

September 15, 1986



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**WILL YOU HEED
A WARNING
FROM THE PAST?**



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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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The Unheeded Warning



H. Armstrong Roberts

ON MAY 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens in the United States broke a silence of 123 years. A mighty eruption then tore 1,300 feet from its top, devastated some 230 square miles of beautiful landscape, and killed more than 60 people.*

The eruption did not come without warning. Nearly two months in advance, a sizable earthquake occurred in the area, with more quakes following at an increasing rate. On March 27, the mountain belched out a plume of ash and steam that rose four miles into the air.[#] Although the mountain had become relatively calm by April, a noticeable bulge was forming on the north face and was growing at the rate of five feet per day.

For the scientists these signs clearly indicated an impending eruption. Warnings were issued for people to get away from the mountain. But the warnings went unheeded by many.

Harry Truman, a lodge owner at Spirit Lake near the foot of the mountain, re-

fused to be evacuated. He had lived there for 50 years and could not believe that his beloved mountain would change the tranquility of his surroundings. Others drove around roadblocks on remote logging roads in order to camp and watch the mountain in the deceptively peaceful woods.

When the gigantic explosion came, ash and hot gases were hurled from the mountain at speeds of 200 miles per hour! Millions of fir trees were leveled, and the lives of unheeding people were snuffed out. Some died with cameras to their eyes. Forty feet of boiling mud buried Harry Truman and his lodge.

Mud flows were moving away from the mountain as fast as 50 miles per hour. When one helicopter pilot warned people in the path of a mud flow, some refused to heed his words. He said: "I couldn't believe it. I told them what was coming and they just laughed and waved me away." Shortly thereafter their laughter changed to panic.

This refusal to believe reliable warnings is not unusual, especially when these pertain to something that people have never experienced personally. They reason that

* One foot = 0.3 meter; one square mile = 2.6 square kilometers.

[#] One mile = 1.6 kilometers.

nothing will change because surrounding conditions have continued the same since the days of their forefathers. Such an attitude will prove to be disastrous if it causes one to ignore an ancient warning of a coming catastrophe that will far exceed

the eruption of Mount St. Helens. What is that catastrophe? And what is your attitude toward the warning? Will you wave it off in disbelief, or are you willing to heed it and live? See what it is in the next article.



IN MANKIND'S long history, there have been many natural disasters as great or greater than the eruption of Mount St. Helens. But none have equaled the immense Flood of Noah's day. So great and so devastating was that Deluge that it left an indelible impression upon mankind on a global scale.

There are 150 separate Flood legends from many diverse parts of the earth, including Babylonia, Rome, India, Australia, and the Americas. Although these legends differ in details, there is general agreement in a moral cause of the Flood, global destruction of mankind, and the survival of a family in an ark or a boat. Only a disaster of global proportions could

The Flood

A Warning From the Past

have left such a widespread and lasting impression.

One Bible scholar wrote: "The harmony between all these accounts is an undeniable guarantee that the tradition is no idle invention; a fiction is individual, not universal; that tradition has, therefore, a historical foundation; it is the result of an event which really happened in the ages of the childhood of mankind." But why is that disaster in the remote past a warning to the generation now living?

It is especially important for us to note the circumstances that led up to the Flood. Their similarity to world conditions today makes the Flood significant to us. Here is how the historical account in the Bible

book of Genesis describes those circumstances: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. So God saw the earth and, look! it was ruined, because all flesh had ruined its way on the earth." —Genesis 6:5, 12.

The world of mankind had suffered a general moral breakdown, with every inclination of its thoughts being bad all the time. As a consequence, "the earth became filled with violence." (Genesis 6:11) Lives were completely devoted to pursuing material and sexual desires. Jesus Christ drew attention to this when he said: "As they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matthew 24: 38, 39) Satisfying fleshly desires was their sole interest.

Advance warning had been given by Noah for many years, but that generation refused to believe it. They surely had never experienced such a flood. So with things continuing as before, the warning fell on deaf ears. They "took no note." It mattered not to them that the warning came from their Creator through Noah.

But God told Noah: "The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence as a result of them; and here I am bringing them to ruin together with the earth." (Genesis 6:13) When the Flood came, Noah and his family were preserved because they heeded the warning and followed God's instructions. But why should all of this be of special interest to us?

Parallel Conditions

As in pre-Flood days, especially since World War I has violence become a way of

life. Political violence among countries has resulted in the most destructive and gruesome wars of human history. The violence has spread to cities, to streets, and to homes; it even threatens travelers. Moreover, television, movies, and novels have predominantly violent themes.

Another parallel is in the modern way of life. Satisfying sexual and materialistic desires is the all-consuming interest of the present generation. Earth wide, we see a moral breakdown that has produced sexually transmitted diseases in epidemic proportions. Adultery, fornication, and homosexual relations are common. Like the generation before the Flood, the present generation loves fleshly pleasures and material possessions more than it loves God.

Since God felt "hurt" at the extremely bad conduct of the pre-Flood people, is it not reasonable to conclude that he would feel the same today at the bad conduct that is common worldwide? Should not what he did to that world of Noah's day be a warning to the present generation? Is it not reasonable to think that he will draw the same conclusion that we find at Genesis 6:5-7? When God saw the badness of mankind, "he felt hurt at his heart. So Jehovah said: 'I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground.'" Through inspired Bible writers, God has declared that he will execute a like judgment on the self-indulgent generation living today. It is approaching the greatest catastrophe in human history.

The Last Days

Looking to our time, the inspired Bible writer of the second letter to Timothy describes the decadent state of affairs that we now see worldwide. In chapter 3, verses 1 to 4, he says: "But know this, that in the *last days* critical times hard to deal

with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God."

Jesus Christ also prophesied of the last days of this system of things. In his prophecy he spoke of the extreme violence we have seen since World War I, saying: "For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." (Matthew 24:7) He also spoke of the lawlessness that is rampant today and the fear that people have of the future. "Because of the increasing of lawlessness," said Jesus, "the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matthew 24:12) He also said that men would "become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:26.

The expression "last days" means the same for this present generation that it meant for the pre-Flood generation—an end to the predominant part of that human system of things. At 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9, the inspired Bible writer Paul says that, through Jesus Christ, God will bring "vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength."

The Flood survivors found that the pre-Flood generation had been swept from the earth. The people and all that they had lived for were gone. It will be the same when divine vengeance brings an end to the present violent generation. "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give

attention to his place, and he will not be."
—Psalm 37:10.

Survival Possible

The parallel between the pre-Flood generation and our generation is not confined to the badness of the people and to their destruction. As there were Flood survivors, so there will be survivors of the end of the present system of things. The Flood survivors were meek persons who did not live as did the people in general. They were lovers of righteousness who were obedient to God and heeded his warnings. We are told at Genesis 6:8, 9: "Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. . . . Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries." Regarding him and his fellow survivors, the apostle Peter wrote that God "did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people."—2 Peter 2:5.

We are assured by God's prophets that there will be a great multitude of survivors out of the coming divine destruction of the present system of things. They, too, will be meek people who are lovers of righteousness and are as obedient to God's instructions as Noah was. After foretelling the destruction of the wicked, the psalmist says: "But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11; Revelation 7:9, 13, 14.

Jesus foretold that the good news of God's Kingdom would be proclaimed worldwide in the last days. This is the means by which the righteously disposed people of earth are being gathered for survival. Jesus illustrated this in his parable about the separating of the sheep from the goats. And he concluded the par-



**As Noah and
his family
survived the
Deluge, so you
can be among
the happy
survivors of
this system's
end**

able by saying that the goatlike unrighteous ones would "depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the [sheeplike] righteous ones into everlasting life."—Matthew 25: 31-46.

Although the Flood is remote from our day, it is clearly a warning to us not to be unheeding. The record of it was written, as the Bible says, "for our instruction." (Romans 15:4) It is a warning against living in the violent, sensual, and materialistic manner of the world without giving heed to our Creator. He does not change. God wiped out the pre-Flood generation

because of its badness. For the same reason, he will wipe out this modern generation and its entire system of political government, materialistic commercialism, and false religion.

To survive the end of this system of things, we must heed the warning from the past. We must prove ourselves lovers of righteousness, as did the eight Flood survivors. And for survival we must follow the counsel at Zephaniah 2:3: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."

The Most Famous Sermon Ever Given

THE scene is one of the most memorable in Bible history: Jesus seated on a mountainside, delivering his famous Sermon on the Mount. The site is near the Sea of Galilee, probably close to Capernaum. Jesus had spent the whole night in prayer to God, and the following morning he had chosen 12 of his disciples to be apostles. Then, along with all of them, he had come down to this level place on the mountain.

By now, you would think, Jesus would be very tired and would want some sleep. But great crowds have come, some all the way from Judea and Jerusalem, 60 to 70 miles (100 to 110 km) away. Others have come from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon to the north. They have come to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. There are even persons who are troubled by the demons.



Jesus' Life and Ministry

As Jesus comes down, sick people draw close to touch him, and he heals them all. Afterward, Jesus apparently climbs to a higher place on the mountain. There he sits down and begins teaching the crowds spread out on the level place before him. And think of it! Now there is not even one person in the entire audience who is suffering from a serious infirmity!

The people are eager to hear the teacher who is able to perform these amazing miracles. Jesus, however, delivers his sermon mainly for the benefit of his disciples, who are probably gathered around closest to him. But so that we can benefit, too, both Matthew and Luke have recorded it.

Matthew's account of the sermon is about four times as long as Luke's. Moreover, portions of what Matthew records, Luke presents as being said by Jesus at another time during his ministry, as can be noted by comparing Matthew 6:9-13

with Luke 11:1-4, and Matthew 6:25-34 with Luke 12:22-31. Yet this should not be surprising. Jesus obviously taught the same things more than once, and Luke chose to record some of these teachings in a different setting.

What makes Jesus' sermon so valuable is not only the depth of its spiritual contents but the simplicity and clarity with which he presented these truths. He drew on ordinary experiences and used things familiar to people, thus making his ideas easily understood by all who are seeking a better life in God's way. In our following issues we will examine some of the things he said. **Luke 6:12-20; Matthew 5:1, 2.**

- ♦ Where was Jesus' most memorable sermon given, who were present, and what had occurred just prior to his giving it?
- ♦ Why is it not surprising that Luke records some teachings of the sermon in another setting?
- ♦ What makes Jesus' sermon so valuable?



Skillful Counselors

—A Blessing to Their Brothers

"I will bring back again judges for you as at the first, and counselors for you as at the start."

—ISAIAH 1:26.

TERRI is the daughter of Christian parents. At school she had a young friend who was also "in the truth." Terri noticed, however, that toward the end of elementary school her friend was not as enthusiastic about her faith as formerly. As they progressed through high school together, her friend became irregular at Christian meetings and began to find fault with the Watch Tower Society and the congregation. Terri prayed hard about her friend, however, and constantly counseled her to try to stay strong as a Christian. Eventually, Terri's efforts were rewarded. By the tenth grade, her friend was regularly attending meetings again and was finally baptized. What a blessing for her! And what a reward for her faithful young friend Terri!

² In view of this experience, can anyone doubt the need for Christians to counsel one another lovingly from time to time? The Bible encourages us: "Listen to coun-

1. 2. (a) How do Proverbs 12:15 and 19:20 show the value of counsel? (b) What is needed first if we are to accept counsel, and what experience demonstrates this?



sel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future." (Proverbs 19:20; 12:15) Terri's friend followed that advice. But what if Terri had not had the love, persistence, and courage to keep offering her help through the years? Yes, for any of us to "listen to counsel," there has to be a counselor. Who should this be?

Counsel—By Whom?

³ Jehovah God promised to provide his people with counselors in our time. He said: "I will bring back again . . . counselors for you as at the start." (Isaiah 1:26) This promise is fulfilled principally in the appointed elders in the Christian congregation. Counseling is a form of teaching, and elders primarily are "qualified to teach." (1 Timothy 3:2) Perhaps the

3. Who are the ones provided by Jehovah to give timely counsel in the Christian congregation?

apostle Paul chiefly had the elders in mind when he said: "Even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you *who have spiritual qualifications* try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness." (Galatians 6:1) But are elders the only ones who can give counsel?

⁴ No. Terri was not an elder, yet her counsel finally brought good results. Remember, too, the Syrian military leader Naaman. He acted on some fine information originating with a young Israelite girl and then on advice from his servants. David was saved from incurring bloodguilt by the timely counsel of Abigail, the wife of Nabal. And the young man Elihu had some wise counsel for Job and his three "comforters."—1 Samuel 25:23-35; 2 Kings 5:1-4, 13, 14; Job 32:1-6.

⁵ Similarly today, counseling is not the prerogative solely of elders. Parents counsel their children regularly. Young people like Terri are often successful in counseling their peers. And the Bible specifically encourages mature sisters to be "teachers of what is good," especially to younger women in the congregation. (Titus 2:3-5) In fact, in a general sense we all have the obligation to help one another in this way. The apostle Paul said: "Keep comforting one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing."—1 Thessalonians 5:11.

The Goals of Christian Counsel

⁶ What are some goals of Christian counsel? These are to help someone to make progress and continue in the right way, to solve problems, to overcome difficulties, and perhaps to correct a wrong

4, 5. (a) What are some Scriptural examples showing that elders are not the only ones who can give counsel? (b) What are some typical modern-day situations in which Christians other than elders offer counsel?

6. What are some goals of Christian counsel?

course. Paul referred to some forms of counseling when he urged Timothy to "reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all longsuffering and art of teaching." (2 Timothy 4:1, 2) It truly is an art to counsel someone in such a way that he can understand without feeling hurt.

⁷ When should counsel be offered? Parents regularly have occasion to counsel their children, and children more or less expect this. (Proverbs 6:20; Ephesians 6:4) In the congregation, a student expects counsel when he has given a talk in the Theocratic Ministry School. And a new Kingdom publisher expects help and advice as he makes progress toward maturity as a Christian minister. (1 Timothy 4:15) Sometimes individuals seeking help and counsel will approach elders or others in the congregation.

⁸ On occasion, though, counsel has to be offered to those who do not expect it or do not want it. Perhaps someone is losing his zeal in Jehovah's service, 'drifting away' as Terri's friend was. (Hebrews 2:1) A person may be having a serious personal difference with another individual in the congregation. (Philippians 4:2) Or someone may need help in the matter of proper grooming or dress, or in the choice of friends or music.—1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Timothy 2:9.

⁹ When the prophet Hanani offered counsel to King Asa of Judah, Asa resented it so much that he "put him in the house of the stocks"! (2 Chronicles 16:7-10) A person had to be courageous to counsel a king in those days. Today, counselors may also need to be courageous,

7, 8. (a) What are some situations in which counsel is expected in the Christian congregation? (b) On what occasions may a Christian not expect counsel but need it?

9, 10. (a) Why may the giving of Christian counsel take courage? (b) Why should a Christian nevertheless give counsel if it is needed?

since giving counsel may initially cause resentment. One experienced Christian held back from offering needed counsel to a younger associate. The reason? He explained: "We are good friends right now, and I want to keep it that way!" Really, though, holding back from giving help when needed is not the mark of a good friend.—Proverbs 27:6; compare James 4:17.

¹⁰ In fact, experience has shown that if a counselor is skillful, bad feelings can usually be minimized, and the goal of the counsel can often be achieved. What does it take to be a skillful counselor? To answer this, let us consider two examples, one good and one bad.

Paul—A Skillful Counselor

¹¹ The apostle Paul had many occasions to offer counsel, and sometimes he had strong things to say. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4; Galatians 1:6; 3:1) Nevertheless, his counsel was effective because those to whom he directed it knew that Paul loved them. As he told the Corinthians: "Out of much tribulation and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears, not that you might be saddened, but that you might know the love that I have more especially for you." (2 Corinthians 2:4) Most of the Corinthians accepted Paul's counsel because they knew that it was given without selfish motives, since "love . . . does not look for its own interests." Also, they were confident that he was not speaking out of personal irritation because "love . . . does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury."—1 Corinthians 13:4, 5.

¹² Today, too, it is much easier to accept

11. Why did most of the Corinthians accept Paul's counsel even though he often spoke quite frankly?

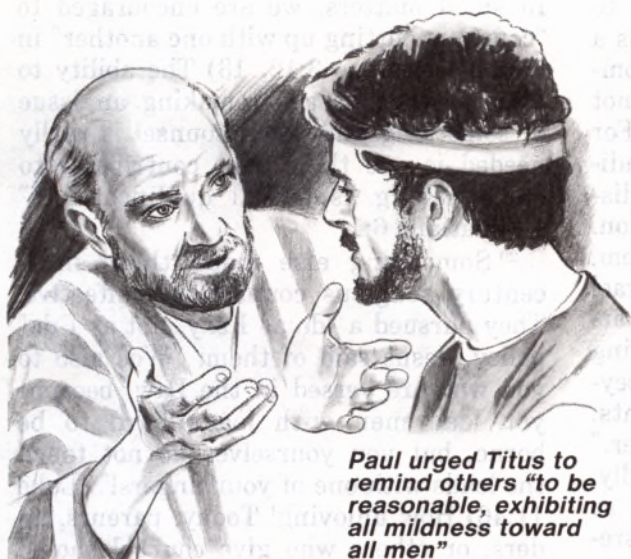
12. What quality will make it easier for a Christian counselor to get good results? Illustrate.

even strong counsel if we know that the one counseling us loves us, is not speaking because of personal irritation, and has no selfish motives. For example, if the only time an elder talks to the teenagers in the congregation is when he criticizes them, the youngsters could easily feel picked on. But what if the elder has a good relationship with the teenagers? What if he takes them in field service, is approachable at the Kingdom Hall, and encourages them to talk to him about their problems, hopes, and doubts, perhaps even inviting them (with their parents' consent) to his home from time to time? Then, when he has to give them counsel, the teenagers will more likely accept it, knowing that it comes from a friend.

Mildness and Humility

¹³ There was another reason why Paul's counsel was successful. He relied on godly wisdom, not on his own opinions. As he reminded the counselor Timothy: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16; compare 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2.) Christian counselors today likewise base what they say on the Scriptures. It is true that, in the family, parents do not quote the Bible every time they counsel their children. Nevertheless, whether Christian parents are encouraging obedience, cleanliness, concern for others, punctuality, or anything else, there must always be a Scriptural basis for what they say. (Ephesians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Matthew 7:12; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) Within the congregation, we should be careful not to try to force our own personal viewpoints or tastes upon others.

13. (a) Christian counsel should ultimately be based on what? (b) Hence, what must those offering counsel in the Christian congregation avoid doing?



Paul urged Titus to remind others "to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men"

And elders should avoid bending the Scriptures to make them appear to support some idea about which they have strong feelings. (Compare Matthew 4: 5, 6.) There must always be a genuine Bible reason for any counsel they offer. —Psalm 119:105.

¹⁴ Counsel is more effective, too, if it is offered in a spirit of mildness. Paul knew this. That is why, when speaking of the one who takes a false step before he is aware of it, Paul encouraged qualified ones to "try to readjust such a man *in a spirit of mildness*." (Galatians 6:1) He also advised Titus to remind others "to speak injuriously of no one, not to be belligerent, to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men."—Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Timothy 6:11.

¹⁵ Why the need for mildness? Because uncontrolled emotions are contagious. Angry words provoke more angry words, and it is difficult to reason when tempers are

at the boiling point. Even if the one being counseled reacts angrily, this is no reason for the counselor to do the same. Rather, the counselor's own mild attitude may help to calm things down. "An answer, when mild, turns away rage." (Proverbs 15:1) This is true whether the counselor is a parent, an elder, or anyone else.

¹⁶ Finally, consider what Paul said to the younger elder Timothy: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." (1 Timothy 5:1, 2) What excellent advice! Imagine

how an older woman would feel if a younger elder, perhaps young enough to be her own son, counseled her in a severely critical or disrespectful way. It would be much better if the counselor took a moment to think: 'Considering the personality and age of this person, what would be the most loving and effective way to offer this point of counsel? If I were in his or her position, how would I want to be approached?' —Luke 6:31; Colossians 4:6.

The Counsel of the Pharisees

¹⁷ Turn now from Paul's good example and consider a bad example—that of the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day. They offered much counsel, but usually the nation did not benefit from it. Why?

¹⁸ There were many reasons. For one, consider the time when the Pharisees rebuked Jesus because his disciples did not wash their hands before a meal. Of course,

14, 15. (a) Name another quality that makes it easier to accept counsel. (b) Why is it so important for a counselor to develop this quality?

16. Why should one always be respectful when offering counsel?

17, 18. What was one reason why the counsel offered by the Pharisees was not helpful?

most mothers counsel their children to wash their hands before a meal, and as a hygienic practice, there is much to recommend this. But the Pharisees were not primarily concerned with hygiene. For them, the washing of hands was a tradition, and they were upset that Jesus' disciples were not following this tradition. However, as Jesus went on to show them, there were much bigger problems in Israel that should have been claiming their attention. For example, some were using Pharisaic tradition as a way to avoid obeying the fifth of the Ten Commandments: "Honor your father and your mother." (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:1-11) Sadly, the scribes and the Pharisees were so caught up with details that they "disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness."—Matthew 23:23.

¹⁹ Counselors today should be careful not to make the same mistake. They should avoid having their own ax to grind, as it were, getting so involved in details that they forget "the weightier matters."

19. How can modern-day Christians avoid falling into the trap of having their own ax to grind?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ Who have the privilege and responsibility of offering Christian counsel?
- ☐ Why may courage be needed to offer counsel?
- ☐ Why did the fact that Paul loved the Corinthian Christians make it easier for them to accept his counsel?
- ☐ Why should a Christian counselor be both mild and humble?
- ☐ How can a Christian avoid making his counsel seem oppressive?

In small matters, we are encouraged to "continue putting up with one another" in love. (Colossians 3:12, 13) The ability to discern when to avoid making an issue of something and when counsel is really needed is one thing that contributes to one's having "spiritual qualifications."—Galatians 6:1.

²⁰ Something else made those first-century religious counselors ineffective. They pursued a "do as I say, not as I do" policy. Jesus said of them: "Woe also to you who are versed in the Law, because you load men with loads hard to be borne, but you yourselves do not touch the loads with one of your fingers!" (Luke 11:46) How unloving! Today, parents, elders, or others who give counsel should be very sure that they are themselves doing what they tell others to do. How can we encourage others to be busy in the field ministry if we do not set an appropriate example? Or how can we warn against materialism if material things dominate in our own lives?—Romans 2:21, 22; Hebrews 13:7.

²¹ The Jewish leaders also failed as counselors because they used bullying tactics. On one occasion, they sent men to arrest Jesus. When these men, greatly impressed by Jesus' manner of teaching, returned without him, the Pharisees rebuked them, saying: "You have not been misled also, have you? Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people." (John 7:45-49) Was this a proper basis for rebuke—tyranny of authority and name-calling? May Christian counselors

20. Why is personal example so important in the matter of giving counsel?

21. (a) How did the Pharisees browbeat the people? (b) How should the Pharisees' tactics serve as a caution to Christian counselors?

never be guilty of such counseling! They should strictly avoid browbeating others or conveying the impression: 'You should listen to me because I'm an elder!' Or when speaking to a sister, let them not imply: 'You should listen to me because I am a brother.'

²² Yes, counseling is an act of love that all of us—especially the appointed el-

22. (a) How and why should Christians offer counsel? (b) What further question needs to be discussed?

ders—owe to fellow Christians from time to time. Counsel should not be given on any pretext. But when needed, it should be given courageously. It should have a Scriptural basis and be offered in a spirit of mildness. Moreover, it is much easier to accept counsel from someone who loves us. Sometimes, though, it can be difficult to know just what to say when giving counsel. So how can we offer counsel in a way that will be effective? This will be considered in the next article.

Counsel That Is *"Seasoned With Salt"*

"Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—COLOSSIANS 4:6.

THROUGHOUT history, salt has played a special role in the preparation of food. It is both a preservative and an enhancer of flavor, so that many foods without salt are viewed as bland and tasteless. Therefore, when Paul wrote that a Christian's utterances should be "seasoned with salt," he was saying that our speech should be upbuilding, as well as acceptable and appealing. (Colossians 4:6) This is especially true when giving counsel. Why?

² The purpose of counseling is not merely to share information. In many cases, the one being counseled already knows some of the Bible principles that apply to

his situation, but he has trouble either in applying them or in seeing their importance. Therefore, the real challenge of Christian counseling is to change someone's way of thinking. (Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:11, 12) Hence, the need for "salt."

³ Truly, counseling is a challenge, and to meet it, the counselor needs knowledge and discernment. (Proverbs 2:1, 2, 9; 2 Timothy 4:2) Happily, Jehovah has provided the Bible, which contains not only the necessary knowledge but also many examples of counsel given by discerning men of God. Examining some of these will help us to be more effective counselors.

1, 2. Why is it especially important that Christian counsel be "seasoned with salt"?

3. What help has Jehovah supplied for Christian counselors?

Consider the "Wonderful Counselor"

⁴ For example, consider Jesus, the "Wonderful Counselor." (Isaiah 9:6) At the end of the first century, Jesus had letters of counsel sent to seven congregations in the district of Asia. These letters are a fine model for elders who may need to offer counsel to their congregations—and the principles apply equally well when counseling individuals. The problems Jesus discussed were serious: apostasy, a "Jezebel" influence, lukewarmness, and materialism, among others. (Revelation 2:4, 14, 15, 20-23; 3:1, 14-18) So Jesus discussed these problems frankly. There was no doubt about what he wanted to say to the respective congregations. Today, when Christian elders offer counsel to their congregations, they should "salt" their counsel with humility and kindness, in imitation of Jesus. (Philippians 2:3-8; Matthew 11:29) On the other hand, also in imitation of Jesus, they need to be frank. The counsel should not be so vague and so general that the congregation misses the point.

⁵ Notice, too, that wherever possible Jesus at the outset strongly commended the congregations and concluded his counsel with upbuilding encouragement. (Revelation 2:2, 3, 7; 3:4, 5) Christian counselors, too, should season their counsel with commendation and encouragement. As one experienced elder remarked: "Really, you do not accomplish much if you merely scold the brothers." When giving strong counsel, elders should not leave the brothers feeling demoralized but, rather, strengthened and determined to do better in the future.—Compare 2 Corinthians 1:1-4.

⁶ Finally, what about Jesus' messages to

4. In offering counsel to the congregation, how can a Christian elder imitate Jesus Christ?
5, 6. What further lessons can a Christian elder learn from Jesus' messages to the seven congregations?

the congregations at Smyrna and Philadelphia? He had no criticism of these brothers. But since they were undergoing serious trials, he encouraged them to keep on enduring. (Revelation 2:8-11; 3:7-13) Christian overseers, too, should not only offer counsel when correction is needed but always be alert to commend the brothers for their good works and encourage them to endure.—Romans 12:12.

Use Illustrations

⁷ Another time when Jesus offered counsel was when his disciples became concerned about who was going to be first in the Kingdom of the heavens. He could have scolded his followers severely for this concern. Instead, he "seasoned his words with salt." Calling over a young child, he said: "Whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one that is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 18:1-4; Luke 9:46-48) The counsel was clear but kind and upbuilding. By showing that the Kingdom of the heavens was very different from the kingdoms of this world, Jesus encouraged his followers to be humble, and he tried to remove their reason for arguing.

⁸ Notice, too, the effective teaching technique Jesus used in this case. A living illustration—a young child! Wise counselors often "salt" their words with illustrations, since these can emphasize the seriousness of a matter or can help the recipient of counsel to reason and to view a problem in a new light. Often illustrations help to reduce tension.

⁹ When warning Cain that he was in grave danger of committing a serious sin,

7, 8. (a) How was Jesus' counsel to his followers "seasoned with salt"? (b) Why are illustrations valuable when we are offering counsel?
9. What are some other Scriptural examples of the use of illustrations in giving counsel?

Using a child to illustrate his point, Jesus gave his disciples clear, kind, and uplifting counsel



Jehovah vividly described sin as a wild animal. He said: "There is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving." (Genesis 4:7) When Jonah was angry because Jehovah had spared the repentant Ninevites, God gave him a bottle-gourd plant for shade. Then, when the plant withered and Jonah complained, Jehovah said: "You, for your part, felt sorry for the bottle-gourd plant . . . Ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men?" (Jonah 4:5-11) Powerful counsel indeed!

¹⁰ Similarly, when one young person was upset because her parents restricted her associations, a traveling overseer tried to help her by using this illustration: "You like to sew, don't you? Imagine that you spent a lot of time making an attractive dress for a friend. But after you gave it to her, you found that she was using it to wipe the floor. How would you feel?" The girl admitted that she would be upset. So the minister continued: "That is how your parents view it. They have spent a lot of time bringing you up, and they are proud of you. So they want you to associate with people who will treat you properly, not people who will end up harming you." The illustration helped the girl to appreciate what her parents were trying to do.

Ask Questions

¹¹ When Jehovah was speaking to Jonah about his unreasonable anger, you may have noticed that He also asked questions. When Jonah, angry that Nineveh had not been destroyed, asked to die, Jehovah said: "Have you rightly become hot with anger?" Jonah did not answer. Hence, Jehovah allowed the bottle-gourd plant to grow and then die. Then Jonah was doubly

10. How did a modern-day Christian counselor use an illustration to help a young person to understand her parents' motives?

11. How did Jehovah effectively use questions when counseling Jonah?



Jonah was bitter and angry, but he apparently responded well to Jehovah's counsel

upset. So Jehovah asked him: "Have you rightly become hot with anger over the bottle-gourd plant?" This time Jonah did answer: "I have rightly become hot with anger, to the point of death." Now that the prophet had answered Jehovah, He went on to compare Jonah's attitude toward a mere plant with His own attitude toward Nineveh, asking the clinching question: "Ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh?" (Jonah 4:4, 9, 11) Thus Jonah was counseled to imitate Jehovah's attitude toward the repentant Ninevites.

¹² Yes, questions help the counselor to find out what the person requiring counsel is thinking. They also help that individual to realize more clearly his own problems and motivations. For example, a person might insist that he has every right to

12. What is the value of questions in counseling? Illustrate.

take a drink before driving home. He might genuinely feel, 'Alcohol has no effect on me!' A friend might wish to reason with him, saying: 'But suppose you got involved in an accident that was not your fault. What would the police think if they noticed that you had been drinking? And suppose, in fact, that alcohol did affect your reactions even a little. Do you really want to drive your car when your reflexes are not 100 percent? Is it worth the risk, just for a drink?'

¹³ Christian counsel is always Bible based. And where possible, Christian counselors actually use the Bible in giving counsel. It is a powerful aid. (Hebrews 4:12) To illustrate: An experienced elder was trying to help someone who was no longer active in the preaching work. The elder called attention to Jesus' parable of the man who had two children, both of whom he asked to go and work in his vineyard. The first said that he would go but did not. The second said he would not go but then decided to go after all. (Matthew 21:28-31) Then the counselor asked: "Which of these two children are you acting like right now?" The publisher quickly got the point, especially when the counselor continued: "How do you think Jehovah, the Owner of the vineyard, views your situation?"

13. In what way did one counselor use the Bible, along with questions, to offer counsel? Why was this effective?

¹⁴ It is similar when trying to help those with doubts, those with marital or other family problems, those who have difficulties with individuals, or those in other trying situations.* Skillful questions help those being counseled to reason, examine themselves, and arrive at correct conclusions.

Listen Carefully

¹⁵ Remember, though, that asking questions implies that you want to hear the answers. (Proverbs 18:13) Counselors should not fall into the trap that snared the three "comforters" of Job. Job spoke to them, but they did not really listen. They had already made up their minds that Job's suffering was caused by his own sinfulness. (Job 16:2; 22:4-11) In contrast, a Christian counselor should listen carefully. Thus, he may notice significant pauses or inflections of voice indicating that the whole story has not yet been told. Perhaps a supplementary question will bring out a thought that is lurking in the back of the person's mind.—Compare Proverbs 20:5.

¹⁶ True, this may not always be easy. A disturbed person may blurt out: "I hate my parents!" or, "I can't live with my husband anymore!" It is upsetting to listen to such things. But remember that Jehovah was willing to listen when Asaph complained that his faithfulness seemed to be in vain. (Psalm 73:13, 14) God lis-

* For more information on counseling married couples, see the article "How to Give Counsel That Really Helps" in the July 22, 1983, issue of *Awake!*

14. What are some other situations in which questions could be a valuable tool in offering counsel?

15. (a) What did Job's three "comforters" fail to do? (b) How will listening help a Christian counselor?

16. What is required of the counselor when it is difficult to listen to the expressions of an emotionally upset fellow Christian?

tened, too, when Jeremiah said that he had been fooled. (Jeremiah 20:7) Habakkuk seemingly complained that the wicked were oppressing the righteous and that Jehovah was not even seeing it. (Habakkuk 1:13-17) Christian counselors should be equally ready to listen. If people really have these feelings, then the counselor needs to know about this so that he can help. He should avoid subtly urging the person being counseled to express opinions that he thinks the individual *should* have rather than those he really *does* have. The counselor should also avoid reacting strongly or judgmentally, perhaps thereby discouraging the person from opening his heart any further.—Proverbs 14:29; 17:27.

¹⁷ Sometimes the major part of our counseling is listening, allowing the person to pour out his hurt, heartbreak, or emotional suffering. When Naomi returned from the fields of Moab, the women of Israel greeted her with the words: "Is this Naomi?" But Naomi sadly replied: "Do not call me Naomi. Call me Mara, for the Almighty has made it very bitter for me. I was full when I went, and it is empty-handed that Jehovah has made me return. Why should you call me Naomi, when it is Jehovah that has humiliated me and the Almighty that has caused me calamity?" (Ruth 1:19-21) There was not much that the Israelite women could say in reply. But, often, just making oneself lovingly available to listen while others express their emotional pain can contribute to their healing.*

* For suggestions as to how to help Christians suffering from depression, see the articles "Speak Consolingly to the Depressed Souls" in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 1982, and "An Educated Tongue — 'To Encourage the Weary'" in the issue of June 1, 1982.

17. How is just listening to our brothers sometimes a way of comforting them?

Be Realistic

¹⁸ Of course, response to counsel varies. Jonah evidently responded well to Jehovah's counsel. The prophet recovered so well from his bitterness and anger that he reported his experiences so that others could learn from them. Jesus' followers took some time to learn the lesson about humility. Why, the very night before Jesus died, they got into another argument about who would be the greatest among them! (Luke 22:24) Therefore, those giving counsel need to be patient. (Ecclesiastes 7:8) A person with a deeply rooted wrong attitude usually will not alter his course just because of a few words from an elder. Long-standing problems between marriage mates will not disappear after one interview with a mature Christian. Serious illnesses can take months to cure, and so may serious spiritual problems. And some simply will not listen to sound counsel. Despite being counseled by Jehovah himself, Cain went off and murdered his brother.—Genesis 4:6-8.

¹⁹ Those with severe problems should be realistic as to what they may expect from the congregation. A fellow Christian cannot remove chronic mental depression, or emotional hurt possibly caused by a tragedy or a terrible experience. When a person is physically sick, often all the doctor does is make him comfortable while time works a healing on the body. Similarly, when a Christian suffers emotionally, the congregation can try to "make him comfortable," praying with him and for him, offering an encouraging word whenever possible, and giving whatever practical help they can. Then, usually, time and

18. (a) What were some responses to the counsel from Jehovah and Jesus Christ? (b) What quality should Christian counselors cultivate?

19. How can the congregation help those suffering emotional wounds?

Jehovah's spirit perform the healing. (Proverbs 12:25; James 5:14, 15) Thus, one victim of incest wrote: "While incest might be a terrible emotional strain, Jehovah's organization does a lot to support you, and with help from the Scriptures and support from the brothers and sisters, you *can* overcome."^{*}

²⁰ Yes, Christians have a responsibility to help one another. Elders in particular, but also all in the congregation, should be concerned about one another's welfare and offer kind, Scriptural counsel when needed. (Philippians 2:4) Of course, such counsel should not be dictatorial or harsh. Neither should it give the impression of trying to control someone else's life. Rather, it should be Scripturally based and "seasoned with salt." (Colossians 4:6) Everyone needs help on occasion, and timely counsel, "salted" with kindness and encouragement, will help all of us to continue on the roadway to everlasting life.

^{*} For more information on helping those suffering emotional wounds, see the articles "Hope for Despairing Ones" and "They Want to Help" in *The Watchtower* of August 1, 1983, and "Help for the Victims of Incest" in the issue of October 1, 1983.

20. What part does counsel play as all of us endeavor to keep serving Jehovah?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What features of Jesus' counsel to the seven congregations can help elders today?
- ☐ What Scriptural examples are there of the use of illustrations in giving counsel?
- ☐ To a Christian counselor, what is the real value of questions?
- ☐ How can a skillful counselor use the Bible?
- ☐ Why should a person giving counsel also be a careful listener?

Caring for Scattered "Sheep" in the Caprivi

THE cream-colored Land-Rover was laden with supplies, spares, and Bible literature. It was heading north from Windhoek, capital of South-West Africa (Namibia). The time? May of 1981. As they drove through the flat, dry countryside, the four passengers had time to meditate on the exciting trip ahead.

The driver, Chris du Plessis, and his partner were Jehovah's Witnesses and regular pioneers, that is, full-time preachers of the Kingdom message. They had just spent several enjoyable weeks in Katatura, the large black township near Windhoek. Both of them had found it exhilarating to preach the good news of God's Kingdom from house to house among the black people with their friendly attitude and good response to the message.

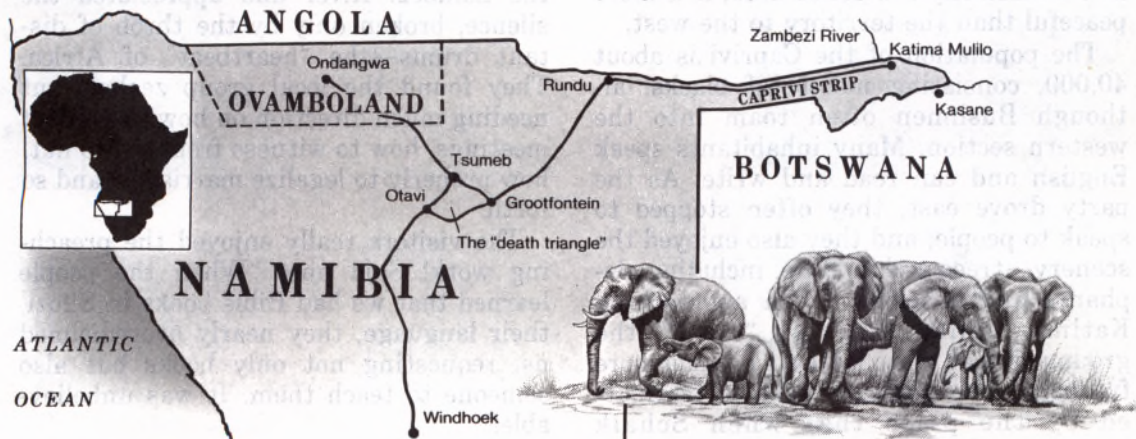
The two young men had been asked to provide transportation for circuit overseer Schalk Coetzee and his wife to isolated groups of Witnesses up north, where some roads are impassable by ordinary vehicles.

With the Land-Rover they could camp anywhere—the Coetzees sleeping "downstairs" in the vehicle and the two young men "upstairs" in a tent on the roof!

After driving some 370 kilometers* the party reached the "death triangle"—so called because many people have lost their lives there because of intense guerrilla activity by raiders from Angola. Farther north they saw several wrecked cars but had no trouble.

Their first visit was at Ondangwa, a military post not far from Angola. Special pioneers were caring for the small congregation there. Christo Els and his wife Elizabeth had learned the local language, Ndonga—a real challenge. But the people listened well and had deep respect for the Bible. Sometimes Christo had to take over plowing with donkeys or his wife had to hoe the field so that householders could be free to listen to the Kingdom message!

* One kilometer = 0.6 mile.



Since the area was a war zone, travelers on gravel roads ran the risk of land mines. So Christo and Elizabeth often drove on sandy bush roads, and people they met were very surprised that they carried no weapons.

It was a real joy for them to visit the Ovahimba people living primitive lives in a remote area. These people were dressed in skins, their bodies smeared with ocher. The pioneers used a publication they had helped to translate. What a thrill to see these people show appreciation for the Kingdom message!

A one-day assembly was held during the week's visit of Brother Coetzee and his party. Since the area was sparsely populated, the attendance was small. But all in this remote outpost were thrilled with the program and fine association.

The Caprivi Strip

After a brief stop at Rundu to obtain permits, the party entered the Caprivi Strip. As the map shows, this is a narrow corridor of territory stretching from northeastern Namibia deep into the heart of southern Africa. It is 480 kilometers long and 80 kilometers wide at its widest point and shares borders with Angola, Zambia, and Botswana. Although it is also a militarily controlled area, it is more peaceful than the territory to the west.

The population of the Caprivi is about 40,000, consisting mostly of blacks, although Bushmen often roam into the western section. Many inhabitants speak English and can read and write. As the party drove east, they often stopped to speak to people, and they also enjoyed the scenery—trees and wildlife, including elephants and antelope. Upon approaching Katima Mulilo, the only "town," the groups of neat thatched huts became more frequent. The pioneers were so fascinated by the place that when Schalk

Coetzee asked if they would be willing to serve in this remote location, they gladly accepted the privilege.

After a brief stay in Katima Mulilo, the quartet was off again to visit the isolated group at Kasane in northern Botswana. They traveled through the Chobe Game Reserve, at times alongside large buffalo and elephant herds. When they camped at night, they heard lions roaring nearby.

At Kasane, with local pioneers interpreting, they preached from hut to hut, African style. The approach is slow and dignified. The visitor stands outside the hut and calls out to attract attention. Someone responds and invites him to enter and be seated. Usually the whole family is summoned to listen. Then follows a lengthy exchange of greetings and inquiries about health and origin. Only then does the Witness begin discussing a Bible topic.

The local Witnesses were very happy and grateful that the party had come so far to visit them. Meetings had to be held in a mud hut. So Schalk Coetzee encouraged them to build their own Kingdom Hall.

Returning to Katima Mulilo, the travelers all enjoyed a week's visit with the local Witnesses. At night they camped near the Zambezi River and appreciated the silence, broken only by the throb of distant drums—the "heartbeat" of Africa. They found the local group zealous but needing much direction on how to conduct meetings, how to witness from hut to hut, how properly to legalize marriages, and so forth.

The visitors really enjoyed the preaching work! Said one: "When the people learned that we had Bible books in Silozi, their language, they nearly overwhelmed us, requesting not only books but also someone to teach them. It was unbelievable!"



Camping by the Zambezi River at Katima Mulilo. Schalk Coetzee making out his weekly report as circuit overseer. Notice the "upstairs" accommodations of the Land-Rover

Reluctantly the party left their new friends in Katima Mulilo and began the return trip. They spent a week with the local congregation at Rundu in northern Namibia. Most of the brothers there were refugees from Angola who spoke Portuguese. Another language problem! After a trip of about 4,000 kilometers, they reached Windhoek, tired but happy and very grateful to Jehovah for the many privileges they had enjoyed.

Back to Katima Mulilo

The two pioneers returned to Katima Mulilo, this time to remain and help Jehovah's "sheep." To stay, they needed accommodations and part-time work. At their first attempt they found work. They also obtained permission to use a caravan, a motor vehicle, belonging to the Watch Tower Society. And they thanked Jehovah for thus caring for their needs.

Soon, the pioneers were involved in helping the local Witnesses in various

ways. This included building a Kingdom Hall. They cut long grass for the roof, collected the special mud found in anthills that sets very hard, and learned to thatch the roof—African style. With white-washed walls, the hall looked neat and attractive. Since they could not afford chairs, seating was on benches or logs. It was rough-and-ready, but it was their own Kingdom Hall!

There had been no properly conducted meetings. So the pioneers prepared the five weekly meetings held by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. This meant a lot of work, but for them and the local Witnesses, it was upbuilding spiritually. The pioneers also had to learn Silozi, the local language.

Before long, a congregation was formed. In time, four of the local brothers were able to deliver public talks and handle all meetings, and one was appointed as a ministerial servant. Meanwhile, the

**Kingdom preaching
in Kasane,
northern Botswana**



pioneers were greatly enjoying the preaching work from hut to hut. So many people wanted to study the Bible that they could not handle all the requests. Would you not like to serve in territory like that? Could you?

Another Visit to Kasane

The circuit overseer had asked the pioneers to visit the group at Kasane in Botswana from time to time. On one occasion, they ran into serious trouble. Botswana soldiers stopped them near the border.

"You are spies!" said the leader.

"No, we are ministers, Jehovah's Witnesses, teaching the people about the Bible."

"I don't believe you are Christians. You are South African soldiers."

It was a difficult situation. But when the soldiers saw the supplies of Bible literature and no guns, they let the brothers go.

The tense military situation in the area also made contact with Zambia very difficult. Only the Zambezi River separates

Katima Mulilo from Zambia, where Jehovah's Witnesses are numerous and have large supplies of Silozi literature. But with troops watching, the local people did not dare to cross the river in their *mokolos*, or dugout canoes. Once or twice there was a shoot-out across the river.

Caring for Scattered "Sheep"

All of this, however, did not prevent the pioneers from looking after the "sheep" in the Caprivi Strip, including some scattered ones. For example, they had heard that Andrew, an elderly man in a village some 70 kilometers from Katima, was deeply interested in the Bible. When they found him, he was actually reading the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and was almost overcome with joy by the visit! For years he had studied by himself, and he was greatly encouraged by the help the pioneers gave him.

Frank Mwemba is also very isolated. He lives in a village about a hundred kilometers from Katima. His home can be reached only with a four-wheel-drive vehicle, and even then only at certain times of the year, since much of the Caprivi is marshy and periodically under water. Frank had accepted the truth in Zambia, had been baptized there, and then had returned to his native village in the Caprivi. For many years he had carried on alone. Had he kept on preaching in that isolated place? Had he resisted the local practices of witchcraft and polygamy? Was his marriage legally registered? Yes! Frank supports his wife—only one—and children by fishing and farming, and he spends days visiting scattered villages in his *mokolo* or on foot so as to spread the good news. He regularly studies with his family, avoids witch doctors, and proudly showed the visitors his marriage certificate!

On another occasion, Chris made a trip

by barge down the Zambezi River to the flat, marshy region of Nantungu. He had heard that there were interested ones there. 'What will I find?' wondered Chris as, knapsack on his back, he jumped from the barge to the bank. To his delight he found a little group trying to live according to the Bible as they had been taught by *Zambian Witnesses*. They were overjoyed to see the *Silozi* publications that Chris had brought with him, including the latest issues of *The Watchtower*. For the next three days, Chris was busy with Bible discussions and visits to nearby villages to meet with interested ones. Before leaving, he made arrangements for regular meetings and Kingdom preaching.

A Change of Partners

Because of health problems, Chris' partner had to leave the Caprivi early in 1982. Later, Chris was joined by a second partner, Melt Marais, a brother who served zealously in the Caprivi for almost a year. In May 1983 he married Magda, a young pioneer sister, and she became his third partner in the Caprivi. Their wedding talk was given in the little Kingdom Hall that Chris had helped to build.

It took Magda a while to adjust to life in the Caprivi. The caravan had been moved to an area outside town with no

electricity or running water. There they were often "invaded" by elephants at night. To shine a torch through a caravan window and see the huge bulk of an elephant two meters or so away was at first quite alarming for Magda! But she soon adapted to the new life and loved it. Her example encouraged the small congregation in Katima.

Also very encouraging for the Caprivi brothers was attending circuit assemblies in Francistown, Botswana (650 kilometers away). They were especially delighted to attend a district convention near Johannesburg (about 1,400 kilometers distant). They were amazed to see the huge crowd of Witnesses and such a smooth-running organization and to experience great kindness from the white brothers and sisters—all evidence of Jehovah's spirit in action.

But it was the faithful, loving ministry of the young pioneers that was the most upbuilding for the "sheep" in the Caprivi who so urgently needed help. In turn, supplying that help brought great joy to the pioneers who were willing to serve where the need was very great.

In September 1983, however, Chris and Magda had to leave the Caprivi. Why? He explains: "We were invited to serve at the South Africa branch of the Watch Tower Society. We were sorry to say good-bye to the 13 Caprivi publishers and many interested ones in the small congregation and three groups we left behind. Our prayers are that Jehovah may supply more workers to cultivate this field, ripe for harvest."—Matthew 9:37, 38.

There are many other places where help is needed. Are you able and willing to serve in this way, to give of yourself to care for Jehovah's sheep? If so, there are rich rewards in store for you. As Jesus said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

In Our Next Issue

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—Dreams That Affect You
- 1986—A Year
"to Safeguard Peace?"
- "Love Your Neighbor"—What Is
the Most Practical Way?

Insight on the News

Blood Transfusions—Safe From AIDS?

"I don't think concern about AIDS should enter into the decision about surgery or any other reason to receive blood," claims a spokesman for the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control. However, a 60-year-old surgery patient who became infected with the AIDS virus after receiving donated blood that had been tested for AIDS may not agree.

The New York Times reports that the patient received blood from a donor who gave this blood "so soon after a homosexual encounter that he had not yet developed the antibodies that trigger the AIDS blood tests." However, about three months later, the donor again gave blood. This time it "showed signs of AIDS antibodies and was rejected," reported the *Times*.

With the use of the newly developed AIDS blood test, medical authorities were confident that the nation's blood supply was successfully purged of contaminated blood. Yet, failure to identify contaminated blood that has not developed antibodies to trigger proper test results shows that the risk to persons accepting blood transfusions is real indeed. More than 21,000 AIDS cases have been reported in the United States since 1977, almost 2 percent of which are attributed to transfusions of contaminated blood.

Those observing God's law remain free of the potentially contaminating effects of blood transfusions. Why? Because they "keep abstaining . . . from blood and from things strangled," which have not been bled. While such

persons abstain for religious reasons, they enjoy added benefits, for the governing body of the early Christian congregation added: "If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"—Acts 15:28, 29.

Catholics Uphold Evolution

During a general audience held at the Vatican in April 1986, Pope John Paul II stated: "As far as the doctrine of faith is concerned, we see no difficulty in explaining the origin of man's body by means of the hypothesis of evolutionism." Why not? Because such Catholic "doctrine of faith" holds that, apart from the body, man has an immortal soul. The church contends that this soul, and not the body, was directly created by God.

According to Genesis 2:7, however, when God formed man out of the dust and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, "the man came to be a living soul." Man was not given a soul but became a soul, a living person. (Compare 1 Corinthians 15:45.) At Ezekiel 18:4 we are told: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." This indicates that the soul is the person, not some immaterial part of him that lives on after his body dies.

On the surface, it may seem that there is no problem in accepting an evolutionary origin of man's body. But in doing this, the Catholic Church has rejected the Genesis account of creation, a record that Jesus Christ himself accepted as true. (Matthew 19:4-6) Whose viewpoint should a Christian accept?

Unscriptural Compromise

The visit of Pope John Paul II to the Rome synagogue on April 13, 1986, has been described as a "historical event" destined to 'open a new era.' Why? Because it was the first time a pope had paid an official visit to a Jewish place of worship. According to *La Repubblica*, a Rome newspaper, by means of this gesture the Catholic Church is attempting to "correct the errors of history," since the church has not "always lived up to the obligations of the love of Christ toward its Jewish brothers."

The pope's visit was intended to underscore the "common spiritual heritage" shared by Catholics and Jews. However, what John Paul has defined as "the fundamental divergence" between these two religions still remains, namely, the fact that the Jews do not accept Jesus as the Messiah. What is the pope's solution to this problem? In his address, he mentioned showing "respect for one another's intimate convictions" and the need to avoid any further pressure to impose the faith of one upon the other. Such statements, notes *La Repubblica*, confirm the "papal renunciation of every form of proselytism" with regard to Jews.

However, the apostle Peter told the Jewish priests and older men in Jerusalem that "there is no salvation in anyone else" but Jesus Christ. Moreover, when Peter and John were ordered to stop preaching on the basis of Jesus' name, they replied: "We cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:8, 12, 18-20) Should not Christ's followers today do the same?

The God of the “Old Testament” —Is He a God of Love?



“THE God of the Old Testament, namely the Yahweh of Judaism, is a god of cursing, a god of anger, a god of jealousy, and I cannot feel close to him.” So says Youji Inoue, a Japanese Catholic priest, in an article entitled “Japanese and Christianity” in one of Japan’s leading newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*. But, he continues, this God eventually “developed and transformed into what is the God of the New Testament, that is, the God whom Jesus taught.”

To be sure, clergyman Inoue is not the only one who holds such a view. But do you agree with him? Do you also feel that the God of the “Old Testament,” or the Hebrew Scriptures, is a harsh and vengeful God when compared to the God of the “New Testament,” or the Christian Greek Scriptures?

With humans, personalities can change. For instance, the Bible urges those who love God to “put on the new personality

which was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Ephesians 4:24) By studying the Bible and applying what they have learned, many who formerly harbored jealousy, anger, and so on, have made great changes, so that they now manifest in their daily lives the fruitage of God’s spirit—“love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.”—Galatians 5:22, 23.

But can the same be said of the Creator, Jehovah God? Has he “developed and transformed” from “a god of anger” into the Christian God of love, as some would call him?

Jehovah—Always a God of Love

“God is love,” wrote the apostle John. (1 John 4:8) Therein he stated an eternal truth: The Creator, Jehovah, has been, is, and always will be a God of unchangeable love. And from beginning to end, the Bible record supports that statement.

When Jehovah created the earth, he lovingly made it to be an ideal home for mankind. (Isaiah 45:18) Later, when he created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, he made them "in his image," that is to say, he endowed them with such godly qualities as love, justice, wisdom, and power. He also placed before them the prospect of having children, turning the whole earth into a paradise, and living in it forever. (Genesis 1:27, 28) Was not all of this evidence of a God of love?

When the first human pair succumbed to temptation by Satan through the serpent, they lost eternal blessings not only for themselves but also for their yet unborn offspring. At this crucial point, Jehovah pronounced the first prophecy recorded in the Bible, namely, that a promised 'seed of the woman' would bruise the head of the serpent. (Genesis 3:15) Was not this promise of hope and deliverance another outstanding expression of God's love?

Some 2,000 years later, Jehovah promised his faithful servant Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves," thus revealing that 'the seed of the woman' would come through Abraham's family line. (Genesis 22:18) This promise solidified the hope of deliverance and showed that Jehovah's love for mankind had not diminished with the passing of time. He had a blessed future in mind for humankind in making this promise. He is most certainly a God of love!

God's Love Toward Israel

Further, Jehovah God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt in 1513 B.C.E. and concluded the Law covenant with them through Moses. In the second of the Ten Commandments, Jehovah said: "For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God [a God exacting exclusive de-

votion, *New World Translation*] and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me; but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."—Exodus 20:5, 6, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

As the Sovereign and husbandly owner, Jehovah had the right to exact exclusive devotion from his covenant people, Israel. (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14) When his people became unfaithful and turned to false gods time and again, was it not reasonable that Jehovah, out of his love for them, should discipline them, expressing his disapproval and condemnation of their wayward course?

On many occasions, Jehovah showed deep concern for his people and appealed to them to return to him. (Isaiah 55:7) Though he chastised them for their sins, finally allowing their nationhood to be destroyed and them to be taken captive into a foreign land, in due time he brought them back to their homeland. What does all of this show about Jehovah? Is he a jealous, hateful, and vengeful God? No! Rather, it shows that he is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth."—Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Joel 2:13; Nahum 1:2, 3.

Love Expressed Through His Son

Over the centuries, Jehovah God provided further details regarding the 'seed of the woman' and 'Abraham's seed,' and through His prophets He foretold the coming of the Messiah. When the appointed time arrived, God demonstrated his love in an unprecedented way—by sending his only-begotten Son to earth to provide the ransom sacrifice.

Of this marvelous provision, the apostle John wrote: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in

order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Because God's love through his Son, Jesus Christ, is so magnanimous, some have mistakenly concluded that He could not have been the same God as the one spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures as bringing punishment and judgment.

But is the God taught by Jesus so different from the God portrayed in the Hebrew Scriptures? Or is it that people have chosen to see just what they want to see? Does not that well-known scripture, John 3:16, clearly show that if one does not 'exercise faith' in the Son, that one will be "destroyed"? Furthermore, John went on to say: "He that disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him." (John 3:36) If this in no way detracts from the magnitude of God's love, then why should his expression of displeasure against the unfaithful Israelites and

others in the Hebrew Scriptures make him any less a God of love?

God's Loving Purpose for You

Through his prophet Malachi, God stated: "I am Jehovah; I have not changed." (Malachi 3:6) Not only has he remained unchanged as the God of love but his loving purpose regarding mankind and the earth has also remained unchanged. As Jehovah laid before Adam and Eve the prospect of everlasting life in an earthly paradise, so this God of love wants you to be among those who will forever live happily in that Paradise. (Luke 23:43; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:4) But what is required? 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) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you learn about Jehovah, the God of unchangeable love.

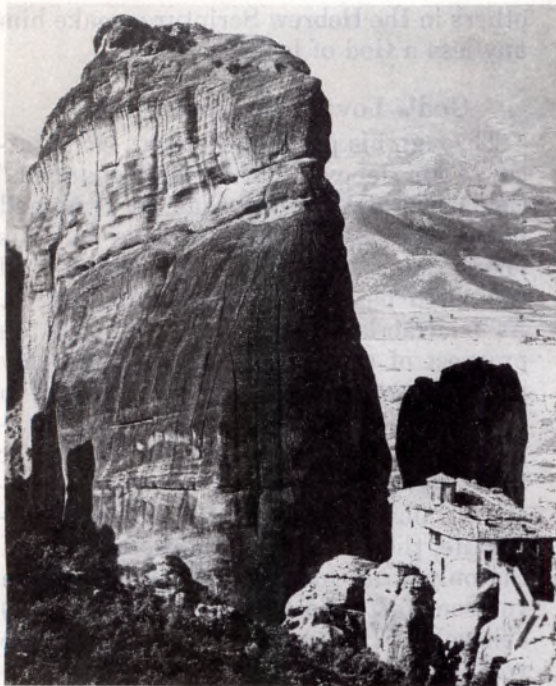
Meteora —Those Gigantic Rock-Masses

THE gigantic rock-masses of Meteora, in Thessaly of central Greece, are a real wonder! And the great plain of Thessaly itself is a museum of natural masterpieces. Its beauty and fertility are renowned. On approaching the plain from the east, one passes through the breathtaking, gatelike gorge of Tempe, under the shading of colossal Mount Olympus, the mythical residence of the 12 Grecian gods. At its foot the Piniós River flows, and at the extreme west end of the plain stands Meteora.

This gigantic rocky group causes amazement, admiration, fear, joy, and dizziness. Some of these rocks reach a

height of 600 meters (1,970 ft). They sprout like obelisks. And they are surely tremendous heaps of witness to the mighty Creator.

According to some geologists, the formation of Meteora dates back to the remotest geological periods, when the whole Thessalian Plain was a seabed pressed from the sides to form undulations and irregular surfaces. Other researchers set the probable time of Meteora's formation at just a few millennia ago and ascribe it to earthquakes and erosion caused by water. Yet, all of them admit that the carver of these giants was water acting



Embassy of Greece photo

with tremendous force. One may, of course, wonder about the source of all that water.

The Flood in Legend

Ancient Grecian mythology refers to this area. According to Pindar's odes and the writings of Apollodorus, when the mythical Deucalion was king of Phthia in Thessaly, Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods made up his mind to exterminate impious and mischievous humankind by a deluge. With a view to escaping the wrath of the gods, Deucalion had an ark constructed. In it he put the necessary provisions. Right after he entered the ark with his wife Pyrrha, a mighty deluge broke out, flooded the larger portion of Greece, and drowned "almost all humans." During the deluge the mounts of Thessaly were supposedly formed. For nine days and nights, Deucalion's ark moved to and fro over the waves until it ran aground atop Mount Parnassus, in Thessaly.

After getting out of the ark, Deucalion offered a sacrifice to Zeus. The god Zeus commanded Deucalion and Pyrrha to throw stones behind them. Those thrown by

Deucalion became men, whereas those thrown by Pyrrha came to be women. A twisted version, indeed, of the Bible's record of the factual Deluge of Noah's day! —Genesis 6:1–8:22.

The Monasteries of Meteora

Great Meteora rises to a height of 613 meters (2,011 ft) above the Pineós riverbed. Situated on the flat top of the mount is the monastery of Metamorphosis, the largest of the six now in operation. The ascent by paved road and carved stone stairs is not easy.

In the monasteries of Meteora, there are now libraries containing a considerable number of manuscripts. Many were found to be hidden in such places as walls and roofs or under a mattress.

The contents of the manuscripts are mostly religious and ecclesiastical. But there are also manuscripts of historical, literary, philosophical, and scientific content. Their sheets are of parchment or of paper, and they are dated from the 9th to the 19th century. Among them is the parchment Codex 591 dated 861–62 C.E. This is the oldest manuscript in Greece, contains 423 sheets, and consists of interpretative discourses on the Gospel of Matthew.

There are also archives containing such documents as gold-embossed pages of Byzantine emperors and patriarchs. The total number is about 3,000. But the Bible manuscripts are few, for the copyists of Meteora have engaged themselves little in this kind of work.

The monasteries are full of religious images (icons) portraying both mythical and real persons, as well as events testifying to the monks' religious convictions. For instance, one representation of the Second Coming depicts sinners being thrown into the mouths of terrible monsters. Elsewhere, in the temple of John the Baptist, there is a relief depicting a horseman before whom stands Venus.

So ends our visit to Meteora. Whatever we may think of man-made things now found there, we are moved by the grandeur of this gigantic rocky group situated in Thessaly.



'I have never read anything to equal it'

THE book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* has helped many to understand more clearly how life got here on earth and where it is going. One person wrote: "I am 78 years old and have been reading since I was two. But I have never read anything to equal *Life—How Did It Get Here?* It is truly amazing. The information it contains boggles the mind."

From New Zealand a man wrote that the book "must be one of the most outstanding works in the history of modern publishing." Another, in Italy, declared: "The book is simply superlative! I have read it without stopping and without getting tired, as suits exceptional books."

A businessman in England obtained 25 copies for his business associates. He quickly ran out of copies and obtained 25 more. And a teacher of religion in the United States ordered 24 additional copies to use in his classes.

"Accurate Science"

A student in Canada said: "I call it my science textbook, and I can tell you truthfully that I've learned more accurate science from this book than from all my school days put together."

In this regard, a man wrote: "While I was enrolled in a university degree-granting program, I paid many hundreds of dollars for various courses which con-

tained no more information than the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* These courses were in mathematics, biology, genetics, inorganic and organic chemistry, and anthropology. I now realize that I could have saved a considerable sum by buying your book for \$2.50. At the same time, you have separated the 'wheat from the chaff.'"

A college physiology instructor expressed her appreciation by stating: "It is exactly the type of reference material I have often wished I had. All the research I have often wished I had time for or an inclination to do has been done for me!" Similarly, another person wrote: "I really appreciate all the detailed research this book must have required. Why, it must have taken months to fully research each topic!"

Building Appreciation for the Creator

When a man wrote to express his "great admiration" for the book, he added: "The book not only convinces but also *inspires!*" And that is its purpose—to inspire confidence in a loving Creator who has a marvelous purpose for mankind.

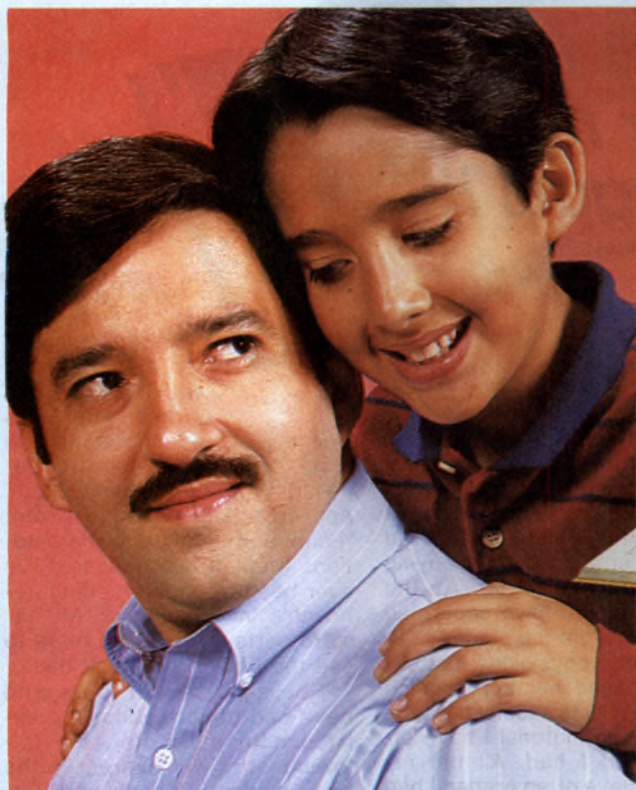
Thus, a family man wrote that it "enhanced our appreciation for our marvelous Father and makes clear, as no other man-made publication ever has, the intelligence of our De-

signer." Similarly, a woman said that of all the books she has

read, "this one has done the most for my friendship with Jehovah. What an *awesome* God!" And a Canadian woman wrote: "I cannot do justice to the emotions I feel. It is the closest I've ever been to understanding Jehovah's immense love. My inward parts move me to tears to see the power this book has."

For sincere persons who have had doubts about the existence of a Creator, the following letter well expresses the book's effect: "Thank you! For years I found it hard to believe in a Creator because I believed in evolution. But then I bought your book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* I feel like a blind man who has been granted sight for the first time. I've searched for a sound basis, and sound reasoning, to explain the origin of life on earth and have finally found it in your book. It has provided me with all the answers I've been searching for all these years. I can't thank you enough! Keep up the good work!"

This book has, indeed, proved to be an inspiration to many. No doubt it will continue to direct others to the Creator, Jehovah God, so that they can benefit now and eternally in his new system of things here on earth.—2 Peter 3:13.



"My Boy Has Not Given Me a Minute's Peace"



That is what one father reported when he came to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Peru recently. He explained:

"My little boy has been pestering me for weeks, wanting me to get him the book *My Book of Bible Stories*. Ever since one of his schoolmates got it, my boy has not given me a minute's peace. I have been searching high and low to find where to get a copy. I did not have the slightest idea where to start. Inquiries at bookstores brought no results.

"I mentioned it to one of my office workers, and he said I should go to Jehovah's Witnesses to

get it. I said, 'Oh, no! Not those people. They are always coming to my door, and I keep turning them away.' But he convinced me that you are not so bad—in fact, he spoke very highly of you and said that the book I was looking for was really a good one. So here I am. I want that book."