November 15, 1986

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

The Handwriting on the Wall

—Do You See It?

A Look at Daniel's Prophecy

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The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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

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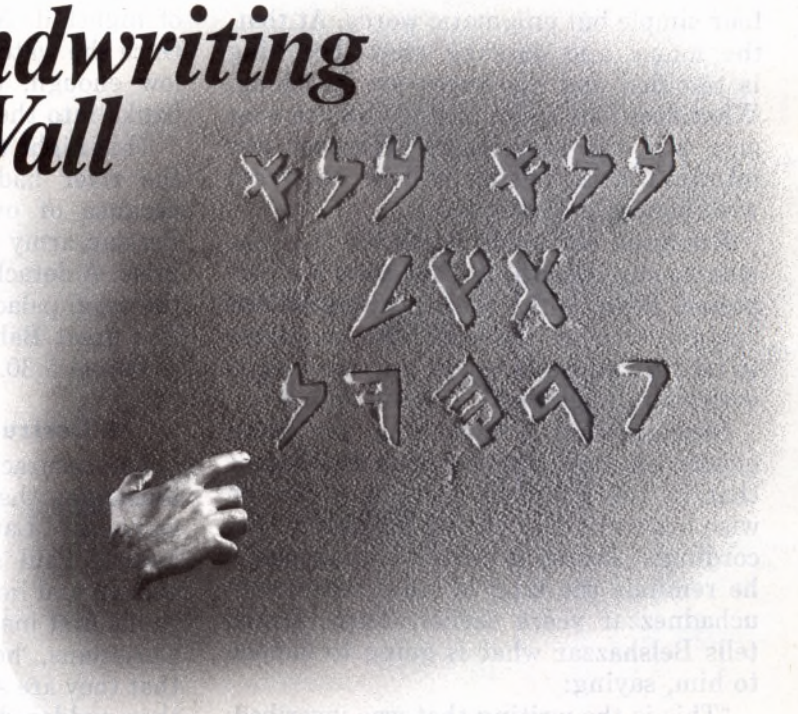
The Handwriting on the Wall

Do You See It?



**"From his own hand foresees his fall, . . .
'Tis like the writing on the wall."**

WITH these words, 18th-century Irish writer Jonathan Swift described a banker. Besieged by clients wanting their money back, he sensed that his end was near. For centuries, the expression 'the handwriting on the wall' has implied imminent danger.

But the original 'handwriting on the wall' appeared more than 2,500 years ago. And its speedy fulfillment changed the course of history. To examine further the origin of the expression 'the handwriting on the wall,' we must turn to the Bible book of Daniel. This will help us to see the value of warnings contained in the Scriptures, and it should move us to heed a critical warning in our day.

From the Pinnacle of Power

It is the night of October 5, 539 B.C.E. Babylon's residents are drinking and dancing. Though the Medo-Persian enemy is at its gates, the city seems secure. Its walls are impregnable, so let everyone enjoy himself. Why, the sounds of banqueting may well indicate to the besiegers that the city can resist for a long time!

In the great hall of his palace, and doubtless with much pride, King Belshazzar surveys the important people he has called together for the occasion. He has his servants bring in the gold and the silver vessels that his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, took from Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem decades earlier. 'From these vessels let us drink wine to the praise of our gods!' Belshazzar may well be exclaiming.—Daniel 5:1-4.

To Complete Ruin

Suddenly, Belshazzar's face pales with fright. There, in front of the lampstand near the wall, a hand appears and writes

four simple but enigmatic words. At that, the music and dancing stop. The king is terrified and his knees are knocking. What does this omen mean? Call the wise men and the astrologers! Whoever can interpret this writing will be showered with honors.—Daniel 5:5-7.

Everyone nervously waits for the wise men to say something. But they are perplexed. What is the deep meaning of that 'handwriting on the wall'? No one dares to venture an explanation, and the king is even more frightened.—Daniel 5:8, 9.

Hearing what is happening, the queen enters the hall. She reminds Belshazzar that in the kingdom there is a foreign wise man who has proved his ability. Accordingly, Daniel is called. Courageously, he reminds the king of what befell Nebuchadnezzar years earlier. Then, Daniel tells Belshazzar what is going to happen to him, saying:

"This is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL and PARSIN.

"This is the interpretation of the word: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has finished it.

"TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and have been found deficient.

"PERES, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians."—Daniel 5:10-28.

A Speedy Fulfillment

Will Belshazzar have to wait long to see if Daniel's words are accurate? Let us see what happens next and consider events that have more than historical significance.

The Medo-Persian hosts have been digging canals to divert the Euphrates River that flows through the city of Babylon. King Cyrus has waited for this evening to execute his plan, hoping that the Babylonians will relax their vigilance because of nightfall. Now the canals are opened. Once the waters of the diverted river are low enough, the soldiers file down the banks into the riverbed.

This night the city gates opening onto the river had been left open, possibly because of overconfidence. The Medo-Persian army penetrates the city by surprise. A detachment succeeds in entering the royal palace, and Belshazzar is killed. The great Babylonian empire has fallen. —Daniel 5:30.

A Destruction Equally Sudden

The accuracy of Daniel's interpretation illustrates the seriousness of the Bible's warnings. Later words written by the apostle Paul show that there are other sudden and important events yet to come. In his first inspired letter to Thessalonian Christians, he writes: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction [from God] is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape."—1 Thessalonians 5:3.

But just as Daniel and the Jews were saved when Babylon fell, so it is possible to survive this coming destruction at God's hand. How? By staying spiritually awake and thus enjoying Jehovah's protection. "But you, brothers," said Paul, "you are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as it would thieves." —1 Thessalonians 5:4.

Paul was referring to "Jehovah's day," a time of divine intervention in human affairs by means of God's Messianic Kingdom. (1 Thessalonians 5:2) When should we expect this 'handwriting on the wall' —the indications forewarning us of this intervention? An earlier prophecy, recorded in Daniel chapter 2, answers our question.

A Prophetic Giant —What Will Its Fall Mean?

WHAT did Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful Babylonian ruler, see in his sleep over 2,500 years ago? If he could remember after awakening, would he know that in a single image he had seen a summary of the world's future?

When he woke up, King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire called for his astrologers and wise men. He wanted them to remind him of his dream and explain it.

But who can explain something that he does not know? The wise men were baffled. However, Jehovah enabled the Jewish exile Daniel to recall and to interpret the dream and thus tell the king of future events. Let us follow Daniel's explanation of this dream, since it affects our own time.

A Mysterious Image

Daniel starts by describing a huge image with a head of gold, breasts and arms of silver, belly and thighs of copper, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. A stone strikes the feet of the image and then completely destroys it. Next, the stone grows until it becomes a mountain filling the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35) This was the king's forgotten dream! What did it all mean?

Daniel tells the king that the parts of the image represent world powers that will follow one another. Many religious scholars agree with the point made in a Bible encyclopedia that says: "The central truth of (Daniel chapter 2) is that some day the kingdom of God will supersede all human empires." When will that day come? Daniel's prophecy gives important information that has a bearing on that question.

The Head and the Body

"You, O king, the king of kings, you to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the might, and the strength and the dignity, . . . you yourself are the head of gold." Thus, the head represented King Nebuchadnezzar and the dynasty of kings that began with him.—Daniel 2:37, 38.

"After you there will rise another kingdom inferior to you; and another kingdom, a third one, of copper, that will rule over the whole earth." (Daniel 2:39) Following Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire took its turn as the dominant world power of Bible record. It was followed by the Grecian Empire, which, under Alexander the Great, extended its domination over a territory much greater than that of any previous world empire.

"The Fourth Kingdom" —Key to the Mystery

The first three kingdoms appeared and then disappeared from the scene as great world powers just as Daniel prophesied under divine inspiration. But for us, it is more important to identify "the fourth kingdom." Why? Because it is during the time of this kingdom that the dream image must fall, and we need to know what its collapse involves. Listen as Daniel gives more information.

"As for the fourth kingdom, it will prove

to be strong like iron. Forasmuch as iron is crushing and grinding everything else, so, like iron that shatters, it will crush and shatter even all these." (Daniel 2:40) Does this fourth kingdom represent only the Roman Empire, which followed Greece as the dominant world power? No, for various reasons.

The book of Daniel itself gives us the time frame for this image, for it was said: "[God] has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what is to occur *in the final part of the days.*" (Daniel 2:28) These words indicate that the final fulfillment of the vision would be in the distant future, after the time of the Grecian and the Roman empires.

The apostle John, another Bible writer, also mentioned "kings," or world powers. Concerning them he wrote: "There are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived." Before the intervention of God's Kingdom, one more world power was due to come (following the Roman Empire, which 'was' in John's day). That world power would also be included in "the fourth kingdom" of Daniel's prophecy. (Revelation 17:10-14; Daniel 2:40) From history, what do we learn about this?

Established by military conquests, the Roman World Power did not end with the removal of its last emperor in Rome by German leader Odoacer, in 476 C.E. For many centuries, Rome continued to exercise political, and especially religious, domination over Europe because of the feudal system that made everyone subject first to his lord, then to the king, and finally to the pope. Actually, the pope judged important matters as the court of last resort and could bend kings to his will by excommunication and by interdict.* As *The Columbia History of the World* states: "The church was Europe's greatest government."

In 1534 King Henry VIII of England made himself head of the Church of England, independent of Rome. Thus he broke this embrace. But he also began to forge the principal military tool of the British power, as Eric Delderfield states in his book *Kings and Queens of England:* "Henry carried on his father's work of creating an effective Navy. . . . At his death, Henry had added some eighty ships to Naval strength and so began the challenge to the maritime supremacy of Spain."

Over the centuries the British power was transformed into a vast empire that Daniel Webster, a famous 19th-century American politician, described as "a power to which, for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome in the height of her glory is not to be compared,—a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts." Soon the British Empire was closely linked in political and military affairs with its former colonies of North America. Thus the seventh king of Revelation 17:10 appeared, the Anglo-American Dual World Power.

According to what was said about the dream image, "the offspring of mankind," or the common people, would play a greater role in government at the time of this last "king." (Daniel 2:42, 43) Modern history confirms that this has indeed happened, with democracies or 'people's governments' replacing many kings, queens, or other autocratic powers. Among the governments of today, represented by the ten toes of the image, some are ironlike, that is, authoritarian or tyrannical. But others, being socialistic or democratic rulerships, are more pliable, like clay.

* When an interdict was enforced, there were to be no Masses, no marriages, and even no ecclesiastical burials in the territory so affected.

The Fall

As indicated in Daniel's prophecy, when the governments represented by the feet were in power —and that means in our time—the end of the great image would be approaching. It will fall, not because of the weakness of the feet made of iron mixed with clay, but because of being struck and crushed by a symbolic stone. What does that "stone" represent? The Messianic Kingdom that was to "crush and put an end to all these kingdoms" and become 'a large mountain that fills the whole earth.'—Daniel 2:34, 35, 44.*

"The dream is reliable, and the interpretation of it is trustworthy," said Daniel. (Daniel 2:45) The initial fulfillments of these two prophecies—one about the destruction of Babylon and the other pertaining to the succession of world powers—assure us that what remains to be fulfilled will happen on time. This will include the destruction of the prophetic dream image by the interference of God's Kingdom.

Other Bible books contain vital prophecies about God's purposes. *The Watchtower,* issue by issue, discusses many of these and explains their meaning for our time. So if you are not already a regular reader of this journal, why not become one? You can thus learn more about Jehovah God, the "Revealer of secrets," and the countless blessings that his Kingdom will soon bring to the earth.—Daniel 2:28.

* The three preceding issues of *The Watchtower* have examined other evidence that we are living in "the final part of the days" when the dream image is to be destroyed.

The Way to Life

THE way to life is that of abiding by Jesus' teachings. But this is not easy to do. The Pharisees, for example, tend to judge others harshly, and likely many imitate them. So as Jesus continues his Sermon on the Mount, he gives this admonition: "Stop judging that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged."

It is dangerous to follow the lead of the overly critical Pharisees. According to Luke's account, Jesus illustrates this danger by saying: "A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Both will tumble into a pit, will they not?"

Being too critical of others, magnifying their faults and picking on them, is a serious offense. So Jesus asks: "How can you say to your brother, 'Allow me to extract the straw from your eye'; when, look! a rafter is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First extract the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to extract the straw from your brother's eye."

This does not mean that Jesus' disciples are to use no discernment in connection with other people, for he says: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, neither throw your pearls before swine." The truths from God's Word are holy. They are like figurative pearls. But if some individuals, who are like dogs or swine, show no appreciation for these precious truths, Jesus' disciples should leave those people and seek out ears that are more receptive.

Although Jesus has discussed prayer earlier in his sermon, he now stresses the need to persist in it. "Keep on asking," he urges, "and it will be given you."

To illustrate God's readiness to answer prayers, Jesus asks: "Who is the man among you whom his son asks for bread—he will not hand him a stone, will he? . . . Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?"

Next Jesus provides what has become a famous rule of conduct, commonly called the Golden Rule. He says: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." Living by this rule involves

positive action in doing good to others, treating them as you want to be treated.

That the way to life is not easy is revealed by Jesus' instruction: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."

The danger of being misled is great, so Jesus warns: "Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves." Even as good trees and bad trees can be recognized by their fruits, Jesus notes, false prophets can be recognized by their conduct and teachings.

Going on, Jesus explains that it is not simply what a person *says* that makes *him* His disciple but what he *does*. Some people claim that Jesus is their Lord, but if they are not doing the will of his Father, he says: "I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."

Finally, Jesus gives the memorable conclusion to his sermon. He says: "Everyone that hears these sayings of mine and does them will be likened to a discreet man, who built his house upon the rock-mass. And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and lashed against that house, but it did not cave in, for it had been founded upon the rock-mass."

On the other hand, Jesus declares: "Everyone hearing these sayings of mine and not doing them will be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and struck against that house and it caved in, and its collapse was great."

When Jesus finishes his sermon, the crowds are astounded at his way of teaching, for he teaches them as a person having authority and not as their religious leaders. **Matthew 7:1-29; Luke 6:27-49.**

- What does Jesus say about judging others; yet how does he show that his disciples need to use discernment regarding people?
- What does Jesus further say regarding prayer, and what rule of conduct does he provide?
- How does Jesus show that the way to life would not be easy and that there is a danger of being misled?
- How does Jesus conclude his sermon, and what effect does it have?

Be Honest in All Things

"We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—HEBREWS 13:18.

OLDER persons can remember a time when, in many places, people did not lock their doors. They did not think of stealing from others or of cheating them. If they borrowed money, they felt honorbound to repay it. And their word was 'as good as gold.' True, there was dishonesty, but it was not all-pervasive. Today, however, stealing, lying, and cheating are commonplace throughout the world. And many dishonest acts originate with so-called respectable people who live and work in nice neighborhoods, dress well, may have a religion, and consider themselves good citizens. Indeed, dishonesty has become notorious among officials of government and business.

[2] In the United States over 11 million major crimes involving dishonesty are reported each year. And the failure to report all taxable income amounts to over $250 billion a year. In New York City about a hundred thousand people avoid paying fares in the subway system—every day. An official said that if all these cheaters were arrested, "we'd tie up the court system for months." In Japan a survey of taxpayers found that 95 percent cheated on tax returns, including 92 percent of the lawyers. In one month over 16,000 people were caught stealing free rides on the railways.

[3] Dishonesty has increased in married life too. Some years ago a survey revealed that 30 percent of American wives "engaged in sex outside of marriage." In a more recent survey of over a hundred thousand married women, 50 percent admitted "having had an affair outside her marriage, at least once." An observer com-

1, 2. (a) What has happened to honesty in our time? (b) What types of people are involved in dishonesty?

3. How has dishonesty become more prevalent in marriage?

mented that perhaps "90 percent of the married men" similarly cheat.

Part of "the Last Days"

[4] It is no surprise to Jehovah's servants that dishonesty has increased. They know that this is part of the sign of these "last days." God's Word foretold that in our time people would be 'lovers of themselves, lovers of money, disloyal, without self-control, without love of goodness, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power, and advancing from bad to worse.' (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) "Increasingly," a group of experts acknowledged, people in the world "are setting aside traditional values of right and wrong and bypassing conscience."

[5] The condition in the world today is *worse* than it was in the time just before Jehovah executed his judgment against the ancient ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. Of that time Hosea 4:1-3 relates: "Jehovah has a legal case with the inhabitants of the land, for there is no truth nor loving-kindness nor knowledge of God in the land. There are the pronouncing of curses and practicing of deception and murdering and stealing and committing of adultery that have broken forth, and acts of bloodshed have touched other acts of bloodshed. That is why the land will mourn and every inhabitant in it will have to fade away." Jehovah's adverse judgment was executed in 740 B.C.E. when he allowed Assyria to overrun Israel and its capital Samaria and to carry its inhabitants into exile.

[6] Similarly, Jehovah has a "legal case" with this dishonest world. The Scriptures make clear that it has been adversely judged by Jehovah and will "fade away" in destruction. "The heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:7) So certain is the fulfillment of this that God's Word speaks about it as though it had already happened: "Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way." —Jude 14, 15.

[7] However, until God brings this dishonest world to its end, his servants have to live in it. Christians are "in the world," though, as Jesus said, "they are no part of the world." (John 17:11-14) Thus, daily they are called on to make moral judgments involving honesty. This includes situations on the job, at school, in the family, or with friends. In all challenges to their Bible-trained conscience, Jehovah's servants want to feel as did the apostle Paul when he declared: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." —Hebrews 13:18.

Not Just 'the Best Policy'

[8] It has been said that 'honesty is the best policy,' meaning that honesty brings practical results. But for Christians, the matter goes beyond that. For them, honesty is the *only* policy. As servants of Jehovah, they are obligated not to imitate this condemned world's dishonesty—not for any reason. Instead, they must carry on all their activities in harmony with God's laws. And his laws have not changed in this regard.

4. Why is the increase of dishonesty no surprise to us?
5. What happened when a condition similar to that of our day existed in the ancient ten-tribe kingdom of Israel?
6. Why will God execute judgment upon this present system, and how certain is that judgment?
7. Until Jehovah brings this corrupt world to an end, what challenges face his servants?
8. Why is honesty the policy for Jehovah's servants?

[9] For instance, Jehovah said to ancient Israel: "You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely as a witness against your fellowman. You must not desire . . . anything that belongs to your fellowman." (Exodus 20:14-17) Similarly, Leviticus 19:11, 12 states: "You people must not steal, and you must not deceive, and you must not deal falsely anyone with his associate. And you must not swear in my name to a lie, so that you do profane the name of your God. I am Jehovah."

[10] Such laws have been restated for Christians. Thus, God's Word says: "What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom"; nor will anyone who is "carrying on a lie." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 22:15) All who want to live in God's new system must reflect his qualities, one of which is that "God . . . cannot lie." (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) Dishonesty originates with Satan, "the father of the lie."—John 8:44.

[11] Since "righteousness is to dwell" in God's promised "new earth," "righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn." (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 26:9) That is why the rapidly growing number of prospective citizens of the Paradise earth are now being 'instructed about Jehovah's ways,' including that of honesty. (Isaiah 2:3, 4) Thus, God's Word counsels us: "Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old personality with its practices." (Colossians 3:9) It also says: "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need."—Ephesians 4:28.

[12] So Jehovah's servants *must* be honest in all things. Since that is the way everyone will have to be in the new system, it is the way God's people must be now. And what a pleasure it is to associate with an international society of millions of people who are cultivating honesty! How secure we feel in this spiritual paradise that is the product of God's powerful holy spirit, "which God has given to those obeying him as ruler." (Acts 5:32) Contrast that with the unwholesome spirit that permeates this world under "the god of this system of things," Satan the Devil.—2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 5:19-24.

Honesty Noticed by Others

[13] The honesty of God's people is often noticed by others. For example, the Italian newspaper *Il Piccolo* published a letter from one of its readers that stated: "I wish to thank the lady who identified herself as a Jehovah's Witness and who gave proof of exemplary honesty by sending me back, through this newspaper, a considerable sum of money I had lost." In the United States, *The Indianapolis Star* wrote about a Witness couple who found $4,000 and returned it to the owner. The paper stated that the couple "had no doubts about what they had to do." Why not? They said: "We couldn't keep it. We're Jehovah's Witnesses."

[14] When a Witness in Missouri found $9,500 and turned it in to the police, a newspaper quoted an officer as stating: "It

9. How did Jehovah's Law to ancient Israel stress honesty?
10. How does Christianity stress honesty?
11, 12. (a) Why should we learn honesty now? (b) Why do we feel secure in God's visible organization?
13, 14. How have others commented on the honesty of Jehovah's people?

Right now, the prospective citizens of God's new system are being instructed in Jehovah's way of honesty

is extremely rare for someone to find that kind of money and turn it in. We've never had anyone that I can recall do that before. It really was amazing." The article mentioned that the Witness "never entertained the thought of keeping the money." The officer in charge said that the Witness "had restored his faith that there were still some honest people among mankind." The Witness responded: "We as a people pride ourselves in being honest in all respects."

[15] It is not just in big things that we must be honest. Honesty is necessary in small things too. (Luke 16:10) For example, when a Witness family stayed at a Florida hotel, their son inadvertently took a pillowcase, mistaking it for his undershirt. The family mailed it back to the hotel, and the hotel manager wrote: "We would like to thank you very much for your honesty. While sending back our pillowcase was probably your usual everyday deed in being yourself, to us it was something to be commended." Similarly, when a Witness couple accidentally took a writing pen from a Georgia hotel and then returned it, the manager wrote: "Let me thank you for taking the time to return the writing pen that you accidentally packed with your belongings. It is refreshing to receive notes such as the one you sent from such honest and caring people!"

[16] A Witness boy in the fifth grade was playing baseball at school. He was involved in a play that was close, but he knew he was "out." His teammates tried to say he was "safe." But then a member of the opposing team said that there was one sure way to determine the truth. He said: "Ask him if he is out or not. He's a Witness, and Witnesses don't lie." The boy's good conduct in everyday matters had been noticed by the others. Truly, by living according to God's standards, even "out of the mouth of babes" praise can come to Jehovah.—Matthew 21:16.

[17] In Nigeria, the husband of a Witness was very opposed to her going to a circuit assembly. So he followed her there and tried to cause a disturbance. After the session, the man said: "Now I am going to test you Witnesses." When no one was looking, he took money from his pocket, marked it, crumpled it up, and dropped it on the ground. Later, he mentioned that he had lost his money. However, he was

15, 16. What experiences show that honesty even in small things is noticed by others?

17, 18. What good effect can Jehovah's principles regarding honesty have on people of good heart?

told not to worry because it would be recovered. He went back to where he had dropped the money, but it was gone. "Aha," he said, "I have caught you people cheating!" Then he was told that the money would not be there but would have been taken to the Lost and Found Department. The marked money was indeed at that department and was returned to him. This experience encouraged him to look into what his wife believed, and today he is one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

18 In a letter written to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York, a woman who is not a Witness said that she wanted to share an incident that happened to her daughter in school. Her daughter had an expensive horse's bridle stolen from her one day. Two years later, the daughter received a letter that said: "Dear Lili, Here is your bridle that was stolen from you a couple of years ago. It was me who took it, but now I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and my new conscience will not let me keep it any longer. I am truly sorry. Please forgive me." Yes, those who wish to serve Jehovah must cultivate "an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—Hebrews 13:18.

Keeping the Organization Clean

19 If a servant of God inadvertently commits a dishonest act, then he must be quick to make amends as soon as he realizes it or it is called to his attention. And if a few individuals among us lose their appreciation for Bible principles and persist in dishonest practices, they will not be allowed to contaminate God's people. They will be disfellowshipped. (1 Corinthians 5: 11-13) In this we can count on heavenly assistance, for Jesus foretold: "The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness . . . At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matthew 13:41-43.

20 Thus, Jehovah's organization is kept clean. As a result, it 'shines brightly' as a beacon to honesthearted people. That is why we confidently say to the meek ones of the earth: "Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah [the elevated place or position of true worship] . . . and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Micah 4:2.

21 Since Jehovah's servants must practice honesty in all things, this would, of course, include their business dealings with other Witnesses. Here, too, challenges to honesty can arise. What are some of them? How can we deal with them? The following article will discuss this aspect of honesty.

19. (a) If a Christian does commit a dishonest act, what must he do? (b) If a few among us persist in dishonest acts, what will happen to them, and why?

20, 21. (a) Why can we confidently invite meek ones to worship Jehovah with us? (b) What aspect of honesty will be discussed in the next article?

Questions for Review

- □ What has happened to honesty in our time? Why?
- □ How does God's Word speak of the need for honesty?
- □ Why must we cultivate honesty even before the new system?
- □ What experiences show the value of honesty?
- □ What assurance is there that honesty will be maintained among us?

Maintaining Christian Unity in Business Relationships

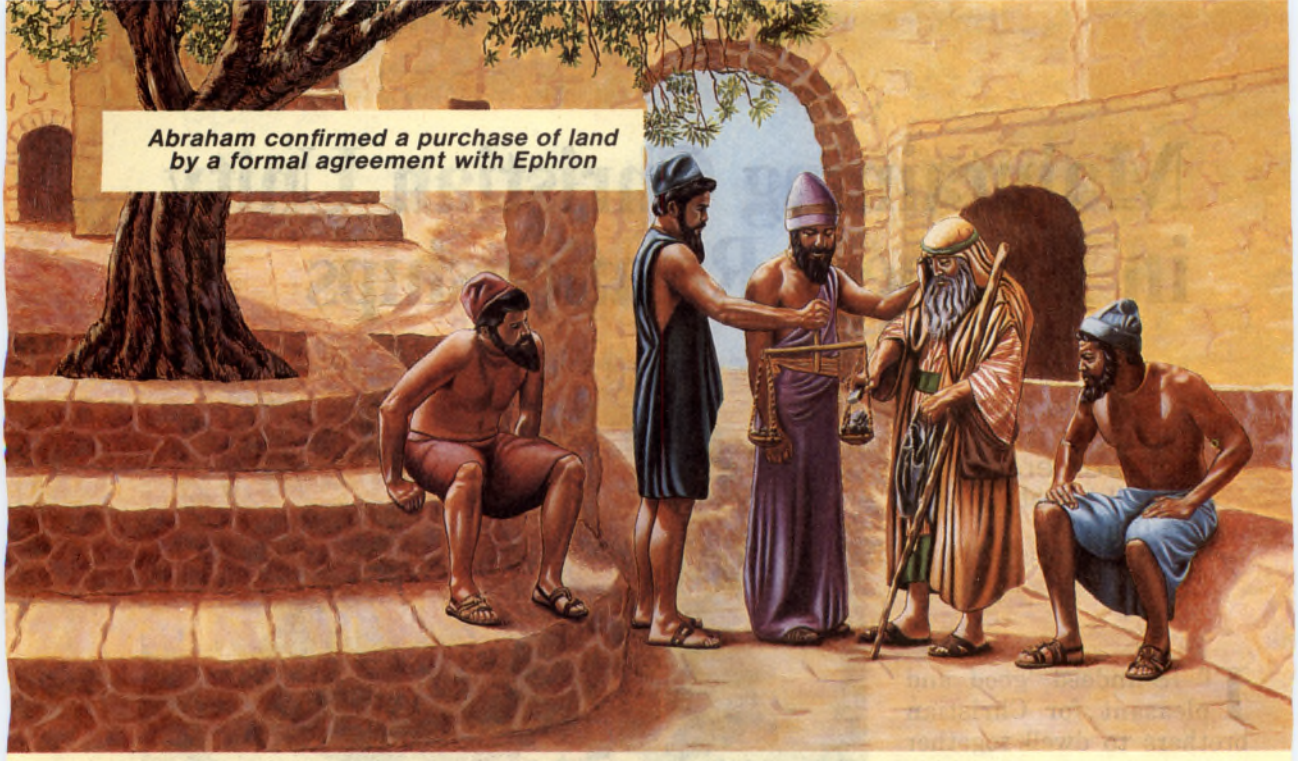
"Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"
—PSALM 133:1.

IT IS indeed 'good and pleasant for Christian brothers to dwell together in unity,' especially today when there is so much disunity in the world. Where genuine unity abounds, it becomes a thing of beauty, resulting in a close bond of brotherly love among people, making it a joy to be in one another's company. Disunity, on the other hand, is ugly and results in resentment, hatred, and estrangement among associates.

[2] When Christians engage in business dealings with other servants of Jehovah, their common view of Bible principles should enhance their brotherly unity. An overseer in a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses put it this way: "As the world becomes less trustworthy, it is refreshing to work with fellow Christians of principle. We don't have to be 'on our guard' every minute. Clean, honest business associates are becoming rare in this system. How pleasant it is to work with honest people who don't smoke or use foul language, people with self-control, whose principal motive is not material greed!"

[3] What are some of the business relationships that may involve fellow believers? One is where two or more Christians decide to enter a business venture as partners. Another is where one is an employer and the other an employee. Still another situation is where a Christian offers a product or service to another believer. In any such business dealings, the principles of honesty and integrity recorded in Jehovah's inspired Word must guide their actions. In this way brotherly unity and the joy of working together are enhanced.—1 Corinthians 10:31.

1. Why is Christian unity so desirable?
2. How should our common view of Bible principles enhance our brotherly unity even in business matters?
3. (a) What are some business relationships that involve fellow believers? (b) What principles must guide business dealings?



Abraham confirmed a purchase of land by a formal agreement with Ephron

[4] However, the danger exists that some may fail to keep the elevated Christian view. They may start thinking too much about their own interests. (Philippians 2:4) Money may become more important than Christian unity. But selfishness in business can ruin brotherly relationships and one's relationship with Jehovah. Never would we want that to happen!—John 13:34, 35; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 3:2, 3; 1 John 3:16; 4:20, 21.

The Importance of a Formal Agreement

[5] To help prevent misunderstandings in business dealings, consider the way Abraham bought a piece of land. He "weighed out to Ephron the amount of silver that he had spoken in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred silver shekels current with the merchants. Thus the field of Ephron that was in Machpelah . . . became *confirmed to Abraham* as his purchased property before the eyes of the sons of Heth among all those entering the gate of his city." This was no private gentleman's agreement. It was a formal agreement, confirmed in front of witnesses. There was no misunderstanding about what had been purchased and the exact price.—Genesis 23:2-4, 14-18.

[6] Similarly, it is wise for Christians to formalize important transactions. If the transaction involves the sale of an item, the parties may write down what is sold, the price, the method of payment, when and how delivery is to be made, and other conditions agreed upon. If it involves a service that is to be performed, the parties may write down the work to be done, when it is to be completed, the price, and other factors. This document should be dated and signed, and a copy should be kept by both parties. Such a written agreement is espe-

4. What danger exists for Christians in business?

5. How does Abraham's experience in buying land demonstrate the value of a formal agreement?

6. How can Christians formalize important business transactions?

cially vital in a business partnership. It helps both sides to understand their relationship clearly and assists them to live in harmony with Jesus' counsel: "Let your word *Yes* mean Yes, Your *No,* No." (Matthew 5:37) In more complicated matters, it may be advisable to seek professional help in drawing up a written agreement.

[7] In formulating written agreements, the parties should give thought not only to objectives but also to possible consequences, such as how to terminate the arrangement in the event that this becomes necessary. (Proverbs 21:5) All business ventures hold an element of risk, and no document can incorporate every circumstance that may arise. If circumstances do change, the agreement may have to be amended or renegotiated. In time it may even become apparent to a person that he has undertaken a business commitment unwisely and he may have to extricate himself in an honorable way. However, this should not be merely a device to escape responsibility for debts incurred by personal extravagance or mismanagement. The matter needs to be discussed to see if the agreement can be dissolved and what financial settlement, if any, needs to be made. Surely, though, a conscientious person will do all he reasonably can to honor contractual obligations, even if he must change his life-style for a time. (2 Thessalonians 3:12) If a Christian wants to walk faultlessly and practice righteousness, he will try to fulfill his obligations in an agreement even though such is not in his best interests, but he will do this in order to keep Jehovah's approval. "He has sworn to what is bad for himself, and yet he does not alter." (Psalm 15:1-4) In all such proceedings, Jehovah's servants need to let their "affairs take place with love."—1 Corinthians 16:14.

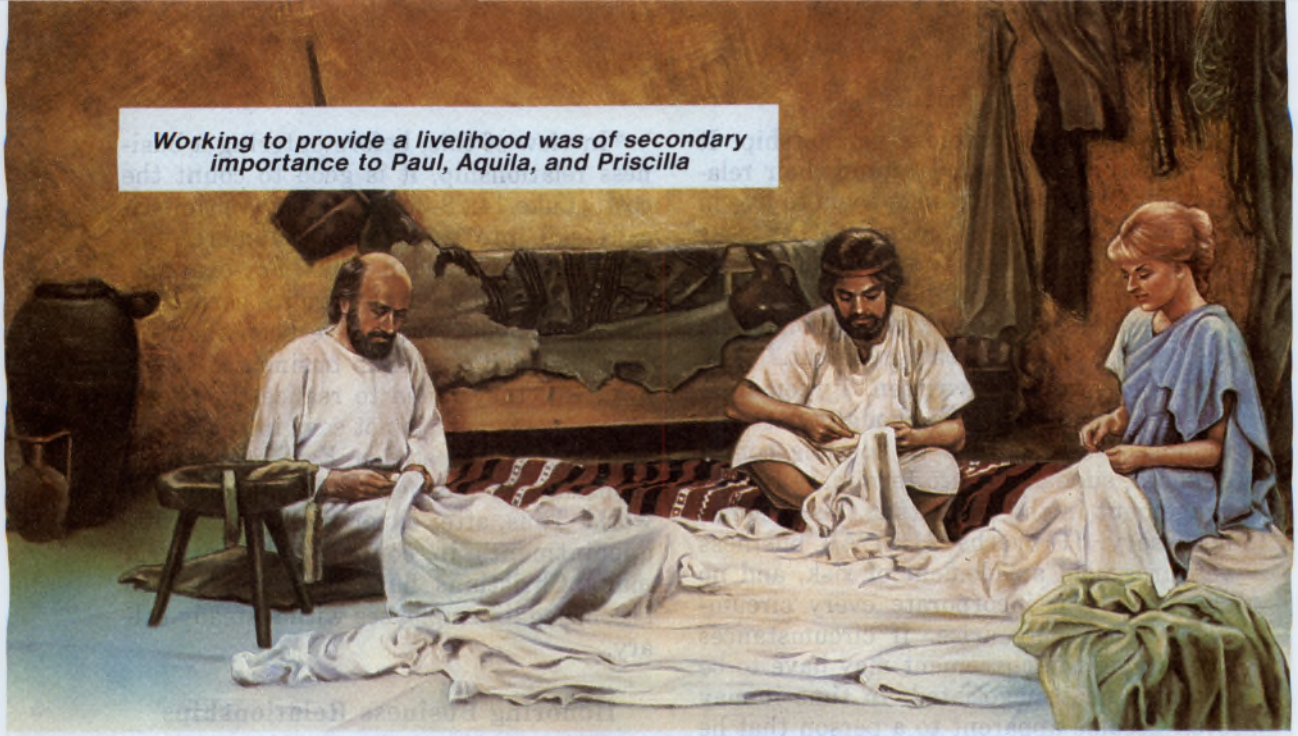
7. (a) What else must be considered regarding written agreements? (b) In what spirit should Christians proceed with business matters?

[8] In view of this, before entering a business relationship, it is good to count the cost. (Luke 14:28-30) Some may optimistically sail into the seas of commerce but founder on its hidden rocks. For example, some have felt that the profits earned by their employers could have been theirs if they had had a similar business of their own. But they failed to realize that business management is not easy in this world of cutthroat competition. Each year tens of thousands of businesses fail all over the world. Thus, after experiencing bitter disappointments in commercial ventures, many Christians have been relieved to become again employees with a steady salary.

Honoring Business Relationships

[9] "In showing honor to one another take the lead," says Romans 12:10. Christian employees who do this will not try to take advantage of their employer because he is a fellow Witness, adopting the worldly attitude that since the employer can afford it, he should tolerate the shortcomings of his employees. Instead, they will show honor to their employer by their attitude and diligent work. (1 Timothy 6:2) In turn, Christian employers will show honor to fellow Witness employees by the way they talk to them and deal with them. An employer should never feel that he is above a fellow believer who works for him but should remember that both are slaves of Jehovah, equal in His sight. (Ephesians 6:9) Too, both employer and employee should always keep in mind this counsel at Galatians 6:10: "Let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith."

8. Why is it good to count the cost before entering a business relationship?
9. What are some ways in which Christians can show honor to one another at work?



Working to provide a livelihood was of secondary importance to Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla

[10] Honor is not hard to show where humility abounds. As an example, a humble elder in a Christian congregation will not find it difficult to subject himself in business to the direction of a fellow Christian who does not have the same privileges in the congregation. In turn, the humble employer will not find it difficult to subject himself to his employee, the elder, in congregation activities. Humility will also keep both of them from becoming overly critical or expecting perfection of the other, since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23; 12:3.

[11] The Bible also commands: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." (Philippians 4:5) It would not be reasonable for a Christian to expect special favors or superior work or always the lowest price just because he is dealing with a fellow believer. Nor should a Christian, as a right, expect time off or other privileges, such as the use of machines or vehicles, because his employer is a fellow believer. Favors, superior work, low prices, or time off may come but should not be demanded. Unreasonable expectations can cause resentment between Christians, damaging their relationship.—Proverbs 18:19.

[12] While Christians want to make known the good news of God's Kingdom to nonbelievers, at the workplace they should exercise care that such Kingdom witnessing is done at the proper time. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7) If it is done during working hours, it should be with the employer's approval. Otherwise the employer may resent it, and this could bring reproach on Jehovah and His people. (1 Timothy 6:1) There are other times, such as during lunch or breaks in the workday, when such witnessing can be done. Too, where there are several Witnesses on the job, they would not want to spend time talking to one another about theocratic matters when they should be working.

10. How does humility help in showing honor to one another?

11. How can Christians show reasonableness in business matters?

12. Regarding Kingdom witnessing, what care needs to be exercised at the workplace?

Guarding Business Motives

13 While in Corinth, the apostle Paul entered into a business relationship with his Christian hosts, Aquila and Priscilla. (Acts 18:1-3) They worked to provide for life's necessities, but that was secondary to their main objective—furthering the worship of Jehovah. They certainly could not be accused of "thinking that godly devotion is a means of [material] gain." (1 Timothy 6:5) All three were richly blessed by Jehovah and are favorably mentioned in the Bible. —Romans 16:3-5.

14 By carefully examining motives *before* entering a business venture, a Christian can avoid many difficulties. For instance, one Christian may want more time to further Kingdom interests, whereas a partner may want to improve his life-style. One may wish to reinvest profits to develop the business, but the other is ready to pay heavier taxes and not reinvest the profits so as to avoid increased involvement. In one country, three of Jehovah's Witnesses who were also related in a fleshly way became partners in a business. But in time their views differed as to the extent to which each wanted to involve himself in the business. Their solution was a mutual decision to separate their business interests and to distribute their clients among them. In this way they preserved both their spiritual and their family relationships. They had heeded the Bible's counsel to "pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another."—Romans 14:19.

15 Special care should be exercised in guarding one's motive relative to money. "A man of faithful acts," the Bible assures us, "will get many blessings, but he that is hastening to gain riches will not remain innocent." (Proverbs 28:20) By "hastening to gain riches," a Christian can become blind to something far more precious—his Christian brotherhood. This can cause disunity in the congregation, as others may resent his putting money ahead of Kingdom interests. Thus the Bible warns: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

16 One way that "the love of money" can lead a Christian astray is by tempting him to adopt business practices that are unethical or outright dishonest. When fellow Christians are involved with such a person, disunity can result. And such practices jeopardize one's relationship with Jehovah. For business relationships to run smoothly, it is important to keep in mind that cheating in business "is something detestable to Jehovah." (Proverbs 11:1; 20:23) Rather, Christians want to be able to say, as did the apostle Paul: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." —Hebrews 13:18.

Solving Business Problems

17 In any business relationship between brothers, problems can arise. Some of the minor problems can be solved simply by applying the principle at 1 Peter 4:8, which says: "Above all things, have intense love

13. How did Paul and his hosts at Corinth view their secular work?
14. (a) Why is it good to examine motives before entering a business venture? (b) How did three Witnesses solve their problem?
15. Why must we especially guard our motives regarding money?
16. How must all business matters be conducted?
17. How can some minor business problems be solved?

for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." If problems cannot be solved in that way, they should not be allowed to fester and worsen. This could result in a loss of mutual respect and in alienation. The solution often lies in kind, frank communication before the situation grows worse. God's Word counsels us to settle disputes quickly.—Matthew 5:23-25; Ephesians 4:26, 27.

[18] However, when a Christian believes that he has been seriously wronged by a fellow believer in business, the steps outlined at Matthew 18:15-17 should be carefully followed. The first step or two should resolve the matter. If they do not, the third step would be for the appointed elders to look into the matter. If this should happen, the elders would strongly discourage the brothers involved from instituting lawsuits against each other. A lawsuit against a fellow believer would mean, as Paul said, "altogether a defeat for you." He added: "Why do you not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?" (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) It is better to suffer financial loss than to bring reproach on Jehovah's name as well as the congregation and disrupt our unity by taking a believer to court. Of course, even though court action is not taken, some form of congregation action may be necessary if dishonesty is involved.

[19] When counseling those who are having business difficulties, the elders could point them to the unselfish example set by Abraham when his relationship with Lot was in jeopardy. Abraham, though older, kindly gave Lot the first choice of land rather than risk a breach in relationships. (Genesis 13: 5-11) Elders could also point to the good example of Zacchaeus. He was willing to give half his belongings to the poor and with the other half to restore fourfold what he had extorted from people by false accusation.—Luke 19:1-10; see also 1 Corinthians 10:24.

18. What can a Christian do if he believes he has been seriously wronged in business by a fellow Christian?

19. What excellent Bible examples can elders point to when counseling on business problems?

[20] How fine it is when Christians effectively settle business problems by carefully following Bible counsel! In this way they remain united even when business ventures fail. That will be the happy outcome when we keep foremost in mind at all times that, for Christians, secular activity is secondary to Kingdom interests and brotherly unity. It is also fine when business interests can be arranged in order to allow more time for the more important things related to Kingdom activity.—Matthew 6:33; compare Philippians 1:9, 10.

[21] Thus, what is really vital in our lives is our relationship with Jehovah and our Christian brotherhood. (Matthew 22: 36-39) Never would we want this to be marred by worldly influences or business matters, for absolutely nothing can be compared to our relationship with Jehovah or can match the beauty of our united brotherhood!

20, 21. What must be kept foremost in mind about secular activity?

Questions for Review

- ☐ How does obeying God's Word enhance business relationships?
- ☐ Why is it wise to formalize important transactions?
- ☐ How can Christians show honor to one another at work?
- ☐ Why should we examine our motives in business?
- ☐ What attitude should be shown in resolving business problems?

Insight on the News

TV Evangelism —God's Way?

If Jesus Christ were on earth today, asserted TV evangelist Jim Bakker, "he'd have to be on TV." Why television? Because, according to Bakker, "that would be the only way he could reach the people he loves." Like Bakker, an increasing number of fundamentalist preachers in the United States feel that television is the best medium for spreading the Word of God. Yet, a 1984 study showed that, for the most part, TV evangelists "reinforce people already committed to evangelical religion."

Interestingly, in a letter to the editor of the magazine *Ministry*, one reader wrote: "You said they [television sets] are the church's most powerful gospel seed-sowing tools, and yet God says the most essential work is house-to-house visitation —soul hunting. . . . Our Saviour loved to get away from the multitude, and then He went from house to house—soul hunting. The one-soul audience was His delight. . . . Can we not do the same?"

According to Jesus Christ, the purpose of the Christian ministry was not just to 'spread the Word' but to "make disciples." (Matthew 28:19, 20) He directed his followers to go to people's homes. (Matthew 10: 7, 11-13) The apostle Paul accepted this preaching method and said regarding his ministry: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house." The personalized house-to-house ministry of the disciples reaped good results. —Acts 5:42; 20:20.

If Jesus laid such emphasis on this method of preaching in order to make disciples, why do many evangelists prefer TV as their medium? *The Courier-Mail* of Brisbane, Australia, notes that TV evangelists "make up to $120 million a year selling salvation. They appear in a blaze of electrified power and glory on 300 TV stations, and are worshipped like pop idols. . . . For all their tactics, these men who claim to manipulate even God, come down in the end to a straight business deal. Send them $10 and they will send you to heaven."

Faithless Leadership

Jesus Christ said: "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) Yet, "many of the Catholic theologians who staff universities and seminaries cannot bring themselves to say they believe, or at least believe literally, in the resurrection," reports the news magazine *Insight*.

How can Roman Catholics who sincerely desire to follow Bible teachings have their faith strengthened by such teachers? They cannot, for the apostle Paul wrote: "If, indeed, there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised up. But if Christ has not been raised up, our preaching is certainly in vain, and our faith is in vain."—1 Corinthians 15: 13, 14.

Where There Is No Peace

On October 24, 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared 1986 to be the International Year of Peace. The resolution stated that the year would be "devoted to concentrate the efforts of the United Nations and its Member States on the promotion and achievement of the ideals of peace by all possible means." How did they hope to accomplish this? By the "continuing and positive action by States and peoples aimed at the prevention of war."

Now that we are nearing the "Peace" year's end, what do we find? Such noble intentions have been dwarfed dramatically by the military conflicts that continue to rage worldwide. "Guerilla insurgencies, territorial disputes, ideological and racial differences and 'holy' wars add up to at least 19 major conflicts, and many smaller ones," noted *The West Australian*. The newspaper article pointed out that nearly one million soldiers are presently engaged in armed conflict worldwide. Clearly, for the millions who become victims of such warfare, there is no peace.

Can human leaders hope for a genuine solution through future proclamations calling for peace? No, for Jeremiah 10:23 states: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Compare Jeremiah 6:14.) Indeed, true peace will come only from God.

Disabled Persons *Who Are Able Preachers*

THE handsome young man in leg braces is a paraplegic. This woman with the happy eyes is a deaf-mute. The three smiling gentlemen are victims of muscular dystrophy. What do they have in common? Their disabilities? Perhaps. Their abilities? Definitely! They are all able preachers—full-time pioneer ministers.

These individuals say that they owe their success as pioneer ministers to three things: (1) positive direction from Jehovah God through his loving organization; (2) unwavering help from their families and members of the Christian congregation; and (3) a heartfelt desire to enlarge their privileges of service. Let us see why and how these disabled persons prove to be able preachers.

A Paraplegic With a Full Life

Even without the use of his legs, 35-year-old Masashi Tokitsu has been a regular pioneer for five years. He grew up with dreams of becoming a gymnastics teacher. But those dreams were shattered at age 15 by a fall from the horizontal bar. When he had that bitter experience, he felt that the lights in his life had been turned off. But they started to come back on as he studied the Bible. Only, this time they were the lights of truth. (Compare John 1:5.) Within ten months, Masashi was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Listen as he tells us why and how he became a pioneer.

"Almost from the beginning, I felt that the purpose of my Bible study was that of preaching to others. So I seized the opportunity to talk to anyone who came to the house. To me, the pioneers were the most enviable of persons. How I longed to be out preaching to people every day! Paraplegics are predisposed to decubitus, or bed sores, and on my hip, I had a very bad one that emitted pus, fluid, and blood. Just changing the dressings many times a day was so time consuming! Thinking that I couldn't be a pioneer in this system of things, I was moved to tears when I read in the Watch Tower publications the kind, warm words directed to those unable to pioneer.

"Because of sores on both hips, I ran a low fever. Strangely, this condition would clear up when I went to Christian meetings. Then at the discerning suggestion of a brother who is a physician, I underwent an operation on the sores. A second operation was a complete success, so that after five months of recuperation, I began to serve as an auxiliary pioneer. At the time, however, I thought that to take proper care of my responsibility as a congregation elder, regular pioneering might be too much for me. The congregation had just been formed, and I was the only elder.

"At the same time, I was interested in marrying a certain sister, but it was one-sided. Hurting deeply, I reasoned that this outcome must be Jehovah's will, and there was no room to give way to emotions when there was so much to care for in the congregation. I felt that the best medicine for me was to become even more involved in theocratic work. Two months later, I

enrolled as a regular pioneer. To pioneer as a paraplegic, personality adjustments are much more important than physical ones. You need so much help from others to accomplish what you want to do, so it is imperative to learn a pleasant way to get that cooperation. Since I can drive a car in the field service, where possible I stop near the entrance of the homes. I always work with another Kingdom publisher who sits in the passenger's seat. My helper carries my briefcase and remembers what I need from it, and in what order.

"Since we travel narrow roads, sometimes I just stand at the gate and call into the entryway in a loud voice to get the householder's attention. If there are stairs, my helper goes to the door to show the Bible to the householder while I do the talking from below. When there are easy-to-get-to houses in a row, or an occupied bottom floor in an apartment building, the friends kindly leave those for me. For magazine work, I lighten the load for my helper by just carrying a case containing magazines and brochures.

"As service overseer, I like to sit in on home Bible studies. So we have the studies in a Kingdom publisher's home that is easily accessible, or they come to mine. So you can see that I need help from the brothers. It is important not only that the friends understand how to help me but also that I know how to accept their help graciously.

"When I first began to pioneer, I did a lot of witnessing through letter writing. Since I can now wear leg braces all day long without any ill effects, almost all my preaching is done with the other pioneers and publishers. One immediate benefit of a full day in service is a full night of sound sleep. Using the Bible each day deepens my own conviction that I have the truth. Taking a direct part in the everyday drama of life and seeing how much people need the truth deepens my love for them. Always working with someone also gives opportunities for shepherding work and helps me to get to know the flock even better.

"Of course, I look forward to the new system of things and service to Jehovah with a healthy body. But it isn't necessary to wait until then. Serving him now, with or without limitations, is the finest opportunity for young and old alike."

She Searches for a Hearing Ear

"My years of growing up were filled with crying," says Katsuko Yamamoto. After a high fever combined with measles, Katsuko was left deaf at the age of two. She remembers the agonies of going to school and of enduring unkind treatment by other children. Happy to have been a pioneer since 1981, Katsuko tells us how she does it.

"Because I cannot communicate orally, for the field ministry I use notes and show them to the householder. I often ask a hearing sister to go along to make sure I am getting through. Sometimes I make the first return visit by myself and then ask a hearing sister to go with me on the second visit. I have been able to start Bible studies that way. It makes me very happy to show appreciation for Jehovah's kindness in this way."

Katsuko's "crying days" are now past. Today, this lovely Christian woman finds real joy in her busy life as a pioneer minister.

Three Brothers Who Share

The three Tanizono brothers are in their 40's and have the limb-girdle type of muscular dystrophy. Before learning the truth, they centered their lives around secular work, hoping to forget the gradual debilitation and premature death characteristic of this disease. Each of them began a separate study of the Bible and came to a knowledge of the truth. To show their appreciation to Jehovah, what could they do to enlarge their service? The younger brother, Toshimi, tells us:

"I lived with my oldest brother, Akimi, and his wife until 1979. No longer able to care for myself, I then joined my brother Yoshito in an institution. There I began to serve as an auxiliary pioneer and during the next five years studied the Bible with some 12 children in the ward. One of those children was forced to stop studying when he was opposed by his parents, but they relented when he begged them to let him study again. He died at age 16 with a sure hope of a resurrection. About a year later, I received a phone call from the formerly opposed parents. They were having some problems with their younger daughter and felt that a study would help her.

"My brother Yoshito and I wanted to be regular pioneers. But could we make the required yearly goal of 1,000 hours? True, it was a matter of increasing our time spent in the ministry by only 30 more hours each month. But would our bodies hold up? Then again, we thought, 'If we don't do it now, we will get to the point where we can't.' Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 9:16 repeatedly came up in our discussions. 'Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!' Certainly, we have the obligation to preach the good news whether we have good health or not. So we submitted our applications and began regular pioneering on September 1, 1984."

Yoshito adds: "When I tried 'temporary' pioneering in January 1976, I damaged my health and had to be confined to bed for two months. My worst fear was that regular pioneering would cause me to get sick and force me to miss meetings. Happily, by August 1985 I was able to reach my goal in hours for the year, and I hadn't missed one meeting because of my pioneering!"

Toshimi comments: "Our main means of accomplishing our ministry is through letter writing. We write to not-at-homes, friends, relatives, unbelieving family members of those in the congregation, and residents of a mountain territory covered in the house-to-house ministry only twice a year. We preach informally to doctors, nurses, student workers, and other patients. So far, six patients have learned the truth. Three of them became Kingdom

publishers and were awaiting baptism when they died. We enjoy physical benefits from keeping busy, mental satisfaction from knowing we are doing the preaching work, and heartfelt joy from encouraging others."

Yoshito adds: "As congregation elders, we can both speak from experience to those who are reaching out for pioneer service. When we submitted applications to become pioneers, two older sisters in the congregation were also moved to join the ranks. I am especially happy to say that in the spirit of Psalm 119:71, my former negative way of thinking has changed to Jehovah's way. Yes, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, in order that I might learn God's regulations.'"

Now, the older brother speaks up. Akimi says: "It is through the kindness of the brothers and my loving, supportive wife that I can do what I do in a theocratic way. I cannot walk even one step. For 14 years now, the brothers have tirelessly helped me to every meeting and assembly. From the time I began to study, pioneer experiences were the center of conversation when the young folks got together for association. As suggested in *Our Kingdom Ministry,* I decided to try pioneering for one year. With some misgivings about my physical condition, I made the promise to Jehovah in prayer, and I have renewed that promise every year for five years. In field service, I use a three-wheeled bike designed for disabled persons. With it I can get close to the doorway of many houses. I often sit in areas where there are a lot of pedestrians. If only a few go by, I pray right there for someone to witness to, and along comes a person with a hearing ear. Bible students come to my home to study, and I have been able to help eight persons to advance to baptism.

"As presiding overseer and Theocratic Ministry School overseer, I arrive at the meetings early so that I am on hand to greet the brothers. Because I can't call freely at their homes, effectively using time before and after meetings is vitally important. I also often use the telephone for shepherding work.

"In the last four or five years, my muscle power has significantly diminished. By nighttime, I literally can't move a muscle, and the tension has built up to such an extent that I feel as if a great pressure is on me in bed. My wife gently shifts my limbs so that I can get some relief. It is at times like these that the brothers' warm and loving words help me keep a smiling face that I hope reflects the condition of my heart and not my body."

The progress of this disease cannot now be stopped. But the Tanizono brothers do feel that keeping their bodies busy in the field service, being aware of the householder and his needs, working closely with fellow believers, and experiencing the sense of fullness from service to God as pioneers have helped to keep the progress of the disease to a minimum. How thankful they are to Jehovah!

Disabled but Determined

Physical disabilities have not dampened the love and zeal that these able preachers have for the full-time ministry. Their determination is similar to that of the apostle Paul, who wrote: "We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day." —2 Corinthians 4:16.

Of course, not all disabled Kingdom proclaimers can be full-time preachers. Circumstances vary from one person to another. But whatever such individuals can do to praise the Most High and to help others spiritually will bring great joy, personal satisfaction, and the blessing of our loving God, Jehovah.

Are You Looking for a Partner in Life?

"THERE is no more lovely, friendly and charming relationship, communion or company than a good marriage." So it has been said. Hence, it is no wonder that millions of single people would like to have a partner in life.

Some look to a computer as a matchmaker, others to the stars. But how much better it is to look to our Creator, the Originator of marriage! (Genesis 2:18-24) God's loving interest and wisdom provide a solid basis for trusting his counsel and principles that help us to know what to look for in a marriage partner. (Psalm 19:7) His Word commands us as follows:

'Marry Only in the Lord'

Why? This is because Jehovah God is concerned with our eternal welfare. The apostle Paul's counsel to 'marry only in the Lord' harmonizes with the practice of Jehovah's early servants who chose as marriage mates those who were likewise true worshipers. (1 Corinthians 7:39; Deuteronomy 7:3, 4) The benefits of doing so are numerous and should be kept in mind.

For example, a godly marriage mate can contribute to continued fidelity to our loving heavenly Father. (Compare Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.) Christian mates can encourage each other and together can successfully meet different trials. Unitedly, they can resist the pressures that can weaken marriage bonds. Since both look to Jehovah and apply his wonderful counsel, they can with greater ease smooth over the rough spots and work together harmoniously instead of being competitors. Their sincere efforts to serve Jehovah and mold their lives according to his ways will

contribute to a successful marriage that honors our Creator.

Some years ago, a woman named Gloria was having close association with a young man who was attending Christian meetings and was even commenting at the *Watchtower* Study. She received admonition not to continue associating closely with this unbaptized person, but she was "so in love" that she did not apply the counsel. Yet, she knew the counsel was good. So one day she prayed to Jehovah earnestly, begging for his help in the matter. Shortly thereafter, it was discovered that the young man was immoral, and Gloria therefore immediately cut off the friendship. She eventually married a fine young Christian man. Today, he is an appointed elder, and their two children are active in the truth. As she looks back, she says: "Thanks to Jehovah, I have avoided many problems. Because of his direction, I have received the best counsel, permitting me to live a happy life along with a loving husband."

Why Look Elsewhere?

Why, then, would a person dedicated to Jehovah look elsewhere for a marriage mate? Is the Christian not convinced that Jehovah knows and desires what is best for us? (Proverbs 3:1-7; Psalm 145:16) What about you? Do you believe that Jehovah is "the God of truth"? (Psalm 31:5) If so, then you surely realize that he always provides trustworthy advice that is proper and beneficial. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Indeed, our loving heavenly Father gives counsel with our everlasting welfare in mind, but we may shortsightedly limit our plans to the immediate future. When looking for a partner in life, though, should we not be planning for more than the immediate future?—Psalm 37:11, 29.

Do you really believe that the Kingdom is at hand and will soon take action to cleanse the earth? And do you see yourself in the foretold global Paradise? Or do you desire to enjoy the present system of things to the full? Are you looking for a partner who has the ability to provide you with a good life-style? Or are you seeking one who keeps true worship in first place? (Matthew 6:33) Really, what is foremost in your life? It is wise for us to examine our inmost thoughts and motives. Then, if necessary, we can make adjustments and thereby avoid a course of action that might displease Jehovah.—Compare Psalm 78:40, 41.

Our Treacherous Heart

Jeremiah 17:9 warns that "the heart is more treacherous than anything else." So we need to keep it in check. It is also good to remember that those who ignore the inspired Bible admonition and the reminders lovingly given by congregation elders and others often shed many tears and suffer heartaches.

'But how can you say that?' someone may ask. 'I know a brother who did not marry a fellow worshiper, and now they are both serving Jehovah.' True, in a few cases matters have worked out that way, and we are glad that both mates are now "walking in the truth." (3 John 4) Nevertheless, the brother who married an unbaptized person was disobedient. Will that independent spirit surface once again? Might he be tempted to think he knows better than God and thus disregard Bible counsel and trust in his own wisdom in yet another situation? We are encouraged to 'trust in Jehovah with *all* our heart.' (Proverbs 3:5) That implies submissive compliance with the divine will in all things. So we should want to develop an obedient heart, one meeting the test of obedience even in small things. (Luke 16:10) If we disobey God, what kind of pattern are we developing? The brother who

did not 'marry in the Lord' probably now recognizes his mistake in doing things his own way and has sought Jehovah's forgiveness. But is that how you want to initiate your marriage?

'But my boyfriend has begun to study the Bible and is attending Christian meetings,' someone else may say. Yes, but why is he studying? To win a marriage partner or to learn about Jehovah God and serve him? Throughout the courtship the man's motives may be in doubt. What will you discover after the wedding day? Of course, you may wait until your boyfriend is baptized and very soon thereafter set the wedding date. Strictly speaking, you are 'marrying in the Lord.' But are you acting in harmony with the spirit of that counsel?

Have you noticed when a brother is recommended for certain privileges of service? Is it enough to be baptized? No, rather, such a brother is "tested as to fitness first." (1 Timothy 3:10) Can we learn a lesson from that? Yes. Stop, look, and listen. Stop and think about the seriousness of marriage. Look at the individual, not through the beclouded eyes of infatuation, but objectively. And listen too. Does he (or she) speak from the heart with loving expressions of praise to God? Over a reasonable period of time, has he given evidence of Christian growth? After he has shown his faithfulness and spiritual qualifications, it is soon enough to begin considering him (or her) as a possible partner in life. To quote a witty poet:

"Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry."

What can happen if our heart causes us to cast aside good counsel and objective reasoning? The consequences can be disastrous. Remember, the Bible counsels us:

'You Reap What You Sow'

Consider what happened to Jacqueline. An elder counseled her about a friendship she was forming with a young man outside the Christian congregation. But because she felt the brothers were too strict, she turned a deaf ear to Bible-based recommendations. Reflecting upon her own attitude, she later admitted: "One sees what one wants to see and not what Jehovah sees and says." The young man began to study the Bible and eventually was baptized. Within three months they were married.

Problems developed very quickly. In fact, they began on the honeymoon! Undesirable traits that Jacqueline had not noticed or had conveniently overlooked then became evident. She had dreamed of a happy and united marriage, but, regrettably, the opposite proved true. Her husband was disfellowshipped and left her and their two babies. Now she must meet not only the economic pressures of this deteriorating system but also the challenge of raising two young ones, caring for their physical and emotional needs. What has Jacqueline learned from this bitter experience? "Obedience," she says. "Although the counsel seems harsh or it may not appear to be the best for you, you should consider it as coming from Jehovah

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and should fully obey it."—Galatians 6:7; Psalm 86:11.

Consider another example. Maritza met her future husband at work. He showed her things in the world that she had not known about—and they did not seem so bad to her. He was well educated, had good manners, and could speak intelligently on many subjects. Although she was given many Scriptural warnings, they just did not sink in. She was too much "in love."

Soon the Christian meetings became monotonous to Maritza, not having the glitter of exciting evenings with her entertaining companion. Before their marriage, he promised that he would not interfere with her Christian meetings, and so it was. However, little by little she found herself so occupied with other matters that her spiritual activities were relegated to second place, and she became inactive.

What about those entertaining conversations? They gradually ceased, and eventually her husband divorced her, leaving her with four children from four to nine years of age. The shock left Maritza numb, and only after three years did she feel sufficiently tranquil to analyze what had happened and what she would do with her life. She kept telling herself: "To live is to suffer." But that did not satisfy her because she could still recall the years when she was happy, when she enjoyed even a cool breeze against her face while out in the field ministry, sharing with others the good news of the Kingdom.

"Oh, how much pain and vexation I could have avoided if only I had listened!" Maritza exclaimed. By means of her children's schoolmates, she once again came into contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Her interest in the truth and her love for Jehovah were rekindled, and now she and her children are active in his service. Now Maritza wholeheartedly recommends: "Learn to submit to the guidance that Jehovah is giving and recognize that Jehovah uses the persons you would least think of to make known his will." As Jesus Christ said: "Pay attention to how you listen." (Luke 8:18) Yes, stop, look, and listen!

Look around during the next meeting at the Kingdom Hall. You will undoubtedly see many happy Christian married couples and will note their delight in sharing time and experiences together. On the other hand, you may see some who are there alone because they have unbelieving mates. Oh, how they wish their husbands or wives were with them! Often they have to rush home right after the meeting and must miss out on upbuilding conversations and association with fellow believers. Are you willing to take the risk of needlessly finding yourself in similar circumstances because of ignoring the admonition to 'marry only in the Lord'? Rather, how wise it is to follow Jehovah's instructions and thereby avoid sad consequences! —Psalm 119:9; Proverbs 28:26.

Wait on Jehovah

'But,' you may say, 'I just can't find anyone in the congregation. There are so few people my age.' That may be true. But are you convinced that Jehovah wants you to be happy? "He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6, 7) Do you recall the proverb that says: "A discreet wife is from Jehovah"? (Proverbs 19:14) Well, then, why not consider the subject of marriage in prayer?—Philippians 4:6, 7.

Do you remember Hannah and her desire to have a child? What did she do? She poured out her heart in supplication to

Jehovah, trusting him completely. Then she left matters in his hands. In due time, she received a wonderful answer to her prayer—the birth of a son.—1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 18-20; Psalm 62:8.

Although there may be few people your age in the local congregation, what about circuit assemblies and district conventions? We attend such gatherings for spiritual reasons. But those who volunteer their services at such times have the satisfaction of serving others and meeting brothers and sisters who serve Jehovah whole-souled. And on such occasions, there is some possibility that you will meet your future partner in life.

But even if you cannot now find a suitable Christian mate, prayerfully rely on Jehovah to help you pursue a chaste life as a single person. And while yet unmarried, cultivate qualities and abilities that will enable you to be a good husband and father or a good wife and mother. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Many have been helped to do just that by taking up the full-time ministry as pioneers. What better way to use your time and energies!

If you are looking for a partner in life, then, where will you start? May it be among active fellow worshipers of Jehovah, those who share your goals in life and who have a keen desire to serve him forever. (2 Timothy 2:22) And if Jehovah blesses you with a God-fearing partner in life, may your marriage be one that honors our loving God.

BALAAM—*History or Myth?*

ACCORDING to the Bible book of Numbers, Balaam the son of Beor was a prophet for hire. (Numbers, chapters 22–24) In fact, his name appears in eight different Bible books, including letters by the Christian writers Peter and Jude. Balaam lived in the 15th century B.C.E. in the upper Euphrates Valley. He hired himself out to Balak, king of Moab, who wanted him to pronounce curses on the nation of Israel. Now, was Balaam a historical figure or just a Jewish invention?

As reported in the *Biblical Archaeology Review* (September/October 1985), archaeologists working in the middle Jordan Valley have come up with some remarkable confirmation that Balaam really existed. They were excavating at Tell Deir Alla, just north of the river known in the Bible as the Jabbok, when they discovered some fragments of plaster with ancient Semitic writing on them. Over the last few years, these fragments have been carefully dated, compiled, and deciphered.

French researcher André Lemaire explains that the fragments were submitted to radiocarbon dating tests and states: "According to these tests, the inscriptions were to be dated c. 800 B.C., plus or minus 70 years." And what do they say? According to Lemaire's restoration, the text reads in part (the letters in brackets are supplied for missing fragments):

"1. Inscription of [Ba]laam [son of Beo]r, the man who was a seer of the gods. Lo, the gods came to him at night and [spoke to] him
2. According to these wor[d]s, and they said to [Balaa]m, son of Beor . . . and he wept
4. Intensely and his people came to him and s[aid] to Balaam, son of Beor: 'Why do you fast and why do you weep?'"

Evidently the text was available for reading by the public some 2,800 years ago, since it was part of a fairly lengthy wall inscription. Although there are gaps in the text, Balaam is clearly named. Even though the inscription was made some seven hundred years after the events, Balaam was obviously accepted as a historical figure and a prophet.

These wall inscriptions are several hundred years nearer to the events described in the Bible than the oldest manuscripts available at present. They are one more piece of evidence added to the proof that the Bible presents a reliable record of ancient history.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Questions From Readers

■ **Why did David knowingly endanger Ahimelech the high priest, leading to the priest's death, as David confessed in 1 Samuel 22:22?**

Actually, 1 Samuel 22:22 does not indicate that David knew beforehand that his course would lead to Ahimelech's death. The verse states: "At this David said to Abiathar [son of Ahimelech]: 'I well knew on that day, because Doeg the Edomite was there, that he [Doeg] would without fail tell Saul. I personally have wronged every soul of the house of your father [Ahimelech].'"

David, fleeing from enraged King Saul, went to Nob, where high priest Ahimelech was. Perhaps out of a concern that the high priest would feel obliged to report David's whereabouts to the king, David did not reveal the precise reason for his being out of Jerusalem. Yet his presence in Nob was noticed. The Edomite named Doeg saw David and afterward reported the matter to angry Saul.

There is nothing in the account, though, that proves that David knew beforehand of Doeg's presence. Doeg "was there on that day, detained before Jehovah." (1 Samuel 21:7) Likely, David was surprised, even shocked, that the unprincipled Doeg saw him with Ahimelech. Once it was done, however, it was done. David could not change that; nor could he prevent the awful consequences that Saul's rage brought on the high priest and scores of other priests, as well as women, children, and animals in Nob. —1 Samuel 22:9-19.

With this in mind, note again David's sad words to Abiathar, who had escaped the massacre: "I well knew on that day, because Doeg the Edomite was there . . . " We can understand David's point to be, 'I knew that day, just as soon as I saw that Doeg had observed me with Ahimelech . . . ' But it was too late. Doeg unexpectedly was there and noted David's contact with the high priest. So David immediately concluded that Doeg would report the matter to Saul. That is why David later admitted to Abiathar a feeling of some guilt, even if David had contributed only indirectly to the subsequent massacre. He urged Abiathar to remain with him, for David trusted in Jehovah's guidance and protection.—1 Samuel 22:22, 23.

■ **Is it appropriate for two or three brothers to share in immersing a person during Christian baptism?**

Normally only one male minister is needed to baptize someone.

While the Bible does not outline procedural rules concerning Christian baptism, we can learn from the Biblical record. The water baptism of Jesus is particularly instructive.

The Bible reports: "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John [the Baptizer], in order to be baptized by him." (Matthew 3:13) Notice that it says "by him," not by them. The Gospel accounts give no indication that anyone shared with John in baptizing Jesus. In fact, there were evidently no observers at that baptism, for John alone initially identified Jesus as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29, 33, 34) Jesus' baptism, then, sets the pattern of total immersion in water, but it also suggests that one male servant of God should perform the baptism.

There may have been one or more witnesses when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in "a certain body of water," but Philip was alone in doing the baptizing. (Acts 8:36-39) Moreover, the Biblical records of other baptisms do not indicate that two or three brothers shared in lowering a person under the water and then lifting that new brother or sister out of it. In many cases, though, there evidently were observers, or witnesses, of the baptisms.

Of course, over the years there have been some special situations that have needed to be considered when performing certain baptisms. For example, when the only available body of water is a swift and potentially dangerous stream, respect for safety might recommend that two brothers work together. Or the physical condition of the candidate, such as paralysis or extreme fragility, might require that more than one brother perform the baptism. These, though, are unusual cases to be handled as wisdom dictates. The norm among Jehovah's Witnesses is for only one male to immerse the baptismal candidate.

A mother from Illinois, U.S.A., wrote: "My daughter and I have read stories from your hardbound publication *My Book of Bible Stories* and enjoyed them thoroughly. We had checked this book and its four accompanying cassettes out of our local library."