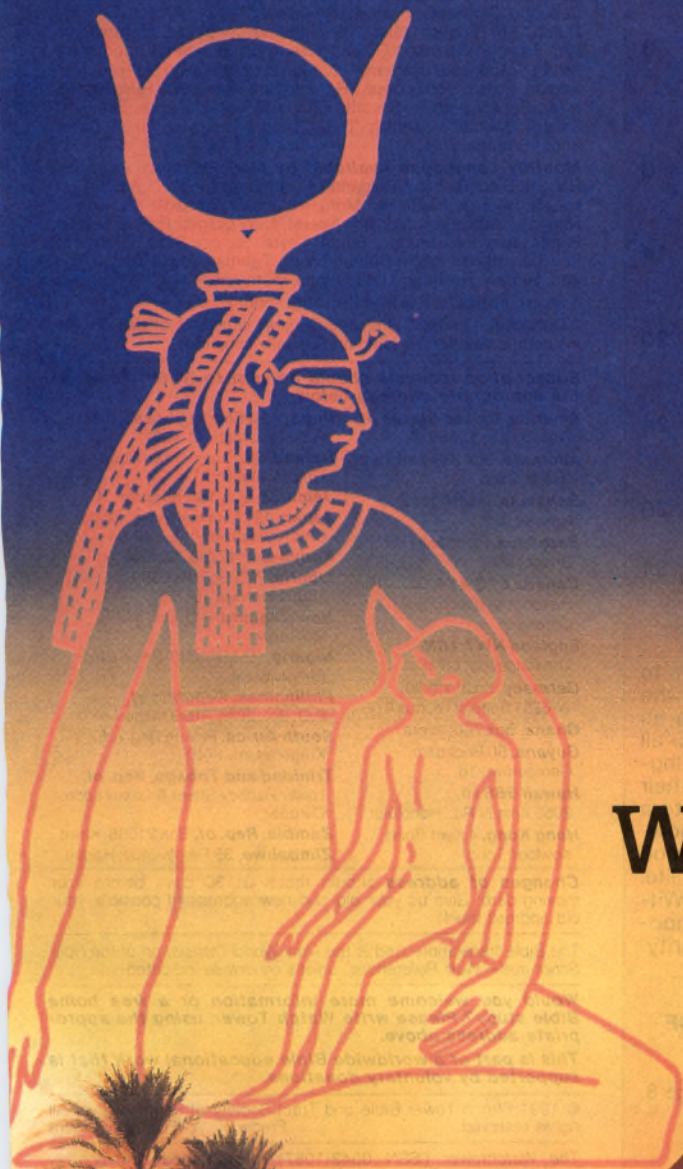


The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 1, 1991



**THE
MOTHER-
GODDESS
IS STILL
WORSHIPED!**

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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From Earth Mother to Fertility Goddesses

DO YOU recognize the goddess pictured on the cover of this magazine? It is Isis, ancient mother-goddess of Egypt. If you have visited a museum or looked through a book on ancient history, you have probably already seen idols resembling this. Consider this though: Would you bow down to and worship the goddess Isis?

If you belong to one of Christendom's religions, that may seem a strange question. You will likely insist that you worship the Creator, the One addressed, "Our Father which art in heaven." (Matthew 6:9, *King James Version*) The idea of bowing down to a mother-goddess may seem strange, even repugnant. Nevertheless, such worship has been widespread throughout history, and you may be shocked to know just who worship the great mother-goddess today.

However, before discussing that, let us get some background by considering the extent of mother-goddess worship in ancient times. This kind of worship appears to have been a very early form of false religion. Statuettes and images of naked mother-goddesses have been unearthed by archaeologists at ancient sites all over Europe and from the Mediterranean lands to India.

The Earth Mother was looked upon as the constant source of all forms of life, giving

life and then taking it back to herself at their death. As such, she was worshiped but also feared. To start with, it was believed, her reproductive powers were nonsexual. Then, mythology has it, she gave birth to the masculine Sky Father and became his wife. This couple brought forth innumerable other gods and goddesses.



The Babylonian Prototype

In the Babylonian pantheon, Ishtar was the principal goddess, identical with the Sumerian fertility goddess Innanna. Paradoxically, she was both goddess of war and goddess of love and voluptuousness. In his book *Les Religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (The Religions of Babylonia and Assyria), French scholar Édouard Dhorme said of Ishtar: "She was the goddess,

the lady, the merciful mother who listens to prayer and intercedes before the angry gods and calms them. . . . She was exalted above all, she became the goddess of goddesses, the queen of all the gods, the sovereign of the gods of heaven and earth."

Ishtar's worshipers addressed her as "the Virgin," "Holy Virgin," and "Virgin Mother." The ancient Sumero-Akkadian "Prayer of Lamentation to Ishtar" states: "I pray to thee, O Lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses. O Ishtar, queen of all peoples. . . . O possessor of all divine power, who wears the crown

of dominion. . . . Chapels, holy places, sacred sites, and shrines pay heed to thee. . . . Where are thy likenesses not fashioned? . . . See me O my Lady; accept my prayers.”*

Mother-Goddess Worship Spreads

Orientalist Édouard Dhorme speaks of the “expansion of Ishtar worship.” It spread throughout Mesopotamia, and either Ishtar herself or goddesses with different names but similar attributes were worshiped in Egypt, Phoenicia, and Canaan, as well as in Anatolia (Asia Minor), Greece, and Italy.

The principal mother-goddess worshiped in Egypt was Isis. Historian H. G. Wells wrote: “Isis attracted many devotees, who vowed their lives to her. Her images stood in the temple, crowned as the Queen of Heaven and bearing the infant Horus in her arms. The candles flared and guttered before her, and the wax ex-votos hung about the shrine.” (*The Outline of History*) Isis worship was extremely popular in Egypt. It also spread throughout the Mediterranean area, especially to Greece and Rome, even reaching western and northern Europe.

In Phoenicia and Canaan, mother-goddess worship focused on Ashtoreth, or Astarte, said to be the wife of Baal. Like her Babylonian counterpart, Ishtar, she was both a fertility and a war goddess. In Egypt ancient inscriptions have been found in which Astarte is called lady of heaven and queen of the heavens. The Israelites had to put up a constant fight against the degrad-

* *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by James B. Pritchard, Princeton University Press, pages 383-4.

ing influence of the worship of this fertility goddess.

To the northwest in Anatolia, the equivalent of Ishtar was Cybele, known as the Great Mother of the gods. She was also called the All-Begetter, the All-Nourisher, the Mother of all the Blessed. From Anatolia the cult of Cybele spread first to Greece and then to Rome, where it survived well into the Common Era. The worship of this fertility goddess included frenzied dancing, self-laceration by the priests, self-

castration by candidates for the priesthood, and processions in which the statue of the goddess was borne in much splendor.*

The primitive Greeks worshiped an Earth-Mother goddess called Gaea. But their pantheon came to include Ishtar-type goddesses, such as Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility and love; Athena, the goddess of war; and Demeter, the goddess of agriculture.

In Rome, Venus was the goddess of love and, as such, corresponded to the Greek Aphrodite and the Babylonian Ishtar. The Romans, however,

also worshiped the goddesses Isis, Cybele, and Minerva (Greek Athena), all of whom reflected in one way or another the Babylonian archetype Ishtar.

Clearly, for thousands of years, mother-goddess worship was a powerful rival to the pure worship of the great Creator, Jehovah. Did worship of the great mother-goddess die out? Or has it survived until the present day? Please read on.

* Another fertility goddess worshiped in Asia Minor was the Ephesian Artemis, which will be considered in the following article.



ISIS of Egypt with
infant god Horus

Musée du Louvre, Paris

Is Mother-Goddess Worship Still Alive?

MOTHER-GODDESS worship was still practiced during the days of the early Christians. The apostle Paul met up with it in Ephesus in Asia Minor. As in Athens, another goddess-worshipping city, he had borne witness to "the God that made the world," the living Creator, who is not "like gold or silver or stone, like something sculptured by the art and contrivance of man." This was too much for the Ephesians, most of whom worshiped the mother-goddess Artemis. Those who made a living by fashioning silver shrines of the goddess incited a riot. For about two hours, the crowd shouted: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"—Acts 17:24, 29; 19:26, 34.

The Ephesian Artemis

The Greeks also worshiped an Artemis, but the Artemis worshiped in Ephesus can only be loosely identified with her. The Greek Artemis was a virgin goddess of hunting and childbirth. The Ephesian Artemis was a fertility goddess. Her huge temple at Ephesus was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Her statue, thought to have fallen from heaven, represented her as a personification of fertility, her chest being covered with rows of egg-shaped breasts. The peculiar shape of these breasts has given rise to various explanations, such as that they represent gar-

lands of eggs or even bulls' testicles. Whatever the explanation, the symbol of fertility is clear.

Interestingly, according to *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, the original statue of this goddess "was made of gold, ebony, silver, and black stone." A well-known statue of the Ephesian Artemis, dating from the second century C.E., shows her with black face, hands, and feet.

The image of Artemis was paraded through the streets. Bible scholar R. B. Rackham writes: "Within the temple [of Artemis were] stored her . . . images, shrines, and sacred utensils, of gold and silver, which on great festivals were carried to the city and back in a magnificent procession." These festivals attracted hundreds of thousands of pilgrims

from all Asia Minor. They purchased small shrines of the goddess and hailed her as great, their lady, the queen, the virgin, "one who listens to and accepts prayers." In such surroundings, it took great courage for Paul and the early Christians to extol "the God that made the world," rather than gods and goddesses made of "gold or silver or stone."

From Mother-Goddess to "Mother of God"

It was to the elders of the Christian congregation of Ephesus that the apostle



ASHTORETH
Canaan's goddess
of sex and war

Paul foretold an apostasy. He warned that apostates would rise up and speak "twisted things." (Acts 20:17, 28-30) Among the ever-lurking dangers in Ephesus was a return to mother-goddess worship. Did this actually occur?

We read in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*: "As a pilgrimage center, Ephesus was considered the burial site of [the apostle] John. . . . Another tradition, witnessed by the Council of Ephesus (431), links the Blessed Virgin Mary with St. John. The basilica in which the Council was held was called the Mary Church." Another Catholic work (*Théo—Nouvelle encyclopédie catholique*) speaks of a "plausible tradition" that Mary accompanied John to Ephesus, where she spent the rest of her life. Why is this supposed connection between Ephesus and Mary important to us today?

Let *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* answer: "Veneration of the mother of God received its impetus when the Christian Church became the imperial church under Constantine and the pagan masses streamed into the church. . . . Their piety and religious consciousness had been formed for millennia through the cult of the 'great mother' goddess and the 'divine virgin,' a development that led all the way from the old popular religions of Babylonia and Assyria." What better place could there be than Ephesus for the "Christianization" of mother-goddess worship?

Thus, it was in Ephesus, in 431 C.E., that the so-called third ecumenical council pronounced Mary "*Theotokos*," a Greek word meaning "God-bearer," or "Mother of

God." The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: "The use of this title by the Church was undoubtedly decisive for the growth in later centuries of Marian doctrine and devotion."

The ruins of the "Church of the Virgin Mary," where this council met, can still be seen today on the site of ancient Ephesus. A chapel can also be visited that, according to a tradition, was the house where Mary lived and died. Pope Paul VI visited these Marian shrines in Ephesus in 1967.

Yes, Ephesus was the focal point for the transformation of pagan mother-goddess worship, such as Paul met up with in the first century, into fervent devotion to Mary as "Mother of God." It is principally through devotion to Mary that mother-goddess worship has survived in the lands of Christendom.

Mother-Goddess Worship Still Alive

The *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* cites Bible scholar W. M. Ramsay as reasoning that in "the 5th cent. the honour paid to the Virgin

Mary at Ephesus was [a renewed] form of the old pagan Anatolian worship of the Virgin Mother." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states: "The Catholic notions of the 'mother of God' and of the 'queen of heaven,' though later than the N[ew] T[estament], point to much earlier religio-historical roots in the East. . . . In the later veneration of Mary there are many traces of the heathen cult of the divine mother."

These traces are too numerous and too detailed to be coincidental. The similarity



between mother-and-child statues of the Virgin Mary and statues of pagan goddesses, such as Isis, cannot go unnoticed. The hundreds of statues and icons of the Black Madonna in Catholic churches throughout the world cannot fail to evoke the statue of Artemis. The work *Théo—Nouvelle encyclopédie catholique* says of these Black Virgins: "They appear to have been a means for transferring to Mary what remained of popular devotion to Diana [Artemis] . . . or Cybele." The Assumption Day processions of the Virgin Mary also find their prototype in the processions in honor of Cybele and Artemis.

The very titles given to Mary remind us of pagan mother-goddesses. Ishtar was hailed as the "Holy Virgin," "my Lady," and "the merciful mother who listens to prayer." Isis and Astarte were called "Queen of Heaven." Cybele was styled the "Mother of all the Blest." All these titles, with slight variations, are applied to Mary.

Vatican II encouraged the cult of the "Blessed Virgin." Pope John Paul II is well-known for his ardent devotion to Mary. During his extensive travels, he never misses an opportunity to visit Marian shrines, including that of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, in Poland. He entrusted the whole world to Mary. It is, therefore, not surprising that under "Mother Goddess," *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* writes: "The term also has been applied to figures as diverse as the so-called Stone Age Venuses and the Virgin Mary."

But Roman Catholic veneration of Mary is not the only way mother-goddess worship

has survived until our day. Curiously, supporters of the feminist movement have produced much literature on the worship of mother-goddesses. They believe that women have been sorely oppressed in this aggressively male-dominated world and that female-oriented worship reflects mankind's aspirations for a less aggressive world. They appear also to believe that today the world would be a better and more peaceful place if it were more feminist-oriented.

However, worship of a mother-goddess did not bring peace in the ancient world, and it will not bring peace today. Further, more and more people today, in fact millions associating with Jehovah's Witnesses, are convinced that this earth will not be saved by Mary, however much they respect and love her as the faithful, first-century woman who had the wonderful privilege of bearing and raising Jesus. Neither do Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Women's Liberation Movement, even though some of its demands may be justified, can bring about a peaceful world.

For that they look to the God that Paul declared to the Athenians and to the Ephesians, "the God that made the world and all the things in it." (Acts 17:24; 19:11, 17, 20) This Almighty God, whose name is Jehovah, has promised a glorious new world in which "righteousness is to dwell," and we can confidently rely on his promise.—2 Peter 3:13.

As to the Bible's viewpoint on woman's position before God and man, this subject will be developed further on in this magazine.



WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE SCRIPTURES

"This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken."

—GENESIS 2:23.

HOW do the Holy Scriptures view women? Opinions on this vary. One recent book on the subject states: "A current preconceived idea is that the Bible has belittled women." Some people claim that in both its Hebrew and its Greek parts, the Bible is hard on women. Is this true?

²To be fair, it is appropriate first to examine how women were treated in Bible times among peoples who did not worship Jehovah. In some ancient civilizations that practiced mother-goddess worship, women were honored as symbols of fertility. They

1, 2. (a) How do some people think the Bible views women? (b) To be fair, what comparison should be made, and what does one reference book state?

appear to have been held in high esteem in Babylonia and Egypt. But elsewhere they fared less well. In ancient Assyria a man could put away his wife at will and even kill her if she was unfaithful. Outside the home, she had to wear a veil. In Greece and Rome, only rich women, many of whom were courtesans, or high-class prostitutes, had access to education and enjoyed a certain amount of freedom. Hence, it is refreshing to read in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*:* "In contrast with the rest of the oriental (religious) world, she [woman in the Hebrew Scriptures] is recognized as a person and as a man's partner."

* Volume 3, page 1055.



This is well stated in the concluding book of the Hebrew Scriptures, where Jehovah's prophet describes a man's wife as his "partner," adding: "With the wife of your youth may no one deal treacherously."—Malachi 2:14, 15.

Created as Man's Counterpart

³ According to the Bible, Jehovah created Adam "out of dust from the ground" and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate it. God brought the wild beasts of the field and the flying creatures to Adam so that he could study them and give them names. During whatever time it took for Adam to do this, he was alone. For the assignments he had received from Jehovah thus far, he was perfect, complete, lacking nothing.* He had "no helper as

* "The last Adam," Jesus Christ, was likewise a perfect, complete man, although he had no human wife.—1 Corinthians 15:45.

3 and footnote. (a) After creating Adam, what assignments of work did Jehovah give him? (b) Even though he had as yet no wife, what was true of Adam before Eve's creation, and what was also true of "the last Adam," Jesus?

a complement of him."—Genesis 2:7, 15, 19, 20.

⁴ However, after some time had passed, Jehovah declared that it was "not good for the man to continue by himself," and he proceeded to provide Adam with a companion to share with him in the tasks that lay ahead. He anesthetized Adam, extracted one of his ribs, and built it into a woman, 'bone of Adam's bones and flesh of his flesh.' Now Adam would have "a helper," "a complement," or a counterpart. "Further, God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.'"—Genesis 1:25, 28; 2:18, 21-23.

⁵ Notice that this assignment was given to

4, 5. (a) When it was no longer good for Adam to continue alone, what did Jehovah do? (b) What long-term assignment did Jehovah give to Adam and Eve, and what would this require of both of them?

Woman's place in the family was dignified



"THE WOMAN THAT FEARS JEHOVAH"

"10 A capable wife who can find? Her value is far more than that of corals. 11 In her the heart of her owner has put trust, and there is no gain lacking. 12 She has rewarded him with good, and not bad, all the days of her life. 13 She has sought wool and linen, and she works at whatever is the delight of her hands. 14 She has proved to be like the ships of a merchant. From far away she brings in her food. 15 She also gets up while it is still night, and gives food to her household and the prescribed portion to her young women. 16 She has considered a field and proceeded to obtain it; from the fruitage of her hands she has planted a vineyard. 17 She has girded her hips with strength, and she invigorates her arms. 18 She has sensed that her trading is good; her lamp does not go out at night. 19 Her hands she has thrust out to the distaff, and her own hands take hold of the spindle. 20 Her palm she has stretched out to the afflicted one, and her hands she has thrust out to the poor one. 21 She does not fear for her household because of the snow, for all her household are clothed with double garments. 22 Coverlets she has made for herself. Her clothing is of linen and wool dyed reddish purple. 23 Her owner is someone known in the gates, when he sits down with the older men of the land. 24 She has made even undergarments and proceeded to sell them, and belts she has given to the tradesmen. 25 Strength and splendor are her clothing, and she laughs at a future day. 26 Her mouth she has opened in wisdom, and the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue. 27 She is watching over the goings-on of her household, and the bread of laziness she does not eat. 28 Her sons have risen up and proceeded to pronounce her happy; her owner rises up, and he praises her. 29 There are many daughters that have shown capableness, but you—you have ascended above them all. 30 Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself. 31 Give her of the fruitage of her hands, and let her works praise her even in the gates."—Proverbs 31:10-31.

"them," to both the man and the woman. Their collaboration would not be limited to filling the earth. It would also include the subduing of the earth and the exercising of proper dominion over all the lower creatures. It would require intellectual and spiritual qualities, and both the man and the woman had the necessary potential for developing these in harmony with God's will.

Woman's Logical Role

⁶ Of course, subduing the earth would also take physical strength. In his infinite wisdom, Jehovah created Adam first, then Eve. She was created "out of man," "for the sake of the man," and apparently with less physical strength than man. (1 Timothy 2:13; 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9; compare 1 Peter 3:7.) This is a fact of life that many feminists,

6. (a) What does the Bible indicate about the relative physical strength of man and of woman? (b) How would women do well to reason in order to accept Jehovah's arrangement of things?

and some other women too, seem to have difficulty in accepting. They would certainly be happier if they tried to understand why Jehovah arranged things this way, thus accepting their God-given role. Persons who complain about God's arrangements might be compared to a nightingale that sulks in its nest because it is not as strong as a sea gull, instead of flying to a high branch and singing in gratitude for the unique gifts God has given it.

⁷ Before Eve was created, Adam doubtless gained much experience in living. During this time, Jehovah gave him certain instructions. Adam was to transmit these to his wife, thus acting as God's spokesman. Logically, he should have taken the lead in all matters concerning worship and godly activities that they were to carry out with a view to accomplishing their assignment.

7. Why was Adam in a good position to exercise headship over Eve and any children that would be born, but was this to Eve's detriment?

When children were born, he would be the head of the family. But this would not be to the detriment of his wife. Rather, it would be to her advantage because she would have someone to back her up when she wielded her own God-given authority over her children.

⁸ According to the divine order of things, Adam was answerable to Jehovah, Eve was under the headship of Adam, any children would be under the direction of their parents, and the animals were in subjection to humankind. Man and woman had their respective roles, and each could live a happy and productive life. Thus, 'all things could take place decently and according to order.'—1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33, 40, footnote.

Sin Distorted Woman's Role

⁹ Naturally, the invasion of sin and imperfection into the original Paradise marred this orderly arrangement of things. (Romans 7:14-20) It brought hardship for the rebellious man and his disobedient wife. (Genesis 3:16-19) Since then, many selfish men have abused their rightful headship, bringing much suffering to women throughout the ages.

¹⁰ Foreseeing this particular consequence of sin, Jehovah said to Eve: "Your craving will be for your husband, and he will dominate you." (Genesis 3:16) This abusive domineering has not been the proper exercise of headship. It has reflected man's sinful condition and also woman's imperfection, for sometimes women have suffered because they have attempted to usurp their husband's authority.

¹¹ But to the extent that Bible principles have been adhered to, many women have

found fulfillment and happiness. This was so even in patriarchal times. Speaking of that period in her book *La Bible au Féminin* (The Bible in the Feminine Gender), author Laure Aynard writes: "What is particularly outstanding in all these accounts is the important role played by women, their prestige in the eyes of the patriarchs, their bold initiative, and the climate of freedom in which they lived."

Women Under the Law of Moses

¹² According to Jehovah's laws given through Moses, wives were to be "cherished." (Deuteronomy 13:6) The dignity of wives was to be respected in sexual matters, and no woman was to be sexually abused. (Leviticus 18:8-19) Men and women were equal before the Law if they were found guilty of adultery, incest, or bestiality. (Leviticus 18:6, 23; 20:10-12) The fifth commandment required that equal honor be given to the father and the mother.—Exodus 20:12.

¹³ Above all, the Law provided women with full opportunity to develop their spirituality. They benefited from the reading of the Law. (Joshua 8:35; Nehemiah 8:2, 3) They were required to observe religious festivals. (Deuteronomy 12:12, 18; 16:11, 14) They shared in the weekly Sabbath and could take the Nazirite vow. (Exodus 20:8; Numbers 6:2) They had a personal relationship with Jehovah and prayed to him individually.—1 Samuel 1:10.

¹⁴ Commenting on Hebrew women, Catholic Bible scholar Roland de Vaux writes: "All the hard work at home certainly fell to her; she looked after the flocks, worked in the fields, cooked the food, did the spinning, and so on. All this apparent drudgery,

8. What divine order of things is outlined in the Bible?

9, 10. What were the consequences of the fall into sin for man and woman, and in what has this resulted for many women?

11. What is true of many women, and what did one author write about women in patriarchal times?

12, 13. (a) What was the status of women under the Law of Moses? (b) How did women fare spiritually under the Law?

14. What does a Catholic Bible scholar say about Hebrew women, and what can be said about woman's role under the Law?

however, far from lowering her status, earned her consideration. . . . And those rare passages which give us a glimpse into the intimacy of family life show that an Israelite wife was loved and listened to by her husband, and treated by him as an equal. . . . And there is no doubt that this was the normal picture. It was a faithful reflection of the teaching enshrined in Genesis, where God is said to have created woman as a helpmate for man, to whom he was to cling (Gn 2:18, 24); and the last chapter of Proverbs sings the praises of a good housewife, blessed by her children, and the pride of her husband (Pr 31:10-31)." (*Ancient Israel—Its Life and Institutions*) Unquestionably, when the Law was followed in Israel, women were not treated badly.

Outstanding Women

¹⁵ The Hebrew Scriptures contain many examples of women who were outstanding servants of Jehovah God. Sarah provides a fine illustration of how a godly woman can be at once submissive to her husband and helpful to him in making decisions. (Genesis 21:9-13; 1 Peter 3:5, 6) Rahab's case is noteworthy. It gives the lie to the accusation that Jehovah is racially prejudiced and hard on women. Rahab was a non-Israelite prostitute. Not only did Jehovah accept her as a worshiper but because of her great faith, backed up by works including a change of life-style, he declared her righteous. In addition, he rewarded her with the signal privilege of becoming an ancestress of the Messiah.—Matthew 1:1, 5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25.

¹⁶ Illustrating that Jehovah does not require a wife to be blindly submissive to her husband is the case of Abigail. Her husband was a wealthy man, with large flocks of

sheep and goats. But he was "harsh and bad in his practices." Abigail refused to follow her husband in his bad course. Showing discretion, good sense, humility, and quick-mindedness, she prevented a situation that could have been disastrous for her household, and she was richly blessed by Jehovah.—1 Samuel 25:2-42.

¹⁷ A few women were even prophetesses. Such was the case with Deborah, during the time of the Judges. (Judges, chapters 4 and 5) Huldah was a prophetess in Judah, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 22:14-20) The case of Miriam is worthy of note. Although she is spoken of as a prophetess, sent by Jehovah, apparently this privilege went to her head at one point. She failed to recognize the authority Jehovah had given her younger brother Moses to lead Israel, and she was punished for it, though she apparently repented and was restored.—Exodus 15:20, 21; Numbers 12:1-15; Micah 6:4.

Women Under Judaism

¹⁸ As we have seen, the Law of Moses protected women's rights and, when followed, allowed womenfolk to lead a satisfying life. But as time went by, particularly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., there developed the religion of Judaism, based more on oral traditions than on the written Law of Jehovah. From the fourth century B.C.E. on, Judaism absorbed much Greek philosophy. By and large the Greek philosophers paid little attention to the rights of women, so there occurred a corresponding drop in the status of women within Judaism. From the third century B.C.E., women began to be separated from men in the Jewish synagogues and

17. (a) What outstanding privilege did some women have in Israel? (b) What lesson does the example of Miriam contain for Christian women who may be given certain privileges of service? 18, 19. What was the status of women under Judaism, and how did this come about?

15. (a) How does Sarah's conduct illustrate a proper relationship between a man and his wife? (b) Why is Rahab's case worthy of note?
16. What does the example of Abigail illustrate, and why was her course of action justified?

were discouraged from reading the Torah (Law of Moses). The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* acknowledges: "As a result few women were learned." Education was principally for boys.

¹⁹ In his book *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, J. Jeremias writes: "On the whole, the position of women in religious legislation is best expressed in this constantly repeated formula: 'Women, (Gentile) slaves and children.' . . . We may add to all this that there were plenty of disdainful opinions expressed on women. . . . We have therefore the impression that Judaism in Jesus' time also had a very low opinion of women."

Faithful Women

Who Were Awaiting the Messiah

²⁰ This scornful attitude toward women was another way in which the Jewish rabbis 'made the word of God invalid by their tradition.' (Mark 7:13) But in spite of this disdain, as the time for the coming of the Messiah approached, some godly women were alertly on the watch. One of these was Elizabeth, wife of the Levite priest Zechariah. She and her husband were "righteous before God because of walking blamelessly in accord with all the commandments and legal requirements of Jehovah." (Luke 1:5, 6) Elizabeth was favored by Jehovah in that, although barren and well along in years, she became the mother of John the Baptizer.—Luke 1:7, 13.

²¹ Moved by the holy spirit, Elizabeth expressed deep love for another godly woman of her day, a relative named Mary. When, about the end of 3 B.C.E., the angel Gabriel informed Mary that she would miraculously conceive a child (Jesus), he addressed her, "Highly favored one," adding: "Jehovah is with you." Soon after, Mary visited Eliza-

20, 21. (a) In spite of the scornful attitude of the Jewish religious leaders toward women, who were to be found among those on the watch as the time for the Messiah drew near? (b) What shows that Elizabeth and Mary had deep godly devotion?

beth, who blessed her and the unborn child she was carrying, calling Jesus her "Lord" even before he was born. At that, Mary burst into an expression of praise to Jehovah that bears eloquent testimony to her deep godly devotion.—Luke 1:28, 31, 36-55.

²² When Jesus was born and Mary brought him to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to Jehovah, another God-fearing woman, the aged prophetess Anna, expressed her joy. She returned thanks to Jehovah and spoke about Jesus to all who were anxiously awaiting the promised Messiah.—Luke 2:36-38.

²³ Thus, as the time for Jesus' earthly ministry approached, there were still in existence "holy women who were hoping in God." (1 Peter 3:5) Some of these women became disciples of Christ. How did Jesus treat them? And are there women today who gladly accept their role as outlined in the Bible? These questions will be examined in the following article.

22. After Jesus' birth, what God-fearing woman showed that she had been among those awaiting the Messiah?

23. How does the apostle Peter speak of faithful pre-Christian women, and what questions will be examined in the following article?

Questions for Review

- ☐ How did the treatment of women in Israel contrast with that in other lands?
- ☐ What were the relative positions of Adam and Eve, and why?
- ☐ What status did Israelite women have under the Law, and were they spiritually at a disadvantage?
- ☐ What are some lessons to be learned from the lives of outstanding women in the Hebrew Scriptures?
- ☐ What fine examples of faith can be found despite the views in Judaism?

"WOMEN WHO ARE WORKING HARD IN THE LORD"

"Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, women who are working hard in the Lord."

—ROMANS 16:12.

JESUS' earthly ministry was truly a blessing for Jewish women. The work he began was going to bring comfort, hope, and a new dignity to women of all races. He paid no heed to the traditions of Judaism that "made the word of God invalid." (Matthew 15:6) Many of those traditions flouted the basic God-given rights of women.

Jesus' Attitude Toward Women

² What a marked contrast there was between Jesus' attitude toward women and that of Jewish religious leaders! To quote the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, the latter considered women to be "greedy, eavesdroppers, lazy, and jealous." Conversation with a woman was frowned upon, and "it was disgraceful for a scholar to speak with a woman in the street." (*Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, by Joachim Jeremias; compare John 4:27.) Much more could be said about the disdainful attitude of the leaders of Judaism toward women. But the above will suffice to show how Jesus' approach to women was truly revolutionary for the times.

³ Jesus provides the perfect example of

1. In what way did Jesus' earthly ministry prove to be a blessing for women?
2. Why can it be said that Jesus' approach to women was revolutionary for the times?
3. What incidents during Jesus' ministry show that he was willing to teach women deep spiritual truths?

how men can have a warm yet chaste relationship with women. Not only did he converse with them but he also taught them deep spiritual truths. In fact, the very first person to whom he openly revealed his Messiahship was a woman, and a Samaritan woman at that. (John 4:7, 25, 26) Furthermore, the incident involving Martha and Mary clearly shows that unlike the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus did not feel that a woman had no right temporarily to leave her pots and pans in order to increase her spiritual knowledge. On that occasion, Mary "chose the good portion," putting spiritual things first. (Luke 10:38-42) But a few months later, after their brother had died, it was Martha, not Mary, who showed the greater eagerness to meet the Master. How we thrill even today when reading that profoundly spiritual conversation between Jesus and Martha about the resurrection hope! (John 11:20-27) What a privilege that was for Martha!

Women Who Ministered to Jesus

⁴ Jesus also accepted the ministrations of women as he traveled through the land. In his Gospel account, Mark mentions "women . . . who used to accompany him [Jesus] and minister to him when he was in Galilee."

4, 5. Besides the apostles, who followed Jesus during his Galilean ministry, and how did they minister to him?

lee.” (Mark 15:40, 41) Who were these women, and how did they serve Jesus? We do not know the names of all of them, but Luke identifies a few and explains in what way they ministered to Jesus.

⁵ Luke writes: “Shortly afterwards he went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and certain women that had been cured of wicked spirits and sicknesses, Mary the so-called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had come out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s man in charge, and Susanna and many other women, who were ministering to them from their belongings.” (Luke 8: 1-3) Jesus was willing to have these women follow him and use their belongings to minister to his material needs and those of his apostles.

⁶ When Jesus was executed, “many women were there viewing from a distance, who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee to minister to him; among whom was Mary Magdalene, also Mary the mother of James and Joses.” (Matthew 27:55, 56) Thus, many faithful women stood by Jesus at the time of his death. It is also noteworthy that women were the first witnesses of his resurrection. (Matthew 28:1-10) This in itself was a blow to Jewish tradition, for within Judaism women were considered unworthy of being legal witnesses. With this in mind, read John 20:11-18, and try to imagine the intense emotion Mary Magdalene must have felt when the risen Master appeared to her, called her by her name, and used her as his witness to inform his disciples that he was truly alive!

6. (a) Who accompanied Jesus during his last journey to Jerusalem? (b) Who stood by Jesus right up to his death, and how were some of them rewarded? (c) From the standpoint of Judaism’s traditions, what is remarkable about the account at John 20:11-18?

Faithful Christian Women After Pentecost

⁷ After Jesus’ ascension to heaven, godly women were present with the faithful apostles in the upper room at Jerusalem. (Acts 1:12-14) That there were women among those upon whom the holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost is evident. Why? Because when Peter explained what had occurred, he quoted Joel 2:28-30, which specifically mentions “daughters” and “maidservants,” or “women slaves.” (Acts 2:1, 4, 14-18) So spirit-begotten, anointed Christian women were a part of the Christian congregation right at its foundation.

⁸ Women played an important, though not dominant, role in the spread of Christianity. Mary, the mother of Mark and the aunt of Barnabas, put her apparently large house at the disposal of the Jerusalem congregation. (Acts 12:12) And she was willing to do this at a time when there was a fresh outbreak of persecution against the Christians. (Acts 12:1-5) The four daughters of the evangelizer Philip were privileged to be Christian prophetesses.—Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 10.

Paul’s Attitude Toward Women

⁹ Sometimes the apostle Paul is accused of misogyny, that is, a hatred and distrust of women. True, it was Paul who insisted that women keep their proper place within the Christian congregation. In the normal run of things, they were not to do the teaching at congregation meetings. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35) If, because no male Christian was present or because she prophesied under the impulse of the holy

7, 8. (a) How do we know that women were present when the spirit was poured out at Pentecost? (b) How did Christian women share in the early expansion of Christianity?

9. What counsel did Paul give concerning Christian women in his first letter to the Corinthians, and what divine principle was he encouraging women to respect?

spirit, a Christian woman spoke at a meeting, she was required to wear a head covering. This covering was "a sign of authority," visible proof that the woman recognized God's arrangement of headship. —1 Corinthians 11:3-6, 10.

¹⁰ Paul apparently found it necessary to remind the early Christians of these theocratic principles in order that 'all things might take place decently' at the congregation meetings. (1 Corinthians 14:40) But does this mean that Paul was antiwoman, as some claim? No, it does not. Was it not Paul who in the closing chapter of his letter to the Romans sent warm greetings to nine Christian women? Did he not show deep appreciation for Phoebe, Prisca (Priscilla), Tryphaena, and Tryphosa, calling these last two "women who are working hard in the Lord"? (Romans 16:1-4, 6, 12, 13, 15) And it was Paul who under inspiration wrote: "All of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27, 28) Paul clearly loved and appreciated his Christian

sisters, including Lydia, who showed exemplary hospitality during a time of trial. —Acts 16:12-15, 40; Philippians 4:2, 3.

Hardworking Women Today

¹¹ Within the Christian congregation today, there are many Christian women who are "working hard in the Lord." In fact, statistics show that "the women telling the good news are a large army," making up the major part of the army of Witnesses that Jehovah is using in this time of the end. (Psalm 68:11) These hardworking Christian women have earned a fine name for themselves as they struggle to fulfill their role of wives, mothers, homemakers, breadwinners, as well as Christian ministers.

¹² A number of these fine sisters have unbelieving husbands. They have to cope with this situation 24 hours a day. Some have been struggling for years to be good wives while meeting the requirements for loyal servants of Jehovah. It has not been

11, 12. (a) How is Psalm 68:11 literally being fulfilled today? (b) In what situation do many of our sisters find themselves, and why do they need our affection and prayers?

10. Of what have some accused the apostle Paul, but what proves that this accusation is false?

Women ministered to Jesus and his apostles



easy, but they have endured, always hoping that their husbands “may be won without a word” through their fine Christian conduct. And what joy is shared in by the entire family when such a husband responds! (1 Peter 3:1, 2) Meantime, these faithful sisters certainly need the brotherly affection and the prayers of the other members of the congregation. Even as “the quiet and mild spirit” that they try to show is “of great value in the eyes of God,” so their steadfast integrity is precious in our eyes.—1 Peter 3:3-6.

¹³ The sisters who are serving as pioneers can most assuredly be said to be “working hard in the Lord.” Many of them have a home, a husband, and children to take care of, in addition to their preaching work. Some do part-time work to meet their material needs. All of this requires good organization, determination, perseverance, and much hard work. These Christian women should be able to feel the love and support of those whose situation does not allow them to devote pioneer hours to the witnessing work.

13. Why can it be said of our pioneer sisters that they are “women who are working hard in the Lord,” and how should they be considered in their respective congregations?

¹⁴ Some Christian women have shown extraordinary tenacity in the pioneer service. In Canada, Grace Lounsbury had her first taste of pioneering in 1914. She had to come off the pioneer list in 1918 because of illness, but by 1924 she was back in the full-time service. At the time of this writing, she is still on the pioneer list, although 104 years of age! Many missionary sisters who in the 1940’s were trained in the early classes of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead are still faithfully serving, either in the missionary field or as members of the Bethel family in Brooklyn or one of the Watch Tower Society’s branches. All these Christian women, and indeed all the sisters who apply themselves in Bethel service, show a self-sacrificing spirit and are fine examples. Do we ever let them know that they are appreciated?

Wives of Traveling Overseers

¹⁵ The wives of traveling overseers make

14. (a) What fine example of perseverance is mentioned? (b) What other Christian women deserve commendation, and why? Mention any local examples.

15, 16. What group of Christian women especially deserve our warm commendation, and why?



up another group of Christian women that deserve warm commendation and encouragement. These dear sisters are prepared to follow their husbands as these go from congregation to congregation, or from circuit to circuit, in order to build up their brothers spiritually. The majority of them have forgone the comforts of a home; they sleep in a different bed every week, and not always a good bed. But they are happy to accept whatever the brothers can offer. They are a fine example for their spiritual sisters.

¹⁶ These Christian women also provide invaluable support for their husbands, much like the godly women who followed Jesus “to accompany him and minister to him.” (Mark 15:41) They are not able to spend much time alone with their husbands, who always ‘have plenty to do in the work of the Lord.’ (1 Corinthians 15:58) Some of them, like Rosa Szumiga in France, who entered the full-time service in 1948, have been packing suitcases for

their husbands and traveling with them for 30 or 40 years. They are willing to make sacrifices for Jehovah and for their brothers and sisters. They deserve our appreciation, love, and prayers.

Elders’ Wives

¹⁷ While enumerating the qualifications for brothers who may be appointed as elders and ministerial servants, the apostle Paul also mentioned women, writing: “Women should likewise be serious, not slanderous, moderate in habits, faithful in all things.” (1 Timothy 3:11) True, this general counsel applies to all Christian women. But in view of the context, obviously it should be followed in an exemplary way by the wives of brothers appointed to service positions.

¹⁸ Happily, this is the case with many thousands of wives of Christian overseers. They are moderate in their habits and their dress, serious about Christian living, care-

Self-sacrificing wives of traveling overseers and of other elders make a valuable contribution to God’s work

17, 18. (a) What qualities are required of the wives of brothers appointed to service positions? (b) What sacrifices do elders’ wives agree to make for Jehovah and their brothers, and how can other wives help their husbands?



ful about what they say, and they sincerely endeavor to be faithful in all things. They also agree to make sacrifices, accepting that their husbands devote to congregation matters time that might otherwise be spent with them. These faithful Christian women deserve our warm love and encouragement. Perhaps more brothers could reach out for privileges within our many congregations if their wives would humbly consent to making such sacrifices for the well-being of all.

Faithful "Older Women"

¹⁹ Our review of women mentioned in the Bible has enabled us to see that age does not prevent women of faith from serving Jehovah. This fact was illustrated in the cases of Sarah, Elizabeth, and Anna. Today, there are many Christian women advanced in years who are fine examples of faith and endurance. In addition, they can discreetly back up the elders by helping the younger sisters. Drawing on their long experience, they can give wise counsel to younger women, even as the Scriptures authorize them to do. (Titus 2:3-5) It may be that at times an elderly sister needs to be counseled herself. If so, the elder doing so should 'entreat her as a mother.' Elders should "honor widows" and, if need be, organize material help for them. (1 Timothy 5:1-3, 5, 9, 10) Our dear elderly sisters should most certainly feel wanted and appreciated.

Rulers With Christ

²⁰ It is patently clear from the Scriptures that "there is no partiality with God" with regard to race or sex. (Romans 2:10, 11; Galatians 3:28) And this holds true also in

19. Why are many faithful "older women" greatly appreciated in their congregations, and what should be our feelings toward them?

20. What supreme privilege has been offered to many Christian women, and why can the other sheep be happy about this?

the way Jehovah selects those who are to be associated with his Son in the Kingdom government. (John 6:44) How thankful the great crowd of other sheep can be that faithful women, such as Jesus' mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, Priscilla, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and a host of others in the early Christian congregation, now share in the Kingdom rule, enriching that government with their intimate understanding of the feelings and experiences of womenfolk! What loving foresight and wisdom on Jehovah's part!—Romans 11:33-36.

²¹ We today can share the apostle Paul's feelings when he spoke with love and appreciation of "these women who have striven side by side with me in the good news." (Philippians 4:3) All of Jehovah's Witnesses, men and women, count it a joy and a privilege to work side by side with the 'large army of women telling the good news,' yes, "women who are working hard in the Lord." —Psalm 68:11; Romans 16:12.

21. What are our feelings today toward "women who are working hard in the Lord"?

Review Questions

- ☐ How did Jesus show that he did not share the prejudices of the Jewish religious leaders against women?
- ☐ How did God-fearing women minister to Jesus, and what great privilege did some of them receive?
- ☐ What counsel did Paul give concerning women in the congregation meetings?
- ☐ What categories of sisters deserve our special affection and support, and why?
- ☐ How should we feel toward all those today who are "women who are working hard in the Lord"?

‘LIVING WITH JEHOVAH’S DAY CLOSE IN MIND’

AS TOLD BY LYLE REUSCH

FROM my earliest memory, our family life centered around a strong belief in the coming new world of righteousness. My mother and father would read to us children from the Bible about ‘the new heavens and the new earth’ and about ‘the cow and the bear feeding together, the lion eating straw just like the bull, and a mere little boy being leader over them.’ They made it so real, I imagined myself to be that mere little boy.—2 Peter 3:11-13; Isaiah 11:6-9.

In the 1890’s my grandfather, August Reusch, learned basic Bible truths through correspondence with Charles T. Russell. He preached extensively in and around his home in the Northwest Territory of Canada, now Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Repeatedly he counseled his sons: “Boys, watch out for 1914!” The conviction that Jehovah’s day was close at hand imbued my father with a sense of urgency that continued through his lifetime and that has been a way of life for me.

Mother and Dad were the epitome of hospitality. A Bible study group of the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Ecclesia of Bible Students regularly met in our home. Traveling ministers (called pilgrims) frequently stayed in our home. My brother, Verne, and my sister, Vera, and I benefited spiritually. There was always a sense of reality about the Kingdom message and an urgent need to tell others about it. (Matthew 24:14) Little did I realize that in future years I would spend the major portion of my life continuing the work of these

pilgrims by serving as a traveling overseer of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

In 1927, Dad moved the family to Berkeley, California. Then, during the depth of the financial depression in 1933, I graduated from high school. My brother, Verne, and I considered ourselves fortunate to get a job at the Ford Motor Company plant in Richmond, California. However, one day in the spring of 1935, I reflected: ‘If I must work hard, I may as well work hard for what is worth while.’ That day I put in my resignation, and the next day I wrote for an application to serve at Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. After attending the thrilling convention in Washington, D.C., in June 1935, I was accepted for Bethel service.

Bethel Service

Nathan Knorr, the factory manager, put me to work in building maintenance. I was the whole crew. As a 20-year-old lad, I felt very important. I had the run of the factory, and no one questioned what I was doing. Brother Knorr appreciated the way I did my work, but he discerned an attitude problem. He kept working on me so that I could develop some humility.

It was some time, however, before I realized that Brother Knorr was really trying to help me. So I apologized for my attitude and expressed determination to do better. That was the beginning of a long, warm relationship with Brother Knorr, who in January 1942 became the Watch Tower Society’s third president.

Besides doing maintenance work, I learned to operate most of the machines in the bookbindery or to assist on them. In time I did office work, writing and dispatching work orders through the factory. The spring and summer of 1943 were especially busy and exciting times. The world was in the midst of World War II, and Jehovah's Witnesses endured harassment, arrests, and prison sentences on all kinds of unjust charges. In 1940 the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that schools could require students to salute the flag. This triggered a wave of violence in 44 of the then 48 states. Witness children were expelled from schools, parents were arrested, and mobs ran Witnesses out of town. Individuals were shot, others were tarred and feathered.

As Jehovah's Witnesses fought back in the courts, the volume of paperwork in the form of writs, briefs, and documents produced by the Society's legal staff came across my desk to be printed. All of us worked many hours extra time to meet deadlines. The resulting Supreme Court rulings in May and June of 1943—when 12 out of 13 cases were decided in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses—have become part of the annals of legal history. I am grateful to have observed firsthand how Jehovah opened the way in defending and legally establishing the good news.—Philippians. 1:7.

The Theocratic Ministry School

In some ways we were poorly equipped in those days to accomplish the tremendous work foretold at Matthew 24:14, namely, 'to preach the good news of the Kingdom in all the earth before the end comes.' Brother Knorr, as the Society's president, saw the need for an educational program. Along with other male members of the Bethel family, I received an invitation to enroll in

the "Advanced Course in Theocratic Ministry." This eventually developed into the Theocratic Ministry School, which has been operative in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses since 1943.

We met in the Bethel family meeting room on Monday evening, February 16, 1942, and Brother Knorr gave the first instruction talk. His subject was "Manuscripts of the Bible." Brother T. J. Sullivan was the school overseer and gave us counsel to help us improve. In time I was given this assignment of Bethel school overseer, which I viewed as a great privilege. But it was again time for discipline.

I had been overly critical and flippant in counseling an older brother, so Brother Knorr frankly told me: "Nobody appreciates your throwing your weight around." When he had made his point and my ears had become red enough, Brother Knorr's large brown eyes softened. In a kindly voice, he read Psalm 141:5: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (*King James Version*) I have used that text many times when it has been my responsibility to give corrective counsel to others.

Prior to the beginning of the Theocratic Ministry School, few of us had the opportunity to do much public speaking. When Brother Rutherford died, Brother Knorr worked hard to develop his speaking ability. My Bethel room was directly below his quarters, and I could hear him practicing his delivery. Literally dozens of times, he read aloud the public talk "Peace—Can It Last?" before he gave it at the Cleveland convention in 1942.

On the Road

After I had served 13 years at Bethel, Brother Knorr assigned me to serve in the

field as a district overseer. In briefing me on my new assignment, he said: "Lyle, you now have the opportunity to observe firsthand just how Jehovah deals with his people." With this in mind and two suitcases in hand, I began my career as a traveling overseer on May 15, 1948. Before beginning the district work, I served as a circuit overseer for a few months.

The first company, or congregation, that I served was a small rural one in Waseca, Minnesota. I had written ahead to Dick Cain, the company servant (as the presiding overseer was then called) to meet me at the train. He was a special pioneer, and to cut down on expenses, he had just moved from his rented room, where he had wintered, into his summer quarters, a tent. However, Minnesota in May is not exactly summertime! That night, shivering in the tent, I wondered if I was cut out for this way of life. I caught a severe cold that lasted for weeks, but I survived.

During those early years when visiting different congregations and circuits, I stayed in brothers' homes and lived out of a suitcase. I experienced all types of accommodations, including sleeping on the kitchen floor, on living-room couches, in hot unventilated attics. At times I stayed in homes where a member of the family opposed our beliefs. In Wisconsin an unbelieving husband glared at me all week long as I came and went. When he came home drunk one night, and I overheard him threaten to "shoot that so-and-so," I concluded that it was time to leave. But disagreeable experiences were comparatively rare and only added spice to my assignment. They were something to be amused about afterward.

I Find a Companion

I recall it well. At a circuit assembly in Tiffin, Ohio, I met a pretty, brown-eyed

young lady, Leona Ehrman, from Fort Wayne, Indiana. She too was reared in the Christian faith and had been a faithful pioneer for several years. Traveling constantly did not lend itself to courting, but we kept in touch by correspondence. Then, in 1952, I asked, "Will you?" and she said, "Yes, I will!" and so we did. We got married. We have often been asked why we never settled down with a home and family, but we say that we do have a family—brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers in some 44 states where we have served.—Mark 10:29, 30.

Some have asked, 'Haven't you ever got tired and felt like quitting?' Yes, more than once. But between the two of us, when one feels down, the other holds up. One time I even wrote to my brother, Verne, asking him about the possibility of working with him in his painting business. He replied that he had often looked forward to that because we were so close when growing up. However, he counseled me to weigh my decision carefully. Then I called to mind Brother Knorr's oft-repeated words to members of the Bethel family: "It doesn't take much effort to quit; it takes courage and integrity to stick to your assignment." That was still good advice.

No married traveling overseer could long stick to his assignment without a wife who is loyal and supportive, as Leona has proved to be to me. Her warm, loving personality and constantly cheerful attitude in the congregations have endeared her to thousands. I never tire of telling her how much I love her. That, I am sure, helps her to stick to the work also.

Witness to Jehovah's Blessing

The primary work of the district overseer centers around the circuit assembly, where he serves each week as chairman, public speaker, and school overseer. Jeho-

vah's blessing on this arrangement is evident from the fact that of the hundreds of circuit assemblies of which I have had oversight, not a single one failed to be held. True, some were interfered with, but not one was canceled.

In Wooster, Ohio, in the spring of 1950, as I called for the closing song of the Saturday night session, a mob of more than a thousand opposers formed outside the theater where the assembly was being held. The mob had brought along cases of rotten eggs to pelt us with as we left. So we evaluated the situation and kept the program going with songs, experiences, and impromptu Bible talks. The 800 Witnesses remained calm and patient.

At 2:00 a.m., the weather was extremely cold. As though in preparation for exiting, the attendants brought out the fire hoses and began washing off the eggs that had landed on the front sidewalk. The mob formed again, leaving the warmth of the nearby bus depot. But the attendants' action was a diversion, and we dismissed the audience quietly through the rear exit. All made it safely to their cars. Mob interference occurred at other Ohio assemblies, in Canton, Defiance, and Chillicothe. But mob violence was tapering off, as decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in our favor began to have an effect on lawless ones.

In time health problems made a change necessary. So in the mid-1970's, the Society kindly assigned me to serve as a circuit overseer in a southern California area where congregations are close together and health-care facilities are readily available. While the district overseer's duties involve more travel and the care and oversight of many circuits, the circuit overseer's duties involve arranging circuit assemblies and assigning and rehearsing



program parts. In addition, Pioneer Service Schools need to be arranged and served. So the work of traveling overseers, either district or circuit, is a full-time, rewarding way of life.

Still Anticipating Jehovah's Day

From my earliest recollections more than 70 years ago, I have always felt a keen sense of urgency. Armageddon has always been, in my thinking, the day after tomorrow. (Revelation 16:14, 16) Like my father, and his father before him, I have lived my life as the apostle urged, "keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." I have always viewed the promised new world as a 'reality though not beheld.' —2 Peter 3:11, 12; Hebrews 11:1.

This expectation inculcated in me from infancy will soon be realized. "The cow and the bear themselves will feed," "the lion will eat straw just like the bull," and "a mere little boy will be leader over them." (Isaiah 11:6-9) Such heartwarming promises are guaranteed by Jehovah's words to John at Revelation 21:5: "The One seated on the throne said: 'Look! I am making all things new.' Also, he says: 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'"



BUILDING CHRISTIAN PERSONALITIES IN OUR CHILDREN

WANDA'S mother, whose husband had left her, worked hard to build Christian qualities in her daughter. When Wanda was 12, this training was put to the test. At that time, Wanda, together with a younger brother and sister, was compelled to leave her mother and live for a while with her father. Her father was not a believer, so how would Wanda act when her mother was not around to watch?

An eventuality that comes to all Christian parents is the time when their children have to make decisions on their own, testing their own faith. The children may be separated from their Christian parents, as Wanda was. They may face peer

pressure at school to do wrong. Or they may be faced with powerful temptations. Christian parents hope and pray that when that time comes, their children will have Christian personalities strong enough to stand the test.

How can parents build strong Christian qualities into their children? Before finding out what happened to Wanda, let us see how the Bible helps us to answer that question. The basis for the answer is found in these words of the apostle Paul to the Christians at Corinth: "No man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood materials, hay, stubble,

each one's work will become manifest, for the day will show it up, because it will be revealed by means of fire; and the fire itself will prove what sort of work each one's is."—1 Corinthians 3:11-13.

The Foundation

Why did Paul write these words? He had started a program of building Christian personalities in Corinth, but the program had run into problems. Of course, Paul's building program did not involve his own fleshly children. It involved those who became Christians through his preaching. But he thought of these as spiritual offspring, and what he said is of value to parents too.—1 Corinthians 4:15.

Paul had come to Corinth some time earlier and had established a Christian congregation there. Those who had responded to his preaching had made big changes in their personalities. Some had formerly been immoral persons, thieves, idolaters, and drunkards. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) But they were able to make the change to Christian thinking because Paul had laid a good foundation, as it were. What was that foundation? "No man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 Corinthians 3:11.

How did Paul lay this foundation as he taught these new believers in Corinth? He tells us: "I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come with an extravagance of speech or of wisdom declaring the sacred secret of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him impaled." (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2; Acts 18:5) He did not direct attention to himself or dress up the truth to give it a superficial intellectual appeal. Rather, he directed attention to Jesus Christ and the way this one had been used by God.

In fact, Jesus is a magnificently strong foundation for Christian building. He pro-



vided the ransom sacrifice. He is now a heavenly King and as such will soon destroy God's enemies at Armageddon. Then he will administer God's righteousness during a thousand-year reign, and as God's High Priest, he will gradually lift the human race to perfection. What other foundation could a person want?

Hence, in building Christian personalities in our children, we do well to imitate Paul and be sure that they appreciate these vital facts. From their infancy, we should teach our children to love Jesus for what he has done and is still doing for us.—1 Peter 1:8.

The Building

However, while Paul had laid this fine foundation, the building work suffered some setbacks after he left. (1 Corinthians 3:10) The problem was not dissimilar to what many parents experience today. They raise their children in the Christian faith and feel sure that the children

understand what the truth is. But when they get older, the children drift away or reject the faith. Why is that? Often it is because of the building materials used.

Paul said that personalities can be built with valuable materials: gold, silver, and precious stones. Or they can be built with cheap materials: wood, hay, and stubble. (1 Corinthians 3:12) Now, if a builder uses gold, silver, and precious stones, he must be erecting a superior kind of structure, one of outstanding value. But the builder who uses wood, hay, and stubble is merely building something that is makeshift, temporary, and cheap.

It seems that flimsy spiritual materials were being used in Corinth. Some who had followed up on the apostle Paul's foundation-laying were building cheaply, not erecting strong, enduring structures. The Corinthians had started to look to men, and there was disunity, jealousy, and strife among them. (1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:1-4) How could this have been prevented? By their using better-quality, durable materials.

These represent those valuable traits that are an essential part of a Christian's personality. What traits? The apostle Peter mentioned one: "The tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold." (1 Peter 1:6, 7) King Solomon mentioned two more: wisdom and discernment, the having of which "is better than having silver as gain." (Proverbs 3:13-15) And King David reminded us that the fear of Jehovah and an appreciation of his commandments "are more to be desired than gold."—Psalm 19:9, 10.

These and other valuable materials can be built into Christian personalities to help our children survive tests. How, though, can we be sure we are building with such materials? By paying attention to hearts, both our children's and our own.

A Successful Building Work

The part a parent's heart plays in this building work is seen in a command given by Jehovah to parents in the ancient nation of Israel: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on *your* heart." Then he went on to say: "And you must inculcate them in your son." (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) Hence, before we can build up others, we have to build up ourselves. Our children should see in the things we say and do that *our* personality is made of the right materials.—Colossians 3:9, 10.

Then, our teaching has to reach *their* heart. Jesus, the most successful builder of Christian personalities, reached hearts by using illustrations and questions. (Matthew 17:24-27; Mark 13:34) Parents find that these same teaching techniques are very effective. They use illustrations to make Christian truths appeal to the hearts of their young children, and they use well-thought-out questions to discern what their older children are really thinking, how they are reasoning in their hearts. —Proverbs 20:5.

When Moses was trying to build in the Israelites a desire to remain faithful, he said: "Keep the commandments of Jehovah and his statutes . . . *for your good*." (Deuteronomy 10:13) Similarly, parents do well not only to explain clearly to their children what God's standards are but also to show convincingly why such things as honesty, moral cleanness, and good association are for their good.

Finally, 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) When children get to know Jehovah personally at an early age, learn to talk with him about their problems, and have

the experience of his answering their prayers, they develop the most vital part of a Christian personality: a personal relationship with their Creator.

The Fire

Paul found that when the building work in Corinth was not done properly, worldly traits, such as sectarianism and dissension, took root. This was dangerous because, as he explained, "the fire itself will prove what sort of work each one's is." —1 Corinthians 3:13.

What is the fire? It may be any test that Satan brings upon a Christian. It may be peer pressure, fleshly temptation, materialism, persecution, even the corrosive influence of doubts. Such tests are sure to come. "Each one's work will become manifest, for the day will show it up, because it will be revealed by means of fire." Wise parents build their children's personalities in the *expectation* that the children will be tested. But they are confident that with Jehovah's help, their children can survive the testing. If parents have this attitude, they will be greatly blessed.

The Reward

Paul said: "If anyone's work that he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward." (1 Corinthians 3:14) The apostle Paul received a reward. To Christians in the city of Thessalonica, where he had also done building work, he wrote: "For what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?—before our

Lord Jesus at his presence? You certainly are our glory and joy."—1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20.

Wanda's mother had this reward. When 12-year-old Wanda found herself separated from her mother, she cried herself to sleep at first. Then she remembered her mother's counsel to discuss her problems with Jehovah in prayer. She prayed and soon had the idea of looking through the telephone book to see if there were any of Jehovah's Witnesses nearby. She contacted them and learned that a family lived right down the road from her father's house. "Was I glad!" says Wanda.

With the encouragement of this family, Wanda organized her younger brother and sister to get back into Christian activity. "I was responsible for getting us ready for the meetings," she explains. "I had to wash our clothes, comb our hair, and make sure we were clean and presentable." It was hard work for a young girl, but she did it. One time her father tried to stop their attending meetings, but the children pleaded with him, and he let them go.

Later, the children were reunited with their mother. When Wanda was 15 years old, she became a baptized Christian, and eventually expressed her ambition to be a missionary. Yes, the work of Wanda's mother passed the test. She enjoyed the reward of seeing her daughter stand firm on her own for the truth. May all Christian parents have similar success as they work to build Christian personalities in their children.

While, as this article shows, parents try hard to build Christian personalities in their children, the children themselves also have a responsibility. They, like all Christians, must do a building work in themselves. (Ephesians 4:22-24) Although parents have a wonderful opportunity to help in this, ultimately each individual has to make his or her own decision to serve Jehovah.

INTENSELY OCCUPIED WITH THE GOOD NEWS

THE apostle Paul was in a predicament not unknown to Jehovah's Witnesses who are full-time ministers—he was low on funds. So in Corinth he took up the humble tentmaking trade that he had learned as a youth. The work was hard, and at times his hands may have bled from handling the abrasive tent cloth. The income barely provided his sustenance and covering, but he was content, for when his secular work was finished each day, he laid down the tools of his trade and did what he came to Corinth for in the first place—he preached the good news!—Philippians 4:11, 12.

Come the Sabbath, Paul headed for the synagogue. True, Paul at first approached his Corinthian audiences "in weakness and in fear and with much trembling." (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3) But spurred on by the response of some to his message, Paul went on to "give a talk in the synagogue every sabbath and would persuade Jews and Greeks."—Acts 18:1-4.

For a while, though, Paul could do little more than preach part-time. Then came Silas and Timothy down from Macedonia with a generous contribution that 'abundantly supplied his deficiency.' (2 Corinthians 11:9; Philippians 4:15) Heartening, also, was the news that the brothers in Thessalonica were standing firm in spite of persecution.—1 Thessalonians 3:6.

The effect on Paul? "Paul began to be *intensely occupied* with the word ["devoted all his time to preaching," *The Jerusalem Bible; Today's English Version*], witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 18:5) Relieved of financial pressures for a while, Paul could not rest

until he returned to full-time preaching. He went back to this work with gusto, not only preaching to the Jews but even taking the time to write the first of his inspired epistles—the letter to the Thessalonians!

A Pattern for Us Today

The record of Paul's intense work in Corinth has been preserved so as to encourage all Christians to be intensely occupied with the good news. Paul realized that the Lord Jesus himself had passed on to his disciples the high honor of being "the light of the world." They were not to hide this light. Jesus told them: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:14-16) This meant having a full share in the preaching work foretold by Jesus. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:6-8) The preaching of this Kingdom good news was a principal reason for the existence of the Christian congregation.

Early Christians, like Paul, took this preaching work seriously. Thus, when the enemies of God thought they had extinguished the true light by cruelly putting to death "the Chief Agent of life," his followers carried on as the light of the world, preaching vigorously. (Acts 3:15) Even persecution did not stifle their efforts. Says the Bible record: "Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:42) Nothing could hold them back!

In modern times, Christians have likewise been intensely occupied with witness-

ing activity. Toward the end of the 19th century, conscientious students of God's Word began to see the need to share Bible truths with others. Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society—an organization that has become international in scope—was incorporated in 1884. These Bible Students, known since 1931 as Jehovah's Witnesses, have literally filled the earth with the knowledge of God's Word. Their intense occupation has resulted in a great army more than four million strong! And no doubt their number will continue to expand under Jehovah's direction.—Isaiah 60:22.



Are You Doing Your Part?

Jesus said: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:37, 38) In 1990 almost ten million people attended the Memorial of Christ's death. What a marvelous potential exists for an increased worldwide harvest! But while rejoicing in this continued expansion, each one must ask himself, "To what extent am I having a share in this grand work? Am I doing so *regularly*—every week if possible?"

Elders must take the lead in this work as "examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:3) True, most elders have secular jobs. So did the apostle Paul while in Corinth. Yet, he set aside time for regular preaching activity. Many elders today are similarly intensely occupied with spiritual activities on weekends. This can have a powerful and encouraging effect on all in the congregation. In some months when a special effort is put forth, quite a number of congregations have a majority of their publishers in

pioneer service. The secret? The elders take the lead both in preaching and in organizing field-service arrangements.

Ministerial servants can likewise be a wholesome influence on the congregation if they regularly participate in field service. Remember, the Scriptures require that they be "serious, . . . men who minister in a fine manner." (1 Timothy 3:8, 13) Faithfulness in field service is essential for a brother to qualify as an elder or ministerial servant.—Titus 1:8, 9.

Like Paul, some are able to cut back on secular work and thus pioneer. The number of regular, auxiliary, and special pioneers increased from 137,861 just ten years ago to 536,508 in 1990. Surely, only the blessing and approval of Jehovah could have brought this about. Pioneers, though, must take care to make time count, not simply count time. Pioneers, are you well prepared and effective in the ministry? Do you strive to make continual improvement so that your ministry will be truly fruitful?

Rewards of a Balanced Ministry

Do you appreciate the life-sustaining information presented each month in *The Watchtower* and its companion, *Awake!*? Doubtless you do. Has your appreciation moved you to have a share in distributing these journals? One sister in Botswana did so. She was formerly opposed to the truth, but her husband read to her from the magazines. In time she had a change of heart and became a Witness. Although unable to read, she is very successful in placing magazines, saying, "I don't know how to read, but my husband reads these magazines to me. I enjoy them, and I am sure that you will too."

Why not have a weekly share in this lifesaving work? As soon as you have the spiritual qualifications, the Christian congregation would be glad to help you get started. Placing magazines, however, is just one feature of service. Anyone intensely occupied with the good news endeavors to have a balanced ministry. For example, the Watch Tower Society publishes bound books by the millions, and these are offered to the public as a more permanent source of good spiritual food. Have you become proficient enough in your ministry to place books, such as *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*?

And what about people who show interest? Do you keep good records so as to make

return visits on them? Such visits could lead to the feature of service that brings the greatest joy of all—the home Bible study work. Remember, Jesus commanded us at Matthew 28:19, 20 to 'make disciples, baptizing them.' That means to study the Bible with them. True, starting a study often requires persistence. One Witness met an elderly couple who heartily agreed to a home Bible study. But they postponed the study three weeks in a row. Eventually the study was started. Then, for a while, the couple canceled the study almost every other week. Finally, though, the wife advanced to the point of baptism. "After being baptized," the brother recalls, "her eyes were filled with tears of happiness, which brought tears of happiness to both my wife and me." Yes, being intensely occupied with the good news brings indescribable joy!

Make Yourself Available!

Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul have set fine patterns of devotion for us to imitate. And we have many grand examples among Jehovah's Witnesses in modern times. The time is ripe for all who know the good news to become fully active in making it known to others. The Bible assures us that all such labor is "not in vain."—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Like Paul, most have financial obligations to meet. Because of this, many may be unable to pioneer. But with Jehovah's help, all can follow the good advice given at Romans 12:11: "Do not loiter at your business. Be aglow with the spirit. Slave for Jehovah." And if circumstances change to allow for more time to be spent in Jehovah's service, anyone who truly loves Jehovah will, like Paul, seize the opportunity. Be intensely occupied with the good news! Doing so not only will bring blessings now but in the future will result in everlasting life with endless joy and happiness!—Matthew 19:28, 29.

In Our Next Issue

■ A New World Is At Hand!

■ Christian Youths
—Be Firm in Faith

■ Please Jehovah by
Showing Kindness

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

They Trusted in Jehovah

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are commanded by Jehovah to preach the good news of the Kingdom in all the world so that people of all nations will have an opportunity to know of God's new world. In some countries, often at the instigation of Christendom's clergy, our work is restricted. Such is the case in a certain country in Africa. But Jehovah's Witnesses there do as did King David. He said: "In God I have put my trust. I shall not be afraid." (Psalm 56:11) The experiences of our brothers in that land show that they trust in Jehovah and continue with his important work.

A Witness working as headmaster in a school insisted on obeying "God as ruler rather than men," declaring his neutrality toward the affairs of State. (Acts 5:29) He was badly beaten and was expected to be judged a traitor. Everyone thought he would be killed. The Witness, however, trusted in Jehovah. He remained faithful and explained the conscientious reasons for his stand. The result? He was acquitted and was returned to his hometown, whereupon the agents of the State who beat him apologized. This faithful Witness was taken back into the teaching profession and promoted to the position of inspector of schools!

The coordinator of one school had a Witness teacher dismissed. One month later this coordinator accepted the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* from a special pioneer and agreed to a Bible study. After completing chapter 6, he resigned as coordinator of the

school, and he and his wife began attending all the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. One Sunday morning the dismissed teacher was pleasantly surprised to meet the man who had dismissed him and to find that he was on the road to becoming a spiritual brother.

Another experience from this same country illustrates how Jehovah's Witnesses instill respect for Jehovah's arrangements and work to keep the organization clean. A special pioneer working isolated territory experienced much opposition. Since he was from another tribe and region, enemies of the truth wanted to expel him from the village. However, the village chief pointed out his good conduct and the fine results of his ministry and would not permit his expulsion. The chief had noted that since the arrival of the special pioneer, people were honoring the ruling authorities by paying their taxes and doing community road work once a week.—Romans 13:1, 7.

Then, one night another Witness was caught in the act of adultery with a non-Witness

woman. There was a scandal, and the special pioneer was summoned before the chief, who chided him, saying: "Here is your brother caught in the act of adultery. You Jehovah's Witnesses are no different from other religions." The special pioneer, however, explained: "Although being imperfect, we are different from other religions because we do not condone the actions of those who commit gross sins."

The Witness who committed adultery served a term in prison and paid a fine. Further, he was disfellowshipped from the congregation as an unrepentant wrongdoer. This action impressed the chief and stopped the mouths of those who mocked Jehovah's Witnesses. The chief remarked: "Do not speak badly about Jehovah's Witnesses. They have the truth. Such action is not taken by other religions."

Faithful Witnesses in that land follow the exhortation of Psalm 37:3: "Trust in Jehovah and do good; reside in the earth, and deal with faithfulness." Will we trust in Jehovah as these Christians do?



"Why Do Babies Die?"

That is what a family who lost two small children wanted to know. A man from Willowick, Ohio, U.S.A., explained:

"Recently, a tragedy occurred within my family. My fleshly sister lost her two infant children in a terrible car accident. Of course, the entire family was devastated. Their Baptist minister offered nothing in the way of Scriptural comfort. He could only say, 'It was God's will' and, 'God needed two more angels.'

"Although there was very little time for research, I turned to the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures* and its topic 'Why Do Babies Die?' In the days and weeks that followed, my wife and I have been able to share with my family the truthful answers to many of their questions, such as, 'Why do babies die?' 'Is it God's will to take children from their parents?' and, most important, 'What hope is there to see these lovely children again?' My parents have said they would like to come to the Kingdom Hall in the future."

Reasoning from the Scriptures