

The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 15, 1991

**A NEW
WORLD
IS AT HAND!**

In This Issue

In Search of a New World Order	3
A New World Is At Hand!	4
Thrilling Report From the Soviet Union	8
Please Jehovah by Showing Kindness	12
Always Pursue Loving-Kindness	18
Christian Youths—Be Firm in Faith	23
The Meaning of Prayer	26
Why Be Clothed With Humility?	27
Questions From Readers	31

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.

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

August 19: Please Jehovah by Showing Kindness.
Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 66, 38.

August 26: Always Pursue Loving-Kindness.
Page 18. Songs to Be Used: 156, 152.

Average Printing Each Issue: 15,290,000

Now Published in 111 Languages.

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English* (also Braille and cassettes†), Estonian, Finnish,* French,* German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Italian,* Japanese,* Korean, Macedonian, Malagasy, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,* Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Twi, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail: Albanian, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Fijian, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Kannada, Kwanyama/ Ndonga, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Niuean, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Samar-Leyte, Sango, Siloli, Sinhalese, Solomon Islands-Pidgin, Sranan Tongo, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Tongan, Turkish, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

† Outside the United States and Canada, write U.S. office concerning certification for the blind and visually impaired.

Subscription requests should be sent to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

America, United States of, India, Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589 Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401

Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565 **Ireland,** 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11

Bahamas, Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Jamaica,** Box 180, Kingston 10

Barbados, Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown **Japan,** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04

Canada L7G 4Y4, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario **Kenya,** Box 47788, Nairobi

England NW7 1RN, The Ridgeway, London **Liberia,** P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10

Germany, Postfach 20, W-6251 Selters/Taunus 1 **New Zealand,** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa

Ghana, Box 760, Accra **Nigeria,** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Bendel State

Guyana, 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16 **Philippines, Republic of,** P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila

Hawaii 96819, 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu **South Africa,** Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740

Hong Kong, 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong **Trinidad and Tobago, Rep. of,** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe

Zambia, Rep. of, Box 21598, Kitwe **Zimbabwe,** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please write Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

This is part of a worldwide Bible educational work that is supported by voluntary donations.

© 1991 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Frederick W. Franz, President

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. Printed in U.S.A.

In Search of a New World Order

“THERE are no maps to lead us where we are going, to this new world of our own making. As the world looks back to nine decades of war, of strife, of suspicion, let us also look forward—to a new century, and a new millennium, of peace, freedom and prosperity.”

U.S. president George Bush made those comments on January 1, 1990. In a similar message, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev then proposed cooperation in the 1990's to rid “the world of fears and mistrust, of unnecessary weapons, of outdated political concepts and military doctrines, and artificial barriers between people and states.” So reported Japan's *Mainichi Daily News* of January 3, 1990.

Obviously, hopes were running high. They still were a year later. In the State of the Union message on January 29, 1991, President Bush alluded to warfare in the Persian Gulf and said: “What is at stake is more than one small country [Kuwait], it is a big idea—a new world order where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind: peace and security, freedom and the rule of law.”

Not a Trouble-Free Quest

Many problems hinder man in his quest for a new world order. Armed conflicts surely stand in the way. Referring to hostilities then under way in Iraq and Kuwait, *Time* magazine of January 28, 1991, said: “As the bombs fell and missiles flew, hopes for a new world order gave way to familiar disorder.” The journal added: “No one should be under any illusion that the much vaunted new world order is in place or even at hand.”

International cooperation has never been achieved, and this hampers man's efforts to establish a new world order. In a report appearing in the publication *The World & I* (January 1991), scholars examined “the emerging foreign policies of the superpowers and their likely impact on the new world order.” The editor concluded: “History suggests that the line between war and peace is a fine one at the best of times. International cooperation, particularly between the major powers, is crucial to the successful transition from the Cold War to a new world order.”

Environmental problems also stand in the way of the new world order that many envision. In *State of the World 1991* (a Worldwatch Institute report), Lester R. Brown said: “No one can say with certainty what the new order will look like. But if we are to fashion a promising future for the next generation, then the enormous effort required to reverse the environmental degradation of the planet will dominate world affairs for decades to come.” The report noted that air pollution had “reached health-threatening levels in hundreds of cities and crop-damaging levels in scores of countries.” It added: “As the number of humans inhabiting the planet rises, the number of plant and animal species drops. Habitat destruction and pollution are reducing the earth's biological diversity. Rising temperatures and ozone layer depletion could add to losses.”

Clearly, then, man's search for a new world order is fraught with problems. Will the quest prove successful? Can it be said that a new world is at hand? If so, how will it be brought about?

A New World Is At Hand!

STATESMEN have said much about a new world order of their own making. They speak about ridding the world of fears and barriers to cooperation between people and states. But is it up to humans to bring about a new world?

Mankind has had centuries to establish a world of peace and security. Doubtless, many have been very sincere in such endeavors. Regardless of the structure of governments conceived by men to fulfill such objectives, however, the Bible's words have proved true: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23.

A New World Promised

Yet, the same inspired Word of God provides assurance that there will be a new world. After foretelling the end of an old system of things, the Christian apostle Peter declared: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:10-13.

Whose promise is this? It is given by none other than Jehovah, "the Most High over all the earth." (Psalm 83:18) He will accomplish what men cannot. Yes, Jehovah God will bring about a new world. But when?

A New World Very Near!

Before God's promised new world becomes a full-scale reality, the present "world," or



"system of things," must come to its end. Concerning this, Jesus Christ's disciples asked: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3, *King James Version*) As the more accurate *New World Translation* puts it, Jesus' followers asked: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"

In reply, Jesus foretold many features of the sign of his invisible presence as a spirit personage in heavenly Kingdom power. (1 Peter 3:18) For instance, he said: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another." From "a beginning of pangs of distress" in 1914, "this generation" pinpointed by Jesus has experienced continuing warfare, food shortages, and earthquakes as part of the sign of his invisible presence.—Matthew 24: 7, 8, 34.

Warfare has beset this generation in an unparalleled way since the year 1914. World War I took an estimated 14 million lives. During World War II, 55 million combatants and civilians were killed. Why, since 1914 over 100 million lives have been lost in war! Surely, this marks part of the sign of Jesus' presence.

Food shortages, also foretold by Christ, ravaged many lands after each of the two world wars. Despite scientific advancements, nearly a quarter of the world is hungry today. Each year, millions of children and others die because of malnutrition. Says *The World Book Encyclopedia*: "Most of the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have barely enough food for their people. Millions in these countries go hungry. When food production or imports drop for any reason, famine may strike and thousands or millions of people may die."

Earthquakes have taken a great toll in lives during this generation marking "the time of the end." (Daniel 12:4) Estimates of earthquake casualties vary. But since 1914 destruction by earthquakes has escalated throughout the earth, and these have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Commenting on just two of these, the *Yorkshire Post* of October 19, 1989, stated: "In 1920 a quake in China's Jiangsu province killed 180,000, and on July 28, 1976, China suffered the worst quake in its modern history. At least 240,000 died when the northeastern city of Tangshan was almost completely levelled by a quake measuring 7.8 on the open-ended Richter scale." The newspaper listed more than 30 other major earthquakes in the 20th century.

Kingdom-preaching activity was also foretold as one of the features of the sign of Jesus' invisible presence. He told his inquiring disciples: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and

then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) As Jesus prophesied, this preaching work is now being carried on earth wide in 212 lands by upwards of 4,000,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The present-day fulfillments of these and other prophecies prove that we are indeed living in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Just ahead of us is the "great tribulation" also foretold by Jesus Christ. Climaxing in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, it will bring an end to the present wicked system of things. (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 16:14-16) Then God's promised new world will become a reality.*

Blessings Humans Cannot Bring

Statesmen boast about a new world order of their own making. But Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, never asked humans to replace the present system with a new world. He himself will do that at the day and hour known only to him. (Matthew 24:34, 36) The aged apostle John had this foreview of what God, not man, will do:

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. I saw also the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: 'Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.' And the One seated on the throne said: 'Look! I

* See chapters 17 and 18 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

am making all things new.' Also, he says: 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'—Revelation 21:1-5.

The "new heaven" is the heavenly Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The "new earth" is not another earthly globe but a new society of people on this planet—all of them obedient subjects of Christ's Kingdom, without racial, national, or linguistic divisions. (Compare Psalm 96:1.) The present symbolic heaven and earth—the Devil's system of things with its governmental structure influenced by Satan and his demons—will have been destroyed. (1 John 5:19) Though literal seas will remain, the figurative sea of restless, wicked mankind will be gone. Jesus' associate heavenly rulers constitute the New Jerusalem and in association with him form a capital organization that will govern righteous human society. God will 'tent with' obedient mankind representatively while they are being fully reconciled with him through Christ during the thousand-year Judgment Day.—Revelation 14:1-4; 20:6.

Under Kingdom rule there will be many reasons for happiness. Mourning, outcry, and pain resulting from illness, grief, and the like will be experiences of the past. Even death that spread to mankind from our first parent, sinful Adam, will be no more. (Romans 5:12) What joy will prevail when this worldwide cause for tears is gone forever!

Not mortal humans but God himself gives a guarantee regarding these blessings. He is the One who says: "Look! I am making all things new." Yes, and Jehovah God told the apostle John: "Write, because these words are faithful and true."

Basic Needs Fully Satisfied

In the new world of God's making, the earth will ultimately become a paradise. This is certain, for Jesus promised a contrite evildoer impaled alongside him: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Amid paradisaic conditions, such human needs as food and shelter will be fully met.

Food shortages are costing millions of lives today. However noble the efforts to feed the hungry may be, greed and other factors prevent humans from solving such problems. For instance, the *Saturday Star*, a newspaper of Johannesburg, South Africa, reports: "Political arguments, increased fuel costs and general weariness with Africa's seemingly never-ending conflicts are combining to delay relief . . . In Sudan, one of the worst-hit countries, between 5 million and 6 million people face starvation in 1991." But famine will be forgotten in God's new world. Under Kingdom rule "there will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."—Psalm 72:16.

Shelter is another human need that is far from adequately met for many in our day. Millions live in mere hovels or are totally homeless. According to *The New York Times*, in one Oriental land, "at an electronics company . . . , 20-year-old employees face a 73-year waiting list to get housing," and a government report indicates that some people must live "in warehouses, offices or even toilets." But how different it will be in the new world! In the future Paradise, "they will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full."—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

Ecological problems will vanish in God's promised new world. Health-threatening and crop-damaging air pollution will no longer exist. Pollution and habitat destruction now imperiling numerous plant and animal species will then be no threat. And such factors as ozone-layer depletion will not endanger



life on earth. We can be sure that Jehovah God will solve all these problems, for his Word assures us that he will soon “bring to ruin those ruining the earth.”—Revelation 11:18.

In the new world, warfare will also be a thing of the past but not because statesmen have succeeded in disarming the nations. Rather, God will act where political rulers have failed. He will bring peace to obedient mankind in keeping with these words of the psalmist: “Come, you people, behold the activities of Jehovah, how he has set astonishing events on the earth. He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the wagons he burns in the fire.” (Psalm 46:8, 9) In God’s promised new world so near at hand, people will wage war no more but will enjoy true peace and security.—Micah 4:2-4.

Will You Be There?

You can have confidence in the new world promised by Jehovah God. He does not lie. (Hebrews 6:17, 18) His Word, the Bible, is true, and what it promises always comes to pass.—John 17:17.

The good news of wonderful blessings for obedient mankind is what Jehovah’s Witnesses endeavor to share with all honest-hearted people. You should make efforts now to acquire knowledge of the divine purpose, and act on the marvelous promises found in the Holy Scriptures. This course can lead to endless life, for 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) Then you will be privileged to enjoy the happy times just ahead, for God’s new world is at hand!

Thrilling report from the S O V I E T U N I O N

Joyful Climax to One Hundred Years of Witnessing

“TO REGISTER the Charter of the Administrative Center of the religious organizations of ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses in the U.S.S.R.’”

This is the translation of the first words of the Russian-language document reproduced on this page. Truly, these words represent the answer to many prayers. The document was signed and sealed in Moscow by a ranking official of the Ministry of Justice of the R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). It means that Jehovah’s Witnesses are a recognized religious organization in the U.S.S.R. Thus, a turning point has been reached in their one-hundred-year history in that vast land.

A Very Small Beginning

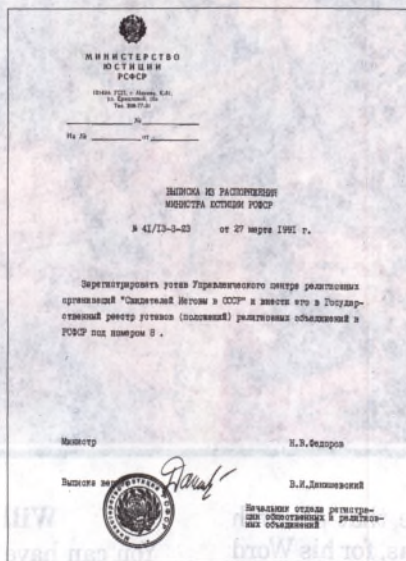
One hundred years of history? Yes. In modern times, the earliest known preacher of the good news in that land was Charles Taze Russell, who reported a visit there in 1891. In the September 1891 issue of *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, he recounts that he traveled to Kishi-

nev, Russia, during the course of a European trip. There he met up with a certain Joseph Rabinowitch, who believed in Christ and was trying to preach to Jewish families in the area. Russell reports at length on his visit with Rabinowitch and their deep, interesting conversations about the Kingdom.

The Good News Is Heard Again

After Russell’s visit, little is heard of witnessing in what is now the U.S.S.R., but that does not mean that nothing was accomplished. In 1927 three congregations in the Soviet Union sent reports of their Memorial meetings to the Society. But progress does not seem to have been rapid until the second world war. That war resulted in dramatic dislocations of many people in Europe. One unforeseen result of these movements was large infusions of Kingdom preachers into the Soviet Union.

For example, the February 1, 1946, issue of *The Watchtower* reports: “More than a thousand publishers who formerly preached in the Ukrainian language in the eastern part of Poland have now been transferred





The Kremlin in Moscow

into the depths of Russia. . . . Then, too, hundreds of brethren who lived in Bessarabia, formerly a part of Rumania, are now inhabitants of Russia and continuing with their work of discipling all nations."

Further, during the second world war, many Soviet citizens suffered in Nazi concentration camps. For some this hard experience led to unexpected blessings. One report tells of a number of young Russian women imprisoned in Ravensbrück. There they met Jehovah's Witnesses, responded to the truth, and made progress to the point of baptism. Similar things happened in other camps. When these newly baptized Witnesses were released after the war, they carried the good news of the Kingdom back with them to the Soviet Union. In this way the second world war resulted in a rapid increase in the number of Kingdom preachers in Soviet territory. In 1946 it was estimated that 1,600 publishers were active there.

Preaching in Prison

Prisons continued to play a major part in the spreading of the good news in the Soviet Union. After the war, the authorities mistakenly viewed the Witnesses as a threat, and many were imprisoned. But this did not stop their preaching. How could it, when they truly believed that the message about God's Kingdom is the best of news for man-

kind? So for many of them, prison became their territory, and numerous prisoners who heard them responded. A report from 1957 says: "Of all that are known to be in the truth today in Russia it is concluded that forty percent have received the truth in prison and in camps."

Were the Witnesses discouraged by this constant threat of imprisonment? In no way! A report from 1964 says: "There are witnesses of Jehovah in those camps who are there for the second or third time, as they did not stop preaching the message after they were released." Others, it goes on to say, were criminals who were committed to prison or camp and met the Witnesses while there. They accepted the truth and progressed to the point of baptism before their release.

A Lessening of Pressure

In the mid-1960's, the authorities adopted a less stern attitude toward the Witnesses. Likely, they realized that Jehovah's people were in no way a threat to public law and order. So while the activities of these humble Christians were still not legal, they were subjected to fewer arrests and searches of their homes, and they were grateful for this easing of pressure. Their main desire was to



Russian delegates at a 1990 convention outside the Soviet Union

carry on their Christian lives and work in a quiet, mild, and peaceful manner, as far as it depended on them.—Romans 12:17-19; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

In 1966 all those who had been exiled in Siberia for a long time were freed and were allowed to go to any place they wished within the country. Many returned home after long years of absence, but some chose to remain in that fruitful field. And not all who came back chose to remain. One sister, deported to Siberia with her family as a young girl, had returned with her parents to western Russia. But she stayed only a short while. She loved the humble, hospitable folk of Siberia so much that she left her family and moved back east to continue preaching to those receptive people.

A typical experience during this time involved a brother who moved from one city to another. After a while he discovered two other Witnesses. The three of them prayed for help and soon contacted a young woman of Greek Orthodox background. She quickly accepted the truth and led the brothers to two other interested ones—her mother and her younger sister. The report concludes:

“Today there are forty people associated with these brothers, thirty of whom learned the truth within the past six months.”

Nevertheless, Jehovah’s Witnesses were hampered in their activities by a lack of legal recognition. Meetings were held cautiously. Preaching was done with care. Imprisonment was still a possibility, and open house-to-house witnessing was impossible. In spite of this, however, these faithful Soviet Christians continued to serve their God faithfully and to be good citizens of their country. (Luke 20:25) Expressing their attitude, one of them wrote: “It is a grand privilege to endure all tests and remain faithful to Jehovah God, to praise God forever in one’s life in order to gain everlasting life from Jehovah through Jesus Christ.” What fine examples of endurance and faithfulness these Soviet Witnesses have been!

Legalization at Last!

In 1988 things began to change in lands associated with the Soviet Union. A climate

of greater freedom began to prevail, and countries that had restricted the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses began to adopt new policies. Poland, Hungary, Romania, and other lands granted these sincere Christians legal recognition, allowing them to act openly without fear of reprisal. What happy years these last three have been in Eastern Europe! How the brothers there have taken advantage of their newfound freedom to spread the peaceful message of the Kingdom! And how Jehovah's Witnesses in the rest of the world have rejoiced with them!

The Soviet Witnesses have already benefited from their expanding freedoms. Thousands—some from as far away as the Pacific coast of Asia—attended the epoch-making conventions in Poland in 1989 and again in 1990, when 17,454 Witnesses from the Soviet Union were present in Warsaw. What memories they took home with them! Most had never worshiped with more than a handful of fellow Christians. Now they had been in crowds of tens of thousands!

They went back to a Soviet Union that was becoming more and more tolerant. Witnesses around the world watched and wondered: When will Jehovah's Witnesses be legalized in the Soviet Union? Well, it happened in 1991—exactly a hundred years after the visit there of Charles Taze Russell! On March 27, 1991, the "Administrative Center of the Religious Organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the U.S.S.R." was registered in a document signed in Moscow by the Minister of Justice of the R.S.F.S.R. What kind of freedom was granted to the Witnesses?

The legal charter of the newly registered body includes the following declaration: "The purpose of the Religious Organization is to carry on the religious work of making known the name of Jehovah God and his

loving provisions for mankind through his heavenly Kingdom by Jesus Christ."

How is this to be done? The ways listed include preaching publicly and visiting the homes of the people; teaching Bible truths to people who are willing to listen; conducting with them free Bible studies with the help of Bible study publications; and arranging for the translating, importing, publishing, printing, and distributing of Bibles.

The document also outlines the organization of the Witnesses under the Governing Body, including congregations with bodies of elders, a seven-member Presiding [Branch] Committee for the country, and circuit and district overseers.

Clearly, Jehovah's Witnesses can now act as freely and openly in the Soviet Union as they do in many other lands. Imagine the joy of five of the seven members of the Presiding Committee and the five long-standing congregation elders who had the privilege of signing this historic document and seeing it sealed by the Head of the Department of the Registration of Public and Religious Associations! Appropriately, Milton Henschel and Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses were also present to witness this momentous event. Of those groups approved by the R.S.F.S.R., Jehovah's Witnesses were the first to receive their official document of registration. What a reward for those faithful Russian brothers after so many years of patient endurance!

Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere are grateful to the Soviet authorities who granted this legalization. Especially do they thank Jehovah with all their heart for the new freedom of their Soviet brothers. They rejoice with fellow Witnesses in the U.S.S.R. and in the other Eastern European lands who can now serve Jehovah God so much more openly. May Jehovah bless them richly as they use this freedom to the full in praising his holy name.

PLEASE JEHOVAH BY SHOWING KINDNESS

"What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"—MICAH 6:8.

JEHOVAH expects his people to show kindness. This should not surprise us. God himself is kind to all, even to unthankful wicked people. In this regard Jesus Christ told his disciples: "Continue to love your enemies and to do good and to lend without interest, not hoping for anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked. Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful."—Luke 6:35, 36.

² As Micah 6:8 declares, those walking with God must actually "love kindness." Obviously, Jehovah is pleased when his servants love kindness and display it in a heartfelt way. But what is kindness? What benefits result from showing it? And how can this quality be shown?

What Kindness Is

³ Kindness is the quality of taking an active interest in others. It is shown by helpful acts and considerate words. To be kind means doing good rather than anything harmful. A kind person is friendly, gentle, sympathetic, and gracious. He has a generous, considerate attitude toward

1. Why should it not surprise us that Jehovah expects his people to show kindness?
2. What questions regarding kindness merit our consideration?
3. How would you define kindness?

others. And kindness is part of the fabric of every true Christian's figurative attire, for Paul urged: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering."—Colossians 3:12.

⁴ Jehovah takes the lead in showing kindness. As the apostle Paul said, it was "when the kindness and the love for man on the part of our Savior, God, was manifested" that "according to his mercy he saved us through the bath that brought us to life and through the making of us new by holy spirit." (Titus 3:4, 5) God cleanses, or 'bathes,' anointed Christians in Jesus' blood, applying the merit of Christ's ransom sacrifice in their behalf. They are also made new through holy spirit, becoming "a new creation" as spirit-begotten sons of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Of course, God's kindness and love for man also extend to an international "great crowd," who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9, 14; 1 John 2:1, 2) Moreover, anointed ones and the great crowd, with an earthly hope, are all under Jesus' "kindly" yoke.—Matthew 11:30.

⁵ Kindness is also part of the fruitage of God's holy spirit, or active force. Said

4. How has Jehovah taken the lead in showing kindness to mankind?
5. Why should we expect those led by God's spirit to show kindness to others?

Kindness makes Christian elders patient, considerate, and compassionate

Paul: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23) So, what should we expect of those led by God's spirit? Surely, they would show kindness to others.

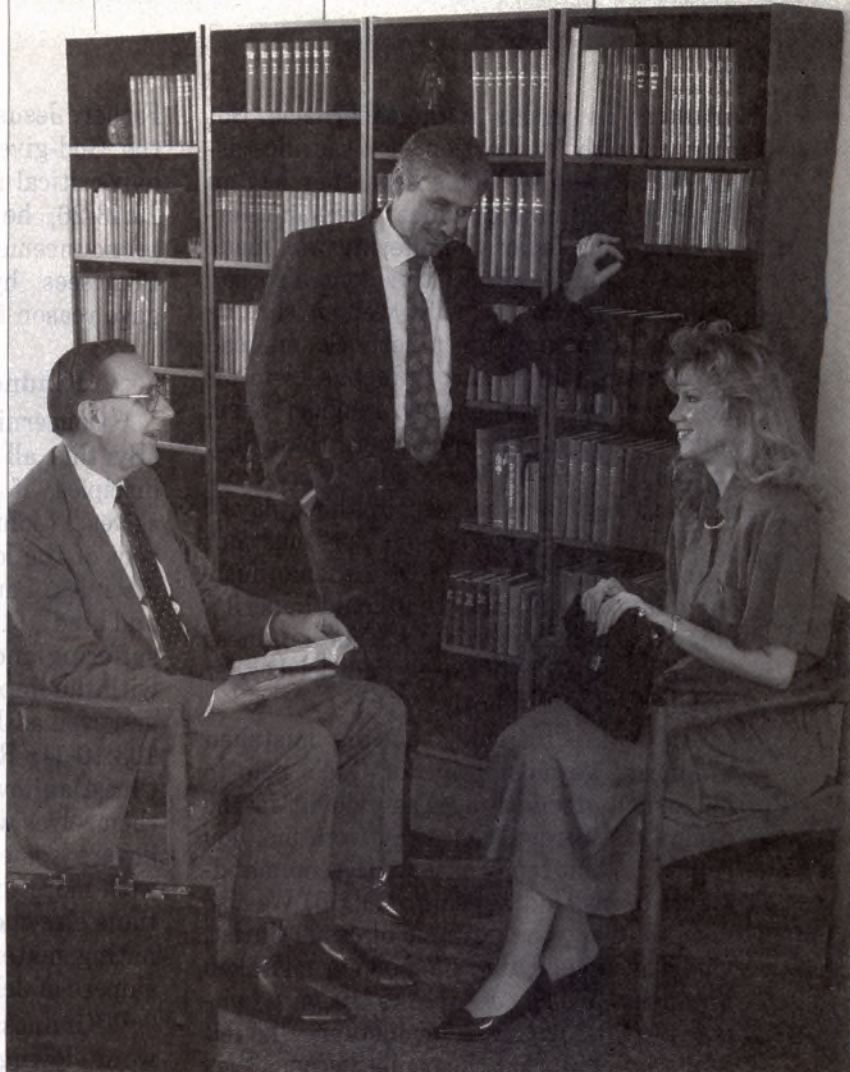
⁶ Kindness can be displayed in many ways. We show kindness when we are merciful. For example, Christian elders are kind when they extend mercy to a repentant wrongdoer and seek to help him spiritually. The God-given quality of kindness makes overseers patient, considerate, compassionate, and gentle. It moves them to "treat the flock with tenderness." (Acts 20:28, 29) In fact, the spirit's fruit of kindness should make all Christians merciful, patient, considerate, compassionate, friendly, and hospitable.

Avoid Mistaken Kindness

⁷ Some people view kindness as weakness. They feel that a person must be hard, even rude, at times, so that others will be impressed by his strength. But it has well been said that "rudeness is a weak man's

6. Kindness should cause elders and other Christians to act in what way?

7. Why would you say that mistaken kindness is weakness?



imitation of strength." Actually, it takes real strength both to be truly kind and to avoid mistaken kindness. The kindness that is a fruit of God's spirit is not a weak, compromising attitude toward wrong conduct. Rather, mistaken kindness is a weakness that causes one to condone wrongdoing.

⁸ Israel's high priest Eli was lax in disciplining his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who

8. (a) With regard to his sons, how did Eli prove to be lax? (b) Why must elders guard against succumbing to mistaken kindness?

officiated as priests at the tabernacle. Not content with the portion of a sacrifice assigned to them by God's Law, they had an attendant demand raw meat from an offerer before the fat of the offering was made to smoke on the altar. Eli's sons also had immoral intercourse with women serving at the entrance of the tabernacle. Instead of ousting Hophni and Phinehas from office, however, Eli merely rebuked them mildly, honoring his sons more than God. (1 Samuel 2:12-29) No wonder "word from Jehovah had become rare in those days"! (1 Samuel 3:1) So Christian elders must not succumb to false reasoning or to manifesting mistaken kindness that could imperil a congregation's spirituality. True kindness is not blind to evil words and deeds that violate God's standards.

⁹ If we are to avoid showing mistaken kindness, we must pray for God's help to have such strength as was evident in the psalmist's words: "Get away from me, you evildoers, that I may observe the commandments of my God." (Psalm 119:115) We also need to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who was never guilty of showing mistaken kindness. In fact, Jesus was the very epitome of true kindness. For instance, 'he felt tender affection for the people because they were skinned and knocked about like sheep without a shepherd.' Therefore, honest-hearted people felt free to approach Jesus, even bringing their young children to him. And just imagine the kindness and compassion he displayed as "he took the children into his arms and began blessing them"! (Matthew 9:36; Mark 10:13-16) Though Jesus was kind, he was nevertheless firm for what was right in the sight of his heavenly

9. (a) What attitude can help us to avoid succumbing to mistaken kindness? (b) How did Jesus show strength in handling apostate religionists?

Father. Jesus never condoned evil; he had the God-given strength to denounce the hypocritical religious leaders. At Matthew 23:13-26, he several times repeated the pronouncement: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Each time, Jesus gave reason for divine judgment.

Kindness Linked With Love

¹⁰ Concerning his followers, Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) And what is one aspect of the love that identifies Jesus' true disciples? Paul said: "Love is long-suffering and kind." (1 Corinthians 13:4) Being long-suffering and kind means that we put up with the imperfections and failings of others, even as Jehovah so kindly does. (Psalm 103:10-14; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9, 15) Christian love and kindness also manifest themselves when hardships beset fellow believers somewhere on earth. Responding with more than "human kindness," Christians elsewhere show brotherly love by donating material things to help such worshippers of Jehovah.—Acts 28:2.

¹¹ Kindness is linked with love in the word "loving-kindness," often used in the Scriptures. This is kindness stemming from loyal love. The Hebrew noun rendered "loving-kindness" (*che'sedh*) includes more than tender regard. It is kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object until its purpose in connection therewith is realized. Jehovah's loving-kindness, or loyal love, is displayed in various ways. For instance, it is shown in his acts of deliverance and protection.—Psalm 6:4; 40:11; 143:12.

10. How do Jesus' disciples show kindness and love to fellow believers?

11. Scripturally speaking, what is loving-kindness?

***A Christian wife's kindness
may help to win her mate
to the true faith***

¹² No wonder Jehovah's loving-kindness draws people to him! (Jeremiah 31:3) When God's faithful servants need deliverance or help, they know that his loving-kindness is indeed loyal love, which will not fail them. Hence, they can pray in faith, as did the psalmist who said: "As for me, in your loving-kindness I have trusted; let my heart be joyful in your salvation." (Psalm 13:5) Since God's love is loyal, his servants do not trust in his loving-kindness in vain. When they pray for help or deliverance, they have this assurance: "Jehovah will not forsake his people, nor will he leave his own inheritance."—Psalm 94:14.

Rewards of Kindness

¹³ In imitation of Jehovah, his servants "carry on with one another loving-kindness and mercies." (Zechariah 7:9; Ephesians 5:1) "The desirable thing in earthling man is his loving-kindness," and a person manifesting this quality reaps rich rewards. (Proverbs 19:22) What are some of these?

¹⁴ *Kindness makes us tactful and thus helps us to maintain a good relationship with others.* A tactful person says and does things or handles difficult situations in considerate and inoffensive ways. Whereas a "cruel person" suffers ostracism, "a man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly

12. When Jehovah's servants pray for help or deliverance, of what can they be certain?

13, 14. Why does a kind person have loyal friends?



with his own soul." (Proverbs 11:17) People avoid a cruel person but are drawn to one showing them loving-kindness. Hence, a kind individual has loyal friends.—Proverbs 18:24.

¹⁵ *A Christian wife with an unbelieving mate may draw him to God's truth by such a quality as kindness.* Before she learned the truth and put on "the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty," she may have been unkind, even contentious. (Ephesians 4:24) If her husband had known

15. What effect may kindness have in a religiously divided household?

certain proverbs, he might well have agreed that “the contentions of a wife are as a leaking roof that drives one away” and “better is it to dwell in a wilderness land than with a contentious wife along with vexation.” (Proverbs 19:13; 21:19) But now the Christian wife’s chaste conduct and deep respect, along with such qualities as kindness, may help to win her mate to the true faith. (1 Peter 3:1, 2) Yes, this may be one reward for her kindness.

¹⁶ *Kindness shown to us may be of benefit by making us more compassionate and forgiving.* For example, if we were in need of spiritual assistance and were treated in a kind and mild manner, would that not make us more inclined to deal with others in a similar way? Well, kind and mild treatment can be expected from spiritually qualified men, for Paul wrote: “Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1) Appointed elders speak mildly and kindly when they seek to help erring fellow believers. Whether we have personally received such kind help or not, however, what does God expect of all those serving him? All Christians ought to show kindness to others and should heed Paul’s counsel: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32) Of course, if we have been forgiven by someone or we have been helped out of spiritual difficulty in a kind way, this should increase our own capacity for forgiveness, compassion, and kindness.

16. How may we benefit from kindness shown to us?

Appreciate God’s Undeserved Kindness

¹⁷ Since all of us were born as sinners condemned to death, there is a kindness for which we need to be especially grateful. It is Jehovah God’s undeserved kindness. For sinners to be released from condemnation to death and to be declared righteous is kindness that is totally undeserved. Paul, who mentioned God’s undeserved kindness 90 times in his 14 divinely inspired letters, told Christians in ancient Rome: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:23, 24) How we ought to appreciate the undeserved kindness shown by Jehovah God!

¹⁸ By being unappreciative, we could miss the purpose of God’s undeserved kindness. In this regard, Paul said: “We are therefore ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through

17. Since we are sinners from birth, for what kindness should we be especially grateful?
18, 19. How can we avoid missing the purpose of God’s undeserved kindness?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is kindness?
- ☐ How can we avoid succumbing to mistaken kindness?
- ☐ Why can Jehovah’s people trust in his loving-kindness?
- ☐ What are some rewards of kindness?
- ☐ By doing what will we not miss the purpose of God’s undeserved kindness?

We can do others the greatest kindness by helping them to become reconciled to God

us. As substitutes for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.' The one who did not know sin he made to be sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness by means of him. Working together with him, we also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose. For he says [at Isaiah 49:8, *Septuagint*]: 'In an acceptable time I heard you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.' Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation. In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers." (2 Corinthians 5:20-6:4) What did Paul have in mind?

¹⁹ Anointed Christians are ambassadors substituting for Christ, and the great crowd are his envoys. Together they urge people to become reconciled to God so as to gain salvation. Paul did not want anyone to receive Jehovah God's undeserved kindness through Jesus Christ and miss its purpose. That could happen to us if we failed to do the work for which that undeserved kindness made us fit. Being on friendly terms with God as those reconciled to him, we will not be receiving his undeserved kindness in vain if we fulfill "the ministry of the reconciliation, namely, that God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to



himself." (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19) We will also be doing others the greatest kindness by helping them to become reconciled to God.

²⁰ Jehovah's servants use their time and resources in acts of kindness when they seek to help people spiritually through the Christian ministry. But what can we learn from Scriptural examples of kindness in action? Let us next examine some of these and consider other ways to please Jehovah by showing kindness.

20. What will we next examine?



ALWAYS PURSUE LOVING-KINDNESS

“He that is pursuing righteousness and loving-kindness will find life, righteousness and glory.”—PROVERBS 21:21.

JEHOVAH is kind and compassionate. He is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.” (Exodus 34:6, 7) Understandably, then, the fruitage of his holy spirit includes love and kindness.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

² Those guided by Jehovah’s holy spirit, or active force, display its fruit of kindness. They show loving-kindness in their relationships with others. Indeed, they follow the apostle Paul’s example, recommending themselves as God’s ministers “by kind-

ness” and in other ways. (2 Corinthians 6:3-10) Their kind, compassionate, forgiving spirit harmonizes with the personality of Jehovah, who is “abundant in loving-kindness” and whose Word contains many examples of kindness. (Psalm 86:15; Ephesians 4:32) What can we learn from some of these?

Kindness Makes Us Unselfish and Hospitable

³ The patriarch Abraham (Abram)—“Jehovah’s friend” and “the father of all those having faith”—set a fine example in show-

1. Why should we expect those guided by God’s spirit to show kindness?

2. What examples will we now consider?

3. How was Abraham exemplary in showing kindness, and what encouragement does Paul give in this connection?

ing kindness. (James 2:23; Romans 4:11) He and his family, including his nephew Lot, left the Chaldean city of Ur and entered Canaan at God's command. Though Abraham was the older man and the head of the family, he was kind and unselfish in letting Lot take the choicest pasture lands, while he himself took what was left. (Genesis 13:5-18) Similar kindness may move us to allow others to have advantages at our expense. Such unselfish kindness harmonizes with the apostle Paul's counsel: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person." Paul himself 'pleased all people in all things, not seeking his own advantage but that of the many, in order that they might get saved.' —1 Corinthians 10:24, 33.

⁴ Sometimes kindness takes the form of heartfelt hospitality. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were kind and hospitable to three strangers passing by one day. Abraham prevailed upon them to stay for a time, while he and Sarah hurriedly prepared a fine meal for the visitors. Those strangers turned out to be Jehovah's angels, one of whom conveyed the promise that aged and childless Sarah would have a son. (Genesis 18:1-15) What a reward for kind hospitality!

⁵ One way that all Christians can show kindness is by being hospitable. (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:1, 2) Accordingly, Jehovah's servants kindly extend hospitality to traveling overseers. This is reminiscent of the kindness shown by the first-century Christian Gaius. He did "a faithful work" in receiving visiting brothers hospitably—and they were "strangers" formerly unknown to him. (3 John 5-8) Usually, we know those to whom we can kindly extend

hospitality. Perhaps we notice that a spiritual sister is dejected. Her marriage mate may be an unbeliever or even a disfellowshipped person. What an opportunity to show kindness by inviting her to enjoy spiritual fellowship and a meal with our family from time to time! Though we may not spread a banquet, surely our family will find joy in showing kindness to such a sister. (Compare Proverbs 15:17.) And she will undoubtedly express her gratitude for this orally or in a kind note of thanks.

⁶ After the devout woman Lydia was baptized, "she said with entreaty: 'If you men [Paul and his associates] have judged me to be faithful to Jehovah, enter into my house and stay.' And she just made us come," added Luke. Undoubtedly, Lydia's kindness was appreciated. (Acts 16:14, 15, 40) But failure to show appreciation can be devastating. On one occasion, an 80-year-old sister of limited strength and means kindly labored to prepare a meal for a few guests. She was especially disappointed when one young man did not even notify her that he could not come. On another occasion, two sisters missed a meal that a young woman prepared especially for them. "I was crushed," she said, "as neither one had forgotten. . . . I would have preferred to hear that they had forgotten about dinner, but instead neither sister was kind or loving enough to call me." Would the holy spirit's fruit of kindness move you to be appreciative and thoughtful under similar circumstances?

Kindness Makes Us Considerate

⁷ Kindness should make us considerate of others and of their proper wishes. To

4. How were Abraham and Sarah rewarded for showing kindness in the form of hospitality?

5. In what way did Gaius show kindness, and how might we do something similar?

6. How did Lydia show kindness, and why is it important to show appreciation for kind acts?

7. What point regarding kindness is illustrated by the effort made to comply with the burial wishes of Jacob?

illustrate: Jacob (Israel) asked his son Joseph to exercise loving-kindness toward him by not burying him in Egypt. Though this required that Jacob's body be carried quite a distance, Joseph and the other sons of Jacob "carried him into the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, the field that Abraham had purchased for the possession of a burial place from Ephron the Hittite in front of Mamre." (Genesis 47:29; 49:29-31; 50:12, 13) In harmony with that example, should not loving-kindness move us to comply with Scripturally acceptable burial arrangements desired by a Christian family member?

⁸ When others show us loving-kindness, should we not express appreciation or reciprocate in some way? Certainly we should. Rahab the harlot showed kindness by hiding the Israelite spies. Hence, the Israelites showed loving-kindness by preserving her and her household when they devoted the city of Jericho to destruction. (Joshua 2:1-21; 6:20-23) What a fine example indicating that we should repay kindness by being considerate and kind ourselves!

⁹ For that matter, it is proper to ask someone to show loving-kindness toward us. This was done by Jonathan, son of Israel's first king, Saul. Jonathan asked his beloved younger friend David to show loving-kindness toward him and his household. (1 Samuel 20:14, 15; 2 Samuel 9:3-7) David remembered this when he avenged the Gibeonites wronged by Saul. Recalling "the oath of Jehovah" between him and Jonathan, David exercised loving-kindness by sparing the life of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. (2 Samuel 21:7, 8) Do we like—

8. What does the case of Rahab teach us about repaying kindness?

9. Why would you say that it is proper to ask someone to show us loving-kindness?

wise 'let our Yes mean Yes'? (James 5:12) And if we are congregation elders, are we similarly compassionate when fellow believers need to be shown loving-kindness?

Kindness Strengthens Bonds

¹⁰ Loving-kindness strengthens family bonds and promotes happiness. This was shown in the case of the Moabitess Ruth. She toiled as a gleaner in the field of elderly Boaz near Bethlehem, providing food for herself and her widowed and needy mother-in-law, Naomi. (Ruth 2:14-18) Boaz later told Ruth: "You have expressed your loving-kindness better in the last instance than in the first instance, in not going after the young fellows whether lowly or rich." (Ruth 3:10) First, Ruth showed loving-kindness to Naomi. "In the last instance," the Moabitess displayed loving-kindness by being willing to marry elderly Boaz so as to raise up a name for her dead husband and for aged Naomi. By Boaz, Ruth became the mother of David's grandfather Obed. And God granted her the "perfect wage" of being an ancestress of Jesus Christ. (Ruth 2:12; 4:13-17; Matthew 1:3-6, 16; Luke 3:23, 31-33) What blessings Ruth's loving-kindness meant for her and her family! Today, blessings, happiness, and a strengthening of family bonds also occur when loving-kindness flourishes in godly homes.

¹¹ Kindness strengthens bonds within congregations of Jehovah's people. The Christian man Philemon was known for showing loving-kindness to fellow believers. Paul told him: "I always thank my God when I make mention of you in my prayers, as I keep hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the holy ones . . . I got much joy and comfort over your love, because the

10. How was Ruth's loving-kindness blessed?

11. The kindness of Philemon had what effect?

tender affections of the holy ones have been refreshed through you, brother.” (Philemon 4-7) The Scriptures do not say how the tender affections of the holy ones were refreshed through Philemon. However, he must have shown loving-kindness to fellow anointed ones in various ways that proved refreshing to them, and this undoubtedly strengthened the bonds between them. Similar things occur when Christians display loving-kindness today.

¹² The kindness of Onesiphorus also had a good effect. “May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus,” said Paul, “because he often brought me refreshment, and he did not become ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he happened to be in Rome, he diligently looked for me and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from Jehovah in that day. And all the services he rendered in Ephesus you know well enough.” (2 Timothy 1:16-18) If we exert ourselves to show loving-kindness to fellow worshipers, we will be happy and will be strengthening the bonds of brotherly affection within the Christian congregation.

¹³ When an entire congregation shows loving-kindness toward fellow worshipers, this strengthens the bond between them. Such a close bond existed between Paul and the congregation in the city of Philippi. In fact, one reason that he wrote his letter to the Philippians was to express gratitude for their kindness and material help. He wrote: “At the start of declaring the good news, when I departed from Macedonia, not a congregation took a share with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone; because, even in Thessalonica, you

sent something to me both once and a second time for my need. . . . I have all things in full and have an abundance. I am filled, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.”—Philippians 4:15-18.

¹⁴ No wonder the kind Philippians were in Paul’s prayers! He said: “I thank my God always upon every remembrance of you in every supplication of mine for all of you, as I offer my supplication with joy, because of the contribution you have made to the good news from the first day until this moment.” (Philippians 1:3-5) Such kindhearted and generous support of the Kingdom-preaching work never makes a congregation poor. After the Philippians kindly did what they could in this regard, Paul assured them: “In turn, my God will fully supply all your need to the extent of his riches in glory by means of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19) Yes, God repays kindness and generosity. His Word says: “Each one, whatever good he may do, will receive this back from Jehovah.”—Ephesians 6:8.

When Women Show Kindness

¹⁵ The loving-kindness of the disciple Dorcas (Tabitha) of Joppa did not go unrewarded. “She abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy,” and when ‘she fell sick and died,’ the disciples sent for Peter at Lydda. Upon his arrival, “they led him up into the upper chamber; and all the widows presented themselves to him weeping and exhibiting many inner garments and outer garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.” Picture the scene: Sad, tearful widows told the apostle how kind Dorcas had been and showed him those

15, 16. (a) How was the kindness of Dorcas remembered, and what happened when she died? (b) How do kindhearted Christian women abound in good deeds today?

12. What resulted from the kindness shown by Onesiphorus?

13, 14. How was the congregation at Philippi exemplary, and how did Paul respond to its kindness?

garments as evidence of her love and kindness. Dismissing everyone, Peter knelt in prayer and turned to the body. Listen! He said: "Tabitha, rise!" And look! "She opened her eyes and, as she caught sight of Peter, she sat up. Giving her his hand, he raised her up, and he called the holy ones and the widows and presented her alive." (Acts 9:36-41) What a blessing from God!

¹⁶ This was the first recorded resurrection performed by an apostle of Jesus Christ. And the circumstances leading to this wonderful miracle were rooted in kindness. Who can say that Dorcas would have been raised to life if she had not abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy—if she had not been abundant in loving-kindness? Not only were Dorcas and those widows blessed but the miracle of her resurrection furnished a witness to God's glory. Yes, "this became known throughout all Joppa, and many became believers on the Lord." (Acts 9:42) Today, kindhearted Christian women also abound in good deeds—perhaps sewing garments for fellow believers, preparing meals for the aged among us, extending hospitality to others. (1 Timothy 5:9, 10) What a witness this is to observers! Most of all, how happy we are that godly devotion and loving-kindness move this 'large army of women to tell out the good news' to the glory of our God, Jehovah! —Psalm 68:11.

Keep On Pursuing Loving-Kindness

¹⁷ All who desire God's favor must pursue loving-kindness. "He that is pursuing righteousness and loving-kindness will find life, righteousness and glory," says a wise proverb. (Proverbs 21:21) A godly person diligently pursues God's righteousness, always being guided by divine standards.

17. What is said at Proverbs 21:21, and how do those words apply to godly individuals?

(Matthew 6:33) He continually shows loyal love, or loving-kindness, to others in material and especially spiritual ways. Thus, he finds righteousness, for Jehovah's spirit helps him to live in a righteous way. In fact, he is 'clothed with righteousness' as the godly man Job was. (Job 29:14) Such a person does not seek his own glory. (Proverbs 25:27) Rather, he gets whatever glory Jehovah allows him to receive, perhaps in the form of respect from fellow humans moved by God to deal kindly with him because of his own loving-kindness toward them. Moreover, those loyally doing God's will find life—not just for a few fleeting years but forever.

¹⁸ Therefore, let all who love Jehovah God continue to pursue loving-kindness. This quality endears us to God and to others. It promotes hospitality and makes us considerate. Kindness strengthens bonds within the family and the Christian congregation. Women who show loving-kindness are appreciated and highly regarded. And all those pursuing this splendid quality bring glory to the God of loving-kindness, Jehovah.

18. Why should we pursue loving-kindness?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How was Abraham exemplary in showing kindness?
- ☐ What does Rahab's case teach us about repaying kindness?
- ☐ How did the Philippi congregation show kindness?
- ☐ How do kindhearted Christian women abound in good deeds today?
- ☐ Why should we pursue loving-kindness?

Christian Youths BE FIRM IN FAITH

“EVERYONE must attend.” That was the announcement. All students in a certain Japanese school had to be present at a general assembly in the auditorium. A young Christian student could not subscribe to some thoughts expressed in the school song. “Well,” he thought, “I know that the school song will be played. But I will not have any difficulties. I will just sit at the back as usual.”

When the young Witness of Jehovah entered the auditorium, however, he found that all the members of the faculty were seated in the back row. Hence, he had to sit in front of them. When the other students rose for the school song, he remained respectfully seated. But the teachers were incensed at this. They physically tried to force him to stand. Can you imagine yourself in such a situation? What would you have done?

Why Strong Faith Is Needed

It would be fine if people let Christians alone and allowed them to live according to their Bible-trained conscience. Often, however, Christians have to face stressful situations. This should not surprise us, for God’s own Son, Jesus Christ, said: “If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20) Besides outright persecution, servants of Jehovah face various other tests of faith.

Christian youths often need strong faith to face trials encountered at school. They may be thrown into contact with classmates who use immoral language or have God-dishonoring attitudes. Young Christians may

be faced with increasing emphasis on nationalism and pressure to get involved in clubs, school politics, or other activities that may be spiritually detrimental. Teachers or fellow students may try to put pressure on young Christians to compromise. Hence, godly youths must rely on Jehovah’s spirit for the faith needed to give a clear defense of their hope.—Matthew 10:19, 20; Galatians 5:22, 23.

‘Be Ready to Make a Defense’

The apostle Peter’s counsel is appropriate for both young and adult Christians. He said: “Always [be] ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect.” (1 Peter 3:15) What does it take to be ready to make such a defense? First, you must understand what the Scriptures teach. To take a stand at school on matters such as nationalism, politics, drug abuse, or morals, you must first understand the reason for the Christian stand and must sincerely believe in it.

For example, the apostle Paul told fellow Christians: “Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.” (1 Corinthians 15:33) Do you agree with that? As Paul indicated, it is easy to be misled in the matter of association. A person may appear friendly and agreeable. But if he does not share your concern for Jehovah’s service or even believe in the Bible’s promises, he is a bad associate. Why? Because his life is based on different principles, and things that are very important to a Christian may be of little consequence to him.

This is not surprising, for Jesus said of his followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) It is impossible for a person to be a true Christian and at the same time be a part of this world, of which Satan is the god. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Do you see how such a separation from the world protects a Christian from the corruption and strife that plague so many today? If so, then you can understand why you must maintain your separateness, even if this means that you cannot join in some school activities.*

The importance of being firm in faith and keeping Kingdom interests first in life was shown in the case of a certain young Christian girl. (Matthew 6:33) When her graduation rehearsal was announced, she found that it was scheduled for the same day as the circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses she planned to attend. She wrote a respectful letter explaining why she would be absent from the rehearsal and gave it to her teacher before class. After the class, the teacher called her aside and asked her to explain again why she would not be present for the rehearsal. The girl says: "He wanted to see if my words were the same. Was this my feeling, or did the letter contain merely the words of my mother? Upon seeing my personal conviction in the matter, he did not oppose me."

"Make a Defense Before Everyone"

Christian youths often find that if they make their position clearly known to faculty members and students before an issue arises, the pressure is not nearly so great when problems have to be faced. One young Japanese Christian relates that when she was 11 years old, her school required that all

* For a discussion of these and other Bible principles, see the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

students attend a Christmas party. Students in the higher grades put pressure on her to participate, but she was not present, and her teacher understood her stand. Why? Because near the start of the school year, the Witness and her parents had met with the teacher and explained various aspects of their Christian position.

While engaging in the field ministry, some young Christians are fearful of meeting classmates or teachers. Do you feel that way? If so, why not take the initiative and let your classmates know that you preach from house to house and why you do so. One 14-year-old Witness of Jehovah reported: "Everyone at school knows my position as a Christian. Indeed, they know it so well that if I meet a classmate while I am engaging in the ministry, I do not feel embarrassed. Fellow students usually listen, and many times they accept Bible literature." A 12-year-old reports that he anticipates meeting his classmates when he participates in the ministry. Instead of being dismayed at the thought of this, he regularly rehearses what he is going to say when it happens. Thus, he is ready to give sound reasons for his faith.

In many schools, after-school activities are said to be a matter of choice. But in actual practice, teachers and students put much pressure on individuals to join in such activities. A 20-year-old Christian discovered a good way to cope with this pressure. She says: "I served as an auxiliary pioneer all through high school. Everyone knew I was too busy with my religious activities to join in other things." The younger sister of this Witness followed the same course. Some Christian youths go straight from auxiliary pioneer service during school years into regular pioneer activity as full-time Kingdom proclaimers when their schooling has ended.

Never overlook the good effects of your fine conduct and your courageous witness. Rather than remaining quiet, why not show that you are firm in faith by speaking respectfully but boldly? That is what was done by an Israelite girl who had been taken captive and came to be in the household of the Syrian general Naaman. (2 Kings 5:2-4) Jehovah's name was praised because of the initiative of that young girl. Similar faith on your part can also bring honor to God and may help others to take a stand as praisers of his name.

The fact is that we cannot compromise our faith and yet remain Christians. Jesus said: "Everyone, then, that confesses union with me before men, I will also confess union with him before my Father who is in the heavens; but whoever disowns me before men, I will also disown him before my Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 10:32, 33) Being firm in faith as a follower of Jesus is a serious responsibility, is it not?

Assistance Available

In order to take a firm stand as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you need strong faith. To that end, you must diligently study the Bible, attend Christian meetings, and engage in the field ministry. If you still feel that something is lacking, what can you do? The disciple James said: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him." (James 1:5) Talk to Jehovah in prayer about your problem; he can strengthen you to face trials or tests of your faith.

What else can a young Christian do? The book of Proverbs tells us: "Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother just because she has grown old." (Proverbs 23:22) The apostle Paul supported this counsel, for he said: "You children, be obedient to your parents

in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." (Colossians 3:20) Christian parents can help you to be firm in faith. Listen to their suggestions. With their help, search the Scriptures and Bible-based publications, looking for ideas, counsel, and experiences. Both you and your parents will enjoy this, and it will help you to overcome timidity or fear.—2 Timothy 1:7.

Take full advantage of the provisions Jehovah God has made through the Christian congregation. Prepare well for meetings. Talk to appointed elders and others who have gone through experiences similar to those now facing you. Solomon said: "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction." (Proverbs 1:5) So learn from these older ones. You can learn, too, from Christian youths who are successfully coping with problems like yours.

Faithfulness Brings Blessings

By standing firm in faith, you will be applying Paul's counsel to "become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) Jehovah knows and understands the problems you face. He has strengthened many who have faced similar difficulties,

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

- ☐ Listen to the wisdom of your God-fearing parents.
- ☐ Take advantage of spiritual provisions in the Christian congregation.
- ☐ Speak with appointed elders and others who may have had problems like yours.
- ☐ Talk to other young Christians who are successfully coping with similar obstacles.

and he will strengthen you. If you rely on God, he will support you, for the psalmist said: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

Peter wrote: "Hold a good conscience, so that in the particular in which you are spoken against they may get ashamed who are speaking slightly of your good conduct in connection with Christ." (1 Peter 3:16) If you refuse to compromise with regard to God's righteous laws and principles, you will have a good conscience, which is a real blessing from Jehovah. Moreover, you will set a good example for Christian youths whose faith may be weak. (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) Your conduct may encourage them to make efforts to become firm in faith and thus be able to endure trials.

You may even help those who initially oppose your Christian position. Remember these hope-inspiring words: "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not

knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good." (Ecclesiastes 11:6) Who knows what good results will come from your sowing good seed by means of your faithful acts?

Among the greatest blessings you will reap is an approved standing with Jehovah. Ultimately, being firm in faith will result in eternal life. (John 17:3; compare James 1:12.) No temporary respite from trial gained by compromise is worth losing that gift.

What about the youth mentioned at the beginning of this article? Well, he endured his ordeal. After the school assembly was over, he tactfully tried to explain his position to the teachers. Though his words fell on deaf ears, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had made Jehovah's heart rejoice. (Proverbs 27:11) He continued to defend his faith until he completed his schooling. Then he became a pioneer. May your faithful endurance have a similar happy outcome. It will if you prove to be firm in faith.

The Meaning of Prayer

"In Hebrew, the principal word for prayer comes from the root, 'to judge', and the usual reflexive form . . . means literally, 'to judge oneself.'" So observes *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*. The connotation is that one of the functions of prayer is that it should help the person see if he measures up to the righteous standards and requirements of God.

For this reason, throughout the Bible, we are told that unless one is doing the will of God, his prayers will not be heard favorably. "Jehovah is far away from the wicked ones,

but the prayer of the righteous ones he hears."—Proverbs 15:29; 1 John 5:14.

Self-examination before Jehovah God certainly should make the one praying humble and contrite. This gives all the more force to Jesus' parable of the boastful Pharisee and the contrite tax collector who came to the temple to pray.—Luke 18:9-14.

Thus, whether we pray to Jehovah to thank, praise, or petition him, prayer is always an occasion for self-examination. In this way, prayer draws us closer to Jehovah and strengthens our relationship with him.

Why Be Clothed With Humility?

THE American author Edgar Allan Poe had just finished reading his new story to some friends. They jokingly said that he had used the hero's name too often. How did Poe react? One friend recalled: "His proud spirit would not stand such open rebuke, so in a fit of anger, before his friends could prevent him, he had flung every sheet into a blazing fire." Lost was a story "intensely amusing, entirely free from his usual . . . gloom." Humility might have saved it.

Though pride makes people do unwise things, it is rampant in the world. But Jehovah's servants are to be different. They must wear the well-designed garment of humility.

What Is Humility?

The apostle Paul alluded to the beautiful Christian garment of humility when he wrote to fellow believers in the ancient city of Colossae. He urged: "As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering."—Colossians 3:12.

Yes, humility is "lowliness of mind." It is "humbleness of mind; lack of pride; meekness." A humble person is "modest in spirit; not proud." He is "deeply or courteously respectful." (*The World Book Dictionary*, Volume I, page 1030) Humility is not cowardice or weakness. Actually, pride reflects weakness, whereas displaying humility often calls for courage and strength.

In the Scriptures a Hebrew word rendered "humble yourself" literally means "stamp yourself down." Thus, the wise writer of Proverbs counseled: "My son, . . . if you have been caught by the sayings of your mouth,

. . . deliver yourself, for you have come into the palm of your fellowman: Go humble yourself [stamp yourself down] and storm your fellowman with importunities." (Proverbs 6:1-3) That is, cast aside pride, acknowledge your error, set matters straight.

It Must Be Genuine

Not all people who seem humble have genuine humility. Some seemingly humble individuals may actually be proud and will stop at nothing to get their own way. Then there are those who use the cloak of false humility to impress others. For instance, the apostle Paul encountered some who displayed "mock humility," and he indicated that anyone doing this was actually "puffed up without proper cause by his fleshly frame of mind." Such an individual wrongly thought that having God's favor depended on whether he ate, drank, or touched certain things or observed religious days or not. True, he might have seemed pious and humble, but his false humility was worthless. (Colossians 2:18, 23) In fact, it led him to think that the prize of life was awarded to those who renounced material things. It also spawned a subtle form of materialism because ascetic prohibitions focused attention on material things that he professed to despise.

On the other hand, genuine humility restrains a person from manifesting self-importance in dress, grooming, and lifestyle. (1 John 2:15-17) An individual clothed with the garment of humility does not draw undue attention to himself or his abilities. Rather, humility helps him to treat others in a considerate manner and to see himself as God sees him. And how is that?

Jehovah's Viewpoint

When the prophet Samuel was about to anoint a new king for the nation of Israel, he thought that Jesse's son Eliab was Jehovah's choice. But God told Samuel: "Do not look at his appearance and at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. For not the way man sees is the way God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is." Seven of Jesse's sons were rejected. God's choice was David, who proved to be a man of faithfulness and humility.—1 Samuel 13:14; 16:4-13.

The garment of humility safeguards us from becoming proud, presumptuous—and disapproved by God. He "opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (James 4:6) His view is shown in the psalmist's words: "Jehovah is high, and yet the humble one he sees; but the lofty one he knows only from a distance." (Psalm 138:6; 1 Peter 5:5, 6) What God expects of his servants is evident from this question, posed at Micah 6:8: "What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"

Displayed by God and Christ

No wonder Jehovah expects us to show humility! It is one of his own qualities. After God delivered him from his foes, David sang: "You [Jehovah] will give me your shield of salvation, . . . and your own humility will make me great." (Psalm 18:35; 2 Samuel 22:1, 36) Though Jehovah is in the highest heavens, "he is condescending to look on heaven and earth, raising up the lowly one from the very dust; he exalts the poor one from the ashpit itself, to make him sit with nobles." (Psalm 113:5-8) God shows humility by exercising mercy toward sinful mankind. His dealing with sinners and giving his Son

as a sacrifice for sins are expressions of his humility, love, and other qualities.—Romans 5:8; 8:20, 21.

Jesus Christ, who was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart," set the greatest human example of humility. (Matthew 11:29) He told his disciples: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:12) That was not mere rhetoric. On the evening before he died, Jesus washed the feet of his apostles, performing a service customarily rendered by slaves. (John 13:2-5, 12-17) Jesus served God humbly before coming to the earth and has manifested humility since his resurrection to an exalted position in heaven. So Paul admonished fellow believers to 'consider others superior to them' and have the humble attitude of Jesus Christ.—Philippians 2:3, 5-11.

Since God and Christ display humility, those desiring divine approval must manifest this quality. If we have been haughty at times, it would be wise to humble ourselves and pray for God's forgiveness. (Compare 2 Chronicles 32:24-26.) And instead of having grandiose ideas about ourselves, we need to apply Paul's counsel: "Do not be minding lofty things, but be led along with the lowly things." (Romans 12:16) How, though, can humility benefit us and others?

In Our Next Issue

■ **Judgment Day**
—A Time of Hope!

■ **"The Light Has Come**
Into the World"

■ **What a Joy to Sit at**
Jehovah's Table!

Benefits of Humility

One benefit of humility is that it restrains us from bragging about ourselves. We thus spare others annoyance and avoid personal embarrassment if they are not enthralled by our achievements. We should boast in Jehovah, not in ourselves.—1 Corinthians 1:31.

Humility helps us to obtain divine guidance. Jehovah sent an angel to Daniel with a vision because that prophet humbled himself before God when searching for guidance and understanding. (Daniel 10:12) When Ezra was about to lead Jehovah's people out of Babylon with much gold and silver for beautifying the temple in Jerusalem, he proclaimed a fast so that they could humble themselves before God. The result? Jehovah protected them from enemy assault during the dangerous trip. (Ezra 8:1-14, 21-32) Like Daniel and Ezra, let us display humility and seek Jehovah's guidance instead of trying to fulfill God-given duties in our own wisdom and might.

If we are clothed with the garment of humility, we will respect others. For example, children possessing humility respect and obey their parents. Humble Christians also respect their fellow believers of other nationalities, races, and backgrounds, for humility makes us impartial.—Acts 10:34, 35; 17:26.

Humility promotes love and peace. A humble person does not fight fellow believers in an effort to establish his supposed rights. Paul only did things that were upbuilding and would not trouble a brother's conscience. (Romans 14:19-21; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:23-33) Humility also helps us to promote love and peace by forgiving others for their sins against us. (Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21, 22) It moves us to go to an offended person, admit our error, ask his forgiveness, and do what we can to rectify any wrong we may have done. (Matthew 5:

23, 24; Luke 19:8) If an offended individual approaches us, humility prompts us to settle matters peaceably in a spirit of love.—Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3.

Salvation depends on displaying humility. For example, concerning God, it is said: "The humble people you will save; but your eyes are against the haughty ones, that you may bring them low." (2 Samuel 22:28) When the King Jesus Christ 'rides in the cause of truth, humility, and righteousness,' he will save those humbling themselves before him and his Father. (Psalm 45:4) Those showing humility can find comfort in the words: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zephaniah 2:3.

Humility and God's Organization

Humility leads God's people to appreciate his organization and to stay with it as integrity keepers. (Compare John 6:66-69.) If we are not given a service privilege we had hoped to receive, humility helps us to cooperate with those shouldering responsibility within the congregation. And our humble cooperation sets a good example.

On the other hand, humility keeps us from displaying vanity in connection with our privileges of service among Jehovah's people. It prevents us from seeking praise for work we have been privileged to do in God's organization. Moreover, if we are serving as elders, humility helps us to treat God's flock with tenderness.—Acts 20:28, 29; 1 Peter 3:8.

Humility and Discipline

The garment of humility helps us to accept discipline. Humble people are not like Judah's King Uzziah, whose heart became so haughty that he usurped priestly duties.

He 'acted unfaithfully against Jehovah and came into the temple to burn incense upon the altar of incense.' When Uzziah became enraged at the priests for correcting him, he was stricken with leprosy. What a price to pay for lack of humility! (2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Proverbs 16:18) Never be like Uzziah and let pride prevent you from accepting discipline from God through His Word and organization.

In this regard Paul told anointed Hebrew Christians: "You have entirely forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not belittle the discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines; in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son.' . . . True, no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Hebrews 12:5-11) Remember, too, that "the reproofs of

discipline are the way of life."—Proverbs 6:23.

Remain Clothed With Humility

How important it is that Christians always wear the garment of humility! It moves us to persevere as Kingdom proclaimers, humbly witnessing from house to house in search of those "rightly disposed for everlasting life." (Acts 13:48; 20:20) Indeed, humility helps us to keep on obeying God in every respect, though proud opposers hate our righteous course.—Psalm 34:21.

Because humility moves us to 'trust in Jehovah with all our heart,' he makes our paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) In fact, only if we are clothed with this fine quality can we truly walk with God and enjoy his approval and blessing. As the disciple James wrote: "Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you." (James 4:10) Let us therefore be clothed with humility, that beautiful garment styled by Jehovah God.

A N N U A L M E E T I N G

OCTOBER 5, 1991

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 5, 1991, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:30 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after August 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual

meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 15. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

Questions From Readers

■ Why did Jesus institute the Memorial with only the apostles and not other disciples who would be taken into the new covenant?

This question seems to be based on the mistaken thought that Jesus gathered with his apostles that evening to institute the Lord's Evening Meal with the Christian congregation of anointed ones already in the new covenant. Rather, on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., the Christian congregation had not yet been formed, and Jesus came together with his apostles for the annual Jewish Passover meal.

Of course, Jesus had disciples other than the 12 known as apostles. The year before his death, he sent out 70 disciples on a preaching tour. After his resurrection, "he appeared to upward of five hundred brothers at one time." And there were "about one hundred and twenty" disciples gathered on the day of Pentecost. (1 Corinthians 15:6; Acts 1:15, 16, 23; Luke 10:1-24) But let us consider the group with Jesus when he instituted the annual celebration known as the Lord's Evening Meal.

Luke 22:7, 8 gives the time frame, saying: "The day of the unfermented cakes now arrived, on

which the passover victim must be sacrificed; and he dispatched Peter and John, saying: 'Go and get the passover ready for us to eat.'" The account goes on: "You must say to the landlord of the house, 'The Teacher says to you: "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the passover with my disciples?"'" So that evening Jesus was with the 12 for a Jewish celebration. He told them: "I have greatly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."—Luke 22:11, 15.

From its start in Egypt, the Passover was a family celebration. In instituting the Passover, God told Moses that a sheep was to be slaughtered for each household. If the family was too small to consume an entire sheep, a neighboring family could be invited to share the meal. Thus, it is logical that for the Passover of 33 C.E., most of Jesus' disciples would normally have gathered with their own families for this meal.

But Jesus "greatly desired" to share what was to be the final valid Passover, and the final night before

his death, with his closest followers, who had traveled with him during much of his ministry. At the end of that Passover meal, Jesus told them of a new celebration that was to be held by all his followers in the future. The wine of that yet future Christian celebration would represent the blood of "the new covenant" that was to replace the Law covenant.—Luke 22:20.

On the evening of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., however, the new covenant was not in effect, for the validating sacrifice—Jesus—had not been offered. The Law covenant was still in force. It had not yet been nailed to the stake. Furthermore, it would not be evident until the day of Pentecost that the old covenant with natural Israel had been replaced by the new covenant with spiritual Israel.—Galatians 6:16; Colossians 2:14.

Hence, neither the 11 faithful apostles nor any of the other disciples were in the new covenant that evening. And Jesus was not showing any disapproval of the other Jewish disciples by letting them gather with their families to celebrate the Passover.



What hope for the dead?

A woman in Augusta, Georgia, U.S.A., wrote: "I recently lost my younger sister in a fatal car accident. She was just 18, full of life and ready to graduate. I found a couple of your pamphlets placed among some flowers at her gravesite. They have helped me, and I would like to order the following book you offer."

The woman asked for the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. She concluded: "I think it will help me and my family to find some understanding and peace within ourselves."

