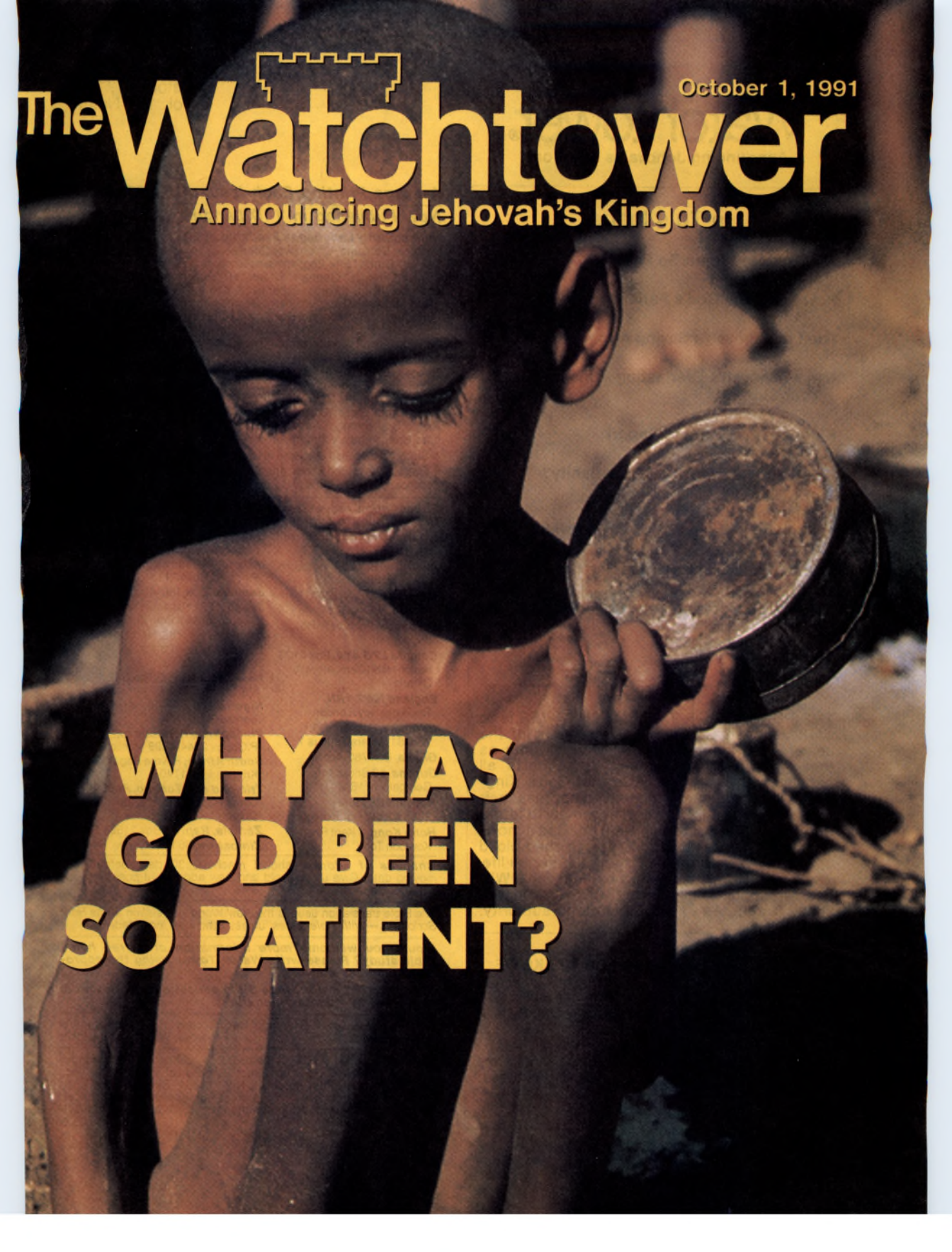


A photograph of a young child, likely from an impoverished region, holding a large, rusted metal bowl. The child is looking down at the bowl with a somber expression. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting a poor, outdoor environment.

The Watchtower

October 1, 1991

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**WHY HAS
GOD BEEN
SO PATIENT?**

In This Issue

Why Has God Been So Patient?	3
How Long Will God's Patience Last?	4
Trust in Jehovah's Saving Arm	8
Make Jehovah's Everlasting Arms Your Support	13
Kingdom Proclaimers Report	19
What Is the Key to Real Christianity?	20
'Happy Are All Those Keeping in Expectation of Jehovah'	23
Can Science Disprove Miracles?	28
"Do Not Be Irritating Your Children"	29

Cover photo: Frilet/Sipa

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

November 4: Trust in Jehovah's Saving Arm. Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 77, 45.

November 11: Make Jehovah's Everlasting Arms Your Support. Page 13. Songs to Be Used: 58, 34.

Average Printing Each Issue: 15,290,000

Now Published in 110 Languages.

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail: Afrikaans, Arabic, Bislama, Cebuano, Chicheŵa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English* (also Braille and cassettes†), Estonian, Finnish,* French,* German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Italian,* Japanese,* Korean,* Macedonian, Malagasy, Maltese, Myanmar, New Guinea Pidgin, 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, Bulgarian, Fijian, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Icelandic, Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Niuean, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Samar-Leyte, Sango, Silozi, Sinhalese, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Sranantongo, 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, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589

Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565

Bahamas, Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P.

Barbados, Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown

Canada L7G 4Y4, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario

England NW7 1RN, The Ridgeway, London

Germany, Postfach 20, W-6251 Selters/Taunus 1

Ghana, Box 760, Accra

Guyana, 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16

Hawaii 96819, 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu

Hong Kong, 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong

India, Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401

Ireland, 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11

Jamaica, Box 180, Kingston 10
Japan, 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04

Kenya, Box 47788, Nairobi

Liberia, P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10

New Zealand, P.O. Box 142, Manurewa

Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Bendel State

Philippines, Republic of, P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila

South Africa, Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740

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.



Why Has God Been So Patient?

LOOK at the downcast face of a starving child. See his emaciated frame and bloated belly. Think about his desperate need for food, and observe the empty bowl he carries. Perhaps his mother looks on through sunken eyes, her own face a grim picture of hopelessness. Then try to suppress your sorrow—yes, and fight back your tears.

This scene is repeated millions of times in the 2.3 million square miles of the famine-stricken region known as the Sahel. It stretches over 3,000 miles across Africa south of the Sahara Desert, from Senegal on the Atlantic Coast to Ethiopia on the Red Sea. Of course, famine also stalks multitudes in other lands. The World Health Organization reports that about 1.1 thousand million people around the earth are seriously ill or malnourished.

Hunger is, of course, only one aspect of

human suffering. Man pollutes the earth, and all of us are affected. Political systems countenance injustice and warfare that bring distress and death to many. Why does God permit such things? Does he care about us?

God Does Care!

Our Creator does care about us. There is much proof of this and of his ability to make things work together for our good and for harmony in all of his creation. For instance, look at the accompanying picture of a bee visiting a blossom on a fruit tree. The bee depends on the blossom for the nectar it needs for nourishment. In turn, the tree is dependent on pollen that the bee's body carries from a similar tree. In this way, the blossom is pollinated so that fruit will develop. Not all fruit trees are pollinated in this way, but God has surely arranged for unusual cooperation in

this case. And his goodness results in the fruit that we may eat with pleasure and benefit.

The bee itself is part of a well-organized swarm of more than 30,000 bees. Some guard the hive, while others clean or ventilate it. Still others store nectar and pollen, feed larvae, or scout for new nectar sources. God himself has so arranged matters that we benefit when such busy bees produce sweet and nourishing honey that delights our palate.

The miracle of cooperation between bees and plants and among the insects themselves is only one of many proofs that the

Creator is perfectly capable of making living things cooperate with one another. For that matter, "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33) Why, then, has he allowed mankind to exist in such disharmony, with resulting misery for so many? If God cares about us, why has he waited so long to correct this situation? Indeed, why has God been so patient?

God's Word, the Bible, answers such questions. This remarkable book tells us that Jehovah God has been patient for a good reason. What is that reason? And how much longer will God's patience last?

How Long Will God's Patience Last?

SOME 3,000 years ago, a wise man wrote: "Man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Ever since he made that observation, things have not improved. Throughout history, individuals or groups have seized power, one after another, dominating and exploiting other humans. Jehovah God has patiently endured this.

Jehovah has been patient while governments sent millions to their deaths in war and allowed gross economic injustices. Today, he is still exercising patience as men destroy the ozone layer and pollute the atmosphere and the sea. How it must pain him to see the ruin of good productive land and the wanton destruction of forests and wildlife!

Why Is God So Patient?

A simple illustration might help us to answer this question. Consider the effect on

a business when an employee persistently arrives late. What should the owner do? Simple justice might demand that he immediately dismiss the employee. But he may remember the Bible proverb: "He that is slow to anger is abundant in discernment, but one that is impatient is exalting foolishness." (Proverbs 14:29) Discernment might cause him to wait before he acts. He might decide to allow time for a replacement to be trained so that the business is not disrupted even more.

Fellow feeling might also make him wait. What about warning the negligent employee to see if he will mend his ways? Why not talk to him and see whether his habitual lateness is caused by a problem that can be solved or by an incurably bad attitude? While the owner of the business might decide to exercise patience, his patience would, however, not be unlimited. The employee would either have to reform or final-

ly face dismissal. That would only be fair to the business itself and to the employees who follow the rules.

In a rather similar way, Jehovah God exercises patience in the face of wrongdoing in order to allow time for the working out of a just solution to certain problems. Furthermore, his patience gives wrongdoers an opportunity to change their ways and gain eternal benefits. Hence, the Bible encourages us not to be unhappy with God's patience. Rather, it says: "Consider the patience of our Lord as salvation."—2 Peter 3:15.

An Example of God's Patience

Jehovah God was patient before the great Flood of Noah's day. The world of that time was filled with violence and was very wicked. We read: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth . . . So Jehovah said: 'I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground.'" (Genesis 6:5, 7) Yes, Jehovah had in mind an ultimate solution to the problem of wickedness back then: the removal of the wicked people. But he did not act immediately. Why not?

Because not everyone was wicked. Noah and his family were righteous in God's sight. So for their sake, Jehovah waited patiently to allow the few righteous individuals to make preparations for salvation. Further, that long wait gave Noah the opportunity to be "a preacher of righteousness," giving those wicked people the opportunity to change their ways. The Bible says: "The patience of God was waiting in Noah's days, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few

people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water."—2 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 3:20.

Why God Is Patient Now

Today, the situation is similar. The world is again filled with violence. As in Noah's day, God has already judged this world, which, the Bible says, is "reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:7) When that happens, there will be no more ruining of the environment, oppression of the weak, or greedy abuse of power.

Why, then, has God not long since destroyed ungodly men? Because there have been issues to settle and important matters to arrange. Indeed, Jehovah is moving toward a permanent solution to the problem of wickedness that involves many things, including the saving of righthearated humans from bondage to sickness and death.

With this latter end in mind, Jehovah purposed to provide a Savior who would offer a ransom for our sins. Regarding him,



the Bible says: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) It took thousands of years to prepare the way for Jesus to come and sacrifice his life in behalf of mankind. During all those years, God was lovingly patient. But was not such a provision worth waiting for?

Jesus provided the ransom for mankind almost two thousand years ago. Why, then, is God still exercising patience? For one thing, Jesus' death signaled the beginning of an educational campaign. Mankind had to learn of this loving provision and be given the opportunity to accept it or reject it. That would take time, but it would be time well spent. The Bible says: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."—2 Peter 3:9.

The Issue of Government

Another important matter would also take time. There was a need to sort out the problem of the government of mankind. To start with, man was under divine government. But in the garden of Eden, our first parents turned their backs on that. They chose to be independent of God, wanting to rule themselves. (Genesis 3:1-5) Really, though, man was not created to rule himself. The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 20:24.

Nevertheless, since the issue of government was raised, Jehovah has patiently allowed time to resolve it. Indeed, he has generously allowed thousands of years for

man to try every conceivable form of government. With what result? It has become evident that no human government can remove oppression, inequity, or other causes of unhappiness.

Indeed, in view of human history, can anyone truly say that God is unjust when he announces his intention to remove all human governments and replace them with one of his own? Surely not! We positively welcome the fulfillment of this Bible prophecy: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

The heavenly King of that Kingdom is the resurrected Jesus. Preparing him for that position—as well as choosing humans to be corulers with him—has taken time. During all that time, God has exercised patience.

Benefit Now From God's Patience

Today, millions of individuals in no less than 212 lands benefit from God's patience. They have become united in their desire to obey God and serve his heavenly government. When they meet together in their Kingdom Halls, they learn how much better it is to apply Bible principles in their lives. They do not share in the divisive politics of this world, although they subject themselves to human governments as long as God patiently allows these to function.—Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-5.

Such cooperation among so many vindicates Jehovah as the One who can bring about harmony among people with free will who learn to love him and who want to serve him. No doubt you have met these as they continue the same work that Jesus

himself began, that of publishing the good news of God's Kingdom. Jesus foretold the climax of this work when he said: "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.

Not Much Longer!

Visible evidence proves that arrangements for God's righteous government to take over the day-to-day rule of the earth are nearly complete. After describing the terrible results of the failure of human government that we have seen during this century, Jesus said: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:10, 11, 31.

Soon, God will remove the wicked from the earthly scene. The psalmist's words will have literal application: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be." (Psalm 37:9, 10) Can you imagine a world without wickedness? Who would run things then? The Bible says: "A king [Christ Jesus enthroned in the heavens] will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes [his loyal appointees on earth], they will rule as princes for justice itself. And the work of the true righteousness must become peace; and the service of the true righteousness, quietness and security to time indefinite. And my people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places."—Isaiah 32:1, 17, 18.

Thus, God's heavenly government will undo the bad effects of

man's wrongdoing and organize those hoping in Him into a harmonious human society. Describing this harmony, the Bible says: "The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them . . . They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isaiah 11:6-9.

What a magnificent result from God's exercise of patience! Hence, rather than complaining that God has waited too long, why not take advantage of his patience to subject yourself to his Kingdom? Learn from the Bible what his standards are and conform to them. Associate with others who are harmoniously subject to him. Then, God's patience will result in everlasting blessings for you.



TRUST IN JEHOVAH'S SAVING ARM

*"O Jehovah, . . . become our arm every morning,
yes, our salvation in the time of distress."*—ISAIAH 33:2.

JEHOVAH has a mighty arm. Of course, since "God is a Spirit," it is not an arm of flesh. (John 4:24) In the Bible, the figurative arm represents ability to exert power. Thus, it is by his arm that God delivers his people. Indeed, 'like a shepherd, God shepherds his drove. With his arm he collects together the lambs, and in his bosom he carries them.' (Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 23:1-4) How secure Jehovah's people feel in his loving arm!—Compare Deuteronomy 3:24.

² How has Jehovah's arm saved his people, past and present? What assistance does God

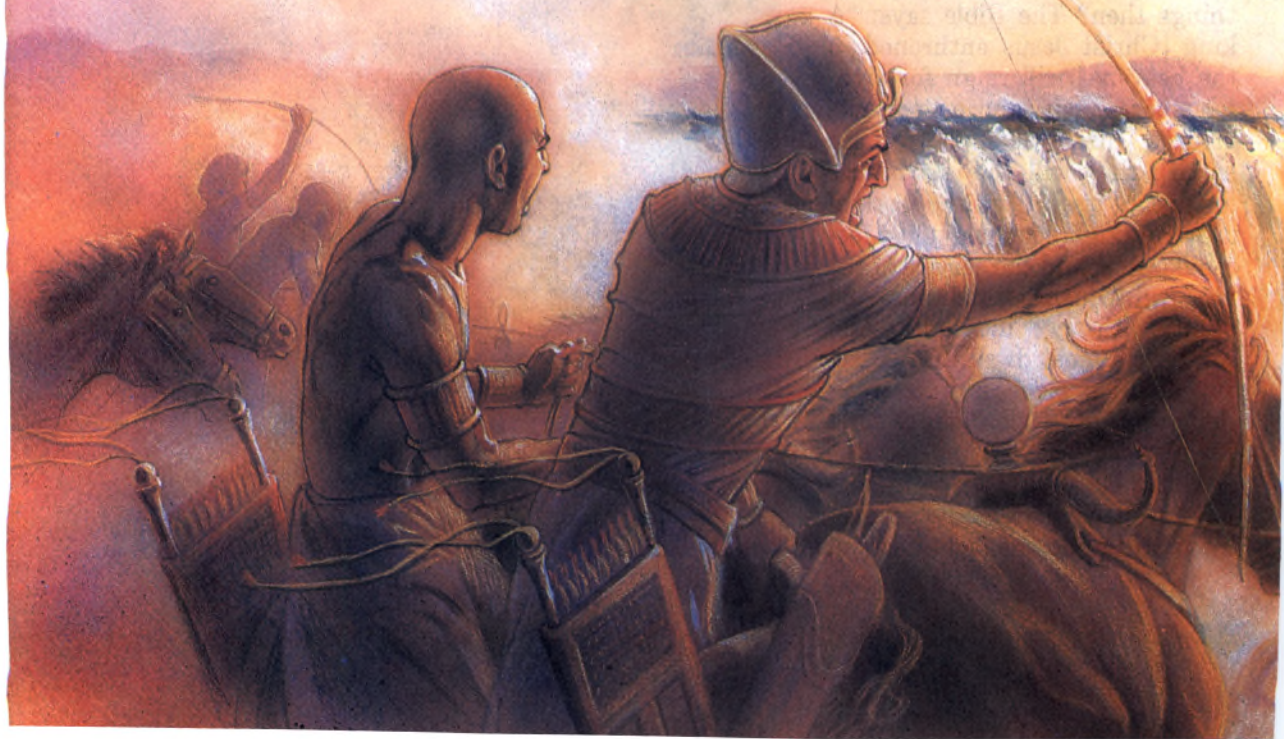
give them as a congregation? And why can his people trust in his saving arm during all their distresses?

God's Saving Arm in Action

³ Before delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage 3,500 years ago, God told his prophet Moses: "Say to the sons of Israel, 'I am Jehovah, and I shall certainly bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from their slavery, and I shall indeed reclaim you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.'" (Exodus 6:6) According to the apostle Paul,

3. To what do the Scriptures ascribe Israel's deliverance from Egypt?

1. In what sense does Jehovah have a mighty arm?
2. What questions here merit our consideration?



God brought the Israelites out of Egypt "with an uplifted arm." (Acts 13:17) The sons of Korah ascribed the conquest of the Promised Land to God, saying: "It was not by their own sword that they took possession of the land, and their own arm was not what brought them salvation. For it was your right hand and your arm and the light of your face, because you took pleasure in them."—Psalm 44:3.

⁴ Jehovah's arm also came to the aid of his people in the days of Assyrian aggression. At that time the prophet Isaiah prayed: "O Jehovah, show us favor. In you we have hoped. Become our arm every morning, yes, our salvation in the time of distress." (Isaiah 33:2) That prayer was answered when God's angel killed 185,000 in the Assyrian camp, sending King Sennacherib away from Jerusalem "with shame of face." (2 Chronicles 32:21; Isaiah 37:33-37) Placing trust in Jehovah's saving arm is always rewarded.

4. How was trust in Jehovah's saving arm rewarded in the days of Assyrian aggression?

**God brought the Israelites out of Egypt
"with an uplifted arm"**

⁵ God's mighty arm saved persecuted anointed Christians at the end of World War I. In 1918 the headquarters of the Governing Body was assailed by their enemies, and well-known brothers were imprisoned. Fearful of the worldly powers, the anointed virtually stopped their witness work. But they prayed for its revival and for cleansing from the sin of inactivity and the uncleanness of fear. God responded by causing the imprisoned brothers to be released, with exoneration following shortly thereafter. As a result of truths expressed at their convention in 1919 and the outpouring of God's activating spirit, the anointed were revived for fearless service to Jehovah in final fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32.—Revelation 11:7-12.

Help in the Congregation

⁶ As God supports his organization in general, his arm upholds individuals in it. Of course, conditions are not perfect in any congregation because all humans are imperfect. (Romans 5:12) So some servants of

5. What did God's mighty arm do for persecuted Christians at the end of World War I?

6. How do we know that it is possible to endure a trialsome situation in a congregation?



Jehovah may at times experience a trialsome situation in a congregation. For instance, though Gaius did "a faithful work" in receiving visiting brothers hospitably, Diotrephes did not receive them and even tried to throw hospitable ones out of the congregation. (3 John 5, 9, 10) Nevertheless, Jehovah helped Gaius and others to continue showing hospitality in support of the Kingdom-preaching work. Prayerful reliance on God should help us to keep doing faithful works while we wait for him to correct a situation that may be testing our faith.

⁷ Suppose you were associated with the first-century Corinth congregation. At one time, factions threatened its unity, and toleration of immorality endangered its spirit. (1 Corinthians 1:10, 11; 5:1-5) Believers took one another to worldly courts, and some wrangled over various matters. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; 8:1-13) Strife, jealousy, anger, and disorder made life difficult. Some even questioned Paul's authority and belittled his speaking ability. (2 Corinthians 10:10) Yet, loyal ones associated with that congregation fulfilled their dedication to God during that trying time.

⁸ If a trialsome situation arises, we need to stick with God's people. (Compare John 6: 66-69.) Let us be patient with one another, realizing that it takes some individuals longer than others to put on "the new personality" and clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Since God's servants also differ in background, all of us need to show love and be forgiving.—Colossians 3:10-14.

⁹ After many years of service to Jehovah, one brother said: "If one thing has been most important to me, it has been the matter of keeping close to Jehovah's visible organiza-

7. Despite what circumstances in the Corinth congregation did loyal Christians there fulfill their dedication to God?

8, 9. What should we do if a trialsome situation confronts us in a congregation?

tion. My early experience taught me how unsound it is to rely on human reasoning. Once my mind had been resolved on that point, I determined to stay by the faithful organization. How else can one get Jehovah's favor and blessing?" Do you similarly cherish your privilege of serving Jehovah with his joyful people? (Psalm 100:2) If so, you will let nothing draw you away from God's organization or destroy your relationship with the One whose arm saves all who love him.

Help When Temptations Beset Us

¹⁰ As faithful individuals associated with God's organization, we have his help during time of trial. For instance, he helps us to maintain our integrity to him when we are beset by temptation. Of course, we should pray in harmony with Jesus' words: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one," Satan the Devil. (Matthew 6:9-13) In effect, we thus ask God not to allow us to fail when we are tempted to disobey him. He also answers our prayers for wisdom to surmount trials. (James 1:5-8) And Jehovah's servants can be sure of his help, for Paul said: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) What is the source of such temptation, and how does God make the way out?

¹¹ Temptation comes from circumstances that can induce us to be unfaithful to God. Paul said: "These things became our examples, for us not to be persons desiring inju-

10. (a) How does prayer help God's people to face temptation? (b) What assurance did Paul give at 1 Corinthians 10:13?

11, 12. To what temptations did the Israelites succumb, and how can we benefit from their experiences?

rious things, even as [the Israelites] desired them. Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; just as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and they got up to have a good time.' Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day. Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of them put him to the test, only to perish by the serpents. Neither be murmurers, just as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer." —1 Corinthians 10:6-10.

¹² The Israelites desired injurious things when they yielded to the temptation to be greedy in gathering and eating quail miraculously provided by God. (Numbers 11:19, 20, 31-35) Earlier, they became idolaters when Moses' absence gave rise to temptation to engage in calf worship. (Exodus 32:1-6) Thousands perished because they succumbed to temptation and committed fornication with Moabite women. (Numbers 25:1-9) When the Israelites gave in to temptation and murmured about the destruction of rebellious Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their associates, 14,700 perished from a divinely sent scourge. (Numbers 16:41-49) We can benefit from such experiences if we realize that not one of these temptations was so great that the Israelites could not have resisted it. They could have done so if they had exercised faith, had been grateful for God's loving care, and had appreciated the rightness of his Law. Then Jehovah's arm could have saved them, even as it can save us.

¹³ As Christians, we face temptations common to mankind. Yet, we can remain faithful to God by praying for his help and working to resist temptation. God is faithful, and he will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. If we are loyal to Jehovah, we will never find it impossible to do his will. He

13, 14. How does Jehovah make the way out when his servants face temptation?

makes the way out by strengthening us to resist temptation. For example, when persecuted, we may be tempted to compromise in the hope of escaping torture or death. But if we are trusting in Jehovah's mighty arm, temptation never reaches a point where he cannot fortify our faith and give us enough strength to maintain integrity. As the apostle Paul said: "We are pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; we are persecuted, but not left in the lurch; we are thrown down, but not destroyed." —2 Corinthians 4:8, 9.

¹⁴ Jehovah also sustains his people by using his spirit as a remembrancer and a teacher. It brings Scriptural points to mind and helps us to discern how to apply them so as to resist temptation. (John 14:26) Faithful servants of Jehovah understand the issues involved in a temptation and are not deceived into following a wrong course. God has made the way out by enabling them to endure even to death without yielding to temptation. (Revelation 2:10) Besides helping his servants through his spirit, Jehovah uses his angels in behalf of his organization. —Hebrews 1:14.

Help in Personal Affairs

¹⁵ Those associated with Jehovah's organization have his help in personal affairs. For example, some may be seeking a Christian mate. (1 Corinthians 7:39) If there is a disappointment, it may be helpful to consider Israel's king Solomon. He failed to win the hand of a Shulammite maiden in marriage because she loved a humble shepherd. The king's record of this matter might be called The Song of Solomon's Frustrated Love. We may shed tears if our own romantic efforts are fruitless in a certain case, but Solomon survived his disappointment, and so can we.

15. What personal help may we find in The Song of Solomon?

God's spirit can assist us to display self-control and other godly qualities. His Word helps us to accept the often painful fact that a person cannot have romantic love for just anyone. (Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5) Yet, The Song of Solomon shows that it may be possible to find a fellow believer who loves us dearly. More important, this "superlative song" is fulfilled in the love of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for his "bride" of 144,000 anointed followers.—Song of Solomon 1:1; Revelation 14:1-4; 21:2, 9; John 10:14.

¹⁶ Even those marrying a believer have "tribulation in their flesh." (1 Corinthians 7:28) There will be anxieties and cares involving husband and wife and their children. (1 Corinthians 7:32-35) Illness may bring burdens and stress. Persecution or economic hardship may make it difficult for a Christian father to provide life's necessities for his family. Parents and children may be separated by imprisonment, and some may be tortured and even put to death. But in all such circumstances, we can resist the temptation to deny the faith if we really trust in Jehovah's saving arm.—Psalm 145:14.

¹⁷ We may have to endure some trials for a long time. For instance, a son may cause

16. The "tribulation in their flesh" experienced by married Christians may include what?

17. What family problem did God enable Isaac and Rebekah to endure?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ How has Jehovah's arm brought salvation in former times?
- ☐ How does Jehovah help his people in the congregation today?
- ☐ What help does God provide in personal affairs?
- ☐ What should we do if distressing problems persist?

his godly parents distress by marrying an unbeliever. That happened in the family of the patriarch Isaac and his wife Rebekah. Their 40-year-old son Esau married two Hittite women who were "a source of bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah." In fact, "Rebekah kept saying to Isaac: 'I have come to abhor this life of mine because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob [their other son] ever takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these from the daughters of the land, of what good is life to me?'" (Genesis 26:34, 35; 27:46) Apparently, Rebekah's righteous soul was tormented by this continuing problem. (Compare 2 Peter 2:7, 8.) Yet, Jehovah's arm upheld Isaac and Rebekah, enabling them to endure this trial while maintaining a strong relationship with Him.

¹⁸ It is distressing when a baptized family member slows down in God's service. (Compare 2 Timothy 2:15.) Yet, some have even endured the spiritual loss of a mate, as did Charles T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society. His wife severed her ties with the Society and abandoned him in 1897, after nearly 18 years of marriage. She filed for legal separation in 1903, and it was issued in 1908. His grief was clear when he told her in an early letter: "I have prayed earnestly to the Lord on your behalf. . . . I will not burden you with accounts of my sorrow, nor attempt to work upon your sympathies by delineating my emotions, as I from time to time run across your dresses and other articles which bring vividly before my mind your former self—so full of love and sympathy and helpfulness—the spirit of Christ. . . . Oh, do consider prayerfully what I am about to say. And be assured that the keen edge of my sorrow, its poignancy, is not my own loneliness for the remainder of life's journey, but your fall, my dear, your everlasting loss, *so far as I can see.*" Despite such heartache, Russell had God's support to the

18. What personal trial did C. T. Russell endure with God's help?

end of his earthly life. (Psalm 116:12-15) Jehovah always upholds his loyal servants.

Out of All Distresses

¹⁹ Jehovah's people know him to be "a God of saving acts," One "who daily carries the load for us." (Psalm 68:19, 20) Therefore, as dedicated individuals associated with his earthly organization, let us never give in to despair if distressing problems persist. Remember that "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses." (Psalm 46:1) Our trust in him is always rewarded. "I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me," said David, "and out of all my frights he delivered me. . . . This

19. What should we remember if distressing problems persist?

afflicted one called, and Jehovah himself heard. And out of all his distresses He saved him."—Psalm 34:4-6.

²⁰ Yes, our heavenly Father saves his people out of all distresses. He supports his earthly organization, providing help in congregation matters and in personal affairs. Indeed, "Jehovah will not forsake his people." (Psalm 94:14) But let us next consider other ways in which Jehovah helps his people individually. How does our heavenly Father sustain his servants who are ill, mentally depressed, grief-stricken because of bereavement, or distressed over their errors? As we shall see, in these matters as well, we have reason to rely on Jehovah's mighty arm.

20. What question remains for consideration?

MAKE JEHOVAH'S EVERLASTING ARMS YOUR SUPPORT

"The eternal God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."—DEUTERONOMY 33:27, *American Standard Version*.

JEHOVAH cares for his people. Why, during all the distress of the Israelites, "it was distressing to him"! In love and compassion, he "proceeded to lift them up and carry them." (Isaiah 63:7-9) So if we are faithful to God, we can be confident of his support.

² The prophet Moses said: "A hiding place is the God of ancient time, and underneath

1, 2. Why can Jehovah's people be confident of his support?

are the indefinitely lasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27) Says another translation: "The eternal God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (*American Standard Version*) But how do God's arms support his servants?

Why So Many Hardships?

³ Serving Jehovah does not shield us from

3. When will obedient mankind fully enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God"?

hardships common to imperfect humans. God's servant Job said: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation." (Job 14:1) As to "the days of our years," the psalmist said: "Their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things." (Psalm 90:10) Life will be that way until 'the creation is set free from enslavement to corruption and has the glorious freedom of the children of God.' (Romans 8:19-22) That will happen during Christ's Thousand Year Reign. On the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, human subjects of the Kingdom will then experience deliverance from sin and death. By the end of the Millennium, Christ and his associate king-priests will have helped obedient mankind to reach perfection, and those loyal to God during the final test by Satan and his demons will have their names written permanently in "the book of life." (Revelation 20:12-15) Then they will fully enjoy the glorious freedom of the children of God.

⁴ Meanwhile, instead of complaining about our lot in life, let us trust in Jehovah. (1 Samuel 12:22; Jude 16) Let us also be grateful for our High Priest, Jesus, through whom we can approach God "that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for *help at the right time*." (Hebrews 4:14-16) Never should we be like Adam. In effect, he wrongly charged Jehovah with giving him a bad wife, saying: "The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate." (Genesis 3:12) God gives good things and does not bring hardships on us. (Matthew 5:45; James 1:17) Adversities are often the result of our own lack of wisdom or someone else's mistakes. They may also come upon us because we are sinful and live in a world lying in Satan's power. (Proverbs 19:3; 1 John 5:19) Yet, Jehovah's everlasting arms always support his loyal servants who prayerfully rely

4. Instead of complaining about our lot in life, what should we do?

on him and personally apply the counsel of his Word.—Psalm 37:5; 119:105.

Sustained During Illness

⁵ Illness causes most of us distress at times. Yet, David said: "Happy is anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one; in the day of calamity Jehovah will provide escape for him. Jehovah himself will guard him and preserve him alive. He will be pronounced happy in the earth; and you cannot possibly give him over to the soul of his enemies. Jehovah himself will sustain him upon a divan of illness; all his bed you will certainly change during his sickness." —Psalm 41:1-3.

⁶ A considerate person helps the needy. "The day of calamity" can be any calamitous occasion or long period of hardship that weakens an individual. He trusts in God to guard him during infirmity, and others 'pronounce him happy in the earth' by spreading the news of Jehovah's merciful dealings with him. God sustained David "upon a divan of illness," perhaps during the stressful time when David's son Absalom sought to seize Israel's throne.—2 Samuel 15:1-6.

⁷ Since David had shown consideration to the lowly, he felt that God would sustain him while he was helpless in a sickbed. (Psalm 18:24-26) Though perilously ill, he was confident that God would 'change his bed,' not by miraculously removing the sickness, but by strengthening him with comforting thoughts. It would be as though Jehovah were transforming his bed from one of illness into one of recuperation. Similarly, if we are suffering illness as God's servants, Jehovah's everlasting arms will support us.

5. What encouragement may ailing ones find at Psalm 41:1-3?

6, 7. How did God help David when he was on a sickbed, and how can this encourage Jehovah's servants today?

Consolation for the Depressed

⁸ Sickness may cause mental depression. A seriously ill Christian, who sometimes lacks enough strength even to read, relates: "This runs me through many emotions of depression, feelings of lack of worth, and even tears." Knowing that Satan wants to crush him with discouragement, he is fighting back, aware that with Jehovah's help he cannot fail. (James 4:7) This man is an encouragement to others who know that he is trusting in God. (Psalm 29:11) Even when hospitalized, he telephones sick ones and others to build them up spiritually. He himself is upbuilt by listening to audiocassette recordings of Kingdom melodies and articles in this journal and its companion magazine, *Awake!*, and by association with fellow Christians. This brother says: "I regularly talk to Jehovah in prayer, asking him to give me strength, guidance, comfort, and help to endure." If you are a Christian experiencing serious health problems, always trust in Jehovah and make his everlasting arms your support.

⁹ Depression is an old problem. While under test, Job spoke as a man feeling abandoned by God. (Job 29:2-5) Concern over the devastated state of Jerusalem and its walls made Nehemiah gloomy, and Peter was so depressed about denying Christ that he wept bitterly. (Nehemiah 2:1-8; Luke 22:62) Epaphroditus was depressed because Christians in Philippi heard he had fallen sick. (Philippians 2:25, 26) Depression plagued some Christians in Thessalonica, for Paul urged the brothers there to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) So how does God help such individuals?

¹⁰ A personal decision must be made about

8. How has one ailing Christian shown his dependence on God?

9. What examples show that mental depression sometimes troubles godly people?

10. What may be helpful in trying to cope with mental depression?

treatment for severe depression.* (Galatians 6:5) Adequate rest and balanced activity may help. Instead of viewing several problems as one major plight, a depressed individual may find it helpful to work at solving them *one at a time*. Comforting help from congregation elders may be very beneficial, especially if this emotional problem is causing spiritual concern. (James 5:13-15) Above all, it is vital to rely on Jehovah, 'throwing all our anxiety upon him, because he cares for us.' Persistent and heartfelt prayer can bring one 'the peace of God that will guard the heart and mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.'—1 Peter 5:6-11; Philippians 4:6, 7.

Jehovah Helps Us to Endure Grief

¹¹ Another distressing experience is the death of a loved one. Abraham bewailed the loss of his wife, Sarah. (Genesis 23:2) When his son Absalom died, David was grief-stricken. (2 Samuel 18:33) Why, even the perfect man Jesus "gave way to tears" over the death of his friend Lazarus! (John 11:35) So there is sadness when death claims a loved one. But what can help to allay such sorrow?

¹² God helps his people to endure the extreme grief of bereavement. His Word says that there will be a resurrection. Hence, we do not "sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13; Acts 24:15) Jehovah's spirit helps us to have peace and faith and to meditate on the wonderful future promised in his Word, so that we are not completely overwhelmed by sad thoughts about a dead loved one. Solace also comes from reading the Scriptures and praying to "the God of all comfort."—2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; Psalm 68:4-6.

¹³ We can draw comfort from the resurrection hope as did godly Job, who exclaimed:

* See articles on mental depression in *Awake!* of October 22, 1987, pages 2-16, and November 8, 1987, pages 12-16.

11-13. What can help to allay sorrow over the death of a loved one?

"O that in Sheol you [Jehovah] would conceal me, that you would keep me secret until your anger turns back, that you would set a time limit for me and remember me! If an able-bodied man dies can he live again? All the days of my compulsory service I shall wait, until my relief comes. You will call, and I myself shall answer you. For the work of your hands you will have a yearning." (Job 14: 13-15) Great sadness is not usually experienced when a dear friend goes on a journey, for we expect to see him again. The deep grief that loss of a loved one causes may be somewhat lessened if we look upon the death of a faithful Christian in a similar way. If he had an earthly hope, he will be awakened from the sleep of death here on earth during Christ's Thousand Year Reign. (John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:11-13) And if we hope to live on earth forever, we may be here to greet our resurrected loved one.

¹⁴ After her husband's death, one sister knew that she had to get on with her life in

14. How did two Christian widows cope with the death of their husbands?

God's service. Besides keeping busy with 'plenty to do in the Lord's work,' she made a quilt with 800 pieces. (1 Corinthians 15:58) "This was a good project," she says, "because all the time I was working I could listen to Kingdom melodies and Bible tapes, which kept my mind occupied." She fondly recalls a visit by an experienced elder and his wife. From the Bible, the elder pointed out that God really cares for widows. (James 1:27) Another Christian woman did not yield to self-pity when her husband died. She appreciated the support of friends and took greater interest in others. "I prayed more often and developed a closer relationship with Jehovah," she says. And what a blessing it is to have the support of God's everlasting arms!

Help When We Err

¹⁵ Though we love Jehovah's law, we err at times. This no doubt distresses us, as it did David, to whom God's laws, reminders, or-

15. What is the substance of David's words at Psalm 19:7-13?



ders, and judicial decisions were more desirable than gold. He said: "Your own servant has been warned by them; in the keeping of them there is a large reward. Mistakes—who can discern? From concealed sins pronounce me innocent. Also from presumptuous acts hold your servant back; do not let them dominate me. In that case I shall be complete, and I shall have remained innocent from much transgression." (Psalm 19:7-13) Let us analyze these words.

¹⁶ Presumptuous acts are much more serious sins than mistakes. Saul was rejected as king for presumptuously offering sacrifice and for sparing Amalekite king Agag and the best spoil, though God had commanded that the Amalekites be devoted to destruction. (1 Samuel 13:8-14; 15:8-19) King Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for presumptuously seizing priestly duties. (2 Chronicles 26:16-21) When the ark of the covenant was

16. Why should we avoid presumptuousness?

We can draw comfort from the resurrection hope, as did godly Job

being taken to Jerusalem and the cattle drawing the cart nearly caused an upset, God struck Uzzah dead for irreverently grabbing hold of the Ark to steady it. (2 Samuel 6:6, 7) So, if we do not know what to do or whether we are authorized to do something, we should display modesty and consult those having discernment. (Proverbs 11:2; 13:10) Of course, if we have ever been presumptuous, we should pray for forgiveness and ask God to help us guard against presumptuousness in the future.

¹⁷ Concealed sins may cause distress. According to Psalm 32:1-5, David tried to hide his sin, but he said: "When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My life's moisture has been changed as in the dry heat of summer." Trying to repress a guilty conscience wore David out, and anguish reduced his vigor as a tree loses life-giving moisture during a drought or in summer's dry heat. He

17. How can concealed sins affect a person, yet how can forgiveness and relief be obtained?



apparently suffered ill effects mentally and physically and lost joy because of failure to confess. Only confession to God could bring pardon and relief. Said David: "Happy is the one whose revolt is pardoned, whose sin is covered. . . . My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: 'I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jehovah.' And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins." Loving help from Christian elders can help to promote spiritual recovery.—Proverbs 28:13; James 5:13-20.

¹⁸ Sin may have long-lasting effects. It did for David, who committed adultery with Bath-sheba, maneuvered her husband's death, and married the pregnant widow. (2 Samuel 11:1-27) Though God showed mercy because of the Kingdom covenant, David's repentance, and his merciful treatment of others, David experienced 'calamity out of his own house.' (2 Samuel 12:1-12) The adulterine child died. David's son Amnon raped his half sister Tamar and was killed at her brother Absalom's order. (2 Samuel 12:15-23; 13:1-33) Absalom disgraced David by having relations with Da-

18. What evidence is there that sin can have long-lasting effects, but what can be a source of comfort in such circumstances?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ How does Jehovah help his servants who are sick?
- ☐ What may be helpful when we are trying to cope with mental depression?
- ☐ What can help to allay grief over the death of a loved one?
- ☐ How can those concealing their sins get relief?
- ☐ What help is there when Jehovah's people are severely tried?

vid's concubines. He tried to usurp the throne but met death. (2 Samuel 15:1-18:33) Sin still has an aftermath. For example, a disfellowshipped wrongdoer may repent and be reinstated in the congregation, but it may take years to overcome the tarnished reputation and emotional trauma resulting from sin. Meanwhile, how comforting it is to have Jehovah's forgiveness and the support of his everlasting arms!

Rescued From the Stresses Upon Us

¹⁹ When severely tried, we may lack sufficient wisdom and strength to make a decision and carry it out. In such a case, God's spirit "joins in with help for our weakness; for the problem of what we should pray for as we need to we do not know, but the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered." (Romans 8:26) If Jehovah brings about a change of circumstances, we should be grateful. Yet, his arm may save us in another way. If we pray for wisdom, Jehovah may by his spirit indicate what we should do and supply the strength needed to do it. (James 1:5-8) With his help, we can endure when "grieved by various trials" and come through them with tested and strengthened faith.—1 Peter 1:6-8.

²⁰ Let us never tire of turning to God in prayer. "My eyes are constantly toward Jehovah, for he it is that brings my feet out of the net," said David. "Turn your face to me, and show me favor; for I am solitary and afflicted. Distresses of my heart have multiplied; from the stresses upon me O bring me out. See my affliction and my trouble, and pardon all my sins." (Psalm 25:15-18) Like David, we will enjoy divine deliverance, favor, and forgiveness if we really make Jehovah's everlasting arms our support.

19. How can God's spirit be of help when we are severely tried?

20. What will we enjoy if we really make Jehovah's everlasting arms our support?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

'Happy Are the Spiritually Hungry'

JESUS said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need." (Matthew 5:3) Such ones will seek life-giving information from God's Word, the Bible, and taking in this knowledge will lead them to everlasting life. —Matthew 4:4; John 17:3.

□ A spiritually hungry person in an African land walked for four hours in the cold and dark in order to obtain a copy of *My Book of Bible Stories*. Upon reaching the village where Jehovah's Witnesses were preaching, he was bitterly disappointed to find that the last book had been placed. He stayed in the village for three days until an additional supply of books could be obtained, and then he was happy finally to have in his possession this fine spiritual information.

During the month of their stay in this isolated area, the Witnesses distributed 55 books, 365 brochures, and 145 magazines, and they obtained 5 subscriptions. They were very moved when, as they left, both adults and children called after them in the Kpelle language: "May Jehovah be with you!" Efforts are being made to follow up on the interest.

Another person in this same country was also spiritually hungry. She was the treasurer for her church and an entertainment officer for her county. When the Witnesses called on her, she tearfully admitted that the church fell far short of the Bible's requirements for Christianity. The Witnesses showed her from her own Bible how to iden-

tify the true religion. Then she attended two meetings at the Kingdom Hall and afterward stated: "What I saw and heard really convinced me that this is the truth." She was impressed by the meetings and by the conduct of those present. She saw that what the Witnesses who called on her had said was not something they had dreamed up but something real. She has since taken steps to break off her relationship with the church, and this has resulted in a good witness in the community.

□ A young Melanesian catechist in New Caledonia was

his heart. In view of what these scriptures say, he asked his priest why the Catholic Church tolerates the use of images in worship. The priest evaded the question. The man went to a number of other "Christian" religions, but they did not give him satisfactory answers to his questions. Finally he decided to attend a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses with his mother, who had already manifested an interest in the truth. The love he saw among the Witnesses and their Bible-based teachings impressed him very much.

Despite great distances, he regularly hitchhiked to the meetings, quickly took a stand for the truth, and was baptized. Now he is a ministerial servant. His mother and two of his fleshly sisters also became Witnesses of Jehovah. The young man preached to his own tribe and started many Bible studies. Now a number are attending meetings in this area—all because a young man happened to notice on a table a book explaining the Bible, studied it, and took seriously what he learned.

Jehovah has a great spiritual feeding program in operation today, and multitudes benefit from it. Isaiah aptly prophesied about it when he said: "Look! My own servants will eat, but you yourselves [members of false religion] will go hungry." (Isaiah 65: 13) Happy are we if we benefit from Jehovah's provision for satisfying our spiritual hunger.



spiritually hungry. He found a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* on the table in his mother's house, and he read chapters 2 and 3. The Bible texts Exodus 20:4, 5 and John 4: 23, 24 discussed there touched

What Is the Key to Real Christianity?



TODAY, more people claim to belong to Christianity than to any other religious group. But the beliefs of these self-styled Christians are contradictory, they have no unity, and sometimes they even kill one another. Clearly, many are not *real* Christians. Jesus said that in our day, many would say to him, "Lord, Lord," in other words, claim to be Christians, yet he would say to them: "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7:21, 23) Surely, none of us would want to be among these! So how can we tell if we are *real* Christians?

The fact is, many things are needed to be a real Christian. The real Christian has to have a strong faith because "without faith it is impossible to please [God] well." (Hebrews 11:6) That strong faith has to be accompanied by right acts. The disciple James warned that "faith without works is dead." (James 2:26) Moreover, a Christian has to recognize the authority of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) But the key to real Christianity is something apart from these things.

What is the key? The apostle Paul explained in his first letter to the Corinthians: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a sounding piece of brass or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesying and am acquainted with all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but

do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all." —1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

So *love* is the key to real Christianity. Faith, works, and right association are vital, indispensable. But without love, their value is not realized. Why is that?

Basically, because of the kind of God we worship. The apostle John described Jehovah, the God of true Christianity, in these words: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Jehovah God has many other qualities, such as power, justice, and wisdom, but since he is preeminently a God of love, what kind of people would he want his worshipers to be? Surely, individuals who imitate him and cultivate love.—Matthew 5:44, 45; 22:37-39.

A Right Motive

Yes, love causes Christians to be like the God they worship. It means that their motives are similar to God's motives. What motive above all moved Jehovah God to send Jesus to earth to give us the opportunity to gain eternal life? Love. "God *loved* the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) What, then, should be our motive in doing God's will. Once again, love. "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments."—1 John 5:3.

Is it possible to serve God with a wrong motive? Yes. Paul mentioned some in his day who were serving out of envy and rivalry. (Philippians 1:15-17) That could happen to us. This world is very competitive, and that spirit could affect us. We may be proud to think that we are a better speaker or able to place more literature than others. We may compare our privileges of service with those enjoyed by someone else and become self-important—or envious. An elder may be jealous of his position of authority, even to the point of hindering a younger man with ability from making progress. A desire for personal gain may move us to cultivate the friendship of wealthier Christians while ignoring poorer ones.

These things can happen because we are imperfect. However, if—like Jehovah—we make love our main motivation, we will fight such tendencies. Selfishness, a desire to glorify ourselves, or presumptuous pride can crowd out love, so that we are “not profited at all.”—Proverbs 11:2; 1 Corinthians 13:3.

Love in a Selfish World

Jesus said that his followers would be “no part of the world.” (John 17:14) How can we avoid being swamped by the influence of the world around us? Love will help. For example, today men are “lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” (2 Timothy 3:4) John warned us not to be like that. He said: “Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world.”—1 John 2:15, 16.

Yet, it is not easy to turn our backs on “the desire of the flesh” and “the desire of

the eyes.” These things are loved precisely because they are so appealing to our flesh. Moreover, there are far more and varied pleasures available today than there were in John’s day, so if the desire of the eyes was a problem then, it is especially so now.

Interestingly, many of the modern pleasures that the world offers are not wrong in themselves. There is nothing wrong with having a big house, a nice car, a television set, or a stereo unit. Neither does it break any Biblical law to take long, interesting trips and have exciting vacations. What is the point of John’s warning, then? For one thing, if such things become *too* important to us, they develop within us a spirit of selfishness, materialism, and pride. And the effort of earning the money to get them could hinder us in our service to Jehovah. Even enjoying such things takes time, and while a reasonable amount of relaxation brings refreshment, our time is limited, in view of our obligation to study the Bible, meet with fellow Christians for worship, and preach the good news of the Kingdom.—Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

In this materialistic age, it takes determination to ‘put God’s Kingdom first’ and resist ‘using this world to the full.’ (Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 7:31) A strong faith will help. But especially, a genuine love for Jehovah and for our neighbors will strengthen us to resist the lures that, while not wrong in themselves, may prevent us from ‘thoroughly accomplishing our ministry.’ (2 Timothy 4:5) Without such love, our ministry could easily deteriorate into a mere token effort.

Love in the Congregation

Jesus highlighted the importance of love when he said: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) Why would elders

spend so much time shepherding and helping fellow Christians if they did not love them? Why would the congregation put up with the weaknesses of their fellows—including the elders—if not because of love? Love moves Christians to help one another in a physical way when they hear that others are in need. (Acts 2:44, 45) During times of persecution, Christians protect one another and even die for one another. Why? Because of love.—John 15:13.

Sometimes the greatest proofs of love come in little things. An elder, already under pressure from a heavy work load, may be approached by a fellow Christian who again brings up a complaint that seems quite unimportant to the elder. Should the elder get angry? Instead of allowing this to become a cause for division, he deals patiently and kindly with his brother. They discuss the matter together, and it also strengthens their friendship. (Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15-17) Instead of each one insisting on his rights, all should try to cultivate the bigheartedness that Jesus recommended, being ready to forgive their brothers “seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:21, 22) Thus, Christians try hard to clothe themselves with love, “for it is a perfect bond of union.”—Colossians 3:14.

Intensifying Our Love for One Another

Yes, love is the right motive for serving Jehovah. Love will strengthen us to keep separate from the world, and love will ensure that the congregation remains truly Christian. While not detracting from efficiency, it will help those in authority not to become so efficiency-minded that they forget kindness and mildness in dealing with others. Love helps all of us to “be obedient to those who are taking the lead . . . and be submissive.”—Hebrews 13:17.

The apostle Peter urged us to have “intense love” for one another because “love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8) How can we do this? Man was created in the image of God and thus has a natural capacity to love. But the type of love we are speaking of here needs something extra. In fact, it is the main fruit of God’s spirit. (Galatians 5:22) Hence, to cultivate love, we have to expose ourselves to God’s spirit. How? By studying the Bible, which was inspired by Jehovah’s spirit. (2 Timothy 3:16) By praying for Jehovah’s spirit to build up our love for Jehovah and for our brothers. And by associating with the Christian congregation, where the spirit flows freely.

We also need to examine ourselves so as to detect any unloving acts or thoughts. Remember, love is a quality of the heart, and “the heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate.” (Jeremiah 17:9) Despite all the help Jehovah gives, we will sometimes act in a loveless way. We may speak with unnecessary sharpness to a fellow Christian, or we may bristle and take offense at something that is said. Hence, we do well to echo David’s prayer: “Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite.”—Psalm 139:23, 24.

As the Bible says, “love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:8) If we practice loving one another, we will never be found wanting in times of testing. The love that exists among God’s people contributes greatly to the spiritual paradise that exists today. Only those who love one another intensely from the heart will find pleasure in living in the new world. Hence, imitate Jehovah in expressing such love and thus strengthen the bond of unity. Cultivate love, and possess the key to *real* Christianity.



‘HAPPY ARE ALL THOSE KEEPING IN EXPECTATION OF JEHOVAH’

AS TOLD BY DOMENICK PICCONE

My parents emigrated from Italy to the United States during the early 1920's and eventually settled in South Philadelphia, then known as Little Italy. By 1927 they were associating with the Bible Students, who later became known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

I WAS born in 1929 and was thus exposed to Bible truth from infancy. I can recall that Witnesses would meet in our house before going out to preach in staunchly Roman Catholic towns in the coal-mining region of Pennsylvania, where the brothers were arrested many times. I was baptized in 1941 at the convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in St. Louis, Missouri. Then things started to go wrong.

I began to associate with the wrong kind of youths in the neighborhood and started to smoke and gamble on street corners. Fortunately, my parents saw that they were losing control of me and decided to move to another area of the city. I was not pleased, since I lost all my street friends. However, today I look back and feel very grateful to my father. He made a real financial sacrifice to pull me out of those

surroundings. Whereas previously he could walk to work, now he had to take a long subway ride. But this move got me back into a theocratic environment.

The Missionary Seed Is Sown

Almost every year, we traveled over to South Lansing, New York, to attend the graduations of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Seeing those missionaries sent off all around the world sowed the desire for missionary service in my heart. Therefore, after graduating from high school, I enrolled as a regular pioneer minister, starting May 1947.

Another young pioneer in our congregation was Elsa Schwarz, and she was very zealous in the preaching work. Her parents had always encouraged her to be a missionary, so you can likely guess the result. We were married in 1951. While serving together as pioneers in Pennsylvania, we applied to attend the Gilead missionary school. In 1953 we were invited to the 23rd class of Gilead. After five months of intensive study and preparation in Gilead, we graduated at a convention in Toronto, Canada, and received our assignment—Spain!

Problems in Spain

While preparing to leave for our missionary assignment in 1955, Elsa and I were full of questions. Spain! What would it be like? The nation was under the rule of the Catholic dictator Generalissimo Francisco Franco, and the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was under ban. How would we manage under such conditions?

We had been advised by the brothers at the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn that Frederick Franz, then vice president of the Watch Tower Society, and Alvaro Berecochea, a missionary from Argentina, had been arrested, along with many other brothers. A secret assembly had been orga-

nized in the woods near Barcelona. However, the police had learned of this secret gathering and had arrested most of those present.*



Assembly in a forest in Spain, 1956

We had been told that perhaps no one would be able to meet us when we arrived in Barcelona. Our instructions were: "Look for a hotel, then advise the Society in New York of the address." We kept in mind the words of Isaiah: "Happy are all those keeping in expectation of [Jehovah]. And your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people.'" (Isaiah 30:18, 21) We would just have to keep in expectation of Jehovah and follow the direction of his organization.

We said good-bye to our parents and friends who came to New York to bid us farewell, and soon our ship, the *Saturnia*, was sailing down the Hudson River heading for the Atlantic. That was the last time that I saw my father. Two years later, while I was abroad, he died after a prolonged illness.

Eventually we reached our assignment, the port city of Barcelona. It was a dreary, rainy day, but as we were going through

* For full details, see the 1978 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pages 177-9.

customs, we saw the "sunshine" of beaming faces. Alvaro Berecochea, along with some Spanish brothers, was there to meet us. We were really happy to know that our brothers had been freed.

Now we had to learn Spanish. In those days missionaries had to learn languages the hard way—without textbooks or teachers. There were no language courses then. We had to meet the required quota of hours in the preaching work and at the same time learn the language—on the job, as it were.

Preaching Under a Catholic Dictatorship

Jehovah's organization was then in its infancy in Spain. In 1955 there was a peak of 366 publishers in a land of some 28 million people. There were only ten congregations in the entire country. Would it remain that way for long? Once my wife and I got started preaching from house to house, we found that Spain was like a paradise for those spreading the good news. Yes, the people were hungry for the truth.

But how was the preaching work done, since it was under ban? Usually we did not visit every house on a street, nor all the apartments in a building. Barcelona is made up of many five- and six-story apartment buildings, and we were instructed to start from the top and work our way down. Perhaps we would call at just one apartment on each floor or even skip several floors. This method made it more difficult for the police to catch us if a fanatical householder turned us in.

Congregation meetings were held in private homes, congregations being made up of from three to four book study groups. This enabled the congregation servant to visit each of these book studies once a month. The book study conductor was responsible for conducting all the meetings,

held on two different nights of the week for small groups of from 10 to 20 people.

We had to learn a new way of life. At that time there were no missionary-home arrangements in Spain. Whenever possible, we lived with the brothers in their homes. Learning to cook on a charcoal burner was a real experience for Elsa! Eventually we were able to buy a small one-burner kerosene stove, which was a real improvement.

Persecution and Expulsions

After a while we got word that a wave of persecution was starting in Andalusia, where a special pioneer had been arrested. Unfortunately, he was carrying a booklet that contained the names and addresses of



*We used to preach to
non-Muslims in Morocco*

brothers in all parts of the country. We continued to receive reports that our brothers were being arrested in one city after another. The raids were getting closer and closer to Barcelona. Finally, persecution hit Barcelona.

A few months earlier, the police had taken me to their headquarters for questioning. After several hours I was released, and I thought that was the end of the matter. Then the American Embassy contacted me and suggested that to avoid the

embarrassment of being deported, I should leave the country of my own accord. Shortly after, the police advised us that we had ten days to leave. Since we had no time to write to the Watch Tower Society, what should we do? Circumstances seemed to indicate that we should head for the nearest missionary field outside Spain—Portugal, to the west.

Another Assignment, Another Language

Once we arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, in July 1957, we were assigned as missionaries to Porto, a city well to the north of Lisbon. It was considered the second capital of the country and was in a region famous for its port wines. A thriving congregation held its meetings in the basement of a downtown building. The preaching work was banned in Portugal too, as the country was under the dictatorship of Salazar. Yet, the circumstances were completely different from those in Spain. The meetings were held in the homes of the brothers, and groups of from 40 to 60 attended. There were no indications that the homes were meeting places of Jehovah's Witnesses. Even though I spoke no Portuguese, I was appointed congregation servant. Once again, we learned a new language the hard way.

About a year later, we were assigned to Lisbon. Here, for the first time, we had a place of our own, an apartment overlooking the city of Lisbon. We were assigned to care for a circuit—the entire Republic of Portugal. When we arrived in Portugal, there were only 305 publishers and five congregations.

Time of Trouble Begins

On some of the maps showing Portugal and its colonies, there was the saying: "The sun never sets on Portuguese territory."

This was the case, since Portugal had colonies in many parts of the world, two of the largest being Mozambique and Angola in Africa. In 1961 it seemed that there were problems brewing in these colonies, and Portugal saw the need to increase its military forces.

Now, what would the young brothers do when they were recruited for military service? Some were able to get exemption due to ill health, but most took a firm stand for Christian neutrality. Soon a strong wave of persecution started. The branch received reports that special pioneers were being arrested and severely beaten by the secret police, the infamous P.I.D.E. (*Policia Internacional e Defesa do Estado*). Some of us



Branch in El Salvador, our present assignment

missionaries were called to police headquarters for questioning. Then, three couples were given 30 days to leave the country. All of us appealed.

One by one the missionary couples were called to police headquarters for an interview with the director of the P.I.D.E. First, the branch servant, Eric Britten, and his wife, Christina, were questioned. Then, Eric Beveridge and his wife, Hazel, and finally Elsa and I were interrogated. The police chief falsely accused us of being used

by the Communists to undermine the Western world with our teaching on neutrality. Our appeals were in vain.

How sad it was to leave behind 1,200 brothers and sisters who were going through hard times because of the harsh rule of an unreasonable dictator! While the Beveridges went to Spain and the Brittens back to England, what was to be our next assignment? Muslim Morocco!

Preaching in Islamic Morocco

Once again, we were keeping in expectation of Jehovah. A new assignment, new customs, and new languages! Arabic, French, and Spanish were the official languages of the Kingdom of Morocco, where there were 234 Witnesses in eight congregations. The official religion of the land was Islam, and proselytizing among Muslims was illegal. So we could preach only to the mainly European non-Muslim population.

Once missionaries started to arrive in the late '50's, increases were seen. But the Moroccan government began to put pressure on the European population, and there was a great exodus of foreigners, including many brothers.

As our non-Muslim population shrank, we found ourselves obliged to find tactful ways of talking to the Muslims, and this led to complaints to the police. As complaints became more frequent in Tangier and other cities, we were finally told that we had only 30 days to leave the country. In May 1969, Elsa and I were expelled from yet another assignment.

A Short-Term Assignment?

We were told to return to Brooklyn, and I was invited to attend a meeting for branch servants held that summer. While there, I was informed that our new assignment would be El Salvador, Central Amer-

ica, and that I was to serve there as branch servant. I learned that this would most likely last for about five years, the maximum that missionaries were allowed to remain in the country, since our work was not legally recognized there.

El Salvador—what an assignment! There were 1,290 publishers, including 114 pioneers reporting on average each month. The people were God-fearing, Bible-loving, and hospitable. At virtually every door, they would invite us in to talk to them. In a short time, we had as many Bible studies as we could handle.

As we observed the increase and the great need there, we felt sad that we would have to leave this assignment after just five years. So it was decided that we should try to have the work of Jehovah's Witnesses legalized. We submitted the paperwork to the government in December 1971, and on April 26, 1972, we were delighted to read in the government paper, *Diario Oficial*, that our petition had been accepted. The missionaries would no longer have to leave after five years but could obtain permanent residency in the country.

Tests and Blessings

Over the years in our various assignments, we have made many good friends

In Our Next Issue

- **Is Your Future Set by Destiny?**
- **How Happy the Mild-Tempered!**
- **Lending Money
to Fellow Christians**

and seen fruitage in our ministry. Elsa had a fine experience in San Salvador with a schoolteacher and her soldier husband. One of the schoolteacher's friends also became interested in the truth. At first the husband did not manifest interest in the Bible; nevertheless, we visited him while he was in the hospital, and he was friendly. Eventually he studied the Bible, gave up his military career, and started to preach along with us.

In the meantime, a lady turned up at the Kingdom Hall and asked Elsa if she was studying with the former soldier. It turned out that she had been his mistress! She was also studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. At the district convention, the former military man, his wife, her friend, and the former mistress were all baptized!

Expansion in El Salvador

Because of the great increase, many Kingdom Halls have been built, and the country now has more than 18,000 active Witnesses. This progress, however, has not been without its tests and trials. For ten years, the brothers have had to do Jehovah's will in the midst of a civil war. But they have kept their neutrality and remained loyal to Jehovah's Kingdom.

Between the two of us, Elsa and I have been in full-time service for 85 years. We have found that when we keep in expectation of Jehovah and listen 'to the word from behind saying, "This is the way. Walk in it, you people,"' we are never disappointed. We have indeed enjoyed a satisfying and rewarding life as Jehovah's full-time servants.

Can Science Disprove Miracles?

Did the miracles of the Bible really happen? There are many, including numerous scientists and religious leaders, who answer no. They feel that belief in miracles belongs to a more superstitious age and that modern science has disproved the possibility of their happening. Hence, the following letter published in *The Times* of London and signed by a number of scientists is worthy of note. It says:

"It is not logically valid to use science as an argument against miracles. To believe that miracles cannot

happen is as much an act of faith as to believe that they can happen. . . . Miracles are *unprecedented* events. Whatever the current fashions in philosophy or the revelations of opinion polls may suggest, it is important to affirm that science (based as it is upon the observation of *precedents*) can have nothing to say on the subject. Its 'laws' are only generalizations of our experience. Faith rests on other grounds." (Italics ours.) Indeed, there is no way that modern science can disprove the accounts of the miracles recorded in the Bible.

“Do Not Be Irritating Your Children”

FATHERS, do not be irritating your children.” So said the apostle Paul. (Ephesians 6:4) In Western lands, where parents are subjected to the stresses and strains of industrialized society, it is not always easy for them to deal kindly with their children. And child rearing is no less a challenge in developing lands. True, the pace of life may be slower than in the West. But long-standing customs and traditions may influence parents to deal with children in ways that are almost sure to frustrate and irritate them.

Children in some developing lands are placed on the lowest rung of the ladder of recognition and respect. In certain cultures children are ordered about in threatening and authoritative tones, yelled at and insulted. It may be rare to hear an adult say a kind word to a child, not to mention courtesies such as “please” and “thank you.” Fathers feel they must establish their authority with strong hands; hard words are reinforced with hard blows.

In some African cultures, it is even viewed as impertinent for a child to say a greeting to a grown-up on his own initiative. It is not uncommon to see youths, weighed down with heavy loads on their heads, patiently waiting for permission to greet a group of adults. The grown-ups will carry on their idle chatter, ignoring the waiting youths until they choose to let them offer greetings. Only after those greetings have been said are the children allowed to pass.

Poverty is another factor that can work against the welfare of children. At the expense of their health and schooling, youngsters are exploited as child laborers. Unreasonably heavy work loads may be placed on children even at home. And when families in rural areas send their children to the big cities to be cared for by relatives while they are being schooled, they are frequently treated as virtual slaves. Surely, all this shabby treatment is irritating to children!

What ‘Irritating Them’ Means

Some parents allow themselves to be carried along by the tide of popular child-rearing customs with little thought as to the consequences. However, it is with good reason that God’s Word urges parents not to irritate their children. The original Greek expression rendered “do not be irritating” literally means “not be you provoking to wrath.” (*Kingdom Interlinear*) At Romans 10:19, the same verb is rendered “incite to violent anger.”

Today’s English Version thus says: “Do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry.” *The Jerusalem Bible* similarly says: “Never drive your children to resentment.” The Bible is therefore not talking about the minor irritations a parent might unwittingly cause his child because of imperfection, nor is it condemning righteously applied discipline. According to *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, this Bible verse speaks of “the hasty, rough, moody treatment of children, so

that . . . they are repelled and enticed to opposition, defiance and bitterness.”

As educator J. S. Farrant observed: “The fact is that children are human. They do not simply respond in a passive way as plants do to their environment. They *react*.” And often the reaction to unjust treatment results in spiritual and emotional devastation. Says Ecclesiastes 7:7: “For mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy.”

Raising Children in God’s Discipline

Parents who desire their children to go on walking in the truth must not allow cultural norms and traditions to be the sole determinants of how they will rear their children. (Compare 3 John 4.) After warning parents about irritating their children, Paul added: “Go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah.” (Ephesians 6:4) Jehovah’s standards thus supersede local customs and views.

Whereas it may be common in certain lands for children to be treated as inferiors and as slave laborers, the Bible declares at Psalm 127:3: “Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward.” Could a parent maintain good relations with God if he treated his inheritance abusively? Hardly. Nor is there room for the view that children exist solely to meet the needs of their parents. At 2 Corinthians 12:14, the Bible reminds us: “For the children ought not to lay up for their parents, but the parents for their children.”

It is not that children should be excused from doing their share of household chores and duties. But should not the child’s own best interests be taken into consideration? For instance, when Yaa, a Christian girl in Africa, was asked what she would like most

for her parents to do for her, she answered: “I wish that my household chores would be reduced on the days that I have field service arrangements.” So if a child is finding it difficult to be in school on time or to attend meetings due to a heavy load of household chores, would it not be best to make some adjustments?

Granted, young ones can be difficult to deal with. How can parents deal with them in a way that is not abusive or irritating? Says Proverbs 19:11: “The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger.” Yes, first you can try to understand your child as an *individual*. Each child is unique, with his own interests, capabilities, and needs. What are these? Have you taken the time to get to know your child and to learn the answer to this question? Working and worshipping together, engaging in family recreation—these things provide opportunities for parents to draw closer to their children.

At 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul made another interesting observation when he told Timothy: “Flee from the desires incidental to youth.” Yes, Paul understood that youth can be a turbulent period. Dramatic physical and emotional changes take place. Attraction to the opposite sex grows. During this time, youths need mature and loving direction to avoid serious pitfalls. But they need not be treated as if they are immoral. The exasperated daughter of one Christian man lamented: “If I have not committed fornication, but my father is accusing me of it, I may as well go ahead and do it.” Instead of imputing bad motives, express confidence in your child. (Compare 2 Thessalonians 3:4.) Instead of being critical, be empathetic and discerning in a loving, consistent way.

Many problems can be averted, however, if parents discuss beforehand the moral

dangers a child faces. Remember, God obligates parents to train and educate their offspring in God's Word. (Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7) That may require considerable time and effort. Unfortunately, some parents fail to carry out their teaching assignment because they lack patience. Illiteracy, a huge problem in many developing lands, hinders other parents.

In some cases a mature Christian can be called upon to help out. It may simply be a matter of offering suggestions to the less experienced parent. (Proverbs 27:17) Or it may involve helping out with conducting the family study itself. But this does not relieve the parent of his responsibility to teach his offspring God's Word. (1 Timothy 5:8) He can make an effort to work with his children in the field ministry and to discuss spiritual matters at meals or on other appropriate occasions.

A youth approaching adulthood may naturally desire more independence. Often this is misinterpreted as insubordination

or insolence. How exasperating it would be if his parents reacted by treating him as a small child and refused to give him more latitude in his actions! Equally irritating would be for them to decide every aspect of his life—education, career, marriage—without talking matters over with him in a calm and respectful manner. (Proverbs 15: 22) The apostle Paul urged fellow Christians to “become full-grown in powers of understanding.” (1 Corinthians 14:20) Should not parents wish that their own children grow up—emotionally and spiritually? Yet, a youth's “perceptive powers” can only be trained “through use.” (Hebrews 5:14) To use them he must be granted a certain amount of freedom of choice.

Raising children during these difficult days is not easy. But parents who follow God's Word do not irritate or exasperate their children “so that they do not become downhearted.” (Colossians 3:21) Rather, they endeavor to treat them with warmth, understanding, and dignity. Their children are led, not driven; nurtured, not ignored; moved to love, not provoked to wrath or frustration.

Playing “oware,” a local indoor game in Ghana, gives these parents an opportunity to associate with their children





Awake!

HELPS TO WIN PRIZE IN ITALY

Last year a ten-year-old schoolgirl in Italy wrote an essay on the theme "If the Earth Could Talk." The theme was developed as a dialogue between the earth and a baby who had asked the earth why it was crying. The schoolgirl explains:

"The earth responded that it was polluted by the smog that had produced a greenhouse effect. The earth continued speaking to the baby and said that soon things would change and its future would be better, no thanks to man. The earth's hope was in Almighty God, its Creator, who did not create the earth for nothing but for it to be inhabited.—Isaiah 45:18."

The schoolgirl further said: "I took the information from the *Awake!* magazines of July 22, 1989; September 8, 1989; and September 22, 1989. Thanks to these magazines, my theme won first prize. The second prize was won by one of my classmates whose mother is on my mother's magazine route. He also took information from the same *Awake!* magazines.

"I thank you for this good and accurate and also simple information that makes us wise. The prize that I won is in the amount of 100,000 lire [about \$100, U.S.], and I am sending this money to be used to print more magazines."

