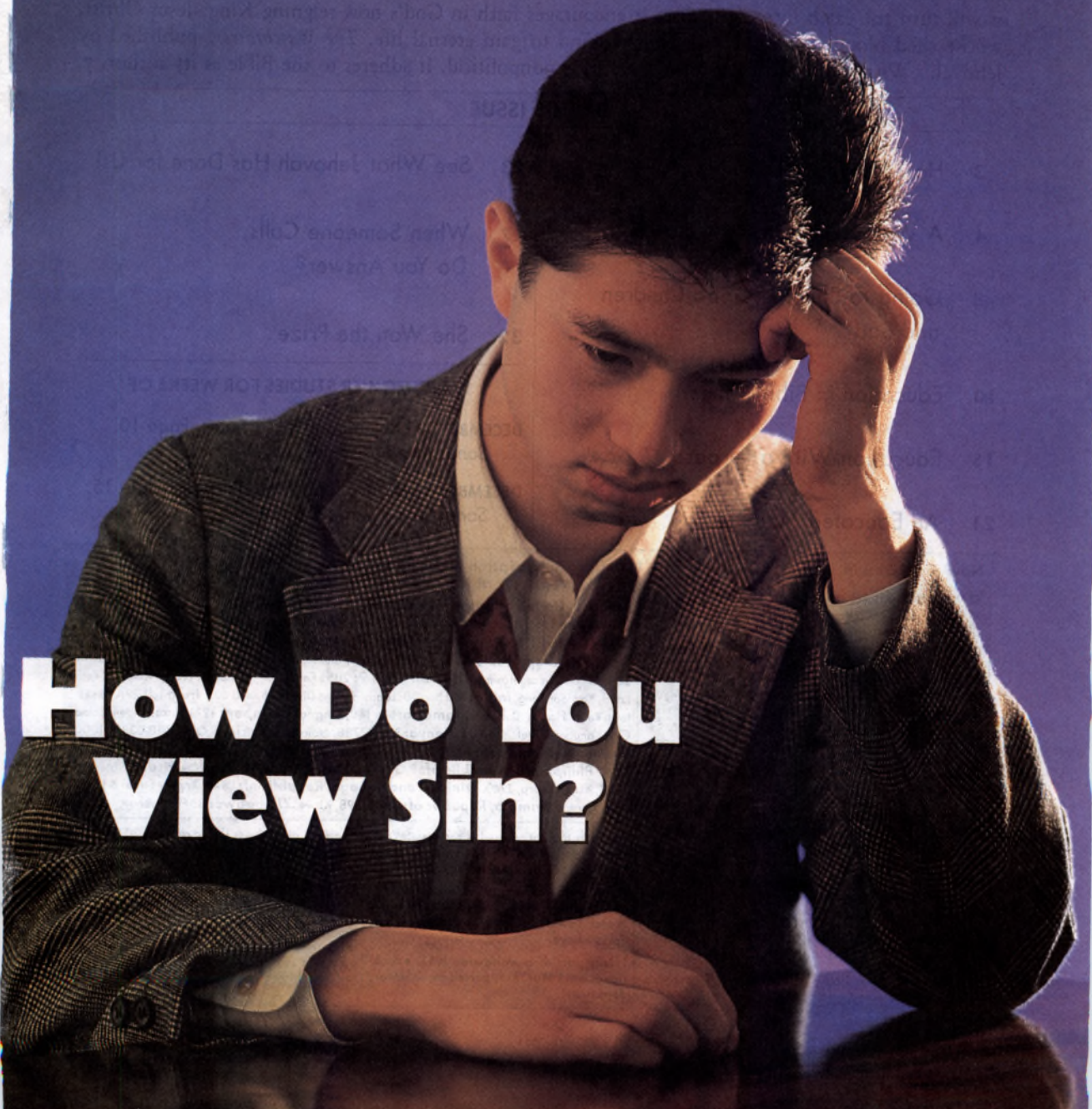


NOVEMBER 1, 1992

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark patterned suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark tie, is shown from the chest up. He is looking down with a distressed expression, his right hand pressed against his forehead. The background is a solid dark blue.

**How Do You  
View Sin?**

# THE WATCHTOWER<sup>™</sup>

## ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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# How Do You View Sin?

**“W**HY does she keep on asking for the forgiveness of our sins in prayer?” complained a housewife who was studying the Bible with one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. “It sounds as though I were a criminal.” Just like this woman, many today are not aware of their sins unless they have committed a crime.

This is especially true in the Orient, where people traditionally have no concept of inherited sin as taught in Judeo-Christian religions. (Genesis 3:1-5, 16-19; Romans 5:12) For example, Shintoists identify sin with filth that can easily be wiped away by a swing of a priest’s stick, which has paper or flax attached to its tip. In this process no repentance over what has been committed is required. Why? “Not only evil actions, but also uncontrollable natural calamities, were termed *tsumi* [sin],” explains *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*. Natural disasters, *tsumi* that are not the responsibility of men, were considered to be sins that purification rites caused to cease to exist.

This led to the thinking that any sin, even evil acts committed willfully (except criminal acts punishable by law) can be wiped away by purification rites. Under the heading “Ritual of Political Cleansing in Japan,” *The New York Times* referred to such a mentality and explained that politicians in Japan who have been involved in scandals consider themselves “purified” when they are reelected by the voters. Thus, no real correction is made, and similar scandals may recur.

Buddhists who believe in *samsara*, or rebirth, and the doctrine of Karma have a

different perspective. “According to the doctrine of *karman*,” explains *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, “good conduct brings a pleasant and happy result and creates a tendency toward similar good acts, while bad conduct brings an evil result and creates a tendency toward repeated evil actions.” In other words, sinful conduct bears bad fruitage. The teaching of Karma is tied in with the teaching of rebirth, as some Karmas are said to bear fruit in future lives far removed from the life in which the act was committed.

How does this teaching affect its believers? A Buddhist woman who sincerely believed in Karma said: “I thought it did not make sense to have to suffer for something I was born with but about which I knew nothing. I had to accept it as my destiny. Chanting sutras and trying hard to live a good life didn’t solve my problems. I became ill-tempered and discontented, always complaining.” The Buddhist teaching about the results of evil conduct left her with a feeling of worthlessness.

Confucianism, another Eastern religion, taught a different way to deal with human evil. According to Hsün-tzu, one of the three great Confucian philosophers, human nature is evil and inclined to be selfish. In order to maintain social order among men with sinful tendencies, he stressed the importance of *li*, which means propriety, courtesy, and the order of things. Meng-tzu, another Confucian philosopher, although expressing an opposite view of human nature, recognized the existence of social ills and, trusting the nature of men to be good, relied on self-improvement for the solution.

Either way, Confucian philosophers taught the importance of education and training in order to fight sin in the world. Although their teachings agree on the necessity of *li*, their concept of sin and evil is very vague. —Compare Psalm 14:3; 51:5.

### Fading Concept of Sin in the West

In the West, views on sin have traditionally been clear-cut, and most people have agreed that sin exists and should be avoided. However, the Western attitude toward sin is changing. Many cast aside all awareness of sin, labeling the voice of conscience

a “guilt trip,” something to be avoided. More than 40 years ago, Pope Pius XII lamented: “The sin of this century is the loss of all sense of sin.” According to a survey published in the Catholic weekly *Le Pèlerin*, an amazing 90 percent of the population of France, where most people profess to be Roman Catholics, no longer believe in sin.

Indeed, East and West, most people now seem to be dwelling in cozy complacency without being plagued by an awareness of sin. Does that mean, however, that sin is nonexistent? Can we safely ignore it? Will sin ever disappear?

## A World Without Sin—How?

**S**HRIEKING cries for help shattered the tranquillity of the early hours of a winter morning in a peaceful neighborhood of Tokyo. For from five to ten minutes, a dozen people heard the desperate screams of a newspaper-delivery woman being chased while being repeatedly stabbed. Not one person cared enough to find out what was going on. She died from excessive loss of blood. “If one of these people had reported the incident to the police as soon as they heard her scream,” said an investigator, “her life could have been saved.”

Although those who had heard the dying woman did nothing worse than simply ignore her, could they rightly claim that they were free of guilt? “My conscience tormented me all day Friday after I learned about the killing,” said one man who had heard her cries. This makes us wonder, What really is sin?

### What Is Sin?

Pointing to the consciousness of sin, Hideo Odagiri, literary critic and professor emeritus at Hosei University in Tokyo, Japan, said, as quoted in the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper: “I cannot blot out the vivid recollections I have of a consciousness of sins, such as the nasty egotism that exists in a child, shameful jealousy, betrayal behind a person’s back. This consciousness was branded on my mind when I was in elementary school and still torments me.” Have you ever experienced such feelings? Do you have an inner voice that condemns you if you do something that you know is wrong? Perhaps no crime has been committed, but an uncomfortable feeling lingers and weighs heavily on your mind. This is your conscience working, and the Bible refers to it in the following passage: “Whenever people of the nations that do not have law do by

nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused." (Romans 2:14, 15) Yes, by nature most people feel disturbed by such acts as adultery, stealing, and lying. Their conscience is testifying to sin.

However, when the voice of conscience is repeatedly ignored, it no longer serves as a safe guide. It can become insensitive and defiled. (Titus 1:15) A sensitivity to what is bad is lost. In fact, today most people's conscience is dead as far as sin is concerned.

Is conscience the only measure of sin, or is there something that can serve as the absolute standard as to what constitutes sin and what does not? More than 3,000 years ago, God gave his chosen people a law code, and through this Law, sin came to be "recognized as sin." (Romans 7:13, *New International Version*) Even conduct that had formerly been somewhat acceptable was now revealed for what it was—sin. God's chosen people, the Israelites, were exposed as sinners and as such were under condemnation.

What are these sins of which our conscience makes us aware and which the Mosaic Law specified and listed? In the Biblical use of the word, sin means missing the mark with regard to the Creator. Anything out of harmony with his personality, standards, ways, and will is sin. He cannot grant continuing existence to any creation that falls short of the mark that he has established. So a law specialist in the first century warned Hebrew Christians: "Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the liv-

ing God." (Hebrews 3:12) Yes, lack of faith in the Creator constitutes a major sin. Thus, the scope of sin as explained in the Bible is far wider than what is normally considered to be sin. The Bible goes so far as to state: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23.

### Origin of Sin

Does that mean that man was created a sinner? No, Jehovah God, the Originator of human life, made the first man a perfect creature. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Deuteronomy 32:4) However, the first human couple missed the mark when they defied the only prohibition God had set, when they ate from the forbidden "tree of the knowledge of good and bad." (Genesis 2:17) Though they were created perfect, they now missed the mark of complete obedience to their Father, became sinners, and were accordingly condemned to die.

What does this ancient history have to do with sin today? The Bible explains: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) Without exception all of us are sinners by inheritance; hence, we have come under the condemnation of death.—Ecclesiastes 7:20.

### Human Efforts to Erase Sin

Adam passed sin on to his offspring, but he also passed on the God-given faculty of conscience. Sin may give rise to an uneasy feeling. As mentioned before, men have contrived various schemes to alleviate such feelings. Are they really effective, however?

East and West, people have tried to deal with the effect of sin by changing their standards or by denying the very existence of sin. (1 Timothy 4:1, 2) Mankind's sinful situation may be likened to that of a patient

with a fever. Sin may be compared to the virus that causes the symptoms, while the disturbed conscience is comparable to the uncomfortable fever. Breaking the thermometer does not change the fact that the patient has a high fever. Throwing away moral standards, as many in Christendom have done, and ignoring the testimony of one's own conscience is no help in blotting out the sin itself.

A person may apply an ice pack to relieve his fever. That is like trying to relieve twinges of conscience by going through the motions of Shinto purification rituals. An ice pack may temporarily cool the fever victim, but it does not remove the cause of the fever. The priests and prophets in Jeremiah's day tried a similar healing for the Israelites of that time. They "lightly" healed the spiritual and moral wounds of the people, saying, "All is well, all is well." (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11, *An American Translation*) Simply going through religious motions and chanting something like "all is well" did not heal the moral breakdown of God's people, and purification rites do not change people's ethics today.

By taking antipyretics a feverish person may cause his fever to subside, but the virus is still in his system. The same is true with the Confucian way of dealing with evil through education. On the surface it may help people to turn away from evil, but practicing *li* only suppresses sinful conduct and does not rid a person of his inborn sinful inclination, the underlying cause of evil conduct.—Genesis 8:21.

What about the Buddhist teaching of entering into Nirvana to rid oneself of sinful inclinations? The state of Nirvana, said to mean "blowing out," is supposed to be indescribable, the extinguishing of all passion and desire. Some claim that it is the cessa-

tion of individual existence. Does that not sound like telling a sick man with a fever to die in order to find relief? What is more, attaining the state of Nirvana is considered to be very difficult, even impossible. Does this teaching sound helpful for one with a troubled conscience?

### Liberation From Sin

It is clear that human philosophies on life and sinful tendencies can, at best, only pacify one's conscience. They do not remove the sinful condition. (1 Timothy 6:20) Is there any way to do this? In the Bible, an ancient book written in the Near East, we find the key to liberation from sin. "Though the sins of you people should prove to be as scarlet, they will be made white just like snow . . . If you people show willingness and do listen, the good of the land you will eat." (Isaiah 1:18, 19) Here Jehovah was speaking to the Israelites, who, although being his chosen people, had missed the mark of integrity to him. The same principle, however, applies to mankind as a whole. Showing a willingness to listen to the words of the Creator is the key to having one's sins cleansed, washed away, as it were.

What does God's Word tell us as to the washing away of mankind's sins? Just as through one man's sin all mankind became sinners, through another man's perfect obedience to God, obedient mankind will be released from their misery, says the Bible. (Romans 5:18, 19) How? "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) Jesus Christ, born as a perfect and sinless man, the equivalent of the original Adam before that one sinned, was in a position to carry away the sins of mankind. (Isaiah 53:12; John 1:14; 1 Peter 2:24) By being put to death on a torture stake as though a criminal, Jesus released mankind from

bondage to sin and death. "For, indeed," explained Paul to the Christians in Rome, "Christ, while we were yet weak, died for ungodly men at the appointed time. . . . Just as sin ruled as king with death, likewise also undeserved kindness might rule as king through righteousness with everlasting life in view through Jesus Christ our Lord." —Romans 5:6, 21.

Christ's dying for the whole of mankind and balancing the scale upset by Adam is called the "ransom" arrangement. (Matthew 20:28) It may be likened to a medicine that works against the virus causing the fever. By applying the value of Jesus' ransom to mankind, mankind's sickly condition caused by sin—including death itself—can be cured. This healing process is described figuratively in the last book of the Bible: "On this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations." (Reve-

lation 22:2) Imagine! A figurative river of water of life flowing between trees of life with their leaves, all for the healing of mankind. These divinely inspired symbols represent God's provision for restoring mankind to perfection on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice.

The prophetic visions of the book of Revelation will soon be reality. (Revelation 22: 6, 7) Then, with the complete application of the value of Jesus' ransom sacrifice to mankind, all righthearted ones will become perfect and "will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) Fulfillment of Bible prophecies indicates that this glorious liberation is near. (Revelation 6:1-8) Soon God will rid the globe of wickedness, and humans will enjoy eternal life on a paradise earth. (John 3:16) That will indeed be a world without sin!

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***Jesus' ransom sacrifice will enable families like this to enjoy eternal happiness***



## Scenes From the Promised Land

# Going to Shiloh Good Children and Bad



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

**W**HEN you think of cities, towns, or areas of the Promised Land, do certain notable men and women come to your mind? Probably so, for most Biblical accounts involve adults. But what of the children back then? Do you imagine them in the scenes?

The view above can help us to focus on accounts involving youths, some of whom were fine examples for Christians and others of whom were warning examples. The rounded hill in the center is evidently the site of Shiloh.\*

You likely recall that when Israel entered the Promised Land, they first located God's tabernacle at Gilgal near Jericho. (Joshua 4:19) But when the land was being divided, this sacred tent—the focus of Israel's worship—was moved here to Shiloh. (Joshua 18:1) This was about 20 miles north of Jerusalem in the mountainous region of Ephraim. Men and women from all over Israel made their way to Shiloh;

\* For a larger picture, see the 1992 *Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses*.

large masses could gather in the valley south of where the tabernacle likely stood. (Joshua 22:12) Can you picture children coming here?

Some did. The most notable example that we should know of was young Samuel. His parents, Elkanah and Hannah, lived in a town over the hills to the west. Each year they traveled here, perhaps bringing along some children by Elkanah's other wife. Finally Jehovah blessed Hannah with a son, who was named Samuel. In time his parents brought him to live at Shiloh so that he could serve at the tabernacle with high priest Eli. —1 Samuel 1:1–2:11.

The boy had chores to do at God's house, and he must have had many opportunities to hike in the nearby hills. (1 Samuel 3:1, 15) Some of them were terraced and full of olive trees, as seen in the picture on page 9. Note the small stone watchtower. Isolated farmers or shepherds could keep watch from such a watchtower, but you can imagine young Samuel climbing up for a look too. (Compare 2 Chronicles 20:24.) This would be a fine vantage point from which to watch for wild animals.

Back then, there were more trees than now, even forests where wild animals roamed. (Joshua 17:15, 18) We see this from an incident that





Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

happened when Elisha had become God's main prophet. Elisha was traveling up from Jericho toward Bethel, so he was in this area, some ten miles south of Shiloh. What reception would he receive from the people of Bethel, which had become a center for the worship of a golden calf? (1 Kings 12:27-33; 2 Kings 10:29) Evidently the adults were antagonistic toward Jehovah's prophet, and their attitude seems to have rubbed off on their offspring.

Second Kings 2:23, 24 tells us that a band of youths jeered God's prophet: "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!" In response, Elisha "called down evil upon them in the name of Jehovah. Then two she-bears came out from the woods and went tearing to pieces forty-two children of their number." Such Syrian brown bears could be ferocious

when surprised or when their cubs seemed threatened. (2 Samuel 17:8; Proverbs 17:12; 28:15) God used them to execute divine justice against those who grossly despised his representative and thus despised Jehovah himself.

That a child might meet such wildlife in the hills around Shiloh should help us to appreciate more the faith that Samuel's parents showed in bringing him to serve at the tabernacle.

Another true worshiper had earlier shown similar faith and devotion—Judge Jephthah. He resided in the hill country of Gilead on the east side of the Jordan. Zealous for Jehovah against the enemy Ammonites, Jephthah vowed that the first of his house coming out to meet him would be sacrificed to Jehovah. His virgin daughter proved to be that

one. So he brought his only child to God's sanctuary at Shiloh, where she lived and served faithfully for years. —Judges 11:30-40.

The faithful devotion that Samuel and Jephthah's daughter manifested in the area of Shiloh certainly is a fine contrast to the negative example of the 42 delinquents who mocked Jehovah's prophet in this same region. —Compare 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11.

Safari Zoo, Ramat-Gan, Tel Aviv





# EDUCATION IN BIBLE TIMES

*"You must also teach them to your sons."*—DEUTERONOMY 11:19.

**J**EHOVAH is the Great Educator. He has never left his servants in a state of ignorance. He has always been willing to share knowledge with them. He teaches them his will and his ways. Over countless millenniums his only-begotten Son was at his side, constantly learning as God's "master worker." (Proverbs 8:30) When on earth Jesus stated: "Just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (John 8:28) Referring to God as the Incomparable Educator, Elihu asked: "Who is an instructor like him?" (Job 36:22) The prophet Isaiah spoke of Jehovah as being the "Grand Instructor" of His people and prophesied: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." (Isaiah 30:20;

54:13) Unquestionably, Jehovah desires his intelligent creatures to be enlightened and well educated.

## Patriarchal Education

<sup>2</sup> One of the basic prerogatives of the family head in patriarchal times was the teaching of his children and of his household. For God's servants the education of their children was a religious duty. Jehovah said of his servant Abraham: "I have become acquainted with him in order that he may command his sons and his household after him so that they shall keep Jehovah's way to do righteousness and judgment; in order that

2, 3. (a) How did the faithful patriarchs view the education of their children, and what instruction did Jehovah give Abraham? (b) What grand purpose was behind the instruction to educate Abraham's offspring?

1. What shows that Jehovah is interested in the education of his servants?

Jehovah may certainly bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about him.”—Genesis 18:19.

<sup>3</sup> This divine statement shows that Jehovah considered education to be of great importance. God required Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to educate their households in His ways of righteousness and judgment so that future generations would be in a position to keep Jehovah’s way. Thus, Jehovah would fulfill his promises concerning Abraham’s seed and the blessing of “all the nations of the earth.”—Genesis 18:18; 22:17, 18.

### The Educational System in Israel

<sup>4</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states: “The Bible is the primary source for an understanding of the process of education in ancient Israel.” Jehovah used Moses as Israel’s first human teacher. (Deuteronomy 1:3, 5; 4:5) Moses transmitted words given to him by Jehovah. (Exodus 24:3) So, in point of fact, God was Israel’s primary Educator. This in itself differentiated Israel’s educational system from that of other nations.

<sup>5</sup> The same reference work declares: “Higher education or book learning in Mesopotamia and Egypt was formal and limited to the scribal class, which does not seem to have been the case in Israel. The difference was no doubt due to the simpler alphabetic system of writing used by the Hebrews. . . . The importance of alphabetic writing for the history of education must not be overlooked. It ushered in a break with the traditional scribal cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and second-millennium Canaan. To be literate was no longer the identifying and exclusive characteristic of a class of professional scribes and

priests, versed in the abstruse cuneiform and hieroglyphic scripts.”

<sup>6</sup> The Bible provides evidence that the Israelites were a literate people. Before they even entered the Promised Land, they were told to write Jehovah’s laws on their doorposts and on their gates. (Deuteronomy 6:1, 9; 11:20; 27:1-3) While this command was no doubt figurative, it would certainly have had no meaning to the average Israelite if he did not know how to read and write. Scriptures such as Joshua 18:9 and Judges 8:14 show that others besides leaders like Moses and Joshua knew how to write long before the monarchy was set up in Israel.—Exodus 34:27; Joshua 24:26.

### Teaching Methods

<sup>7</sup> In Israel, children were taught from a very early age by both father and mother. (Deuteronomy 11:18, 19; Proverbs 1:8; 31:26) In the French *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Bible scholar E. Mangenot wrote: “As soon as he could speak, the child learned a few passages from the Law. His mother would repeat a verse; when he knew it, she would give him another one. Later, the written text of the verses they could already recite from memory would be put into the children’s hands. Thus, they were introduced to reading, and when they had grown older, they could continue their religious instruction by reading and meditating on the law of the Lord.”

<sup>8</sup> This suggests that a basic teaching method used was the learning of things by heart.

6. What Biblical evidence is there that right from the beginning of their history, the Israelites were a literate people?

7. (a) According to the Scriptures, who gave Israelite children their basic education? (b) What information is given by a French Bible scholar?

8. (a) What basic teaching method was used in Israel, but with what important characteristic? (b) What memory aids were used?

4, 5. (a) What differentiated Israel’s educational system from that of other nations? (b) What other important difference is outlined in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, and what doubtless contributed to this difference?

The things learned concerning Jehovah's laws and his dealings with his people were to penetrate into the heart. (Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7) They were to be meditated upon. (Psalm 77:11, 12) To help young and old to memorize, various memory aids were used. These included alphabetic acrostics, successive verses in a psalm beginning with a different letter, in alphabetical order (such as Proverbs 31: 10-31); alliteration (words beginning with the same letter or sound); and the use of numbers, like those used in the latter half of Proverbs chapter 30. Interestingly, the Gezer Calendar, one of the oldest examples of ancient Hebrew writing, is thought by some scholars to be a schoolboy's memory exercise.

### The Curriculum

<sup>9</sup> Education in Israel was not limited to learning to read and write. One important subject taught was history. The learning of Jehovah's wondrous doings in favor of his people was a fundamental part of the curriculum. These historical facts had to be taught from generation to generation. (Deuteronomy 4:9, 10; Psalm 78:1-7) The celebration of the annual festivals provided a fine opportunity for the family head to teach his children. (Exodus 13:14; Leviticus 23:37-43) In this connection *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states: "Through the father's instruction in the home and his explanations of the significance of the festivals, the Hebrew children were taught how God had manifested Himself to them in the past, how they were to live in the present, and what God's promises were regarding the future of His people."

<sup>10</sup> Parental education included practical

9. (a) What was an important part of the study program for Israelite children? (b) What does a Bible encyclopedia state concerning teaching done in connection with the annual festivals?
10. What practical training was given to girls? to boys?

training. Girls were taught household skills. The closing chapter of Proverbs shows that these were many and varied; they included spinning, weaving, cooking, trading, and general household management. Boys were usually taught their father's secular occupation, whether in agriculture or some trade or craft. In later times Jewish rabbis were wont to say: "He who does not teach his son a useful trade is bringing him up to be a thief."

<sup>11</sup> The spiritual depth of the teaching methods used in Israel is apparent throughout the book of Proverbs. It shows that the purpose was to teach "inexperienced ones" such elevated things as wisdom, discipline, understanding, insight, judgment, shrewdness, knowledge, and thinking ability—all of this in "the fear of Jehovah." (Proverbs 1: 1-7; 2:1-14) It underscores the motives that should move one of God's servants today to improve his or her education.

### Priests, Levites, and Prophets

<sup>12</sup> While basic education was provided by parents, Jehovah further educated his people by means of the priests, the nonpriestly Levites, and the prophets. In his final blessing upon the tribe of Levi, Moses stated: "Let them instruct Jacob in your judicial decisions and Israel in your law." (Deuteronomy 33:8, 10) Significantly, the word "law" in Hebrew (*toh-rah'*) is derived from a root that in its verbal form means "to show," "to teach," "to instruct." The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states: "The meaning of the word [torah] is therefore 'teaching,' 'doctrine,' or 'instruction.'"

11. What shows the underlying purpose of education in Israel, and what lesson does this contain for young ones today?

12. Who besides parents took part in educating the people of Israel, and what is the basic meaning of the Hebrew word translated "law"?

<sup>13</sup> This too set Israel apart from the other nations and even from modern-day nations. Political nations today have a body of laws of which the general population knows only a fragment. When people run afoul of the law, they have to pay lawyers high fees to defend them. Law schools are for the specialists. Yet, in Israel the Law was God's means of telling his people how he wanted them to worship him and live in accordance with his will. Unlike other legal codes, it included love for God and neighbor. (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5) The Law was far from being a cold statute-book. It provided doctrine, teaching, and instruction in a way of life *that had to be learned*.

<sup>14</sup> While faithful, the priests and the Levites discharged their responsibility to teach the people. But more often than not, the priests neglected their duty to educate the nation. This lack of education in God's Law was to have dire consequences for both priests and people. In the eighth century B.C.E., Jehovah prophesied: "My people will certainly be silenced, because there is no knowledge. Because the knowledge is what you yourself have rejected, I shall also reject you from serving as a priest to me; and because you keep forgetting the law of your God, I shall forget your sons, even I."—Hosea 4:6.

<sup>15</sup> As well as the priests, Jehovah raised up prophets as educators. We read: "Jehovah kept warning Israel and Judah by means of all his prophets and every visionary, saying:

13. Why was Israel's Law different from the legal systems of other nations?

14. What was one reason why Jehovah rejected the Levitical priesthood? (Malachi 2:7, 8)

15. (a) In addition to priests, whom did Jehovah raise up as teachers in Israel, and what did a Bible scholar write about their role as educators? (b) What finally happened to Israel and Judah because they rejected knowledge of Jehovah and his ways?

"Turn back from your bad ways and keep my commandments, my statutes, according to all the law that I commanded your forefathers and that I have sent to you by means of my servants the prophets.'" (2 Kings 17:13) As to the role of the prophets as educators, French Bible scholar Roland de Vaux wrote: "The prophets, too, had a mission to instruct the people; this was at least as much a part of their task as foretelling the future. And prophetic inspiration lent to their preaching the authority of a word of God. It is certain that under the monarchy the prophets were the religious and moral teachers of the people; and, we may add, the best of all their teachers, if not always the most heeded." Through lack of proper education by the priests and the Levites together with failure to heed Jehovah's prophets, the Israelites forsook Jehovah's ways. Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 740 B.C.E., and Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E.

### Education During and After the Captivity

<sup>16</sup> Some ten years before the destruction of Jerusalem, King Jehoiachin and a group of princes and nobles were carried off to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 24:15) Among them were Daniel and three other young nobles. (Daniel 1:3, 6) Nebuchadnezzar ordered the four of them to undergo a special three-year training course in "the writing and the tongue of the Chaldeans." Moreover, they were provided with "a daily allowance from the delicacies of the king and from his drinking wine." (Daniel 1:4, 5) This was potentially dangerous for several reasons. Likely, the curriculum was not

16, 17. (a) What educational program was forced upon Daniel and his three companions? (b) What enabled them to undergo this Babylonian education and yet remain faithful to Jehovah?



### **Compulsory education in Babylon did not turn Daniel and his companions away from Jehovah**

year immersion in Babylonian higher learning. "As for these children, the four of them, to them the true God gave knowledge and insight in all writing and wisdom; and Daniel himself had understanding in all sorts of visions and dreams. And as regards every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired about from them, he even got to find them ten times better than all the magic-practicing priests and the conjurers that were in all his royal realm."—Daniel 1: 17, 20.

<sup>18</sup> After the Babylonian captivity, a great work of education was carried out by Ezra, a priest who "prepared his heart to consult the law of Jehovah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice." (Ezra 7:10) In this he was helped by faithful Levites, who "were explaining the law to the people." (Nehemiah 8:7) Ezra was a Bible scholar and "a skilled copyist," or scribe. (Ezra 7:6) It was in his day that scribes came into prominence as a class.

### **Rabbinic Schools**

<sup>19</sup> By the time Jesus appeared on earth, the scribes had become an elite class of teachers, more attached to traditions than to the true teachings of God's Word. They liked to be called "Rabbi," which had become an honorific title meaning "My Great (Excellent) One." (Matthew 23:6, 7, footnote) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the scribes are often associated with the Pharisees, some of whom were themselves teachers of the Law.

18. What educational program was carried out in Judah after the Babylonian captivity?

19. What class of educators had appeared in Israel by the time Jesus came to earth, and for what important reasons did he and his disciples not undergo Jewish higher education?

simply a three-year language course. The term "Chaldeans" in this passage is thought by some to designate, "not the Babylonians as a people, but the learned class." (*The Soncino Books of the Bible*) In his commentary on Daniel, C. F. Keil states: "Daniel and his companions were to be educated in the wisdom of the Chaldean priests and learned men, which was taught in the schools of Babylon." The royal food allowance also exposed them to violating the dietary restrictions imposed by the Law of Moses. How did they fare?

<sup>17</sup> As spokesman for the four young Jewish nobles, Daniel made it clear right from the start that they would not eat or drink in violation of their conscience. (Daniel 1:8, 11-13) Jehovah blessed this firm stand and softened the heart of the Babylonian official in charge. (Daniel 1:9, 14-16) As to their studies, subsequent events in the lives of all four young Hebrews prove beyond doubt that their compulsory three-year curriculum in Babylonian culture did not cause them to deviate from their profound attachment to Jehovah and his pure worship. (Daniel, chapters 3 and 6) Jehovah enabled them to emerge unscathed from this forced three-

(Acts 5:34) Jesus accused both groups of making the word of God invalid because of their tradition and teaching "commands of men as doctrines." (Matthew 15:1, 6, 9) Small wonder that neither Jesus nor most of his disciples were educated in the rabbinical schools.—John 7:14, 15; Acts 4:13; 22:3.

<sup>20</sup> This overview of education in Bible times has shown that Jehovah is the Grand Instructor of his people. Through Moses, God organized an efficient system of education in Israel. But after a long time, a system of Jewish higher education developed that taught things contrary to the Word of God. While Jesus did not attend such Jewish schools, he was, nevertheless, an incomparable Teacher. (Matthew 7:28, 29; 23:8; John 13:13) He also commissioned his disciples to teach, even until the conclusion of the system of things. (Matthew 28:19, 20) To do

20. What has this review of education in Bible times shown us, and what indicates that Jehovah's servants need education?

this, they would have to be good teachers and consequently would require education. So how should true Christians view education today? This question will be examined in the following article.

### A Memory Test

- ☐ Why can we be sure that Jehovah is interested in the education of his servants?
- ☐ In what respects was Israel's educational system different from that of the other nations?
- ☐ What education did Israelite children receive?
- ☐ What teaching methods were used in Israel?
- ☐ Why did Jesus and his disciples not go to Jewish schools of higher learning?

## EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE

*"Impart knowledge to someone righteous and he will increase in learning."*

—PROVERBS 9:9.

**J**EHOVAH is "a God of knowledge." (1 Samuel 2:3) He educates his servants. Moses foretold that contemporary peoples would say of Israel: "This great nation is undoubtedly a wise and understanding people." (Deuteronomy 4:6) True Christians should likewise be knowl-

1. What does Jehovah expect of his servants regarding knowledge?

edgeable. They need to be excellent students of God's Word. Showing the purpose of such study, the apostle Paul wrote: "We . . . have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every

**By studying diligently, young Christians can become more useful members of the new world society**

good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God.”—Colossians 1:9, 10.

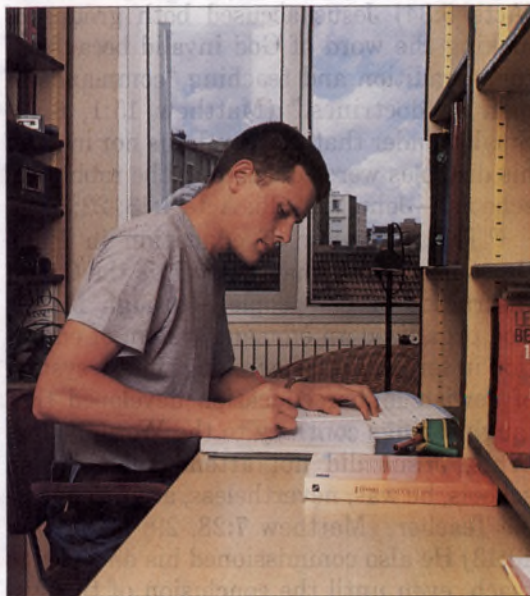
<sup>2</sup> Study with a view to acquiring an accurate knowledge of God and his purposes requires at least a minimum amount of education. But many people who have come to learn the truth of God’s Word live in countries where they had little or no opportunity to receive proper secular education. They were at a disadvantage. To overcome this problem, the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses has for many years now instructed that, where needed, literacy classes should be organized within the congregations. Over 30 years ago, the Brazilian newspaper *Diário de Mogi* published an article entitled “Jehovah’s Witnesses Wage War Against Illiteracy.” It stated: “A qualified instructor sets about . . . to patiently teach others to read and write. . . . The pupils, because of the very circumstances impelling them as ministers of God, must develop their knowledge of the language in order to give discourses.” Thousands of people all over the world have thus been enabled to become good students of God’s Word. They undertook this basic education with an elevated purpose in mind.

### **Skills Needed to Be Effective Ministers**

<sup>3</sup> True Christians are interested in education, not for its own sake, but in order to

2. (a) What is necessary in order to acquire an accurate knowledge of God? (b) How has the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses addressed this matter?

3, 4. (a) Why are true Christians interested in education? (b) What was the situation in Israel, and what basic education is indispensable within our congregations today?



become more effective servants of Jehovah. Christ gave all Christians the mission to “make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) To teach others, they themselves must first learn, and this requires good study methods. They must have the ability to examine the Scriptures carefully. (Acts 17:11) To fulfill their commission, they also need to be able to read fluently.—See Habakkuk 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:13.

<sup>4</sup> As we saw in the previous article, there is good reason to believe that, by and large, even young ones in ancient Israel knew how to read and write. (Judges 8:14; Isaiah 10:19) Christian ministers today need to make neat notes as they witness from house to house. They write letters, take notes at meetings, and annotate their study material. All of this requires legible handwriting. Keeping records within the Christian congregation calls for at least a basic knowledge of arithmetic.

## Advantages of Proper Schooling

<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the word “school” comes from the Greek word *skho-le'*, which originally meant “leisure” or the use of leisure time for some serious activity, such as learning. It later came to designate the place where such learning was done. This indicates that, at one time, only the privileged class—in Greece and most other lands—had the leisure to learn. The working class generally remained ignorant. Today, in most countries children and young folk are given time to learn. Young Witnesses should certainly buy out the opportune time to become knowledgeable and capable servants of Jehovah.—Ephesians 5:15, 16.

<sup>6</sup> A basic knowledge of history, geography, science, and so forth will enable young Witnesses to become rounded-out ministers. Their schooling will teach them not only many subjects but also the learning process. True Christians do not stop learning and studying when they leave school. What they get out of their studying, however, will greatly depend on their knowing *how to study*. Both secular and congregation schooling can help them to develop their thinking abilities. (Proverbs 5:1, 2) When they read they will be better able to discern what is important, what deserves noting and memorizing.

<sup>7</sup> Learning a foreign language, for example, will not only develop the mental capacity of young people but also make them more useful to Jehovah's organization. In some of the Watch Tower Society's branches, a number of young brothers have found

it advantageous to be able to speak or read English fluently. Moreover, all Christian ministers should endeavor to be articulate in their mother tongue. The good news of the Kingdom deserves to be expressed in a clear, grammatically correct manner. The facts show that in the world today, many youngsters when completing school still have difficulty in writing and speaking correctly and in doing even the simplest arithmetic; and they have only the vaguest knowledge of history and geography.

## Adequate Education

<sup>8</sup> This seems, therefore, to be an appropriate time to consider the Christian's attitude toward secular education. What Bible principles bear on this subject? First, in most countries proper submission to “Caesar” requires Christian parents to send their children to school. (Mark 12:17; Titus 3:1) As for young Witnesses, in their schoolwork they should remember Colossians 3:23, which states: “Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men.” A second principle involved is that Christians should be able to support themselves, even if they are full-time pioneer ministers. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12) If married, a man should be able to provide properly for his wife and any children that may be born, with a little extra to give to those in need and to support the local and worldwide preaching work.—Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:8.

<sup>9</sup> How much education does a young Christian need in order to respect these Bible principles and meet his Christian obligations? This varies from country to country. By and large, however, it seems

5. (a) What is the origin of the word “school”? (b) What opportunity should young ones seize? 6, 7. (a) What are some of the advantages of proper schooling? (b) In what ways can learning a foreign language be useful? (c) What is the situation today among many young people when they complete school?

8. What scriptures bear on the subject of secular education and a person's ability to support himself?

9, 10. (a) What appears to be a trend in many lands? (b) What might a pioneer minister consider to be an adequate wage?

that the general trend in many lands is that the level of schooling required to earn decent wages is now higher than it was a few years ago. Reports received from branches of the Watch Tower Society in different parts of the world indicate that in many places it is difficult to find jobs with decent wages after completing simply the minimum schooling required by law or in some countries even after finishing secondary or high school.

<sup>10</sup> What is meant by “decent wages”? It does not indicate highly paid jobs. *Webster's Dictionary* defines “decent” in this context as “adequate, satisfactory.” What might be termed “adequate,” for instance, for those who wish to be pioneer ministers of the good news? Such ones generally need part-time work to avoid putting “an expensive burden” upon their brothers or their family. (1 Thessalonians 2:9) Their wages might be termed “adequate,” or “satisfactory,” if what they earn allows them to live decently while leaving them sufficient time and strength to accomplish their Christian ministry.

<sup>11</sup> What is often the situation today? It has been reported that in some countries many well-intentioned youngsters have left school after completing the minimum required schooling in order to become pioneers. They had no trade or secular qualifications. If they were not helped by their parents, they had to find part-time work. Some have had to accept jobs that required them to work very long hours to make ends meet. Becoming physically exhausted, they gave up the pioneer ministry. What can such ones do to support themselves and get back into the pioneer service?

11. Why have some young ones given up the pioneer service, and what question is raised?

## A Balanced View of Education

<sup>12</sup> A balanced view of education can help. For many young people of the world, education is a status symbol, something to help them climb the social ladder, the key to a prosperous, materialistic life-style. For others, schooling is a chore to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. Neither of these views is appropriate for true Christians. What, then, might be termed “a balanced view”? Christians should regard education as a means to an end. In these last days, their purpose is to serve Jehovah as much and as effectively as possible. If, in the country where they live, minimal or even high school education will only allow them to find jobs providing insufficient income to support themselves as pioneers, then supplementary education or training might be considered. This would be with the specific goal of full-time service.

<sup>13</sup> Some have taken training courses that have opened up job opportunities enabling them to engage in or resume full-time service. One sister in the Philippines was the family breadwinner, but she wanted to pioneer. The branch reports: “She has been able to do this because she has received additional education to qualify as a certified public accountant.” The same branch report stated: “We have quite a number who are studying and at the same time have been able to arrange their schedules to pioneer. Generally they become better publishers as they are more studious, provided they do not become overly ambitious in worldly pursuits.” The last remark should give us rea-

12. (a) With regard to education, what two extreme views will a Christian avoid? (b) For dedicated servants of Jehovah and their children, what purpose should education serve?

13. (a) How has one sister in the Philippines been able to continue her pioneer service while meeting her family obligations? (b) What warning is timely?



**Further education, if chosen,  
should be motivated by the desire  
to serve Jehovah better**

Society's headquarters, or in one of the branches had only basic education. They were faithful pioneers, never stopped learning, received training, and have been entrusted with greater responsibilities. They have no regrets. On the other hand, some of their contemporaries chose to get a university education and fell by the wayside, subjugated by the faith-destroying philosophies and "wisdom of this world."—1 Corinthians 1:19-21; 3:19, 20; Colossians 2:8.

### Counting the Cost

<sup>16</sup> Who decides whether a young Christian should undertake further education or training? The Bible principle of headship comes into play here. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 6:1) On this basis parents will surely want to guide their children in the choice of a trade or occupation and consequently in the amount of education that will be needed. In many countries educational and occupational choices have to be made early on during secondary education. That is the time when Christian parents and youths need to seek Jehovah's direction in making a wise choice, with Kingdom interests uppermost in mind. Young people have different propensities and aptitudes. Wise parents will take these into account. All honest work is honorable, be it blue-collar or white-collar. While the world may elevate office work and disparage working hard with one's hands, the Bible certainly does not. (Acts 18:3) So when parents and young Christians today, after carefully and

son to reflect. The *purpose* of the extra schooling, where this seems necessary, must not be lost sight of or change into a materialistic goal.

<sup>14</sup> In a few countries, secondary schools provide vocational training that can prepare a young Christian for some trade or occupation by the time of graduation. Even when this is not the case, in some lands enterprising youngsters with only basic schooling do find part-time work that enables them to earn enough to pioneer. So no hard-and-fast rules should be made either for or against extra education.

<sup>15</sup> Many who are now serving in responsible positions as traveling overseers, at the

14, 15. (a) Why should no hard-and-fast rules be made with regard to education? (b) What secular education did some responsible brothers receive, but what has compensated for this?

16. (a) Who decides whether further education is desirable, and what should be kept uppermost in mind? (b) What should be taken into consideration?

prayerfully weighing the pros and cons, decide for or against postsecondary studies, others in the congregation should not criticize them.

<sup>17</sup> If Christian parents responsibly decide to provide their children with further education after high school, that is their prerogative. The period of these studies would vary according to the type of trade or occupation selected. For financial reasons and in order to enable their children to get into the full-time service as quickly as possible, many Christian parents have chosen for them short-term study programs in vocational or technical schools. In some cases youths have needed to be apprenticed to some trade but always with a full life of service to Jehovah as the goal.

<sup>18</sup> If additional courses are taken, certainly the motive should not be to shine scholastically or to carve out a prestigious worldly career. Courses should be chosen with care. This magazine has placed emphasis on the dangers of higher learning, and justifiably so, for much higher education opposes the "healthful teaching" of the Bible. (Titus 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:20, 21) Further, since the 1960's, many schools of advanced learning have become hotbeds of lawlessness and immorality. "The faithful and discreet slave" has strongly discouraged entering that kind of environment. (Matthew 24:12, 45) It must be admitted, however, that nowadays youngsters meet up with these same dangers in high schools and technical colleges and even in the workplace.—1 John 5:19.\*

\* See also *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1975, pages 542-4.

17. What choice do some Witness parents make for their children?

18. If additional courses are taken, what should be kept in mind?

<sup>19</sup> Should supplementary education be decided upon, a young Witness would do well, if at all possible, to take this while living at home, thus being able to maintain normal Christian study habits, meeting attendance, and preaching activity. At the outset a proper stand should also be taken on Bible principles. It should be remembered that Daniel and his three Hebrew companions were captives in exile when they were obliged to undertake advanced studies in Babylon, but they consistently kept their integrity. (Daniel, chapter 1) While placing spiritual interests first, young Witnesses in a number of countries have taken courses to equip themselves for part-time work as accountants, tradesmen, teachers, translators, interpreters, or other occupations that supported them adequately in their primary career of pioneering. (Matthew 6:33) A number of these youths have later become traveling overseers or Bethel volunteers.

19. (a) What precautions should be taken by those who decide to take supplementary courses? (b) How have some used their education to good advantage?

### Test Your Memory

- ☐ Why are true Christians interested in education?
- ☐ What extreme views of education will true Christians avoid?
- ☐ What dangers of added education should be taken into account, and what precautions should be taken?
- ☐ What worldly distinction has no place among Jehovah's people?

## A United, Educated People

<sup>20</sup> Among Jehovah's people, whether a person's occupation is white-collar, blue-collar, farming, or services, all need to be good students of the Bible and able teachers. Skills acquired by all in reading, studying, and teaching tend to dispel the distinction that the world makes between manual and office workers. This makes for the unity and mutual respect that is particularly visible among the volunteer workers in Bethel homes and on Watch Tower Society construction sites, where spiritual qualities are all-important and required of all. Here, ex-

20. What worldly distinction has no place among Jehovah's people?

perienced office personnel work joyfully with skilled manual workers, all displaying appreciative love for one another.—John 13:34, 35; Philippians 2:1-4.

<sup>21</sup> Parents, guide your children toward the goal of becoming useful members of the new world society! Young Christians, use your opportunities for education as a means of equipping you to lay hold more fully on your privileges in serving Jehovah! As taught ones, may all of you prove to be well-equipped members of the theocratic society both now and everlastingly in God's promised "new earth."—2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 50:4; 54:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13.

21. What should be the aim of young Christians?

# An Educated Man

**“Y**OU behold his calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth.” (1 Corinthians 1:26) As these words indicate, there is a danger in being steeped in worldly wisdom or having a high social position. Such things can be a hindrance to one's accepting the good news.—Proverbs 16:5; Mark 10:25.

Nevertheless, in Paul's day some who were wise in a fleshly way did accept the truth, and one of these was Paul himself. Well educated and seemingly from a prominent family, Paul was a zealous evangelizer. He thus showed that privileged ones in this world can serve Jehovah if their heart is right. They can even use their secular abilities in Jehovah's service.—Luke 16:9.

## A Native of Tarsus

Paul was born in Tarsus, “no obscure city,” as he later described it. (Acts 21:39) Probably it was there that he gained a knowledge of languages—particularly a mastery of Greek—that was invaluable in his missionary work. Life in Tarsus would have exposed Paul not only to Jewish ways but also to Gentile culture, experience that he used in later years as apostle to the nations. He knew how to express the truth in a way that they could understand. (1 Corinthians 9:21) As an example, consider his speech to the Athenians reported in Acts chapter 17. There, he skillfully wove references to Athenian religion and even a quotation from one of their poets into his presentation of the truth.

## A Roman Citizen

Paul had another worldly advantage. He was a Roman citizen, and he used this also for the furtherance of the good news. In Philippi, he and his companions were beaten and jailed without a trial. It was illegal to do this to a Roman citizen, and when Paul brought this fact to the attention of the authorities, they allowed him to remain and minister to the congregation before he left for his next destination.—Acts 16:37-40.

Later, when appearing before Governor Festus, Paul took advantage of his Roman citizenship to appeal his case to Caesar. Thus, he made a defense of the good news before the highest authority of the Roman Empire.—Acts 25:11, 12; Philippians 1:7.

Paul received training in a practical way that later proved useful. He was taught tentmaking, likely by his father. Thanks to this, he could maintain himself in the ministry when funds were low. (Acts 18:1-3) He also received an intensive religious education. He was brought up as “a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees.” (Acts 23:6) Indeed, he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most illustrious of Jewish teachers. (Acts 22:3) Such an education, perhaps comparable to a quality university education today, suggests that his family was quite prominent.

## A Proper View

Paul’s background and training offered a bright future in Judaism. He could have gone far. However, once he accepted that Jesus was the Messiah, Paul’s goals changed. When writing to the Philippians, he outlined some of his former worldly advantages and said: “What things were gains to me, these I have considered loss on account of the

Christ. Why, for that matter, I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”—Philippians 3:7, 8.

This educated man did not look back with longing on what he could have done with his worldly education; neither did he use his “great learning” to overawe others. (Acts 26:24; 1 Corinthians 2:1-4) Rather, putting full faith in Jehovah God, he referred to his previous prospects, saying: “*Forgetting the things behind* and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13, 14) Paul valued spiritual things.

Nevertheless, Paul used that previous training in Jehovah’s service. When he said of the Jews, “I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God,” he spoke from personal experience. (Romans 10:2) As a practicing Pharisee, he certainly had a zeal for God and for the Scriptures. After Paul became a Christian, his zeal was tempered with accurate knowledge, and he could use his early education for a righteous purpose. In the book of Hebrews, for example, he used his profound knowledge of Israelite history and temple worship to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian system.

Today some who are wise in a fleshly way also respond to the good news. People with all kinds of educational qualifications, as well as members of all kinds of professions and trades, have accepted the truth and used their previous training in Jehovah’s service. Nevertheless, whatever their secular education, Christians never lose sight of the fact that the vital qualifications are spiritual. These are “the more important things” because they can lead us to everlasting life.—Philippians 1:10.

# See What Jehovah Has Done for Us!

**“WE USED** to pray for such an occasion,” said one man. Another woke up every morning at four to pray. For what? “To pray that some day we would have freedom to worship Jehovah openly,” he said. In January 1992, when Jehovah’s Witnesses in Ethiopia met together in Addis Ababa for their “Lovers of Freedom” District Convention, it was clear that these humble, sincere prayers had been answered.

That Ethiopian convention was an indication of how things are changing in Africa. In recent years Jehovah’s people in 13 lands there have rejoiced to receive legal freedom where they had formerly been banned or restricted. In Ethiopia, 34 years of official ban ended on November 11, 1991, when government officials granted recognition and reregistration took place. Immediately, the Witnesses made arrangements to hold an international convention. Yet, to see a crowd of 7,573 gathered in the Addis Ababa City Stadium was beyond everyone’s fondest imagining. For most of those in attendance, it was as if they were dreaming. Again and again they were telling one another: “Brother, see what Jehovah

our God has done for us!”—Compare Psalm 66:1-5; 126:1.

Their having been under ban for 34 years created some unexpected problems. Most were not acquainted with the beautiful Kingdom songs. How would they learn to sing them before the convention? Forty songs, including the 17 used on the convention program, were translated into the Amharic language. Then, a special chorus was set up to record the songs on audiocassette. Each congregation in the capital received a copy of the tape, and the entire congregation would take 30 minutes before and after the meetings to practice the songs. The result? The stadium was filled with wholehearted and joyful singing during the convention.

Because of disturbances in the eastern part of the country, the road to the capital from Dire Dawa and Harar was cut off. The only means of travel from there was by plane. Not being able to afford the airfare, but determined to be at the convention, eight brothers in Harar went to a military base and

requested passage on a military aircraft. To their surprise the request was granted. They were provided a free trip to the convention!



***In Benin a Kingdom  
publisher beats out the  
words of Matthew 24:14  
on his talking drum***

To see their prayers answered brought tears of joy to these Ethiopian brothers, who for the past three decades had endured hardships and persecutions and had even seen their friends executed for their faith. One delegate said: "I have cried since the beginning of the convention." Another: "If you had the ability to read hearts, you would see how happy I am." Yes, what a wonderful thing Jehovah did for these faithful Witnesses!—Psalm 66:16, 19.

### Greater Freedom in West and Central Africa

Benin is another land where the work of Jehovah's people has recently been legalized. How do the Witnesses feel about it? One speaker at a Christian gathering there acknowledged: "Freedom of worship in this country is truly a gift from Jehovah." Yes, Jehovah's servants there are deeply grateful that now they can enjoy unrestricted freedom to meet together in worship and speak to their neighbors about Jehovah's Kingdom—freedom that so many of us take for granted.

How will they show their joy? The above-quoted speaker pointed to one way when he said: "Our sharing in the preaching work

—particularly our going from house to house with the good news—reflects our appreciation for this liberty." In Benin this

has certainly been the case. As evidence, just look at the figures for pioneers. During January 1990, the month the 14-year ban was lifted, 77 publishers were engaged in regular full-time service. Two years later the number had more than tripled, to 244!

This is not to say that Witnesses in Benin were not active before the ban was lifted. Indeed, their endurance had a profound effect on one military officer who was assigned to a camp where they were brought when arrested. Since their determination to serve Jehovah led to frequent arrests, he found himself in almost constant contact with them. But this only served to remind him of the enjoyable Bible discussions he had had with them in earlier days when they had enjoyed legal freedom.

Finally, their strong faith awakened a feeling of spiritual hunger with-

in him. He visited different churches and sects but could never satisfy that hunger. It was only after the ban was lifted in January 1990 that he was able to discuss the Bible



**Lands Where Jehovah's Witnesses Were Legalized or Restrictions on Them Removed**

1. The Gambia, December 1989
2. Benin, January 1990
3. Cape Verde Republic, November 1990
4. Mozambique, February 1991
5. Ghana, November 1991
6. Ethiopia, November 1991
7. Congo, November 1991
8. Niger, December 1991
9. Togo, December 1991
10. Chad, January 1992
11. Kenya, March 1992
12. Angola, April 1992
13. Rwanda, April 1992

freely with the Witnesses and find the answer to his spiritual need. He is now baptized and is serving as a pioneer. In a sense, his change reminds the brothers in Benin of what happened to Saul of Tarsus: "The man that formerly persecuted us is now declaring the good news about the faith."—Galatians 1:23.

In December 1991, Jehovah's Witnesses in another West African country, Niger, were registered as a legal corporation, and restrictions on their work ended. Here too there was a joyous reaction. The Nigeria branch, which cared for Niger, reports the response at one convention: "After the keynote address at the Maradi convention on Friday, it was announced to the brothers that we now had legal recognition in Niger. They were very excited and applauded for several minutes. At the conclusion of the session, the brothers were very expressive, hugging one another and rejoicing at such good news." We can imagine the scene, and we rejoice with them.

How will the brothers there use their newfound freedom? One pioneer sister in Niger has no doubt as to the answer to that question. She writes: "The facts show that in our territory in Niger, those who will come out of Babylon the Great before the end are numerous. As proof of this, I have been able to report from 80 to 85 return

visits each month and conduct 13 or 14 Bible studies, in spite of the fact that I have turned over many of my calls to other publishers." This faithful sister adds: "Because of my health problems, I cannot do as much as I would like in the field service, but everyone does what he can."

In Rwanda in Central Africa, the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses has also changed dramatically.

In April 1992 a document was issued to the effect that they were at last a legal organization. The document was received the same week as the Memorial, and the 1,526 publishers in Rwanda were thrilled to see 6,228 attend that event. Will these dear brothers demonstrate their joy and appreciation by more activity in declaring the good news? Evidently! During that same month of April, congregation publishers averaged 27.7 hours in the preaching work and 17 return visits, conducting on an average

2.4 Bible studies. And about 40 percent of them were in some form of full-time service.

### **Legalized in Southern Africa**

Down in southern Africa, the fresh winds of freedom blew across two beautiful lands, Mozambique and Angola. In Mozambique legalization was granted in February 1991.



*In many African lands,  
true Christians are making good use  
of their newfound freedom*

As the situation eased there, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society sent missionaries into the country, which had been tragically devastated by civil war. The missionaries found fertile soil. Bible literature—particularly the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*—is in great demand. One missionary reports placing 50 books in less than two and a half hours.

Interested people respond quickly. A missionary visited an address that had been given to the Society, and it turned out to be that of a man in the military. A good discussion was held with the man himself and two of his relatives. On a return visit, another fruitful discussion was held with the man and five others. Then they accepted an invitation to attend the public talk and Watchtower Study—all within four days.

In Angola the Witnesses have enjoyed increasing freedom that culminated in the legalizing of their work in April 1992. How are they using their greater freedom? They are sharing in the field service! There are about 17,000 publishers in Angola, and those publishers are conducting almost 60,000 Bible studies. What a prospect for future increase!

### **The Young Share in Witnessing**

In these countries where the preaching work has recently been legalized, even the

young and the not-yet-baptized are showing their appreciation by activity in the ministry. In Cape Verde Republic, where Jehovah's Witnesses were legalized in November 1990, at one convention a 17-year-old girl stood up to make a public expression of faith. After the baptism, a visitor saw a crowd around her. He went up to congratulate her and asked who

the crowd were. "Oh," she replied, "these are my Bible studies." She was conducting seven studies, and they were there congratulating her on her baptism. She had already put in her application to serve as an auxiliary pioneer and looked forward eventually to qualifying as a regular pioneer.

A ten-year-old girl in Angola was asked if she was a publisher. She answered: "Yes." Did she conduct any Bible studies? "Of course." How many? "Seven," this ten-year-old replied.

We read in the book of Acts that at one point in the first century, "the congregation throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria entered into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walked in the fear of Jehovah and in the comfort of the holy spirit it kept on multiplying." (Acts 9:31) We pray that for our brothers in Africa, this too will turn out to be a period of peace. We rejoice with them as they are built up, and we pray that Jehovah's spirit may be on them as they take advantage of their freedom to spread the good news and keep on multiplying.



**New Witnesses symbolize their dedication to Jehovah by water baptism**

# WHEN SOMEONE CALLS, DO YOU ANSWER?

AS TOLD BY SHINICHI TOHARA

**F**OR the first part of my life, I did not call out to God, nor did I look for direction from him. My grandparents had emigrated from Japan to Hawaii, and my parents were Buddhists. They were not very active in their faith, so thoughts of a divinity did not loom large in my mind as I grew up.

Then I learned about evolution and came to think how foolish it was to believe in God. However, as my formal education progressed, science classes introduced me to astronomy, physics, and biology. At night I would gaze into the sky and wonder how all the stars got there. A faint voice inside of me began to ask: 'Could there be a God who is controlling all these things?' I came to feel that there must be Someone out there. My heart began to call out, 'Who is this God?'

After graduating from high school, I found myself tied down by my work as a mechanic at a sake brewery, and I had no time to meditate on the question of God. Soon I met Masako, who became my wife in 1937, and eventually we were blessed with three children. What a faithful companion and hardworking mother Masako has proved to be!

Now that I had a family, I thought seriously about our future. Again I started to go outside and gaze at the stars. I was convinced that there was a God. I did not know who that God was, but I began to call out to him anyway. Repeatedly I begged: 'If you are out there somewhere, please help my family to find a way to walk in happiness.'

## My Call Was Finally Answered

We had been living with my parents ever since our marriage, but in 1941 we started to live on our own in Hilo, Hawaii. Just after we settled into our new home, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941. It was a time of tension, and everyone was worried about the future.

One month after the Pearl Harbor attack, I was polishing my car when a man approached me and offered me a book entitled *Children*. He introduced himself as Ralph Garoutte, a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. I did not understand what he was saying, but I was interested in God, so I accepted the book. The following week, Ralph returned and offered me a home Bible study. Although I had heard of the Bible, this was the first time that I actually saw one. I accepted the Bible study, and my wife and her younger sister joined in.

The truth that the Bible was God's Word really impressed me. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) That Jehovah had a purpose was even more wonderful. He was the Creator I had been looking for! (Isaiah 45:18) We were thrilled to learn that the original Paradise that had been lost was to be restored right here on earth, and we could be a part of it. (Revelation 21:1-4) Here was the answer to my call to God!

We spoke to anyone and everyone about these newfound truths. My parents thought we were crazy, but that did not discourage

us. After three months of intensive Bible study, on April 19, 1942, my wife and I were baptized in symbol of our dedication to our God, Jehovah. Masako's younger sister Yoshi and her husband, Jerry, who had by then joined our Bible study, were baptized with us. We had only a limited knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, but it was enough to move us to want to serve God.

With the second world war still raging, I surmised that the end of this system was just around the corner, and my wife and I felt the need to warn people of this. The Garouttes were our example in this regard.



**The Toharas with some of their pioneer group in Hawaii, 1942**

Both Ralph and his wife were serving as pioneers, full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses. I compared our situation with that of Ralph. He had a wife and four children. I had a wife and only three children. If he could do it, I should be able to do it too. So the month following our baptism, we applied for pioneer service.

Even before being accepted as a pioneer, I disposed of all unnecessary things, including my steel guitar, saxophone, and violin. I had been a great music enthusiast, but I discard-

ed everything except my little harmonica. Moreover, my job in the sake brewery no longer seemed attractive. (Philippians 3:8) I built a trailer and waited to see if Jehovah would answer my pleas to be used. I did not have to wait long. We were accepted as pioneers from June 1, 1942. We went straight into serving Jehovah full-time and have never regretted that decision.

### **Pioneering in Hawaii**

Together with the Garouttes, we covered Hawaii, the Big Island, including Kona, the famous coffee area, and Kau. In those days we worked with the phonograph. It was quite heavy, but we were still young and strong. Hence, with the phonograph in one hand and a bag of books in the other, we followed any trails that might lead us to hearing ears in the coffee fields, plantations, and everywhere else. Then, after covering the whole island, we were assigned to Kohala on the Big Island. Kohala was a small sugarcane plantation, populated by Caucasians, Filipinos, Chinese, Hawaiians, Japanese, and Portuguese. Each group had its own customs, ideas, tastes, and religions.

Once I began pioneering, I never took up secular employment again. For a time we lived on my savings, and as the need arose, I went spearfishing. Amazingly, I always came home with some fish. We picked wild greens and herbs growing on the roadside, and those graced our plates at suppertime. I made an oven from galvanized tin, and Masako learned to bake bread. It was the best bread I have ever eaten.

When we went to Honolulu for a Christian convention in 1943, Donald Haslett, who was then branch overseer in Hawaii, invited us to move there and live in a small apartment built over the Watch Tower Society's garage. I was assigned as janitor for the branch

property and enjoyed the next five years of pioneering from there.

### **An Unexpected Call**

In 1943 we heard that the Society had begun a school to train missionaries for foreign service. How we would have loved to attend! Families with children were not invited, though, so we gave it no further thought. However, in 1947, Brother Haslett told us that the Society wanted to know if there were any Hawaiians willing to take up foreign service in Japan. He asked us what we thought, and like Isaiah, I said: "Send me." (Isaiah 6:8) My wife felt the same way. We had no hesitation about answering Jehovah's call.

So we were invited to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead to be trained as missionaries. The invitation included our three young children. Five others, Donald and Mabel Haslett, Jerry and Yoshi Toma, and Elsie Tanigawa, were also invited, and together we made our way to New York in the winter of 1948.

We crossed the continent by bus. After three days on the bus, all of us were tired, and Brother Haslett suggested that we take a break and stay in a hotel overnight. When we got off the bus, a man approached us and shouted: "Japs! I'm going home to get my gun to shoot them!"

"They're not Japanese," said Brother Haslett. "They're Hawaiians. Can't you tell the difference?" We were saved by his quick-witted remark.

Were we really part of the 11th class of Gilead? It seemed like a wonderful dream. The reality of it, though, soon sank in. In our class, 25 students had been selected by the then president of the Watch Tower Society, Nathan H. Knorr, to be trained for possible missionary service in Japan. As I was of Japanese descent and spoke some

Japanese, I was assigned to teach the language to this group of students. Since I was not proficient in the language, this was not easy; but somehow we all survived!

At that time our son, Loy, was ten years old, and our daughters, Thelma and Sally,



*The Tohara children at Gilead in 1948*

were eight and six. While we were in school, what happened to them? They went to school too! A bus picked them up in the morning and brought them back home later in the day. When the children got home from school, Loy worked with the brothers on the Society's farm, and Thelma and Sally worked in the laundry folding handkerchiefs.

### **Conditioning the Mind to the Unknown**

When we graduated from Gilead on August 1, 1948, we were anxious to get to our assignment. Brother Haslett went ahead of us to find a place for the missionaries to live. Finally, he found a two-story house in Tokyo,

and on August 20, 1949, our family departed for our future home.

Before arriving in Japan, I often thought about this Oriental land. I contemplated the loyalty of the Japanese people to their human lords and to the emperor. Many Japanese gave their lives for these human rulers. During the second world war, kamikaze pilots died for the emperor by aiming their aircraft at the smokestacks of enemy warships. I remember thinking that if the Japanese people are so faithful to human lords, what would they do if they found the true Lord, Jehovah?

When we arrived in Japan, there were only seven missionaries and a handful of publishers in the whole land. All of us set to work, and I strove to improve my knowledge of the language and was able to start Bible studies with many who were calling out to God in their hearts. A number of those early Bible students have continued faithful right down to this day.

### **Missionary Service With Our Children**

How could we manage missionary service with three small children to care for? Well, Jehovah was the power behind it all. We received a small reimbursement from the Society, and Masako made clothes for the

children. In addition we had some help from my parents.

After he graduated from junior high school, Loy served at the Japan branch of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society for a while. However, because of health problems, he decided to return to Hawaii for treatment. He and his wife are now faithfully serving Jehovah in California. His marriage resulted in our being blessed with four faithful grandchildren. All of them are baptized, and one, together with his wife, is serving at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses.

My daughters, Thelma and Sally, were given missionary status when they grew up. Thelma is presently serving as a missionary in the city of Toyama. Sally married a missionary brother, Ron Trost, and they have been serving in Japan as missionaries in the traveling work for over 25 years.

### **From North to South**

After spending two years in Tokyo, we were sent to Osaka for two years. Our next assignment took us up north to Sendai, where we served for some six years. Those years in Sendai conditioned us for assignments on the northernmost island of Japan, Hokkaido. It was in Hokkaido that our daughters received missionary status. It was there too that we had to get used to winter temperatures that sometimes went below zero. After tropical Hawaii it was quite a change!

Then, one day a new call rang in my ears in the form of a letter from the Society. It asked me to open a branch office in Okinawa, which was still under U.S. control. The move from the cold northern tip of Japan to what has now become the southernmost prefecture of Japan would pose a great challenge. What would I do? Though feeling inadequate, I arrived in Okinawa in November 1965, accompanied as always by my faithful

## **In Our Next Issue**

**Who Are Born Again?**

**Serve Jehovah Loysally**

**Elders—Readjust Others  
in a Spirit of Mildness**

wife. Would life in Okinawa be the same as life in Japan? What about the culture? Would people respond to Jehovah's message of salvation?

When we arrived, there were fewer than 200 publishers in Okinawa. Now there are more than 2,000. In the early days, I was part-time circuit overseer and part-time branch overseer. Traveling throughout the islands helped me to build close relationships with the brothers there, and I count it a privilege to have served them.

### Problem Free?

Our missionary career was by no means free of problems. While vacationing in the United States in 1968, Masako became ill and had to have an operation. She had a tumor removed from her intestines and then made a remarkable recovery. We did not have medical insurance, and we were worried that perhaps we would not be able to return to our assignment. Much to our surprise, however, friends in the faith cared for everything.

On a personal note, I am now living with the problems common to diabetics. Though not blind, my vision is severely impaired. But through Jehovah's loving-kindness, I am able to take in regular spiritual nourishment by listening to tape recordings of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* Brothers and sisters in the faith also help by reading various material for me.

How could I continue to give public talks with my impaired eyesight? At first I taped my talks and had them played through the sound system while I pantomimed. However, at my daughter's suggestion, I improved on this. Now I record my talks with a small tape recorder and give them while listening with earphones to my prerecorded talk.

Whenever we faced real problems, we never failed to call upon Jehovah. Eventual-



**Happy that they answered the call, Shinichi and Masako Tohara have completed 43 years in missionary work**

ly, the blessings that came from Jehovah's solving the problems always seemed greater than the problems themselves had appeared to be. To continue in his service is the only way to show our gratitude.

After 23 years in Okinawa, we were again assigned to the same geographical location in which we had served when we first set foot in Japan. The Society's main office and its largest missionary home are on the original site of that two-story building in Tokyo, bought by Brother Haslett so many years ago.

Besides Masako and me, 11 of our relatives are now serving as missionaries in Japan. All consider it a great privilege to have seen the growth that Jehovah has brought to this land of predominantly Buddhist and Shinto cultures. The work in Japan had small beginnings, but Jehovah's power has forged a "nation" of over 167,000 publishers of the good news.—Isaiah 60:22.

When I called out to God, he answered me. When he invited me, I answered positively. My wife and I feel we have only done what we ought to have done. How about you? When your Creator calls, do you answer?

# She Won the Prize



**"I** OWE it all to you," writes Kiyoe, a high school senior, to the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Japan. What is she so grateful for? Kiyoe recently won the highest prize in a national composition contest, sponsored by the Japan Traffic Safety Association. The valuable award includes a trip to Sweden.

Kiyoe wrote to express her appreciation for the many fine publications published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, which she feels greatly helped her succeed. Aside from this contest, she has represented her school in many speech and composition contests. "In most of these contests," she says, "a theme is given, and the students do research for their compositions in a library. However, I do not have to go to all that trouble. I find wonderful material on the bookshelf at home!" She continues:

"Whatever the theme, be it the problems of aging, the environment, international relations, or self-improvement, there is usually an in-depth discussion in the *Watchtower* or *Awake!* magazines."

Nevertheless, it is not just the publications that helped Kiyoe. She says that the education she received through the teaching programs of Jehovah's Witnesses helped her to improve her reading and writing, and this enabled her to excel in the contests. "Once, I really wanted to get a university education," she admits. "But where could I get training like this?" Now she hopes to work full-time in helping others to benefit from the education that she has received. While delighted with the composition prize, Kiyoe's heart is set on winning the prize of life.—Compare Philip-  
pians 3:14.