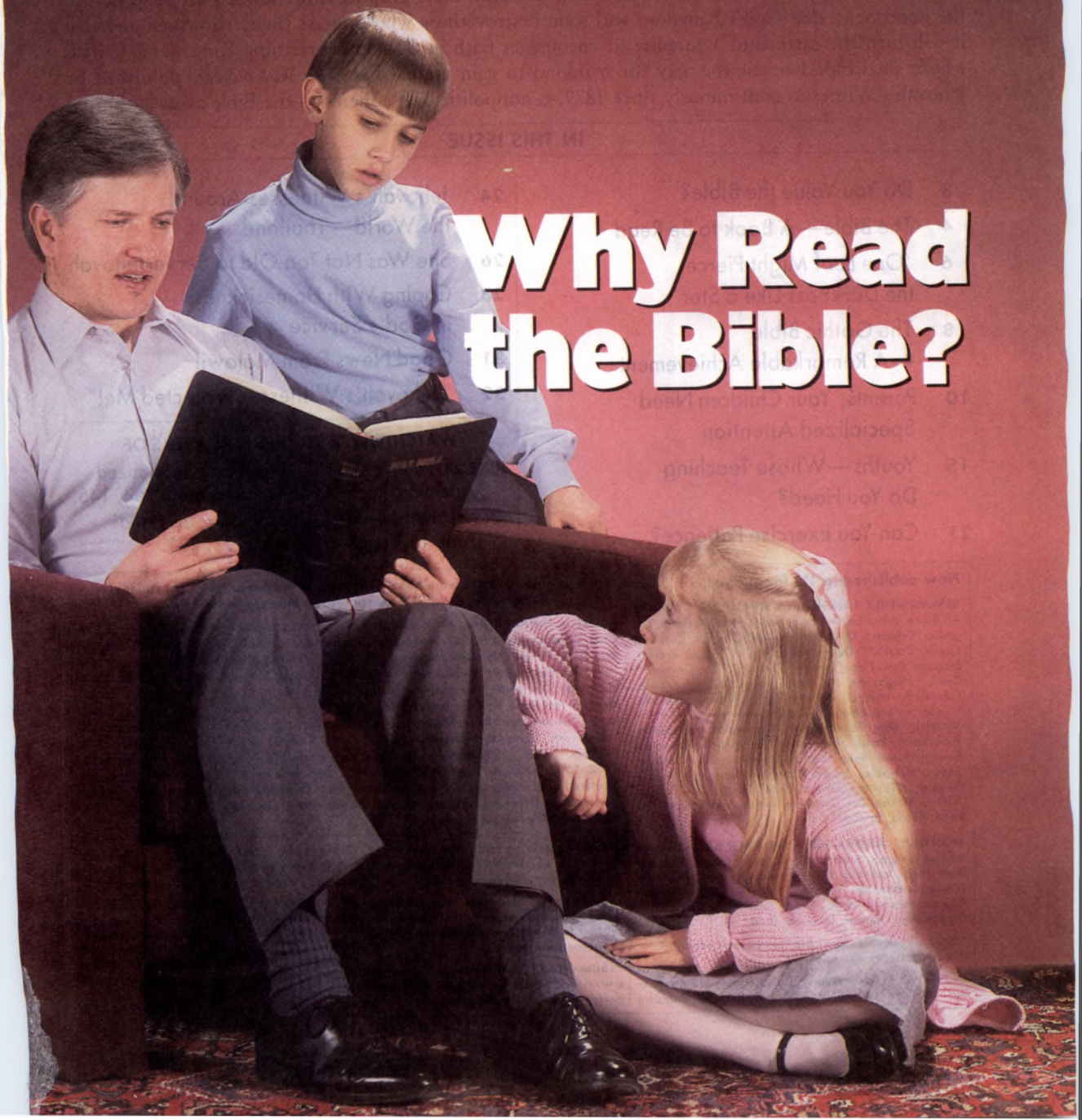
MAY 15, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Why Read the Bible?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

May 15, 1994 | Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000 | Vol. 115, No. 10

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

3 Do You Value the Bible?

4 The Bible—A Book to Be Read

6 'One Leaf Might Pierce the Darkness Like a Star'

8 The Gothic Bible —A Remarkable Achievement

10 Parents, Your Children Need Specialized Attention

15 Youths—Whose Teaching Do You Heed?

21 Can You Exercise Patience?

24 Jehovah's Witnesses Around the World—Thailand

26 She Was Not Too Old to Serve Jehovah

28 Coping With Homesickness in God's Service

31 Good News From Malawi!

32 "Jehovah's Witnesses Protected Me!"

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

JUNE 27: Parents, Your Children Need Specialized Attention. Page 10. *Songs to be used:* 164, 145.

JULY 4: Youths—Whose Teaching Do You Heed? Page 15. *Songs to be used:* 157, 221.

Now published in 116 languages.

SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,*# Dutch,* Efik, English*# (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,*# French,*# Ga, German,*# Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese* (also Braille), Kannada, Korean,* Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Marathi, Myanmar, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, Portuguese,* Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,*# Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Armenian, Bengali, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Icelandic, Kinyarwanda, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luganda, Maltese, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Persian, Sango, Silozi, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Sranantongo, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Urdu

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.
\# Audiocassettes also available.

© 1994 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Milton G. Henschel, President

If you would like to learn about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please write 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:*** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. ***England:*** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RP. ***Germany:*** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. ***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, Edo State. ***Philippines, Republic of:*** P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila. ***South Africa:*** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. ***Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:*** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. ***Zambia:*** P.O. Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. ***Zimbabwe:*** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare.

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 send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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 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.

Do You Value the Bible?

JUST over 200 years ago, Mary Jones was born in Llanfihangel, a remote Welsh village not far from the Atlantic coastline. Her parents were poor weavers—too poor to own a Bible. But they instilled in their daughter a love for God by telling her Bible stories and repeating texts they remembered. Mary often read a neighbor's Welsh Bible and started to save what little money she could, determined to buy one of her own.

From the book *The Story of Mary Jones and Her Bible*

In the year 1800, when Mary was 16, she heard that a few Welsh Bibles were for sale 25 miles away in the small town of Bala. Undaunted, she resolved to walk there. This she did, barefoot across the hills. By the time she arrived, however, all copies had been sold. Mary also learned that the sum of money she had saved was far too small.

The local pastor was deeply moved by Mary's knowledge and love of the Bible. Seeing her tears of disappointment after all the effort she had made, he kindly gave her his own personal copy, saying: "Read it carefully, study it diligently, treasure up the sacred words in your memory, and act up to its teachings."

This story was later related at a meeting of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society of London. There the decision was made to supply Bible translations not just to the people of Wales but to the whole world. From this simple beginning sprang the first of the many Bible societies of the 19th century. Thereafter, foreign-language copies of the Bible began to appear with increasing frequency.

Today, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, incorporated in 1884, prints Bibles and Bible study aids in over 200 languages. Worldwide, it has distributed 72 million copies of the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. Translated from the original Hebrew and Greek, the *New World Translation* is now available in whole or in part in 18 languages and is presently being translated into 12 additional tongues.

With the Bible now accessible to nearly everyone, how do you view it? Do you value the Bible? Do you have a copy that you treasure and read?

The Bible—A Book to Be Read

IT IS easy to run out of superlatives when one is talking about the Bible. It is by far the most widely circulated book in all history. The Bible is the oldest, most translated, most quoted, most influential, and most respected book. Probably it is also the most controversial. And certainly it is the book that has survived the most bans, burnings, and violent opposition. Unhappily, though, there is one superlative that can no longer be applied to the Bible. It is unlikely that it is any longer the most widely *read* book in the world.

While people may have a Bible somewhere in the house, many feel that they are too busy to spend time actually reading it. Reading was once a popular pastime. Now, however, most prefer to spend their spare time watching television or doing something else. Those who still do some reading usually prefer something light and easy. Reading the Bible takes concentration, and most people no longer concentrate deeply on what they read.

Yet, the Bible did not survive merely to be left sitting on our bookshelves. There are good reasons why it should be read. Consider some facts about it.

No Wonder It Endured!

The term "Bible" comes from the Greek word *bi·bli'a,* meaning "little books." This reminds us that the Bible is made up of a number of books—some not so little! They were written over a period of sixteen hundred years. While the writers were men, they were inspired by a higher Source. One Bible writer said: "Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) What is true of Scriptural prophecy is also true of the rest of the Bible. These divinely inspired "little books" are filled with the lofty thoughts of Jehovah God. (Isaiah 55:9) No wonder the Bible has endured so long!

For God's servants, the Bible has always been the foremost book. They agree with the apostle Paul, himself one of the Bible writers. He said: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching." (2 Timothy 3:16) Accordingly, the Bible is the basis of the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses today. It determines their doctrines and governs their conduct. They wholeheartedly recommend that everyone read some portion of God's Word each day and meditate appreciatively on its contents.—Psalm 1: 1-3.

The Habit of Bible Reading

The habit of reading the Scriptures has been beneficial in times past. Kings of Israel were commanded to make their own handwritten copy of the Law—now an important part of the Bible—and read it daily as a constant reminder of God's will for them. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20) Failure to do this caused the downfall of many kings.

The value of studying the Scriptures is illustrated in the case of the aged prophet Daniel. Because of his personal study of the parts of the Bible that existed in his day, Daniel, while in exile in Babylon, was able to 'discern by the books' that an important prophecy recorded by Jeremiah was about to be fulfilled.—Daniel 9:2.

At the time of Jesus' birth, the "righteous and reverent" man Simeon was confidently expecting to see the one who would

become the Christ, or the Messiah. Simeon had been promised that he would not die before seeing the Christ. His allusion to Isaiah's prophecy when holding the infant Jesus in his arms shows that Simeon was an attentive reader of the books of the Bible that had already been written in his day. —Luke 2:25-32; Isaiah 42:6.

When John the Baptizer was preaching, "the people were in expectation" of the Messiah. What does this indicate? It suggests that many among the Jews were familiar with the Messianic prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. (Luke 3:15) This is interesting, for in those days books were not readily available. Copies of Bible books had to be painstakingly made by hand, and they were correspondingly expensive and difficult to obtain. How did people become familiar with their contents?

In many cases, by public reading. For example, Moses commanded that at certain fixed times, the whole Law given by God was to be read to the assembled Israelites. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13) By the first century C.E., public reading of Bible books was widespread. The disciple James remarked: "From ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath."—Acts 15:21.

Today, it is easy to own a personal copy of the Bible. At least some of these "little books" are available in the languages of 98 percent of the world's population. Thus it is sad that many are not interested in finding out what the Bible has to say to them. This may be a scientific age, but God's Word, the Bible, is still preeminently "beneficial for teaching." It gives sound counsel on morals, human relations, and many other subjects. Moreover, the Bible offers the only sure hope for a peaceful future.

Read It Regularly

Jehovah's Witnesses have therefore made it a prominent part of their work to encourage the regular reading of the Bible. In bold letters on the factory building at their world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, appears the exhortation: "READ GOD'S WORD THE HOLY BIBLE DAILY." Millions of passersby have seen these words, and it is hoped that many have heeded them.

In the more than 73,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world, sessions of the Theocratic Ministry School are held each week. Part of the course is the public reading of a selected portion of the Bible. All in attendance also have an assignment to read a few chapters of the Bible weekly in the privacy of their own home. Those who keep up with this schedule eventually read the whole Bible.

This arrangement is in harmony with one of the textbooks used in this school. The *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook* says: "Your personal schedule should include time for reading the Bible itself. There is great value in reading it right through from cover to cover. . . . However, your goal in reading should never be just to cover material, but to get the overall viewpoint of it with the intention of remembering. Take time to ponder on what it says."

Other publications produced by Jehovah's Witnesses likewise encourage the reading of the Bible. For example, in this journal's companion magazine, *Awake!*, appeared the following encouragement for young people: "Have you read . . . the Bible all the way through? Yes, the Bible is a big book, but why not break down the reading of it into small portions? . . . The 'noble-minded' Beroeans 'carefully examined the Scriptures *daily*.' (Acts 17:11) If you follow

a daily schedule of reading just 15 minutes a day . . . , you could complete the reading of the Bible within a year." Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses feel that modern-day Christians should be well acquainted with the Scriptures, just as God's servants were in ancient times.

With this in mind, the Witnesses have promoted a 20th-century version of public Bible reading. In several languages, they have made cassette recordings of readings covering the entire Bible. For many this has proved to be a fine help in overcoming some obstacles to Bible reading. Some listen to these recordings while working around the house, driving their car, or doing a number of other things. To sit down and listen quietly to the reading of a portion of the Bible while following along in your own copy is a delightful experience.

If you are not already reading the Bible daily, why not make it your habit to do so? This need not take long each day, but the benefits will be great, for application of the Scriptures will enable you to act wisely and enjoy a spiritually rewarding life. You will also be acting in harmony with this command given long ago to the Israelite leader Joshua: "This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely."—Joshua 1:8.

The pages of the Bible reveal Jehovah's loving purpose for obedient mankind. Accurate knowledge of his inspired Word results in true happiness and the hope of eternal life in Paradise in a marvelous new world of endless blessings. (Luke 23:43; 2 Peter 3:13) May you seize your opportunity to read and study the Bible and reach out for this wonderful life.

'One Leaf Might Pierce the Darkness Like a Star'

TODAY, translations of the Holy Scriptures are almost universally available. However, the battle over the Bible has often been a matter of life and death.

In the book *Fifteenth Century Bibles,* Wendell Prime wrote: "Thirty years after the invention of printing, the Inquisition was in completely successful operation in Spain. Of 342,000 persons punished by it in that country 32,000 were burned alive. It was the Bible which brought them to the flames of martyrdom. Equally terrible was this engine of destruction in Italy, both at the north and south. Archbishops, aided by the Inquisition, were consuming fires for both Bibles and their readers. Nero made some Christians shine as lights in the world by setting them on fire, sewed up in sacks, covered with pitch, using them as candles to illuminate the scene of his debaucheries. But the streets of European cities blazed with Bible bonfires. Bibles were not like readers who could be impoverished,

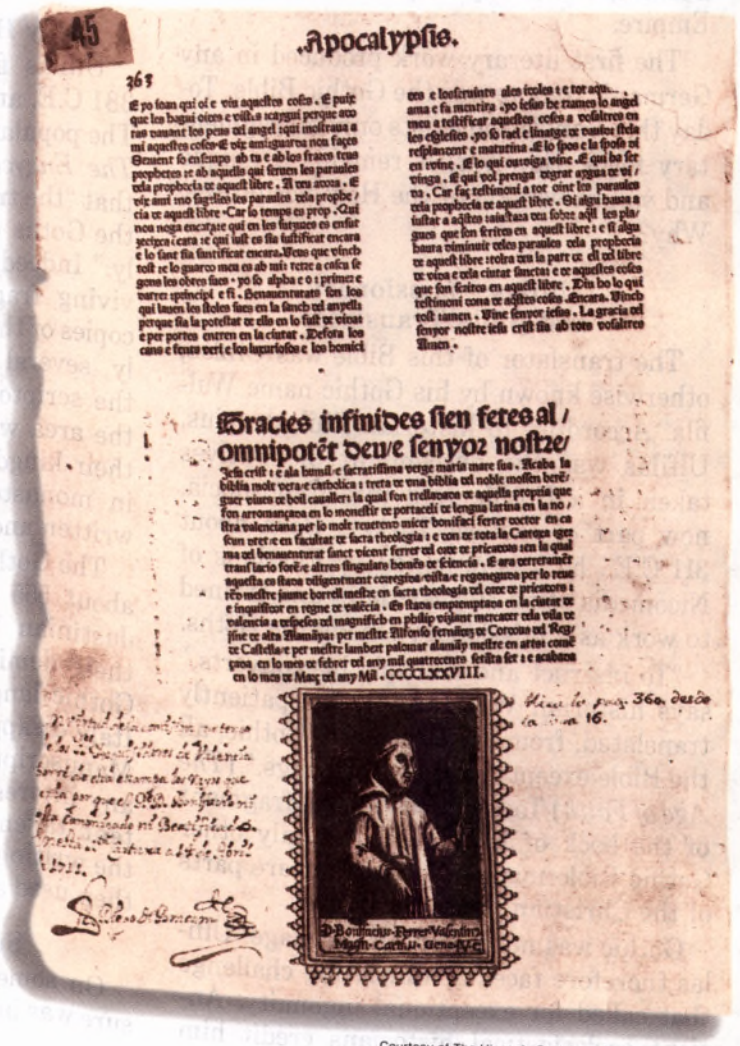
stripped, tortured, mutilated and cast out. *Even a leaf surviving might pierce the blackness of this darkness like a star.*" (Italics ours.)

What author Prime describes actually took place in the case of the Bible page reproduced here. It is the colophon page, that is, the closing page of the book with an inscription identifying the translator. The two parallel columns at the top are the concluding verses of Apocalypse, or the book of Revelation.

Regarding this book, *The Cambridge History of the Bible* states: "Bonifacio Ferrer's Catalan translation of the Bible was printed in Valencia, 1478; all available copies were destroyed by the Inquisition before 1500, but *a single leaf survives* in the Hispanic Society of America's library." (Italics ours.)

Wendell Prime also noted: "To terrified ecclesiastics there were no good Bibles but burnt Bibles. These holy fires had been far more frequent and brilliant but for the lack of fuel. In many places there were no Bible bonfires merely because authority was so vigilant that there were no Bibles to burn." Despite such intense efforts to eradicate Bibles intended for the common people, many copies escaped destruction. Prime added: "Bibles were preserved by being carried away by exiles, or by being concealed like precious stones and metals in times of distress and danger."

God's prophet Isaiah wrote: "All flesh is green grass . . . The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite." (Isaiah 40:6, 8) Over the centuries, multitudes of Bible lovers and many courageous translators have risked much and suffered greatly for the sake of God's Word. Yet, human efforts alone could never have ensured its preservation. For this preservation, we thank the Bible's Author, Jehovah.



Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York

The Gothic Bible
A Remarkable Achievement

THE Goths were a confederation of Germanic tribes, probably originating in Scandinavia. In the early centuries of our Common Era, they migrated as far south as the Black Sea and the river Danube, to the very outposts of the Roman Empire.

The first literary work produced in any Germanic tongue was the Gothic Bible. Today this translation exists only in fragmentary form. However, it remains a unique and valued version of the Holy Scriptures. Why?

Ulfilas—Missionary and Bible Translator

The translator of this Bible was Ulfilas, otherwise known by his Gothic name Wulfila. According to historian Philostorgius, Ulfilas was the descendant of captives taken in a Gothic raid into Cappadocia, now part of eastern Turkey. Born about 311 C.E., he was ordained by Eusebius of Nicomedia some 30 years later and trained to work as a missionary among the Goths.

"To instruct and multiply his converts," says historian Will Durant, "he patiently translated, from the Greek into Gothic, all the Bible except the Books of Kings." (*The Age of Faith*) Today, apart from a fragment of the book of Nehemiah, the only other Gothic Bible manuscripts extant are parts of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Gothic was not a written language. Ulfilas therefore faced a translating challenge that called for exceptional ingenuity. Ancient ecclesiastical historians credit him with the invention of the Gothic alphabet of 27 symbols, based primarily on the Greek and Latin alphabets. Moreover, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* remarks that "he coined a Germanic Christian terminology, some of which is still in use."

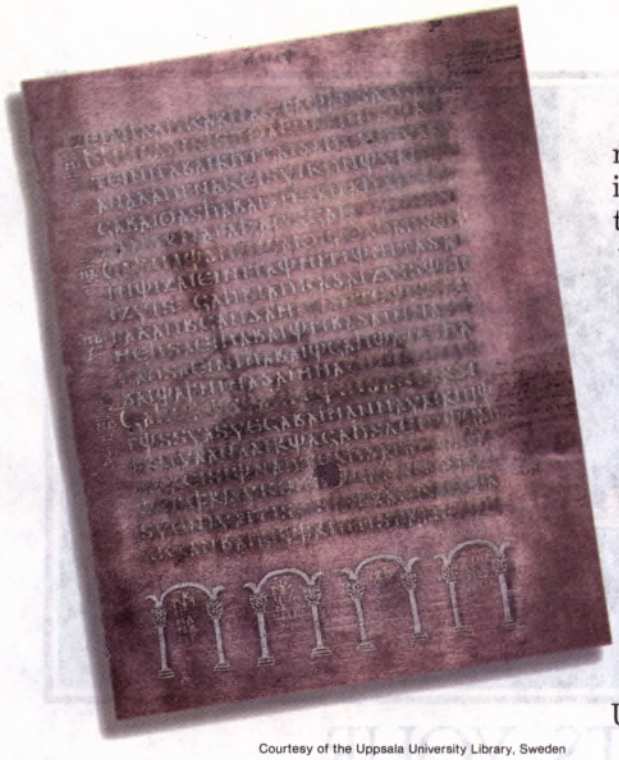
Early History of the Gothic Bible

Ulfilas finished his translation before 381 C.E. and died two or three years later. The popularity of his work is attested to by *The Encyclopedia Americana,* which says that "the translation was generally used by the Goths who migrated to Spain and Italy." Indeed, judging by the number of surviving fragments, it appears that many copies of this Gothic Bible were made. Likely, several manuscripts were produced in the scriptoria of Ravenna and Verona, in the area where the Goths had established their kingdom. The scriptoria were rooms in monasteries where manuscripts were written and copied.

The Goths came to their end as a nation about 555 C.E., after Byzantine emperor Justinian I had reconquered Italy. After their demise, says Tönnes Kleberg, "the Gothic language and Gothic traditions in Italy disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace. Manuscripts in Gothic were no longer of any interest. . . . They were to a large extent taken apart and scraped to remove the writing. The expensive parchment was then used again for writing new contents."

Surviving Manuscripts

On some of these manuscripts, the erasure was imperfectly done, leaving the orig-



Courtesy of the Uppsala University Library, Sweden

inal script still faintly visible. Several of these palimpsests, as they are called, have been found and deciphered. Remarkably, the famous Codex Argenteus, containing the four Gospels in the order Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark, was preserved unscathed.

This splendid codex is thought to have originated in the Ravenna scriptorium at the beginning of the sixth century C.E. It is called Codex Argenteus, meaning "Silver Book," because it is written in silver ink. Its leaves of parchment are dyed purple, indicating that it was probably commissioned for a royal personage. Gold letters embellish the first three lines of each Gospel as well as the beginnings of the different sections. The names of the Gospel writers also appear in gold at the top of the four parallel "archways" placed at the foot of each column of script. These give references to parallel passages in the Gospels.

Restoring the Gothic Bible Text

Following the dissolution of the Gothic nation, the valuable Codex Argenteus vanished. It was not seen again until it came to light in the middle of the 16th century in the monastery of Werden, near Cologne, Germany.

In the year 1569, the Gothic version of the Lord's Prayer was published, drawing attention to the Bible from which it had been taken. The name Codex Argenteus appeared in print for the first time in 1597. From Werden this manuscript came to be in the emperor's art collection in Prague. At the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, however, the victorious Swedes carried it off along with other treasures. Since 1669 this codex has held a permanent place in the Uppsala University Library, Sweden.

The Codex Argenteus was originally composed of 336 leaves, 187 of which are in Uppsala. One other leaf—the last one of Mark's Gospel—was discovered in 1970 at Speyer, Germany.

From the moment the codex reappeared, scholars began to study the script to unravel the meaning of the dead Gothic language. Using all available manuscripts and previous attempts at restoring the text, German scholar Wilhelm Streitberg put together and published in 1908 "Die gotische Bibel" (The Gothic Bible), with the Greek and Gothic texts on opposite pages.

Today, this Gothic Bible is of interest mainly to scholars. The fact that it was produced and cherished in the early days of Bible translating, however, testifies to Ulfilas' desire and determination to have God's Word translated into what was then a modern tongue. He correctly recognized that only by this means could the Gothic people hope to understand Christian truth.

PARENTS, YOUR CHILDREN NEED SPECIALIZED ATTENTION

"Your sons will be like slips of olive trees all around your table."—PSALM 128:3.

IN MANY respects, children grow and develop like plants. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Bible speaks of a man's wife as "a fruit-bearing vine" and likens his children to "slips of olive trees all around [his] table." (Psalm 128:3) A farmer will tell you that raising a crop of young plants is not easy, especially when climate and soil conditions are adverse. Likewise, in these critical "last days," it is very difficult to rear children to become well-adjusted, God-fearing adults.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

1. How might raising plants and rearing children be compared?

[2] To reap a good crop, a farmer needs fertile soil, warm sunshine, and water. In addition to cultivating and weeding, he must provide pest control and other protective care. There may be difficult times along the way, right up to the harvest. How sad when the crop turns out to be bad! Yet, how contented a cultivator can be when, after much

2. What is usually needed to produce a good harvest?

hard work, a good crop is reaped!—Isaiah 60:20-22; 61:3.

[3] A successful, productive human life surely is more precious than a farmer's harvest. It therefore is not surprising that rearing a child successfully can take even more time and effort than raising a bountiful crop. (Deuteronomy 11:18-21) A young child planted in the garden of life, if watered and nurtured with love and given healthy boundaries, can grow and blossom spiritually even in a world filled with blighted moral values. But if mistreated or oppressed, the child will wither inside and possibly die spiritually. (Colossians 3:21; compare Jeremiah 2:21; 12:2.) Indeed, all children need specialized attention!

Daily Attention From Infancy

[4] Parents have to give almost constant attention to a newborn. However, does the baby need only physical or material attention on a daily basis? To God's servant Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote: *"From infancy you have known the holy writings,* which are able to make you wise for salvation." (2 Timothy 3:15) So the parental attention Timothy received, even from infancy, was also of a spiritual kind. But when does infancy start?

[5] The Greek word Paul used here (*bre'phos*) is also applied to an unborn child. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer, told her relative Mary: "As the sound of your greeting fell upon my ears, the infant [*bre'phos*] in my womb leaped with great gladness." (Luke 1:44) Thus, even the unborn are called infants, and the Bible shows that they can respond to activity outside the womb. Should prenatal care, which is often encouraged today, therefore include attention to the unborn infant's spiritual welfare?

[6] This is something to consider, since evidence reveals that the unborn can either benefit from or be adversely affected by what they hear. A music director found that various scores he was rehearsing sounded strangely familiar, especially the cello part. When he mentioned the names of the musical works to his mother, a professional cellist, she said that these were the very musical compositions she had been rehearsing when she was pregnant with him. Similarly, the unborn may be negatively affected when their mothers habitually watch TV soap operas. Thus, a medical journal spoke of "fetal soap addiction."

[7] Realizing the benefit of positive stimuli to infants, many parents begin to read, talk, and sing to their child even before it is born. You can do the same. While your infant may not understand the words, it will likely benefit from your soothing voice and its loving tone. After birth, the child will begin to comprehend your words, perhaps much sooner than you think. In only two or three years, a child learns a complex language just by being exposed to it. A baby can also begin to learn the "pure language" of Bible truth.—Zephaniah 3:9.

[8] What did Paul mean when he said that Timothy had 'known the holy writings *from*

3. How do plants and children compare in importance, and what kind of attention should children receive?
4. What kind of attention do children need "from infancy"?
5, 6. (a) What does the Bible say about the unborn? (b) What indicates that parents should be concerned about the welfare of the unborn child?

7. (a) How have many parents given attention to the welfare of their unborn? (b) What capabilities does a child have?
8. (a) What does the Bible evidently mean when it says that Timothy knew the holy writings "from infancy"? (b) What proved true regarding Timothy?

infancy'? He evidently meant that Timothy had received spiritual training from babyhood, not just from childhood. This is in keeping with the meaning of the Greek word *bre'phos,* which generally refers to a newborn. (Luke 2:12, 16; Acts 7:19) Timothy received spiritual instruction from his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois from as far back as his memory could reach. (2 Timothy 1:5) The saying, 'As the young twig is shaped, so grows the tree' surely applied to Timothy. He had been 'trained up according to the way for him,' and, as a result, he became a fine servant of God. —Proverbs 22:6; Philippians 2:19-22.

Specialized Care That Is Needed

[9] Children also are like plants in that not all have the same characteristics, nor do they all respond to the same methods of care. Wise parents will respect the differences and will avoid comparing one child with another. (Compare Galatians 6:4.) If your children are to blossom into wholesome adults, you need to observe their distinctive personality traits, cultivating the good ones and weeding out the bad. What if you detect a weakness or improper trend, perhaps toward dishonesty, materialism, or selfishness? Correct it kindly, even as Jesus corrected the weaknesses of his apostles. (Mark 9:33-37) In particular, commend each child regularly for his strengths and good traits.

[10] What children especially need is loving personal attention. Jesus took time to provide little ones with such special attention, even during the busy final days of his ministry. (Mark 10:13-16, 32) Parents, follow that example! Unselfishly make time to be with your children. And do not be ashamed to show them genuine love. Put your arms around them, as Jesus did. Give them warm, affectionate hugs and kisses. When parents of well-adjusted young adults were asked what advice they could offer other parents, among the most frequent responses were: 'Love abundantly,' 'spend time together,' 'develop mutual respect,' 'really listen to them,' 'offer guidance rather than a speech,' and 'be realistic.'

[11] Providing such specialized attention can be a joy. One successful parent wrote: "When our two boys were younger, the process of getting them ready for bed, reading to them, tucking them in, and saying prayers with them was a pleasure." Such times together provide opportunity for interchanges that can be encouraging to both parent and child. (Compare Romans 1: 11, 12.) One couple listened while their three-year-old asked God to bless "Wally." He prayed for "Wally" on succeeding nights, and the parents were greatly encouraged when they realized that he meant the brothers in Malawi, then suffering persecution. One woman said: 'When I was only four, my mother helped me to memorize scriptures and sing Kingdom songs while I stood on a chair to dry dishes as she washed them.' Can you think of times when you can enjoy valuable interchanges with your young ones?

[12] Wise Christian parents arrange for a regular study program. Though you may use a formal question-and-answer method,

9. (a) What should parents avoid doing, and why? (b) As a child develops, what do parents need to do, and what example should they heed?
10. What do children especially need, and how can it be provided?
11. (a) How should parents view the providing of specialized attention for their children? (b) When might parents be able to enjoy valuable interchanges with their children?
12. What will Christian parents wisely provide for their children, and what methods could be used?

can you contribute to pleasurable interchanges by adapting study sessions, especially for younger children? You might include drawing pictures of Bible scenes, telling Bible stories, or listening to a report you have asked the child to prepare. Make God's Word as tasty as you can for your children so that they form a longing for it. (1 Peter 2:2, 3) One father said: 'When the children were younger, we crawled on the floor with them and acted out historic events involving famous Bible characters. The kids loved it.'

[13] Practice sessions also result in valuable interchanges because they help young ones to prepare for real-life situations. One of the Kusserow children—all 11 of whom remained faithful to God during the Nazi persecution—said of her parents: "They showed us how to act and how to defend ourselves with the Bible. [1 Peter 3:15] Often we held practice sessions, asking questions and giving answers." Why not do the same thing? You can practice presentations for the ministry, with a parent acting as the householder. Or the practice session may deal with real-life temptations. (Proverbs 1: 10-15) "Rehearsing for difficult situations can build a child's skills and confidence," one individual explained. "The practice might include playing the role of a friend offering your child a cigarette, drink or drug." These sessions can help you to discern how your child will respond in such situations.

[14] During interchanges with your child, appeal to him in the same compassionate manner as did the writer of these words: "My son, my law do not forget, and my commandments may your heart observe, because length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you." (Proverbs 3: 1, 2) Would it not touch your child's heart if you lovingly explained that you require obedience because this will result in his having peace and length of days—in fact, eternal life in God's peaceful new world? Take your young one's personality into account as you reason from God's Word. Do this prayerfully, and Jehovah will bless your efforts. Such loving and compassionate Bible-based discussions are likely to have fine results and bring lasting benefits.—Proverbs 22:6.

[15] Even if such an interchange does not take place during your planned study period, do not be distracted by other matters. Listen carefully not only to what your child says but also to how the thought is expressed. "Look at your child," said one expert. "Give him your full attention. You need to understand, not just to hear. Parents who exert that extra effort can make a major difference in their children's lives." Children today often encounter serious problems at school and elsewhere. As a parent, draw the child out, and help him to view matters from God's standpoint. If you are not sure how to resolve the problem, do research in the Scriptures and the publications provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) By all means, give your child all the specialized attention needed to solve the problem.

Cherish Your Time Together

[16] Young people need more specialized attention today than ever before because we

13. What is the value of practice sessions, and what may you rehearse during these?
14. Why are loving and compassionate discussions with your children so important?
15. How can parents help their children to resolve problems?
16, 17. (a) Why do young people particularly need specialized attention and instruction today? (b) What do children need to know when disciplined by their parents?

are living in "the last days," and these are "critical times." (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14) Parents and children alike need the protection afforded by true wisdom that "preserves alive its owners." (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Since godly wisdom involves the proper application of Bible-based knowledge, children need regular instruction in the Word of God. Therefore, study the Scriptures with your young ones. Tell them about Jehovah, carefully explain his requirements, and create joyful anticipation for the fulfillment of his grand promises. Speak of such things at home, as you walk with your children at your side—indeed, on every appropriate occasion.—Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

[17] Farmers know that not all plants flourish under the same conditions. Plants need specialized care. Similarly, every child is different and needs specialized attention, instruction, and discipline. For instance, a parent's disapproving look may be enough to halt the wrong course of one youngster, whereas another child may need stronger discipline. But all your children need to know why you are displeased with certain words or actions, and both parents should cooperate so that discipline is consistent. (Ephesians 6:4) It is especially important that Christian parents give clear guidance that harmonizes with the Scriptures.

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How might raising plants and rearing children be compared?
- ☐ What kind of attention should a child receive daily from infancy?
- ☐ What specialized care do children need, and how can it be given?
- ☐ Why give your children specialized attention?

[18] A farmer must do the work of planting and cultivating at the right time. If he delays or neglects his crop, he will harvest little or nothing. Well, your young children are developing "plants" that need specialized attention right now, not next month or next year. Do not pass up precious opportunities to promote their spiritual growth in harmony with God's Word and to weed out worldly thoughts that can cause them to wither and die spiritually. Cherish the hours and days that you are privileged to spend with your children, for these times pass quickly. Work hard to cultivate in your offspring the godly qualities needed for a happy life as Jehovah's faithful servants. (Galatians 5:22, 23; Colossians 3:12-14) This is not someone else's work; it is your job, and God can help you to do it.

[19] Give your children a rich spiritual heritage. Study God's Word with them, and enjoy wholesome recreation together. Take your young ones to Christian meetings, and have them at your side in the Kingdom-preaching work. Build within your beloved offspring the kind of personality that meets with Jehovah's approval, and most likely they will bring you great joy in later life. Indeed, "the father of a righteous one will without fail be joyful; the one becoming father to a wise one will also rejoice in him. Your father and your mother will rejoice, and she that gave birth to you will be joyful."—Proverbs 23:24, 25.

A Rich Reward

[20] The rearing of children is a complex, long-term assignment. Raising these 'slips

18, 19. What responsibility do Christian parents have toward their children, and what is likely to result if that work is well done?
20. What is the key to being a successful parent of teenagers?

of olive trees around your table' to become God-fearing adults who bear Kingdom fruitage has been called a 20-year project. (Psalm 128:3; John 15:8) This project usually becomes harder when children reach the teenage years, when pressures on them often increase and parents find it necessary to intensify their efforts. But the key to success remains the same—being attentive, warm, and understanding. Remember that your youngsters really need personal attention. You can give them such attention by showing genuine loving concern for their welfare. To help them, you must expend yourself by providing the *time, love,* and *concern* that they really need.

[21] The reward for your efforts to care for the precious fruitage Jehovah has entrusted to you can be far more satisfying than any farmer's bountiful harvest. (Psalm 127:3-5) So then parents, continue to give your children specialized attention. Do so for their good and to the glory of our heavenly Father, Jehovah.

21. What can be the reward for giving children specialized attention?

YOUTHS—WHOSE TEACHING DO YOU HEED?

"Some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to . . . teachings of demons."—1 TIMOTHY 4:1.

THE question here addressed to youths is, Whose teaching do you heed? This suggests that you young ones have a choice. The choice is between responding to divine teaching and following the teachings of demons. Jehovah teaches by means of his Word, the Bible, as well as through the ministry of the ones he uses as his representatives on earth. (Isaiah 54:13; Acts 8:26-39; Matthew 24:45-47) But are you surprised that the demons also teach?

[2] The apostle Paul wrote: "In later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and *teachings of demons.*" (1 Timothy 4:1) Since we are living in "the last days" when Satan and his demons are especially active, do you see why we ask the question, Whose teaching do you heed? (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-12) Because Satan and his demons are so cunning, so seductive in their methods of operation, it is vital that you give careful consideration to this question.—2 Corinthians 11:14, 15.

1. (a) What choice do youths have? (b) How does Jehovah teach?
2. Why is it vital to be on guard against the teachings of demons particularly at this time?

The Demons and Their Teachings

[3] The demons were at one time angels of Jehovah, but they rebelled against their

3. Who are the demons, what is their purpose, and how do they seek to accomplish it?

Before the Flood, the disobedient angels and their offspring promoted violence and debauchery

Creator and thus became the cohorts of Satan. (Matthew 12:24) Their purpose is to corrupt people and turn them away from serving God. To accomplish this, the demons use human teachers to promote a selfish, immoral way of life that is condemned by Jehovah. (Compare 2 Peter 2:1, 12-15.) A review of how once faithful angels became demons will help you to identify their teachings and the way of life that these teachings promote.

[4] In the days of Noah, certain angels became so attracted to the beautiful daughters of men that these spirit creatures left their positions in heaven to come to earth. Their sexual union with women resulted in hybrid offspring called Nephilim. Since it is unnatural for spirit creatures to cohabit with humans, what the disobedient angels did with those women was just as wrong as were the homosexual acts later committed by the men and boys of Sodom. (Genesis 6: 1-4; 19:4-11; Jude 6, 7) Although the mates of the angels perished in the floodwaters along with their hybrid children, the wicked angels shed their materialized fleshly bodies and returned to heaven where they became the demon companions of Satan the Devil.—2 Peter 2:4.

[5] In view of this historical background, do you see what kind of creatures the demons really are? They are sex perverts who are the behind-the-scenes manipulators of this

4. (a) Why did disobedient angels come to earth in Noah's day? (b) What happened to the wicked angels and their offspring during the Flood?

5. What kind of creatures are the demons, and how do they try to subvert God's laws?

sex-mad world. Although they have been barred from again materializing as humans, they derive pleasure from the sexual perversions of those they can corrupt on earth. (Ephesians 6:11, 12) The demons try to subvert Jehovah's laws regarding chastity and morality by making them seem needlessly restrictive. These wicked angels advocate sexual immorality as a normal, pleasurable way of life.

Promoting Teachings of Demons

[6] That the demons would promote their teachings in a subtle way should not surprise us, since this is the method that their leader, Satan the Devil, used in deceiving Eve. Recall that he spoke to her as though he wanted to be of help. "Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" asked Satan. Then he craftily tried to undermine God's teaching by telling Eve that she would benefit from eating from the prohibited tree. "In the very day of your eating from it," the Devil promised, "your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:1-5) Thus Eve was enticed, yes seduced, into disobeying God. —2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13, 14.

[7] In recent times, too, many have been seduced. The demons have so cunningly promoted sexual immorality that it has come to be accepted by many who once condemned it. For example, when a well-known advice columnist in the United States answered a letter on the matter of unmarried people having sexual relations, she wrote: "I never thought I would reverse myself on this issue, but I now believe that couples who are serious about marriage should take a few weekend trips together to test their compatibility." Then she added: "I can't believe I wrote that!" Even she could not believe that she had recommended fornication, but she had! Clearly, we must be careful that the teachings of demons do not affect our view of practices that God condemns.—Romans 1:26, 27; Ephesians 5:5, 10-12.

[8] We must never forget that Satan is "the ruler of this world." In fact, the apostle John said that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19) True, Jesus sometimes used the word "world" to refer to all humankind. (Matthew 26:13; John 3:16; 12:46) More frequently, however, he used the word "world" to refer to all organized human society that exists outside the true Christian congregation. For instance, Jesus said that his followers must be "no part of the world" (unrighteous human society) and that because they were no part of the world, the world would hate them. (John 15:19; 17:14-16) The Bible further warned that we should avoid becoming friends of this world ruled by Satan.—James 4:4.

[9] The apostle John urged: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world." He also said: "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." (1 John 2:15, 16) Think about this. What is there in the world today that stimulates wrong desire, say for illicit sex? (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5) What about much

6. Why should we not be surprised that the demons promote their teachings in a subtle way?
7. What has been the effect of the subtle teachings of demons, and what warning does this provide?
8. (a) How is the word "world" used in the Bible? (b) Who rules the world, and how should Jesus' followers view the world?
9, 10. (a) What worldly things stimulate improper sexual desire? (b) How is it possible to identify who is behind what the world's entertainment teaches?

of the world's music? A California police probation officer said: "Basically, the music teaches that you don't have to listen to your parents, and that you should live life the way you want." Do you recognize the source of the teaching supplied by such music?

[10] Recall that Satan, in effect, told Eve: 'You are missing out. Live life the way you want. Make up your own mind as to what is good and what is bad. You don't need to listen to God.' (Genesis 3:1-5) Is that not the same kind of message found in much of the world's music? But the demons do not teach only by means of music. They also use commercial television programs, movies, and videos to teach. How so? Well, the communication channels of the world present entertainment that makes the moral teachings of God appear repressive. They advocate fornication by emphasizing it and presenting it as desirable.

Would you be embarrassed if Jesus heard your favorite music?

[11] The magazine *U.S.News & World Report* stated: "In 1991, the three [U.S.] networks displayed more than 10,000 sexual incidents during prime time; for every scene depicting sexual intercourse between married partners, the networks showed 14 scenes of sex outside marriage." By showing over 9,000 incidents of illicit sex during prime time in one year, what would you say television is teaching? Barry S. Sapolsky, who coauthored the report "Sex in Primetime Television: 1979 Versus 1989," states: "If an adolescent watches years of TV where people engage in flirtatious or explicit behavior, these thousands of images over the years will teach them that sex is pleasant—and without any consequences." There is no question about this: The world's entertainment teaches young ones that there are no rules, that fornication is acceptable, and that there are no bad consequences for living in a way that God condemns. —1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:3-5.

[12] The world's music, movies, videos, and television are designed to appeal to young people. They propagate the corrupt teachings of demons! But should this be surprising? Think about it. If false religion and politics are part of Satan's world—and they clearly are—does it make sense to believe that the entertainment promoted by the world is free of demon influence? You young people in particular need to be on guard not to "let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould."—Romans 12:2, *The New Testament in Modern English,* by J. B. Phillips.

11. Morally speaking, what does television often teach?

12. Why does the world's entertainment pose a threat particularly to Christian youths?

Make a Self-Examination

[13] The matter of whose teachings you heed is determined not only by your speech but also by your deeds. (Romans 6:16) So

13. What self-examination should be made?

ask yourself, 'Are my attitude and my course of life being unduly affected by what I learn through the world's propaganda channels? Could the teachings of the demons be making inroads in my life?' To help you answer such questions, why not compare the amount of time and effort you spend studying the Bible, attending Christian meetings, and talking to others about God's Kingdom with that spent watching TV, listening to music, participating in your favorite sport, or engaging in similar activities? Since so much—indeed, your very life—is at stake, make an honest self-examination.—2 Corinthians 13:5.

[14] You are well aware that the material food you eat will affect your physical health. Similarly, your spiritual health is affected by what you feed your mind and heart. (1 Peter 2:1, 2) While you may deceive yourself regarding what your real interests are, you cannot deceive our Judge, Jesus Christ. (John 5:30) So ask yourself, 'If Jesus were on earth, would I be embarrassed to have him walk in and hear my music or see what I am watching?' The sobering fact is that Jesus *is* watching and knows our deeds. —Revelation 3:15.

Resist Teachings of Demons

[15] The pressure that the demons exert on young ones to heed their teachings is tremendous. These wicked spirits seem to offer a life of immediate gratification—one of fun and pleasure. In order to please God, Moses of old rejected "the temporary enjoyment of sin" as a prominent member of Pharaoh's household. (Hebrews 11:24-27) It is not easy to reject what the demons offer, so you must fight hard to do what is right. This is especially true because we have inherited sin and our hearts often crave to do what is bad. (Genesis 8:21; Romans 5:12) Because of sinful inclinations, even the apostle Paul had to get tough with himself and not allow his fleshly desires to dominate him.—1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 7:21-23.

[16] Although you may be tempted to "follow after the crowd for evil ends," God can help you resist pressure from your peers to pursue their wrong course. (Exodus 23:2; 1 Corinthians 10:13) But you must listen to God's directions, treasuring up his sayings in your heart. (Psalm 119:9, 11) You need to realize that when young people isolate themselves, sexual desire can build up and lead to breaking God's law. "When I'm alone with my boyfriend, my body wants to do one thing and my brain tells me to do another," admitted one youth. So recognize your limitations and realize that your heart is treacherous. (Jeremiah 17:9) Do not isolate yourself. (Proverbs 18:1) Set limits on expressions of affection. And of particular importance, keep close company only with those who love Jehovah and who have deep respect for his laws.—Psalm 119:63; Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

[17] A careful study of Christian publications designed for your spiritual strengthening will help you. For instance, consider the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* and the chapter "The Fight to Do What Is Right" in the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth.* Let the Scriptural instruction provided sink deep into your mind and heart, and it will strengthen you. A fact that you must never forget is that in this demon-controlled

14. What will affect our spiritual health, and what sobering thought should we keep in mind?
15. Why should Christians fight hard to resist the teachings of demons?
16. How can youths resist pressures to engage in immoral conduct?
17. What can help Christian youths gain the strength to resist the teachings of demons?

world doing what is right is not easy. So fight hard. (Luke 13:24) Build up your spiritual strength. Do not imitate the weak, fearful ones who follow after the crowd.

Benefit From Divine Teaching

18 Remember, too, that you will never miss out on anything worthwhile by heeding Jehovah's teaching. He truly loves you, and that is why he is "teaching you to benefit yourself." (Isaiah 48:17) So heed Jehovah's teaching, and avoid the heartache of a ruined conscience, loss of self-respect, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, or similar tragedies. Jehovah rejoices when his servants provide him with an answer to Satan's challenge that humans will not remain faithful to God under test. (Job 1:6-12) If you make Jehovah's heart glad by being faithful to him, you will survive when he renders adverse judgment against this world, whereas all who flout his laws will perish.—Proverbs 27:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 John 2:17.

19 If you associate closely with those who appreciate what Jehovah has done for them, you can learn from their experience. One person who had formerly been addicted to drugs and who had practiced immorality explained: "If I had not listened to Jehovah, I would be dead. The person I was to marry is dead from AIDS. All my former worldly close friends are dead from AIDS or are on their way to dying. I see them often in the streets, and I thank Jehovah every day for his laws that govern his people and will keep us holy if only we apply them. I have never been so happy, content, and secure in my life." Truly, heeding Jehovah's teaching always benefits us!

18. What are some benefits of heeding divine teaching?
19. What is the value of associating with those who appreciate the benefits of Jehovah's teaching?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Who are the demons, and what do they teach?
- ☐ How do the demons promote their teachings today?
- ☐ How is it possible to resist the teachings of the demons?
- ☐ What are the benefits of heeding Jehovah's teaching?

Make the Right Choice

20 We urge you young ones: Make the right choice by serving Jehovah. Then be resolute in sticking to that decision. (Joshua 24:15) Actually, you can make only one of two choices. Jesus said that there is the broad and spacious road—the easy one of doing what pleases oneself. That road leads to a dead end, to destruction. The other road is cramped. It is a difficult road to travel in this loose-living, demon-controlled world. But that road will eventually take those traveling it into God's wonderful new world. (Matthew 7:13, 14) Which road will you take? Whose teaching will you heed?

21 Jehovah leaves the choice up to you. He does not try to force you to serve him. "I have put life and death before you," said God's prophet Moses, urging: "Choose life." This choice is made "by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him." (Deuteronomy 29:2; 30:19, 20) May you wisely choose to heed divine teaching and enjoy life without end in God's glorious new world.

20, 21. (a) What two choices do youths have? (b) What lasting benefit will result from heeding divine teaching?

Can You Exercise Patience?

JEHOVAH told Abram: "Go your way out of your country . . . to the country that I shall show you; and I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great." (Genesis 12:1, 2) Abram was then 75 years old. He obeyed and wisely exercised patience the rest of his life, waiting on Jehovah.

Eventually, God made this promise to patient Abraham (Abram): "Assuredly in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you." The apostle Paul added: "And thus after Abraham had shown patience, he obtained this promise."—Hebrews 6:13-15.

What is patience? Dictionaries define it as the ability "to wait calmly for something" or to manifest "forbearance under provocation or strain." So your patience is put to the test when you have to wait for someone or something, or when you are provoked or under stress. In such situations the patient person remains composed; the impatient one becomes hasty and irritable.

Our Impatient Modern World

Especially in many urban areas, a premium is put not on patience but on speed. For millions of people living in crowded cities, each day begins when the morning alarm goes off. That starts the frantic race—to get somewhere, to see someone, to achieve something. Is it any wonder that many are tense and impatient?

Do you get upset when faced with the shortcomings of others? "I do not like a lack of punctuality," says Albert. Most would agree that waiting for someone who is overdue is stressful, especially if there is a deadline to be met. Regarding the Duke of Newcastle, an 18th-century British politician, it was said: 'He loses half an hour in the morning, which he is running after the rest of the day without ever being able to overtake it.' If you had to depend on such a person day after day, would you remain patient?

When driving an automobile, are you quickly riled, reluctant to wait, or tempted to travel too fast? In such circumstances, impatience often spells disaster. During 1989, in what was then West Germany, more than 400,000 highway accidents resulted in injury or death. Of these, 1 in 3 was caused by driving either too fast or too close to the vehicle in front. At least to some extent, therefore, being impatient was responsible for the injury or death of over 137,000 persons. What a price to pay for impatience!

"I find it difficult to remain patient when someone interrupts all the time," complains Ann, "or when someone brags a lot." Karl-Hermann admits that his patience is challenged by "younger ones who have no respect for the elderly."

These and other situations may make you impatient. How, then, can you cultivate more patience?

Jehovah Can Fortify Your Patience

Many people think that patience indicates indecisiveness or weakness. To Jehovah, however, it bears the insignia of strength. He himself "is patient . . . because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) To fortify your own forbearance, therefore, stick close to Jehovah and rely on him

with all your heart. Strengthening your relationship with God is the single most important step toward developing a patient disposition.

Moreover, it is vital to know Jehovah's purposes for the earth and mankind. Abraham "was awaiting the city having real foundations [God's Kingdom], the builder and maker of which city is God." (Hebrews 11:10) Similarly, it will be beneficial to keep a clear view of divine promises and to be content to wait upon Jehovah. You will then realize that patience, far from denoting hesitancy, actually wins people to true worship. Hence, "consider the patience of our Lord as salvation."—2 Peter 3:15.

What if your own personal circumstances test your patience almost unbearably? Do unbelievers put you under harrowing strain? Have you been ill for what seems an interminably long time? In such a case, take to heart what the disciple James wrote. After referring to the pattern the prophets supplied in exercising patience, he revealed the secret of remaining calm under severe stress. James said: "Is there anyone suffering evil among you? Let him carry on prayer."—James 5:10, 13.

Earnestly ask God in prayer to fortify your patience and help you control your spirit under trial. Turn to Jehovah repeatedly, and he will help you identify the circumstances or the habits of others that pose a particular threat to your composure. Praying in advance of potentially trying situations can help you to keep calm.

A Proper View of Self and Others

To maintain a placid frame of mind, you must view yourself and others in a proper manner. This is possible through a study of the Bible, for it shows that everyone has inherited imperfections and therefore has foibles. Moreover, Biblical knowledge will help you grow in love. This quality is essential in order to manifest patience toward others.—John 13:34, 35; Romans 5:12; Philippians 1:9.

Love and an eagerness to forgive can calm you down when you get agitated. If someone has habits that get on your nerves, love will remind you that it is the habits you find disagreeable, not the person. Consider how often your own weaknesses must test God's patience and must exasperate others.

A correct view of yourself will also help you to wait patiently. For instance, have you been reaching out for privileges in Jehovah's service, only to be disappointed? Do you sense your patience running out like the last grains of sand in an hourglass? If that is so, then remember that much impatience is rooted in pride. "Better is one who is patient than one who is haughty in spirit," said Solomon. (Ecclesiastes 7:8) Yes, pride is a major impediment to the cultivating of patience. Is it not true that the humble person finds it easier to wait calmly? Therefore, cultivate humility, and you will be better able to accept delay with peace of mind.—Proverbs 15:33.

Patience Pays Rich Rewards

Abraham is primarily known for his faith. (Romans 4:11) Yet, patience made his faith durable. What was his reward for waiting on Jehovah?

Abraham was granted Jehovah's increasing trust. Abraham's name thus became great and his descendants a mighty nation. All nations of the earth can bless themselves by means of his seed. Abraham served as spokesman for God and even as a type of the Creator. Could there have been any greater reward for Abraham's faith and patience?

A close relationship with Jehovah will help you to display patience, as Abraham did

"Jehovah is very tender in affection" toward Christians who patiently endure trials. (James 5:10, 11) Such individuals enjoy a clean conscience because of doing his will. In your case, then, if you wait on Jehovah and patiently endure trials, your forbearance will result in Jehovah's approval and blessing.

Patience serves God's people well in every aspect of life. Two of Jehovah's servants, named Christian and Agnes, discovered this when they decided to get engaged. They delayed the engagement out of respect for Christian's parents, who needed time to get to know Agnes. What effect did this gesture have?

"Only later did we realize how much our patience meant to my parents," explains Christian. "Our patiently waiting did not kill the relationship between my wife and me. But it was the first building block in our relationship with my parents." Yes, patience pays rich dividends.

Patience also promotes peace. Family and friends will be grateful that you do not make an issue of their every lapse. Your calmness and understanding when others make mistakes will prevent embarrassing scenes. A Chinese proverb says: "Patience in a moment of anger will spare you a hundred days of anguish."

Patience enhances your personality, in effect coating other fine qualities with a varnish of permanence. It makes your faith durable, your peace long lasting, and your love unshakable. Being patient will help you to be joyful while practicing kindness, goodness, and mildness. Exercising patience builds up the strength essential to the cultivating of long-suffering and self-control.

Wait patiently for the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises, then, and you are assured of a wonderful future. Like Abraham, may you "through faith and patience inherit the promises."—Hebrews 6:12.

Jehovah's Witnesses Around the World

"THE land of the free." That is the meaning of the name Thailand. Various religious ideas are held by its more than 57,000,000 gentle, hard-working inhabitants. Although Buddhism predominates, the religions of Christendom are also practiced in this southeast Asian country. All these people need to hear the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.*

Refugees Hear the Good News

In camps scattered throughout the hills of Thailand along the Myanmar border, Bible truth is gaining ground among the more than 10,000 Karen refugees. Members of one Karen family living in that area are Jehovah's Witnesses. They have been spreading the good news among the refugees. How did their work get started?

Several years ago a young man severed his ties with the Anglican Church and became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Prodded by their minister, his relatives opposed him. However, he endured patiently, and his family's opposition gradually subsided. The clerics of the Anglican Church kept up their ridicule until about two years ago when they were dismissed from their office because of immoral conduct. Since the church was then without a shepherd, the immediate family and other relatives of the Witness were shocked and lost. Eleven of them resigned from the church and asked the Witnesses to study the Bible with them.

This study progressed nicely, with other refugees participating. The truth spread quickly, resulting in the baptism of 17 new Witnesses in the river flowing through the refugee camp. What a happy sight when an 88-year-old grandmother was immersed with them!

Video Sparks Interest

The potential for growth is great among the refugees. In 1993 at the Memorial observance, 57 people were in attendance. During the circuit overseer's visit in May of that year, 67 gathered for one of his talks. And about 250 assembled to see the Watchtower Society's video *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name.*

The wife of a Baptist pastor in the refugee camp attended a public Bible talk sponsored by the Witnesses and noted the Bible texts discussed. She told her husband how dissatisfied she was with the repetitious sermons heard at their church. He objected, saying that if she were to go to the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, all the other parishioners would follow. When she again attended the meetings, her husband chased her with a knife and burned her meeting notes and Bible literature. In spite of that, when the video was shown, she came again. Later this woman told her husband what she had seen. With a changed heart, he wanted to see the video and felt sorry that he had burned her notes and Bible literature.

So it is that people are hearing the good news in Thailand. They are thus acquiring spiritual freedom in "the land of the free."—John 8:32.

COUNTRY PROFILE
1993 Service Year

PEAK NUMBER WITNESSING:
1,434

RATIO:
1 Witness to 40,299

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE:
3,342

AVERAGE PIONEER PUBLISHERS:
232

AVERAGE BIBLE STUDIES:
1,489

NUMBER BAPTIZED:
92

NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:
39

BRANCH OFFICE:
BANGKOK

* For additional information, see the *1994 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

THAILAND

First branch office, 1947

Kingdom proclaimers zealously preaching the good news

Bethel family in front of new branch office in Bangkok, dedicated February 8, 1992

She Was Not Too Old to Serve Jehovah

MANY elderly people feel that their remaining years hold little hope of happiness. A well-known aging actress even said: "I have messed up my life, and it's too late to change it . . . When I go walking alone, I think back over my life, and I'm not happy with the way I made it . . . I'm restless everywhere and unable to settle down."

An elderly woman who lived almost 2,000 years ago had no problem of that kind. She was an 84-year-old widow, but she was active, happy, and wonderfully favored by God. Her name was Anna, and she had a special reason for joy. What was it?

"Never Missing From the Temple"

The Gospel writer Luke acquaints us with Anna. "Now," says he, "there was Anna a prophetess, Phanuel's daughter, of Asher's tribe" in Israel. As a prophetess, she had the gift of God's holy spirit, or active force, in a special sense. And Anna had a grand opportunity to prophesy on one notable occasion.

Luke relates: "This woman was well along in years, and had lived with a husband for seven years from her virginity, and she was a widow now eighty-four years old." (Luke 2:36, 37) Likely, Anna became a widow when she was quite young. Widowed Christian women of any age know how heartrending it is to lose a beloved husband in death. Like many godly women of our day, however, Anna did not let this sad experience halt her service to God.

Luke tells us that Anna "was never missing from the temple" in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:37) She keenly appreciated the blessedness that results from service at the house of God. Her actions revealed that she, like Israel's psalmist-king David, had only one thing to ask of Jehovah. And what was that? David sang: "One thing I have asked from Jehovah—it is what I shall look for, that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the pleasantness of Jehovah and to look with appreciation upon his temple." (Psalm 27:4) In this respect, too, Anna is like Christian women today who find delight in regular presence at Jehovah's place of worship.

Anna rendered sacred service to Jehovah night and day. She did this "with fastings and supplications," indicating mourning and earnest longing. (Luke 2:37) The centuries-long Jewish subjection to Gentile powers, coupled with the deteriorating religious conditions that reached even to the

temple and its priesthood, could well have accounted for Anna's fastings and supplications to Jehovah God. But she also had reason to be happy, especially because of something extraordinary that happened on a truly eventful day in the year 2 B.C.E.

An Unexpected Blessing

On this highly significant day, the infant Jesus was brought to Jerusalem's temple by his mother, Mary, and his adoptive father, Joseph. Aged Simeon saw the babe and spoke prophetic words on that occasion. (Luke 2:25-35) Anna was at the temple as usual. "In that very hour," reports Luke, "she came near." (Luke 2:38) How thrilled Anna must have been as her aging eyes beheld the future Messiah!

Forty days earlier, God's angel had startled shepherds near Bethlehem with the words: "Look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in David's city." A multitude of the heavenly army praised Jehovah and added: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill." (Luke 2:8-14) Likewise, Anna was now moved to bear witness about the One who would be the Messiah!

Upon beholding the babe Jesus, Anna "began returning thanks to God and speaking about the child to all those waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance." (Luke 2:38) Like elderly Simeon, also privileged to see the infant Jesus at the temple, undoubtedly she had been longing, praying, and waiting for the promised Deliverer. The good news that Jesus was that One was just too good for her to keep to herself.

Though Anna might not have expected to be alive when Jesus was grown, what did she do? She joyfully witnessed to others about the liberation due to be effected through this coming Messiah.

Anna's Fine Example

How many religious people of the world would give such a witness or still be rendering worship night and day at the age of 84? Likely, they would have asked for a pension years earlier. Anna and Simeon were different. They set fine examples for all elderly servants of Jehovah. Indeed, they loved Jehovah's house of worship and praised him with all their heart.

In Anna we have a splendid example of a godly widow. In fact, Luke's description of this humble elderly woman compares well with the qualifications of a worthy widow outlined at 1 Timothy 5:3-16. There the apostle Paul says that such a widow "persists in supplications and prayers night and day," is "a wife of one husband," and 'diligently follows every good work.' Anna was that kind of woman.

Today, we find faithful elderly widows rendering sacred service to God night and day in thousands of congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses around the earth. How much we appreciate having these modern-day "Annas" in our midst!

Even at an advanced age, men and women can make a dedication to God and symbolize this by water baptism. The elderly are never too old to serve Jehovah and to witness about the Messianic Kingdom now installed in the heavens and soon to bring rich blessings to obedient humankind. Aged persons now rendering sacred service to God can testify to Jehovah's blessing upon them, even as Anna was specially blessed centuries ago. She was not too old to serve Jehovah and praise his holy name —and neither are they.

Coping With Homesickness in God's Service

JESUS CHRIST commanded his followers: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19) For many Christians, carrying out that commission has meant accepting difficult circumstances far from home. Traveling overseers, their wives, and others leave many things behind for the sake of God's service. Homesickness can be a real challenge for all of these Witnesses of Jehovah.

Homesickness occurs when memories carry your thoughts back to the security and love of a pleasant past. This can cause such intense emotion that you feel depressed and unable to carry on. In fact, after selling their belongings and making an expensive trip to a foreign land, some have abandoned their plans and returned home. Homesickness overpowered them.

Such attacks on the emotions are usually frequent after first moving, but with some they continue for a lifetime. After being away for more than 20 years, Jacob was 'yearning intensely for the house of his father.' (Genesis 31:30) Who can expect to suffer homesickness? What triggers it? How can a person cope with such feelings?

What Triggers the Sadness?

Homesickness can affect anyone. Amytis, a daughter of the Median king Astyages, apparently had every reason for happiness: riches, prestige, a beautiful home. Yet, she was so homesick for the mountains of Media that her husband, King Nebuchadnezzar, built the hanging gardens of Babylon in an effort to comfort her.

Homesickness can be especially trialsome when life seems more difficult than it was before a person moved. When the people of Judah became exiles, they lamented: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down. We also wept when we remembered Zion. How can we sing the song of Jehovah upon foreign ground?"—Psalm 137:1, 4.

Many things may provoke the melancholy of homesickness. Terri, who had left Canada, says: "One day a family picture fell out of a book. When I picked it up, a flood of homesickness suddenly overwhelmed me, and I cried." Chris, who moved from England to a much poorer country, admits: "Just recognizing the tune of an old song or the aroma of a familiar dish could make me yearn for the things I left behind."—Compare Numbers 11:5.

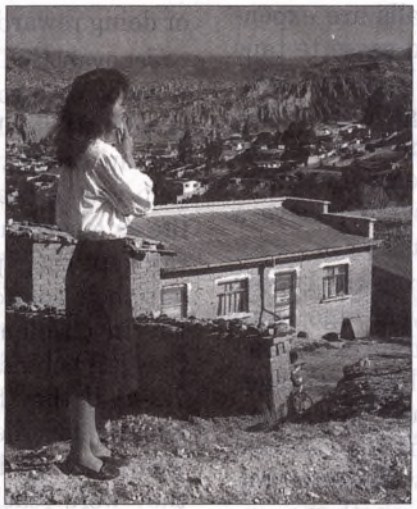
Close family ties are often a contributing factor. Roseli, a Brazilian now living in a neighboring country, comments: "I feel down when I get bad news from home and I can't be there to help. Sometimes it is worse when I get no news and start imagining things." Janice moved from North America to a small town in the Amazonian tropics. She says: "I get homesick when I hear good news from home. I hear how they are having a good time together, and I wish I could be with them."

It is not just leaving people behind that causes homesickness. Linda explains: "I would get frustrated when I didn't know where to buy things I needed. I didn't know the prices or how to barter. Owning a car was too expensive, and I was always get-

ting knocked about as I struggled to board crowded public transportation. This just made me long for home." Commenting on the cultural and economic gap, Janet remarks: "It was the poverty that upset me. I had never before seen people begging for bread, or large families all living in one room with no water. . . . Such things upset me so much that I felt I couldn't stay there any longer."

Coping With Your Feelings

We should not feel embarrassed about having strong emotional feelings for people we love or for the familiar surroundings of our formative years. Jehovah God gave us emotions so that we could enjoy warm personal relationships. Christian overseers of the congregation at Ephesus were emotionally mature men. But what happened when the apostle Paul's visit with them drew to an end? Why, "quite a bit of weeping broke out among them all, and they fell upon Paul's neck and tenderly kissed him"! (Acts 20:37) Of course, that incident did not involve homesickness. Yet, it does give us food for thought. It is normal to have feelings, but we should not let them control us. How, then, can you successfully cope with homesickness?



Homesickness does not need to interfere with the Christian ministry

Learning to speak the local language is a key to feeling settled. Feelings of homesickness may be heightened when communication is hampered because you have to deal with a foreign tongue. If possible, therefore, learn to read and speak the language of the region before you move there. Otherwise, concentrate on language studies during the first few weeks after you arrive. That is when you have the strongest motivation and thus the best prospect of learning it. If you devote these weeks chiefly to language study, you will soon be enjoying conversations, and that can help to allay feelings of homesickness.

Make new friends as quickly as possible, for this will help you to feel at home. The congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is the best place to make real friends. Take the initiative and be interested in others. Make an effort to get to know their background, their family, their problems, and their interests. Invite fellow believers to your home. In turn, you will find that others will take an interest in you.

Among God's people, friendships can be as close as family ties. Jesus said: "Whoever does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:35) Christ also assured his followers: "No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life." (Mark 10:29, 30)

With such a wonderful spiritual brotherhood, we are not alone, even in a new land.

Maintaining friendships with those back home can also help you to cope with homesickness. You may be surprised to find that now that you have moved, communication by letter is especially meaningful, since you will probably give considerable thought to your words. There will be exciting things to say. Janet, mentioned earlier, suggests: "Long-distance telephone calls are expensive, but sending a recorded cassette tape through the mail is relatively cheap. Talking to a machine feels strange at first. Yet, if you converse with someone with the microphone between you, it is easy and interesting." You might also ask to receive a cassette recording in return.

Shirley, who emigrated from the United States to Latin America 25 years ago, says: "I always write about upbuilding experiences rather than problems. This encourages others to keep writing to me." Be careful, however. Too much letter-writing can hold you back from making new friends. Del, who moved from Canada to another country, says: "Avoid staying at home and moping over the things you miss. Rather, go out and enjoy your new location."

Get to know the new land's customs, history, humor, and places of interest and beauty. This will help you not to dwell on negative factors. And if you intend to stay where you have moved to, it is best not to visit your homeland too soon or too often. It takes time to form new friendships and get used to new surroundings. Extended visits back home interrupt that process. Once you have put down new roots, you can enjoy going home for a visit—and then returning. In the meantime, keep busy in building up an attachment to your new home.

Keep Looking Forward

Jehovah gave us the whole earth as our home. (Psalm 115:16) With a joyful Christian spirit, life can be pleasant in any land. If you move in order to promote Kingdom interests and preach the good news in another country or elsewhere in your homeland, do so with happy anticipation. Look forward to making new friends, learning about different customs, making disciples, or doing rewarding things in God's service.

Jehovah God is one Friend who will always be with you, no matter where you are. (Psalm 94:14; 145:14, 18) So keep close to him in prayer. (Romans 12:12) This will help you to bear in mind your purpose in life as a servant of God. Abraham and Sarah kept their purpose in mind when they left their comfortable home in the city of Ur. In obedience to Jehovah's command, they left behind friends and relatives. (Acts 7:2-4) If they had kept remembering and longing for the place they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. But they were reaching out for a better place —ultimately life on a paradise earth under God's heavenly Kingdom.—Hebrews 11:15, 16.

Preaching in foreign fields or where the need for Kingdom proclaimers is greater in your homeland can be quite challenging. But it is also a fruitful and most rewarding work. (John 15:8) And if negative thoughts should temporarily engulf you, they can be overcome by keeping your goal in mind and looking ahead. An unmarried missionary sister said: "When I feel sadness coming over me, I try to think about the new world and how all of mankind will be one family." Pleasant thoughts like these can help you maintain your joy and not succumb to homesickness.

Good News From Malawi!

ON NOVEMBER 15, 1993, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania was officially registered in the southeast African country of Malawi. This will give Jehovah's Witnesses legal recognition and freedom to preach Bible truths to the people of Malawi.

Back in 1948, a branch office of the Watch Tower Society was established in Malawi to coordinate the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in that land. On January 8, 1957, the Watch Tower Society was registered there for the first time. For several years Jehovah's Witnesses enjoyed rapid growth. But violent persecution broke out in 1964. Why?

M. G. Henschel with the Malawi Bethel family in the 1960's

In obedience to God, Jehovah's Witnesses maintained strict neutrality in politics. (John 17:16) Evidently, some did not quite understand this Scriptural position and misrepresented the Witnesses as a radical religion and as outlaws. Hence, some felt justified in persecuting these peace-loving Christians. Many Witnesses were fired from their jobs, beaten, and otherwise humiliated. Some were forcibly separated from their children.

In 1972 more than 30,000 Witnesses and some who were studying the Bible with them had to leave the country for fear of losing their lives. Thousands settled in refugee camps in neighboring Mozambique. But in 1975 these refugees were sent back to Malawi, where they had to face further persecution. Many were placed in concentration camps. Amid this turmoil, the Watch Tower Society was struck off the official list of legal organizations in Malawi. Since then Jehovah's Witnesses and their legal organizations have been under ban in that land.

Despite all of these developments, the Witnesses did not retaliate. They never formed mobs or rioted in protest against the government. Instead, they prayerfully maintained their Christian obligation to show proper honor and respect for the governmental "superior authorities." (Romans 13: 1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2) The Witnesses also upheld the high standards of Christian living set forth in the Bible and have thus set an excellent example in conduct.

With their newly acquired freedom, Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi are determined to continue preaching Bible truths urgently, "in favorable season."—2 Timothy 4:2.

In Our Next Issue

Why Be Interested in Religion?

Have You Found the Right Religion?

"Jesus Christ Is Lord"
—How and When?

"Jehovah's Witnesses Protected Me!"

DURING these last days, many have proved themselves to be "fierce, without love of goodness." (2 Timothy 3: 1, 3) Isaac, a volunteer minister at a branch office of the Watch Tower Society in West Africa, found this to be true. He relates:

"In January 1992, I was traveling on a deserted stretch of road in a communal taxi with five other passengers. I struck up a conversation with the woman sitting next to me, and she gladly accepted a Bible-based brochure from me.

"Suddenly, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, a new car without license plates cut in front of us, and our car screeched to a halt. Three hefty men, each with a rifle, jumped out of the other car and yanked our doors open. 'Get out, all of you,' one of them roared.

"Another man grabbed my book bag. When he saw that it contained only Bible literature, he flung the bag away. 'What else do you have?' he asked, pointing his gun at me. I quickly gave him the money in my wallet. 'Is this all?' he asked. I told him that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses and that the Witnesses do not tell lies. He snatched my wallet from me, saw my Watch Tower identification card and then said, 'Ok, Watchtower. Wait here.'

"Next, he turned to the lady I had conversed with in the taxi. She hastily took off her necklace and gave him the money in her purse. When the highwayman noticed the brochure in her trembling hand, he assumed we were together, and so he motioned her to stay with me.

"Meanwhile, the other armed bandits ferociously attacked our fellow travelers. They beat and robbed the driver and the other man journeying with us. One robber grabbed at the second woman's necklace. When she resisted, they viciously struck her on the head and chest with rifle butts until she was dead. The third woman they dragged out of the vehicle and shot in the chest. Regrettably, she too died. Only I and the young woman with me were left completely unharmed.

"When we were picked up later by a passing motorist, the terrified woman kept repeating, 'Jehovah's Witnesses protected me!'"