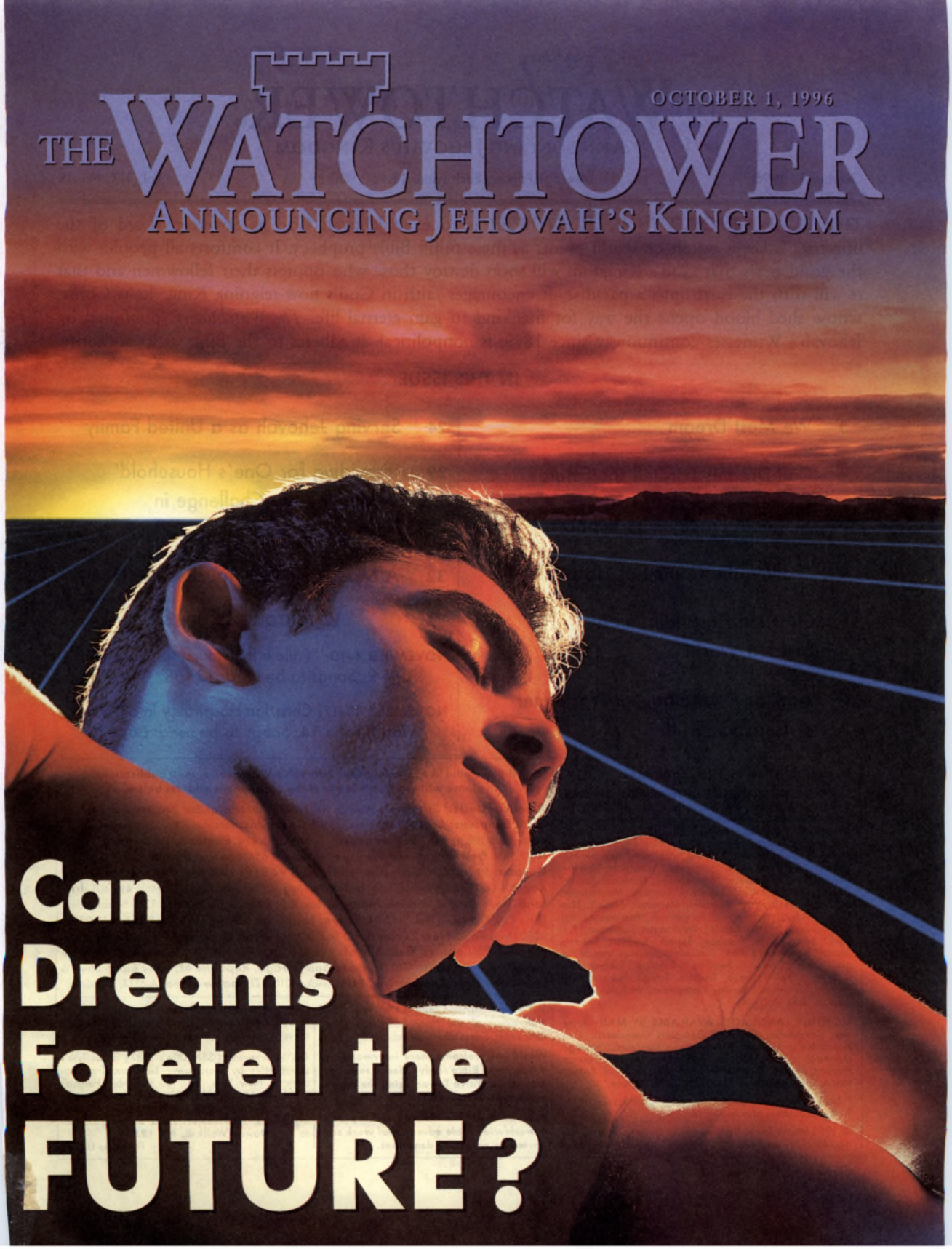
OCTOBER 1, 1996

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Can Dreams Foretell the FUTURE?

THE WATCHTOWER®

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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WE MUST DREAM

DO YOU have dreams? It is safe to assume that you do, since all of us dream while sleeping, even if we may claim that we do not. It has been estimated that more than 95 percent of all dreams are not remembered. Which ones do you remember? Actually, those we usually remember are the ones we have just before awakening.

Dream investigators have found that sleep is a progressive process that is deepest in the first few hours and then becomes lighter later on. Dreaming occurs especially during periods of rapid eye movement, called REM sleep. This alternates with non-REM sleep. Each cycle of non-REM/REM sleep lasts about 90 minutes, and these cycles are repeated five or six times during the night, with the last one occurring just before we awake.

It is a mistake to think that your brain is at a low level of activity during sleep. It has been found that the brain is more active in dreams than in some states of wakefulness, with the exception of certain neurons in the brain stem, which are related to attention and memory. These appear to rest during REM sleep. But in general the nerve cells in the brain have continuous intercellular communication.

Our brain is an amazingly complex part of the body with billions of elements that are generating signals at approximately one hundred to two or three hundred a second. There are more elements in one human brain than there are people on earth. Some researchers estimate that it contains from 20 billion to more than 50 billion elements. Its complexity confirms what the Bible writer David said about the human body: "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful."—Psalm 139:14.

The World of Dreams

During our waking hours, our five senses are constantly conveying information and images to the brain, but during sleep this is not the case. The brain generates images within itself without any external sensory input. Therefore, what we see in dreams and the actions we experience in them are at times like hallucinations. This makes it possible for us to do things that are violations of natural laws, such as flying like Peter Pan or falling from a cliff without injury. Time may be distorted so that the past is seen as if it were the present. Or if we are trying to run away, we do not seem to have control of our movements—our legs do not want to respond. Strong impressions and experiences that we may have during our waking hours can, of course, affect our dreams. Many who have experienced the frightful atrocities of war cannot easily forget them, nor can some forget the feeling of being attacked by a criminal. Such disturbing experiences while we are awake can emerge in our dreams, causing nightmares. Common things that are on our minds when we go to sleep can surface in our dreams.

Sometimes when we are trying to solve a problem, the solution comes to us during sleep. This may reflect that not all sleep consists of dreaming. A portion of it is thinking.

A book about dreams and our brain notes: "The most common form of mental activity in sleep is not dreaming but thinking. Sleep thinking is not accompanied by sensory illusions and is not bizarre. It tends to be commonplace, often concerned with the real-life events of yesterday or tomorrow, and is usually banal, uncreative, and repetitive."

Some people feel that the subjects of their dreams have special messages for them. In order to have the dreams interpreted, they keep a notepad by their bed so that they can record them when they awaken. Regarding the usefulness of books that try to give meaning to dream symbols, *The Dream Game,* by Ann Faraday, says: "Dream books in which you look up the meanings of dream themes and symbols are equally useless, whether they be traditional or based on some modern psychological theory."

Since it seems that dreams originate principally within the brain, it is not reasonable to think that they have special messages for us. We should view them as a normal function of the brain that helps maintain it in a healthful condition.

But what about those who say that they had dreamed of the death of a relative or a friend and learned the next day that the person had died? Does not that indicate that dreams can foretell the future? In the following article, we will consider what is behind prophetic dreams.

CAN DREAMS FORETELL THE FUTURE?

FROM ancient times, mankind has had intense interest in dreams. The Egyptians prepared elaborate books for dream interpretation, and the Babylonians had their dream interpreters. Among the Greeks the custom was to have sick people sleep in the shrines of Asclepius to receive health instructions in their dreams. In the second century of our Common Era, Artemidorus produced a book in which he gave interpretations of dream symbols. Many similar books produced since then have been based on his book. Down to this day, efforts are made to interpret dreams, but do they actually give insight into future events?

For them to have a futuristic significance, they would have to be influenced by a superior force. In the Bible we find many instances in which God supplied that very force. He gave prophetic dreams to his servants as well as to some who did not worship

him. In fact, Job 33:14-16 says: "God speaks . . . in a dream, a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, during slumbers upon the bed. It is then that he uncovers the ear of men."

God did this in the case of the Egyptian Pharaoh in the days of Joseph, who lived more than 1,700 years before the Common Era. Pharaoh's dream is found at Genesis 41:1-7, and in verses 25 to 32, Joseph interprets it as foretelling seven years "with great plenty in all the land of Egypt," followed by seven years of famine. Joseph explained to Pharaoh: "What the true God is doing he has caused Pharaoh to see." (Genesis 41:28) The dream was prophetic of what actually occurred.

A prominent king of the Babylonians had a similar experience. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that disturbed him greatly, but he could not remember it. So he called his sorcerers to make known to him the dream and its interpretation. This was a request impossible for them to fulfill.—Daniel 2:1-11.

Since God had given the dream to the king, He enabled the prophet Daniel to reveal the dream and its interpretation. Daniel 2:19 says: "Then it was that to Daniel in a night vision the secret was revealed." Daniel gave credit to God for this dream: "The secret that the king himself is asking, the wise men, the conjurers, the magic-practicing priests and the astrologers themselves are unable to show to the king. However, there exists a God in the heavens who is a Revealer of secrets, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what is to occur in the final part of the days."—Daniel 2:27, 28.

At times God gave instructions to his people by means of dreams, and at other times he gave assurance of divine favor or helped them to understand how he was aiding them. In the case of Jacob, God revealed his approval by means of a dream.—Genesis 48:3, 4.

When Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus, discovered that Mary was pregnant, he decided to divorce her. Then he received instructions in a dream not to do so. Matthew 1:20 says: "After he had thought these things over, look! Jehovah's angel appeared to him in a dream, saying: 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for that which has been begotten in her is by holy spirit.'" Later he received a warning in a dream: "Jehovah's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying: 'Get up, take the young child and its mother and flee into Egypt.'"—Matthew 2:13.

Dreams That Are Not From God

The fact that dream interpretation was common among those who were not God's people indicates that dreams in general cannot be considered to be reliable revealers of the future. In the days of God's prophet Jeremiah, false prophets were saying: "I have had a dream! I have had a dream!" (Jeremiah 23:25) Their intentions were to mislead the people into thinking that God was speaking through them. Regarding these dreamers, Jeremiah was inspired to say: "This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said: 'Let not your prophets who are in among you and your practicers of divination deceive you, and do not you listen to their dreams that they are dreaming. For "it is in falsehood that they are prophesying to you in my name . . . ," is the utterance of Jehovah.'"—Jeremiah 29:8, 9.

Since these false prophets were "practicers of divination," their dreams could have been influenced by wicked spirit forces for the purpose of deceiving the people. The same is indicated in what is stated at Zechariah 10:2: "The teraphim themselves have spoken what is uncanny; and the practicers of divination, for their part, have visioned

falsehood, and valueless dreams are what they keep speaking."

The Devil is the archdeceiver who for thousands of years has used religious leaders to claim falsely that God has spoken to them through visions and dreams, just as the false prophets did in the days of Jeremiah and Zechariah. Concerning such ones, the inspired Bible writer Jude wrote to the Christians of the first century: "Certain men have slipped in who have long ago been appointed by the Scriptures to this judgment, ungodly men, turning the undeserved kindness of our God into an excuse for loose conduct and proving false to our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." These men, he said, were, so to speak, "indulging in dreams." —Jude 4, 8.

Test the Claims

A person may claim that God spoke to him in a dream or that his dreams of future events proved true, yet that is not sufficient reason to believe him and blindly follow him. Note the instructions written to the Israelites, found at Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 5: "In case a prophet or a dreamer of a dream arises in your midst and does give you a sign or a portent, and the sign or the portent does come true of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us walk after other gods, whom you have not known, and let us serve them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or to the dreamer of that dream . . . And that prophet or that dreamer of the dream should be put to death." God permitted such ones to speak out falsely as a test of the loyalty of his people.

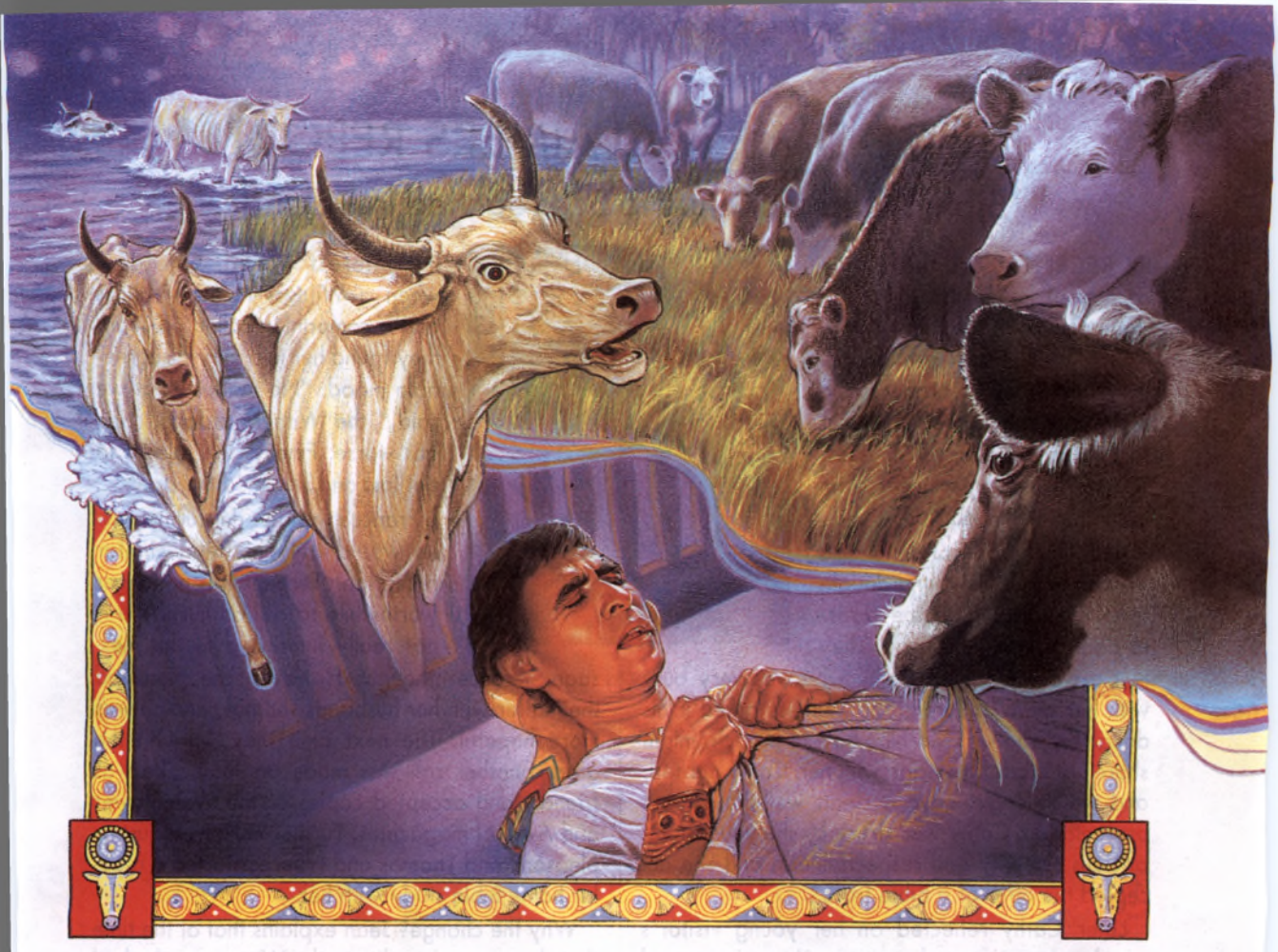
Instead of blindly believing the claims of charismatic dreamers, the wise course is for us to test their claims to avoid being misled by the invisible archdeceiver, who is "misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) But how can they be reliably tested?

God's written Word is our divinely given guide to the truth. Regarding it, Jesus Christ said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) So we are admonished at 1 John 4:1: "Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world." When carefully compared with the Bible, their claims, philosophies, and actions will conflict with it. God's Word is the authority as to what is truth.

Is the dreamer who claims special knowledge actually using divination or other spiritistic practices? If so, he is condemned by God's Word. "There should not be found in you anyone . . . who employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah."—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

If he claims to have a soul in him that does not die, he is contradicting God's Word that plainly states: "The soul that is sinning —it itself will die." (Ezekiel 18:4) Is he exalting himself and drawing a personal following? Matthew 23:12 cautions: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled." And Acts 20:30 warns Christians: "From among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves."

Does he advocate violent actions? James 3:17, 18 condemns him: "The wisdom from above is first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical. Moreover, the fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for those who are



As Pharaoh's dream showed what was to come, God's Word sheds light on our future

making peace." Does he seek political authority or influence in the world? God's Word denounces him emphatically, saying: "Whoever . . . wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." Thus the Bible exposes what is false. —James 4:4.

If a person has a dream about the death of a family member or a friend, it is perhaps because he has been concerned about this person. That the person may have died on precisely the night of the dream does not in itself prove that the dream was prophetic. For every dream of this type that appears to become a reality, there are hundreds that do not.

Although God did use dreams in the past to reveal prophetic events and give instructions while his written Word was being produced, he has no need to do so today. That written Word contains all the instructions from God that mankind needs at this time, and its prophecies concern events more than a thousand years into the future. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) So we can be confident that our dreams are not indications from God of future events but essential functions of the brain for maintaining our mental well-being.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Bible Truths Continue to Be Preached in Ireland

IN RECENT years the scenic country of Ireland has been the stage for considerable turmoil. At the same time, Irish people have responded favorably to the Bible's message of hope brought to them by Jehovah's Witnesses. The following experiences from Ireland bear this out.

■ In Dublin one of Jehovah's Witnesses and his young daughter were sharing in the door-to-door preaching work. They met a woman named Cathy who was very busy with her many children. The Witness asked if his daughter, who was learning how to preach, might share just a brief message with her. Cathy agreed, and the little girl gave a clear, well-thought-out presentation. Cathy was struck by the youngster's obvious sincerity and respectfulness, and she accepted the offer of a Bible tract.

Later Cathy reflected on her young visitor's good preparation and manners. "I was impressed that a small girl could share such an interesting message without being precocious," she said. "I decided that the next time Jehovah's Witnesses called, I would listen to them."

In the meantime Cathy moved to a small town in southwestern Ireland near the border of counties Cork and Kerry. Some time later Jehovah's Witnesses called at her door, and she invited them in. She accepted a regular study of the Bible and now attends congregation meetings with several of her children. Cathy is grateful for the little girl's genuine desire to share the good news with her.

■ In the area of Tullamore, the Witnesses had Bible discussions with a woman named Jean over a period of seven years. Sometimes she showed interest and accepted literature, but at other times her interest waned. One day, when a Witness named Frances and a companion called on Jean, they found her in a very disagreeable mood. "No matter what we said," the Witness reports, "she got worse. Finally, she told us to get lost and slammed the door."

Frances wondered if further visits would only invite a similar reception. 'Perhaps it is no longer worthwhile to call on her if she is not really interested in the message,' Frances thought. However, she discussed the matter with her husband, Thomas, and he was more hopeful. The next time they were in the area, another call was made on Jean. She was friendly and accepted copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Further calls were just as pleasant, and Thomas and Frances started a regular home Bible study with her.

Why the change? Jean explains that at the time that she was so impolite to the Witnesses, she had recently given birth and had just come out of the hospital. Because of breast-feeding her newborn and spoon-feeding her older baby, she was getting only an hour and a half of sleep a night. "The last thing I wanted to do," Jean says, "was to talk about religion."

Within two months Jean was attending all congregation meetings, and within four months she was sharing in the field ministry. Ten months from the time she began her Bible study, she was baptized. Now Jean's own experience helps her in the ministry. She relates: "If I meet someone who is very rude, I try to be more understanding. I always make a note of it. Maybe the situation will change by the time I get back; the person may be feeling better and be more receptive."

"FOLLOW THE COURSE OF HOSPITALITY"

"Share with the holy ones according to their needs. Follow the course of hospitality."—ROMANS 12:13.

TO WALK down a lonely street in a strange neighborhood late at night can be a harrowing experience nowadays. But it can be just as stressful to be in a crowd and not know anyone or be recognized. Indeed, an integral part of human nature is the need to be cared for, wanted, and loved. No one likes to be treated as a stranger or an outsider.

[2] Jehovah God, the Maker and Creator of all things, well knows the human need for companionship. As the Designer of his human creation, right from the beginning God knew that it was "not good for the man to continue by himself," and he did something about it. (Genesis 2:18, 21, 22) The Bible record is filled with examples of acts of kindness expressed toward humans by Jehovah and by his servants. This enables us to learn how to "follow the course of hospitality," to the joy and delight of others and to our own satisfaction.—Romans 12:13.

Fondness of Strangers

[3] The word "hospitality" as used in the Bible is translated from the Greek word *phi·lo·xe·ni'a,* which is made up of two root words meaning "love" and "stranger." Thus, hospitality essentially means "love of strangers." However, this is not just a formality or a point of courtesy. It involves one's feelings and affections. The verb *phile'o,* according to James Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,* means "to *be a friend to* (*fond of* [an individual or an object]), i.e. *have affection* for (denoting *personal* attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling)." Hence, hospitality goes beyond love based on principle, perhaps out of a sense of duty or obligation. It usually is an expression of genuine fondness, affection, and friendship.

[4] The receiver of this fondness and affection is the "stranger" (Greek, *xe'nos*). Who might this be? Again, Strong's *Concordance* defines the word *xe'nos* as *'foreign* (literally *alien,* or figuratively *novel*); by implication a *guest* or (vice-versa) a stranger.' So hospitality, as exemplified in the Bible, can reflect kindness expressed toward someone we are fond of, or it can be extended even toward a complete stranger. Jesus explained: "If you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing?" (Matthew 5:46, 47) Genuine

1. What is a basic human need, and how is it manifested?
2. How has Jehovah provided for our need of companionship?
3. Explain the basic meaning of hospitality.
4. Toward whom should hospitality be expressed?

hospitality transcends the division and discrimination imposed by prejudice and fear.

Jehovah, the Perfect Host

[5] After pointing out the deficiencies of the love expressed by humans toward one another, as cited above, Jesus added this remark: "You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) Of course, Jehovah is perfect in every respect. (Deuteronomy 32:4) Jesus, however, was highlighting one particular aspect of Jehovah's perfection, as he said earlier: "[God] makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45) When it comes to showing kindness, Jehovah knows no partiality.

[6] As the Creator, Jehovah is the owner of everything. "To me belongs every wild animal of the forest, the beasts upon a thousand mountains. I well know every winged creature of the mountains, and the animal throngs of the open field are with me," says Jehovah. (Psalm 50:10, 11) Yet, he does not selfishly hoard anything. In his generosity, he provides for all his creatures. The psalmist said of Jehovah: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."—Psalm 145:16.

[7] Jehovah gives people what they need —even people who do not know him, who are strangers to him. Paul and Barnabas reminded the idol worshipers in the city of Lystra that Jehovah "did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:17) Especially toward those in need, Jehovah is kind and generous. (Deuteronomy 10:17, 18) There is much that we can learn from Jehovah in showing kindness and generosity—being hospitable—to others.

[8] In addition to providing abundantly for the material needs of his creatures, Jeho-

5, 6. (a) What did Jesus have in mind when he said, "Your heavenly Father is perfect"? (b) How is Jehovah's generosity seen?

7. What can we learn from the way in which Jehovah treats strangers and those in need?

8. How has Jehovah shown his generosity in caring for our spiritual needs?

vah cares for their needs in a spiritual way. Jehovah acted in the most magnanimous way for our spiritual welfare, even before any of us realized that we were in a desperate state spiritually. We read at Romans 5: 8, 10: "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . When we were enemies, we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son." That provision makes it possible for sinful humans to come into a happy family relationship with our heavenly Father. (Romans 8:20, 21) Jehovah also saw to it that we are provided with proper guidance and direction so that we can make a success of life in spite of our sinful and imperfect state.—Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16.

[9] In view of this, we can say that Jehovah is truly the perfect host in so many ways. He does not overlook the needy, the humble, and the lowly. He shows genuine interest in and concern for strangers, even his enemies, and he does not look for any material return. In all of this, is he not the ultimate example of a perfect host?

[10] As a God of such loving-kindness and generosity, Jehovah wants his worshipers to imitate him. All through the Bible, we see outstanding examples of this kindly quality. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* observes that "in ancient Israel, hospitality was not merely a question of good manners, but a moral institution . . . The biblical customs of welcoming the weary traveler and of receiving the stranger in one's midst was the matrix out of which hospitality and all its tributary aspects developed into a highly esteemed virtue in Jewish tradition." More than being a trademark of any particular nationality or ethnic group, hospitality should be a characteristic of all true worshipers of Jehovah.

9, 10. (a) Why can we say that Jehovah is the perfect host? (b) How should true worshipers imitate Jehovah in this respect?

A Host to Angels

[11] One of the best-known Bible accounts of the display of hospitality is that of Abraham and Sarah when they were camping among the big trees of Mamre, near Hebron. (Genesis 18:1-10; 23:19) The apostle Paul no doubt had this event in mind when he provided this admonition: "Do not forget hospitality, for through it some, unknown to themselves, entertained angels." (Hebrews 13:2) A study of this account will help us to see that hospitality is not simply a matter of custom or upbringing. Rather, it is a godly quality that brings marvelous blessings.

[12] Genesis 18:1, 2 indicates that the visitors were unknown to and unexpected by Abraham, as much as to say just three strangers passing through. The custom among the Orientals, according to some commentators, was that a traveler in a strange land had the right to expect hospitality even if he did not know anyone there. But Abraham did not wait for the strangers to exercise their prerogative; he took the initiative. He "began running" to meet these strangers who were some distance from him—all of this in "the heat of the day," and Abraham was 99 years of age! Does this not show why Paul alluded to Abraham as a model for us to imitate? That is what hospitality is all about, the fondness or love of strangers, the concern for their needs. It is a positive quality.

11. What outstanding example shows that hospitality brought unexpected blessings? (See also Genesis 19:1-3; Judges 13:11-16.)

12. How did Abraham demonstrate his love of strangers?

[13] The account also tells us that after meeting the strangers, Abraham "proceeded to bow down to the earth." Bowing to perfect strangers? Well, a bow, as performed by Abraham, was a way of greeting an honored guest or someone of high position, not to be confused with an act of worship, which is reserved only for God. (Compare Acts 10:25, 26; Revelation 19:10.) By bowing, not just a tipping of the head but a bowing "down to the earth," Abraham accorded these strangers the honor of being important. He was the head of a large, prosperous patriarchal family, yet he regarded these strangers as worthy of greater honor than himself. How different this is from the customary suspicion of strangers, the wait-and-see attitude! Abraham truly demonstrated the meaning of the statement: "In showing honor to one another take the lead."—Romans 12:10.

[14] The rest of the account shows that Abraham's feelings were genuine. The meal itself was extraordinary. Even in a large household having much livestock, "a tender and good young bull" is not everyday fare. Regarding the prevalent customs of the area, John Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations* notes: "Luxuries are never indulged in except on some festivals, or on the arrival of a stranger; and it is only on such occasions that animal food is ever eaten, even by the possessors of numerous flocks and herds." The warm climate did not permit any perishable food to be stored, so to serve up such a meal, everything had to be done on the spot. It is no wonder that in this short account, the word "hurry" or "hurrying" occurs three times, and Abraham literally "ran" to get the meal ready!—Genesis 18:6-8.

13. Why did Abraham "bow down" to the visitors?
14. What effort and sacrifice were involved in Abraham's showing hospitality to the strangers?

[15] The purpose, however, is not just to come up with a big feast to impress someone. Even though Abraham and Sarah went to all that effort to prepare and present the meal, note how Abraham earlier referred to it: "Let a little water be taken, please, and you must have your feet washed. Then recline under the tree. And let me get a piece of bread, and refresh your hearts. Following that, you can pass on, because that is why you have passed this way to your servant." (Genesis 18:4, 5) That "piece of bread" turned out to be a banquet of fattened calf along with round cakes of fine flour, butter, and milk—a feast fit for a king. What is the point? When hospitality is shown, the important thing, or what is to be emphasized, is not how sumptuous the food and drinks will be, or what elaborate entertainment will be provided, and so on. Hospitality does not depend on whether one can afford expensive things. Rather, it is based on a genuine concern for the welfare of others and on a desire to do good to others to the extent that one can. "Better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it," says a Bible proverb, and therein lies the key to genuine hospitality.—Proverbs 15:17.

[16] We must note, however, that there was also a spiritual overtone to the entire event. Abraham somehow discerned that these visitors were messengers from Jehovah. This is indicated by his addressing them with the words: "Jehovah, if, now, I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by your servant."* (Genesis 18:3; compare Ex-

* For a fuller discussion of this point, see the article "Has Anyone Seen God?" in *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1988, pages 21-3.

15. What is the proper view of material provisions in showing hospitality, as exemplified by Abraham?
16. How did Abraham show appreciation for spiritual things in what he did for the visitors?

odus 33:20.) Abraham did not know beforehand if they had a message for him or if they were just passing through. Regardless, he appreciated that an outworking of Jehovah's purpose was taking place. These individuals were engaged in some mission from Jehovah. If he could do something to contribute to that, it would be his pleasure. He realized that Jehovah's servants deserve the best, and he would provide the best under the circumstances. By doing so, there would be a spiritual blessing, whether for himself or for someone else. As it turned out, Abraham and Sarah were greatly blessed for their sincere hospitality.—Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1, 2.

A Hospitable People

17 The outstanding example of Abraham was not to be forgotten by the nation that came forth from him. The Law that Jehovah gave the Israelites included provisions for showing hospitality to the strangers among them. "The alien resident who resides as an alien with you should become to you like a native of yours; and you must love him as yourself, for you became alien residents in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God." (Leviticus 19:34) The people were to give special consideration to those in need of material support and not to dismiss them lightly. When Jehovah blessed them with abundant harvests, when they rejoiced in their festivals, when they rested from their labors during Sabbath years, and on other occasions, the people were to remember those less fortunate—the widows, the fatherless boys, and the alien residents.—Deuteronomy 16:9-14; 24:19-21; 26:12, 13.

17. What did Jehovah require of the Israelites regarding strangers and needy ones among them?

18 The importance of kindness, generosity, and hospitality toward others, especially toward those in need, can be seen in the way Jehovah dealt with the Israelites when they neglected to exercise these qualities. Jehovah made it clear that kindness and generosity toward strangers and needy ones are among the requirements for his people to receive his continued blessings. (Psalm 82:2, 3; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 7:5-7; Ezekiel 22:7; Zechariah 7:9-11) When the nation was diligent in carrying out these and other requirements, they prospered and enjoyed material and spiritual abundance. When they became wrapped up in their selfish personal pursuits and neglected to show these kindly qualities to those in need, they received Jehovah's condemnation, and eventually adverse judgment was meted out to them.—Deuteronomy 27:19; 28:15, 45.

19 How important it is, then, for us to examine ourselves and see if we are living up to Jehovah's expectations in this regard! This is especially so today in view of the selfish and divisive spirit in the world. How can we show Christian hospitality in a divided world? That is the subject discussed in the next article.

18. How important is hospitality in relation to receiving Jehovah's favor and blessing?
19. What must we further consider?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What is the meaning of the Bible word translated "hospitality"?
- ☐ In what ways is Jehovah the perfect example in showing hospitality?
- ☐ To what length did Abraham go to be hospitable?
- ☐ Why must all true worshipers "follow the course of hospitality"?

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY IN A DIVIDED WORLD

"We, therefore, are under obligation to receive such persons hospitably, that we may become fellow workers in the truth."—3 JOHN 8.

"MANKIND have nothing better under the sun than to eat and drink and rejoice, and that it should accompany them in their hard work for the days of their life, which the true God has given them under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 8:15) With those words the ancient Hebrew congregator tells us that Jehovah God not only wants his human creation to be joyful and happy but also provides the means for them to be so. Throughout human history one common desire among people everywhere appears to be to enjoy themselves and to have a good time.

[2] Today we live in a hedonistic society in which people are preoccupied with the pursuit of pleasures and good times. Most people have become "lovers of themselves, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God," as the Bible foretold. (2 Timothy 3: 1-4) This, of course, is a gross distortion of what Jehovah God purposed. When the pursuit of good times becomes an end in itself, or when self-gratification becomes the sole objective, there is no true satisfaction, and 'everything becomes vanity and a striving after wind.' (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:11) On this account the world is filled with lonely and frustrated people, which, in turn, leads to many of the problems in society. (Proverbs 18:1) People become suspicious of one another and become divided racially, ethnically, socially, and economically.

[3] How different things would be if people imitated Jehovah's way of dealing with others—being kind, generous, hospitable! He made it clear that the secret to true happiness does not lie in our trying to satisfy our own desires. Rather, this is the key: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) To find true joy and satisfaction, we must overcome barriers and divisions that might hem us in. And we must reach out to those who are serving Jehovah along with us. It is essential that we heed the counsel: "We, therefore, are under obligation to receive such persons hospitably, that we may become fellow workers in the truth." (3 John 8) Showing hospitality to deserving ones, to the extent that our circumstances allow, pays dividends in two ways—it benefits both the givers and the receivers. Who, then, are among the deserving ones whom we should 'receive hospitably'?

"Look After Orphans and Widows"

[4] Stable families and happy marriages are a rarity today. Rising divorce rates and

1. What most desirable gifts has the Creator given mankind?
2. (a) How have mankind abused what Jehovah purposed for them? (b) What is the result?
3. How can we find true joy and satisfaction?
4. What change in family relations is seen even among some of Jehovah's people?

the increasing number of unwed mothers around the world have drastically changed the traditional family. As a result, many who have become Jehovah's Witnesses in recent years are from broken families. They are either divorced or separated from their marriage mates, or they live in single-parent families. In addition, as Jesus foretold, the truth he taught has resulted in divisions in many families.—Matthew 10:34-37; Luke 12:51-53.

5 It warms our heart to see new ones take a firm stand for the truth, and we often comfort them with Jesus' encouraging promise: "Truly I say to you men, 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.

6 Who, though, are these 'brothers and sisters and mothers and children'? Just seeing a large number of people at a Kingdom Hall, often a hundred or more, who call themselves brothers and sisters does not automatically make a person feel that these are *his* brothers, sisters, mothers, and children. Consider this point: The disciple James reminds us that for our worship to be acceptable to Jehovah, we must 'look after orphans and widows in their tribulation and keep ourselves without spot from the world.' (James 1:27) That means that we must not allow worldly attitudes of economic pride and class superiority to shut our door of compassion toward such "orphans and widows." Rather, we must take the initiative to extend to them our fellowship and hospitality.

7 Showing hospitality to "orphans and widows" does not always involve making up for what they may lack materially. Single-parent families or religiously divided households are not necessarily financially strapped. However, the wholesome association, the family atmosphere, the fellowship with persons of various ages, and the sharing of spiritual good things —these are aspects of life that are treasurable. Thus, remembering that it is, not the elaborateness of the occasion, but the spirit of love and unity that counts, how fine it is that, at times, even "orphans and widows" can share in showing hospitality to fellow Christians!—Compare 1 Kings 17:8-16.

Are There Foreigners Among Us?

8 We live in a time of massive population movement. "More than 100 million people around the world are living in countries of which they are not citizens, and 23 million are displaced in their own countries," says *World Press Review*. A direct result of this has been that in many areas, especially in larger cities, congregations of Jehovah's people that were once made up mostly of one race or nationality now contain people from different parts of the world. Perhaps this is true where you are. How, though, should we view these "aliens" and "foreigners," as the world may

5. What did Jesus say that can be a source of encouragement to those in divided families?

6. How can we become 'brothers, sisters, mothers, and children' to the "orphans and widows" in our midst?

7. (a) What is the real purpose of being hospitable to "orphans and widows"? (b) Who also may be able to share in showing Christian hospitality?

8. What change is seen in many congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses?

call them, whose language, customs, and life-style may be different from ours?

9 Simply put, we must not allow any xenophobic tendencies to make us feel that we are somehow more deserving of the privilege of knowing the truth than are those who came from a strange or so-called pagan land; nor should we feel as though these newcomers are infringing on the use of the Kingdom Hall or other properties. The apostle Paul had to remind some first-century Jewish Christians, who harbored such views, that really no one was deserving; it was God's undeserved kindness that made it possible for anyone at all to gain salvation. (Romans 3:9-12, 23, 24) We should rejoice that God's undeserved kindness is now reaching so many people who had, in one way or another, been denied the opportunity to hear the good news. (1 Timothy 2:4) How can we show that our fondness for them is genuine?

10 We can follow Paul's admonition: "Welcome one another, just as the Christ also welcomed us, with glory to God in view." (Romans 15:7) Appreciating that people from other lands or backgrounds are often disadvantaged, we should show them kindness and concern when it is within our power to do so. We should welcome *them into* our midst, treat each one of them "like a native of yours," and "love him as your-

9. What serious pitfall can ensnare us regarding our view of the "aliens" and "foreigners" coming into the Christian congregation?

10. How can we show that we are genuinely hospitable to the "foreigners" among us?

On festive occasions we can be hospitable to foreigners, fatherless children, those in full-time service, and other guests

self." (Leviticus 19:34) This may not be easy to do, but we will succeed if we remember the counsel: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."—Romans 12:2.

Share With the Holy Ones

[11] Among those who are truly deserving of our consideration and hospitality are mature Christians who work hard for our spiritual welfare. Jehovah made special provisions for the priests and the Levites in ancient Israel. (Numbers 18:25-29) In the first century, Christians were also urged to care for those who served them in special capacities. The account at 3 John 5-8 gives us a glimpse of the close bond of love existing among the early Christians.

[12] The aged apostle John highly valued the kindness and hospitality that Gaius had shown toward certain traveling brothers sent to visit the congregation. These brothers—including Demetrius, apparently the bearer of the epistle—were all strangers or unknown to Gaius formerly. But they were received hospitably because it was "in behalf of [God's] name that they went forth." John put it this way: "We, therefore, are under obligation to receive such persons hospitably, that we may become fellow workers in the truth."—3 John 1, 7, 8.

11, 12. What special consideration was given to certain servants of Jehovah in (a) ancient Israel (b) the first century?

[13] Today, within Jehovah's organization, there are many who are exerting themselves vigorously in behalf of the whole association of brothers. These include the traveling overseers, who spend their time and energy week after week in building up the congregations; the missionaries, who leave behind families and friends to preach in foreign lands; those serving in Bethel homes or branch offices, who volunteer their services to support the worldwide preaching work; and those in the pioneer service, who spend the major part of their time and energy in the field ministry. Basically, all of these work hard, not for any personal glory or gain, but out of love for the Christian brotherhood and for Jehovah. They are worthy of our imitation because of their whole-souled devotion and are deserving of being 'received hospitably.'

[14] When we "receive such persons hospitably," the apostle John pointed out, we "become fellow workers in the truth." In a sense we become better Christians as a result. This is because Christian works include doing good to fellow believers. (Proverbs 3:27, 28; 1 John 3:18) There are rewards in another way too. When Mary and Martha received Jesus into their home, Martha wanted to be a good hostess by preparing "many things" for Jesus. Mary showed hospitality in a different way. She "sat down at the feet of the Lord and kept listening to his word," and Jesus commended her for having chosen "the good portion." (Luke 10:38-42) Conversations and discussions with those having long years of experience are often the highlights of an evening spent in their company.—Romans 1:11, 12.

13. Who among us today especially deserve being 'received hospitably'?

14. (a) How is it that we become better Christians when we show hospitality to faithful ones? (b) Why did Jesus say that Mary chose "the good portion"?

On Special Occasions

[15] Though true Christians do not follow popular customs or observe worldly holidays and festivals, there are occasions when they do get together to enjoy one another's company. For example, Jesus attended a marriage feast in Cana and contributed to the joy of the occasion by performing his first miracle there. (John 2:1-11) Likewise today, Jehovah's people have happy times together on similar special occasions, and appropriate celebration and festivity add much to such events. What, though, is appropriate?

[16] From our study of the Bible, we learn what is appropriate conduct for Christians, and this we follow at all times. (Romans 13:12-14; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5) Social gatherings, whether in connection with weddings or for any other reason, do not give us license to abandon our Christian standards or to do something that we would not ordinarily do; nor are we obligated to follow all the customs of the land in which we live. Many of such are based on false religious practices or superstitions, and others involve conduct clearly unacceptable to Christians.—1 Peter 4:3, 4.

[17] Reading John 2:1-11, it is not difficult for us to see that the occasion was an elaborate one and that quite a large number of guests were there. However, Jesus and his

15. What special occasions may prove to be happy times for Jehovah's people?

16. What guidelines do we have as to proper conduct even for special occasions?

17. (a) What factors show that the wedding feast in Cana was well organized and properly supervised? (b) What indicates that Jesus approved of that occasion?

disciples were "invited" guests; they did not just drop in, even though at least some of them likely were related to the host. We note also that there were those "ministering" as well as a "director," who would give directions as to what was served or done. All of this indicates that the affair was well organized and properly supervised. The account closes by stating that by what he did at the feast, Jesus "made his glory manifest." Would he have chosen that occasion to do that had it been a rowdy and wild party? Undoubtedly not.

18 What, then, about any special occasions that we may host? We want to remember that the purpose of receiving others with hospitality is that we might all "become fellow workers in the truth." Thus, it is not enough to label an event a "Witness" gathering. The question may be asked, Is it in fact a witness to who we are and what we believe? We should never view such occasions as opportunities to see how far we can go in rivaling the world in its devices, in indulging in "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:15, 16) Rather, these occasions must properly reflect our role as Jehovah's Witnesses, and we should be sure that what we do brings glory and honor to Jehovah. —Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33.

18. What serious thought must be given to any social event?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What must we not overlook if we want to find true joy and satisfaction?
- ☐ Who are the "orphans and widows," and how should we "look after" them?
- ☐ How should we view the "aliens" and "foreigners" among us?
- ☐ Who are deserving of particular consideration today?
- ☐ How should special occasions reflect the true spirit of hospitality?

'Be Hospitable Without Grumbling'

19 As world conditions continue to deteriorate and people become ever more divided, we need to do all that we can to strengthen the close bond that exists among true Christians. (Colossians 3:14) To this end we must have "intense love for one another," as Peter urged us. Then, in practical terms, he added: "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:7-9) Are we willing to take the initiative to be hospitable to our brothers, to put ourselves out to be kind and helpful? Or do we grumble when such an opportunity arises? If we do, we nullify the joy we could have and also lose out on the reward of happiness for doing good.—Proverbs 3:27; Acts 20:35.

20 Working closely with our fellow Christians, being kind and hospitable to one another, will bring boundless blessings. (Matthew 10:40-42) To such ones Jehovah promised that he would "spread his tent over them. They [would] hunger no more nor thirst anymore." To be in Jehovah's tent is to enjoy his protection and hospitality. (Revelation 7:15, 16; Isaiah 25:6) Yes, just ahead is the prospect of enjoying Jehovah's hospitality forever.—Psalm 27:4; 61:3, 4.

19. Why do we need to "be hospitable to one another without grumbling"?

20. What blessings await us if we practice being hospitable in today's divided world?

APOLLOS

An eloquent proclaimer of Christian truth

WHETHER they have been members of the Christian congregation for many years or for just a few, all Kingdom proclaimers should be interested in making progress as preachers of the good news. That implies increasing our knowledge of God's Word and our ability to teach it to others. For some, it may mean facing challenges, overcoming difficulties, or making themselves available for increased activity.

The Bible contains several examples of devoted men and women of ancient times who, in different ways, succeeded in making great spiritual progress and reaped rewards for their efforts. One of them was Apollos. When the Scriptures introduce him to us, he is an individual with an imperfect understanding of Christian teachings; just a few years later, however, he is acting as a traveling representative of the first-century congregation. What enabled him to make such progress? He possessed qualities that all of us would do well to imitate.

"Well Versed in the Scriptures"

In about the year 52 C.E., according to the Bible writer Luke, "a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, arrived in Ephesus; and he was well versed in the Scriptures. This man had been orally instructed in the way of Jehovah and, as he was aglow with the spirit, he went speaking and teaching with correctness the things about Jesus, but being acquainted with only the baptism of John. And this man started to speak boldly in the synagogue."—Acts 18:24-26.

Alexandria, Egypt, was the second-largest city in the world after Rome and was one of the most important cultural centers of the time both for Jews and for Greeks. Likely, Apollos acquired his sound knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and a certain eloquence as a result of an education in the large Jewish community of that city. Where Apollos had learned of Jesus is more difficult to surmise. "He was evidently a traveller—perhaps an itinerant merchant," suggests scholar F. F. Bruce, "and he could have met Christian preachers in any one of a number of places which he visited." In any case, even though he spoke and taught with correctness about Jesus, it seems that he had been witnessed to prior to Pentecost of 33 C.E., since he was "acquainted with only the baptism of John."

As the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist had given a powerful witness to the whole Israelite nation, and many were baptized at his hands as a symbol of repentance. (Mark 1:5; Luke 3:15, 16) According to a number of historians, among the Jewish population of the Roman Empire, many people's knowledge of Jesus was limited to what had been preached on the banks of the Jordan. "Their Christianity was at

the same point at which it had stood at the commencement of our Lord's ministry," say W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson. "They were ignorant of the full meaning of the death of Christ; possibly they did not even know the fact of His resurrection." It seems that Apollos was also ignorant of the outpouring of holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E. Nevertheless, he had acquired some correct information about Jesus, and he did not keep it to himself. In fact, he boldly sought opportunities to speak of what he knew. However, his zeal and enthusiasm were not yet according to accurate knowledge.

Zealous but Humble

Luke's account continues: "When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him into their company and expounded the way of God more correctly to him." (Acts 18:26) Aquila and Priscilla must have recognized that Apollos' faith had much in common with their own, but wisely they did not attempt to correct his incomplete understanding in public. We can perhaps imagine that they had a number of personal conversations with Apollos, with the aim of helping him. How did Apollos, a man "powerful . . . in the Scriptures," react? (Acts 18:24, *Kingdom Interlinear*) In all probability, Apollos had been preaching his incomplete message in public for some time before meeting Aquila and Priscilla. A proud person could quite easily have refused to accept any correction, but Apollos was humble and grateful to be able to complete his knowledge.

The same unpretentious attitude of Apollos is evident also in his willingness to accept a letter of recommendation from the Ephesian brothers to the congregation in Corinth. The account continues: "Further, because he was desiring to go across into Achaia, the brothers wrote the disciples, exhorting them to receive him kindly." (Acts 18:27; 19:1) Apollos did not demand to be accepted on his own merits but modestly followed the arrangement of the Christian congregation.

In Corinth

The initial results of Apollos' ministry in Corinth were excellent. The book of Acts reports: "When he got there, he greatly helped those who had believed on account of God's undeserved kindness; for with intensity he thoroughly proved the Jews to be wrong publicly, while he demonstrated by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."—Acts 18:27, 28.

Apollos put himself at the service of the congregation, encouraging the brothers by his preparation and zeal. What was the key to his success? Apollos certainly had natural ability and was courageous in sustaining a public debate with the Jews. But more important, he reasoned using the Scriptures.

Though Apollos had a powerful influence among the Corinthians, unfortunately his preaching produced unexpected negative effects. How so? Both Paul and Apollos had done much good in planting and watering the seed of Kingdom truth in Corinth. Paul had preached there in about 50 C.E., some two years before the arrival of Apollos. By the time Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, in about 55 C.E., factions had developed. Some were viewing Apollos as their leader, while others favored Paul or Peter or held only to Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10-12) Some were saying: 'I belong to Apollos.' Why?

The message preached by Paul and Apollos was the same, but they had different personalities. By his own admission, Paul was "unskilled in speech"; Apollos, on the other hand, was "eloquent." (2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6) He had abilities that enabled him to get a hearing among some of the Jewish community in Corinth. He succeeded in 'thoroughly proving the Jews to be wrong,' whereas Paul, not long before, had left the synagogue.—Acts 18:1, 4-6.

Could this have been the reason for a leaning toward Apollos on the part of some? A number of commentators theorize that the innate passion for philosophical discussion among Greeks may have led some to favor the more stimulating approach of Apollos. Giuseppe Ricciotti suggests that "[Apollos'] colorful language and his high-flown allegories had won him the admiration of many who preferred him to Paul, an unpretentious and unrefined orator." If, indeed, certain ones wrongly allowed such personal preferences to create divisions among the brothers, it is easy to understand why Paul scathingly criticized the exaltation of "the wisdom of the wise men."—1 Corinthians 1:17-25.

Such criticism implies no friction between Paul and Apollos, however. Though some have fancifully imagined that these two preachers were bitter opponents fighting to win the affections of the Corinthians, the Scriptures say no such thing. Far from trying to set himself up as the leader of a faction, Apollos had left Corinth, had returned to Ephesus, and was with Paul when he wrote the first letter to the divided congregation.

There was no disunity or rivalry between them; rather, the two were evidently cooperating to resolve the problems in Corinth with mutual confidence. Perhaps Paul had his misgivings about some in Corinth but certainly not about Apollos. The work of the two men was in complete harmony; their teachings were complementary. To quote Paul's own words: "I planted, Apollos watered," for both were "God's fellow workers."—1 Corinthians 3:6, 9, 21-23.

Like Paul, the Corinthians held Apollos in great esteem, desiring to receive another visit from him. But when Paul invited Apollos to return to Corinth, the Alexandrian declined. Paul says: "Now concerning Apollos our brother, I entreated him very much to come to you . . . , yet it was not his will at all to come now; but he will come when he has the opportunity." (1 Corinthians 16:12) Apollos may have been reluctant to return because of fears of stirring up further division, or simply because he was busy elsewhere.

The last time Apollos is mentioned in the Scriptures, he was journeying to Crete and perhaps beyond. Again Paul shows particular regard for his friend and fellow worker, asking Titus to provide Apollos and his traveling companion, Zenas, with everything they might need for their trip. (Titus 3:13) By this time, after some ten years of Christian training, Apollos had made sufficient progress to be acting as a traveling representative of the congregation.

Godly Qualities That Facilitate Spiritual Growth

The Alexandrian preacher set a fine example for all modern-day publishers of the good news and, indeed, all who desire to make spiritual progress. We may not be as eloquent as he was, but we can certainly strive to emulate his *knowledge and ability in the use of the Scriptures,*

thus helping sincere seekers of truth. By his example of *zealous* activity, Apollos "greatly helped those who had believed." (Acts 18:27) Apollos was *humble, self-sacrificing,* and *willing to serve* others. He well understood that there is no room for rivalry or ambition in the Christian congregation, for we are all "God's fellow workers."—1 Corinthians 3: 4-9; Luke 17:10.

We, like Apollos, can make spiritual progress. Are we willing to improve or expand our sacred service, putting ourselves in a position to be used more fully by Jehovah and his organization? In that case we will be zealous students and proclaimers of Christian truth.

SERVING JEHOVAH AS A UNITED FAMILY

AS TOLD BY ANTONIO SANTOLERI

My father was 17 when he left Italy in 1919. He moved to Brazil in search of a better life. In time, he came to have a barbershop in a small town in the interior of the state of São Paulo.

ONE DAY in 1938, when I was seven, Father obtained the *Brasileira* version of the Bible from a man who passed by his shop. Two years later Mother became seriously ill and remained an invalid until her death. Father also became sick, so all of us—Mother, Father, my sister Ana, and I—went to live with relatives in the city of São Paulo.

During my schooling in São Paulo, I became an avid reader, especially of historical writings. I was impressed that the Bible was occasionally mentioned in them. A book of fiction, which I had borrowed from the São Paulo public library, mentioned the Sermon on the Mount several times. That is when I decided to obtain a Bible to read that sermon for myself. I searched for the Bible that Father had acquired years before and finally found it in the bottom of a trunk, where it had lain for seven years.

Our family was Catholic, so I had never been encouraged to read the Bible. Now, on my own, I learned to look up the chapters and verses. I read with great pleasure not just the Sermon on the Mount but the whole book of Matthew as well as other Bible books. What impressed me the most was the tone of truth with which Jesus' teachings and miracles were presented.

Realizing how different the Catholic religion was from what I read in the Bible, I began to attend the Presbyterian Church, and Ana joined me. Yet, I still felt a vacuum in my heart. For years I had been avidly searching for God. (Acts 17:27) One starry night, when I was in a pensive mood, I wondered, 'Why am I here? What is the

purpose of life?' I sought an isolated spot in the backyard, knelt down, and prayed, 'Lord God! Who are you? How can I get to know you?' An answer came shortly thereafter.

Learning Bible Truth

One day in 1949, a young woman approached Father as he got off a streetcar. She offered him the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. He subscribed to the *Watchtower* and asked her to visit our home, explaining that he had two children who attended the Presbyterian Church. During the woman's visit, she left the book *Children* with Ana and began a Bible study with her. Later I joined the study.

In November 1950 we attended our first convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. There the book *"Let God Be True"* was released, and we continued our Bible study using that book as our guide. Soon afterward we discerned that we had found the truth, and in April 1951 we were baptized in symbol of our dedication to Jehovah. Father made his dedication some years later and died faithful to God in 1982.

Happy in Full-Time Service

In January 1954, when I was still only 22, I was accepted for service at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, which is called Bethel. On arriving there, I was surprised to find that a man only two years older than me, Richard Mucha, was the branch overseer. In 1955, when a need arose for circuit servants, as traveling overseers were then called, I was among five men who were invited to share in this service.

My assignment was the state of Rio Grande do Sul. There were only 8 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses when I began, but within 18 months 2 new congregations and 20 isolated groups were established. In this area today, there are 15 circuits of Jehovah's Witnesses, each with about 20 congregations! At the end of 1956, I was advised that my circuit had been divided into four smaller ones that would be served by four circuit servants. At that time I was directed to return to Bethel for a new assignment.

To my surprise and delight, I was assigned to northern Brazil as a district servant, a traveling minister who serves a number of circuits. Brazil then had 12,000 ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the country had two districts. Richard Wuttke served in the south, and I had the district in the north. At Bethel we were trained to operate a projector for showing the films produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, *The New World Society in Action* and *The Happiness of the New World Society*.

In those days travel was quite different. None of the Witnesses had an automobile, so I traveled by canoe, rowboat, oxcart, horseback, wagon, truck, and once by airplane. It was thrilling to fly over the

Antonio Santoleri with his immediate family

Amazon forest to land in Santarém, a city halfway between Belém at the mouth of the Amazon and Manaus, the capital of Amazonas State. District servants then had few circuit assemblies to serve, hence I spent much of my time showing the Society's films. In larger cities, hundreds attended.

What most impressed me in northern Brazil was the Amazon region. While I was serving there in April 1957, the Amazon River and its tributaries overflowed their banks. I had the privilege of showing one of the films in the forest, extending an improvised screen between two trees. The power for the projector came from a motorboat anchored in the nearby river. It was the first film that most of the audience had ever seen.

Soon afterward I returned to Bethel service, and the following year, in 1958, I had the privilege of attending the historic "Divine Will" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, in New York City. Delegates from 123 lands were among the 253,922 who filled Yankee Stadium and the nearby Polo Grounds on the concluding day of that eight-day convention.

Enjoying Changes in My Life

Shortly after returning to Bethel, I became acquainted with Clara Berndt, and in March 1959 we were married. We were as-

signed to the circuit work in the state of Bahia, where we served for about a year. Clara and I still recall with joy the humility, hospitality, zeal, and love of the brothers there; they were poor materially but rich in Kingdom fruitage. Then we were transferred to São Paulo State. It was there, in 1960, that my wife became pregnant, and we had to leave the full-time ministry.

We decided to move to a place in the state of Santa Catarina, where my wife was born. Our son, Gerson, was the first of our five children. He was followed by Gilson in 1962, Talita in 1965, Tárcio in 1969, and Janice in 1974. Thanks to Jehovah and the fine counsel he provides, we were able to face the challenge of raising them in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.

We consider each of our children precious. The psalmist so well expressed our feelings: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah." (Psalm 127:3) Despite problems, we have cared for our children as we would any "inheritance from Jehovah," keeping in mind the instructions found in his Word. The rewards have been many. It gave us unspeakable joy when all five in turn, separately, and of their own volition expressed their desire to be baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah. —Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Our Children's Choices

We were overjoyed when Gerson, soon after completing a course in data processing, said he wanted to serve at Bethel, thus choosing the full-time ministry instead of a professional career. Yet Bethel life at first was not easy for Gerson. After visiting him when he had been in Bethel only four months, I was struck by the sadness reflected in his face as we left. In our car's rearview mirror, I saw him watching us until we passed the first curve in the road. My eyes were so full of tears that I had to stop on the side of the road before proceeding on our 430-mile trip home.

Gerson really came to enjoy Bethel. After being there nearly six years, he married Heidi Besser, and they served together in Bethel for another two years. Heidi then became pregnant, and they had to leave. Their daughter, Cintia, now six years old, accompanies them in their Kingdom activities.

Not long after we first visited Gerson at Bethel, Gilson, who had recently completed his first year in business administration, said that he too wanted to serve there. His plans were to resume his business course after serving a year at Bethel. But his plans changed, and he remained in Bethel service. In 1988 he married Vivian Gonçalves, a pioneer, as full-time ministers are called. Ever since, they have been serving together at Bethel.

Our joys continued when our third child, Talita, chose to enter the pioneer service in 1986 after taking a course in drafting. Three years later she too was invited to Bethel. In 1991 she married José Cozzi, who had been serving at Bethel for ten years. They continue there as a married couple.

My wife and I were again delighted when Tárcio, the next in line, repeated the same phrase that we had heard three times already, "Father, I want to go to Bethel." His application was accepted, and in 1991 he too began Bethel service, where he stayed until 1995. We are happy that he used his youthful vigor to promote Jehovah's Kingdom interests in this way for over three years.

Our youngest, Janice, made her decision to serve Jehovah and was baptized at age

13. During her schooling, she served for a year as an auxiliary pioneer. Then, on September 1, 1993, she began as a regular pioneer in our congregation here in the city of Gaspar.

The Way of Success

What is the secret to keeping a family united in the worship of Jehovah? I do not believe there is some magical formula. Jehovah has provided counsel in his Word for Christian parents to follow, so all credit should go to him for the fine results that we have enjoyed. We have simply tried to follow his directions. (Proverbs 22:6) All our children inherited a Latin sentimentality from me and a practical Germanic spirit from their mother. But the most important thing they received from us was a spiritual inheritance.

Our homelife revolved around Kingdom interests. Keeping these interests foremost was not easy. For instance, we had difficulty always maintaining a regular family Bible study, yet we never gave up. From their first days of life, each child was brought to Christian meetings as well as to assemblies and conventions. Only illness or some other emergency kept us from attending. In addition, at a young age, the children accompanied us in the Christian ministry.

In Our Next Issue

Is There Life After Death?

Husband and Elder
—Balancing the Responsibilities

The "House of David"
—Fact or Fiction?

When they were about ten, the children began to give talks in the Theocratic Ministry School. We helped them prepare their first talks, encouraging them to use an outline rather than a manuscript. Later on, each one prepared his own talk. Also, when they were between the ages of 10 and 12, they each began to share regularly in the ministry. This was the only way of life they knew.

My wife, Clara, played a vital role in the rearing of our children. Every night, when they were very young—the time a child absorbs like a sponge all that he is taught—Clara read a Bible story to them and prayed with each one. She used to good advantage the books *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained, Listening to the Great Teacher,* and *My Book of Bible Stories.** When they became available, we also used the audio and visual aids provided by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Our experience as Christian parents confirms that children need *daily* attention. Intense love, personalized interest, and abundant time are among the basic needs of young ones. We not only viewed it as our parental responsibility to satisfy these needs to the best of our ability but reaped great pleasure from doing so.

Truly, it is gratifying for parents to realize the fulfillment of the words at Psalm 127:3-5: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the sons of youth. Happy is the able-bodied man that has filled his quiver with them." Serving Jehovah as a united family has indeed caused us to rejoice!

* All published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

'PROVIDING FOR ONE'S HOUSEHOLD'

Meeting the Challenge in Developing Lands

"CERTAINLY if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." So said the apostle Paul. (1 Timothy 5:8) While raising a family has become increasingly difficult in affluent countries, doing so in a developing land often presents an even more formidable challenge.

In Africa, for example, economic hardship is often the rule, not the exception. Jobs are scarce, and when they are available, husband and wife may both need to work in order to provide mere sustenance. Family heads may have to travel long distances to find work, leaving their mates and children alone for months—or years. Adequate housing may also be hard to come by. Many African families are large; living quarters thus tend to be cramped, lacking basic amenities. Unhealthy conditions often prevail.

In addition, local customs, long-standing traditions, and popular viewpoints may run counter to the spirit of God's Word, the Bible. Consider some prevailing attitudes about marriage and children. Some family heads believe that they are responsible only for paying the rent and the obligatory school fees. Their wives—and sometimes even older children—are left with the job of providing such basics as food and clothing.

Furthermore, some husbands have the view that "my money is my money, but your money is my money too." This often stirs resentment among income-producing wives. Complained one Tanzanian woman: "The money is spent on drinking, not on us or on the children. We share the work, or do more of it, but he takes all the money telling us it is his—that he earned it."

Christians, however, place God's Word ahead of local culture or popular opinion. The Bible gives helpful direction on the matter of caring for one's family. For example, it says that "children ought not to lay up for their parents, but the parents for their children." (2 Corinthians 12:14) Therefore, God-fearing men who are able to work do not out of laziness leave it to their wives or older children to provide food and clothing for the family; that responsibility falls squarely upon the shoulders of the family head. —1 Corinthians 11:3.

True, a husband's income may not be adequate to care for all his family's needs. But if his wife earns money outside the home, a Christian man will not be resentful. Rather, he will treat her as a respected "partner." (Malachi 2:14) Thus, he will not callously take her hard-earned money and squander it with little regard for her feelings. On the contrary, he and his wife will 'consult together' and determine how their funds can best be used for the benefit of the entire family. (Proverbs 13:10) Where

possible, a husband even allows his wife a measure of economic freedom, as was enjoyed by the "capable wife" in Bible times. (Proverbs 31:10, 11, 16) Following the Bible's counsel in such matters promotes family happiness and contentment.

Facing the Challenges of Unemployment

Consider the problem of unemployment. When jobs are few and pay is low, many African family heads have sought work far away from home—in mines, in factories, on farms, and on plantations. If a Christian man were in this situation, he might well find himself isolated from fellow worshipers and exposed to very bad association. (Proverbs 18:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33) While his family might endeavor to make the most of the situation, they likely would suffer because of not having a father at home to take the lead spiritually or to render emotional support. Ironically, the long absence may also result in the very thing it was supposed to prevent—financial hardship.

One mother says: "My husband went to dig for gold. He planned to be back after a month or at the most after two. It turned out to be a year! I was left with six children to take care of. Then there was the rent to pay. Since my health was not good, I had to pay hospital bills. We needed clothes, and we had to eat every day. I had no job. It was hard. The most difficult part was taking care of the children spiritually —family study, meetings, and the preaching work. With Jehovah's support, somehow we pulled through."

Even some mothers have felt obliged to leave their families behind for months on end in order to work. Some make their living as traveling merchants and are rarely seen at home. Older children are thus forced to take on a parental role and care for meals, household chores, and even discipline of younger siblings. Participation in spiritual activities suffers. Yes, the strain on the family can be enormous!

Of course, when economic conditions are severe, a parent may have no other way to provide for his family than to seek distant employment. In Bible times the sons of Jacob evidently had to leave their families behind in order to obtain provisions in Egypt. (Genesis 42:1-5) So when similar situations arise today, family heads must weigh whatever material benefits a distant job might bring against the spiritual and emotional damage of a long separation. Many families prefer to endure economic hardship rather than to separate for a lengthy period of time. They bear in mind Paul's words found at 1 Timothy 6:8: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things."—Compare Proverbs 15:17.

Oftentimes there are alternatives to traveling. By demonstrating initiative and ingenuity, some have been able to create employment by providing useful services.* (Compare Proverbs 31:24.) Or it may be a matter of accepting humble jobs that are viewed by others as menial. (Ephesians 4: 28) The apostle Paul himself 'labored and toiled night and day' so as to avoid being a financial burden to others. (2 Thessalonians 3:8) Christian men today can follow that example.

The Problems of Schooling

Another problem involves schooling. In some remote areas, it is common for parents to send their children away to live with relatives for extended periods of time to give the children adequate schooling. Separated from their parents, such children often have

* See the article "Creating Jobs in Developing Countries" in the October 22, 1994, issue of our companion journal, *Awake!*

difficulty attending meetings or participating in the field ministry. Deprived of needed discipline, they easily fall prey to bad associations. As a result, a number have left the Christian way of life.

There is no question that secular education has its advantages. But the Bible places a higher value upon a spiritual education, and God has given parents the responsibility to provide such instruction. (Deuteronomy 11:18, 19; Proverbs 3:13, 14) Sending a child away for long periods of time, however, will likely undermine a parent's efforts to raise him "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.*

When local opportunities for education seem inadequate, parents may have no choice but to do what they themselves can to teach their children basic skills. Help is also provided by our "Grand Instructor," Jehovah. (Isaiah 30:20) Local congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses offer a number of educational provisions. Many congregations conduct literacy classes. The Theocratic Ministry School is likewise a helpful provision that can sharpen a child's ability to read and speak clearly.

A Balanced View of Childbearing

Providing for children can be particularly difficult when there are many. African parents will often say that they love children; hence, they have as many as they can! While children may be viewed as an economic resource, many parents are unable to provide adequately for a large number of them.

Of course, the Bible says that "sons are an inheritance from Jehovah." (Psalm 127:3) Note, however, that those words were penned during a period of favorable conditions in Israel. Later on, severe famine and war made childbearing trialsome. (Lamentations 2:11, 20; 4:10) In view of the difficult situation that prevails in many developing lands, responsible Christians should give serious thought to how many children they can realistically feed, clothe, house, and train. Having calculated the expense, many couples decide it would be best to go against tradition and limit the number of children they have.*—Compare Luke 14:28.

Clearly, these are "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) As this system of things plummets toward its inevitable end, no doubt pressures upon families in developing lands will increase. Yet, by adhering closely to the principles of God's Word, family heads can succeed in caring for both the physical and the spiritual needs of their families, for Jehovah makes this promise to those who loyally serve him: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) Yes, even in impoverished lands, Christians can successfully meet the challenge of providing for their households!

* For further details, see "Questions From Readers" in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1982.

* Helpful information was provided in the series "Family Planning—A Global Issue," which appeared in *Awake!* of February 22, 1993.

A Magazine That Touches the Heart

COUNTLESS magazines are published around the globe to satisfy the reader's hunger for information or entertainment.

What makes the magazine in your hand so exceptional? The following letter, which was received by the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Germany, may provide an answer:

"Thank you very much, dear brothers, for your efforts and work. When my two sons and I returned from the meeting, although it was 9:30 p.m., I simply had to listen to the latest *Watchtower* [on audiocassette]. As I washed the dishes, I began listening to the first study article (April 1, 1995). I felt that I had to listen to it once more, so I interrupted my work in the kitchen and read the article ["You Are Precious in God's Eyes!"] in *The Watchtower* along with the tape. It touched my heart, especially the fourth and fifth paragraphs. And then the tears began to flow—but not for long. I am grateful to Jehovah that I am alive and belong to his people and that I, along with so many others, can make his name known. There is indeed no reason to feel worthless. Jehovah's spirit is with his people. May all of us endure and stand solid in the faith, as one man. With Christian affection, your sister in the faith."

The Watchtower gives more than information. It touches the hearts of its readers and satisfies their desire for spiritual nourishment and timely encouragement. Yes, *The Watchtower* provides "food at the proper time."—Matthew 24:45.