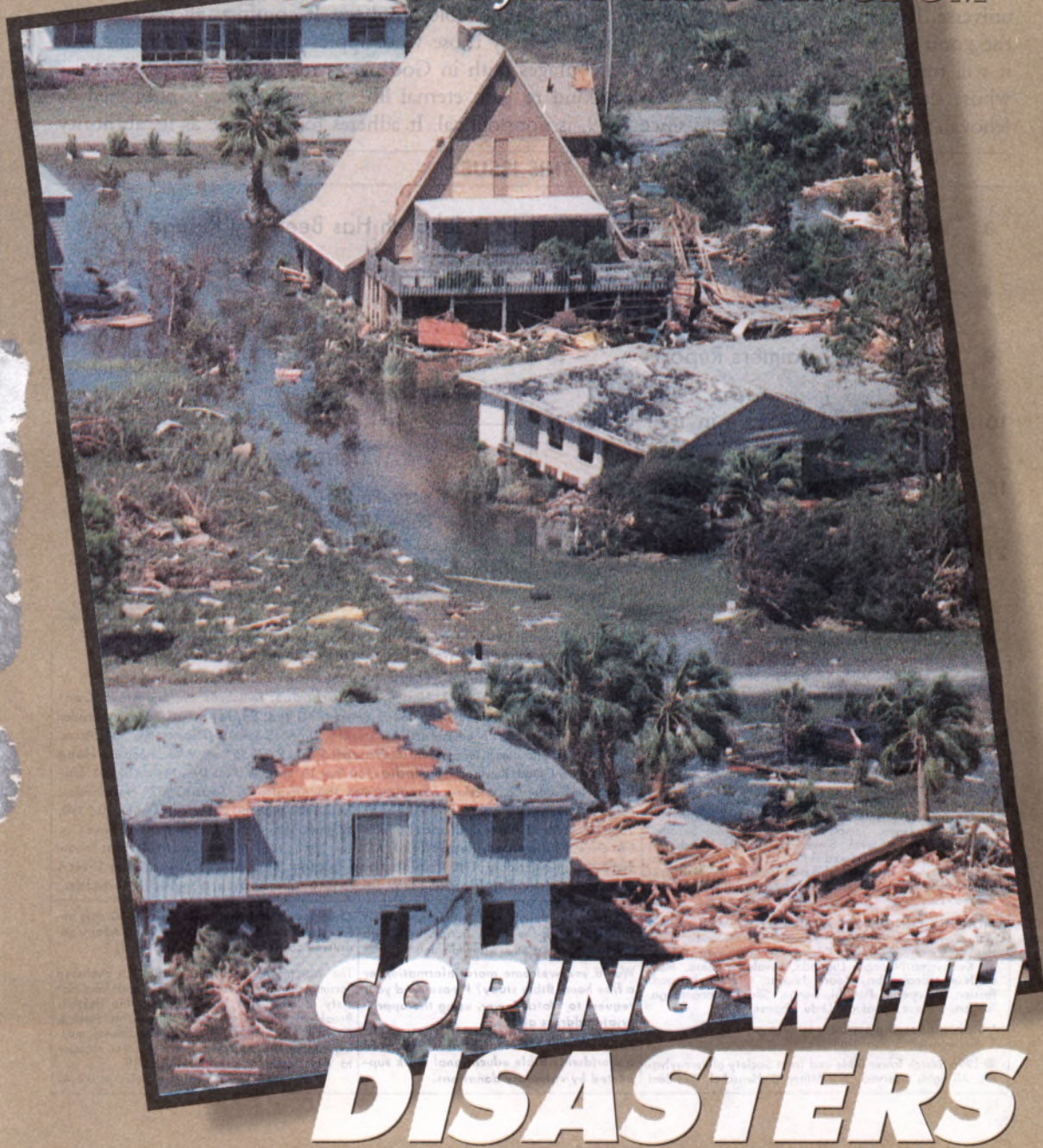


DECEMBER 1, 1996

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**COPING WITH
DISASTERS**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

December 1, 1996

Average Printing Each Issue: 18,950,000

Vol. 117, No. 23

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 When Natural Disasters Strike
- 4 Providing Relief in the Midst of Ruins
- 9 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 10 Parents, Find Pleasure in Your Children
- 15 Youths Who Remember Their Creator
- 21 The 101st Class of Gilead—Zealous for Fine Works

- 24 Jehovah Has Been My Refuge
- 29 "Remember the Days Gone By"—Why?
- 32 Who Will Be Evangelizers?

COVER: Maxie Roberts/Courtesy of THE STATE

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

JANUARY 6-12: Parents, Find Pleasure in Your Children. Page 10. Songs to be used: 157, 164.

JANUARY 13-19: Youths Who Remember Their Creator. Page 15. Songs to be used: 183, 221.

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

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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 semi-monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Printed in U.S.A.

WHEN NATURAL DISASTERS STRIKE



Top: Information Services Department, Ghana;
right: San Angelo Standard-Times

Accra, Ghana, July 4, 1995: The heaviest rains in almost 60 years caused severe flooding. Some 200,000 lost everything, 500,000 lost access to their homes, and 22 lost their lives.

**San Angelo,
Texas, U.S.A.,
May 28, 1995:**

Tornadoes and hail ravaged this city of 90,000 inhabitants, causing an estimated \$120 million (U.S.) in damages.



**Kobe, Japan,
January 17, 1995:**

An earthquake lasting just 20 seconds left thousands dead, tens of thousands injured, and hundreds of thousands homeless.



WE ARE living in what might be called an era of disasters. A United Nations report reveals that in the 30-year period from 1963-92, the number of people killed, injured, or displaced by disasters increased an average of 6 percent each year. The bleak situation has caused the UN to designate the 1990's as "the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction."

Of course, a force of nature—such as a storm, a volcanic eruption, or an earthquake—does not always bring disaster. Hundreds occur each year with no harm to humans. But when a heavy toll on life and property is involved, it is rightly called a disaster.

An increase of natural disasters appears to be inevitable. The book *Natural Disasters—Acts of God or Acts of Man?* notes: “People are changing their environment to make it more *prone* to some disasters, and are behaving so as to make themselves more *vulnerable* to those hazards.” The book presents a hypothetical example: “A mild earthquake in a shantytown of heavy mud-brick houses on the side of a steep ravine may well prove a disaster in terms of human deaths and suffering. But is the disaster more the result of the earthshocks or of the fact that people are living in such dangerous houses on such dangerous ground?”

To students of the Bible, there is yet another reason why the increase in natural disasters is not surprising. Almost 2,000

years ago, Jesus Christ foretold that “the conclusion of the system of things” would be marked by, among other things, “food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another.” (Matthew 24:3, 6-8) The Bible also foretold that during “the last days,” men would be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, without natural affection, and without love of goodness.* (2 Timothy 3: 1-5) These traits often cause man to work against his environment, making humans more vulnerable to natural forces. Man-made disasters are also an offshoot from the loveless society in which most have to live.

As our planet becomes more heavily populated, as human behavior puts people at higher risk, and as earth’s resources are increasingly mismanaged, disasters will continue to plague man. Providing relief presents challenges, as the following article will show.

* For more information on the sign of the last days, see the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, pages 98-107, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

PROVIDING RELIEF IN THE MIDST OF RUINS

MAN’S effort to provide relief in the wake of disaster is certainly praiseworthy. Many relief programs have helped to rebuild homes, reunite families, and, above all, save lives.

When disaster strikes, Jehovah’s Witnesses make use of—and are grateful for—whatever provisions are made through sec-

ular relief programs. At the same time, they have a Scriptural obligation to “work what is good . . . especially toward those related to [them] in the faith.” (Galatians 6:10) Yes, the Witnesses feel as if they are related; they view one another as “family.” That is why they refer to one another as “brother” and “sister.”—Compare Mark 3:31-35; Philemon 1, 2.

So when a disaster affects a neighborhood, elders among Jehovah's Witnesses make painstaking efforts to ascertain the whereabouts and needs of each congregation member and make arrangements for necessary assistance. Consider how this was true in Accra, Ghana; San Angelo, U.S.A.; and Kobe, Japan.

Accra—"A Mini Noah's Day"

The rain began falling about 11 o'clock in the evening, and it poured down relentlessly for hours. "It was raining so hard that my entire family lay awake," says John Twumasi, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Accra. The *Daily Graphic* called it "a mini Noah's Day." "We tried to take some valuables upstairs," continues John, "but as we opened the door to the stairway, the floodwaters surged in."

Authorities sounded the warning to evacuate, yet many hesitated, fearing that an empty home—even if filled with water—might invite looters. Some could not leave even if they wanted to. "My mother and I were unable to open the door," says a girl named Paulina. "The water kept rising, so we stood on wooden barrels and held on to a rafter of the roof. Finally, at about five o'clock in the morning, our neighbors rescued us."

As soon as it was possible, Jehovah's Witnesses got to work. A Christian sister named Beatrice relates: "The elders in the congregation were searching for us, and they found us at the house of a fellow Witness, where we had taken refuge. Just three days after the flood, the elders and the younger members of the congregation rallied to our side and scraped the mud off the inside and outside of our house. The Watch Tower Society supplied detergents, disinfectants, paint, mattresses, blankets, cloth, and clothing for the children. The brothers sent us food for several days. I was deeply moved!"



Beatrice Jones (left) demonstrates how she and others formed a chain to pass through the floodwaters

John Twumasi, quoted earlier, reports: "I told the other tenants that our Society had sent us detergents and disinfectants—enough to clean the entire house. About 40 tenants helped clean up. I gave some of the detergents to my neighbors, including one man who is the priest of a local church. My workmates mistakenly thought that Jehovah's Witnesses show love only to their own people."

The Christian brothers and sisters greatly appreciated the loving assistance that was given to them. Brother Twumasi concludes: "Though the things I lost in the flood had greater monetary value than the relief items, my family and I feel that because of this touching provision from the Society, we have gained far more than we lost."

San Angelo—"It Sounded Like the World Was Ending"

The tornadoes that ravaged San Angelo on May 28, 1995, uprooted trees, snapped power poles, and threw live power lines across roads. Winds gusted up to 100 miles per hour, damaging utility structures. More than 20,000 homes experienced blackouts. Then the hail came. The National Weather Service reported "golf ball-sized hail,"



Relief work after the tornadoes

then “softball-sized hail,” and finally “grapefruit-sized hail.” The onslaught was deafening. Said one resident: “It sounded like the world was ending.”

An ominous calm followed the storm. People slowly emerged from their battered homes to survey the damage. Trees that were still standing had been stripped of their foliage. Homes that were still standing looked as if they had been flayed. In some areas hail covered the ground in drifts up to three feet deep. Thousands of windows from homes and automobiles had been shattered in the storm, so that now shards of broken glass glistened alongside the hail that blanketed the ground. “When I got home,” one woman says, “I just sat in my car in the driveway and cried. The damage was so bad, it just overwhelmed me.”

Relief programs and hospitals swiftly provided financial assistance, building materials, medical treatment, and counseling. Commendably, many individuals who were themselves victims of the storm did what they could to help others.

The congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses took action as well. Aubrey Conner, an elder in San Angelo, reports: “As soon as the storm ended, we were on the phone check-

ing on one another. We helped ourselves and our non-Witness neighbors to board up windows, put plastic on roofs, and weather-proof the homes as much as possible. Then we made a file on every person in the congregation whose home was affected. About a hundred homes needed repair, and the material supplied by relief agencies was not enough. So we purchased extra materials and got organized for work. All told, some 1,000 Witnesses volunteered to help, about 250 each weekend. They came from as far as 460 miles away. All worked tirelessly, often in 100-degree weather. Even a 70-year-old sister worked with us every weekend except one, and that was when her own home was being repaired. And on that weekend she was up on her own roof helping with the repairs!

“We often heard expressions from onlookers such as, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice if other religions would do this for their members?’ Our neighbors were impressed to see a crew of 10 to 12 volunteers (including sisters) show up early Friday morning at the home of a fellow Witness, prepared to repair or even rebuild the entire roof free of charge. In most cases the work was completed in one weekend. At times, an outside contractor would be well into a roofing job when our crew arrived next door. We would strip and rebuild our roof and have the yard cleaned up before they were finished with theirs. Sometimes they stopped their work just to watch us!”

Brother Conner concludes: “All of us are going to miss the experiences we’ve enjoyed together. We have come to know one another from a different perspective by showing and being shown brotherly love as never before. We feel that this is just a sample of what it will be like in God’s new world, with brothers and sisters helping one another because they truly want to.”—2 Peter 3:13.

Kobe—"A Wreckage of Wood, Plaster and Human Bodies"

The residents of Kobe were supposed to be prepared. Indeed, every September 1 they observe Disaster Prevention Day. Schoolchildren practice earthquake drills, the military rehearse helicopter rescue missions, and fire departments bring out their earthquake-simulation machines, in which volunteers practice their survival skills inside a room-sized box that shakes and shudders just like the real thing. But when the real thing occurred on January 17, 1995, all the preparation seemed for naught. Tens of thousands of roofs fell in—something that never happened in the simulators. Trains flipped on their sides; sections of highway disintegrated; gas and water mains ruptured; houses collapsed like cardboard. *Time* magazine described the scene as "a wreckage of wood, plaster and human bodies."

Then came the fires. Buildings blazed while frustrated fire fighters were stuck in miles of backed-up traffic. Those who reached the fires often found that no water could be obtained from the city's damaged water system. "The first day was total panic," said one official. "I've never felt so powerless in my life, knowing there were so many people buried in those burning houses. And knowing there was nothing I could do about it."

All told, some 5,000 people were killed, and approximately 50,000 buildings lay in ruins. Kobe had only one third of the food that it needed. To obtain water some resorted to scraping dirty liquid from beneath the ruptured water pipes. Many of the homeless fled to shelters, some of which rationed food, allotting each person as little as one rice ball per day. Dissatisfaction soon spread. "The authorities haven't done anything," complained one man. "If we continue to rely on them we'll starve to death."

The congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kobe and in nearby areas organized themselves immediately. A helicopter pilot who saw their work firsthand said: "I went to the disaster area on the day of the quake and spent a week there. When I arrived at one shelter, everything was chaotic. No relief work whatsoever was being done. Jehovah's Witnesses were the only ones who rushed to the site, handling one thing after another."

Indeed, there was much work to do. Ten Kingdom Halls were rendered unfit for use, and more than 430 Witnesses were without homes. An additional 1,206 homes in which they lived needed repair. Not only that but the families of 15 Witnesses who had died in the disaster were in dire need of comfort.

Some 1,000 Witnesses from around the country volunteered their time to help in the repair work. "When we worked on the houses of Bible students who were not yet baptized," notes one brother, "we were always asked, 'How much should we pay for all of this?' When we told them that the work was supported by the congregations, they thanked us, saying, 'What we have studied is now a reality!'"

Many were impressed with the Witnesses' quick and thorough response to the disaster. "I was deeply impressed," says the pilot quoted earlier. "You call one another 'brother' and 'sister.' I have seen how you help one another; you people really are a family."

The Witnesses themselves learned valuable lessons from the quake. One sister admitted: "I have always felt that the bigger an organization becomes, the harder it is to show personal concern." But the tender care she received changed her view. "I now know that Jehovah is caring for us not only as an organization but also as individuals." However, permanent relief from disasters lies ahead.

PERMANENT RELIEF SOON!

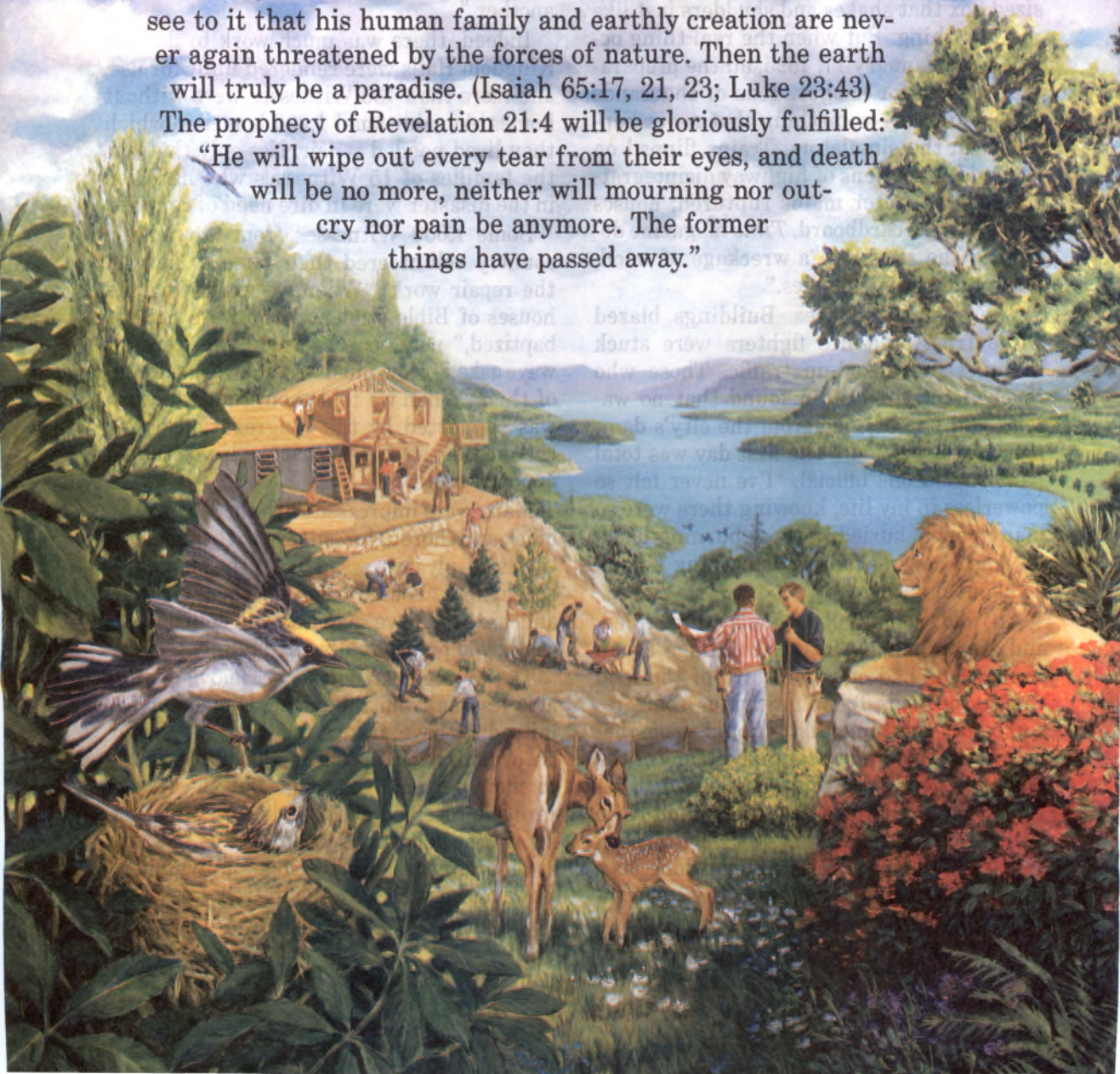
Jehovah's Witnesses look forward to the time when human life and livelihood will no longer be cut short by disasters. In

God's new world, man will be taught to cooperate with earth's environment. As humans put away selfish practices, they will be less vulnerable to natural hazards.

Further, Jehovah God—the Creator of natural forces—will see to it that his human family and earthly creation are never again threatened by the forces of nature. Then the earth will truly be a paradise. (Isaiah 65:17, 21, 23; Luke 23:43)

The prophecy of Revelation 21:4 will be gloriously fulfilled:

“He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”



KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Taking a Firm Stand in School Is Rewarded

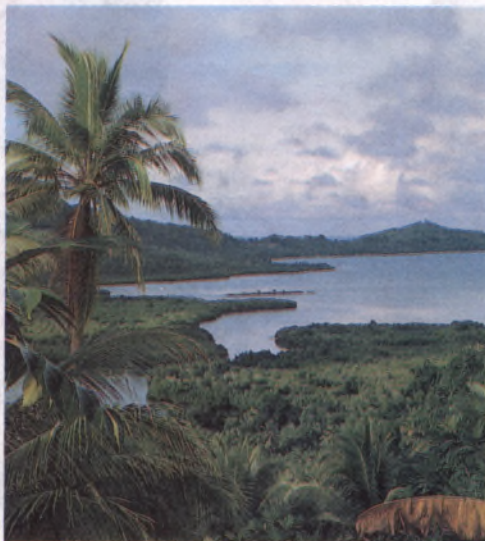
THE Bible foretells: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." (Isaiah 54:13) In an extended way, "all your sons" can be applied to the entire body of God's servants on earth, including the very young. Today, Christian parents make sure that their children are "taught by Jehovah" at home and at Christian meetings.

When attending school, however, young Christians are faced with difficult challenges. Often they find it necessary to take a strong stand based on what they have learned from the Bible. When they do, the results can be beneficial to students and teachers alike, as shown by the following experience from Micronesia.

On the small western Pacific island of Tol in the Chuuk Islands, the teachers in the local school told all the children to prepare for and participate in a school Halloween celebration. The Witness pupils were aware that the celebration could involve decorations and costumes portraying ghosts, goblins, and witches—all related to spiritistic traditions. These children could not conscientiously participate.*

From their Bible-based training at home and in the Christian congregation, they knew that such practices are displeasing to God, even when done merely for entertainment. To help explain their stand more clearly, the children invited

* For more information on Halloween and its spiritistic origins, see the November 22, 1993, issue of *Awake!*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Barak, one of the Witness missionaries on the island, to speak to their teachers.

After hearing the explanation, the teachers arranged for a second meeting, at which Barak could speak to the entire school faculty. At this meeting, Barak presented facts to show the true nature of Halloween. He drew his information from several Watch Tower publications as well as from other sources. Teachers and administrators were

amazed at what they learned about the origin, history, and religious nature of the celebration. They chose to hold a staff meeting to decide how to resolve the situation.

A few days later, an unexpected decision was announced. All preparations for Halloween were being canceled. The school would simply not celebrate Halloween that year. What a favorable outcome resulted from these young Witnesses' determination to do what is right in school! Young ones never need to be afraid or ashamed to take a clear stand for Bible truth.

Around the world, Jehovah's Witnesses teach their children to work hard in school. Young Witnesses are also trained to live by Bible principles and to share their hope and beliefs with other students as they have opportunity. Even when the results are not as favorable or immediate as they were in this case, youths can have the confidence and satisfaction that come from doing what is right. And more important, they can be sure that their heavenly Father is pleased and will bless them for their faithful obedience.



Courtesy of Green Chimney's Farm

PARENTS, FIND PLEASURE IN YOUR CHILDREN

"Your father and your mother will rejoice."—PROVERBS 23:25.

HOW fine to see a sapling grow and become a stately tree that provides beauty and shade—especially if you planted and took care of it! Similarly, parents who care for children who grow up to be mature servants of God find great pleasure in them, as the Bible proverb says: "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.

² Yet, a child does not automatically become "righteous" and "wise." Great effort is needed to keep young ones from becoming a source of "grief" and "bitterness,"

1. What will cause parents to find pleasure in their children?

2, 3. (a) How can parents avoid grief and bitterness? (b) What do both saplings and children need in order to become a source of pleasure?

even as work can be involved in turning a sapling into a stately tree. (Proverbs 17:21, 25) For example, support stakes can train a young sapling to grow straight and strong. A regular water supply is vital, and a sapling may need to be protected from pests. Finally, pruning helps to produce a tree of beauty.

³ God's Word reveals that children need such things as godly training, saturation with the water of Bible truth, protection from moral abuses, and loving discipline to prune away undesirable traits. To supply these needs, fathers especially are urged to bring their children up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) What does this involve?

Emphasis on Jehovah's Words

⁴ "Mental-regulating of Jehovah" means regulating our thinking to conform to Jehovah's will. Parents, then, must instill in the minds of their little ones Jehovah's thinking on matters. And they must also imitate God's example of providing compassionate discipline, or corrective training. (Psalm 103:10, 11; Proverbs 3:11, 12) But before parents can do this, they themselves must absorb Jehovah's words, as God's prophet Moses admonished the ancient Israelites: "These words [from Jehovah] that I am commanding you today must prove to be on *your heart*."—Deuteronomy 6:6.

⁵ Regular study of the Bible, meditation, and prayer equip parents to do what Moses next commanded: "You must *inculcate* [Jehovah's words] in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you

lie down and when you get up." The Hebrew word translated "inculcate" means "to repeat," "to say again and again," "to impress sharply." Note how Moses further emphasized the need to keep Jehovah's words to the fore: "You must tie them as a sign upon your hand, and they must serve as a frontlet band between your eyes; and you must write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Clearly, Jehovah requires parents to give their children regular, loving attention!—Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

⁶ What are "these words" of Jehovah that parents were to inculcate in their children? Moses had just reiterated what is commonly called the Ten Commandments, including the commands not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false testimony, and not to covet. Such moral requirements, as well as the command to "love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force," were particularly what Israelite parents were to inculcate in their young ones. (Deuteronomy 5:6-21; 6:1-5) Would you not agree that this is the kind of teaching that children need today?

⁷ The Israelite father was told: "Your wife will be like a fruit-bearing vine in the innermost parts of your house. Your sons will be like slips of olive trees all around your table." (Psalm 128:3) Yet, for parents to find pleasure in their "saplings" rather than experience grief, they must take a personal, daily interest in their children. (Proverbs 10:1; 13:24; 29:15, 17) Let us examine how parents can train, spiritually water, protect, and lovingly discipline their children in such a way that they come to find real pleasure in them.

6. What were parents to inculcate in their children, and with what benefit?

7. (a) To what were children compared in the Bible? (b) What will we now examine?

4. What responsibility do parents have toward their children, and what is required before they can fulfill it?

5. When and in what way were Israelite parents to instruct their children, and what does it mean to "inculcate"?

Training From Infancy

⁸ Consider Timothy, who received support from, as it were, two firmly implanted training stakes—his mother and his grandmother. Since Timothy's father was a Greek and evidently an unbeliever, it was his Jewish mother, Eunice, and her mother, Lois, who trained the boy 'from infancy in the holy writings.' (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; Acts 16:1) Their diligence in teaching Timothy—even when he was a baby—the "wonderful things that [Jehovah] has done" was richly rewarded. (Psalm 78:1, 3, 4) Timothy became a missionary in distant lands, perhaps while he was still a teenager, and he had a prominent role in strengthening early Christian congregations.—Acts 16:2-5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19-23.

⁹ Parents, what kind of training stakes are you? For example, do you want your children to develop a balanced view of material things? Then you must set the right example by not pursuing all the latest gadgets or other things that you do not really need. If you choose to pursue material advantages, do not be surprised when your children copy you. (Matthew 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Indeed, if the training stakes are not upright, how can the sapling grow straight?

¹⁰ Parents who find pleasure in their children will constantly seek divine help to train them, always considering what is in their children's best interests spiritually. A mother of four related: "Even before our children were born, we regularly prayed to Jehovah to help us to be good parents, to be guided by his Word, and to apply it in our lives." She added: "'Jehovah comes first'

8. (a) Who served as training stakes for Timothy? (b) When did the training begin, and with what result?

9. How can young ones learn to avoid the snares of materialism?

10. Whose direction should parents always seek, and what attitude should they have?

was not just a common phrase but the way we lived our lives."—Judges 13:8.

Supplying "Water" Regularly

¹¹ Saplings particularly need a constant water supply, as is indicated by how well trees grow beside a river. (Compare Revelation 22:1, 2.) Babies too will flourish spiritually if they are regularly provided the water of Bible truth. But parents need to consider their child's attention span. Perhaps frequent abbreviated sessions of instruction would be more effective than a few long ones. Do not minimize the value of such shorter sessions. Spending time together is vital to create a bonding between parent and child, a closeness repeatedly encouraged in the Scriptures.—Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:18-21; Proverbs 22:6.

¹² One of the sessions with the little ones can be at the close of the day. One youth remembers: "My parents would sit on the end of our bed every night and listen to us say our own prayers." Of the value of doing this, another said: "That got me in the habit of praying to Jehovah every night before I go to bed." When children *daily* hear their parents speak about Jehovah and pray to him, he becomes a real person to them. One young man said: "I could close my eyes in prayer to Jehovah and see a real grandfatherly person. My parents helped me to see that Jehovah plays a part in everything we do and say."

¹³ To help little ones absorb the water of Bible truth, parents can include many practical things in the regular instruction periods. The parents of two preteens said: "Both children started to receive training to sit

11. What do both saplings and children require for growth?

12. What is the value of praying with little ones?

13. What can regular instruction periods include?

quietly in the Kingdom Hall from their first few weeks of life." A father described what his family did: "We listed all the books of the Bible on index cards and practiced putting them in order, all of us taking turns. The kids were always looking forward to this." Many families include a brief instruction period either before or after a meal. One father said: "The evening meal has been a good time for us to discuss the daily Bible text."

¹⁴ Little ones also enjoy listening to the vivid Bible accounts in *My Book of Bible Stories*.^{*} "When the children were young," a couple observed, "a lesson in the *Bible Stories* book would be covered, and then the children would put on costumes and act out the parts in the form of a minidrama. They loved this and often insisted on doing more than one story per study." Do not underestimate your child's potential to learn! Four-year-olds have memorized whole chapters of the *Bible Stories* book and have even learned to read the Bible! One youth recalls that when she was about three and a half years old, she would again and again mispronounce "judicial decisions," but her father encouraged her to continue to practice.

¹⁵ Sessions with your little ones can also be used to prepare them to share the water of truth with others, such as by commenting at meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) "During our practice sessions, I would have to comment in my own words," one youth remembers. "I was not permitted just to read without understanding." In addition, children can be trained to have a meaningful

share in the field ministry. A woman reared by God-fearing parents explains: "We were never tagalongs who merely accompanied our parents in *their* work. We knew we had a share, even if it was only to ring a doorbell and leave a handbill. By careful preparation prior to each weekend's activities, we knew what we would say. We never woke up on a Saturday morning asking if we were going in the ministry. We *knew* we were."

¹⁶ The need *regularly* to supply little ones with the water of Bible truth cannot be overemphasized, which means that a weekly family Bible study is vital. A father of two claims that "a major factor in irritating children is inconsistency." (Ephesians 6:4) He said: "My wife and I picked a day and time and faithfully conducted the family study on that schedule. It didn't take long before the children expected it at that time." All such training from infancy is important, in keeping with the truism, "The way the twig is shaped, so grows the tree."

¹⁷ Supplying little ones Bible truths is important, but parental example is equally so. Do your children see you studying, regularly attending meetings, sharing in the field ministry, yes, finding delight in doing Jehovah's will? (Psalm 40:8) It is vital that they do. Significantly, a daughter said of her mother, who had endured the opposition of her husband and had reared six children to become faithful Witnesses: "What impressed us the most was Mother's own example—it spoke louder than words."

Providing Little Ones Protection

¹⁸ As saplings often need protection from

^{*} Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

14. (a) What spiritually rewarding activities might be shared with little ones? (b) What potential for learning do children have?

15. What matters can be included in discussions with children, and what evidence is there that such discussions are of value?

16. Why is regularity in holding a family study with children important?

17. What is as important as supplying little ones Bible truths?

18. (a) How can parents provide children the protection they need? (b) What kind of instruction did little ones in Israel receive about reproductive body parts?

dangerous pests, in this evil system of things, little ones need protection from “wicked men.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) How can parents give this protection? By helping them to acquire divine wisdom! (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Jehovah commanded the Israelites—including their “little ones”—to listen to the reading of his Law, which included identification of proper and improper sexual conduct. (Deuteronomy 31:12; Leviticus 18:6-24) Reproductive body parts are repeatedly mentioned, including “testicles” and “genital organ.” (Leviticus 15:1-3, 16; 21:20; 22:24; Numbers 25:8; Deuteronomy 23:10) Because of the extreme corruption of today’s world, little ones need to know the proper and improper use of such body parts that are included in the creation that God called “very good.”—Genesis 1:31; 1 Corinthians 12:21-24.

¹⁹ Ideally both parents together, or each adult guardian, should identify for the child its private body parts. They should then explain that no other person should be allowed to touch these parts. Since child molesters often test how little ones respond to subtle sexual advances, a child should be taught to resist firmly and say, “I’m going to tell on you!”

19. What is appropriate instruction to provide little ones regarding their private body parts?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What do both saplings and children need in order to become praiseworthy?
- ☐ How, in effect, can parents serve as effective training stakes?
- ☐ What can be included in instruction sessions with little ones, and what should they be taught to resist?
- ☐ How is discipline beneficial for a child, as pruning is for a tree?

Teach your little ones that they should *always* tell on anyone who tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, no matter what scary threats are made.

Supplying Loving Discipline

²⁰ Little ones benefit from loving discipline, as a tree does from pruning. (Proverbs 1:8, 9; 4:13; 13:1) When undesirable branches are lopped off, the growth of others is encouraged. So if your children are focusing particularly on material possessions or are leaning toward bad association or unwholesome entertainment, these wrong inclinations are like branches that need to be cut off. If they are removed, your children will be helped to grow in a spiritual direction. Initially such discipline may not seem pleasant, just as pruning may cause some shock to a tree. But the fine result of discipline is renewed growth in the direction you want your child to grow.—Hebrews 12:5-11.

²¹ It is readily admitted that discipline is not pleasant either to give or to receive. “My son was spending quite a bit of time with a youth that the elders had warned me was not good association,” one father noted. “I should have acted more quickly than I did. Although my son did not become involved in any blatant wrongdoing, it took a while to readjust his thinking.” The son observed: “When I was cut off from my best friend, I was crushed.” But he added: “This was a good decision, since soon afterward he was disfellowshipped.”

²² “The reproofs of discipline are the way of life,” God’s Word says. So regardless of how difficult discipline may be to give, do not hold it back from your children. (Prov-

20. (a) How is discipline like pruning? (b) What is the initial effect of discipline, but what is the result?

21, 22. (a) What indicates that discipline is neither pleasant to give nor to receive? (b) Why should parents not hold back in giving discipline?

erbs 6:23; 23:13; 29:17) In time, they will be grateful that you corrected them. "I remember being so angry with my parents when I was disciplined," a youth recalls. "Now I would be even more angry if my parents had denied me that discipline."

The Reward Worth the Effort

²³ There can be no question about it, chil-

23. Why is all the loving attention invested in young ones worth the effort?

dren in whom parents, as well as others, find pleasure are the product of a lot of daily, loving attention. However, all the effort that is invested in them—whether they be physical children or spiritual ones—is well worth the reward that can be enjoyed. The aged apostle John showed this when he wrote: "No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that I should be hearing that my children go on walking in the truth."—3 John 4.

YOUTHS WHO REMEMBER THEIR CREATOR

*"Remember, now, your Grand Creator
in the days of your young manhood."—ECCLESIASTES 12:1.*

HOW fine when young ones speak and act in a way that shows that they view Jehovah God as a real person whom they admire and want to please! An 11-year-old boy said: "When I'm alone and look out the window, I see how wonderful Jehovah's creations are. Then I dream about how beautiful Paradise will be in the future and about how I can touch the animals then." (Isaiah 11:6-9) He added: "When I'm alone, I pray to Jehovah. I know he won't get mad at me for talking to him all the time. I know he's always there watching me." Is our Creator as real to you as he is to this boy?

How Real Is God to You?

² For Jehovah and his promises to be real

1. What expressions of an 11-year-old reveal that our Creator is real to him?

2. (a) How can your Creator become real to you?

(b) What part can parents have in helping their children appreciate that God is a real person?

to you, you must first learn about him and the wonderful future he offers you in the righteous new world that the Bible describes. (Revelation 21:3, 4) If your parents have taught you about these things, you have reason to be grateful because this enables you to heed the inspired command: "Remember, now, your Grand Creator." (Ecclesiastes 12:1) One youth said regarding her early parental training: "Everything in life always came back to Jehovah. This was the key to my remembering my Creator." Another young woman observed: "I'll be forever grateful to my parents for teaching me that Jehovah is a real person. They showed me how to love him and told me about the joy of serving him full-time."

³ Yet, many find it hard to conceive of

3, 4. What can help you think of Jehovah as a real person?

God as a real person who is interested in them. Do you? One youth was helped to think about God in a personal way by this statement in *The Watchtower*: "How big Jehovah God is as to his body, we do not know." Of course, God's eminence does not lie in his size or shape, as the next sentence in that *Watchtower* said: "His real greatness is in being what kind of God he is," indeed, a faithful, compassionate, loving, and forgiving God.* (Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 86:5; James 5:11) Have you come to view Jehovah as such a person, a trusted friend with whom you can have a precious relationship?—Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23.

⁴ Jesus helped his early followers to enjoy a personal relationship with God. Thus, when the apostle John wrote about his anticipated resurrection to heavenly life, John observed: "We shall be like [God], because we shall see him just as he is." (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:44) Youths today can also be helped to view God as a real person, one they can get to know well even though they cannot personally see him. A young man noted: "My parents helped me remember Jehovah by asking many questions, such as, 'What would Jehovah say? How would you explain it in your own words? What does that mean?'" Do not questions like these make us think about our personal relationship with God?

What It Means to Remember

⁵ Heeding the injunction, "*Remember*, now, your Grand Creator," means more than just thinking about Jehovah. It involves action, *doing* what pleases him. When the criminal implored Jesus, "*Remember me* when you get into your kingdom," he want-

ed Jesus to do more than recall his name. He wanted Jesus to act, to resurrect him. (Luke 23:42) Similarly, the imprisoned Joseph expected some action in his behalf when he asked Pharaoh's cupbearer to *remember* him to Pharaoh. And when Job petitioned God, "*Remember me*," Job was requesting that at some future time, God would act to resurrect him.—Job 14:13; Genesis 40:14, 23.

⁶ One authority says that the Hebrew word translated "remember" often implies "the affection of the mind and the action which accompanies recollection." The implication of "affection" in the word "remember" can be seen in the exclamation of "the mixed crowd" in the wilderness: "How we *remember* the fish that we used to eat in Egypt!" Just as Job petitioned to be favorably remembered by God, so Hezekiah, Nehemiah, David, and an unnamed psalmist also pleaded to be remembered with affection by Jehovah in recognition of their faithfulness.—Numbers 11:4, 5; 2 Kings 20:3; Nehemiah 5:19; 13:31; Psalm 25:7; 106:4.

⁷ Thus we might ask, 'Do we *remember* our Creator with affection and avoid doing anything to cause him to feel hurt or pain?' A youth observed: "Mother helped me to recognize that Jehovah has feelings, and at an early age, I was aware that my actions had an effect on him." (Psalm 78:40-42) Another explained: "I knew that my actions would either help or hinder in answering the challenge Satan made to Jehovah. I wanted to make Jehovah's heart glad, so that helped me and continues to help me today."—Proverbs 27:11.

6. How does the Hebrew word for "remember" imply affection for the thing or person remembered?

7. If we remember God with affection, how will this affect our conduct?

* *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1953, page 750.

5. What Bible examples show that to remember someone involves more than recalling his name?



**Have you thought about why
you go to school?**

⁸ Admittedly, in this wicked world, it is not always easy to remember Jehovah by sharing fully in activity that pleases him. Yet how fine it would be if you could imitate young Timothy of the first century—not to mention thousands of God-fearing youths today—by pursuing the Christian service full-time as a pioneer minister! (Acts 16: 1-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:2) However, it may be asked, Would you be able to support yourself in the pioneer ministry? And if you got married, would you have the skills to provide for those in your family? (1 Timothy 5:8) These are important questions, and it is

8. (a) What pursuit will indicate that we remember Jehovah with affection? (b) What questions will youths wisely consider?

vital that you give them serious thought.

Education With a Purpose

⁹ As human society becomes more complex, a greater amount of schooling may be needed to obtain adequate employment to support yourself in the pioneer work. You may have noted that even some with a university education have had to be reeducated to acquire new skills that are valued by employers today. So how much schooling will you young ones who want to please God pursue? The decision properly should be made with the inspired command in mind: “Remem-

ber, now, your Grand Creator.”

¹⁰ You will, of course, want to pursue what even many secular authorities regard as the best education—the one realized from a careful study of God’s Word. The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe noted: “The greater the intellectual progress of [a people], the more fully possible will it also become to employ the Bible both as the foundation and as the instrument of education.” Yes, a study of the Bible will better equip you for life than will any other education!—Proverbs 2:6-17; 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

¹¹ Since knowledge of God is life-giving, the most important work you can do today is

9. What decision faces youths regarding secular education?

10. What is the best education we can receive?

11. (a) What is the most important work we can do? (b) Why did one youth choose to get a measure of education?

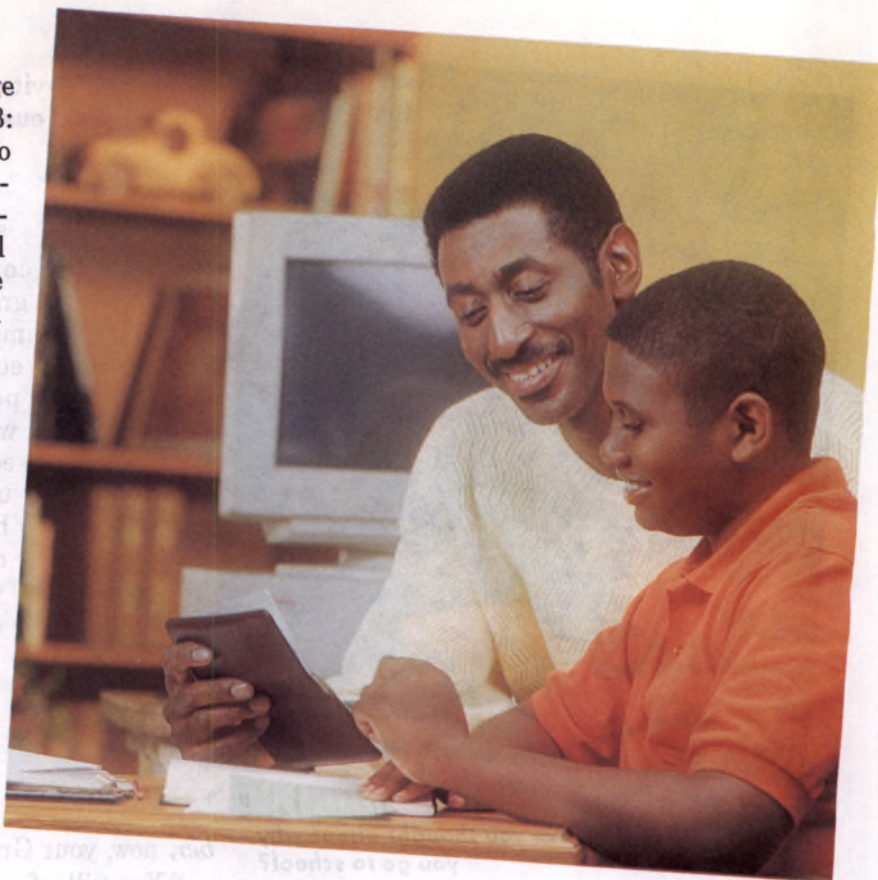
to share that knowledge with others. (Proverbs 3: 13-18; John 4:34; 17:3) To do this effectively, however, you need to be educated in fundamental ways. You need to be able to think clearly, speak logically, and read and write well—skills that are taught in school. So take your school courses seriously, as did Tracy, a youth in Florida, U.S.A., who graduated from high school with scholastic honors. She expressed her hope: “I have always had as my goal to be a full-time servant of my God Jehovah, and I hope my education will help me achieve this goal.”

¹² Have you thought about why you go to school? Is it primarily to equip yourself to become an effective minister of Jehovah? If so, you will want to give serious consideration to how well your education accomplishes this purpose. After consultation with your parents, it may be decided that you should pursue schooling beyond the minimum required by law. Such additional education may help you to obtain employment to support yourself and still leave you with the time and energy to share fully in Kingdom activity.—Matthew 6:33.

¹³ Some who pursue supplementary educa-

12. If additional secular education is chosen, what purpose may it help fulfill?

13. How have two Russian Christians who pursued supplementary education demonstrated their purpose in life?



Are you learning to manage finances wisely?

tion engage in the full-time ministry even while they are receiving further schooling. Consider Nadia and Marina, two teenage girls in Moscow, Russia. Both were baptized in April 1994 and began to serve as auxiliary pioneer ministers. Shortly afterward they graduated from high school and enrolled in a two-year accounting program. In May 1995 they started to regular pioneer, yet they maintained an A average in their accounting classes. Moreover, they were able to conduct, between them, an average of 14 Bible studies each week while still going to school. The girls hope that their education in accounting will enable them to find adequate employ-

ment, so that they can support themselves in the full-time ministry.

¹⁴ If you pursue secular education beyond what is required by law, wisely examine your reason for doing so. Is it to make a name for yourself and to get material riches? (Jeremiah 45:5; 1 Timothy 6:17) Or is it your goal to use supplementary education to share more fully in Jehovah's service? Lydia, a youth who chose to pursue further education, expressed a fine focus on spiritual matters, explaining: "Others pursue higher education and let materialism get in the way, and they've dropped God. Personally my relationship with God is the most important thing to me." What a commendable attitude for all of us!

¹⁵ Significantly, first-century Christians had a wide variety of educational backgrounds. The apostles Peter and John, for example, were considered to be "unlettered and ordinary" because they had not been trained in the rabbinic schools. (Acts 4:13) The apostle Paul, on the other hand, received what was comparable today to a university education. Yet, Paul did not use that education to bring attention to himself; rather, it was an asset when he preached to people in various stations of life. (Acts 22:3; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Philippians 1:7) Similarly, Manaen, who had been "educated with Herod the district ruler," was among those who took the lead in the Antioch congregation.—Acts 13:1.

Why Manage Your Finances Wisely?

¹⁶ If you fail to manage your finances

14. Regardless of what amount of secular education we choose, what should be the most important thing in our lives?

15. What variety of educational backgrounds was there among first-century Christians?

16. (a) Why may it be harder to remember our Creator if we are in debt? (b) How does one of Jesus' illustrations reveal the importance of thinking before we spend?

wisely, it may be harder to remember your Creator by doing what pleases him. For if you fall into debt, it can be said that you have another master. The Bible explains: "Borrow money and you are the lender's slave." (Proverbs 22:7, *Today's English Version*) One of Jesus' illustrations highlights the importance of thinking before we spend. "Who of you," Jesus said, "that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, he might lay its foundation but not be able to finish it, and all the onlookers might start to ridicule him."—Luke 14:28, 29.

¹⁷ Wisely, therefore, you will try to live by the Scriptural principle 'not to be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another.' (Romans 13:8) But this is hard to do, especially when confronted with a continuous supply of new products that advertisers claim you really need. One parent, who has tried to help his children exercise discernment, observed: "We have spent much time discussing what is a need and what is a want." Schools generally have failed to teach such matters, providing little if any instruction on how to handle finances in a responsible manner. "We graduate from high school knowing more about an isosceles triangle than how to save," noted one social worker. What, then, can help you to spend wisely?

¹⁸ Heeding the exhortation, "Remember, now, your Grand Creator," is a key to the wise management of your finances. This is because when you obey that command, your priority is to please Jehovah, and your affection for him influences how you spend your money. Accordingly, you will try not to

17. Why is it often hard to control one's spending?

18. What is a key to wise management of finances, and why?

allow personal wants to interfere with giving God whole-souled devotion. (Matthew 16:24-26) You will strive to keep your eye "simple," that is, clearly focused on God's Kingdom and the doing of his will. (Matthew 6:22-24) You will thus come to view the divine admonition to "honor Jehovah with your valuable things" as a joyful privilege.—Proverbs 3:9.

Youths Worthy of Imitation

¹⁹ Happily, many youths, past and present, have remembered their Creator. Little Samuel remained steadfast in tabernacle service despite the immoral influence of those with whom he served. (1 Samuel 2:12-26) An alluring temptress, Potiphar's wife, could not entice young Joseph to commit fornication. (Genesis 39:1-12) Even though "but a boy," Jeremiah preached courageously in the face of severe opposition. (Jeremiah 1:6-8) A little Israelite girl fearlessly directed a powerful Syrian army chief to seek help in Israel, where he could learn about Jehovah. (2 Kings 5:1-4) Young Daniel and his companions kept their faith when tested on dietary laws of God. And the youths Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to be hurled into a fiery furnace rather than compromise their loyalty to God by worshiping before an image.—Daniel 1:8, 17; 3:16-18; Exodus 20:5.

²⁰ Today more than 2,000 youths 19 to 25 years of age serve at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York State, U.S.A. They are only a small portion of the tens of thousands of young ones who are remembering their Creator worldwide. Like Joseph of old, they have refused to compromise their moral cleanness. Many

19. How have youths in the past remembered their Creator?

20. How have many youths remembered their Creator today?

have obeyed God rather than men when forced to choose whom they would serve. (Acts 5:29) In 1946 in Poland, 15-year-old Henryka Zur was tortured when she refused to perform an act of religious idolatry. "Think inside whatever you want to," suggested one of her tormentors, "just make the Catholic sign of the cross." Because she refused, she was dragged into the forest and shot, her assured hope of eternal life intact!*

²¹ How Jehovah's heart must be warmed by young ones who have remembered him through the centuries! Will you respond to his invitation, "*Remember*, now, your Grand Creator"? Truly he is worthy of your remembrance! Think daily about all he has done for you and yet will do, and accept his invitation: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me."—Proverbs 27:11.

* See 1994 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pages 217-18, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

21. What invitation would it be wise to accept, with what outcome?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ How can youths be helped to view God as a real person?
- ☐ What does it mean to remember your Creator?
- ☐ What purpose should our education serve?
- ☐ Why is it vital to manage our finances wisely?
- ☐ What youths are worthy of your imitation?

THE 101ST CLASS OF GILEAD

Zealous for Fine Works

OUR Creator, Jehovah God, is zealous for fine works, and so is his Son, Jesus Christ. As our exemplar, Jesus showed zeal by carrying out his God-given assignment, which included giving “himself for us that he might . . . cleanse for himself a people peculiarly his own, zealous for fine works.” (Titus 2:14) The 48 members of the 101st class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead have certainly demonstrated their zeal for fine works. The graduation program for these missionaries was held on September 7, 1996, at the Watchtower Educational Center in Patterson, New York.

Practical Counsel to Remain Zealous

The chairman of the graduation program was Carey Barber, a member of the Governing Body, with over 70 years in the full-time ministry. In his opening comments, Brother Barber called attention to the preaching and teaching activity of Jesus, who was “the light of the world.” (John 8:12) He pointed out that Jesus did not keep that honorable role to himself but urged his disciples to let their light shine as well. (Matthew 5:14-16) This privilege of service adds meaning to a Christian’s life and places a weighty responsibility on the shoulders of all those who are “walking as children of light.”—Ephesians 5:8.

Following those opening remarks, Don Adams of the Executive Offices at Brooklyn headquarters was introduced. He spoke on the subject “Moving Forward, Not Backward.” Brother Adams drew attention to the Gilead School itself and its purpose—to extend the preaching of the good news to for-

eign lands. He spoke of the advancement of God’s organization, which has published Bible literature throughout the world in over 300 languages. The book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published in 1995, has been made available in 111 languages and is scheduled to be printed in still more. It has already been instrumental in helping new disciples of Jesus to reach the point of dedication and baptism within just a number of months. So the new missionaries will have the latest Bible study aids available for their work.

Next, Lyman Swingle, a member of the Governing Body, spoke on the topic “Keep On Rendering Jehovah Your Sacred Service,” based on Revelation 7:15. Since Jehovah himself is a happy God, serving him continually is what makes one happy. (1 Timothy 1:11) As a result of this joyful service, a great crowd of individuals from all parts of the earth have come to worship him. Over the years, those who have been trained in Gilead School have had a share in helping many of these to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth. We have every reason, therefore, to believe that Jehovah will continue to bless those who are now being sent out to gather in more members of the expanding great crowd.

“Reflecting the Joy of Jehovah” was the theme highlighted by Daniel Sydlik, also a member of the Governing Body. He showed that all of God’s servants, including the new missionaries, have the privilege of teaching people the way of everlasting life and the way to get the best out of life now. “Teaching,” stated Brother Sydlik, “is a

self-rewarding profession. It is reflected in the faces of the people who do the teaching and in the faces of the people who learn." (Psalm 16:8-11) He quoted one missionary in Estonia who said, "We have the greatest message on the face of the earth, and it's our face that shows it." Our facial expression may open many doors and arouse interest. People want to know what makes Jehovah's servants happy. "So give attention to your face," counseled Brother Sydlík. "People enjoy seeing happy people."

Ulysses Glass, who has shared in giving instruction to Gilead students since the 12th class in 1949, addressed the audience on the subject "With Patience, Guard Your Souls." What is patience? It conveys the thought of waiting calmly for something, manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain. The patient person remains composed; the impatient one becomes hasty and irritable. "Many think that patience indicates weakness or indecisiveness," observed Brother Glass, but "to Jehovah it bears the insignia of strength and purpose." (Proverbs 16:32) What are the dividends that patience pays? "Patience in a moment of anger will spare you a hundred days of anguish," says one Chinese proverb. "Patience enhances one's personality," commented Brother Glass. "In effect, it coats other fine qualities with a varnish of permanence. It makes faith desirable, peace long-lasting, and love unshakable."

"It is a privilege to receive an assignment from Jehovah God through his organization," stated Mark Noumair, who served as a missionary in Kenya for 11 years and is now a Gilead instructor. As he developed the theme "Unless You Have Faith, You Will Not Be of Long Duration," Brother Noumair called attention to the example of King Ahaz of Judah. Isaiah assured

the king of Jehovah's backing in his assignment, but Ahaz still failed to trust in Him. (Isaiah 7:2-9) Brother Noumair then pointed out that missionaries—indeed, all of us—need to have faith in Jehovah in order to be of long duration in their theocratic assignments. The particular challenges of a missionary assignment demand strong faith. "Always keep in mind that there is no perfect situation in this system of things," stated Brother Noumair.

Experiences That Encourage Zealous Activity

During the course of their Gilead training, the students each weekend spent time in the public ministry, which will also be the main concern in their missionary assignments. Wallace Liverance, a Gilead faculty member, interviewed 15 students, who related their experiences. Leon Weaver of the Service Department Committee and Lon Schilling of the Bethel Operations Committee then interviewed branch committee members from Africa and Latin America, who related experiences from the missionary field and who had some fine advice for the graduating missionaries. In Sierra Leone, it was pointed out, about 90 percent of those baptized during the 1995 service year had been assisted by the missionaries. What a fine record of zealous activity!

Finally, Milton Henschel, the Society's president, addressed the audience of 2,734 on the subject "Jehovah's Visible Organization Is Unique." What makes God's or-

Class Statistics

Number of countries represented:	9
Number of countries assigned to:	12
Number of students:	48
Average age:	31.7
Average years in truth:	13.8
Average years in full-time ministry:	9.8



101st Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

- (1) Swint, H.; Zezenski, A.; Highfield, L.; Mercado, S.; Diehl, A.; Chavez, V.; Smith, J.; Selenius, S.
- (2) Kurtz, D.; Clark, C.; Leisborn, J.; Mortensen, W.; Bromiley, A.; Toikka, L.; Marten, A.; Smith, D.
- (3) Zezenski, D.; Bjerregaard, L.; Garafalo, B.; Kaldal, L.; Chavez, E.; Fröding, S.; Khan, R.; Selenius, R.
- (4) Swint, B.; Bjerregaard, M.; Garafalo, P.; Holmblad, L.; Keyzer, M.; Fröding, T.; Palfreyman, J.; Palfreyman, D.
- (5) Minguez, L.; Leisborn, M.; Mercado, M.; Kurtz, M.; Diehl, H.; Toikka, J.; Clark, S.; Khan, A.
- (6) Minguez, F.; Marten, B.; Highfield, L.; Holmblad, B.; Bromiley, K.; Kaldal, H.; Mortensen, P.; Keyzer, R.

ganization something without equal? It is neither its size nor its power but the fact that it is guided by God's righteous regulations and judicial decisions. In ancient times it was Jehovah's people, the nation of Israel, that were entrusted with his sacred pronouncements, which made that nation unique. (Romans 3:1, 2) Today, Jehovah's organization is united as it operates under the guidance of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19,

20) It is prospering, growing. Is there another organization on earth whose Governing Body consults God's Word, the Bible, before making important decisions? In these and other ways, Jehovah's visible organization is truly unique.

A delightful program concluded with the presentation of the diplomas and the reading of a letter from the class expressing appreciation for the special training.

JEHOVAH HAS BEEN MY REFUGE

AS TOLD BY PENELOPE MAKRIS

My mother fervently pleaded with me: "Leave your husband; your brothers will find you a better one." Why would my loving mother want me to dissolve my marriage? What had so upset her?



I WAS born in 1897 in the small village of Ambelos, on the island of Samos. Our family were devout members of the Greek Orthodox Church. Father died shortly before my birth, and Mother, my three brothers, and I had to work hard just to survive amid the sheer poverty of those times.

World War I broke out in 1914, and soon afterward my two older brothers were ordered to enlist in the army. But to avoid doing so, they immigrated to America, leaving me and my other brother at home with Mother. A few years later, in 1920, I married Dimitris, a young teacher in our village.

An Important Visit

Soon after I was married, my mother's brother came from America to visit us. He happened to bring with him one of the volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures*, written by Charles Taze Russell. It was a publication of the Bible Students, who are now known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

When Dimitris opened the book, he noticed a subject about which he had wondered since he was a child, "What happens to man when he dies?" In high school he had questioned a Greek Orthodox theologian about this very subject but had not received a satisfying answer. The clear and logical explanation provided in the pub-

lication delighted Dimitris so much that he went straight to the village coffeehouse, where menfolk in Greece customarily gather. There he related the things from the Bible that he had learned.

Our Stand for Bible Truth

About this time—in the early 1920's—Greece was in the middle of another war. Dimitris was conscripted and sent to the Turkish mainland, in Asia Minor. He was wounded and was sent home. After he recuperated, I accompanied him to Smyrna, Asia Minor (now Izmir, Turkey). When the war ended suddenly in 1922, we had to flee. In fact, we barely escaped on a badly damaged boat to Samos. On arriving home, we knelt and gave thanks to God—a God about whom we still had only scanty knowledge.

Soon Dimitris was assigned to teach at a school in Vathy, the island's capital. He continued to read the literature of the Bible Students, and one rainy night two of them from the island of Chios visited us. They had returned from America to serve as colporteurs, as full-time evangelizers were called. We put them up for the night, and they spoke to us about many things regarding God's purposes.

Afterward Dimitris told me: "Penelope, I realize that this is the truth, and I must follow it. This means that I have to stop singing in the Greek Orthodox Church and that I cannot attend church with the schoolchildren." Although our knowledge of Jehovah was limited, our desire to serve him was strong. So I replied: "I will not be an obstacle for you. Just move ahead."

He continued rather hesitantly: "Yes, but if our course becomes evident, I will lose my job."

"Never mind," I said, "do all people make a living from the teaching profession? We

are young and strong, and with God's help we can find other work."

About this time we learned that another Bible Student—also a colporteur—had come to Samos. When we heard that he had been denied permission by the police to give a public Bible talk, we went looking for him. We found him in a shop conversing with two Greek Orthodox theologians. Shamed at not being able to defend their beliefs with the Bible, the theologians soon left. My husband, impressed by the colporteur's knowledge, asked: "How is it that you use the Bible with such ease?"

"We study the Bible systematically," he replied. Opening his bag, he took out the study book *The Harp of God* and showed us how to use this book in such a study. We were so eager to learn that my husband and I, the colporteur, and two other men immediately accompanied the shopkeeper to his home. The colporteur handed each of us a copy of *The Harp of God*, and we began studying right away. We continued our study until well past midnight, and then as dawn approached, we began to learn the songs sung by the Bible Students.

From that time on, I started to study the Bible several hours a day. Bible Students from abroad kept supplying us with Bible study aids. In January 1926, I made my dedication to God in prayer, vowing unreservedly to do his will. Later that summer my husband and I symbolized our dedication by water baptism. We had a strong desire to speak to others about the things we were learning, so we started in the door-to-door ministry with the tract *Message of Hope*.

Enduring Strong Opposition

One day I was invited by a young lady to attend a liturgy at a small Greek Orthodox chapel. "I have stopped worshipping God



With her husband in 1955

in that way," I explained. "Now I worship him with spirit and truth, as the Bible teaches." (John 4: 23, 24) She was astounded and reported far and wide what had taken place, implicating also my husband.

Practically everyone began to oppose. Nowhere could we find peace—neither in our home nor at the meetings that we held with the few interested persons on the island. At the instigation of the Orthodox priests, crowds gathered outside our meeting place, throwing stones and shouting insults.

When we distributed the tract *Messiah of Hope*, children gathered around us shouting "Millennialists" and other derogatory terms. My husband's col-



Sister Makris would have been 100 in January 1997

leagues also began causing trouble for him. Late in 1926 he was brought to trial, charged with being unfit to be a public-school teacher, and sentenced to 15 days in prison.

When Mother learned of this, she advised me to leave my husband. "Listen, my dear mother," I replied, "you know as well as I do how much I love and respect you. But I simply cannot let you stand in the way of our worshiping the true God, Jehovah." She left for her village bitterly disappointed.

In 1927 an assembly of the Bible Students was held in Athens, and Jehovah opened the way for us to attend. We were thrilled and were strengthened spiritually

by assembling with scores of fellow believers. Returning to Samos, we distributed 5,000 copies of the tract entitled *A Testimony to the Rulers of the World* in the towns and villages of our island.

About that time Dimitris was fired from his teaching position, and because of the prejudice against us, it was almost impossible to find work. But since I could sew and Dimitris was a skilled painter, we were able to earn enough to make ends meet. In 1928 my husband, as well as the four other Christian brothers in Samos, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for preaching the good news. Being the only Bible Student free, I was able to supply food for them in prison.

Battling Severe Infirmities

At one point I fell sick with tubercular spondylitis, a then unknown chronic illness. I lost my appetite and ran a continuous high fever. Treatment involved being encased in a plaster body cast from my neck to my thighs. To cope financially, my husband sold a plot of land so that I could continue therapy. Distressed, I prayed to God every day for strength.

When visiting me, relatives continually fanned the flames of opposition. Mother said we were experiencing all these troubles because we had changed our religion. Unable to move, I soaked my pillow with tears as I beseeched our heavenly Father to give me patience and courage in order to endure.

On my bedside table, I kept my Bible and a supply of booklets and tracts for visitors. It was a blessing that the meetings of our small congregation were held in our home; I could regularly receive spiritual encouragement. We had to sell another plot of land to pay for medical treatment from a doctor in Athens.

Soon after, the traveling overseer visited us. He was very sorry to see me in this condition and Dimitris without work. Kindly he helped us make arrangements to live in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. We moved there in 1934, and Dimitris was able to obtain employment. There we also found wonderful Christian brothers and sisters who took care of me in my illness. Gradually, after five years of treatment, I had fully recovered.

However, in 1946, shortly after World War II, I again fell seriously ill, this time with tubercular peritonitis. I was in bed for five months with a high fever and severe pains. But, as before, I never stopped speaking about Jehovah to my visitors. In time, I regained my health.

Pioneering Despite Opposition

Unrelenting opposition was the lot of Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece in the postwar years. We were arrested scores of times while engaging in the house-to-house ministry. My husband served a total of almost a year in prison. When we set out for the ministry, we usually planned to spend the night under arrest at the police station. Yet Jehovah never abandoned us. He always provided the needed courage and strength to endure.

In the 1940's, I read in the *Informant* (now *Our Kingdom Ministry*) about the provision to vacation pioneer. I decided to try sharing in this feature of service that required devoting 75 hours a month to the ministry. As a result, my return visits and Bible studies increased—for a time I was conducting 17 weekly studies. I also developed a magazine route in the business area of Mytilene, where I regularly delivered about 300 copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to stores, offices, and banks.

When a traveling overseer served our congregation in 1964, he said: "Sister Penelope, I saw from your Publisher's Record Card what wonderful results you are having in your ministry. Why don't you fill out an application to regular pioneer?" I will always be thankful for his encouragement; the full-time ministry has been my joy for over three decades.

A Rewarding Experience

In Mytilene there is a densely populated neighborhood called Langada, where Greek refugees lived. We avoided going from door to door there because of the fanatical opposition that we had met. However, when my husband was in prison, I had to pass through this area to visit him. One rainy day a woman invited me into her home to inquire why my husband was in prison. I explained that it was for preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and that he was suffering just as Christ had suffered.

In time, another woman arranged for me to stop at her home. When I arrived I found that she had invited a total of 12 women. I anticipated possible opposition, so I prayed to God to give me wisdom and courage to face whatever occurred. The women had many questions, and some raised objections, but I was able to provide Scriptural answers. When I stood up to leave, the lady of the house asked me to come again the next day. Happily, I accepted the invitation. When a companion and I arrived the following day, we found the women already waiting.

Thereafter our Scriptural discussions continued on a regular basis, and many Bible studies were started. A number of the women progressed in accurate knowledge, and so did their families. This group later

formed the nucleus of a new congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mytilene.

Jehovah Has Been Good to Me

Over the years Jehovah has rewarded the efforts of my husband and me to serve Him. The handful of Witnesses on Samos in the 1920's have grown to two congregations and one group with about 130 publishers. And on the island of Lesbos, there are four congregations and five groups that include some 430 Kingdom proclaimers. My husband actively proclaimed God's Kingdom until his death in 1977. What a privilege it is to see those whom we helped still remaining zealous in the ministry! Why, with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, they make up a great crowd worshiping Jehovah unitedly!

My course of Christian service, which stretches over 70 years now, has not been an easy one. Yet Jehovah has been an incomparable stronghold. Because of advanced age and deteriorating health, I am confined to bed and am very limited in the preaching that I can do. But, as did the psalmist, I can say to Jehovah: "You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I will trust."—Psalm 91:2.

(Sister Makris died while this article was being prepared. She had a heavenly hope.)

In Our Next Issue

The Truth About Jesus

What Is Paramount in Your Life?

**Do You Have a Godly View of
Alcoholic Beverages?**

“REMEMBER THE DAYS GONE BY”

WHY?

“REMEMBER the days gone by.” This admonition by the apostle Paul, written about 61 C.E., was directed to the Hebrew Christians in Judea. (Hebrews 10:32, *The New English Bible*) What prompted this remark? Why was there a need for those first-century worshipers of Jehovah not to forget the past? Can we benefit by heeding a similar reminder today?

Over the centuries, Bible writers have repeatedly warned against disregarding or being inattentive to the past. Former times and events were to be kept in mind and considered. Even Jehovah said: “Remember the first things of a long time ago, that I am the Divine One and there is no other God, nor anyone like me.” (Isaiah 46:9) Let us examine three powerful reasons for heeding this admonition.

Motivation and Encouragement

First, it can be a great source of motivation and encouragement. When Paul penned his letter to the Hebrew congregation, he was writing to fellow Christians who daily had their faith put to the test because of opposition from the Jews. In recognition of their need to build up endurance, Paul said: “Keep on remembering the former days in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great contest under sufferings.” (Hebrews 10:32) Their calling to mind past acts of loyalty in spiritual warfare would serve to give them the need-

ed courage to finish the race. In like manner, the prophet Isaiah wrote: “Remember this, that you people may muster up courage.” (Isaiah 46:8) It was with a similar desirable effect in mind that Jesus Christ told the congregation in Ephesus: “Therefore remember from what you have fallen [the love you had at first], and repent and do the former deeds.”—Revelation 2:4, 5.

The exhortation to “remember the days of old, consider the years back from generation to generation” was a recurring element in the speeches Moses gave to Israel, as he called the nation to fearless loyalty to Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 32:7) Note his words, recorded at Deuteronomy 7:18: “You must not be afraid of them [the Canaanites]. You should by all means remember what Jehovah your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt.” The recalling to mind of Jehovah’s saving acts in behalf of his people was to be an inducement to their continued faithful adherence to the laws of God.—Deuteronomy 5:15; 15:15.

Sadly, the Israelites often yielded to the sin of forgetfulness. With what result? “Again and again they would put God to the test, and they pained even the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember his hand, the day that he redeemed them from the adversary.” (Psalm 78:41, 42) Eventually, their forgetfulness of Jehovah’s commands resulted in their being rejected by him.—Matthew 21:42, 43.

A fine example was set by the psalmist who wrote: "I shall remember the practices of Jah; for I will remember your marvelous doing of long ago. And I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself." (Psalm 77:11, 12) Such meditative calling to mind of past loyal service and Jehovah's loving acts will provide for us needed motivation, encouragement, and appreciation. Also, "remembering the former days" can serve to dispel tiredness and can spur us on to do all we can and to faithful endurance.

Learning From Past Mistakes

Second, not forgetting can be a means of learning from past errors and their consequences. With this in mind, Moses counseled the Israelites: "Remember: Do not forget how you have provoked Jehovah your God in the wilderness. From the day that you went out of the land of Egypt until your coming to this place you people have proved rebellious in your behavior with Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 9:7) The result of such disobedience on the part of the Israelites was, as Moses pointed out, that 'Jehovah their God made them walk forty years in the wilderness.' Why were they encouraged to remember this? It was in order to humble them and to serve as a correction of their rebellious ways so that they would "keep the commandments of Jehovah [their] God by walking in his ways and by fearing him." (Deuteronomy 8:2-6) They were to learn in the sense of not repeating their past mistakes.

Observed one writer: "A prudent person profits from personal experience, a wise one from the experience of others." While Moses called upon the people of Israel to benefit by considering their own former errors, the apostle Paul admonished others—the first-century Corinthian congregation and,

by extension, us—to absorb a lesson from the same historical record. He wrote: "Now these things went on befalling them [the Israelites] as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." (1 Corinthians 10:11) Jesus Christ had in mind yet another ancient Biblical event and the need to learn from it when he said: "Remember the wife of Lot." (Luke 17:32; Genesis 19:1-26) Wrote the English poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us!"

Modesty and Gratitude

Third, remembering can engender in us the God-pleasing qualities of modesty and gratitude. As we rejoice in the many aspects of our worldwide spiritual paradise, may we never forget that it rests on certain building blocks. These include loyalty, love, self-sacrifice, boldness in the face of adversity, endurance, long-suffering and faith—qualities shown by our Christian brothers and sisters who decades ago opened up the work in various lands. In concluding its report on the modern-day history of God's people in Mexico, the *1995 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* said: "For persons only recently associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, the trials confronted by those who shared in opening up the work in Mexico may come as a surprise. They are accustomed to a spiritual paradise where there is an abundance of spiritual food, where there are hundreds of thousands of God-fearing associates, and where service to God is carried out in a well-organized manner."

Those early trailblazers often worked alone or in small isolated groups. They faced loneliness, deprivation, and other severe tests of integrity as they persevered in proclaiming the Kingdom message. Although many of these servants of former



times have departed the earthly scene in death, how heartwarming it is to know that Jehovah remembers their faithful service! The apostle Paul confirmed this, when he wrote: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Hebrews 6:10) If Jehovah appreciatively remembers, should we not do likewise in a spirit of gratitude?

Those who are newly acquainted with the truth can acquire this historical perspective through the publication *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*.*

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

family or to a Christian congregation whose members include long-serving older brothers or sisters, we are urged in the spirit of Deuteronomy 32:7 to "remember the days of old, consider the years back from generation to generation; ask your father, and he can tell you; your old men, and they can say it to you."

Yes, recalling former acts of godly devotion can incite us to continue to endure joyfully in our Christian service. Too, history contains lessons that we need to learn. And meditating on our God-blessed spiritual paradise engenders the becoming qualities of modesty and gratitude. Truly, "remember the days gone by."

Who Will Be Evangelizers?



ra Mercury stated: "Prominent South Coast Catholics are not keen to adopt the Jehovah's Witness-type approach to their faith." One man said that evangelism is simply "not part of the Catholic psyche." Another reasoned: "It's good for the Church to promote itself, but not through doorknocking. Perhaps through schools or letterbox drops would be better." Even the dean of a local cathedral was not quite sure how to interpret the pope's remarks. "We would encourage people to live out the Gospel they know through their own lives," he said. "Whether that means doorknocking is another thing." The headline of the news article sums it up well: "Catholics won't heed Pope's call to preach."

Despite Christendom's failure to evangelize, more than five million of Jehovah's Witnesses are following Jesus' command to "go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19, 20; compare Acts 5:42.) Their door-to-door preaching is now carried out in more than 230 lands. The message they bring is a positive one, highlighting the Bible's wonderful promises for the future.

AT A meeting of the World Council of Churches some 40 years ago, members were urged to "break out in a spirit of evangelism" and to teach their flocks to "go about evangelizing." Five years later John A. O'Brien, a Catholic clergyman, wrote about the need to bring in new disciples "by going to them" and not simply "by sitting in our homes." And in January 1994, Pope John Paul II said that it is "not the time to be ashamed of the Gospel, it's time to preach it from the rooftops."

Apparently these intermittent calls for evangelizers have fallen on deaf ears. An article in the Australian newspaper *Illawarra*