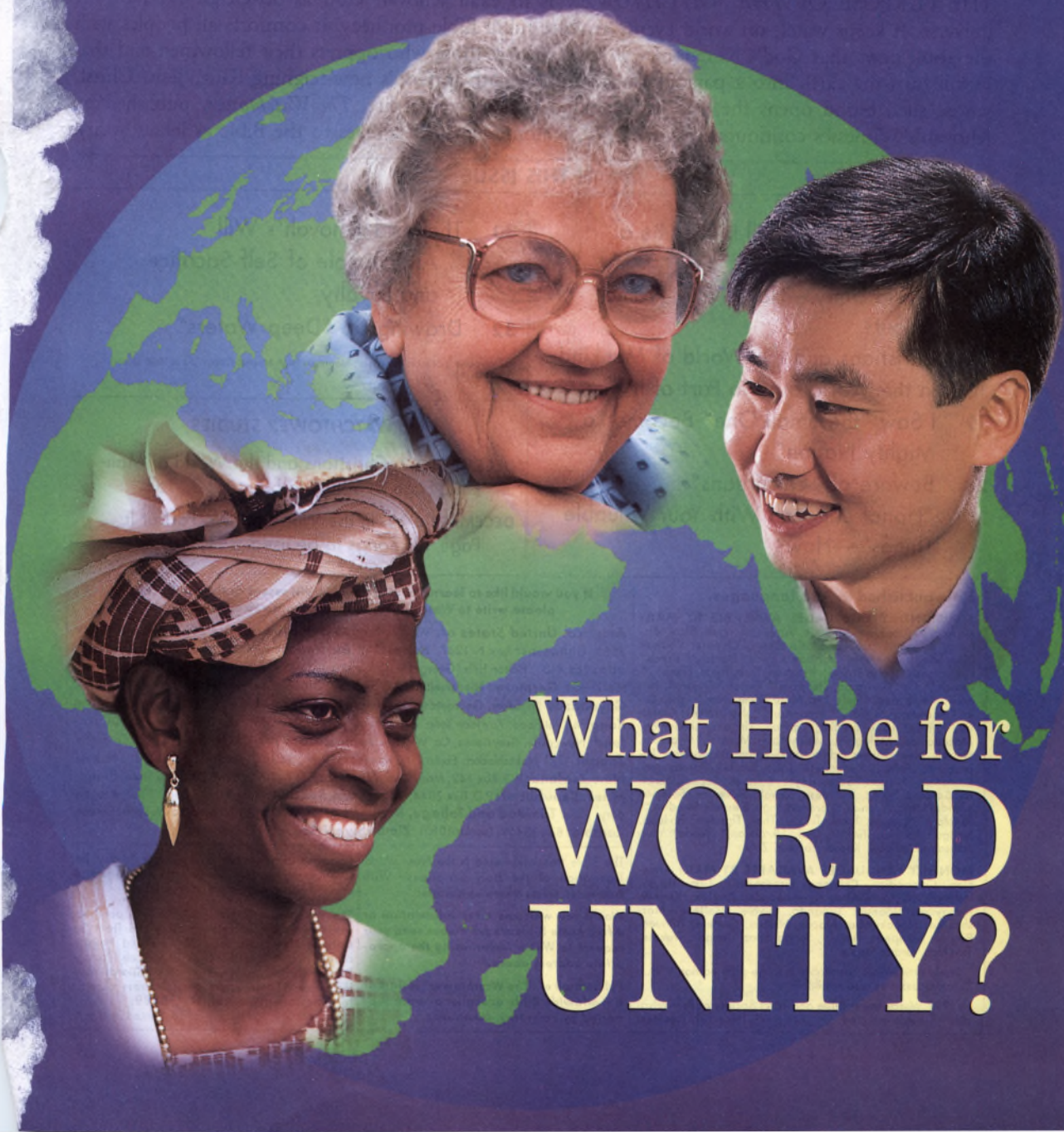


NOVEMBER 1, 1997

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



What Hope for
**WORLD
UNITY?**

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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WORLD UNITY

Will It Ever Be a Reality?

"IF WE should succeed over the next few generations in transforming the world of independent states in which we live into some sort of genuine international community, . . . then we shall effectively have abolished the ancient institution of warfare as well . . . If we should fail, however, there probably will be . . . no civilization." So says military historian Gwynne Dyer in his book entitled *War*.

History's pages, says Dyer, are littered with accounts of nations and other powerful groups who resorted to war to settle their differences. Their disunity devastated the lives of millions of victims. King Solomon's description of how this affected people in his day is still apt today. He wrote: "I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter." —Ecclesiastes 4:1.

Nowadays, as the above historian points out, besides compassion for "the tears of those being oppressed," there is an added reason for finding some way to transform the world of independent states into some sort of genuine international community: The very survival of civilization is at stake!

Modern warfare promises to destroy every nation that resorts to it and will leave no victors.

World Unity in Sight?

What are the prospects for world unity? Can human society overcome the divisive forces that threaten earth's survival? Some think so. Defense editor of Britain's *Daily Telegraph*, John Keegan, writes: "Despite confusion and uncertainty, it seems just possible to glimpse the emerging outline of a world without war."

What gives him this optimistic outlook? Why do many seem hopeful despite mankind's long history of warfare and man's seeming inability to govern himself successfully? (Jeremiah 10:23) 'Mankind is



LIKE a run-down building that has been badly vandalized by uncaring tenants, the present world system is fit for only one thing—demolition and replacement. This is not just another cynical doom-

moving forward. History shows a pattern of continuing progress,' some at one time argued. Even today, many believe that somehow man's innate goodness will triumph over evil. Is that a realistic hope? Or is it simply a delusion that will lead to more disappointment? In his book *Shorter History of the World*, historian J. M. Roberts realistically wrote: "The world's future could hardly be said to look assured. Nor is any end to human suffering now in sight, or any ground for believing it should be."

Are there genuine reasons for believing that peoples and nations really will overcome their mutual distrust and divisive differences? Or is something more than human endeavors required? The next article will consider these questions.

WORLD UNITY

How Will It Come About?

and-gloom scenario. According to the Bible, it is the only realistic view. Why?

The foundations of the present world order are unsafe. The whole structure is riddled with termites and dry rot. The steel

frame is rusting. Supporting walls are weakened. The roof is sagging. The plumbing leaks. The power system is faulty and dangerous. The occupants fight incessantly and maliciously cause damage throughout the building. The whole property and its surroundings are vermin-infested and dangerous to life and limb.

“Dancing on the Edge of the Grave”

Because of incessant political conflicts, greed, aggression, and deep-rooted tribal and ethnic animosities, “the whole human race is,” as Gwynne Dyer put it, “dancing on the edge of the grave.” All over the world, determined minorities—pressure groups, freedom fighters, criminal gangs, international terrorists, and others—pursue their own selfish agendas and seem able to wreck any possibilities for peace in the world almost at will. Like disruptive tenants, they can make life miserable for everyone else.

According to many commentators, however, dissident groups or unruly individuals are not alone in preventing world unity. The biggest barrier is the nation-state itself. Independent nations, says writer on warfare S. B. Payne, Jr., exist in “a state of international anarchy.” They do whatever serves their national interests best, with little or no regard for others. As a result, throughout history “man has dominated man to his injury.”—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

True, some national governments have had a measure of success in fighting injustice and oppression within their territorial borders and, to some extent, on an international scale. They have established a measure of international unity from time to time. But even when some have united to act against an aggressor nation, the suspicion often lingers that they acted out of self-interest rather than genuine altruism. The reality is that human governments

have no comprehensive, lasting solution to world disunity. Gwynne Dyer points out: “The idea that all the nations of the world will band together to deter or punish aggression by some maverick country is fine in principle, but who defines the aggressor, and who pays the cost in money and lives that may be needed to make him stop?”

Of course, aggression by any one nation against another is only possible when the majority of its citizens do not oppose that aggression. History repeatedly shows that it is not simply in some “maverick country” that citizens have supported their leaders, right or wrong. In fact, the majority of earth’s tenants have done this. They have blindly followed “lies, demagoguery and propaganda,” as *Time* magazine put it, from a stream of political and religious leaders.

Nationalism has inflamed the passions of otherwise reasonable and compassionate people and has caused them to commit atrocious crimes against men, women, and children of another nationality. With reference to World War I, for example, historian J. M. Roberts comments: “One of the paradoxes of 1914 is that in every country huge numbers of people, of all parties, creeds and blood, seem, surprisingly, to have gone willingly and happily to war.” Have people learned their lesson since then? No! The beast of “blinkered nationalism,” as journalist Rod Usher called it, continues to wreck any chance of world unity.

Outside Forces at Work

There is, however, a greater barrier to world unity. The Bible reveals that outside forces are at work. These are identified as Satan the Devil and his henchmen, the demons. According to the Bible, Satan is “the god of this system of things

[who] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers," so that "the glorious good news about the Christ" makes no impression on them.—2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9.

This does not absolve individuals of responsibility for their own actions, of course. But it does explain why human governments can never establish a truly united world. As long as Satan the Devil continues to exist, he will influence men and women to cultivate what the Bible calls "the works of the flesh," including 'enmities, strife, contentions, and divisions.'—Galatians 5: 19-21.

World Government

What, then, is the solution? Some seven hundred years ago, the well-known Italian poet and philosopher Dante pointed to the answer. He argued that only world government could ensure the peace and unity of mankind. To many people the hope of any form of world government is simply a delusion, not something in which to place real confidence. "World government," concludes aforementioned author Payne, "is out of the question at this stage in history." Why? Because any successful world government would have to guarantee two things that seem to be totally beyond man's ability, namely that "a world government will put an end to war and that a world government will not be a global tyranny."

It is certain that no human government will ever measure up to this. God's Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ, however, can and will remove war. (Psalm 46:9, 10; Matthew 6:10) Indeed, it will remove all warmongers. The prophet Daniel indicates that at the end of God's appointed time for human rule of the earth, human rulership would "prove to be divided" like "iron mixed with moist clay." (Daniel 2:41-

43) This would result in political fragmentation and inevitable conflict. Yet, Daniel says that God's Kingdom "will crush and put an end to all these [nationalistic and disunited] kingdoms," or governments, replacing them with his long-awaited Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ.—Daniel 2:44.

There would be no point in creating a fine environment for people if the earth continued to be inhabited by predatory individuals who kept on making life miserable for others. However, "evildoers themselves will be cut off." (Psalm 37:1, 2, 9, 38; Proverbs 2:22) Hence, Christ will remove all who willfully reject God's standards or who lend support to disruptive worldly authorities. He will destroy all those who are defacing this planet. God promises "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:18.

This will not be some kind of global tyranny. Jesus Christ will act "in the cause of truth and humility and righteousness" when he separates the good from the bad. (Psalm 45:3, 4; Matthew 25:31-33) Neither is this simply negative and destructive, an abuse of power. No! It is not as if some lovely old building is going to be destroyed by some greedy property developer. It will be more like the destruction of a rotten slum building to make way for a delightful, clean environment.

But what about the outside forces that have caused such disunity in the past? Will they be free to infiltrate this new system so that its inhabitants will begin the destructive process all over again, fighting with their fellow occupants and making life miserable for everyone? Certainly not. This eviction and renovation is final and complete. "Distress will not rise up a second time."—Nahum 1:9.

The Bible likens ultimate destruction of Satan to the incineration of garbage. It says that "the Devil who was misleading [earth's inhabitants] was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur." (Revelation 20:10) What a powerful symbol! Imagine, destruction likened not simply to some small incinerator with only limited capacity but to a whole lake of fire, consuming and removing from existence everything that is evil and contaminated. No one, neither man nor demon, will be allowed to continue doing things that threaten universal order, that violate God's standards of right and wrong, or that cause pain to their fellowman. All wreckers of unity will be gone!—Psalm 21: 9-11; Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8.

**Government in the hands of Jesus Christ
will guarantee a united world**

A United People out of All Nations

Survivors of this great cleanup will constitute "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." (Revelation 7:9) National and tribal differences will not divide them. They will have learned to live together in peaceful harmony. (Isaiah 2:2-4) What is even more wonderful, these will be joined by past tenants of the planet who will be restored to occupancy of the cleansed earth through the wonderful provision of the resurrection.—John 5: 28, 29.

Would you like to live in such a world? Only those who adhere to God's requirements will do so, and his requirements are clearly set out in the Bible. (John 17:3; Acts 2:38-42) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you to learn what God requires so that you can hope to enjoy life forever in a truly united world.



CHRISTIANS AND THE WORLD OF MANKIND

"Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside."—COLOSSIANS 4:5.

IN A prayer to his heavenly Father, Jesus said of his followers: "The world has hated them, because they are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." Then he added: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:14, 15) Christians were not to be separated physically from the world—for example, by segregation in monasteries. Rather, Christ "sent them forth into the world" to be his witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth." (John 17:18; Acts 1:8) Still, he asked God to watch over them because Satan, "the ruler of this world," would incite hatred against them on account of Christ's name.—John 12:31; Matthew 24:9.

² In the Bible the word "world" (Greek, *ko'smos*) often designates unrighteous human society, which "is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Because Christians comply with Jehovah's standards and also heed the command to preach the good news of God's Kingdom to the world, sometimes a difficult relationship has existed between them and the world. (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:1, 13) However, *ko'smos* is also used in Scripture to refer to the human family in general. Speaking

of the world in this sense, Jesus said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life. For God sent forth his Son into the world, not for him to judge the world, but for the world to be saved through him." (John 3:16, 17; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 4:14) So, while hating the things that characterize Satan's wicked system, Jehovah showed his love for mankind by sending his Son to earth in order to save all who would "attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9; Proverbs 6:16-19) Jehovah's balanced attitude toward the world should guide his worshipers.

Jesus' Example

³ Shortly before his death, Jesus told Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) In harmony with these words, Jesus had earlier rejected Satan's offer to give him authority over the kingdoms of the world, and he had refused to allow the Jews to make him a king. (Luke 4:5-8; John 6:14, 15) Yet, Jesus showed great love for the world of mankind. An example of this was reported by the apostle Matthew: "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shep-

1. What did Jesus say with regard to his followers and the world?
2. (a) How does the Bible use the word "world"? (b) What balanced attitude does Jehovah show toward the world?

- 3, 4. (a) What position did Jesus adopt as to rulership? (b) How did Jesus view the world of mankind?

herd.” Out of love, he preached to the people in their towns and villages. He taught them and healed their infirmities. (Matthew 9:36) He was also sensitive to the physical needs of those who came to learn from him. We read: “Jesus called his disciples to him and said: ‘I feel pity for the crowd, because it is already three days that they have stayed with me and they have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away fasting. They may possibly give out on the road.’” (Matthew 15:32) What loving concern!

⁴ The Jews were strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans, but Jesus spoke at length to a Samaritan woman and spent two days giving a thorough witness in a Samaritan city. (John 4:5-42) Although God sent him to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Jesus on occasion responded to expressions of faith by other non-Jews. (Matthew 8:5-13; 15:21-28) Yes, Jesus demonstrated that it is possible to be “no part of the world” and at the same time show love for the world of mankind, for people. Do we similarly show compassion for people where we live, work, or do our shopping? Do we show concern for their well-being—not only for their spiritual needs but also for other needs if it is reasonably within our power to help? Jesus did, and by so doing, he opened up the way to teach people about the Kingdom. True, we cannot work literal miracles as Jesus did. But an act of kindness often does, so to speak, work miracles in breaking down prejudice.

Paul's Attitude Toward People “on the Outside”

⁵ In several of his letters, the apostle Paul refers to people “outside” or “on the

5, 6. How did the apostle Paul deal with Jews who were “on the outside”?

outside,” meaning non-Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 5:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:7) How did he deal with such ones? He ‘became all things to people of all sorts, that he might by all means save some.’ (1 Corinthians 9:20-22) When he arrived in a city, his pattern of preaching was first to go to the Jews who had settled there. What was his approach? Tactfully and respectfully he offered convincing Bible proofs that the Messiah had come, had died a sacrificial death, and had been resurrected.—Acts 13:5, 14-16, 43; 17:1-3, 10.

⁶ In this way Paul built on the Jews’ knowledge of the Law and the prophets so as to teach them about the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. And he succeeded in convincing some. (Acts 14:1; 17:4) Despite opposition by Jewish leaders, Paul showed warm feelings for fellow Jews when he wrote: “Brothers, the goodwill of my heart and my supplication to God for them [the Jews] are, indeed, for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge.”—Romans 10:1, 2.

Helping Non-Jewish Believers

⁷ Proselytes were non-Jews who had become circumcised practicers of Judaism. Evidently, there were proselyte Jews in Rome, Syrian Antioch, Ethiopia, and Antioch in Pisidia—indeed, throughout the Jewish Diaspora. (Acts 2:8-10; 6:5; 8:27; 13:14, 43; compare Matthew 23:15.) Unlike many Jewish rulers, proselytes likely were not haughty, and they could not proudly boast of descent from Abraham. (Matthew 3:9; John 8:33) Rather, they had abandoned

7. How did many proselytes respond to the good news that Paul preached?



By performing acts of kindness to their neighbors, Christians can often break down prejudice

pagan gods and had humbly turned to Jehovah, acquiring some knowledge of him and his laws. And they shared the Jewish hope of a coming Messiah. Having already shown a willingness to change in their search for truth, many of them were ready to make more changes and respond to the preaching of the apostle Paul. (Acts 13:42, 43) When a proselyte who had once worshiped pagan gods converted to Christianity, he was uniquely equipped to witness to other Gentiles who still worshiped those gods.

⁸ Apart from circumcised proselytes, other non-Jews were attracted to the Jewish religion. The first of these to become a Christian was Cornelius who, although not a proselyte, was “a devout man and one fearing God.” (Acts 10:2) In his commen-

8, 9. (a) Apart from proselytes, what other class of Gentiles was attracted to the Jewish religion? (b) How did many uncircumcised God-fearers respond to the good news?



tary on Acts, Professor F. F. Bruce wrote: “Such Gentiles are commonly called ‘God-fearers’; while this is not a technical term, it is a convenient one to use. Many Gentiles of those days, while not prepared to become full converts to Judaism (the requirement of circumcision being a special stumbling block for men), were attracted by the simple monotheism of Jewish synagogue worship and by the ethical standards of the Jewish way of life. Some of them attended synagogue and became tolerably conversant with the prayers and scripture lessons, which they heard read in the Greek version.”

⁹ The apostle Paul met up with many God-fearers when preaching in synagogues

in Asia Minor and Greece. In Pisidian Antioch he addressed those assembled in the synagogue as “men, Israelites and you others that fear God.” (Acts 13:16, 26) Luke writes that after Paul preached for three Sabbaths in the synagogue in Thessalonica, “some of them [the Jews] became believers [Christians] and associated themselves with Paul and Silas, and a great multitude of the Greeks who worshiped God and not a few of the principal women did so.” (Acts 17:4) Likely, some of the Greeks were uncircumcised God-fearers. There is evidence that many such Gentiles associated themselves with Jewish communities.

Preaching Among “Unbelievers”

¹⁰ In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the word “unbelievers” can refer to people in general outside the Christian congregation. Often it refers to pagans. (Romans 15:31; 1 Corinthians 14:22, 23; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 6:14) In Athens many unbelievers were educated in Greek philosophy with no background at all in the Scriptures. Did this discourage Paul from witnessing to them? No. He did, however, adapt his approach. He skillfully presented Biblical ideas without directly quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures, which were unknown to the Athenians. He adroitly showed a similarity between Bible truth and certain thoughts expressed by ancient Stoic poets. And he presented the concept of one true God for all mankind, a God who will judge in righteousness by means of a man who died and was resurrected. Thus Paul tactfully preached about Christ to the Athenians. The result? While the majority mocked him outright or were skeptical, “some men

10. How did Paul preach to the Gentiles who had no background in the Scriptures, and with what result?

joined themselves to him and became believers, among whom also were Dionysius, a judge of the court of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris, and others besides them.”—Acts 17:18, 21-34.

¹¹ In Corinth there was a sizable community of Jews, so Paul began his ministry there by preaching in the synagogue. But when the Jews turned out to be opposed, Paul went to the Gentile population. (Acts 18:1-6) And what a population! Corinth was a busy, cosmopolitan, commercial city, notorious throughout the Greco-Roman world for its loose living. Indeed, “to Corinthianize” meant to act immorally. Yet, it was after the Jews had rejected Paul’s preaching that Christ appeared to him and said: “Have no fear, but keep on speaking . . . , for I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9, 10) Sure enough, Paul established a congregation in Corinth, even though some of its members had previously led a “Corinthian” life-style.—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Trying to Save “All Sorts of Men” Today

¹² Today, as in the first century, “the undeserved kindness of God . . . brings salvation to all sorts of men.” (Titus 2:11) The territory for preaching the good news has expanded to cover all the continents and most of the islands of the sea. And, as in Paul’s day, “all sorts of men” are indeed encountered. For example, some of us preach in lands where the churches of Christendom have been established for

11. What kind of city was Corinth, and what was the result of Paul’s preaching activity there?

12, 13. (a) How is our territory today similar to that of Paul’s day? (b) What attitude do we show in territories where Christendom’s religions have long been established or where many are disillusioned with organized religion?

many centuries. Like the Jews of the first century, their members may be strongly bound by religious traditions. Still, we are happy to seek out those with a good heart condition and build on whatever knowledge of the Bible they have. We do not talk down to them or disdain them even if their religious leaders sometimes oppose and persecute us. Rather, we recognize that some among them may have “a zeal for God” even though lacking accurate knowledge. Like Jesus and Paul, we show genuine love for people, and we have an ardent desire that they be saved.—Romans 10:2.

¹³ While preaching, many of us meet individuals who are disillusioned with organized religion. They may, however, still be God-fearers, believing in God to some extent and trying to live good lives. In this twisted and increasingly godless generation, should we not rejoice to meet people who have some belief in God? And are we not eager to direct them to a form of worship that is not marked by hypocrisy and falsehood?—Philippians 2:15.

¹⁴ In his illustration of the dragnet, Jesus foretold that there would be a large territory for the preaching work. (Matthew 13:47-49) Explaining this illustration, *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1992, stated on page 20: “Over the centuries members of Christendom played a key role in translating, copying, and distributing God’s Word. Churches later formed or supported Bible societies, which rendered the Bible into the languages of remote lands. They also sent out medical missionaries and teachers, who made rice Christians. This gathered vast numbers of unsuitable fish, who did not have God’s approval. But at least it exposed millions of non-Christians to the Bible and to a form of Christianity, although corrupted.”

¹⁵ Proselytizing by Christendom has been especially effective in South America, Africa, and some islands of the sea. In our day, many meek ones have been located in these areas, and we can continue to do much good if we have a positive, loving attitude toward such humble people, even as Paul had toward Jewish proselytes. Among those who need our help are also the millions of people who might be termed “sympathizers” of Jehovah’s Witnesses. They are always pleased to see us when we visit them. Some have studied the Bible with us and have attended our meetings, particularly the annual Memorial of Christ’s death. Do not such ones represent a large field for preaching the good news of the Kingdom?

¹⁶ Further, what of those who come from cultures outside Christendom—whether we meet them in their homelands or they are immigrants to Western lands? And what of those many millions who have total-

16, 17. (a) What types of people do we approach with the good news? (b) How do we imitate Paul in preaching to various types of people?

By Way of Review

- ☐ Describe Jesus’ balanced attitude toward the world.
- ☐ How did the apostle Paul preach to Jews and proselytes?
- ☐ How did Paul approach God-fearers and unbelievers?
- ☐ How can we be “all things to people of all sorts” in our preaching activity?

ly turned their backs on religion, becoming atheistic or agnostic? Moreover, what of those who heed with almost religious fervor modern philosophy or the pop psychology that is published in the numerous self-help books found in bookstores? Should any of such people be shunned, considered beyond redemption? Not if we imitate the apostle Paul.

¹⁷ When preaching in Athens, Paul did not fall into the trap of debating philosophy with his listeners. He did, though, adapt his reasoning to the people he was dealing with, presenting Bible truths in a clear, logical way. Similarly, we do not have to become experts in the religions or philosophies of the people we preach to. However, we do adapt our approach to make our witnessing effective, thus becoming “all things

to people of all sorts.” (1 Corinthians 9: 22) Writing to Christians in Colossae, Paul stated: “Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside, buying out the opportune time for yourselves. Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know *how you ought to give an answer* to each one.”—Colossians 4:5, 6.

¹⁸ Like Jesus and the apostle Paul, let us show love to people of all sorts. Especially, let us go out of our way to share with others the good news of the Kingdom. On the other hand, never forget that Jesus said of his disciples: “They are no part of the world.” (John 17:16) What this means for us will be considered further in the following article.

18. What responsibility do we have, and what should we never forget?

IN THE WORLD BUT NO PART OF IT

“Because you are no part of the world, . . . the world hates you.”—JOHN 15:19.

ON HIS last night with his disciples, Jesus told them: “You are no part of the world.” Of what world was he speaking? Had he not said on an earlier occasion: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life”? (John 3:16) The disciples were clearly a part of that world because they

1. What relationship do Christians have with the world, yet how does the world view them?

were the first to exercise faith in Jesus for everlasting life. Why, then, did Jesus now say that his disciples were separate from the world? And why did he also say: “Because you are no part of the world, . . . on this account the world hates you”?—John 15:19.

² The answer is that the Bible uses the word “world” (Greek, *ko’smos*) in different

2, 3. (a) Of what “world” were Christians to be no part? (b) What does the Bible say about the “world” of which Christians are no part?

ways. As explained in the preceding article, sometimes in the Bible "the world" refers to mankind in general. This is the world that God loved and for which Jesus died. However, *The Oxford History of Christianity* states: "The 'world' is also a term in Christian usage for something alienated from God and hostile to him." How is this true? Catholic author Roland Minnerath, in his book *Les chrétiens et le monde* (Christians and the World), explains: "Taken in a derogatory sense, the *world* is thus seen as . . . the domain where powers hostile to God carry out their activity and that constitutes by its opposition to Christ's victorious rule an enemy empire under Satan's control." This "world" is the mass of humanity that is alienated from God. True Christians are no part of this world, and it hates them.

³ Toward the end of the first century, John had in mind this world when he wrote: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world." (1 John 2: 15, 16) He also wrote: "We know we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5: 19) Jesus himself called Satan "the ruler of this world."—John 12:31; 16:11.

The Growth of World Powers

⁴ The now existing world of mankind alienated from God began to develop shortly after the Flood of Noah's day, when many of Noah's descendants ceased worshiping Jehovah God. Prominent in the early days was Nimrod, a city builder and "a mighty
4. How did world powers come into existence?"

hunter in opposition to Jehovah." (Genesis 10:8-12) In those years much of this world was organized into small city-kingdoms, which from time to time formed coalitions and waged war on one another. (Genesis 14:1-9) Some city-kingdoms gained dominion over others to become regional powers. Some regional powers eventually grew to become great world powers.

⁵ Following the pattern of Nimrod, the rulers of the world powers did not worship Jehovah, a fact reflected in their cruel, violent deeds. These world powers are symbolized in Scripture by wild animals, and through the course of the centuries, the Bible identifies six of them that had a powerful impact on Jehovah's people. These were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. After Rome, a seventh world power was prophesied to arise. (Daniel 7:3-7; 8:3-7, 20, 21; Revelation 17:9, 10) This proved to be the Anglo-American World Power, consisting of the British Empire with its ally the United States, which eventually eclipsed Britain in power. The British Empire began to develop after the last vestige of the Roman Empire finally disappeared.*

⁶ The seven successive world powers are symbolized in the book of Revelation by the heads of a seven-headed wild beast that emerges from the sea of restless humanity. (Isaiah 17:12, 13; 57:20, 21; Revelation 13:1) Who gives this ruling beast its power? The Bible answers: "The dragon gave to the beast its power and its throne and great authority." (Revelation 13:2) The dragon is

* See the book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, chapter 35, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

5. 6. (a) What are the seven world powers of Bible history? (b) How are these world powers symbolized, and where does their power come from?

none other than Satan the Devil.—Luke 4: 5, 6; Revelation 12:9.

The Coming Rule of God's Kingdom

⁷ For nearly 2,000 years, Christians have prayed: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) Jehovah's Witnesses know that God's Kingdom alone can bring real peace on earth. Being close observers of Bible prophecy, they are convinced that this prayer will soon be answered and that the Kingdom will shortly take charge of earth's affairs. (Daniel 2: 44) Their adherence to this Kingdom makes them neutral in the affairs of the governments of the world.

⁸ Some nations claim to observe religious principles. Still, in practice they ignore the fact that Jehovah is the Universal Sovereign and that he has enthroned Jesus as heavenly King with authority over the earth. (Daniel 4:17; Revelation 11:15) A prophetic psalm states: "The kings of earth take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one [Jesus], saying: 'Let us tear their bands apart and cast their cords away from us!'" (Psalm 2:2, 3) Governments accept no divine "bands" or "cords" that would limit their exercise of national sovereignty. Hence, Jehovah says to Jesus, his chosen King: "Ask of me, that I may give nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession. You will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel you will dash them to pieces." (Psalm 2:8, 9) However, the world of man-

7. In what do Christians hope, and how does this affect their relationship to the governments of the world?

8. How do governments react to the rule of God's Kingdom, as foretold in Psalm 2?

kind for which Jesus died will not be completely 'broken.'—John 3:17.

Avoiding "the Mark" of the "Beast"

⁹ The Revelation received by the apostle John warned that the world of mankind that is alienated from God would make increasing demands shortly before its end, putting "under compulsion all persons, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they should give these a mark in their right hand or upon their forehead, and that nobody might be able to buy or sell except a person having the mark." (Revelation 13: 16, 17) What does this mean? A mark in the right hand is an appropriate symbol of active support. What of the mark on the forehead? *The Expositor's Greek Testament* states: "This highly figurative allusion is to the habit of marking soldiers and slaves with a conspicuous tattoo or brand . . . ; or, better still, to the religious custom of wearing a god's name as a talisman." Many humans by their actions and words symbolically wear this mark, identifying themselves as "slaves" or "soldiers" of the "beast." (Revelation 13:3, 4) As to their future, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says: "The enemies of God allow the [mark] of the beast, the mysterious number which contains his name, to be stamped on their forehead and one hand. This gives them great opportunities of economic and commercial advance, but brings them under the wrath of God and excludes them from the millennial kingdom, Rev. 13: 16; 14:9; 20:4."

¹⁰ It takes more and more courage and endurance to resist pressure to receive "the mark of the beast." (a) Of what are we warned in the book of Revelation? (b) What is symbolized by wearing 'the mark of the beast'? (c) What marks do God's servants accept?



mark.” (Revelation 14:9-12) Servants of God have such strength, however, and because of this, they are often hated and maligned. (John 15:18-20; 17:14, 15) Rather than bearing the mark of the beast, Isaiah said that they would symbolically write on their hand, “Belonging to Jehovah.” (Isaiah 44:5) Moreover, since they ‘sigh and groan’ over the detestable things done by apostate religion, they receive a symbolic mark on their forehead identifying them as being worthy to be spared when Jehovah’s judgments are executed.—Ezekiel 9:1-7.

¹¹ God permits human governments to rule until the time for Christ’s heavenly Kingdom to take over completely the rulership of this earth. This divine toleration of political states is referred to by Professor Oscar Cullmann in his book *The State in the New Testament*. He writes: “The complex notion of the ‘provisional’ character of

11. Who grants permission for human governments to rule until God’s Kingdom comes to take over rulership of the earth?



The Bible identifies human governments both as God’s servant and as a wild beast

the State is the reason why the attitude of the first Christians toward the State is not unitary, but rather *appears* to be contradictory. I emphasize, that it *appears* to be so. We need only mention Romans 13:1, ‘Let every man be subject to the powers that be . . .’, alongside Revelation 13: the State as the beast from the abyss.”

The “Beast” and “Caesar”

¹² It would be incorrect to conclude that all humans in governmental authority are Satan’s tools. Many have proved themselves people of principle, such as the proconsul Sergius Paulus who is described in the Bible as “an intelligent man.” (Acts 13:7) Some rulers have courageously defended the rights of minorities, being guided by their God-given conscience even if they did not know Jehovah and his purposes. (Romans 2:14, 15) Remember, the Bible uses the word “world” in two contrasting ways: the world of mankind, which God loves and which we should love, and the world of humanity alienated from Jehovah, of which Satan is the god and from which we must stand apart. (John 1:9, 10; 17:14; 2 Corin-

12. What balanced viewpoint do Jehovah’s Witnesses have of human governments?

thians 4:4; James 4:4) Thus, Jehovah's servants have a balanced attitude toward human rulership. We are neutral in political matters since we serve as ambassadors or envoys of God's Kingdom and our lives are dedicated to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20) On the other hand, we are in conscientious subjection toward those in authority.

¹³ This balanced approach reflects Jehovah God's own view. When world powers, or even tiny States, abuse their authority, oppress their people, or persecute those who worship God, they certainly merit the prophetic description of them as ferocious beasts. (Daniel 7:19-21; Revelation 11:7) However, when national governments serve God's purpose in maintaining law and order in justice, he considers them to be his "public servants." (Romans 13:6) Jehovah expects his people to respect human governments and be subject to them, but their subjection is not without limits. When men require of God's servants things that are forbidden by God's law or when they forbid things that God requires his servants to do, the latter follow the position adopted by the apostles, namely: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

¹⁴ Jesus said that his followers would have obligations both toward governments and toward God when he declared: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matthew 22:21) The apostle Paul wrote under inspiration: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities . . . But if you are doing what is bad, be in fear: for it is not without purpose that it bears the sword; for it is God's minister, an avenger to ex-

13. (a) How does Jehovah view human governments? (b) How far does Christian subjection to human governments extend?

14. How is Christian subjection to human governments explained by Jesus? by Paul?



Because of showing loving concern for others, Jehovah's Witnesses are an asset to their communities

press wrath upon the one practicing what is bad. There is therefore compelling reason for you people to be in subjection, not only on account of that wrath but also on account of your conscience. For that is why you are also paying taxes." (Romans 13:1, 4-6) From the first century C.E. until today, Christians have had to consider demands made by the State. They have needed to discern whether conformity to those demands would lead to compromise of their worship or whether such demands were legitimate and should be met conscientiously.

Conscientious Citizens

¹⁵ The political "superior authorities" are God's "minister" when they fulfill their

15. How do Jehovah's Witnesses conscientiously pay back to Caesar what they owe?

God-approved role, which includes authority “to inflict punishment on evildoers but to praise doers of good.” (1 Peter 2:13, 14) Jehovah’s servants conscientiously pay back to Caesar what he legitimately demands in the way of taxes, and they go as far as their Bible-trained conscience will allow them to go in being “obedient to governments and authorities as rulers, . . . ready for every good work.” (Titus 3:1) “Good work” includes helping others, such as when catastrophe strikes. Many have testified to the kindness shown by Jehovah’s Witnesses toward fellow humans in these situations. —Galatians 6:10.

¹⁶ Jehovah’s Witnesses love their fellow humans and feel that the best good work they can do for them is to help them to come to an accurate knowledge of God’s purpose to bring about righteous “new heavens and a new earth.” (2 Peter 3:13) By teaching and practicing the high moral principles of

16. What good works do Jehovah’s Witnesses conscientiously perform for governments and fellow humans?

Review Questions

- ☐ Of which “world” are Christians a part, but of which “world” can they be no part?
- ☐ What is symbolized by “the mark” of the “beast” on a person’s hand or forehead, and what marks do Jehovah’s faithful servants have?
- ☐ What balanced viewpoint do true Christians have toward human governments?
- ☐ What are some ways that Jehovah’s Witnesses contribute to the well-being of human society?

the Bible, they are an asset to human society, saving many from delinquency. Jehovah’s servants are law-abiding and respectful toward government ministers, officials, judges, and city authorities, rendering honor to ‘those who call for honor.’ (Romans 13:7) Witness parents gladly cooperate with their children’s schoolteachers and help their children to study well, so that later these will be able to earn a living and not be a burden on society. (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12) Within their congregations, the Witnesses oppose racial prejudice and class distinctions, and they attach great importance to strengthening family life. (Acts 10:34, 35; Colossians 3:18-21) Therefore, by their actions, they show that accusations of their being antifamily or unhelpful to the community are false. Thus, the words of the apostle Peter prove true: “So the will of God is, that by doing good you may muzzle the ignorant talk of the unreasonable men.” —1 Peter 2:15.

¹⁷ So while Christ’s genuine followers are “no part of the world,” they are still in the world of human society and must go on “walking in wisdom toward those on the outside.” (John 17:16; Colossians 4:5) As long as Jehovah allows the superior authorities to operate as his minister, we will show proper respect for them. (Romans 13:1-4) While remaining neutral as to politics, we pray respecting “kings and all those who are in high station,” particularly when these are called upon to make decisions that could affect freedom of worship. We will continue doing this “in order that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness,” so that ‘all sorts of men will be saved.’ —1 Timothy 2:1-4.

17. How can Christians go on “walking in wisdom toward those on the outside”?

I SAW "THE SMALL ONE" BECOME "A MIGHTY NATION"

AS TOLD BY WILLIAM DINGMAN

The year was 1936; the place, Salem, Oregon, U.S.A. I was attending a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. The question was asked: "Where's the great multitude?" (Revelation 7:9, *King James Version*)

I was the only new one, so they all pointed at me and said, "There he is!"

IN THE mid-1930's, there were relatively few among Jehovah's Witnesses who had the Bible hope of living forever on earth in Paradise. (Psalm 37:29; Luke 23:43) Things have changed dramatically since then. But let me tell about the events that led to my being at that meeting in Salem, Oregon.

My father was a subscriber to *The Golden Age*, an earlier name for the *Awake!* magazine. When I was a teenager, I enjoyed reading it, and I became convinced that it contained important Bible truth. So one day I sent in a coupon that appeared on the back of a *Golden Age*. It offered the reader 20 booklets, a book, and the name of the nearest congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Upon receiving the literature, I went from house to house and placed all the booklets as well as the book.

At the time no one had studied the Bible with me. In fact, I had never talked with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. But now, with the address of the nearest Kingdom Hall in

hand, I drove some 25 miles into Salem, Oregon, to attend a meeting. It was there, when I was still only 18 years old, that I was singled out as "the great multitude."

Although I had practically no preparation for the ministry, I began preaching with the Salem Congregation. I was encouraged to include three basic points in my witnessing. First, that Jehovah is God; second, that Jesus Christ is his appointed King; and third, that the Kingdom is the only hope for the world. I tried to share that message at every door.

After associating with Jehovah's Witnesses in Salem for two years, I was baptized on April 3, 1938. The friends in Salem were delighted to see several of us of "the great multitude" getting baptized. In February 1939, I became a pioneer, or full-time minister. In December of that year, I accepted an invitation to move to Arizona, where there was a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers.

Pioneering in Arizona

The work of Jehovah's Witnesses was new in Arizona, and there was a lot of misunderstanding regarding us, so when the United States entered World War II, we experienced much persecution. For example, while I was serving in Stafford, Arizona, in 1942, there was talk of mob action against us by a group of Mormons. My pioneer partners and I happened to live close to the house of a Mormon bishop who respected us and said: "If Mormon missionaries were as active as the Witnesses, then the Mormon Church would get somewhere." So in church he spoke up and said: "I hear there's talk of mob action against the Witness boys. Well, I live close to those boys, and if there's mob action, there's going to be a shotgun right across the fence. That shotgun will be used—but not against the Witnesses. It'll be used against the mobsters. So if you want mob action, you know what to expect." The mob never came.

During my three years in Arizona, we were arrested and put in jail several times. Once I was kept for 30 days. To combat the police harassment in our ministry, we formed what we called a flying squad. The Witness in charge told us: "Just as our name is, so we are. We start at five or six in the morning, leave a tract or booklet at every door, and then we fly." Our "flying squad" covered quite a bit of the state of Arizona. However, it was finally dissolved because that form of preaching did not allow us to provide help for those who were interested.

Gilead School and Special Service

In December 1942, I was among several pioneers in Arizona who received a letter of invitation to a new missionary school that was being established by Jehovah's Wit-

nesses. The school was initially called the Watchtower Bible College of Gilead. Later the name was changed to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. The campus was located nearly 3,000 miles away near the city of Ithaca in upstate New York.

After a brief visit to Oregon, in January 1943, several of us pioneers left the heat of the Arizona Desert in a Greyhound bus. Several days later we arrived at our destination and found the snow of an upstate New York winter. The school opened on February 1, 1943, when its president, Nathan H. Knorr, said in his inaugural address to the one hundred students: "It is NOT the purpose of this college to equip you to be ordained ministers. You are ministers already and have been active in the ministry for years. . . . The course of study at the college is for the exclusive purpose of preparing you to be more able ministers in the territories to which you go."

Since I had limited secular schooling, at first I felt out of place at Gilead. But the instructors were wonderful to me, and I came to enjoy my studies very much. Our class graduated after five months of intensive training. Afterward, a few of us were sent to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, where we received further training to prepare us to serve in the traveling work as circuit overseers. My first assignment was in North and South Carolina.

In those early days, the circuit overseer was almost constantly on the move. We would stay one day with a small congregation or two days if it was a large one. Most congregations at the time were small. So after spending a full day, and often being kept up to near midnight visiting and answering questions, I was up at about five the next morning to travel to the next con-

gregation. I served in the circuit work for about a year, and afterward I pioneered for a while in Tennessee and New York.

To Cuba and On to Puerto Rico

In May 1945, along with several others, I was sent to my first foreign missionary assignment, Cuba! The night that we arrived in Havana, Cuba's capital, we went out in the magazine work. We stayed in Havana until we were able to locate a home in Santa Clara. Our monthly allowance was just \$25 each for all necessities, including food and rent. We constructed beds and furniture out of materials that were available and used apple boxes for our chest of drawers.

The following year I was assigned to the circuit work. At the time all of Cuba was one circuit. Because the circuit overseer who preceded me had long legs and delighted in walking, the brothers and sisters literally had to run to keep up with him. Evidently they figured that I would be the same, so they had things all planned for my visit. They didn't all go out in the ministry the same day but divided into groups and took turns working with me. The first day one group took me to a distant territory; the next day another group took me to another such territory, and so on. I was exhausted at the end of the visit, but I had enjoyed it. I have fond memories of that congregation.

By 1950 we had over 7,000 Kingdom publishers in Cuba, about the same number as Mexico had. In July of that year, I attended the Theocracy's Increase international convention at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Afterward, I received a new missionary assignment, to Puerto Rico. Among the new missionaries from the 12th class of Gilead were Estelle and Thelma Weakley, who accompanied me on the flight to Puerto Rico.



With my wife, in the Dominican Republic

Eight years later Estelle and I were married in a simple ceremony in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, held on the platform during our circuit assembly's intermission. Both before and after our marriage, I served in the circuit work. During our more than ten years in Puerto Rico, Estelle and I saw great increases—from fewer than 500 publishers to more than 2,000. We were able to help many to the point of dedication and baptism, and we participated in establishing several new congregations.

In December 1960, Milton Henschel from the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, visited Puerto Rico and spoke to the missionaries.

He asked if some would make themselves available for a different assignment. Among those who volunteered were Estelle and I.

Our Home in Dominican Republic

Our new assignment was the Dominican Republic, and we set June 1, 1961, as our transfer date. On May 30 the Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo, was assassinated, and flights to the country were canceled. Flights, though, were soon resumed, and we were able to fly to the Dominican Republic on June 1 as planned.

The country was in a state of upheaval when we arrived, and there was quite a bit of military activity. A revolution was feared, and soldiers were searching everyone on the highway. We were stopped at several checkpoints, and at each one our luggage was searched. Everything was taken out of our suitcases, even the smallest items. That was our introduction to the Dominican Republic.

We stayed in the capital, Santo Domingo, for several weeks before going to our first assignment in La Romana. During Trujillo's dictatorship, the public had been told that Jehovah's Witnesses were Communists and were the worst kind of people. As a result, the Witnesses had been badly persecuted. Little by little, though, we were able to break down prejudice.

After working in La Romana for a short time, we once again began to serve in the circuit work. Then, in 1964, we were assigned as missionaries to the city of Santiago. The following year the Dominican Republic experienced a revolution, and once again the country was in a state of turmoil. During that conflict we were transferred to San Francisco de Macoris, a town known for its political activism. Nonetheless, we preached freely without interference. De-

spite the political unrest, we even formed a new congregation. Through the years that followed, we experienced further changes of assignment before being reassigned to our current home in Santiago.

We have certainly seen Jehovah's blessing on the work here in the Dominican Republic. When we arrived in 1961, there were about 600 Witnesses and 20 congregations. Now there are almost 20,000 publishers preaching the good news of God's Kingdom in more than 300 congregations. The prospects for further growth are tremendous, as evidenced by the attendance of 69,908 at the Memorial of Christ's death in 1996. That's about three and one half times the number of publishers!

Now a Mighty Nation

Even though the scene of the world continues to change, the Bible message that Jehovah's Witnesses preach remains the same. (1 Corinthians 7:31) Jehovah is still God, Christ is still King, and the Kingdom is more obviously than ever the only hope for the world.

At the same time, a marvelous transformation has occurred among Jehovah's people since I attended that meeting in Salem, Oregon, some 60 years ago. The great multitude, or great crowd, truly has become great, numbering over five million. It is just as Jehovah foretold of his people: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." —Isaiah 60:22.

After almost 60 years in the full-time ministry, I'm happy to have the joy of continuing to preach and teach in my missionary assignment. What a grand privilege to have a share in that work and to have seen "the small one" become "a mighty nation"!

Beware of “EPICUREANS”

“He is so nice! He lives by high moral standards.

He does not smoke, abuse drugs, or use bad language.

In fact, he is nicer than some who claim to be Christian!”

HAVE you heard some use that line of reasoning to justify inappropriate friendships that they cultivate? Does it hold up under Scriptural examination? An example from an early Christian congregation sheds light on this matter.

In the first century, the apostle Paul warned the Corinthian congregation: “Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.” Perhaps some Christians were keeping close company with individuals who were influenced by Greek philosophy, including that of the Epicureans. Who were the Epicureans? Why would they pose a spiritual threat to the Christians in Corinth? Are there people like them today, against whom we should be on guard? —1 Corinthians 15:33.

Who Were the Epicureans?

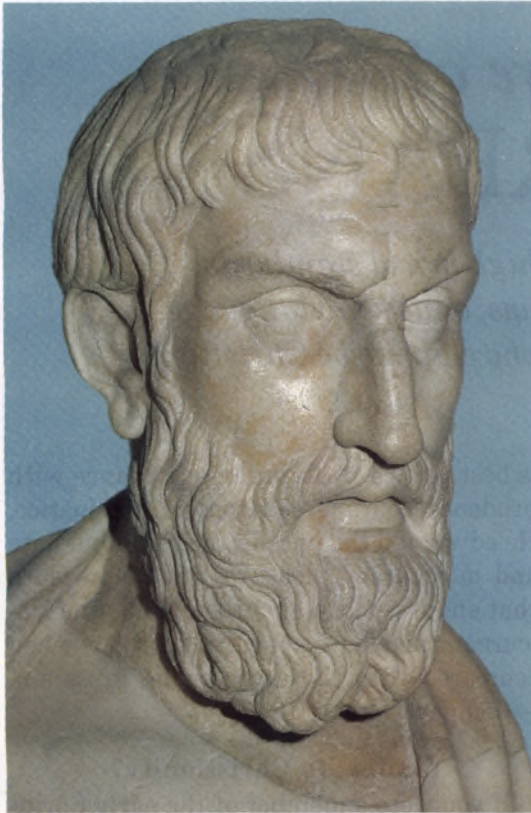
The Epicureans were followers of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, who lived from 341 to 270 B.C.E. He taught that pleasure was the sole or chief good in life. Does that mean that the Epicureans lived scandalously, without principles, resorting to degrading practices in a continuous search of a good time? Surprisingly, Epicurus did not teach his followers to live that way! Rather, he taught that pleasure

is best gained by living in accordance with prudence, courage, self-control, and justice. He advocated the pursuit, not of immediate and momentary pleasure, but of pleasure that endures throughout life. Thus the Epicureans may have appeared virtuous when compared with those practicing gross sin. —Compare Titus 1:12.

Similar to Christianity?

If you were a member of the early Corinthian congregation, would you have been impressed by the Epicureans? Some may have reasoned that the Epicureans’ apparently high ethics made them safe associates for Christians. Rationalizing further, the Corinthians might have noted seeming parallels between Epicurean standards and those of God’s Word.

For example, the Epicureans employed moderation in their pursuit of enjoyment. They valued pleasures of the mind over physical pleasures. What a person ate was not as important as his relationship with the person with whom he ate it. The Epicureans even refrained from political involvement and secret wrongdoing. How easy it could have been to assume: “They are a lot like us!”



Courtesy of The British Museum

Epicurus taught that the gods have no interest in mankind

However, were the Epicureans truly like the early Christians? Absolutely not. Those with properly trained powers of perception could detect significant differences. (Hebrews 5:14) Can you? Let us take a closer look at Epicurus' teachings.

The Dark Side of Epicureanism

To help people overcome the fear of deities and of death, Epicurus taught that the gods have no interest in mankind and do not intervene in human affairs. According to Epicurus, the gods did not create the universe, and life came into existence by acci-

dent. Did this not clearly conflict with the Bible's teaching that there is "one God," the Creator, and that he cares for his human creatures?—1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Epicurus also taught that there can be no life after death. This, of course, was contrary to the Bible's teaching of the resurrection. In fact, when the apostle Paul spoke at the Areopagus, likely the Epicureans were among those who took issue with Paul over the doctrine of the resurrection.—Acts 17:18, 31, 32; 1 Corinthians 15:12-14.

It may be that the most dangerous element in Epicurus' philosophy was also the most subtle. His denial of an afterlife led him to the conclusion that man should live as happily as possible during his short time on earth. As we have seen, his idea was not necessarily to live sinfully but, rather, to savor the present, since now is all we have.

Thus, Epicurus discouraged secret wrongdoing to avoid fear of detection, a clear threat to present happiness. He encouraged moderation to avoid the consequences of overindulgence, another obstacle to present happiness. He also encouraged good relationships with others because their reciprocation paid off. Of course, avoiding secret wrongdoing, practicing moderation, and cultivating friendships are fine in themselves. So why was Epicurus' philosophy dangerous for a Christian? Because his counsel was based on his faithless outlook: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die."—1 Corinthians 15:32.

Granted, the Bible shows people how to live happily now. However, it counsels: "Keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view." (Jude 21) Yes, the Bible places greater emphasis on the eternal future, not the fleeting

present. For a Christian, serving God is the main interest, and he finds that when he puts God in first place, he is happy and fulfilled. In a similar way, Jesus, rather than becoming preoccupied with his own personal interests, spent his energies unselfishly serving Jehovah and helping people. He taught his disciples to do good to others, not in the hope of reciprocation, but out of genuine love for them. Clearly, the basic motivations of Epicureanism and Christianity are totally different.—Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:32-36; Galatians 5:14; Philippians 2:2-4.

A Subtle Hazard

Ironically, while the Epicureans placed such emphasis on being happy, theirs was a limited happiness at best. Lacking “the joy of Jehovah,” Epicurus called life a “bitter gift.” (Nehemiah 8:10) How happy the early Christians were by comparison! Jesus was not recommending an unhappy life of self-deprivation. In fact, following his course is the way to the greatest happiness.—Matthew 5:3-12.

If some members of the congregation in Corinth thought they could associate with those influenced by Epicurean thinking without jeopardizing their faith, they were mistaken. At the time of Paul’s writing his first letter to the Corinthians, some of them

had already lost faith in the resurrection.—1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

Epicureanism Today?

Although Epicureanism disappeared in the fourth century C.E., there are those today who adopt a similar now-is-all-we-have viewpoint. These people place little or no faith in God’s promise of life eternal. Yet, some of them have relatively high standards of conduct.

A Christian might be tempted to form a close relationship with such ones, perhaps reasoning that their decent qualities justify friendship. However, though not considering ourselves superior, we must bear in mind that *all* “bad associations”—including those whose influence is more subtle—“spoil useful habits.”

The now-is-all-we-have philosophy also crops up in some business seminars, self-help books, novels, movies, television programs, and music. While not directly promoting sinful conduct, could this faithless viewpoint influence us in subtle ways? For example, could we become so preoccupied with self-fulfillment that we lose sight of the issue of Jehovah’s sovereignty? Could we be sidetracked into ‘taking it easy,’ rather than “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord”? Or could we be misled into doubting the rightness and benefits of Jehovah’s standards? We need to be on guard both against exposure to outright immorality, violence, and spiritism and against those influenced by worldly viewpoints! —1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 2:8.

Therefore, let us cultivate association, primarily with those who are wholeheartedly following Jehovah’s guidance. (Isaiah 48:17) As a result, our useful habits will be strengthened. Our faith will be fortified. We will live happily not only now but in the future, with everlasting life in view.—Psalm 26:4, 5; Proverbs 13:20.

In Our Next Issue

Do You Yearn for a Just World?

Despite Trials, Cling to Your Faith!

The Mishnah and God’s Law to Moses

"Honor Jehovah With Your Valuable Things" —How?

"HONOR Jehovah with your valuable things and with the firstfruits of all your produce." Locked within these inspired words of wisdom, penned some 2,600 years ago, is the key to experiencing Jehovah's blessings in abundance, for the writer goes on to point out: "Then your stores of supply will be filled with plenty; and with new wine your own press vats will overflow."—Proverbs 3:9, 10.

But what does it mean to honor God? What are the valuable things with which we are to honor Jehovah? And how may we do this?

"Honor Jehovah"

In the Scriptures, the principal Hebrew word for honor, *ka-vohdh'*, literally means "heaviness." So to honor a person means to regard him or her as being weighty, impressive, or amounting to something. Another Hebrew word for honor, *yeqar'*, is also rendered "precious" and "precious things." Similarly, the Greek word *ti-me'*, translated "honor" in the Bible, conveys the sense of esteem, value, preciousness. Thus one honors another by showing that person deep respect and esteem.

Giving honor also has another aspect. Consider the account concerning the faithful Jew Mordecai, who on one occasion exposed a plot against the life of King Ahasuerus of ancient Persia. Later, when the king learned that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai for that deed, he asked his prime minister, Haman, how best to honor the one in whom the king had found delight. Haman thought that such honor would be for him, but how mistaken he was!

Anyway, Haman said that such a person should be clothed in "royal apparel" and ride "a horse upon which the king does ride." He concluded: "They must make him ride on the horse in the public square of the city, and they must call out before him, 'This is how it is done to the man in whose honor the king himself has taken a delight.'" (Esther 6:1-9) In this instance, giving honor to a person included exalting him publicly so that he would be highly esteemed by all the people.



Similarly, giving honor to Jehovah has two aspects: personally showing him high regard and exalting him publicly by sharing in and supporting the work of public proclamation of his name.

"Your Valuable Things"

—What Are They?

Our valuable things certainly include our life, our time, our talents, and our strength. What about our material possessions? Consider Jesus' words when he saw a needy widow drop two small coins of little value into a temple treasury chest. He said: "This widow, although poor, dropped in more than they all did. For all these [other contributors] dropped in gifts out of their surplus, but this woman out of her want dropped in all the means of living she had." (Luke 21:1-4) Jesus praised this widow for using her material assets in promoting Jehovah's worship.

Clearly, then, the valuable things mentioned by Solomon also include any material possessions that we may have. And the expression "the firstfruits of all your produce" carries with it the thought of giving the best of our valuable things to Jehovah.

How, though, can giving of material things honor God? Do not all things already belong to him? (Psalm 50:10; 95:3-5) "Everything is from you," acknowledged King David in a heartfelt prayer to Jehovah. And as to a large donation that he and his people made for the construction of the temple, David said: "Out of your own hand we have given to you." (1 Chronicles 29:14) So when offering gifts to Jehovah, we are merely returning what he, out of the goodness of his heart, has given us. (1 Corinthians 4:7) But, as noted earlier, honoring Jehovah includes exalting him in the eyes of others. And material gifts that are used for the advancement of true worship honor God. The Bible contains excellent examples of this way of honoring Jehovah.

Examples From the Past

Some 3,500 years ago, when the time came for Jehovah to provide the tabernacle in the wilderness as a place of worship for the Israelites, the need arose for a variety of precious items required by the divinely given design. Jehovah commanded Moses to 'let every willing-hearted one bring a contribution for Jehovah.' (Exodus 35:5) The account goes on to relate: "They came, everyone whose heart impelled him, and they brought, everyone whose spirit incited him, Jehovah's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments." (Exodus 35:21) Their voluntary offering, in fact, proved to be so much more than was needed for the work that the people had to be "restrained from bringing it in"!—Exodus 36:5, 6.

Consider another example. When the tabernacle had served its purpose and preparations were under way for the construction of the temple, David made a large personal contribution toward the temple that his son Solomon would build. He also issued a call to others to join in, and the people responded with gifts of valuable things for Jehovah. The silver and gold alone would be worth about 50 billion dollars at current values. "And the people gave way to rejoicing over their making voluntary offerings." —1 Chronicles 29:3-9; 2 Chronicles 5:1.

"Voluntary Offerings" in Our Day

How can we share in the joy of making voluntary offerings in our day? The most important work going on in the world at this time is that of Kingdom preaching and disciple making. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) And Jehovah has seen fit to entrust the earthly interests of the Kingdom to his Witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10.

It is obvious that money is required to finance the work Jehovah's Witnesses are doing today. Building and maintaining Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, branch offices, factories, and Bethel homes involves money. Publishing and

distributing Bibles and Bible-based publications in various languages also involve expenses. How are such organizational expenses met? By contributions that are strictly voluntary!

Most of the contributions are from individuals who—like the widow Jesus observed—have only moderate means. Not wanting to miss out on this aspect of honoring Jehovah, they contribute modest sums “according to their actual ability,” and, at times, even “beyond their actual ability.”—2 Corinthians 8:3, 4.

“Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver,” said the apostle Paul to the Christians in Corinth. (2 Corinthians

9:7) Cheerful giving calls for good planning. Paul told the Corinthians: “Every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering, so that when I arrive collections will not take place then.” (1 Corinthians 16:2) Similarly, in a private and voluntary way, those wishing to make donations to further the Kingdom work today can set aside some of their income for that purpose.

Jehovah Blesses Those Who Honor Him

While material prosperity in itself does not lead to spiritual prosperity, generously using our valuable things—our time, our strength, and our

WAYS IN WHICH SOME VOLUNTEER TO GIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled: “Contributions for the Society’s Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14.” Each month congregations forward these amounts either to the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, or to the local branch office.

Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to the Treasurer’s Office, **Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483**, or to the Society’s

office that serves your country. Jewelry or other valuables may be donated as well. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society under a special arrangement in which, should the donor have a personal need, the donation will be returned to him. For more information, please contact the Treasurer’s Office at the address noted above.

PLANNED GIVING

In addition to outright gifts of money and conditional donations of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

Insurance: The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance pol-

icy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed *in trust for* or made *payable on death* to the Watch Tower Society, in accord

material resources—to honor Jehovah brings rich blessings. This is so because God, to whom everything belongs, assures us: "The generous soul will itself be made fat, and the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."—Proverbs 11:25.

Following King David's death, his son Solomon used the voluntary contributions his father had collected to build a glorious temple, as Jehovah had directed. And as long as Solomon remained faithful in his worship of God, "Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security . . . from Dan to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:25) Storehouses were filled, wine vats overflowed—as long as Israel 'honored Jehovah with their valuable things.'

with local bank requirements. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to the Watch Tower Society either as an outright gift or under an arrangement whereby income continues to be paid to the donor.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated to the Watch Tower Society either by making an outright gift or by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. One should contact the Society before deeding any real estate to the Society.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will, or the Society may be named as a beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages. A copy of the will or trust agreement should be sent to the Society.

As the term "planned giving" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the Society through

Later, through the prophet Malachi, Jehovah said: "'Test me out, please, in this respect,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.'" (Malachi 3:10) The spiritual prosperity that Jehovah's servants enjoy today is evidence that God has kept his promise.

Jehovah is certainly pleased when we do our part in advancing Kingdom interests. (Hebrews 13:15, 16) And he promises to sustain us if we 'keep on seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness.' (Matthew 6:33) With great rejoicing of the heart, may we 'honor Jehovah with our valuable things.'

some form of planned giving, a brochure entitled *Planned Giving to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide* has been prepared. The brochure was written in response to the many inquiries the Society has received regarding gifts, wills, and trusts. It also contains additional useful information on estate, financial, and tax planning, and is designed to help individuals in the United States desiring to benefit Kingdom interests worldwide to select the most advantageous and efficient methods to do so in the light of their family and personal circumstances. By reading the brochure and conferring with those working with the Planned Giving Desk, many have been able to assist the Society and at the same time maximize the tax benefits of doing so. The brochure is available upon request, whether in writing or by telephone.

Those interested in any of these planned giving arrangements should contact the Planned Giving Desk, **Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 100 Watchtower Drive, Patterson, New York 12563-9204, telephone (914) 878-7000**, or they should contact the Society's office that serves their country.

An Example of Self-Sacrifice and Loyalty

FOR a young farmer named Elisha, what began as a routine day of plowing turned out to be the most significant day in his life. While he was working in the field, Elisha received an unexpected visit from Elijah, Israel's foremost prophet. 'What could he want with me?' Elisha may have wondered. He did not have to wait long for an answer. Elijah threw his official garment upon Elisha, indicating that one day Elisha would be his successor. Elisha did not treat this calling lightly. At once, he left his field to become Elijah's attendant.—1 Kings 19:19-21.

Some six years later, it came time for Elijah to leave. The account of his departure has been called "one of the most impressive narratives" in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Elijah Prepares to Depart

Elijah desired to pay a final visit to Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan. This would involve many miles of walking, some of it over rough mountain areas. At each stage of the journey, Elijah encouraged Elisha to stay behind. But Elisha insisted on remaining with his master right to the end.—2 Kings 2:1, 2, 4, 6.

While in Bethel and in Jericho, "the sons of the prophets" approached Elisha.* "Do you really know that today Jehovah is taking your master from headship over you?" they asked him. "I too well know it," he replied. "Be silent."—2 Kings 2:3, 5.

Elijah and Elisha next set out for the Jordan

* The term "sons of the prophets" may denote a school of instruction for those called to this vocation or simply a co-operative association of prophets.

River. When they reached the Jordan, Elijah performed a miracle while some 50 sons of the prophets watched from a distance. "Elijah took his official garment and wrapped it up and struck the waters, and gradually they were divided this way and that way, so that both of them went across on the dry ground."—2 Kings 2:8.

Once they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha: "Ask what I should do for you before I am taken from you." Elisha asked for "two parts" of Elijah's spirit—that is, the double portion that would normally be due a firstborn son. Indeed, Elisha had honored Elijah just as a firstborn son would honor his father. Furthermore, he was anointed to become Elijah's successor as Jehovah's prophet in Israel. So his request was neither selfish nor inappropriate. Nevertheless, knowing that only Jehovah could grant this request, Elijah modestly replied: "You have asked a difficult thing." Then he added: "If you see me when taken from you, it will happen to you that way; but if you do not, it will not happen."—2 Kings 2:9, 10; Deuteronomy 21:17.

Elisha was no doubt more determined than ever to stick close to his master. Then, "a fiery war chariot and fiery horses" appeared. Right before Elisha's startled eyes, Elijah was swept up in a windstorm—miraculously transferred to another place.* Elisha picked up Elijah's official garment and walked back to the shore of the Jordan River. He struck the waters, saying: "Where is Jehovah the God of Elijah, even He?" The waters parted, giving clear evidence that Elisha had divine backing as Elijah's successor.—2 Kings 2:11-14.

* Elijah's message to King Jehoram of Judah was written some years later.—2 Chronicles 21:12-15.



Lessons for Us

When extended the invitation to special service with Elijah, Elisha immediately left his field to minister to Israel's foremost prophet. Evidently, some of his duties were menial, for he became known as the one who "poured out water upon the hands of Elijah."* (2 Kings 3:11) Nevertheless, Elisha viewed his work as a privilege, and he stuck loyally by Elijah's side.

Many of God's servants today display a similar spirit of self-sacrifice. Some have left their "fields," their livelihoods, to preach the good news in distant territories or to serve as members

* It was customary for a servant to pour water over the hands of his master for washing, particularly after meals. This practice was similar to the washing of feet, which was an act of hospitality, respect, and in certain relationships, humility. —Genesis 24:31, 32; John 13:5.

of a Bethel family. Others have traveled to foreign lands to work on the Society's construction projects. Many have accepted what might be called lowly tasks. Yet, no one who slaves for Jehovah is performing an insignificant service. Jehovah appreciates all who serve him willingly, and he will bless their spirit of self-sacrifice. —Mark 10:29, 30.

Elisha stuck by Elijah to the end. He refused to abandon the older prophet even when offered the opportunity. Undoubtedly, the close relationship he had cultivated with Elijah made such loyal love a pleasure. Today, God's servants strive to strengthen their relationship with God and draw closer to their fellow believers. A close bond of unity will be blessed, for the Bible says of Jehovah: "With someone loyal you will act in loyalty." —2 Samuel 22:26.

Drawing up, “deep waters”

A BIBLE proverb states: “Counsel in the heart of a man is as deep waters, but the man of discernment is one that will draw it up.” (Proverbs 20:5) In Bible times it was much harder to get water than it is in many lands today. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, she was hauling up water from Jacob’s fountain, a well that was some 75 feet deep!—John 4:5-15.

As Proverbs 20:5 indicates, the discernment needed to elicit the deep thoughts and feelings harbored in a person’s heart is much like the effort required to draw water from a well. This is true in most areas of life. For example,

likely you know individuals who over many years have built up a wealth of knowledge and experience. If these are not inclined to volunteer unsolicited advice, you may need to draw them out. By showing interest, asking questions, and tactfully probing, you will, as it were, be letting down your bucket into a deep well of wisdom.

The counsel of Proverbs 20:5 also holds true in the family. Often, wives are heard to say: “My husband doesn’t tell me how he feels!” A husband might say: “My wife just gives me the silent treatment!” In such situations, discernment is needed to draw up the



thoughts that are deep in a spouse’s heart. Tactful questions (Did you have a hard day? What happened? How can I help?) can often initiate heart-to-heart communication. Showing such discernment will strengthen the marriage bond, to the benefit of both husband and wife.