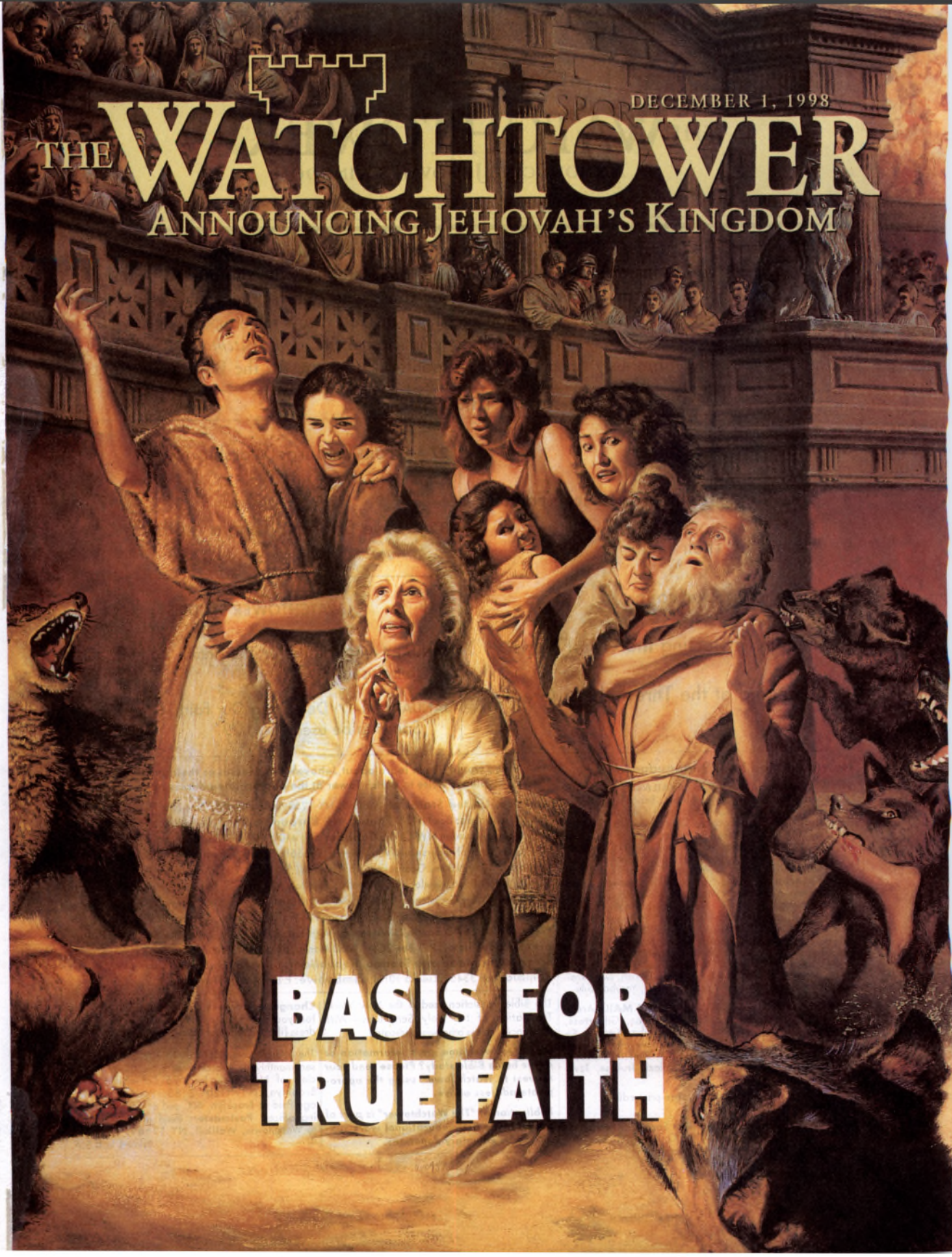
DECEMBER 1, 1998

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



BASIS FOR TRUE FAITH

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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Many Profess Faith

"JESUS is wonderful! He is just marvelous!" exclaimed a religious woman in Brazil. Indeed, there is no denying the power of Jesus' name. Throughout history, people have willingly suffered and died for him.

The apostles Peter and John preached 'upon the basis of Jesus' name' in Jerusalem. For doing that, they were arrested and flogged. Yet they "went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name."—Acts 5:28, 41.

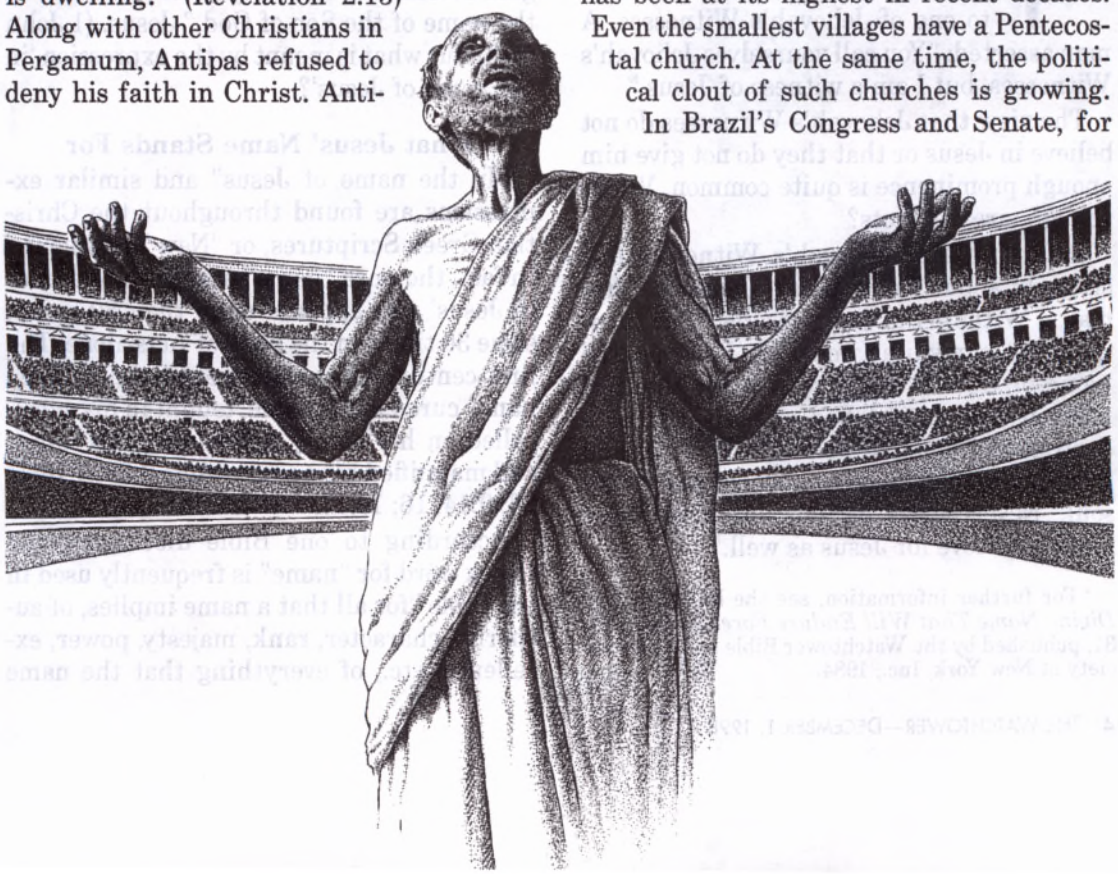
Antipas was another first-century Christian who esteemed Jesus' name. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, Jesus referred to him as "my witness, the faithful one, who was killed by your side, where Satan is dwelling." (Revelation 2:13) Along with other Christians in Pergamum, Antipas refused to deny his faith in Christ. Antipas held fast to Jesus' name even at the cost of his own life!

About half a century later, in 155 C.E., a professed Christian named Polycarp faced a similar test when he was ordered to revile Christ. His response was: "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?" Because of his refusal to deny Christ, Polycarp was burned at the stake.

The apostles, Antipas, and others were willing to seal their witness about Christ by death! What about people today?

Jesus' Name Today

Jesus' name continues to stir up strong emotions. In Latin America, the growth rate of churches that profess to believe in Jesus has been at its highest in recent decades. Even the smallest villages have a Pentecostal church. At the same time, the political clout of such churches is growing. In Brazil's Congress and Senate, for



example, 31 seats are occupied by members of these churches.

Jesus is also the focal point of a new religious movement in the United States. Its followers call themselves Promise Keepers. *Time* magazine reported in 1997 that attendance at their meetings grew from 4,200 in 1991 to 1.1 million in 1996. One of its hymns goes: "Oh victory in Jesus, my Savior forever."

However, not all sentiments inspired by Jesus' name have been noble. The banner of war has often been unfurled to the sound of his name. Jews have been massacred, heathens slaughtered, dissenters tortured, mutilated, and burned at the stake—all in the name of Jesus. And more recently, the commercializing of evangelism has become notorious. All of this is a perverse and repulsive misuse of Jesus' name and what it truly stands for!

Furthermore, it raises some pertinent questions: What is entailed in putting faith in Jesus' name? And what is the view of Jehovah's Witnesses on this subject? The next article will answer these questions.

The Name That Leads to True Faith

"YOU do not believe in Jesus and his redeeming blood," said a woman to one of Jehovah's Witnesses. A man asserted: "You call yourselves Jehovah's Witnesses, but I am a witness of Jesus."

The view that Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Jesus or that they do not give him enough prominence is quite common. What, though, are the facts?

It is true that Jehovah's Witnesses feel strongly about God's name, Jehovah.* Itamar, a Witness in Brazil, recalls: "The turning point in my life came when I learned the name of God. When I read it for the first time, it was as if I had awakened from a deep sleep. The name Jehovah shook me and moved me; it touched the deepest part of my soul." Nevertheless, he adds: "My heart overflows with love for Jesus as well."

Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses recognize that to gain everlasting life, they must put faith "in the name of the Son of God," Jesus. (1 John 5:13) But what is meant by the expression 'in the name of Jesus'?

What Jesus' Name Stands For

"In the name of Jesus" and similar expressions are found throughout the Christian Greek Scriptures, or "New Testament." In fact, the word "name" used with reference to Jesus' role appears more than 80 times, some 30 times in the book of Acts alone. The first-century Christians baptized in Jesus' name, cured in his name, taught in his name, called on his name, suffered for his name, and magnified his name.—Acts 2:38; 3:16; 5:28; 9:14, 16; 19:17.

According to one Bible dictionary, the Greek word for "name" is frequently used in the Bible "for all that a name implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the name

* For further information, see the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, pages 28-31, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1984.

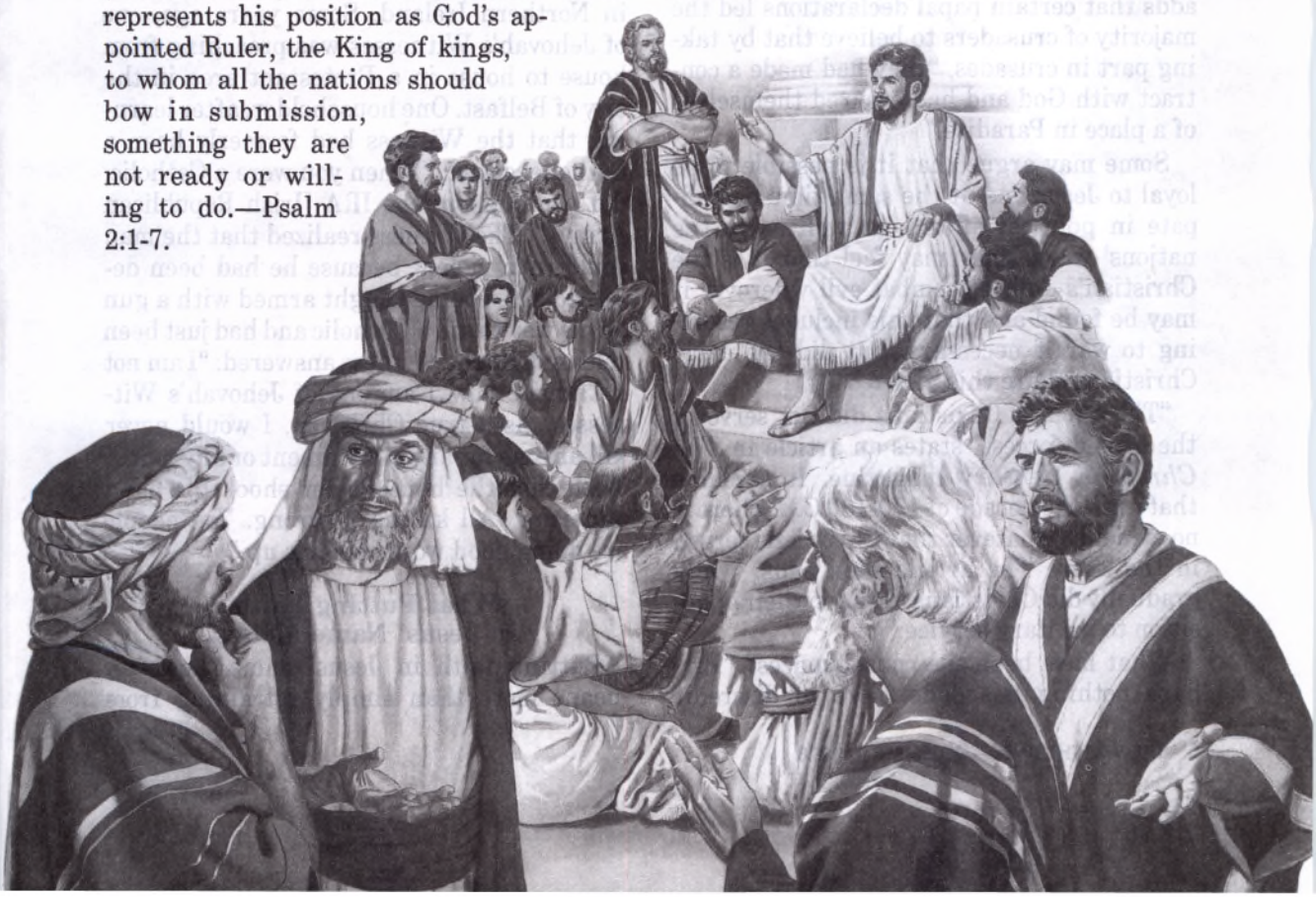
covers." Jesus' name, therefore, stands for the majestic and vast executive authority that Jehovah God has entrusted to him. Jesus himself stated: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth." (Matthew 28:18) After Peter and John had cured a lame man, the Jewish religious leaders demanded: "By what power or in whose name did you do this?" Peter then boldly expressed his faith in the authority and power represented by Jesus' name when he made known that it was "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, . . . by this one does this man stand here sound in front of you."—Acts 3:1-10; 4:5-10.

Faith in Jesus or in Caesar?

Professing such faith in Jesus' name, however, would not be easy. As Jesus had foretold, his disciples would be 'objects of hatred by all the nations on account of his name.' (Matthew 24:9) Why? Because Jesus' name represents his position as God's appointed Ruler, the King of kings, to whom all the nations should bow in submission, something they are not ready or willing to do.—Psalm 2:1-7.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day also did not want to bow in submission to Jesus. They stated: "We have no king but Caesar," thereby rejecting God's Son. (John 19:13-15) Instead, they put their faith in the name—the power and authority—of Caesar and his imperial government. They even decided that Jesus should die so that they could preserve their position and rank.—John 11:47-53.

In the centuries after Jesus' death, many of those who claimed to be Christians adopted an attitude similar to that of the Jewish leaders. These so-called Christians put their faith in the power and authority of the State and got involved in its conflicts. For instance, in the 11th century, after the church had organized idle warriors into the *militia Christi,* or Christian knights, "the responsibility for the conduct of just war was removed from the secular powers of Christendom and assumed, instead, by the church through the



In Jesus' name, millions have killed and been killed

agency of its Christian knights." (*The Oxford History of Christianity*) The account adds that certain papal declarations led the majority of crusaders to believe that by taking part in crusades, "they had made a contract with God and had assured themselves of a place in Paradise."

Some may argue that it is possible to be loyal to Jesus and at the same time participate in political affairs, as well as in the nations' wars. They may feel that it is the Christian's duty to combat evil wherever it may be found and that this includes resorting to war if necessary. But did the early Christians share this view?

"The earliest Christians did not serve in the armed forces," states an article in *The Christian Century* magazine. It explains that until the decade of 170-180 C.E., there is no evidence whatever that Christians served in the army. The article then adds: "Only gradually did Christians abandon their opposition to military service."

What have been the consequences? "Perhaps nothing has done more to discredit Christianity than its practice of taking a stand virtually indistinguishable from that of non-Christians on the practice of war," notes *The Christian Century* article. "That Christians on the one hand espouse the faith of the gentle Savior while on the other they warmly support religious or nationalistic wars has gone far toward damaging the faith."

Imitating the Early Christians Today

Is it possible for Christians today to imitate the sterling example of the early Christians? Jehovah's Witnesses in this century have shown that it is. Speaking about them, the editor of *Holocaust Educational Digest* noted: "No Jehovah's Witness will ever go to war.... If everyone in the world in position of power had been of this faith, [World War II] would never have happened."

The same can be said of more recent regional conflicts, such as the one that raged in Northern Ireland. Some years ago, one of Jehovah's Witnesses was preaching from house to house in a Protestant area in the city of Belfast. One householder, after learning that the Witness had formerly been a Catholic, asked: "When you were a Catholic, did you support the IRA [Irish Republican Army]?" The Witness realized that the man could turn violent because he had been detained after being caught armed with a gun on his way to kill a Catholic and had just been released. So the Witness answered: "I am not a Catholic now. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As a true Christian, I would never kill anyone for any government or any man." With that the householder shook his hand and said: "All killing is wrong. You people are doing good work. Keep it up."

What Putting Faith in Jesus' Name Means

Putting faith in Jesus' name, however, means more than simply refraining from

Jesus did not harbor racial prejudice. Do you?

war. It means obeying all of Christ's commandments. After all, Jesus stated: "You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you," and one of his commandments is that we "love one another." (John 15:14, 17) Love seeks to do good to others. It banishes all racial, religious, and social prejudice. Jesus demonstrated how.

The Jews in Jesus' day had strong feelings against the Samaritans. In contrast, Jesus talked to a Samaritan woman, and as a result, she and many others put faith in his name. (John 4:39) Jesus also stated that his disciples would be witnesses of him "both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) His life-giving message was not to be restricted to the Jews. Accordingly, Peter was instructed to visit the Roman centurion Cornelius. Although it was unlawful for a Jew to visit someone of another race, God showed Peter that he "should call no man defiled or unclean."—Acts 10:28.

In imitation of Jesus, Jehovah's Witnesses willingly help all people—whatever their racial, religious, or economic background—to learn of the salvation that comes through Jesus' name. Faith in Jesus' name moves them 'publicly to declare that Jesus is Lord.' (Romans 10:8, 9) We urge you to accept their help so that you too may learn to put faith in Jesus' name.

The name of Jesus should truly inspire feelings of honor, respect, and obedience. The apostle Paul stated: "In the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10, 11) Even though the majority of earth's inhabitants may not be willing to submit to Jesus' rule, the Bible shows that the time is near when all people will have to do so or perish. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) Now, therefore, is the time to put faith in Jesus' name by keeping all his commandments.

HATED FOR THEIR FAITH

"You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name."
—MATTHEW 10:22.

AN HONEST shopkeeper from the island of Crete is arrested dozens of times and is brought before Greek courts repeatedly. Altogether, he serves more than six years in prison, away from his wife and five children. In Japan a 17-year-old student is expelled from school, although he is well-behaved and at the top of his class of 42 students. In France a number of people are summarily discharged from their employment, even though they have excellent records of diligent and conscientious work. What is the common thread in these real-life experiences?

[2] All the individuals involved are Jehovah's Witnesses. Their "crime"? Basically, practicing their religious beliefs. In obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the shopkeeper had been sharing his faith with others. (Matthew 28:19, 20) He was convicted largely under an archaic Greek law that makes proselytism a criminal offense. The student was expelled because his Bible-trained conscience would not permit him to participate in compulsory kendo (Japanese swordsmanship) drills. (Isaiah 2:4) And those discharged from their employment in France were informed that the sole reason for their dismissal was that they identified themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses.

[3] Such hard experiences are typical of what Jehovah's Witnesses in some countries have recently endured. For most of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, great suffering at the hands of other humans is a relatively rare occurrence. Jehovah's people are known worldwide for their fine conduct—a reputation that gives no valid reason for anyone to want to harm them. (1 Peter 2:11, 12) They do not plot conspiracies or engage in hurtful behavior. (1 Peter 4:15) On the contrary, they try to live by the Bible's counsel to be in subjection first to God, then to secular governments. They pay the taxes required by law and endeavor to "be peaceable with all men." (Romans 12:18; 13:6, 7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) In their Bible educational work, they foster respect for law, family values, and morality. Many governments have praised them for being law-abiding citizens. (Romans 13:3) Yet, as the opening paragraph indicates, they have at times been targets of opposition—in some lands, even of governmental bans. Should that surprise us?

1, 2. Can you relate some real-life experiences endured by Jehovah's Witnesses for practicing their religious beliefs?
3. Why is great suffering at the hands of other humans a relatively rare occurrence for most of Jehovah's Witnesses?

The "Cost" of Discipleship

[4] Jesus Christ left no doubt about what being his disciple would involve. "A slave is not greater than his master," he told his followers. "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." Jesus was hated "without cause." (John 15:18-20, 25; Psalm 69:4; Luke 23:22) His disciples could expect the same—opposition without justifiable basis. On more than one occasion, he warned them: "You will be objects of hatred."—Matthew 10:22; 24:9.

4. According to Jesus, what could one expect on becoming one of his disciples?

The first-century Christians preached the good news with uncompromising zeal

[5] Consequently, Jesus urged prospective followers to "count the cost" of discipleship. (Luke 14:28, *Revised Standard Version*) Why? Not so as to decide whether they should become his followers or not, but so as to be determined to fulfill what is involved. We must be prepared to endure any trials or hardships that come with the privilege. (Luke 14:27) No one forces us to serve Jehovah as a follower of Christ. It is a voluntary decision; it is also an *informed* decision. We know beforehand that in addition to the blessings that we will experience from entering into a dedicated relationship with God, we will be "objects of hatred." So we are not puzzled when we meet with opposition. We have 'counted the cost,' and we are fully prepared to pay it.—1 Peter 4:12-14.

[6] Why would some, including certain governmental authorities, want to oppose true Christians? For the answer, it is helpful to examine two religious groups in the first century C.E. Both were hated—but for very different reasons.

Hateful and Hated

[7] By the first century C.E., Israel was under Roman rule, and Judaism, the Jewish religious system, was by and large in the oppressive grip of such leaders as the scribes and Pharisees. (Matthew 23:2-4) These fanatic leaders took the Mosaic Law's precepts regarding separateness from the nations and twisted them to require disdain for non-Jews. In the process, they produced a religion that engendered hatred for Gentiles and, in turn, elicited hatred from Gentiles.

[8] It was not difficult for the Jewish leaders to preach contempt for Gentiles, since the Jews at that time considered Gentiles to be vile creatures. The religious leaders taught that a Jewish woman must never be alone with Gentiles, for they "are suspected of lewdness." A Jewish man must not "remain alone with them since they are suspected of shedding blood." Milk drawn by a

5, 6. (a) For what reason did Jesus urge prospective followers to "count the cost"? (b) Why, then, should we not be puzzled when we meet with opposition?

7, 8. What teachings reflected contempt for Gentiles, and what attitude developed among the Jews as a result?

Gentile could not be used unless a Jew had been present to watch the process. Through the influence of their leaders, the Jews developed an aloofness and a rigid exclusiveness.—Compare John 4:9.

[9] Such teachings regarding non-Jews did little to promote good relations between Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles came to regard Jews as haters of all mankind. The Roman historian Tacitus (born about 56 C.E.) said of Jews that "they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies." Tacitus also claimed that Gentiles who became Jewish proselytes were taught to disown their country and hold as worthless their family and friends. For the most part, the Romans tolerated the Jews, who were sufficiently numerous to be formidable. But a Jewish revolt in 66 C.E. prompted harsh Roman reprisals, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

[10] How did that view of foreigners compare with the form of worship outlined in the Mosaic Law? The Law did promote separateness from the nations, but this was in order to protect the Israelites, particularly their pure worship. (Joshua 23:6-8) Even so, the Law required that foreigners be treated with justice and fairness and that they be received hospitably—as long as they did not flagrantly disobey Israel's laws. (Leviticus 24:22) By departing from the reasonable spirit clearly evident in the Law respecting foreigners, the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day produced a form of worship that engendered hate and was hated. In the end, the first-century Jewish nation lost Jehovah's favor.—Matthew 23:38.

[11] Is there a lesson in this for us? Yes, there is. A self-righteous, superior attitude that looks down upon those who do not share our religious beliefs does not accurately represent the pure worship of Jehovah, nor does it please him. Consider the faithful Christians in the first century. They did not hate non-Christians, nor did they rise in revolt against Rome. Nevertheless, they were "objects of hatred." Why? And by whom?

9. What was the effect of the teaching by Jewish leaders regarding non-Jews?

10, 11. (a) What treatment of foreigners did the Mosaic Law require? (b) What lesson do we learn from what happened to Judaism?

The Early Christians —Hated by Whom?

[12] It is clear from Jesus' teachings that he intended for his disciples to have a balanced view of non-Christians. On the one hand, he said that his followers would be separate from the world—that is, they would shun attitudes and conduct that were in conflict with Jehovah's righteous ways. They would remain neutral in matters of war and politics. (John 17:14, 16) On the other hand, far from preaching contempt for non-Christians, Jesus told his followers to 'love their enemies.' (Matthew 5:44) The apostle Paul urged Christians: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink." (Romans 12:20) He also told Christians to "work what is good toward all."—Galatians 6:10.

[13] Yet, Christ's disciples soon found themselves "objects of hatred" from three sources. First were *the Jewish religious leaders*. Little wonder that the Christians quickly attracted their attention! The Christians had high principles of morality and integrity, and they delivered a hope-inspiring message with fiery zeal. Thousands abandoned Judaism and embraced Christianity. (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7) To the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus' Jewish

12. How is it clear from the Scriptures that Jesus wants his followers to have a balanced view of non-Christians?

13. Why were the Jewish religious leaders so opposed to Christ's disciples?

'WORKING WHAT IS GOOD TOWARD ALL'

Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to heed the Bible's admonition to "work what is good toward all." (Galatians 6:10) In times of need, love of neighbor motivates them to help those who do not share their religious views. For example, during the calamitous situation in Rwanda in 1994, Witnesses from Europe volunteered to go to Africa to help with relief efforts. Well-organized camps and field hospitals were quickly set up to administer aid. Huge quantities of food, clothing, and blankets have been airfreighted. The number of refugees who benefited from this relief effort was more than triple the number of Witnesses in the area.

disciples were nothing more than apostates! (Compare Acts 13:45.) These angry leaders felt that Christianity nullified their traditions. Why, it even denied their view of Gentiles! From 36 C.E. on, Gentiles could become Christians, sharing the same faith and enjoying the same privileges as Jewish Christians. —Acts 10:34, 35.

[14] Second, Christians incurred the hatred of *pagan worshipers*. For example, in ancient Ephesus, the making of silver shrines of the goddess Artemis was a profitable business. But when Paul preached there, a considerable number of Ephesians responded, abandoning the worship of Artemis. With their trade threatened, the silversmiths rioted. (Acts 19:24-41) Something similar happened after Christianity spread into Bithynia (now northwest Turkey). Not long after the Christian Greek Scriptures were completed, the governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, reported that pagan temples were deserted and that sales of fodder for sacrificial animals declined greatly. Christians were blamed—and persecuted—since their worship did not allow for animal sacrifices and idols. (Hebrews 10:1-9; 1 John 5:21) Clearly, the spread of Christianity affected certain vested interests connected with pagan worship, and those who lost both trade and money resented it.

14, 15. (a) Why did Christians incur the hatred of pagan worshipers? Give an example. (b) The early Christians came to be "objects of hatred" by what third group?

[15] Third, Christians became "objects of hatred" by the *nationalistic Romans*. At first, the Christians were known to the Romans as a small and perhaps fanatic religious group. Yet, in time, merely professing to be a Christian became an offense punishable by death. Why would honest citizens leading a Christian life be seen as fit victims for persecution and death?

The Early Christians —Why Hated in the Roman World?

[16] Primarily, Christians were hated in the Roman world for practicing their religious beliefs. For example, they kept separate from the world. (John 15:19) So they did not hold political office, and they refused military service. As a result, they "were represented as men dead to the world, and useless for all affairs of life," says historian Augustus Neander. Being no part of the world also meant avoiding the wicked ways of the corrupt Roman world. "The little Christian communities were troubling the pleasure-mad pagan world with their piety and their decency," explains historian Will Durant. (1 Peter 4:3, 4) By persecuting and executing Christians, the Romans might have sought to silence the troublesome voice of conscience.

16. In what ways did Christians keep separate from the world, and why did this make them unpopular in the Roman world?

[17] The first-century Christians preached the good news of God's Kingdom with uncompromising zeal. (Matthew 24:14) By about 60 C.E., Paul could say that the good news had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) By the end of the first century, Jesus' followers had made disciples throughout the Roman Empire—in Asia, Europe, and Africa! Even some members of "the household of Caesar" became Christians.* (Philippians 4:22) This zealous preaching aroused resentment. Says Neander: "Christianity steadily made progress among people of every rank, and threatened to overthrow the religion of the state."

[18] Jesus' followers rendered Jehovah exclusive devotion. (Matthew 4:8-10) Perhaps this aspect of their worship, more than any other, put them at odds with Rome. The Romans were tolerant of other religions, as long as their adherents also shared in emperor worship. The early Christians simply could not participate in such worship. They viewed themselves as being accountable to an authority higher than that of the Roman State, namely, Jehovah God. (Acts 5:29) As a result, no matter how fine a citizen a Christian was in all other respects, he was considered an enemy of the State.

[19] There was yet another reason why faithful Christians came to be "objects of hatred" in the Roman world: Vicious slander about them easily gained belief, charges for which the Jewish religious leaders were in no small way responsible. (Acts 17:5-8) About 60 or 61 C.E., when Paul was in Rome awaiting trial by Emperor Nero, leading Jews said of Christians: "Truly as regards this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." (Acts 28:22) Nero could hardly have failed to hear slanderous stories about them. In 64 C.E., when he was blamed for the fire that ravaged Rome, Nero reportedly selected as scapegoats the already maligned Christians. This appears to have precipitated a wave of violent persecution bent on exterminating the Christians.

[20] The false charges against Christians were often a mixture of outright lies and a twisting of their beliefs. Because they were monotheistic and did not worship the emperor, they were labeled atheists. Since some non-Christian family members opposed their Christian relatives, Christians were accused of breaking up families. (Matthew 10:

* The expression "household of Caesar" does not necessarily refer to immediate family members of Nero, then reigning. Rather, it may apply to domestic servants and minor officials, who perhaps rendered such household services as cooking and cleaning in behalf of the imperial family and staff.

17. What shows that the preaching work of the first-century Christians was effective?

18. How did rendering Jehovah exclusive devotion put the Christians at odds with the Roman government?

19, 20. (a) Who were largely responsible for the vicious slander that was spread about faithful Christians? (b) What false charges were raised against Christians?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why did Jesus urge prospective followers to count the cost of discipleship?
- ☐ The prevailing view of non-Jews had what effect on Judaism, and what do we learn from this?
- ☐ Faithful early Christians faced opposition from what three sources?
- ☐ For what basic reasons were the early Christians "objects of hatred" by the Romans?

21) They were branded cannibals, which accusation, say some sources, was based on a distortion of Jesus' words uttered at the Lord's Evening Meal.—Matthew 26:26-28.

[21] Therefore, faithful Christians were "objects of hatred" by the Romans for two basic reasons: (1) their Bible-based beliefs and practices, and (2) the false accusations against them. Regardless of the reason, the opposers had but one objective—the suppression of Christianity. Of course, the real instigators of the persecution of Christians were superhuman opposers, unseen wicked spirit forces.—Ephesians 6:12.

21. For what two reasons were Christians "objects of hatred"?

[22] Like the early Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses in modern times have been "objects of hatred" in various lands. Yet they do not hate non-Witnesses; nor have they ever been a seedbed of insurrection against governments. On the contrary, they are known worldwide for practicing genuine love that crosses all social, racial, and ethnic barriers. Why, then, have they been persecuted? And how do they respond to opposition? These questions will be discussed in the next article.

22. (a) What example shows that Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to "work what is good toward all"? (See box on page 11.) (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

DEFENDING OUR FAITH

"Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you."
—1 PETER 3:15.

IN MOST countries, Jehovah's Witnesses are generally recognized as honest, clean-living people. Many view them as good neighbors who do not cause any trouble. Yet, ironically, these peace-loving Christians have suffered unjust persecution—in times of war and of peace. They are not surprised by such opposition. In fact, they *expect* it. After all, they know that faithful Christians in the first century C.E. were "objects of hatred," so why should those endeavoring to be true followers of Christ today expect to be treated any differently? (Matthew 10:22) Besides, the Bible says: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted."—2 Timothy 3:12.

1, 2. Why are Jehovah's Witnesses not surprised by opposition, but what do they desire?

[2] Jehovah's Witnesses do not *seek* persecution, nor do they enjoy the hardships —fines, imprisonments, or harsh treatment—it may bring. They desire to 'lead a calm and quiet life' so that they can preach the good news of God's Kingdom without hindrance. (1 Timothy 2:1, 2) They appreciate the religious freedom they have in most lands to carry on with their worship, and they conscientiously do what they can to "be peaceable with all men," including the

rulers of human governments. (Romans 12:18; 13:1-7) Why, then, are they "objects of hatred"?

[3] Basically, Jehovah's Witnesses have been unjustly hated for the same reasons that the early Christians were persecuted. First, Jehovah's Witnesses act upon their religious beliefs in ways that make them unpopular with some. For example, they zealously preach the good news of God's Kingdom, but people often misunderstand their zeal, viewing their preaching as "aggressive proselytizing." (Compare Acts 4:19, 20.) They also are neutral toward the politics and wars of the nations, and sometimes this has been wrongly taken to mean that the Witnesses are disloyal citizens.—Micah 4:3, 4.

[4] Second, Jehovah's Witnesses have been targets of false accusations—barefaced lies and twisted presentations of their beliefs. As a result, they have been the object of unjustified attack in some lands. Further, because they seek nonblood medical treatment that is in harmony with their desire to obey the Bible's command to 'abstain from blood,' they have wrongly been labeled "child murderers" and "a suicide cult." (Acts 15:29) But the fact is that Jehovah's Witnesses place a high value on life, and they seek to obtain the best available medical care for themselves and their children. The accusation that numerous children of Jehovah's Witnesses die each year as a result of refusing blood transfusions is totally unfounded. In addition, because Bible truth does not have the same effect on all family members, Witnesses have also been accused of breaking up families. Yet, those acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses know that they highly regard family life and try to follow the Biblical commands that a husband and wife love and respect each other and that children obey their parents whether they are believers or not.—Ephesians 5:21–6:3.

[5] In many instances, the principal instigators of persecution of Jehovah's servants have turned out to be religious opposers who have used their influence with political authorities and the media to try to suppress the activities of the Witnesses. How should we, Jehovah's Witnesses, respond to such opposition—whether it is a result of our beliefs and practices or because of false accusations?

"Let Your Reasonableness Become Known to All Men"

[6] To begin with, we need to have the right view—Jehovah's view—of those who do not share our religious convictions. Otherwise, we might unnecessarily invite hostility or reproach from others. "Let your reasonableness become known to all men," wrote the apostle Paul. (Philippians 4:5) Hence, the Bible encourages us to have a balanced view of those outside the Christian congregation.

[7] On the one hand, the Scriptures very clearly admonish us to "keep [ourselves] without spot from the world." (James 1:27; 4:4) The term "world" here, as in many places in the Bible, has reference to the mass of humanity apart from true Christians. We live in the midst of this society of people; we come in contact with them on the job, at school, in the neighborhood. (John 17:11, 15; 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10) Yet, we keep ourselves without spot from the world

3. What is one reason why Jehovah's Witnesses have been unjustly hated?

4, 5. (a) How have Jehovah's Witnesses been targets of false accusations? (b) Who have often been the principal instigators of persecution of Jehovah's servants?

6. Why is it important to have a balanced view of those outside the Christian congregation?

7. What is involved in keeping ourselves "without spot from the world"?

by shunning attitudes, speech, and conduct that conflict with God's righteous ways. It is also vital that we recognize the danger of intimate association with this world, particularly with those who show utter disregard for Jehovah's standards.—Proverbs 13:20.

[8] However, the counsel to remain without spot from the world does not give us any basis for categorically belittling those who are not Jehovah's Witnesses. (Proverbs 8:13) Recall the example of the Jewish religious leaders, discussed in the preceding article. The form of religion they developed did not win favor with Jehovah; nor did it contribute to good relations with non-Jews. (Matthew 21:43, 45) From their self-righteous perch, these fanatic men looked down on the Gentiles. We do not take such a narrow view, treating non-Witnesses with disdain. Like the apostle Paul, our wish is that all who hear the Bible's message of truth gain God's favor.—Acts 26:29; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

[9] A balanced, Scriptural view should affect the way we speak about non-Witnesses. Paul instructed Titus to remind the Christians on the island of Crete "to speak injuriously of no one, not to be belligerent, to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men." (Titus 3:2) Notice that Christians were to speak injuriously of "no one"—not even of the non-Christians on Crete, some of whom were known for their lying, gluttony, and laziness. (Titus 1:12) So it would be unscriptural for us to use disparaging terms when referring to ones who do not share our beliefs. A superior attitude will not attract others to Jehovah's worship. Rather, when we view and treat others in line with the reasonable principles of Jehovah's Word, we "adorn the teaching" of God.—Titus 2:10.

8. Why does the counsel to remain without spot from the world not give us any basis for looking down on others?

9. A balanced, Scriptural view should have what effect on the way we speak about those who do not share our beliefs?

When to Keep Quiet, When to Speak

[10] There is "a time to keep quiet and a time to speak," says Ecclesiastes 3:7. Here, then, is the challenge: deciding when to ignore opposers and when to speak up to defend our faith. We can learn much from the example of one who was always perfect in discretion—Jesus. (1 Peter 2:21) He knew when it was "a time to keep quiet." For instance, when the chief priests and the older men falsely accused him before Pilate, Jesus "made no answer." (Matthew 27:11-14) He did not want to say anything that might interfere with the carrying out of God's will for him. He chose, instead, to let his public record speak for itself. He knew that not even the truth would change their proud minds and hearts. So he ignored their charge, refusing to break his purposeful silence.—Isaiah 53:7.

[11] However, Jesus also knew when it was "a time to speak." On occasion, he contended outspokenly and openly with his critics, refuting their false accusations. For example, when the scribes and Pharisees tried to discredit him in front of a crowd by accusing him of expelling demons by means of Beelzebub, Jesus chose not to let the false charges stand. With devastating logic and a powerful illustration, he overturned the lie. (Mark 3:20-30; see also Matthew 15:1-11; 22:17-21; John 18:37) Similarly, when Jesus, after his betrayal and arrest, was dragged before the Sanhedrin, High Priest Caiaphas craftily demanded: "By the living God I put you under oath to tell us whether you are

10, 11. How did Jesus demonstrate that he knew when it was (a) "a time to keep quiet"? (b) "a time to speak"?

CORRECTING A MISREPRESENTATION

"In Yacuiba, Bolivia, a local evangelical group arranged for a TV station to show a film that was evidently produced by apostates. In view of the bad effects of that program, the elders decided to visit two TV stations and offer to pay to have them show the public the videos *Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name* and *The Bible—A Book of Fact and Prophecy*. After seeing the Society's videos, the owner of a radio station became indignant at the misrepresentations in the apostates' program and offered to make free spot announcements for Jehovah's Witnesses regarding their upcoming district convention. Attendance was unusually high, and many honesthearted ones began to ask sincere questions when the Witnesses visited them in the ministry."—*1997 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 61-2.

the Christ the Son of God!" This too was "a time to speak," for to remain silent could have been interpreted as a denial of his being the Christ. So Jesus answered: "I am." —Matthew 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61, 62.

12 Consider also the example of Paul and Barnabas. Acts 14:1, 2 states: "In Iconium they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews and spoke in such a manner that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks became believers. But the Jews that did not believe stirred up and wrongly influenced the souls of people of the nations against the brothers." *The New English Bible* reads: "But the unconverted Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the Christians." Not content with rejecting the message themselves, Jewish opposers embarked on a smear campaign, trying to prejudice the Gentile population against Christians.* How deep their hatred of Christianity must have been! (Compare Acts 10:28.) This, Paul and Barnabas felt, was "a time to speak," lest the new disciples become disheartened by public reproach. "Therefore they [Paul and Barnabas] spent considerable time speaking with boldness by the authority of Jehovah," who showed his approval by empowering them to perform miraculous signs. This resulted in some being "for the Jews but others for the apostles."—Acts 14:3, 4.

13 How, then, should we respond when we are reproached? That all depends upon the circumstances. Some situations call for us to apply the principle that there is "a time to keep quiet." Especially is this so when determined opposers try to draw us into pointless arguments. We must not forget that some people simply do not want to know the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12) Endeavoring to reason with those whose hearts are proudly fixed in unbelief is fruitless. More than that, were we to immerse ourselves in debating every false accuser who attacks us, we could become sidetracked from a far more important and rewarding activity—that of helping honesthearted ones who really want to learn Bible truth. So when confronted with antagonists who are bent on spreading lies about us, the inspired advice is: "Avoid them."—Romans 16:17, 18; Matthew 7:6.

* *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* explains that the Jewish opposers "made it their business to go purposely to such [Gentiles] as they had any acquaintance with, and said all that their wit or malice could invent, to beget in them not only a mean but an ill opinion of Christianity."

12. What were the circumstances that moved Paul and Barnabas to speak with boldness in Iconium?

13. In dealing with reproach, when is it usually "a time to keep quiet"?

[14] This, of course, does not mean that we do not defend our faith. After all, there is also "a time to speak." We are rightly concerned about sincere people who have been exposed to defamatory criticism of us. We are willing to give a clear explanation of our heartfelt convictions to others; indeed, we welcome the opportunity. Peter wrote: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) When genuinely interested individuals ask for proof for the beliefs we hold dear, when they inquire about the false charges raised by opposers, it is our responsibility to defend our faith, providing sound Biblical answers. In addition, our fine conduct can speak volumes. As open-minded observers note that we truly try to live in harmony with God's righteous standards, they can readily see that the charges made against us are false.—1 Peter 2:12-15.

On occasion, Jesus openly refuted the false accusations of his critics

What About Slanderous Publicity?

[15] At times, Jehovah's Witnesses have been the target of distorted information in the media. For example, on August 1, 1997, a Russian newspaper published a slanderous article claiming, among other things, that Witnesses categorically require members to 'reject their wives, husbands, and parents if these do not understand and do not share their faith.' Anyone who is truly acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses knows that the charge is false. The Bible indicates that Christians are to treat unbelieving family members with love and respect, and Witnesses endeavor to follow that direction. (1 Corinthians 7:12-16; 1 Peter 3:1-4) Even so, the article was printed, and many readers were thus misinformed. How can we defend our faith when we are falsely accused?

[16] Here again, there is "a time to keep quiet and a time to speak." *The Watchtower* once expressed it this way: "Whether we ignore false information in the media or defend the truth by appropriate means depends on the circumstances, the instigator

14. In what ways may we defend our faith before others?
15. What is one example of how Jehovah's Witnesses have been the target of distorted information in the media?
16, 17, and box on page 16. (a) What did *The Watchtower* once say about responding to false information in the media? (b) Under what circumstances might Jehovah's Witnesses respond to negative reports in the media?

of the criticism, and his goal." In some cases it may be best to ignore negative reports, thus not giving further publicity to the lies.

17 In other cases it may be "a time to speak." A responsible journalist or reporter may have been misinformed about Jehovah's Witnesses and may welcome truthful information about us. (See box "Correcting a Misrepresentation.") If negative reports in the media arouse prejudice that hinders our preaching work, representatives of the branch office of the Watch Tower Society may take the initiative to defend the truth by some suitable means.* For example, qualified elders might be assigned to present the facts, as in a TV program, where failure to appear might imply that Jehovah's Witnesses have no answer. Individual Witnesses wisely cooperate with the direction of the Watch Tower Society and its representatives in such matters.—Hebrews 13:17.

Legally Defending the Good News

18 Our authorization to preach the good news of God's Kingdom comes from heaven. Jesus, who commissioned us to do this work, has been given 'all authority in heaven and on earth.' (Matthew 28:18-20; Philippians 2:9-11) Hence, we do not need the permission of human governments to preach. Even so, we recognize that having religious freedom is conducive to spreading the Kingdom message. In lands where we have the freedom to carry on with our worship, we will use the legal system to protect it. Where we have been denied such freedom, we will, within the framework of the law, endeavor to obtain it. Our objective is, not social reform, but "the defending and legally establishing of the good news."*—Philippians 1:7.

19 As Jehovah's Witnesses, we acknowledge Jehovah as the Universal Sovereign. His law is supreme. We conscientiously obey human governments, thus 'paying back Caesar's things to Caesar.' But we will allow nothing to interfere with our fulfilling a far more important responsibility—'paying back God's things to God.' (Matthew 22:21) We fully understand that doing so will make us "objects of hatred" by the nations, but we accept this as part of the cost of discipleship. The legal record of Jehovah's Witnesses in the 20th century is a testimony to our determination to defend our faith. With Jehovah's help and backing, we will continue "without letup teaching and declaring the good news."—Acts 5:42.

* After the slanderous article was published in the Russian newspaper (mentioned in paragraph 15), Jehovah's Witnesses appealed to the Russian Federation Presidential Judicial Chamber for Media Disputes with a request to review the false charges made in the article. Recently the court issued a decision that castigated the newspaper for printing the libelous article.—See *Awake!*, November 22, 1998, pages 26-7.

18. (a) Why do we not need the permission of human governments to preach? (b) What course do we follow when denied permission to preach?

* See the article "Legally Protecting the Good News," on pages 19-22.

19. (a) What may be the result of our 'paying back God's things to God'? (b) What is it our determination to do?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why are Jehovah's Witnesses "objects of hatred"?
- ☐ How should we view those who do not share our religious beliefs?
- ☐ In dealing with opposers, what balanced example did Jesus set?
- ☐ When we are reproached, how can we apply the principle that there is "a time to keep quiet and a time to speak"?

Legally Protecting the Good News

The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration/J. G. Heck

AS LONG AS man has been constructing cities, he has been building walls. Especially in bygone days, these fortifications were a protection. From atop this barrier, defenders could fight to protect the walls from being breached or undermined by attackers. Not only did the inhabitants of the city find protection but often those dwelling in the surrounding towns also found refuge within the walls.—2 Samuel 11:20-24; Isaiah 25:12.

Similarly, Jehovah's Witnesses have built a wall—a *legal* wall—of protection. This wall has not been erected to isolate the Witnesses from the rest of society, for Jehovah's Witnesses are known for being gregarious, outgoing people. Rather, it fortifies legal guarantees of basic freedoms for all people. At the same time, it protects the Witnesses' legal rights so that they can freely carry out their worship. (Compare Matthew 5:14-16.) This wall safeguards their way of worship and their right to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. What is this wall, and how has it been built?

Building a Legal Wall of Protection

Although Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy religious freedom in most lands, in some countries they have been the object of unjustified attack. When their freedom to worship by assembling together or by preaching from house to house has been challenged, they have pursued matters legally. Legal cases involving the Witnesses have numbered in the thousands earth wide.* Not all have been won. But when lower courts have ruled against them, they have often appealed to higher courts. With what result?

Over the decades of the 20th century, legal victories in many lands have established reliable precedents that Jehovah's Witnesses have appealed to in subsequent cases. Like the bricks or stones making up a wall, these favorable decisions constitute a legal

* For a detailed discussion of the legal record of Jehovah's Witnesses, please see chapter 30 of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Minos Kokkinakis with his wife

wall of protection. From atop this wall of precedent, the Witnesses have continued to fight for the religious freedom to carry out their worship.

Consider, as an example, the case of *Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,* which was decided by the United States Supreme Court on May 3, 1943. The question raised in the case was this: Should Jehovah's Witnesses have to obtain a commercial peddling license for distributing their religious literature? Jehovah's Witnesses maintained that they should not be required to do so. Their preaching work is not—and never has been—commercial. Their objective is, not to make money, but to preach the good news. (Matthew 10:8; 2 Corinthians 2:17) In the *Murdock* decision, the Court agreed with the Witnesses, holding that any requirement of a payment of a license tax as a precondition to distributing religious literature is unconstitutional.* This decision set an important precedent, and the Witnesses have successfully appealed to it as authority in numerous cases since then. The *Murdock* decision has proved to be a sturdy brick in the legal wall of protection.

Such cases have done much to protect religious freedom for all people. Regarding the contribution made by the Witnesses to the defense of civil rights in the United States, the *University of Cincinnati Law Review* said: "Jehovah's Witnesses have had a profound impact on the evolution of constitutional law, particularly by expanding the parameters of the protection for speech and religion."

Strengthening the Wall

With each legal victory, the wall gets stronger. Consider a few of the decisions in the 1990's that have benefited Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as all other lovers of freedom, the world over.

Greece. On May 25, 1993, the European Court of Human Rights upheld the right of a Greek citizen to teach his religious beliefs to others. The case involved Minos Kokkinakis, then 84 years old. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, Kokkinakis had been arrested more than 60 times since 1938, had been made to appear 18 times before Greek courts, and had spent more

Kunihito Kobayashi

* In the *Murdock* decision, the Supreme Court reversed its own position in the case of *Jones v. City of Opelika.* In the *Jones* case, in 1942, the Supreme Court had upheld the decision of a lower court that had convicted Rosco Jones, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, of engaging in distribution of literature on the streets of Opelika, Alabama, without the payment of a license tax.

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The persecution brought upon Jehovah's Witnesses has resulted in their being haled before judges and government officials earth wide. (Luke 21:12, 13) Jehovah's Witnesses have spared no effort in legally defending their rights. Court victories in many lands have helped to protect the legal freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses, including their right to:

☐ preach from house to house unfettered by the restraints imposed on commercial salesmen —*Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, U.S. Supreme Court (1943); *Kokkinakis v. Greece*, European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) (1993).

☐ assemble freely for worship—*Manoussakis and Others v. Greece*, ECHR (1996).

☐ decide how they can conscientiously show respect for the national flag or emblem—*West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, U.S. Supreme Court (1943); *Supreme Court of the Philippines* (1993); *Supreme Court of India* (1986).

☐ refuse military service that violates their Christian conscience—*Georgiadis v. Greece*, ECHR (1997).

☐ choose treatments and medicines that do not violate their conscience—*Malette v. Shulman*, Ontario, Canada, Appeal Court (1990); *Watch Tower v. E.L.A.*, Superior Court, San Juan, Puerto Rico (1995); *Fosmire v. Nicoleau*, New York, U.S.A., Court of Appeals (1990).

☐ raise their children according to their Bible-based beliefs even when these beliefs are challenged in child-custody disputes—*St-Laurent v. Soucy*, Supreme Court of Canada (1997); *Hoffmann v. Austria*, ECHR (1993).

☐ have and to operate legal agencies that receive the same exemptions from taxation that are accorded the agencies used by other recognized religions—*People v. Haring*, New York, U.S.A., Court of Appeals (1960).

☐ receive for those appointed to some form of special full-time service the same favorable tax treatment accorded to full-time religious workers of other religions—Brazil's National Institute of Social Security, Brasília, (1996).

than six years in prison. He had been convicted largely under a 1930's Greek law that prohibits proselytism—a law that was responsible for nearly 20,000 arrests of Jehovah's Witnesses from 1938 to 1992. The European Court ruled that the Greek government had violated the religious freedom of Kokkinakis and awarded him damages in the amount of $14,400. In its decision, the Court ruled that Jehovah's Witnesses are indeed a "known religion."—See *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1993, pages 27-31.

Mexico. On July 16, 1992, a big step in the defense of religious freedom was taken in Mexico. On that date the Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship was enacted. Through this law, a religious group can receive legal status as a religious institution by obtaining the required registry. Previously, Jehovah's Witnesses, like other religions in the country, existed de facto but had no legal status. On April 13, 1993, the Witnesses applied for registration. Happily, on May 7, 1993, they became legally registered as La Torre del Vigía, A. R., and Los Testigos de Jehová en México, A. R., both of which are religious associations.—See *Awake!*, July 22, 1994, pages 12-14.

Brazil. In November 1990, Brazil's National Institute of Social Security (INSS) notified the branch office of the Watch Tower Society that volunteer ministers at Bethel (the name of branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses) would no longer be viewed as religious ministers and would therefore

come under Brazil's labor laws. The Witnesses appealed the decision. On June 7, 1996, the Judicial Advisory of the Office of the Attorney General in Brasília issued a decision upholding the position of ministers at Bethel as members of a legitimate religious order, not as secular employees.

Japan. On March 8, 1996, the Supreme Court of Japan handed down a decision on the issue of education and freedom of religion—to the benefit of everyone in Japan. The court unanimously ruled that Kobe Municipal Industrial Technical College violated the law by expelling Kunihito Kobayashi for his refusal to participate in martial arts training. This ruling marks the first time that the Supreme Court has handed down a decision based on religious freedom guaranteed by the Japan Constitution. Following his Bible-trained conscience, this young Witness felt that these drills were not in harmony with such Bible principles as the one found at Isaiah 2:4, which says: "They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." The Court's decision established a precedent for future cases.—See *The Watchtower,* November 1, 1996, pages 19-21.

On February 9, 1998, the Tokyo High Court handed down another landmark decision upholding the right of a Witness named Misae Takeda to refuse medical treatment that is not in harmony with the Bible's command to 'abstain from blood.' (Acts 15:28, 29) This case has been appealed to the Supreme Court, and it remains to be seen if the High Court's decision will be upheld.

Philippines. In a decision handed down on March 1, 1993, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses in a case involving Witness youths who were expelled from school because they respectfully declined to salute the flag.

Each favorable court ruling is like an added stone or brick strengthening the legal wall that protects the rights not only of Jehovah's Witnesses but of all people.

Safeguarding the Wall

Jehovah's Witnesses are legally registered in 153 lands, rightfully enjoying many freedoms, as do other recognized religions. After decades of persecution and ban in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Jehovah's Witnesses are now legally recognized in such countries as Albania, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, and Slovakia. However, in certain lands today, including in some Western European countries that have long-established judicial systems, the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses are being seriously challenged or denied. Opposers are actively trying to 'frame trouble by decree' against the Witnesses. (Psalm 94:20) How do these respond?*

Jehovah's Witnesses want to cooperate with all governments, but they also want to have the legal freedom to carry out their worship. It is their firm conviction that any laws or court decisions that would prohibit them from obeying God's commands—including the command to preach the good news—are invalid. (Mark 13:10) If amicable agreements cannot be reached, Jehovah's Witnesses will take the offensive in the legal arena, pursuing all appellate measures necessary to gain legal protection for their God-given right to carry out their worship. Jehovah's Witnesses have complete confidence in God's promise: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success."—Isaiah 54:17.

* See the articles "Hated for Their Faith" and "Defending Our Faith," on pages 8-18.

Standing at the Threshold of Greater Activity

"THERE was no competitive spirit. Everyone wanted everyone else to succeed," said Richard and Lusia, describing their fellow students of the 105th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. "We are all very different, but to us, each student is precious." A classmate, Lowell, agreed, adding: "Our differences have drawn us to one another."

The class, which graduated on September 12, 1998, was truly diverse. Some of the students had pioneered in areas where there is a great need for Kingdom publishers; others had faithfully served closer to home. A few, like Mats and Rose-Marie, had to work long and hard to improve their English before they came to school. Many of the students had been thinking about missionary service since childhood. One couple applied 12 times; how happy they were to receive an invitation to the 105th class!

The 20 weeks of intensive training passed by all too quickly. Before the students knew it, they had turned in their last written exercise, had delivered their last oral report, and graduation day had arrived.

The chairman of the program, Albert Schroeder, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, reminded the class that they were "standing at the threshold of greater activity in the field of Bible education," following more than 7,000 others who had preceded them to Gilead. He noted that during the summer, the students had enjoyed the unique opportunity of associating with longtime missionaries when these visited the world headquarters in conjunction with the international conventions.

Brother Schroeder then introduced Max Larson of the Bethel Operations Committee. He developed the theme "Education That Leads to Everlasting Life." Brother Larson quoted Proverbs 1:5, which states: "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction." Skill is required to be an effective missionary. Skillful men stand before kings. (Proverbs 22:29) After having been instructed for five months, the students were well equipped to represent the greatest Kings, Jehovah God and Christ Jesus.

David Olson of the Service Department spoke next on the subject "Help Make Jehovah's Heart Rejoice." He asked: "What can imperfect humans do to make God's heart rejoice?" The answer? They can serve him faithfully, loyally, and with joy. Jehovah wants his people to enjoy their service to him. When we do God's will with joy, we gladden his heart. (Proverbs 27:11) Brother Olson read a letter from a missionary couple who graduated from Gilead in the 104th class. Are they enjoying their new assignment? "We have about 140 publishers," they wrote regarding their congregation, "with an average meeting attendance of 250 to 300.

Class Statistics

Number of countries represented: 9
Number of countries assigned to: 17
Number of students: 48
Number of married couples: 24
Average age: 33
Average years in truth: 16
Average years in full-time ministry: 12

They Chose Full-Time Service

"When I was younger, I had no plans to pioneer," says Ben, a graduate of the 105th class. "I thought that only those with special abilities and ideal circumstances could pioneer," he adds. "But I did learn to love the field service. Then one day it occurred to me that being a pioneer simply means having a greater share in the ministry. It was then that I realized that I could pioneer."

"Full-time servants were always highly regarded in our home," relates Lusia. She recalls the wave of excitement that swept through her congregation each time the missionaries came for a visit. "When I was growing up," she says, "it was understood that full-time service would be in my plans."

Theodis' mother died when he was 15 years old. "At that time, the congregation was really there for me," he says, "so I asked myself, 'What can I do to show my appreciation?' " This led him to enter full-time service and now missionary work.

Field service is the best part. We each have four studies, and some are coming to the meetings already."

Lyman Swingle, of the Governing Body, spoke on the topic "A Time to Pause and Count Your Blessings." Gilead training had brought many blessings. It had helped the students increase in knowledge, grow in appreciation of Jehovah's organization, and cultivate vital qualities, such as humility. "It is a humbling experience to come here and spend time listening to instruction," Brother Swingle said, adding: "You go away from here much better equipped to magnify Jehovah."

"How Great Your Joy—So Why Worry?" was the title of a talk by Daniel Sydlik, also of the Governing Body. When problems arise, seek guidance from the Scriptures, he urged. Using selected verses from the 6th chapter of Matthew, Brother Sydlik illustrated how this can be done. Lack of faith can cause us to worry about mundane things, such as food and clothing. However, Jehovah knows what we need. (Matthew 6: 25, 30) Worrying will only add to the troubles that each day brings. (Matthew 6:34) On the other hand, some planning is necessary. (Compare Luke 14:28.) "What Jesus forbids is, not wise thought for the future, but unwise worrying about it," explained Brother Sydlik. "Action is one of the best cures for anxiety. When we get anxious, it is good for us to start talking about the truth."

Parting Counsel From the Instructors

Talks by three members of the Gilead faculty followed. Karl Adams spoke first, on the subject "What Will You Repay to Jehovah?" His talk was based on the 116th Psalm, which Jesus may have sung on the night before his death. (Matthew 26:30, footnote) What went through Jesus' mind as he sang the words: "What shall I repay to Jehovah for all his benefits to me"? (Psalm 116:12) He may have been reflecting on the perfect body that Jehovah had prepared for him. (Hebrews 10:5) The following day, he would offer that body in sacrifice, proving the depth of his love. The students of the 105th class had tasted Jehovah's goodness for the past five months. Now they would show their love for God by working hard in their missionary assignments.

Mark Noumair, the second Gilead instructor to speak, advised the students to "Continue to Do What Is Right." Joseph, after he was sold as a slave in Egypt, endured 13 years of unjust treatment. Did he allow the wrongs of others to paralyze him? No, he continued to do what was right. Then, at God's appointed time, Joseph was delivered from his trials. Suddenly, he went from living in a prison to living in a palace. (Genesis, chapters 37-50) The instructor asked his students: "If your expectations are not met in your missionary assignment, will you quit? Will you give in

105th 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) Sampson, M.; Brown, I.; Heggli, G.; Abuyen, E.; Desbois, M.; Pourthié, P. (2) Kassam, G.; Lindberg, R.; Dapuzzo, A.; Taylor, C.; LeFevre, K.; Walker, S. (3) Baker, L.; Pellas, M.; Woggon, E.; Böhne, C.; Asplund, J.; Haile, J. (4) Pourthié, T.; Whittaker, J.; Palmer, L.; Norton, S.; Gering, M.; Haile, W. (5) Walker, J.; Böhne, A.; Groenveld, C.; Washington, M.; Whittaker, D.; Abuyen, J. (6) Gering, W.; Washington, K.; Pellas, M.; Desbois, R.; Heggli, T.; Asplund, Å. (7) Woggon, B.; LeFevre, R.; Taylor, L.; Brown, T.; Groenveld, R.; Palmer, R. (8) Norton, P.; Sampson, T.; Baker, C.; Lindberg, M.; Kassam, M.; Dapuzzo, M.

to despair? Or will you endure, as did Joseph?"

Finally, the registrar of Gilead School, Wallace Liverance, moderated a lively discussion with class members on the theme "Advertise the King and the Kingdom." Some of the students related experiences they had while preaching from house to house, from store to store, and on the streets. Others told how they went about witnessing to people who speak another language. Still others showed how to preach to people of different religious backgrounds. All the graduates were eager to have a full share in the ministry in the missionary field.

Happy Longtime Missionaries

The following part, entitled "The Joyful Results That Come From Missionary Service," was presented by Robert Wallen and consisted of interviews with four brothers on the headquarters staff who had recently had upbuilding association with experienced missionaries. Those missionaries had been quick to admit that it was not easy for them to learn a new language, to adjust to another

culture, or to adapt to a different climate. Then there were the pangs of homesickness to cope with. At times, health problems came up. But through it all, the missionaries maintained a positive attitude, and their perseverance was blessed. Some had brought scores of people to a knowledge of Jehovah. Others had contributed in various ways to the overall increase of the Kingdom work in their lands.

The last to speak was Carey Barber, a member of the Governing Body. He reviewed highlights of the "God's Way of Life" convention program. "What effect did the convention program have on your relationship with Jehovah?" he asked his audience. The speaker contrasted the blessed results of following God's way with the disastrous end for those who follow the way of the world. Referring to Moses' transgression at Meribah, he warned: "Even after a person serves faithfully for many years, Jehovah does not take lightly even a minor infraction of His just laws." (Numbers 20:2-13) May all of God's servants everywhere keep a tight grip on their precious privileges of service!

The time had come for the students to receive their diplomas. Then, a class representative read a letter of appreciation for the training the students had received. After a concluding song and a heartfelt prayer, the graduation program was over. But, for the 105th class, this was only the beginning, for the new missionaries were "standing at the threshold of greater activity."

In Our Next Issue

Has Christmas Lost Christ?

This Is the Day of Salvation!

When Armed Robbers Strike

FROM EMPEROR WORSHIP TO TRUE WORSHIP

AS TOLD BY ISAMU SUGIURA

Even though it was obvious in 1945 that Japan was losing World War II, we were confident that kamikaze ("divine wind") would blow and defeat the enemy. Kamikaze refers to the storms in 1274 and 1281 that twice destroyed much of the invading Mongol armadas off the Japanese coast, thus forcing them to withdraw.

THEREFORE, when Emperor Hirohito, on August 15, 1945, announced to the nation that Japan had surrendered to the Allied Forces, the hopes of a hundred million people devoted to him were shattered. I was then a school lad, and my hopes were shattered too. 'If the emperor is not the living God, who is?' I wondered. 'Whom should I trust?'

Actually, though, Japan's defeat in World War II opened the way for me and thousands of other Japanese to learn about the true God, Jehovah. Before I tell of the changes I had to make, let me acquaint you with my religious upbringing.

Early Religious Influences

I was born in the city of Nagoya on June 16, 1932, the youngest of four boys. Father worked as a surveyor for the city. Mother was a devout believer in Tenrikyo, a Shinto sect, and my oldest brother had received religious training to be a Tenrikyo teacher. Mother and I were especially close, and she took me along to the meeting place for worship.

I was taught to bow my head and pray. The Tenrikyo religion taught belief in a creator called *Tenri O no Mikoto,* as well as in ten lesser deities. Its members practiced faith healing and stressed serving others and spreading their beliefs.

As a boy, I was very curious. I marveled at the moon and the countless stars in the night sky, and I wondered how far space extended beyond the sky. I found it fascinating to watch the growth of eggplants and cucumbers that I planted in a tiny plot in

the backyard. Observing nature strengthened my belief in God.

The War Years

My years of elementary schooling from 1939 to 1945 coincided with the period of World War II. Emperor worship, an important part of Shinto, was stressed in our school education. We were instructed in *shushin,* which involved moral training with nationalistic and militaristic overtones. Flag-raising ceremonies, singing the national anthem, studying the imperial education decrees, and paying homage to a photograph of the emperor were all part of our school routine.

We also went to the local Shinto shrine to petition God for the victory of the imperial army. Two of my fleshly brothers were serving in the military. Because of my nationalistic-religious indoctrination, I rejoiced at news of the successes of the Japanese army.

Nagoya was a center for the Japanese aircraft industry, so it was a principal target for massive U.S. Air Force strikes. During the daytime, B-29 Superfortress bombers flew over the city in formation at some 30,000 feet, dropping hundreds of tons of bombs over the factory districts. At night the searchlights spotted the bombers as low as 4,500 feet. Repeated air raids with incendiary bombs caused raging infernos in the housing areas. Nagoya alone had 54 air raids during the last nine months of the war, resulting in much suffering and more than 7,700 deaths.

By this time, bombardment from warships had begun against ten coastal cities, and people were talking about a possible landing by the U.S. forces near Tokyo. Women and young boys were trained to fight with bamboo spears to protect the country. Our slogan was *"Ichioku Sougyokusai,"* meaning "Death to the 100 million rather than surrender."

On August 7, 1945, a newspaper headline reported: "New Type of Bomb Dropped Over Hiroshima." Two days later, another one was dropped over Nagasaki. These were atom bombs, and we were later told that they had taken a combined toll of over 300,000 lives. Then, on August 15, at the end of a training march with wooden guns, we heard the emperor's speech in which he announced Japan's surrender. We had been convinced that we would win, but now we were devastated!

A New Hope Develops

As the occupation by American troops began, we gradually accepted the fact that the United States had won the war. Democracy was introduced to Japan, as well as a new constitution that guaranteed freedom of worship. Living conditions were harsh, food was scarce, and in 1946 my father died of malnutrition.

In the meantime, English began to be taught in the school that I was attending, and the NHK radio station began an English conversation program. For five years I listened daily to this popular program with textbook in hand. This made me dream of going to the United States someday. Because of disappointment with Shinto and Buddhist religions, I began to think that perhaps the truth about God might be found in Western religions.

Early in April, 1951, I met Grace Gregory, a Watch Tower Society missionary. She was standing in front of the Nagoya train station offering an English copy of *The Watchtower* and a booklet in Japanese on a Bible subject. Her humility in doing such work impressed me. I obtained both publications and readily accepted her offer of a Bible study. I promised to come to her home for the Bible study a few days later.

The Mainichi Newspapers

School education centered on emperor worship
In New York with Brother Franz
With my wife, Junko

As I took my seat on a train and started reading *The Watchtower,* the first word in the opening article, "Jehovah," caught my eye. I had never seen that name before. I did not expect to find it in the small English-Japanese dictionary I carried, but there it was! "Jehovah . . . , the God of the Bible." Now I was beginning to find out about the God of Christianity!

On that first visit to the missionary home, I learned about a Bible lecture that was to be given a few weeks later by Nathan H. Knorr, then president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. He was visiting Japan with his secretary, Milton Henschel, and was coming to Nagoya. Although my Bible knowledge was limited, I enjoyed the talk very much, as well as the association with the missionaries and others in attendance.

In about two months' time, I learned from my studies with Grace the basic truths about Jehovah, Jesus Christ, the ransom, Satan the Devil, Armageddon, and the Paradise earth. The good news of the Kingdom was exactly the kind of message I had been searching for. At the same time that I started to study, I also began attending the congregation meetings. I loved the friendly atmosphere at these gatherings, where the missionaries mixed freely with the Japanese and sat on the tatami (woven straw mats) with us.

In October 1951, the first circuit assembly in Japan was held at Nakanoshima Public Hall in the city of Osaka. There were fewer than 300 Witnesses in all of Japan; yet about 300 people attended the assembly, including nearly 50 missionaries. I even had a small part on the program. What I saw and heard so impressed me that I resolved in my heart to serve Jehovah all my life. The next day, I was baptized in the tepid waters of a nearby public bathhouse.

Joy of Pioneer Service

I wanted to become a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called, but I also felt an obligation to help support my family. When I mustered up courage to tell my boss of my desire, I was surprised to hear him say: "I'll be glad to cooperate with you if that would make you happy." I was able to work only two days a week and was still able to assist my mother with household expenses. I really felt like a bird let free from a cage.

As conditions continued to improve, I started pioneering on August 1, 1954, in a territory behind Nagoya station, a few minutes' walk from the spot where I had first met Grace. After several months, I received an assignment to serve as a special pioneer

in Beppu, a city on the western island of Kyushu. Tsutomu Miura was assigned as my partner.* At the time, there were no congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses on the entire island, but now there are hundreds of them, divided into 22 circuits!

Foretaste of the New World

When Brother Knorr visited Japan again in April 1956, he asked me to read a few paragraphs aloud from an English *Watchtower* magazine. I was not told why, but a few months later, I received a letter that invited me to attend the 29th class of Gilead missionary school. So in November that year, I began an exciting trip to the United States that fulfilled a longtime dream. Living and working for a couple of months with the large Brooklyn Bethel family strengthened my faith in Jehovah's visible organization.

In February 1957, Brother Knorr drove three of us students up to the Gilead School campus in South Lansing, upstate New York. The following five months at Gilead School, as I received instruction from Jehovah's Word and lived in beautiful surroundings with fellow students, I had a foretaste of the Paradise earth. Ten of the 103 students, myself included, were assigned to Japan.

Appreciating My Assignments

There were about 860 Witnesses in Japan when I returned in October 1957. I was assigned to the traveling work as a circuit overseer, but first I received a few days of training for that work from Adrian Thompson in Nagoya. My circuit covered an area from Shimizu, near Mount Fuji, to Shikoku Island and included such large cities as Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, and Hiroshima.

In 1961, I was assigned to be a district overseer. This involved traveling from the snowy northern island of Hokkaido to the subtropical island of Okinawa and even beyond to the Ishigaki islands near Taiwan, a distance of about 1,850 miles.

Then, in 1963, I was invited to a ten-month course of Gilead School at Brooklyn Bethel. During the course, Brother Knorr stressed the importance of having a proper attitude toward work assignments. He said that cleaning bathrooms was an assignment just as important as working in an office. If the bathrooms were not clean, he said, the entire Bethel family and their work would be affected. Later, part of my work at Bethel in Japan was cleaning toilets, and I remembered that counsel.

After returning to Japan, I was again assigned to the traveling work. A couple of years later, in 1966, I married Junko Iwasaki, a special pioneer who served in the city of Matsue. Lloyd Barry, then branch overseer of Japan, gave the heartwarming wedding talk. Junko then joined me in the traveling work.

Our assignments changed in 1968 when I was called into the branch office in Tokyo to do translation work. Because of the shortage of rooms, I commuted from Sumida Ward, Tokyo, and Junko served as a special pioneer with the local congregation. By this time, larger branch facilities were needed. So in 1970 property was purchased in Numazu, not far from Mount Fuji. There, a three-story factory and a residence were built. Before the construction started, several houses on the property were used for the Kingdom Ministry School, which provides training for congregation overseers. I was privileged to teach the school, and Junko prepared meals for the students. It was thrilling to see hun-

* His father was a faithful Witness who survived the atom-bomb blast over Hiroshima in 1945 while in a Japanese prison. See *Awake!* of October 8, 1994, pages 11-15.

dreds of Christian men being given special training for the ministry.

One afternoon, I received an urgent telegram. Mother had been hospitalized and was not expected to live. I took the bullet train to Nagoya and hurried to the hospital. She was unconscious, but I spent the night at her bedside. Mother died early in the morning. As I rode back to Numazu, I could not hold back my tears when I recalled the hard times she had gone through in her life and the affection she had had for me. If it is Jehovah's will, I will see her again in the resurrection.

At work in the Translation Department

We soon outgrew the facilities in Numazu. So 18 acres of land was purchased in Ebina City, and construction of a new branch complex was begun in 1978. Now all available space on this property is covered with factory and residence buildings, as well as an Assembly Hall that seats over 2,800. The latest addition, which consists of two 13-story residences and a 5-level parking/service building, was completed earlier this year. Our Bethel family now numbers about 530, but the enlarged facilities will permit us to accommodate about 900.

Many Reasons for Rejoicing

It has been a thrill to see Bible prophecy fulfilled, yes, to see the 'small one grow into a mighty nation.' (Isaiah 60:22) I remember one of my brothers asking me back in 1951, "How many Witnesses are there in Japan?"

"About 260," I replied.

"Is that all?" he asked in a belittling tone of voice.

I remember thinking, 'Time will tell how many people Jehovah will draw to his worship in this Shinto-Buddhist country.' And Jehovah has given the answer! Today, there are no more unassigned territories for preaching in Japan, and the number of true worshipers has swelled to over 222,000 in 3,800 congregations!

The past 44 years of my life in the full-time ministry—32 with my loving wife—have been especially happy ones. For 25 of those years, I have served in the Translation Department at Bethel. In September 1979, I was also invited to be a member of the branch committee of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan.

It has been a privilege and a blessing to have had a small share in helping sincere, peace-loving people to come to Jehovah's worship. Many have done just as I did —changed from giving devotion to the emperor to worshiping the only true God, Jehovah. It is my sincere desire to help many more to come over to Jehovah's victorious side and gain endless life in the peaceful new world.—Revelation 22:17.

Love Stronger Than a Mother's

AT SUBWAY stations, in public restrooms, or on bustling streets, mothers are abandoning their newborn babies. At times, garbage collectors have even found in trash cans tiny babies tired of crying for their mothers. According to *O Estado de S. Paulo*, "cases of babies abandoned on the streets are on the increase." Of course, the young mother may regret her decision later. Yet she goes ahead, even though it may cost her child its life.

You may wonder, 'How can a mother even think of abandoning her baby to an uncertain future?' The Bible uses such a sad state of affairs as a metaphor to provide a strong contrast to our Creator's feeling toward those of his own: "Can a wife forget her suckling so that she should not pity the son of her belly? Even these women can forget, yet I myself shall not forget you."—Isaiah 49:15.

Really, more than any human mother, God has deep love for us and shows sensitivity to our needs. Whether you are a young person or an adult, whatever problem you may face, you are not alone. Your Creator wants to help you and is interested in your welfare. In the words of the psalmist, "in case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up."—Psalm 27:10.

Worldwide, the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines are published to provide knowledge of "the only true God," Jehovah, and his Son, Jesus Christ, which can mean *everlasting* life to those who appreciatively take it in. —John 17:3.