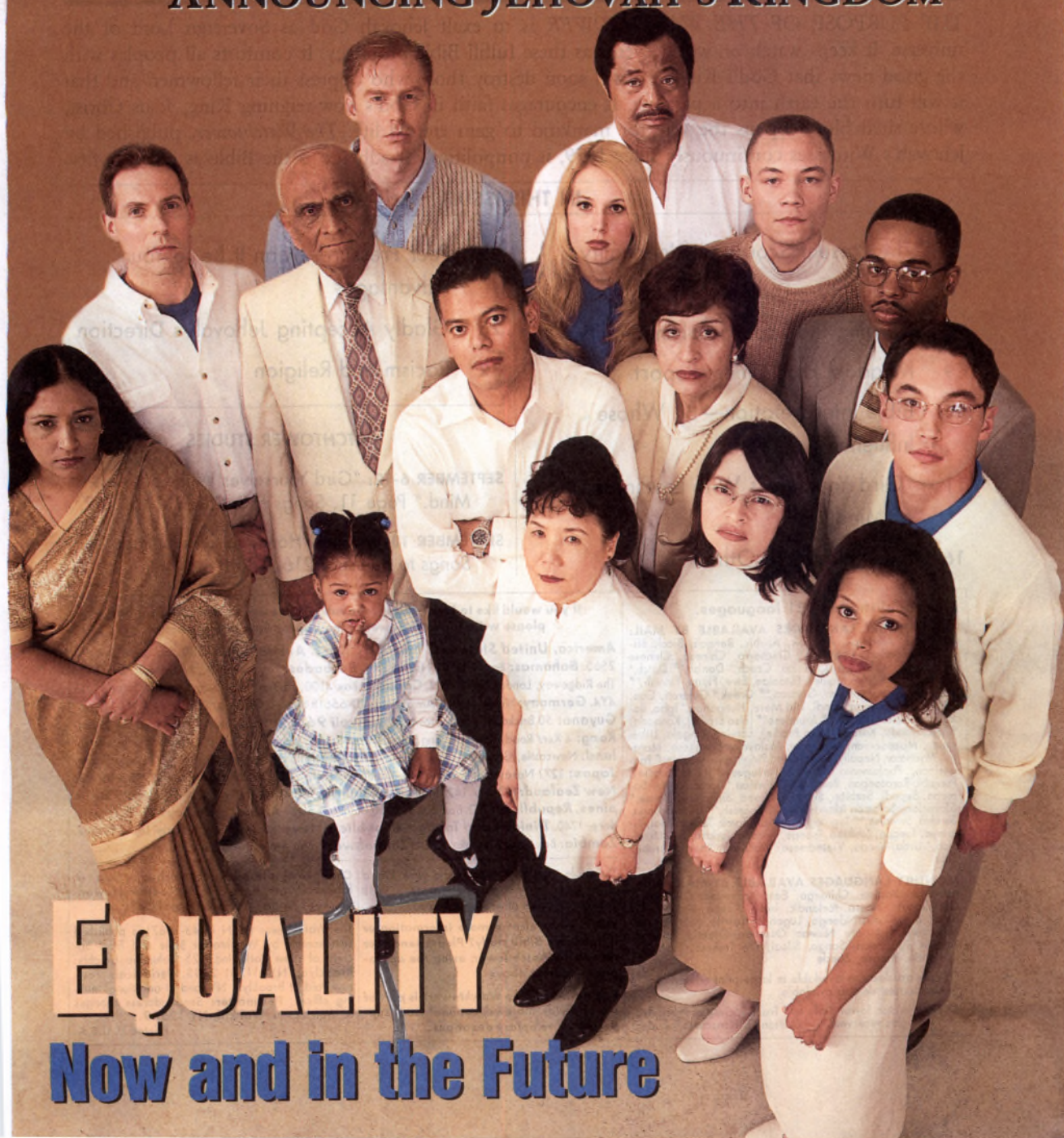


AUGUST 1, 1999

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



EQUALITY

Now and in the Future

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

August 1, 1999

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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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The Present Scourge of INEQUALITY

◆
"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

—Declaration of Independence, adopted by the United States in 1776.

◆
"All men are born free and equal in rights."

—Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted by France's National Assembly in 1789.

◆
"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

—Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

THERE is no doubt about it. Among humans the desire for equality is universal. But sad to say, the very fact that the idea of human equality has had to be repeated so frequently proves that until now equality has eluded mankind.

Can anyone seriously argue that now at the close of the 20th century, things have changed for the better? Do all citizens

of the United States and France, or those of any of the 185 members of the United Nations, really enjoy the equal rights with which they were supposedly born?

Although the idea of equality among all men may be “self-evident,” rights to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” are far from equal for all people. For example, what equality in the right to life can we speak of when a child in Africa must share one doctor with 2,569 other people, whereas a child in Europe does so with only 289? Or what equality in rights to liberty and the pursuit of happiness is there when about one third of the boys and two thirds of the girls in India will grow up illiterate, whereas in places like Japan, Germany, and Great Britain, practically every child is guaranteed an education?

Do people in Central American countries with a per capita income of \$1,380 enjoy the same “dignity and rights” in life as do those in France, where the per capita income is \$24,990? What equality does the African female newborn with a life expectancy of 56 years enjoy in comparison with the North American female infant with a life expectancy of 79 years?

Inequality has many faces, all of them ugly. Inequality in living standards and in opportunities for health care and education are but some of them. Sometimes political, racial, or religious differences play a decisive role in depriving people of their dignity and liberty. Despite all the talk about equality, we live in a world of *inequality*. Like a scourge—“a cause of widespread or great affliction,” as the word is defined—inequality sweeps across every level of human society. The pain it causes in the form of poverty, sickness, ignorance, unemployment, and discrimination stabs to the very heart.

“All men are created equal.” What a beautiful thought! How tragic that the reality is quite the opposite!

INEQUALITY

Did God Intend It?

The answer in a single word is no.
Let us see why.

GOD intended that all humans have equal opportunities to enjoy life and happiness. Of man's creation, we read: “God went on to say: ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth.’” Upon completion of earthly creation, “God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good.”—Genesis 1:26, 31.

Can God pronounce today's sad state of inequality “very good”? Hardly, for “God is love.” (1 John 4:8) It is said of him that he “treats none with partiality” and that “perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he.” (Deuteronomy 10:17; 32:4; compare Job 34:19.) And the apostle Peter concluded: “For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the

man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.”—Acts 10:34, 35.

Since God is loving, impartial, just, upright, and righteous, how could he have created humans with inherent inequality as regards their right to enjoy happiness? To allow discrimination among people and to place them in a system of inequality would be in direct contradiction to his personality. He intended that they all be “born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Yet, today things are obviously not that way. Why not?

The Root of Inequality

That God created humans to be equal does not mean that he intended for all of them to be equal in every respect. They could differ in talents, interests, and personality. They could also differ in station or in degree of authority. For example, man and woman are not equal in all respects, but God created the woman “as a complement” of the man. (Genesis 2:18) Parents and children obviously differ in authority. Despite these differences, however, all—men, women, and children—were to enjoy as a God-given right equal opportunities to satisfy the basic requirements for happiness. They were all to enjoy equal dignity and standing before God.

Similarly, God’s spirit sons, created prior to humans, were given different assignments and responsibilities. (Genesis 3:24; 16:7-11; Isaiah 6:6; Jude 9) Nonetheless, within the boundaries of what they had been given, all were able to enjoy the divine provisions for life and happiness to an equal degree. They thus reflected God’s impartiality in a marvelous way.

Sad to say, one spirit creature was not content with God’s impartial arrangement. He wanted more than what God had given him, yearning for a higher, more elevat-

ed, position. By nurturing this wrong desire, he set himself up in rivalry to Jehovah, who as Creator rightfully holds a position of overall supremacy. This rebellious spirit son of God later induced humans to demand of God more than what He had given them. (Genesis 3:1-6; compare Isaiah 14:12-14.) Thus, Jehovah’s provision for humans to enjoy life and happiness appeared to have been thrown out of balance. This spirit rebel, identified at Revelation 20:2 as “the Devil and Satan,” became the evil instigator of human inequality.

Will Things Ever Change?

The answer in a single word is *yes!*

But who can bring about the desired changes? Human leaders, some no doubt in all sincerity, have struggled for centuries to do so. Their success has been limited,

God intended that all humans have equal opportunities for life and happiness

leading many people to conclude that it is unrealistic to expect the problem of human inequality ever to be solved. God’s view, however, is recorded at Isaiah 55:10, 11: “Just as the pouring rain descends, and the snow, from the heavens and does not return to that place, unless it actually saturates the earth and makes it produce and sprout, and seed is actually given to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.”

How comforting to know that Jehovah God has gone on record that he will fulfill his original purpose to provide all humans with equal opportunities for life and happiness! As a God of truth, he has obligated himself to fulfill what he has promised. Happily, he has both the will and the power to do so. How will he accomplish this?

The answer lies in the Kingdom for which Jesus Christ taught all his followers to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, . . . Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:9, 10) Yes, God's Kingdom is the means that Jehovah will use to "crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [now in existence], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

Under the rule of the heavenly Kingdom, a new human society will emerge. In this regard, the apostle John wrote in the last book of the Bible, Revelation: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away." (Revelation 21:1) Gone will be all the ugly faces of inequality—poverty, sickness, ignorance, discrimination, and other human miseries.*

For more than a century, Jehovah's Witnesses have been directing people's attention to that Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) By means of the printed page and by personal assistance, they have exerted themselves in helping people to gain a knowledge of God's purpose as recorded in the Bible. Their worldwide educational work, however, not only has given people the hope of living in equality and happiness in the future but has also paid dividends right now in curbing the scourge of inequality. Let us see how.

* For a fuller discussion about how God's Kingdom will soon bring equality for all, please see chapters 10 and 11 of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

CURBING the Scourge of INEQUALITY

The Creator will soon bring about the equality that humans crave. Until then, we can at least take steps to curb the scourge of inequality that affects us and our families. As Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, observed, "it is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."

HISTORY verifies his words. Many are the men and women who were given little at birth but who, by making use of what they had, achieved successes that set them apart from their possibly more gifted peers. Conversely, other individuals richly blessed with advantages from birth squandered what they had and failed to live up to their full potential.



Make the Most of What You Have!

Jehovah's Witnesses are keenly interested in helping people gain a knowledge of God's purposes through a study of the Bible. They realize, however, that to benefit fully from Bible information, people must be literate. For that reason, Jehovah's Witnesses have taught tens of thousands of people to read and write, including 23,000 persons (as of the mid-1990's) in one West African country alone. Referring to the outstanding social service that Jehovah's Witnesses provide, the *San Francisco Examiner* noted: "You might regard them as model citizens. They pay taxes diligently, tend the sick, battle illiteracy."

In addition, by means of a progressive course in public speaking, Jehovah's Witnesses have trained hundreds of thousands of people to become qualified speakers, able to express themselves fluently in public. Among these thousands are some who once had serious speech problems. Take the man from South Africa who writes: "My stut-

Jehovah's Witnesses battle illiteracy by teaching tens of thousands of people to read and write

tering was so bad that I had become an introvert, usually relying on others to speak for me. . . . When I joined the Theocratic Ministry School and had to give a Bible reading before a small audience . . . , I stuttered so badly that I was unable to complete the assignment in the allotted time. After the meeting the [counselor] kindly gave me practical advice. He suggested that I practice reading aloud to myself. This I did, spending time day after day, reading aloud from my Bible and the *Watchtower* magazine." This man progressed so well that he now gives public discourses to audiences numbering into the hundreds, even thousands.

Enjoying Equality Among Brothers

As regards education, health care, and economic and social standing, circumstances among Jehovah's Witnesses differ greatly. These differences merely mirror the imperfect worldly conditions in which they live. But in contrast with other religious groups, racial, social, and economic prejudices have been virtually eradicated from their ranks.

They have accomplished this by doing their best in practicing what they have learned from the Bible. They wholeheartedly embrace such Bible principles as: "Not the way man sees is the way God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is." (1 Samuel 16:7) "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) "Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends

Bible truth helps eradicate racial, social, and economic prejudices

upon you, be peaceable with all men.”—Romans 12:17, 18; see also 1 Timothy 6:17-19; James 2:5, 9.

Closely adhering to these Bible principles that promote unity, Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse to tolerate within their ranks any exercise of inequality based upon racial, social, or economic differences. These factors play no part, for example, in deciding who is to be extended privileges of service in the Christian congregation. Positions of responsibility, such as teaching and oversight, are granted solely on the basis of spiritual qualifications.—1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.

For individuals who have suffered under the inequalities of a biased world, how refreshing it is to have others treat them as brothers and sisters with equal standing before their Creator! Martina can attest to this. After her father deserted the family, she was raised in a poor, one-parent home. She was often treated like a social outcast, had little self-confidence, and found it hard to get along with others. She developed a couldn’t-care-less attitude. Things changed, however, after she began studying the Bible and became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. She says: “I must still fight negative thinking, but now I am better able to

cope with the problem.

My self-respect has improved, and I speak with greater confidence. The truth has given me a sense of responsibility. Now I know that Jehovah loves me and that life is worth living.”

As an international group of Christians, Jehovah’s Witnesses in over 230 countries enjoy a degree of equality that is truly unique in today’s world. Can any other religious organization make a similar claim and back it up by facts?

Of course, Jehovah’s Witnesses are realistic. They readily admit that being products of an imperfect environment, they can no more blot out human inequality than could any of the others who over the centuries have tried to do so—and failed. Nevertheless, they rejoice that within their own ranks, they have done much to curb this deadly scourge. And with strong faith in God’s promise, they look forward to a new world of righteousness where inequality will forever be a thing of the past.

Yes, all obedient humans will soon be restored to the equality “in dignity and rights” that their Creator purposed for them to enjoy in the first place. What a beautiful thought! And this time it will be a reality!



KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Witnesses Go to the Public in France

FROM the early hours of Friday, January 29, 1999, and continuing into the weekend, Jehovah's Witnesses in France enthusiastically distributed on the streets and later from house to house, 12 million copies of a tract entitled *People of France, You Are Being Deceived! Why such a campaign?*

At a press conference in Paris that Friday morning, the reason for the campaign was given. A Witness spokesman explained: "What we want to do today is make ourselves known for what we are and silence the defamatory statements spread about us. We are willing to accept criticism, but we will no longer listen to lies and comments that damage our reputation."

Although Jehovah's Witnesses are the third largest Christian religion in France, dozens of Witness children have been insulted and harassed in school. Adults have lost their jobs and have been threatened because of their religion. Unbelievably, even the religious contributions they have received have been assessed for a 60-percent tax. How did the campaign deal with this discrimination?

The tract declares: "The 250,000 Jehovah's Witnesses and their associates living in France PROTEST against the dishonest way in which their Christian religion, which has existed in France since 1900, has been lumped together with dangerous sects since 1995. . . . PROTEST against the constant harassment to which they have been subjected." The slanderous charges that have been leveled at the Witnesses in France and the devious ways in which detractors have sought to create negative publicity were exposed. The tract concludes by saying: "Today, more than two million Jehovah's Witnesses and their associates live in Europe. They respect the laws of the States of which they are citizens by upholding the values of the Gospel. People of France, these are the facts. It is our duty to present them as they truly are!"

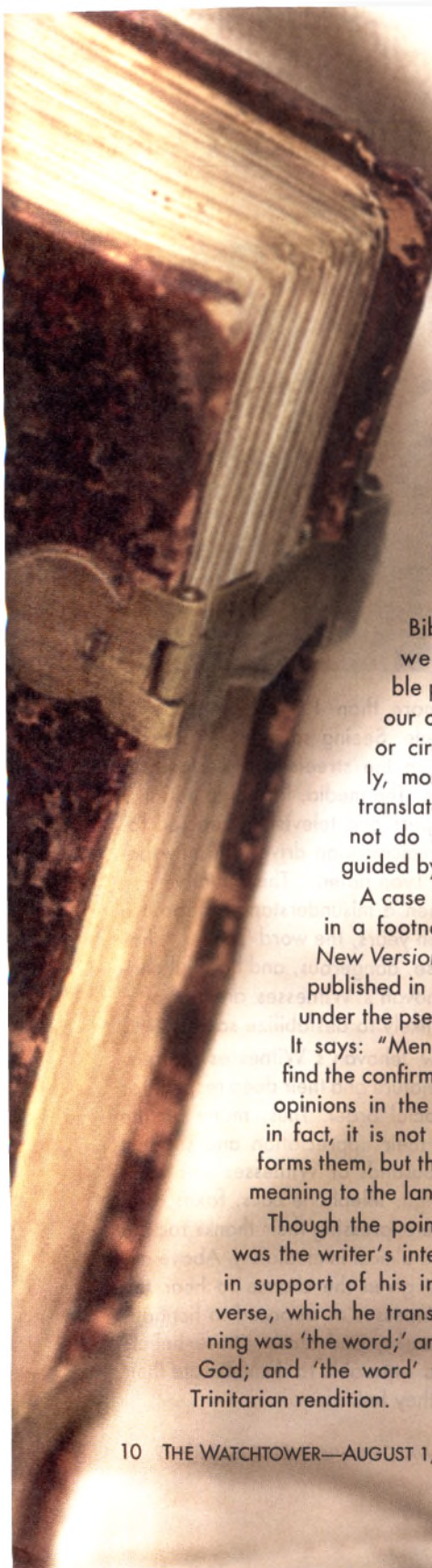
Quick, Positive Response

Millions of tracts were given out on the first day. In Paris alone, by midday over 7,000 Wit-



nesses had put more than 1.3 million tracts in the hands of people. Seeing so many Witnesses giving out tracts on the streets was certainly a first for the people. The media, including national and local newspapers and television, reacted favorably to the communication drive. The newspaper *Le Progrès de Lyon* noted: "This initiative . . . brings into the open a misunderstanding about a word. In the last ten years, the word 'sect' . . . has taken on a perverse, dangerous, and harmful connotation. . . . Jehovah's Witnesses are not of a dangerous nature likely to destabilize society."

Those who know Jehovah's Witnesses appreciate their peaceful nature and their deep respect for the established social order. Thus, many on the streets expressed their appreciation and support for the tens of thousands of Witnesses who took part in the campaign. Telephone calls, faxes, and letters from people expressing their thanks for the tract were received almost immediately. Above all, sincere ones were given the chance to hear the facts about the Witnesses as opposed to fictitious and senseless remarks, and those whose beliefs had been maligned were able to demonstrate their feelings for what they hold dear.



BIBLE INTERPRETATION By Whose Influence?

ONE definition of the word "interpret" is "to conceive in the light of individual belief, judgment, or circumstance." (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*) Thus, one's interpretation of anything is usually influenced by one's background, education, and upbringing.

What, though, about Bible interpretation? Are we free to explain Bible passages according to our own "belief, judgment, or circumstance"? Naturally, most Bible scholars and translators claim that they do not do so but that they are guided by God.

A case in point is what is said in a footnote to John 1:1 in *A New Version of the Four Gospels*, published in 1836 by John Lingard under the pseudonym "A Catholic."

It says: "Men of every persuasion find the confirmation of their peculiar opinions in the sacred volumes: for, in fact, it is not the Scripture that informs them, but they that affix their own meaning to the language of Scripture."

Though the point is well taken, what was the writer's intent? His comment was in support of his interpretation of that verse, which he translated: "At the beginning was 'the word;' and 'the word' was with God; and 'the word' was God," a typical Trinitarian rendition.

What impelled the writer to translate John 1:1 in support of the Trinitarian doctrine? Is it "the Scripture that informs" him to do so? That is impossible, for nowhere in the Bible is the teaching of the Trinity to be found. Note what *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* says on this point: "Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament." In addition, Yale University professor E. Washburn Hopkins observed: "To Jesus and Paul the doctrine of the trinity was apparently unknown; . . . they say nothing about it."

What, then, can we conclude about those who support a Trinitarian interpretation of John 1:1 or any other Bible verse? By Mr. Lingard's own criterion, "it is not the Scripture that informs them, but they that affix their own meaning to the language of Scripture."

Happily, we have God's own Word to guide us on this. "You know this first," said the apostle Peter, "that no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." —2 Peter 1:20, 21.

“GIRD YOURSELVES WITH LOWLINESS OF MIND”

“God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.”—1 PETER 5:5.

AMONG the mental dispositions that God’s Word brings to our attention are two opposites. Both of them have a profound effect on human behavior. One is described as “lowliness of mind.” (1 Peter 5:5) A dictionary defines “lowly” as being “humble in manner or spirit: free from self-assertive pride.” Lowliness of mind is synonymous with humility, and from God’s viewpoint, it is a very desirable quality.

² The opposite is pride. This is defined as “inordinate self-esteem,” being “disdainful.” It is self-centered, and it seeks material, egoistic, and other advantages regardless of the adverse effects upon others. The Bible notes one result: “Man has dominated man to his injury.” It speaks of the “rivalry of one toward another” as “striving after the wind” because at death “nothing at all can one carry away.” Such pride is very undesirable from God’s viewpoint.—Ecclesiastes 4:4; 5:15; 8:9.

The World’s Prevailing Spirit

³ Which of the two mental dispositions characterizes the world today? What is the world’s prevailing spirit? *World Military and Social Expenditures 1996* notes: “No other century on record equals the 20th in uncivilized . . . violence.” Competition

for political and economic power—as well as national, religious, tribal, and ethnic rivalries—has killed over 100 million people in this century. Self-centered behavior on an individual level has also increased. The *Chicago Tribune* stated: “Societal illness includes mindless violence, child abuse, divorce, drunkenness, AIDS, teen-age suicide, drugs, street gangs, rape, illegitimacy, abortion, pornography, . . . lying, cheating, political corruption . . . Right and wrong as moral concepts have been abolished.” Thus, the *UN Chronicle* warned: “Societies are disintegrating.”

⁴ These conditions are worldwide. It is just as Bible prophecy foretold for our time: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride.”—2 Timothy 3:1-4.

⁵ That is an accurate description of this world’s prevailing spirit. It is a selfish me-first attitude. Rivalry among nations is mirrored by rivalry among individuals. In competitive sports, for example, many athletes

- 1, 2. What two opposite mental dispositions have a profound effect on human behavior?
3. What is the world’s prevailing spirit?

- 4, 5. How has the world’s spirit been accurately described in Bible prophecy for our day?

desire to be number one regardless of how this hurts others emotionally or even physically. This self-centered spirit is promoted in children and continues in many areas of adult life. It results in "enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions."—Galatians 5:19-21.

⁶ The Bible shows that the self-centered spirit of this world reflects that of "the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." Regarding Satan's influence on the people living in these critical last days, the Bible foretells: "Woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:9-12) So he and his associate demons have intensified their efforts to promote a selfish frame of mind in the human family. And how does Jehovah feel about such an attitude? His Word says: "Everyone that is proud in heart is something detestable to Jehovah."—Proverbs 16:5.

Jehovah Is With the Lowly Ones

⁷ On the other hand, Jehovah blesses those who are lowly in mind. In song to Jehovah, King David said: "The humble people you will save; but your eyes are against the haughty ones, that you may bring them low." (2 Samuel 22:1, 28) Hence, God's Word counsels: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." (Zephaniah 2:3) Those who humbly seek Jehovah are taught by him to cultivate a totally different spirit from that of this world. "He will teach the meek ones his way." (Psalm 25:9;

6. Who promotes selfishness, and how does Jehovah feel about this frame of mind?

7. How does Jehovah regard lowly ones, and what does he teach them?

Isaiah 54:13) That way is the way of love. It is based on doing what is right according to God's standards. According to the Bible, this principled love "does not brag, does not get puffed up, . . . does not look for its own interests." (1 Corinthians 13:1-8) It also manifests itself in lowliness of mind.

⁸ Paul and other first-century Christians learned this kind of love from the teachings of Jesus. And Jesus learned it from his Father, Jehovah, of whom the Bible says: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Jesus knew that it was God's will for him to live by the law of love, and he did. (John 6:38) That is why he had compassion for the downtrodden, the poor, the sinners. (Matthew 9:36) He told them: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and *lowly in heart*."—Matthew 11:28, 29.

⁹ Jesus showed his disciples the importance of imitating his love and humility when he told them: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) They would stand out as separate from this self-centered world. That is why Jesus could say of his followers: "They are no part of the world." (John 17:14) No, they do not imitate the proud, selfish spirit of Satan's world. Instead, they imitate the spirit of love and humility that Jesus showed.

¹⁰ God's Word foretold that in these last days, humble ones would be gathered together in a global society based on love and humility. Thus, in the midst of a world that is becoming more and more prideful, Jehovah's people display the opposite attitude

8, 9. (a) What is the origin of principled love? (b) How important is it to imitate the love and humility that Jesus displayed?

10. What is Jehovah doing with lowly ones in our day?

—lowliness of mind. Such ones say: “Let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah [his elevated true worship], . . . and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” (Isaiah 2:2, 3) Jehovah’s Witnesses make up this global society walking in God’s paths. They include a growing “great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Revelation 7:9) This great crowd is now made up of millions of people. How is Jehovah training them to be humble?

Learning to Be Lowly in Mind

¹¹ God’s spirit working through his willing people enables them to learn to conquer the bad spirit of the world and then to demonstrate the fruitage of God’s spirit. This manifests itself in “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22, 23) To help them develop those qualities, God’s servants are counseled not to become “egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:26) Similarly, the apostle Paul said: “I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind.”—Romans 12:3.

¹² God’s Word tells true Christians to do “nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others [of God’s servants] are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.” (Philippians 2:3, 4) “Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.” (1 Corinthians 10:24) Yes, “love builds up” others with un-

selfish words and acts. (1 Corinthians 8:1) It promotes cooperation, not competition. The me-first spirit has no place among Jehovah’s servants.

¹³ However, because of inherited imperfection, we are not born lowly in mind. (Psalm 51:5) This quality must be learned. And this may be difficult for those not taught Jehovah’s ways from childhood but who accept them later in life. They have already formed personalities based on this old world’s attitudes. So they have to learn to “put away the old personality which conforms to [their] former course of conduct” and to “put on the new personality which was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Ephesians 4:22, 24) With God’s help sincere ones can do what he asks of them: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, *lowliness of mind*, mildness, and long-suffering.”—Colossians 3:12.

¹⁴ The disciples of Jesus had to learn that. They were adults when they became his disciples and had a measure of the worldly spirit of rivalry in them. When the mother of two of them sought prominence for her sons, Jesus said: “The rulers of the nations lord it over [the people] and the great men wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. Just as the Son of man [Jesus] came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:20-28) When Jesus told his disciples not to use titles to try to elevate themselves, he added: “All you are brothers.”—Matthew 23:8.

13. Why must lowliness of mind be learned, and how does one learn it?

14. How did Jesus speak against wanting to elevate oneself?

11, 12. How do God’s servants display lowliness of mind?

¹⁵ A true follower of Jesus is a *servant*, yes, a *slave* to fellow Christians. (Galatians 5:13) Especially is this so with those who want to qualify for oversight in the congregation. They should never compete for prominence or power; they are not to 'lord it over those who are God's inheritance but are to become examples to them.' (1 Peter 5:3) Indeed, a self-seeking spirit is an indication that a man is unfit for oversight. Such a person would be injurious to the congregation. True, it is proper to 'reach out for an office of overseer,' but this should spring from a desire to serve other Christians. This office is not a position of prominence or power, for those in oversight should be among the most lowly of mind in the congregation.—1 Timothy 3:1, 6.

¹⁶ The apostle John calls our attention to a person who had the wrong viewpoint, stating: "I wrote something to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not receive anything from us with respect." This man dealt with others disrespectfully to try to advance his own position. Instead, God's spirit moved John to incorporate in the Bible a

15. What attitude should those seeking the office of overseer have?

16. Why was Diotrephes denounced in God's Word?

In Review

- ☐ Describe this world's prevailing spirit.
- ☐ How does Jehovah favor those who are lowly in mind?
- ☐ Why must lowliness of mind be learned?
- ☐ What are some Bible examples of individuals who displayed lowliness of mind?

denunciation of Diotrephes because of his me-first attitude.—3 John 9, 10.

The Right Attitude

¹⁷ There are many Bible examples of the right attitude, of lowliness of mind. When Peter entered the home of Cornelius, that man "fell down at [Peter's] feet and did obeisance to him." But instead of accepting adulation, "Peter lifted him up, saying: 'Rise; I myself am also a man.'" (Acts 10:25, 26) When Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra, Paul healed a man lame from birth. As a result, the crowds said that these apostles were gods. However, Paul and Barnabas "ripped their outer garments and leaped out into the crowd, crying out and saying: 'Men, why are you doing these things? We also are humans having the same infirmities as you do.'" (Acts 14:8-15) These humble Christians would not accept glory from humans.

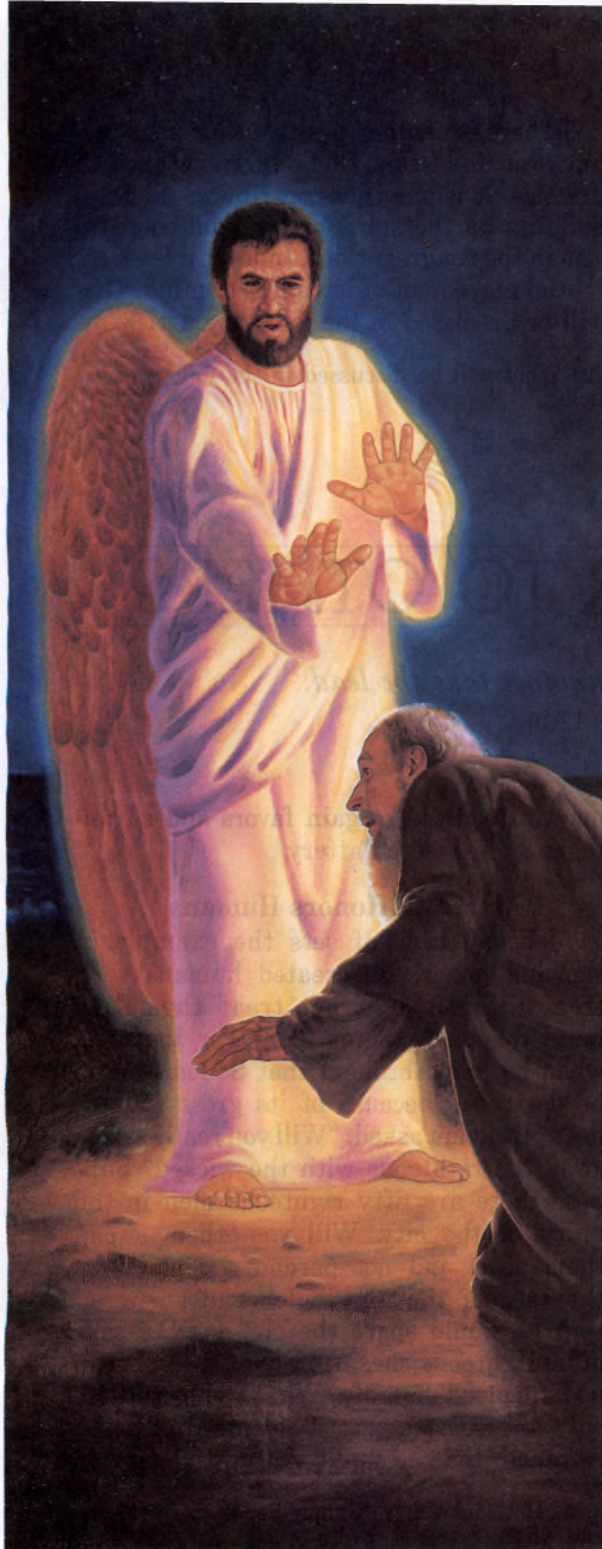
¹⁸ When the apostle John was given "a revelation by Jesus Christ," it was transmitted by an angel. (Revelation 1:1) Because of the power of an angel, we can understand why John was awed, for one angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. (2 Kings 19:35) John relates: "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that had been showing me these things. But he tells me: 'Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers . . . Worship God.'" (Revelation 22:8, 9) What lowliness of mind on the part of this powerful angel!

¹⁹ Jesus was the finest example of one who was lowly in mind. He was God's only-begotten Son, the future King of God's

17. How did Peter, Paul, and Barnabas display lowliness of mind?

18. In his humility, what did a powerful angel tell John?

19, 20. Contrast the haughtiness of conquering Roman generals with Jesus' lowliness of mind.



***The angel told John: "Do not do that!
All I am is a fellow slave"***

heavenly Kingdom. When he presented himself to the people as such, he did not do as the conquering generals of Roman times did. They were given huge parades—processions—and rode in chariots decorated with gold and ivory, drawn by white horses, or even by elephants, lions, or tigers. In the processions were musicians singing victory songs, along with carts loaded with booty and huge floats illustrating battle scenes. There were also captive kings, princes, and generals, with their families, often stripped naked to humiliate them. The events reeked of pride, haughtiness.

²⁰ Contrast that with the way Jesus offered himself. He was willing to submit humbly to fulfilling the prophecy about him, which foretold: "Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass." He humbly rode on a beast of burden, not in a chariot pulled by magnificent parade animals. (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4, 5) How happy humble people are that Jesus will be Jehovah's appointed King over the entire earth in the new world, one who is truly lowly in mind, humble, loving, compassionate, merciful!—Isaiah 9:6, 7; Philippians 2:5-8.

²¹ The fact that Jesus, Peter, Paul, and other men and women of faith in Bible times were lowly in mind dispels the idea that humility is weakness. Instead, it shows strength of character, for these ones were courageous and zealous. With great mental and moral strength, they endured severe trials. (Hebrews, chapter 11) And today, when Jehovah's servants are lowly in mind, they have similar strength because

21. What does lowliness of mind not indicate?

God backs up lowly ones with his powerful holy spirit. Thus, we are urged: "All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." —1 Peter 5:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

²² There is another positive aspect to lowliness of mind that God's servants need to practice. It is one that contributes much to building up the spirit of love and cooperation in the congregations. Indeed, it is an essential ingredient of lowliness of mind. This will be discussed in the following article.

22. What will be discussed in the following article?

SHOW HONOR TO OTHERS

"In showing honor to one another take the lead."

—ROMANS 12:10.

OUR preceding article emphasized the counsel of God's Word: "All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (1 Peter 5:5) One way for us to gird ourselves with lowliness of mind is to practice showing honor to others.

² The word "honor" is often used in the Bible to indicate the respect, esteem, and consideration that we should show to others. We honor others by being kind to them, respecting their dignity, listening to their viewpoint, being ready to fulfill reasonable requests made of us. Those who are lowly in mind usually will not find this difficult. However, those who are proud of heart may find it difficult to show genuine honor and

may instead try to gain favors and advantages by insincere flattery.

Jehovah Honors Humans

³ Jehovah himself sets the example in showing honor. He created humans with free will and does not treat them like mere robots. (1 Peter 2:16) For instance, when he told Abraham that Sodom was to be destroyed because of its gross wickedness, Abraham asked: "Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city. Will you, then, sweep them away and not pardon the place for the sake of the fifty?" Jehovah answered that he would spare the city for the sake of 50 righteous ones. Abraham then continued to plead humbly. What if there were only 45? 40? 30? 20? 10? Jehovah assured Abraham that he would not destroy Sodom

1, 2. (a) What must we practice to show our lowliness of mind? (b) How does the Bible often use the word "honor," and who find it easier to show honor?

3, 4. How did Jehovah show honor to Abraham, and why?



Jehovah honored Abraham by considering his pleading

if just ten righteous men were found.—Genesis 18:20-33.

⁴ Jehovah knew that there were not ten righteous men in Sodom, yet he honored Abraham by listening to his view and dealing with him respectfully. Why? Because Abraham “put faith in Jehovah; and he proceeded to count it to him as righteousness.” Abraham was called “Jehovah’s friend.” (Genesis 15:6; James 2:23) Furthermore, Jehovah saw that Abraham honored others. When a dispute regarding territory arose between his herdsmen and those of his nephew Lot, Abraham honored Lot by telling him to choose first the area he wanted. Lot picked what he considered the choicest land, and Abraham moved elsewhere.—Genesis 13:5-11.

⁵ Jehovah similarly honored righteous

5. How did Jehovah honor Lot?

Lot. Before Sodom was destroyed, he told Lot to flee to a mountainous area. However, Lot said that he did not want to go there; he preferred nearby Zoar, although that city was in the area that was to be destroyed. Jehovah said to Lot: “Here I do show you consideration to this extent also, by my not overthrowing the city of which you have spoken.” Jehovah showed honor to faithful Lot by doing what he asked.—Genesis 19:15-22; 2 Peter 2:6-9.

⁶ When Jehovah sent Moses back to Egypt to lead His people out of slavery and to speak to Pharaoh about letting His people go, Moses responded: “Excuse me, Jehovah, but I am not a fluent speaker.” Jehovah assured Moses: “I myself shall prove to be with your mouth and I will teach you what you ought to say.” But Moses was still hesitant.

6. How did Jehovah honor Moses?



In successful marriages, husband and wife honor each other

At that Jehovah reassured Moses and arranged to send his brother, Aaron, with him as spokesman.—Exodus 4:10-16.

⁷ In all such instances, Jehovah showed his willingness to honor others, especially those who served him. Although what they asked for may have differed from Jehovah's original intent, he considered their requests and made allowance for them as long as these did not violate his purpose.

Jesus Honored Others

⁸ Jesus imitated Jehovah in honoring others. Once in a crowd, there was a woman who had suffered a flow of blood for 12 years. Doctors had been unable to cure her. Under the Mosaic Law, she was considered ceremonially unclean and should not have

been there. She got behind Jesus, touched his garment, and was healed. Jesus did not stand on the technicalities of the Law, scolding her for what she did. Instead, knowing the circumstances, he honored her, saying: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be in good health from your grievous sickness."—Mark 5:25-34; Leviticus 15:25-27.

⁹ Another time, a Phoenician woman said to Jesus: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is badly demonized." Knowing that he had been sent to the nation of Israel and not to Gentiles, Jesus said: "It is not right to take the bread of the children [of Israel] and throw it to little dogs [Gentiles]." The woman answered: "But really the little dogs do eat of the crumbs falling from the table of their masters." Then

7. Why was Jehovah willing to honor others?
8. How did Jesus honor a woman who was very ill?

9. How did Jesus honor a Gentile?

Jesus said: "O woman, great is your faith; let it happen to you as you wish." Her daughter was healed. Jesus honored this Gentile because of her faith. Even his use of the expression "little dogs," instead of referring to wild dogs, softened the matter and showed his compassion.—Matthew 15:21-28.

¹⁰ Jesus kept teaching his disciples about the need to be lowly in mind and to honor others, since they still had the me-first problem. Once after they had had an argument, Jesus asked: "What were you arguing over?" They kept silent, for "they had argued among themselves who is greater." (Mark 9:33, 34) Even the night before Jesus died, "there also arose a heated dispute among them over which one of them seemed to be greatest." (Luke 22:24) So during the Passover meal, Jesus "put water into a basin and started to wash the feet of the disciples." What a powerful lesson! Jesus was the Son of God, next only to Jehovah in all the universe. Yet, he taught his disciples an honorable lesson by washing their feet. He said: "I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also."—John 13:5-15.

Paul Showed Honor

¹¹ As an imitator of Christ, the apostle Paul showed honor to others. (1 Corinthians 11:1) He said: "Neither have we been seeking glory from men . . . To the contrary, we became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children." (1 Thessalonians 2:6, 7) A nursing mother cares for her little ones. After Paul became a Christian, he learned to be lowly in mind and showed honor to his fellow Christians by treating them gently. In doing so, he also respected their free will, as was

10. What powerful lesson did Jesus teach his disciples, and why was it needed?

11, 12. After Paul became a Christian, what did he learn, and how did he apply this lesson in connection with Philemon?

demonstrated by an event that took place when he was a prisoner in Rome.

¹² A runaway slave named Onesimus listened to Paul's teaching. He became a Christian as well as Paul's friend. The slave's owner was Philemon, also a Christian, who lived in Asia Minor. In a letter to Philemon, Paul wrote how useful Onesimus was to him, saying: "I would like to hold him back for myself." Yet, Paul returned Onesimus to Philemon, for he wrote: "Without your consent I do not want to do anything, so that your good act may be, not as under compulsion, but of your own free will." Paul did not take advantage of the fact that he was an apostle, but he honored Philemon by not asking to keep Onesimus in Rome. Moreover, Paul exhorted Philemon to honor Onesimus, treating him "as more than a slave, as a brother beloved."—Philemon 13-16.

Showing Honor in Our Day

¹³ God's Word counsels: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) This means that we should not wait for others to show honor to us first, but we should take the initiative. "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person." (1 Corinthians 10:24; 1 Peter 3:8, 9) Thus, Jehovah's servants look for opportunities to show honor to those in the family circle, to fellow Christians in the congregation, and even to those outside the congregation.

¹⁴ The Bible states: "The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man." (1 Corinthians 11:3) Jehovah obligates the man to treat his wife as Christ did the congregation. At 1 Peter 3:7, the husband is directed to assign his wife "honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine

13. What does Romans 12:10 tell us to do?

14. How is honor shown between husband and wife?

one." He can do this by displaying a genuine willingness to listen and by taking his wife's suggestions into consideration. (Genesis 21:12) He may give her first choice when no issue is at stake, and he does things for her and treats her kindly. In turn, "the wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:33) She listens to him, does not always strive to get her way, does not belittle or nag him. She shows lowliness of mind by not trying to dominate her husband, even when she has superior abilities in certain areas.

¹⁵ Within the Christian congregation, there are those who are particularly worthy of honor, such as older ones. "Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show consideration for the person of an old man [or, woman]." (Leviticus 19:32) This is especially the case with those who have served Jehovah faithfully for many years because "gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31) Overseers should set the example by showing due regard for fellow Christians who are older than they are. Of course, aged ones too need to display a respectful attitude toward younger ones, especially those who share the responsibility of shepherding the flock.—1 Peter 5:2, 3.

¹⁶ Young ones should honor their parents: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother'; which is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth.'" In turn, parents honor their young ones, for they are told 'not to be irritating their children but to go on bringing them up in the discipline and

mental-regulating of Jehovah.'—Ephesians 6:1-4; Exodus 20:12.

¹⁷ Also to be shown honor are those who work hard at serving the congregation: "Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching." (1 Timothy 5:17) One way we can show them this honor is by doing what Hebrews 13:17 states: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive."

¹⁸ Do we have to show honor to those outside the congregation? Yes. For example, we are instructed: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities." (Romans 13:1) These are the secular rulers that Jehovah allows to exercise authority until his Kingdom replaces them. (Daniel 2:44) So we "render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax; to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute; to him who calls for fear, such fear; to him who calls for honor, such honor." (Romans 13:7) We are to "honor men [or, women] of all sorts."—1 Peter 2:17.

¹⁹ While it is true that we are to honor even those outside the congregation, note what God's Word emphasizes: "As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) Of course, the best way that we can "work what is good" toward others is to cultivate and satisfy their spiritual needs. (Matthew 5:3) This we can do by heeding the apostle Paul's reminder: "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright."

17. Who are worthy of being accorded "double honor"?

18. What are we to do toward those outside the congregation?

19. How can we "work what is good" toward others and show them honor?

When we tactfully utilize every opportunity to give a witness, 'fully accomplishing our ministry,' we are not only doing good toward all but also showing honor to them.—2 Timothy 2:15; 4:5.

Honoring Jehovah

²⁰ Jehovah honors his creatures. It is reasonable then that we should, in turn, honor him. (Proverbs 3:9; Revelation 4:11) Jehovah's Word also states: "Those honoring me I shall honor, and those despising me will be of little account." (1 Samuel 2:30) When Pharaoh of Egypt was told to let God's people go, he arrogantly answered: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice?" (Exodus 5:2) When Pharaoh sent his armies to crush the Israelites, Jehovah parted the waters of the Red Sea for Israel. But when the Egyptians followed, Jehovah caused the waters to return. "Pharaoh's chariots and his military forces [Jehovah] has cast into the sea." (Exodus 14:26-28; 15:4) So Pharaoh's proud refusal to honor Jehovah led to his disastrous end.—Psalm 136:15.

²¹ King Belshazzar of Babylon refused to honor Jehovah. During a drunken feast, he mocked Jehovah by drinking wine out of the

20. What happened to Pharaoh and his armies, and why?

21. Why was Jehovah against Belshazzar, and what resulted?

In Review

- ☐ What does it mean to honor others, and how did Jehovah do this?
- ☐ How did Jesus and Paul honor others?
- ☐ Who are deserving of honor in our day?
- ☐ Why must we honor Jehovah and Jesus?

sacred vessels of gold and silver taken from Jerusalem's temple. And while he was doing this, he praised his pagan gods. But Jehovah's servant Daniel told him: "You have not humbled your heart . . . But against the Lord of the heavens you exalted yourself." That very night Belshazzar was killed, and his kingdom was taken away from him.—Daniel 5:22-31.

²² In the first century C.E., King Herod was giving an address to the public, and they shouted: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" The vain king did not disagree but wanted the glory. At that, "the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory to God." (Acts 12:21-23) Herod honored himself, not Jehovah, and was **struck dead**. The religious leaders of that time had dishonored God by conspiring to kill his Son, Jesus. Some rulers knew that Jesus taught the truth but would not follow him, "for they loved the glory of men more than even the glory of God." (John 11:47-53; 12:42, 43) The nation as a whole did not honor Jehovah or his appointed Representative, Jesus. As a result, Jehovah did not continue to honor them, abandoning them and their temple to destruction. But he preserved alive those who honored him and his Son.—Matthew 23:38; Luke 21:20-22.

²³ All those who want to live in God's new world after this present system is destroyed must honor God and his Son, Christ Jesus, and obey them. (John 5:22, 23; Philippians 2:9-11) Those who do not show such honor "will be cut off from the very earth." On the other hand, the upright ones who do honor and obey God and Christ "are the ones that will reside in the earth."—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

22. (a) Why did Jehovah's wrath come upon the leaders of Israel and their people? (b) Whom did Jehovah favor, and with what result?

23. What must we do to live in God's new world? (Psalm 37:9-11; Matthew 5:5)

PEER PRESSURE

Can It Be to Your Advantage?

All of us are born with the basic desire to be accepted by our peers. Nobody wants to be disliked, rejected. Thus, to varying degrees, our peers influence us.

A PEER is defined as “one that is of equal standing with another; . . . one belonging to the same societal group, esp[ecially] based on age, grade, or status.” Peer pressure, in turn, is the force exerted on us by our peers, so that, consciously or unconsciously, we conform to their way of thinking or acting. Peer pressure is usually seen in a negative light. Yet, as we shall see, we can turn it to our advantage.

Influence on All Age Groups

Peer pressure is not limited to the young; it affects all age groups. Its influence is manifest when we find ourselves asking such questions as: “Others are doing it, why can’t I?” “Why do I always have to be different?” “What will others think or say?” “All my friends are dating and getting married, but I’m not. Is something wrong with me?”

While the pressure to conform affects all age groups, it tends to be more intense during adolescence. *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that “most adolescents become deeply involved with their *peer group*—that is, their circle of friends and acquaintances. These teenagers look to their peer group, rather than to their parents, for approval, and they may change their behavior to

win that approval.” Teenagers, it adds, “assume they are developing normally if their peers accept and like them.” To that end they “become absorbed in matters they think affect their popularity, such as their style of dress, leadership ability, and success in dating.”

Married couples may find that their decisions about what kind of home to buy or rent, what kind of car to drive, whether to have children or not, and many other matters are influenced by peer pressure—what is acceptable in their community, among their associates or ethnic group. Some families even go deep in debt just to keep up materially with neighbors and peers. Yes, our goals, our thinking, and our decisions often betray the subtle power of peer pressure. In view of its power, can we deal with peer pressure in an advantageous way, to help us along in the direction we want to go? Indeed, we can!

Tapping Into Wholesome Peer Influence

Doctors and other health professionals know the value of surrounding their patients with positive people and other healthful influences. Such an environment can be a stimulus to recovery. People who have lost a limb, for example,

are often helped through the long process of physical rehabilitation and emotional recovery by the good example and encouragement of others who have suffered similarly. Clearly, immersing oneself in a wholesome environment that includes optimistic, positive role models is a way of tapping into the right kind of peer pressure.

This principle also holds true in the Christian congregation, for positive peer influence is one of the reasons Jehovah has directed his people to gather together regularly. God urges us to 'incite one another to love and fine works and to encourage one another.' (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Such encouragement is invaluable because of the many negative and hurtful pressures in today's world. As a result of these pressures, Christians have to 'exert themselves vigorously' to stay spiritually strong. (Luke 13:24) Thus, we need and appreciate the loving support from fellow believers. In addition, some may have to endure 'thorns in the flesh,' perhaps illness or disability. (2 Corinthians 12:7) Others may be struggling to overcome bad habits or depression, or they may find it difficult to keep up with the demands of life. We are wise, therefore, to surround ourselves with people who stay close to Jehovah God and who enjoy serving him. Such peers will buoy us up and help us 'endure faithfully to the end.'—Matthew 24:13.

By choosing the right peers, then, we can control the influence they exert on us. Additionally, the fine spiritual food and practical guidance dispensed at Christian meetings reinforce the personal encouragement we receive from our peers.

Of course, getting to Christian meetings is not always easy. Some may get little or no support from marriage mates, others may have children to get ready, and transportation may be a problem for still others. But think: If you do not allow these obstacles

to stop you, then *your* example may inspire others who may be contending with similar circumstances. In other words, you and others like you provide not just a fine example but also a wholesome form of peer influence—and that without any hint of coercion.

In fact, the apostle Paul, who himself had to contend with many hardships and obstacles, encouraged Christians to imitate his fine example and that of other mature Christians. He said: "Unitedly become imitators of me, brothers, and keep your eye on those who are walking in a way that accords with the example you have in us." (Philippians 3:17; 4:9) The early Christians in Thessalonica looked to Paul's fine example. Of them Paul wrote: "You became imitators of us and of the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, so that you came to be an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia." (1 Thessalonians 1:6, 7) Our positive attitude and example can have a similar effect on those with whom we associate.

Avoid Negative Influences

If we want to avoid unwholesome peer pressure, we must resist the influence of 'those who walk in accord with the flesh.' (Romans 8:4, 5; 1 John 2:15-17) Otherwise, hurtful peer pressure will steer us away from Jehovah and his wise counsel. Proverbs 13:20 says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." Can you think of someone who fared badly because of unwholesome peer pressure? Some Christians, for example, have been led into materialism, immorality, or drug and alcohol abuse because of the influence of their peers.

Even within the Christian congregation, we can come under the influence of unwholesome peer pressure if we choose spiritually weak individuals as our close associates.



The congregation offers a wholesome form of peer influence

the *Awake!* magazine. Wholesome topics for discussion are truly endless, and by taking an interest in a broad range of subjects, we reflect a love of life and of Jehovah's handiwork.

Just as a good tennis player improves his game by playing with other good players, the right associates elevate us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. On the other hand, the wrong associates can lead us into a course of hypocrisy by encouraging us to lead a double life. How much better it is to enjoy a clean conscience along with self-respect!

Some Who Benefited

Most people find that learning the Bible's doctrines and its moral and spiritual requirements is not too difficult. What can be difficult, however, is putting these things into practice. As the following examples show, wholesome peer influence can help us serve Jehovah whole-souled.

One Witness who is in the full-time ministry with his wife said that the examples of his peers affected his goals in life. While he was growing up, he had to put up with unwholesome influences. But he chose as his friends those who encouraged him to be regular in the ministry and in attending Christian meetings. Sticking with these associates helped him along the path to spiritual maturity.

Another Witness writes: "After my wife and I got married, we moved to a congregation where a couple about our age were regular pioneers. Their example contributed toward our getting into the full-time ministry. Then we too worked on building up the pioneer spirit in the congregation. As a result, many joined us as pioneers."

(1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Thessalonians 3:14) Such ones often are not inclined to discuss spiritual matters; they may even ridicule those who enjoy such discussions. If we choose these ones as our close associates, peer pressure may force us into a similar mold, and soon we might find our thinking and attitude reflecting theirs. We may even begin to think negatively of those who are genuine in their faith and who are trying to make spiritual advancement.—1 Timothy 4:15.

How much wiser it is to cultivate friendships with those who strive to please Jehovah, who delight in spiritual matters! Such associates will help us reflect "the wisdom from above." It "is first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, . . . not hypocritical." (James 3:17) This does not mean that spiritually-minded people are incapable of talking about anything other than spiritual matters. On the contrary! Just think of the variety of interesting subjects that are considered in Watch Tower publications like

**Parents, encourage your children to mix
with upbuilding peers**

Association with those who have theocratic goals can make obedience to Jehovah easier. This is another beneficial effect of wholesome peer influence. A Witness who started in the full-time ministry as a young man and later became a traveling overseer now serves at one of the branch offices of the Watch Tower Society. He writes: "Some of my earliest and fondest childhood memories are of full-time servants visiting our home. There was always room for one more chair at our dining-room table. One circuit overseer gave me a witnessing bag when I was ten years old. I treasure that bag to this day."

Reflecting on his teenage years, this Witness adds: "Many of the young men in the congregation wanted to be involved in congregation activities, and their example incited others of us to desire the same." Wholesome peers helped this youth, like a sprout, grow into a fine, tree-like Christian man. Parents, do you invite to your home those who can have a positive, upbuilding influence on your children?—Malachi 3:16.

Of course, not all of us can share in the full-time ministry like the individuals just



mentioned. But all of us can learn to love Jehovah 'with our whole heart, soul, and mind.' (Matthew 22:37) Our choice of peers plays a major role in our developing that love and, thereby, in our prospects for everlasting life.

The psalmist gave a simple but effective formula for true success in life: "Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones, and in the way of sinners has not stood, and in the seat of ridiculers has not sat. But his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed."—Psalm 1:1-3.

What a wonderful guarantee! Even though we are imperfect and make mistakes, our life will be successful if we let Jehovah guide us and if we liberally tap into that God-given reservoir of wholesome peer influence—"the entire association of [our] brothers in the world."—1 Peter 5:9.

In Our Next Issue

Enjoy "the Real Life"

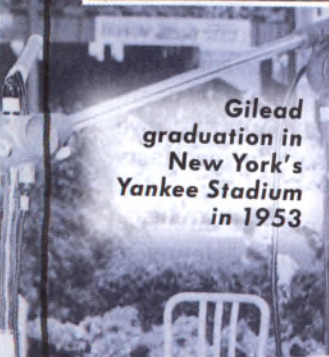
Keep Anger From Stumbling You

Living by Faith in God's Promises

GLADLY ACCEPTING JEHOVAH'S DIRECTION

AS TOLD BY ULYSSES V. GLASS

It was an extraordinary occasion. There were just 127 students in the graduating class, but in attendance was an enthusiastic audience of 126,387, who had come from scores of nations. It was the graduation of the 21st class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, held in New York City's Yankee Stadium on July 19, 1953. Why was that such a significant event in my life? Let me provide a little background.



Gilead
graduation in
New York's
Yankee Stadium
in 1953



Gertrude, me, Kathryn, and Russell



Working with N. H. Knorr (far left)
and M. G. Henschel in convention
organization



In the WBBR broadcasting studio



GILEAD



GILEAD

I WAS born in Vincennes, Indiana, U.S.A., on February 17, 1912, about two years before the birth of the Messianic Kingdom, as described at Revelation 12:1-5. The preceding year my parents had begun studying the Bible along with the volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Every Sunday morning, Dad read to the family from one of those books, and then we talked about it.

Mother used what she was learning to help shape the thinking of her children. She was a very nice person—so kind, so willing to help. There came to be four of us children, but Mother's love reached out to include other children from the neighborhood. She spent time with us. She enjoyed telling us Bible stories and singing with us.

She also invited to our home various ones who were serving full-time in the ministry. They stayed for just a day or two, often holding meetings and giving talks in our home. We especially liked those who used illustrations and told us stories. On one occasion in 1919, about a year after the first world war had ended, the visiting brother directed his comments especially to us children. He discussed consecration—what we now more accurately refer to as dedication—and helped us to understand how it affected our lives. Later that evening when I went to bed, I prayed to my heavenly Father and told him that I wanted to serve him always.

However, after 1922 other concerns in life tended to push that resolve into the background. We moved from one place to another and had no association with a congregation of Jehovah's people. Father was away because of his work with the railroad. Our study of the Bible was irregular. I took school courses with a view to becoming a commercial artist and was making plans to go to an outstanding university.

Adjusting My Focus in Life

During the mid-1930's, the world again began to move toward global war. We were

living in Cleveland, Ohio, when one of Jehovah's Witnesses called at our door. We began to think more seriously about what we had learned as children. My older brother, Russell, was especially serious-minded, and he was first to get baptized. I was a bit more of a stray horse, but on February 3, 1936, I too got baptized. My appreciation of what dedication to Jehovah involves was growing, and I was learning to accept Jehovah's direction. That same year my two sisters, Kathryn and Gertrude, also got baptized. All of us took up full-time service as pioneers.

That, however, did not mean that we never thought about anything else. My ears pricked right up when my sister-in-law told me about a very pretty girl named Ann who was "just flying" since she had heard about the truth and who was going to come to meetings at our house. At that time Ann was working as a secretary in a legal office, and within a year she got baptized. I had not planned to get married, but it was evident that Ann was 100 percent for the truth. She wanted to be fully involved in Jehovah's service. She was never one to say, "Can I do it?" Instead, she would ask, "What is the best way for me to go about doing it?" And she was determined to follow through. That positive outlook appealed to me. Besides that, she was very pretty, and she still is. She became my wife, and soon she became my partner in the pioneer service.

Valuable Training as Pioneers

As pioneers we learned the secret of how to be content both when we were low on provisions and when we had an abundance. (Philippians 4:11-13) It was getting toward evening one day, and we had had nothing to eat. We had only five cents between us. We went into a butcher shop, and I asked, "Could you give us five cents' worth of bologna?" He looked at us and then cut four slices. I am sure that it was more than five cents' worth, and it gave us some nourishment.

It was not unusual to encounter severe opposition as we carried out our ministry. In a town near Syracuse, New York, we were on the street distributing handbills and wearing placards to draw attention to a special public meeting. Two burly fellows grabbed me and got a bit rough. One was a police officer, but he was not wearing his uniform, and he ignored my request to see his badge. Just then, Grant Suiter from Brooklyn Bethel came along and said that we would go to the police station to work things out. Then he phoned the Society's office in Brooklyn, and two of us were instructed to go out again on that same day with placards and handbills to provide the basis for a test case. As expected, we were arrested. However, when we told the police that they were going to be sued for false arrest, they let us go.

The next day a bunch of rowdy teenagers invaded our assembly place at the instigation of a priest, and the police were nowhere to be seen. The hoodlums banged baseball bats on the wooden floor, threw some of the audience down from the bleachers, and got up on the platform, where they held up an American flag and shouted, "Salute it! Salute it!" Then they started singing the "Beer Barrel Polka." They completely broke up the meeting. We were getting firsthand experience in what Jesus meant when he said: "Because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you."—John 15:19.

The public talk was actually a transcription of a discourse by J. F. Rutherford, who was then president of the Watch Tower Society. Ann and I stayed in that town for a few days and called on people to offer them the opportunity to hear the talk in their homes. A few accepted that offer.

Volunteering for Foreign Service

In time, new avenues of service opened up. My brother, Russell, and his wife, Doro-

thy, were invited as a couple to attend the first class of Gilead School, in 1943, and then were sent as missionaries to Cuba. My sister Kathryn was in the fourth class. She too was assigned to Cuba. She was later reassigned to the Dominican Republic and then to Puerto Rico. What about Ann and me?

When we heard about Gilead School and the fact that the Society wanted to send missionaries to other lands, we felt that we would like to make ourselves available for foreign service. At first, we considered going on our own, perhaps to Mexico. But then we decided that it would probably be better to wait and let the Society assign us after we had attended Gilead School. We realized that this was an arrangement that Jehovah was using.

We were invited to the fourth class of Gilead School. But shortly before the class was to begin, N. H. Knorr, who was president of the Watch Tower Society at that time, became more keenly aware of the limitations that Ann had because of childhood polio. He spoke to me about it and decided that it would not be wise to send us to serve in another country.

About two years later, when I was doing preconvention work, Brother Knorr saw me again and asked whether we were still interested in attending Gilead. He told me that we would not be going to a foreign assignment; he had something else in mind. So when the ninth class registered on February 26, 1947, we were included in the student body.

Those days at Gilead were ones never to be forgotten. The courses were spiritually rich. Lifelong friendships were made. But my involvement with the school extended far beyond that.

Between Washington and Gilead

Gilead School was still relatively new. The United States government was not suf-



In the Gilead classroom

ficiently acquainted with the objectives of the school, so many questions were being raised. The Society wanted to have a representative in Washington, D.C. That was where we were sent a few months after graduating from Gilead. I was to assist in obtaining visas for those who were invited to come to Gilead from other countries and in obtaining legal papers so that the graduates could be sent abroad for missionary work. Some officials were very fair-minded and helpful. Others had strong anti-Witness feelings. A few who had strong political views asserted that we had connections with elements that they considered to be undesirable.

One man to whose office I went strongly criticized us because we do not salute the flag or go to war. After he had ranted about that for some time, I finally said: "I want you to know, and you do know, that Jehovah's Witnesses are not involved in a war with anybody in the world. We're not involved in the affairs of the world. We're not involved in their wars, their politics. We are totally neutral. We have already conquered the problems that you're facing; we have unity in our organization. . . . Now, what do you want us to do? Do you want us to go back to your way of doing things and drop ours?" He did not say anything after that.

Two full days a week were set aside for the work with government offices. In addition to that, we were serving as special pioneers. Back then, this involved spending 175 hours in the field ministry each month (later it was changed to 140 hours), so we were often out in the service till late in the evening. We had a good time. We conducted many fine studies with entire families, and they made good progress. Ann and I had decided not to have children, but spiritually speaking, we have had not only children but also grandchildren and great-grandchildren. What a joy they are to our hearts!

Late in 1948, I received a further assignment. Brother Knorr explained that Brother Schroeder, the registrar and one of the instructors at Gilead School, was going to be busy with other important work, so I was asked to teach Gilead classes when necessary. With my heart in my mouth, I arrived back at Gilead, in South Lansing, New York, with Ann on December 18. At first, we were at Gilead for just a few weeks at a time, and then we would go back to Washington. Eventually, however, I was spending more time at Gilead than I was in Washington.

It was during this period, as I mentioned earlier, that the 21st class of Gilead graduated at Yankee Stadium in New York. So as one of the instructors, I was privileged to share in that graduation program.

Service at the World Headquarters

On February 12, 1955, another service assignment began for us. We became members of the Bethel family at the world headquarters of Jehovah's visible organization. But what would it involve? Basically, being willing to do whatever was assigned to us, sharing in projects that required cooperation with others. Of course, we had done that before, but now we would be part of a much larger group—the headquarters Bethel family. We gladly accepted this new assignment as an evidence of Jehovah's direction.

A major part of my work involved matters in connection with news service. Because of the desire for sensational stories and because of getting information from prejudiced sources, the press had written some nasty things about Jehovah's Witnesses. We endeavored to improve that situation.

Brother Knorr wanted to be sure that we all had plenty to do, so there were other assignments too. Some of these drew on my training as a commercial artist. Others involved the Society's radio station, WBBR. There was work to do in connection with motion pictures produced by the Society. Theocratic history was, of course, part of the Gilead course, but now various projects were undertaken to acquaint more of Jehovah's people with details of that history of the modern-day theocratic organization and to make this available to the public too. Another aspect of Gilead training involved public speaking, and work needed to be done to make more of the basics of public speaking available to the brothers in the congregations. So there was plenty to do.

Gilead on a Regular Basis

In 1961, with training of traveling overseers and branch personnel in the offing, Gilead School was moved to Brooklyn, where the Watch Tower Society has its principal offices. Again I was back in the classroom—this time not as a substitute instructor but as a regular member of the faculty. What a privilege! I am firmly convinced that Gilead School is a gift from Jehovah, a gift that has benefited his entire visible organization.

In Brooklyn the Gilead classes had opportunities unknown to students in previous classes. There were more guest lecturers and there was close association with the Governing Body and extensive fellowship with the headquarters Bethel family. It was also possible for the students to get training in office procedures, in Bethel home operations, and in various aspects of factory work.

Over the years the number of students varied, and so did the number of instructors. The location of the school changed several times too. Now it is in lovely surroundings in Patterson, New York.

Working With the Students

It has been such a joy to teach these classes! Here are young people who are not interested in doing things in the old system. They leave behind their family, their friends, their home, and people who speak their language. The climate, the food—everything is going to be different. They do not even know what country they will be going to, but their goal is to be missionaries. You do not have to motivate people of that sort.

When I went into the classroom, it was always my aim to make the students feel at ease. No one learns well when he is tense and worried. True, I was the instructor, but I knew what it was like to be a student. I sat in those seats once. Of course, they studied

hard and learned a lot at Gilead, but I also wanted them to have a good time.

I knew that when they went to their assignments, there would be certain things that they needed in order to succeed. They needed strong faith. They needed humility—lots of it. They needed to learn to get along with other people, to accept situations, to forgive freely. They needed to keep on cultivating the fruitage of the spirit. They also needed to love people and to love the work that they had been sent to do. Those are the things that I constantly tried to keep before the students while they were at Gilead.

I really do not know how many students I have taught. But I know how I feel about them. After spending five months with them in the classroom, I could not help getting attached to them. Then when I watched them walk across the platform and receive their diplomas on graduation day, I knew that they had successfully completed the course and that soon they would be leaving. It was like having part of my family go. How could you keep yourself from loving people who were willing to give of themselves and do the work that these young folk would be doing?

Years later, when they come back to visit, I hear them tell of their joys in the service, and I know that they are still in their assignments, doing what they were trained to do. How does that make me feel? I tell you, it is a good feeling.



With Ann, not too long ago

Looking to the Future

My eyes have grown dim now, and I experience the frustrations that this brings. No longer am I able to teach in the Gilead classroom. At first, that was a hard adjustment to make, but throughout my life I have learned to accept situations and live with them. I often think of the apostle Paul and his "thorn in the flesh." Three times Paul prayed for relief from that affliction, but the Lord told him: "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Paul continued to live with it. If he could do it, I ought to try. Though I no longer

handle class sessions, I am grateful that I can still see the students come and go each day. Sometimes I am able to talk with them, and it brings joy to my heart to think of the fine spirit that they show.

What the future holds is wonderful to contemplate. A foundation is being laid now. Gilead has had a prominent part in it. Beyond the great tribulation, when the scrolls referred to at Revelation 20:12 are opened, there will be a thousand years of further intensive education in Jehovah's ways. (Isaiah 11:9) But even that is not the end. It really is only a beginning. Throughout eternity, there will be more to learn about Jehovah and more to do as we see his purposes unfold. I am fully confident that Jehovah will fulfill all the grand promises that he has made, and I want to be there to share in accepting Jehovah's directions for us then.



RACISM AND RELIGION

“WHEN I came to the U.S. in 1978, I believed that America had long since resolved its racial problems, that blacks were equal citizens,” stated Mark Mathabane, a South African-born author, in an interview by *Time* magazine. “In many ways, I found that to be true. The U.S. seemed to be a hundred years ahead of South Africa. Then I discovered, to my horror, that not much had changed in people’s hearts.” What brought him to that startling discovery?

“One of the most segregated hours in America is 11 a.m. on Sunday,” said Mathabane. He noted that even in church, people cannot bring themselves to join in worship with those of another race. “How can



they feel on the other days of the week?” he asked. Calling for education as a catalyst for change, Mathabane said: “With education you are made to accept the universality of human beings.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses agree that education is the answer, but they especially recommend education based on God’s Word. Yes, the Bible helps them to break down

the barriers of racial prejudice—even in lands where ethnic hatred is rampant. Each week in their Kingdom Halls, people of various races and nationalities gather together to be educated in the laws and principles of God’s Word, the Bible. No collections are taken at these meetings. You are welcome to attend!