

THE WATCHTOWER

OCTOBER 15, 1999

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WILL
Aging
AND
Death
EVER
End?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

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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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Our Quest for a LONGER LIFE

EVEN today few would contradict this reflection on the brevity of life, though it was written some 3,500 years ago. People have always found it unsatisfactory to taste the prime of life briefly and then to grow old and die. Therefore, methods to prolong life have proliferated throughout history.

In Job's time Egyptians ate the testicles of animals in a vain attempt to regain their youth. One of the prime objectives of medieval alchemy was to produce an elixir that could lead to longer life. Many alchemists believed that artificially produced gold would give immortal life and that eating from golden plates would prolong life. Ancient Chinese Taoists reckoned that they could alter the body's chemistry by using such techniques as meditation, breathing exercises, and diet and thus obtain immortality.

The Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León is known for his insatiable search for the fountain of youth. An 18th-century doctor recommended in his book *Hermippus Redivivus* that young virgins be kept in a small room in springtime and their exhalations collected in bottles and used as a life-extending potion. Needless to say, none

"Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation. Like a blossom he has come forth and is cut off, and he runs away like the shadow and does not keep existing."—Job 14:1, 2.

of these methods had any success.

Today, some 3,500 years after Moses recorded Job's statement, man has walked on the moon, invented cars and computers, and investigated the atom and the cell. Yet, despite all such technological advances, we are still "short-lived and glutted with agitation." It is true that in developed countries the life expectancy has increased dramatically over the last century. But this is mainly the result of improved health care, more efficient hygienic measures, and better nutrition. For example, from the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 1990's, the average life span in Sweden rose from 40 to 75 years for men and from 44 to 80 years for women. But does this mean that man's urge to live longer has been satisfied?

No, because even though in some countries more people live to see old age, the words Moses wrote years ago still apply: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years . . . , for it must quickly pass by, and away we fly." (Psalm 90: 10) In the near future, will we see a change? Will man be able to live significantly longer? The next article will discuss such questions.

How Can the Quest for Longer Life SUCCEED?



SOME cherish the hope that the new millennium will see a breakthrough in man's efforts to prolong life. Dr. Ronald Klatz is one of them. He is president of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, an organization of physicians and scientists dedicated to extending the human life span. He and his colleagues plan to live a very long time. "I'm looking at a life span of 130 years, at a minimum," says Dr. Klatz. "We believe that aging is not inevitable. Technology exists now which can slow, stop and perhaps even reverse significantly the physical deterioration and disease which are currently called natural aging." Dr. Klatz himself takes about 60 pills each day in his quest to prolong life.

Hormone Therapy and Genetics —Reasons for Hope?

Hormone therapy is one field that inspires hope. Experiments with the hormone known as DHEA seem to slow down the aging process in laboratory animals.

Concerning the plant hormone kinetin, the Swedish daily *Aftonbladet* quoted Dr. Suresh Rattan, a professor at Aarhus University, Denmark, as saying: "Tests in our laboratory show that human skin cells cultivated in kinetin do

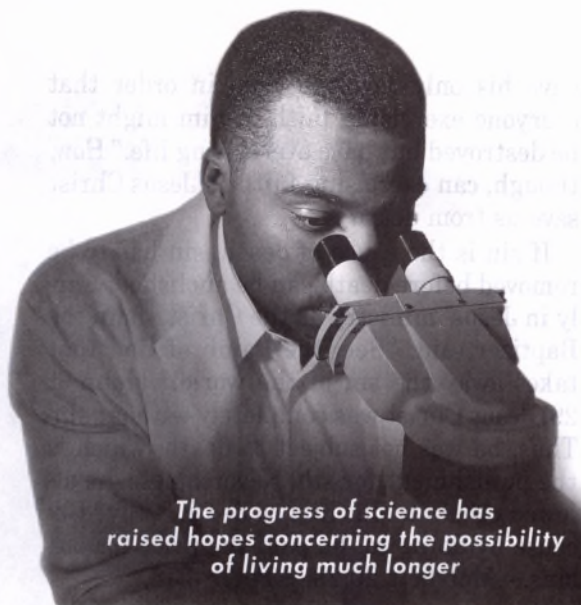
not change in the normal age-related way. They stay young throughout their lives." Insects treated with the hormone are said to live from 30 to 45 percent longer than normal.

Melatonin treatments are said to have extended the life span of mice by as much as 25 percent. Moreover, the mice appeared younger, healthier, and more vigorous.

Advocates of human growth hormone (hGH) claim that it contributes to glowing skin, increased muscle mass, elevated sex drive, a lighter mood, sharper mental acuity, and the metabolism of a teenager.

Many also look to genetics. Scientists have reckoned that by manipulating genes, they can control the life span of a nematode, or roundworm. In fact, they have succeeded in keeping some of them alive for six times their normal life span. This has raised hopes of finding and manipulating similar genes in humans. *Time* magazine quoted Dr. Siegfried Hekimi of McGill University, Montreal, as saying: "If we find all of the hu-





The progress of science has raised hopes concerning the possibility of living much longer

man clock genes, we can perhaps slow them down just a little, so we can extend life.”

Biologists have long known that an end section of chromosomes, the so-called telomere, is shortened each time the cell reproduces. When the telomere loses about 20 percent of its length, the cell’s ability to reproduce is shut off and it dies. A particular enzyme called telomerase can restore the telomere to full length, thus allowing the cell to keep dividing. In most cells this enzyme is repressed and inactive, but active telomerase has been successfully inserted into certain cells, making them grow and divide far beyond the normal number of times.

According to researchers, this opens up sensational possibilities in fighting age-related diseases. What about replacing the body’s stem cells (cells that provide for the regeneration of body tissue) with stem cells that have been “immortalized” with active telomerase? Dr. William A. Haseltine says: “This is a clearly articulated vision of human immortality that will be introduced slowly over the next 50 years.”—*The New York Times*.

Do Nanotechnology and Cryonics Hold the Answer?

Nanotechnology, the science of engineering at a nanometer (a billionth of a meter) level, is also inspiring hope. Visionaries in that field claim that computerized machines, far smaller than cells, may in the future be engineered to operate at a molecular level to repair and rejuvenate aging cells, tissues, and organs. At an anti-aging conference, one researcher suggested that 21st-century physicians might employ nanotechnology to enable man to become physically immortal.

Cryonics is the practice of freezing human bodies in hopes that science will be able to revive dead cells, thus bringing them back to life again. The whole body, or just the brain, can be frozen. One man even had a bed sheet frozen. Why a sheet? It belonged to a missing friend and contained some skin cells and a few hairs. He wanted them frozen in order to give his friend the chance of returning to life if science reaches the point of reconstructing people from just a few or even one of their cells.

Where Should We Put Our Trust?

Man has a natural desire to live, not die. Therefore, scientific progress in this domain is readily hailed and associated with high hopes. But so far there is no hard evidence that DHEA, kinetin, melatonin, hGH, or any other substance can actually retard aging in humans. Skeptics fear that manipulating the telomerase in cells will do nothing but create potential cancer cells. And the use of nanotechnology and cryonics is still more science fiction than reality.

Science has contributed to, and may still contribute to, a longer and healthier life for some, but it will never give anybody eternal life. Why not? Simply put, it is because the

root cause of aging and death lies beyond the realm of human science.

The Root Cause of Aging and Death

Most scientists agree that aging and death seem somehow programmed into our genes. The question is: When, how, and why did they enter our genetic code, as it were?

The Bible gives us the simple answer—even though it does not present it in terms of genetics or DNA. Romans 5:12 reads: “That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”

The first man, Adam, had the prospect of living forever. His body was designed with the necessary faculties to live and enjoy eternal life. Eternal life was conditional, though. Adam had to collaborate with and be obedient to the Source of life, his Creator, in order to maintain his life perpetually.—Genesis 1:31; 2:15-17.

Adam chose to disobey the Creator. In effect, Adam claimed that man is better off ruling himself independent of God. Thus he sinned. From that point onward, it was as if his genetic code was altered. Instead of passing on everlasting life as an inheritance to his offspring, Adam transmitted sin and death.—Genesis 3:6, 19; Romans 6:23.

The True Hope

That situation, however, was not to be permanent. Romans 8:20 says: “The creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will but through him that subjected it, on the basis of hope.” Man’s Creator, Jehovah God, subjected humans to death because they sinned against him, but when doing this he also established a basis for hope.

This basis was clearly identified when Jesus Christ came to earth. John 3:16 says: “For God loved the world so much that he

gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” How, though, can exercising faith in Jesus Christ save us from death?

If sin is the cause of death, sin has to be removed before death can be abolished. Early in Jesus’ ministry as the Christ, John the Baptizer said: “See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Jesus Christ was completely without sin. Thus, he was not subject to death, which is the punishment for sin. Nevertheless, he allowed others to put him to death. Why? Because by doing so, he paid the price for our sins.—Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 3:18.

With that price paid, the possibility of living without ever dying was opened up for all those exercising faith in Jesus. Science may contribute to prolonging our lives to a very limited extent, but exercising faith in Jesus is the real way to everlasting life. Jesus gained such life in heaven, and his faithful apostles and some others will too. Yet, for most of us who exercise faith in Jesus, everlasting life will be on earth, when Jehovah God has restored the earthly Paradise.—Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:48, 49; 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Everlasting Life on a Paradise Earth

One man asked: “How many people will find it worth while living once they don’t have to die?” Will life without death be boring? The Bible assures us that it will not. “Everything he has made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Jehovah God’s creation is so rich and complex that it will continue to intrigue us, stimulate us, and make us happy as long as we live—even forever.



A man who studied the bird known as the Siberian Jay called it “an extraordinary, enchanting acquaintance” and claimed that observing the bird was one of the most enjoyable experiences of his life. The more he studied the bird, the more intriguing he found it. He said that even after 18 years, his study was far from finished. If one species of bird can intrigue, stimulate, and keep an intelligent man happy during an 18-year-long intense study, just imagine the potential for joy and satisfaction that there must be in studying the entire earthly creation.

Picture all the interesting fields of science that will open up to someone who is not re-

Eternity is the only time measure that can do justice to the possibilities life has to offer

stricted by time. Imagine all the fascinating places there will be to explore and all the interesting people there will be to meet. Try to grasp the endless possibilities to conceive, create, and construct things. There will be no limit to the opportunities for us to develop and make use of our creativity. When we reflect on the abundance of creation, it is obvious that eternity is the only time measure that can do justice to life’s possibilities.

The Bible shows that by means of a resurrection, living forever will also be extended to those who are dead. (John 5:28, 29) Many of the mysteries of history might become clear to us when those who experienced them can fill in the details and answer our questions. Think of all the insight on different periods of history that the resurrected ones

will supply.—Acts 24:15.

When contemplating that time, you can appreciate that the resurrected Job may want to revise the statement found at Job 14:1. Perhaps he will offer instead: ‘Man, born of woman, now lives forever and is filled with satisfaction.’

For those putting trust in Jehovah and exercising faith in Jesus, prolonging life beyond the limits of time is not just an elusive dream. It will soon become a reality. Aging and death will cease. This is in line with Psalm 68:20, which says: “To Jehovah the Sovereign Lord belong the ways out from death.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Kosovo, Lebanon, and Ireland. These are names that have often appeared in the news in recent years. They conjure up in people's minds scenes of bloodshed, bombings, and killings. Of course, violent conflicts caused by religious, racial, ethnic, or other differences are

not new. In fact, the pages of history are filled with them, and they have brought untold sufferings to mankind.



Learning the Excelling Way of LOVE

SEEING that there have been wars throughout history, many have come to the conclusion that wars are really inevitable and that it is natural for humans to hate one another. Such views, however, are entirely contrary to the teachings of God's Word, the Bible. The Scriptures declare unequivocally: "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8) It is clear that the Creator wants humans to love one another.

The Bible also reveals that man was created in God's image. (Genesis 1:26, 27) This means that mankind is endowed with the capacity to reflect God's qualities, the most prominent of which is love. Since this is so, why have humans failed so miserably in showing love to one another throughout history? Again, the Bible provides insight. It is because the first human pair, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God and fell into sin. As a result, all their offspring inherited sin and imperfection. Romans 3:23 explains: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Our God-given ability to love is marred by our inherited sin and imperfection. Does this mean that humans are inca-

pable of loving one another anymore? What hope is there that we will ever enjoy a peaceful, loving relationship with our fellowmen?

We Must Learn to Love God

Jehovah God knows that in spite of everything, mankind is still capable of showing love. That is why he requires all who want to please him to manifest love to the best of their ability. This requirement was made clear by God's Son, Jesus Christ, when he was asked to name the greatest commandment in the Law given to Israel. He said: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment." Then he added: "The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments the whole Law hangs." —Matthew 22:37-40.

Many people feel, however, that it is very difficult to love someone whom they cannot see, and we humans cannot see Jehovah God because he is a Spirit. (John 4:24) Still, we are affected every day by what God does, as we all depend on the many good things



he created for our benefit. The apostle Paul pointed out this fact when he said: “[God] did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer.”—Acts 14:17.

Even though everyone benefits from the Creator’s provisions in one way or another, comparatively few are grateful to him or are moved to give thanks to him. Thus, we need to take stock of all the good things that God has done for us and to meditate on the wonderful qualities that permeate all that he does. Doing so should enable us to discern the awe-inspiring wisdom and power of our Grand Creator. (Isaiah 45:18) Above all, it should help us to see what a loving God he is, in that he not only granted us life but also made it possible for us to enjoy the many pleasures of living.

For example, think of the endless variety of beautiful flowers that God created on earth. How wonderful for us that he also endowed us with the ability to see and to derive great pleasure from these things of beauty! Similarly, God provided all sorts of nourishing food for our sustenance. How thoughtful of him that he also created in us

the sense of taste so that we can experience such enjoyment from eating! Are these not eloquent proofs that God truly loves us and has our best interests in mind?—Psalm 145:16, 17; Isaiah 42:5, 8.

Besides revealing himself to us through the “book of nature,” the Creator, through his Word, the Bible, shows us what kind of God he is. This is because in the Bible are recorded many of the loving things Jehovah God did in the past and the numerous blessings he promises to bestow upon mankind in the near future. (Genesis 22:17, 18; Exodus 3:17; Psalm 72:6-16; Revelation 21:4, 5) Above all, the Bible reveals to us the greatest expression of God’s love toward mankind—giving his only-begotten Son to be our Redeemer so that we can be freed from the bondage of sin and death. (Romans 5:8) Indeed, the more we learn about our loving Creator, the more we are moved to love him from our heart.

Learning to Love Our Fellow Humans

As Jesus pointed out, in addition to loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we should love our neighbor as ourselves. In fact, the love of God obligates us to love our fellow humans. The apostle John explained: “Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to



Christian love can be shown by acts of kindness

love one another.” He further emphasized: “If anyone makes the statement: ‘I love God,’ and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that the one who loves God should be loving his brother also.” —1 John 4:11, 20, 21.

Today we are living in a world where most people show a me-first attitude, being “lovers of themselves,” just as the Bible foretold. (2 Timothy 3:2) Therefore, if we want to learn the excellent way of love, we have to put forth serious effort to make our minds over and imitate our loving Creator, rather than follow the selfish ways of people in general. (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:1) God is even “kind toward the unthankful and wicked,” and he “makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous.” Since our heavenly Father sets such a magnificent example for us, we should strive to be kind and helpful to all. By doing so, we can prove ourselves ‘sons of our loving heavenly Father.’—Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:45.

⦿ Sometimes such loving deeds result in

helping people become worshipers of the true God. Some years ago a housewife who is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses tried to share the Bible message with her neighbor, only to be firmly rebuffed. However, she was not discouraged by the response. Instead, she continued to show kindness and tried to be helpful to the neighbor. One time she helped the neighbor move to a different house. Another time she arranged for someone to accompany the neighbor to the airport to meet the latter’s relatives. Later, the neighbor accepted a Bible study and eventually became a zealous Christian despite very severe persecution from her husband. Yes, those expressions of love laid the groundwork for everlasting blessings.

If we are honest about it, we will admit that God’s love for us is not because we have an abundance of admirable qualities. On the contrary, he loves us even though we have many faults and shortcomings. That being so, we should likewise learn to love our fellow humans despite their many failings. If we train ourselves to discern and appreciate

the fine qualities of others rather than looking for their faults, we will find it much easier to feel love toward them. What we feel toward them may even go beyond the love governed by principle and include the warm affection and fondness that exists between close friends.

Letting Your Love Grow

Love and friendship need to be nurtured and cultivated, and among the essential ingredients for this are sincerity and honesty. Some try to hide their shortcomings in order to leave a favorable impression with the people they want to befriend. However, such a course often backfires, as others eventually find out the facts and are repelled by such dishonesty. Therefore, we should not be afraid to allow others to know us as we truly are—even though we have shortcomings that we are striving to overcome. This may help to open up friendships with them.

For instance, an elderly Witness sister in a congregation in the Far East has had very little education. Yet, she never tries to hide that fact from others. She frankly admits, for example, that she is not able to demonstrate to others how to establish from Bible prophecies and history that the Gentile Times ended in 1914.* However, she sets such a fine example in zeal for the ministry, as well as in love and generosity for the brothers, that she is affectionately referred to as the jewel of the congregation.

In some cultures, showing affection openly is frowned upon; people are taught to keep up a polite formality in their dealings with others. While it is always good to be courteous and considerate, we should not allow our politeness to stifle or hide our feelings toward others. Jehovah did not feel ashamed to profess his affection for his chosen people, ancient Israel, saying to them:

* For details, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 132-5.

“With a love to time indefinite I have loved you.” (Jeremiah 31:3) Similarly, the apostle Paul told his fellow believers in Thessalonica: “Having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8) So as we endeavor to cultivate genuine affection for fellow humans, it is more in keeping with Bible teaching to let such feelings be naturally expressed rather than suppressed.

Continued Effort Required

Learning to feel and to show love toward others is an ongoing process. Doing so requires much effort on our part because we have to work hard to overcome our own imperfections as well as to resist the strong influence of this loveless world. However, the rich rewards this brings makes it really worthwhile.—Matthew 24:12.

Even in this very imperfect world, we can enjoy improved relations with our fellowmen, resulting in much joy, peace, and satisfaction to ourselves and to others. By making such an effort, we can prove ourselves worthy of the wonderful hope of living forever in God’s new world. Above all, by learning the excelling way of love, we may gain the approval and blessings of our loving Creator, both now and for eternity!

In Our Next Issue

2000—A Marked Year?

Prepare for the Millennium
That Matters!

Benefits From Loving God’s Word

FORGIVE FROM YOUR HEART

"In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts."—MATTHEW 18:35.

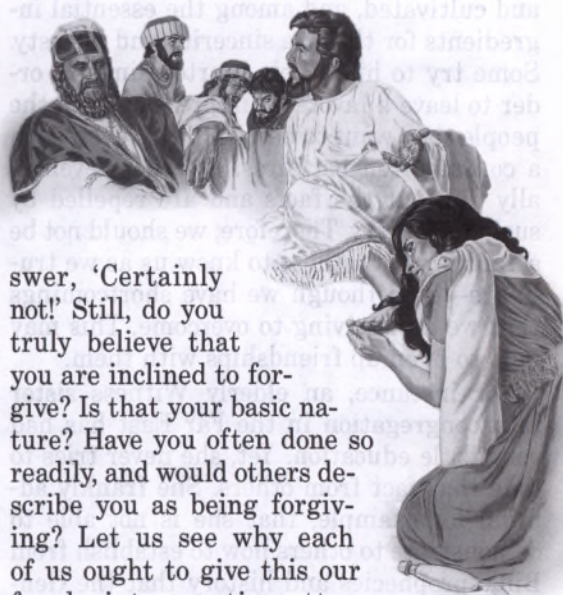
SHE was likely a prostitute, not someone you would expect to find in the home of a religious person. If some were shocked to see her there, what she did was more shocking. She approached the man with the highest morals and displayed her appreciation for his works, washing his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair.

² That man, Jesus, was not repelled by this woman, "known in the city to be a sinner." But Simon the Pharisee, whose home it was, was concerned that she was a sinner. Jesus responded by telling of two men in debt to a lender. One owed a lot—about two years' wages for a laborer. The other owed a tenth of that—less than three months' wages. When neither could repay, the lender "freely forgave them both." Clearly, the one forgiven more had greater reason to respond in love. After tying in the woman's kind act, Jesus added the principle: "He who is forgiven little, loves little." Then he told her: "Your sins are forgiven."—Luke 7: 36-48.

³ Ask yourself, 'Had I been that woman or if I were in a similar situation and mercy was shown me, would I then be harshly unforgiving toward others?' You might an-

1, 2. (a) How did a well-known sinner show her appreciation for Jesus? (b) What point did Jesus make in response?

3. What do we need to consider about ourselves?



swer, 'Certainly not!' Still, do you truly believe that you are inclined to forgive? Is that your basic nature? Have you often done so readily, and would others describe you as being forgiving? Let us see why each of us ought to give this our frank, introspective attention.

Forgiveness Needed —And Shown to Us

⁴ You are imperfect, as you know all too well. If asked, you would even admit it, perhaps recalling the words found at 1 John 1:8: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us." (Romans 3:23; 5:12) With some, sinfulness may have been manifested by gross, shocking sins. But even if you are not knowingly guilty of such, there certainly are many times and ways in which you

4. We should admit what fact about ourselves?

have fallen short of God's standards—you sinned. Is that not so?

⁵ Hence, your situation might correspond to the apostle Paul's description: "Though you were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcised state of your flesh, God made you alive together with him [Jesus]. He kindly forgave us all our trespasses." (Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 2:1-3) Note the phrase "forgave us *all* our trespasses." That covers a lot. Each of us has good reason to plead as did David: "For your name's sake, O Jehovah, you must even *forgive my error, for it is considerable*."—Psalm 25:11.

⁶ How can you—or any of us—receive forgiveness? A key is that Jehovah God is inclined to forgive. That is characteristic of his personality. (Exodus 34:6, 7; Psalm 86:5) Understandably, God expects us to turn to him in prayer and ask his pardon, ask that he forgive us. (2 Chronicles 6:21; Psalm 103: 3, 10, 14) And he has arranged a legal basis for extending such forgiveness—Jesus' ransom sacrifice.—Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 John 4:9, 14.

⁷ You should see in God's willingness to forgive a pattern as to how you ought to treat other humans. Paul focused on this, writing: "Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32) There is no doubt that Paul's point involves our learning from God's example, for the next verse continues: "Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children." (Ephesians 5:1) Do you see the link? Jehovah God forgave you, so—Paul forcefully reasons—you need to imitate Him and be "tenderly compas-

5. For what should we be grateful to God?

6. What can we be sure of with regard to Jehovah and forgiveness?

7. In what way should you want to imitate Jehovah?

sionate, freely forgiving" of others. But ask yourself, 'Am I doing that? If it is not my nature, am I working in that direction, really striving to imitate God in being forgiving?'

We Need to Work at Being Forgiving

⁸ It would be nice to think that in the Christian congregation, there are few occasions when we have to practice the godly course of forgiving. The reality is otherwise. Granted, our Christian brothers and sisters are striving to follow Jesus' pattern of love. (John 13:35; 15:12, 13; Galatians 6:2) They have long worked, and are still working, to abandon ways of thinking, speaking, and acting common to this wicked world. They truly want to manifest the new personality. (Colossians 3:9, 10) Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that the global congregation, and each local congregation, is composed of imperfect humans. Overall, they are certainly better than they once were, yet they are still imperfect.

⁹ In the Bible, God deliberately tells us that we can expect imperfection in the congregation, among our brothers and sisters. Consider, for instance, Paul's words recorded at Colossians 3:13: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also."

¹⁰ Significantly, the Bible here reminds us of the link between God's forgiving of us and our duty and need to be forgiving toward others. Why is this a challenge? Because Paul admitted that someone may have "a cause for complaint against another." He realized that such causes would exist.

8. We should recognize what as to the composition of our congregation?

9, 10. Why should we not be surprised if problems arise between brothers?

They must have existed in the first century, even among Christian “holy ones,” who had a ‘hope reserved for them in the heavens.’ (Colossians 1:2, 5) So can we imagine that it would be otherwise today when most true Christians do not have the testimony of the spirit that they are “God’s chosen ones, holy and loved”? (Colossians 3:12) Hence, we should not conclude that something is exceptionally wrong if in our congregation there are causes for complaint—hurt feelings over real or supposed wrongs.

¹¹ The words of Jesus’ half brother James also show that we must expect that we may at least occasionally encounter situations that call on us to forgive our brothers. “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and contentiousness in your hearts, do not be bragging and lying against the truth.” (James 3:13, 14) “Bitter jealousy and contentiousness” in the hearts of true Christians? Yes, James’ words clearly suggest that such had surfaced in the first-century congregation and will do so today.

¹² A real example involved two anointed Christians who had a fine reputation for exerting themselves side by side with Paul. You may recall reading about Euodia and Syntyche, members of the Philippian congregation. Though not describing the matter in detail, Philippians 4:2, 3 shows that there was some problem between them. Did it begin with a thoughtless, unkind comment, a perceived slight of a relative, or some evidence of competitive jealousy? Whatever its nature, it became so serious that Paul heard about it far away in Rome.

11. To what did the disciple James alert us?

12. What problem arose in the ancient Philippian congregation?

Icy silence may have developed between the two spiritual sisters, leading to their keeping each other at a distance at the meetings or making harsh comments about the other to their friends.

¹³ Does any of that sound familiar, like what occurred between some in your congregation or something that you were involved in? A problem of that sort may even now exist to a degree. What can we do? In the ancient case, Paul urged those two dedicated sisters “to be of the same mind in the Lord.” They may have agreed to discuss the matter, to clear the air, to express a mutual willingness to forgive, and then actually to imitate Jehovah’s forgiving attitude. There is no reason to think other than that Euodia and Syntyche succeeded, and we too can succeed. Such a forgiving attitude can be applied successfully today.

Make Peace—Forgive

¹⁴ What does it really take to forgive when you have a problem with another Christian? Frankly, there is no one simple method, but the Bible offers helpful examples and realistic advice. A key recommendation—though not an easy one to accept and apply—is simply to forget the matter, to let it pass. Often when a problem exists, as it did between Euodia and Syntyche, each person feels that the other is in the wrong or mainly at fault. So in a situation like that, you may well think that the other Christian is primarily to blame or has done the most harm. Nevertheless, can you simply close the book by forgiving? Realize that if, and this may be a big if, the other Christian is primarily or entirely at fault, you are in the prime position to let the matter pass as forgiven and ended.

13. What likely worked out between Euodia and Syntyche, providing what lesson for us?

14. Why is it often possible and best simply to let the personal difference pass?



When a difference with a Christian occurs, try to let it pass; with time the matter will gradually become insignificant

¹⁵ Let us not lose sight of God as our example in forgiving. (Ephesians 4:32-5:1) As to His pattern in letting errors pass, the prophet Micah wrote: "Who is a God like you, one pardoning error and passing over transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? He will certainly not hold onto his anger forever, for he is delighting in loving-kindness."—Micah 7:18.

¹⁶ By describing Jehovah as one "passing over transgression," the Bible is not saying that he is incapable of recalling the wrongs, having some sort of selective amnesia. Consider the cases of Samson and David, both of whom committed serious errors. God was able to remember those sins long afterward; even we know of some of their sins because Jehovah had them recorded in the Bible. Still, our forgiving God showed mercy to

those two, setting them before us as examples of faith to imitate.—Hebrews 11:32; 12:1.

¹⁷ Yes, Jehovah was able to 'pass over'* transgressions, even as David repeatedly asked him to do. (2 Samuel 12:13; 24:10) Can we imitate God in this, being willing to pass over the slights and offenses that our fellow servants commit as imperfect humans? Imagine yourself on a jet airplane speeding down a runway. Looking out, you see near the runway

an acquaintance making the rude gesture of childishly sticking her tongue out. You know that she had been upset and might have you in mind. Or she might not be thinking of you at all. Anyway, as the plane circles to gain altitude, you pass high over the woman, who now seems to be just a speck. In an hour you are hundreds of miles away, and her offending gesture is long since behind you. Similarly, many times it will

* One scholar says that the Hebrew metaphor used at Micah 7:18 is "taken from the conduct of a traveller who passes on without noticing an object to which he does not wish to give his attention. The idea which it communicates is not, that God is unobservant of sin, or that it is regarded by him as a matter of little or no importance, but that he does not mark it in particular cases with a view to punishment; that he does not punish, but forgive[s]." —Judges 3:26; 1 Samuel 16:8.

15, 16. (a) How did Micah describe Jehovah? (b) What does God's "passing over transgression" mean?

17. (a) What approach can help us to pass over the errors, or offenses, of others? (b) If we strive to do that, how will we be imitating Jehovah? (See footnote.)

help us to forgive if we try to be like Jehovah and wisely pass over the offense. (Proverbs 19:11) Will not the slight seem tiny ten years from now or two hundred years into the Millennium? Why not just let it pass?

¹⁸ On a rare occasion, though, you may have prayed about the matter and tried to forgive, but you feel that you cannot. What then? Jesus urged going to the other party and trying to resolve the difference privately to achieve peace. "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away; first make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift."—Matthew 5:23, 24.

¹⁹ Significantly, Jesus did not say to go to your brother to convince him that you were in the right and that he was in the wrong. Maybe he was. More probably, there was some fault on each side. In any case, the goal should not be to get the other party to concede, to grovel, as it were. If that is how you approach the discussion, failure will be almost certain. Nor should the goal necessarily be to review every detail of the real or imagined offense. When calm discussion in the spirit of Christian love reveals a sad misunderstanding at the core of the problem, you can both try to clear that up. But even if the discussion does not lead to total agreement, is that always necessary? Would it not be better if you at least could agree that you both sincerely want to serve our forgiving God? When you face that reality, it may be easier for each to say from the heart, "I am sorry that in our imperfection

18. If we seem unable to put an offense behind us, what advice can we apply?

19. What attitude should we have and what attitude should we avoid as we seek peace with our brother?

we had this difference. Please, let us pass beyond it."

²⁰ Remember that the apostles had their differences, as when some of them aspired to greater honor. (Mark 10:35-39; Luke 9:46; 22:24-26) That caused tension, perhaps hurt feelings, or even deep offense. But they were able to pass over such differences and keep on working together. One of them later wrote: "He that would love life and see good days, let him restrain his tongue from what is bad and his lips from speaking deception, but let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good; let him seek peace and pursue it."—1 Peter 3:10, 11.

²¹ We earlier noted one phase of a cycle: God forgave many sins that we committed in the past, so we should imitate him and forgive our brothers. (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25) But there is another phase to this cycle. After providing the model prayer, Jesus said: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Over a year later, he restated the essence, teaching his disciples to pray: "Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone that is in debt to us." (Matthew 6:12, 14; Luke 11:4) Then, just days before his death,

20. What can we learn from the example of the apostles?

21. Jesus provided what profound advice about forgiving?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ How does Jehovah give us a pattern to follow as to forgiveness?
- ☐ What must we remember about those in the congregation?
- ☐ In most cases, what should we be able to do about slights or offenses?
- ☐ If needed, what can we do to make peace with our brother?

Jesus added: "When you stand praying, forgive whatever you have against anyone; in order that your Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses." —Mark 11:25.

²² Yes, our prospects for continuing to receive God's forgiveness are to a large extent contingent on our being willing to forgive our brothers. When a personal problem be-

22, 23. How can our willingness to forgive affect our future?

tween Christians arises, ask yourself, 'Is not gaining God's forgiveness far more important than my proving that a brother or a sister was wrong on some minor slight, some petty offense, or some reflection of human imperfection?' You know the answer.

²³ What, though, when the matter is more serious than a minor personal offense or problem? And when does Jesus' counsel recorded at Matthew 18:15-18 apply? Let us next consider these matters.

YOU MAY GAIN YOUR BROTHER

"Go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."—MATTHEW 18:15.

WITH less than a year of his ministry left, Jesus had vital lessons for his disciples. You can read them in Matthew chapter 18. One was the importance of our being humble, like children. He next stressed that we must avoid stumbling "one of these little ones" and that we should try to recover straying "little ones" so that they do not perish. Then Jesus added valuable, practical advice on settling difficulties between Christians.

² You may recall his words: "If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take along with you one or

1, 2. Jesus gave what practical advice about dealing with faults?

two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17) When should we apply such counsel, and what should be our attitude in doing so?

³ The preceding article emphasized that since we all are imperfect and prone to error, we need to work at being forgiving. That is especially so when there is hurt over what a fellow Christian said or did. (1 Peter 4:8) Often it is best simply to pass over the offense—to forgive and forget. We can

3. What general approach should we take toward others' errors?



Jews avoided tax collectors. Matthew turned from his ways and followed Jesus

view doing this as a contribution to peace in the Christian congregation. (Psalm 133:1; Proverbs 19:11) Yet, there may be an occasion when you may feel that you must resolve a matter with your brother or sister who hurt you. In such a case, Jesus' words above provide guidance.

⁴ Jesus advised that you "lay bare his fault *between you and him alone*." That is wise. Some German translations phrase this, present his fault "under four eyes," meaning yours and his. When you kindly bring up a problem *in private*, it usually is easier to resolve. A brother who did or said something offensive or unkind may more readily acknowledge the error to you

4. In principle, how can we apply Matthew 18:15 to others' errors?

alone. If others were listening, imperfect human nature might incline him to deny being wrong or to try to justify what he did. But as you bring the issue up "under four eyes," you may find that it was a misunderstanding rather than a sin or deliberate wrong. Once you both grasp it as a misunderstanding, you can settle it, not allowing a trivial issue to grow and poison your relationship. Hence, the principle at Matthew 18:15 can be applied even to minor offenses in daily life.

What Did He Mean?

⁵ Strictly speaking, what Jesus advised relates to more serious matters. Jesus said:

5, 6. Contextually, to what sort of sins was Matthew 18:15 pointing, and what indicates that?

"If your brother commits a sin." In a broad sense, "a sin" can be any mistake or failing. (Job 2:10; Proverbs 21:4; James 4:17) However, the context suggests that the sin Jesus meant must have been serious. It was sufficiently grave that it could lead to the wrongdoer's being viewed "as a man of the nations and as a tax collector." What does that phrase imply?

⁶ Jesus' disciples hearing those words knew that their countrymen would not socialize with Gentiles. (John 4:9; 18:28; Acts 10:28) And they definitely avoided tax collectors, men who were born Jewish but who turned into misusers of the people. So strictly speaking, the reference at Matthew 18:15-17 was to serious sins, not personal offenses or hurts that you can simply forgive and forget.—Matthew 18:21, 22.*

⁷ Under the Law, some sins called for more than forgiveness from an offended person. Blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry, and the sexual sins of fornication, adultery, and homosexuality were to be reported to and handled by elders (or priests). That is true also in the Christian congregation. (Leviticus 5:1; 20:10-13; Numbers 5:30; 35:12; Deuteronomy 17:9; 19:16-19; Proverbs 29:24) Note, though, that the class of sins Jesus here spoke of could be settled between two persons. As examples: Moved by anger or jealousy, a person slanders his fel-

* McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia* says: "The publicans [tax collectors] of the New Test[ament] were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. They were classed with sinners . . . Left to themselves, men of decent lives holding aloof from them, their only friends or companions were found among those who, like themselves, were outcasts."

7, 8. (a) Sins of what sort need to be handled by elders? (b) What class of sins could be settled between two Christians, in line with Matthew 18:15-17?

lowman. A Christian contracts to do a job with particular materials and to finish by a certain date. Someone agrees that he will repay money on a schedule or by a final date. A person gives his word that if his employer trains him, he will not (even if changing jobs) compete or try to take his employer's clients for a set time or in a designated area.* If a brother would not keep his word and is unrepentant over such wrongs, it would certainly be serious. (Revelation 21:8) But such wrongs could be settled between the two involved.

⁸ How, though, would you proceed in resolving the matter? Jesus' words have often been viewed in three steps. Let us consider each. Rather than view them as fixed, legal procedures, seek to grasp their sense, never losing sight of your loving goal.

Strive to Gain Your Brother

⁹ Jesus began: "If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." Clearly, this is not a step based on mere suspicion. You should have evidence or specific information that you can use to help your brother to see that he committed a wrong and needs to set matters straight. It is good to act promptly, not letting the matter grow or letting his attitude become entrenched. And do not forget that brooding over it can damage you too. Since the discussion is to be between you and him alone, refrain from talking to others beforehand to win sympathy or improve your self-image. (Proverbs

* Business or financial matters involving a degree of deceit, fraud, or trickery can fall in the range of sin that Jesus meant. As an indication, after offering the direction recorded at Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gave an illustration of slaves (employees) who owed money and failed to repay.

9. What should we bear in mind as to applying Matthew 18:15?

**Often we can resolve a matter
"under four eyes"**

12:25; 17:9) Why? Because of your goal.

¹⁰ Your objective should be to gain your brother, not to castigate, humiliate, or ruin him. If he really has done wrong, his relationship with Jehovah is at risk. You surely want to keep him as your Christian brother. The likelihood of success will be enhanced if in the private discussion you remain calm, avoiding harsh words or an accusatory tone. In this loving confrontation, remember that you both are imperfect, sinful humans. (Romans 3:23, 24) As he realizes that you have not gossiped about him and sees that you sincerely want to help, a solution may readily come. This kind, clear approach will especially reflect wisdom if it turns out that you both share a degree of fault or that a misunderstanding was really at the root of the matter.—Proverbs 25:9, 10; 26:20; James 3:5, 6.

¹¹ If you help him to see that a wrong occurred and that it is serious, he may be moved to repent. Realistically, though, pride can be an obstacle. (Proverbs 16:18; 17:19) So even if he does not initially admit the wrong and repent, you may pause before taking the matter further. Jesus did not say 'go *only once* and lay bare his fault.' Since it is a sin that you can resolve, consider approaching him again in the spirit of Galatians 6:1 and "under four eyes." You may succeed. (Compare Jude 22, 23.) Yet, what if you are convinced that a sin has been committed and that he will not respond?

10. What will help us to gain our brother?

11. Even if an offender does not listen to us, what might we do?



Getting Mature Help

¹² Would you want others to give up on you quickly if you were guilty of a serious wrong? Hardly. Accordingly, Jesus showed that after the first step, you should not give up trying to gain your brother, to keep him united with you and others in worshipping God acceptably. Jesus outlined a second step: "If he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established."

¹³ He said to take "one or two more." He did not say that after taking the first step, you are free to discuss the problem with many others, to contact a traveling overseer, or to write to brothers about the problem. Convinced as you may be about the wrong, it has not really been fully established. You would not want to spread negative information that could turn out to be slander on your part. (Proverbs 16:28; 18:8) But Jesus did say to take along one or two others. Why? And who could they be?

12, 13. (a) Jesus outlined what second step in dealing with faults? (b) What are fitting precautions in applying this step?

¹⁴ You are trying to gain your brother by convincing him that a sin has been committed and by moving him to repent so as to be at peace with you and with God. To that end, the ideal situation would be if the “one or two” were witnesses to the wrong. Perhaps they were present when it occurred, or they have valid information about what was done (or not done) in a business matter. If such witnesses are not available, those you bring may have experience in the field at issue and therefore be able to establish whether what occurred was truly a wrong. Moreover, should it later be needed, they could be witnesses to what was said, confirming the facts presented and effort made. (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6) So they are not simply neutral parties, referees; yet, their being present is to help gain your brother and theirs.

¹⁵ You need not think that those you bring must be men who are elders in the congregation. However, mature men who are elders may be able to contribute by their spiritual qualifications. Such elders are “like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.” (Isaiah 32:1, 2) They have experience in reasoning with and readjusting brothers and sisters. And the wrongdoer has good reason for showing confidence in such “gifts in men.”* (Ephesians

* One Bible scholar commented: “It sometimes happens that a wrongdoer will take more notice of two or three (especially if they are people worthy of respect) than he will of one, especially if the one is a person with whom he has had a difference of opinion.”

14. Whom might we take along for the second step?

15. Why might Christian elders prove helpful if we have to take the second step?

4:8, 11, 12) Talking the matter out in the presence of such mature ones and sharing in prayer with them can create a new atmosphere and resolve what seemed irresolvable.—Compare James 5:14, 15.

A Final Effort to Gain Him

¹⁶ If step two fails to settle the matter, congregation overseers are definitely involved in the third step. “If he does not listen to [the one or two], speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.” What does this entail?

¹⁷ We do not understand it as a directive to bring up the sin or wrong at a regular or special meeting of the whole congregation. We can determine the appropriate procedure from God’s Word. See what was to be done in ancient Israel in a case of rebellion, gluttony, and drunkenness: “In case a man happens to have a son who is stubborn and rebellious, he not listening to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and they have corrected him but he will not listen to them, his father and his mother must also take hold of him and *bring him out to the older men* of his city and to the gate of his place, and they must say to *the older men* of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he is not listening to our voice, being a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city must pelt him with stones.”—Deuteronomy 21:18-21.

¹⁸ The man’s sins were not heard and judged by the whole nation nor by all of his own tribe. Rather, the recognized “older men” dealt with it as representatives of the congregation. (Compare Deuteronomy

16. What is the third step that Jesus outlined?
17, 18. (a) What pattern helps us to understand the significance of ‘speaking to the congregation’? (b) How do we apply this step today?

19:16, 17 about a case handled by ‘the priests and the judges who were acting in those days.’) Similarly today, when it is necessary to take the third step, the elders, who represent the congregation, handle the matter. Their goal is the same, to gain the Christian brother if at all possible. They reflect this by showing fairness, not prejudging the case or being partial.

¹⁹ They will strive to weigh the facts and hear the witnesses needed to establish whether sin truly has been committed (or continues to be committed). They want to protect the congregation from corruption and to keep the spirit of the world out. (1 Corinthians 2:12; 5:7) In line with their Scriptural qualifications, they will endeavor “to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9) Hopefully, the wrongdoer will not be like the Israelites of whom Jehovah’s prophet wrote: “I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not listen; and you kept doing what was bad in my eyes, and the thing in which I took no delight you chose.”—Isaiah 65:12.

19. What will the elders designated to hear the matter strive to do?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Primarily, to what sort of sin does Matthew 18:15-17 apply?
- ☐ What should we remember if we have to take the first step?
- ☐ Who may be of help if we must go to the second step?
- ☐ Who are involved in taking the third step, and how may we yet gain our brother?

²⁰ In a relatively few cases, however, the sinner reflects that same attitude. If so, Jesus’ direction is clear: “Let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.” The Lord did not recommend being inhumane or desirous of any hurt. There is, though, no ambiguity about the apostle Paul’s direction to exclude unrepentant sinners from the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13) Even this may eventually result in the goal of gaining the sinner.

²¹ We can see that potential from Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son. As illustrated, after a period of living outside the loving fellowship of his father’s house, that sinner “came to his senses.” (Luke 15:11-18) Paul mentioned to Timothy that some wrongdoers would in time repent and “come back to their proper senses out from the snare of the Devil.” (2 Timothy 2:24-26) We would certainly hope that any who unrepentantly sin and must be excluded from the congregation will feel their loss—both of God’s approval and of the warm fellowship and social contact with loyal Christians—and then come to their senses.

²² Jesus did not consider people of the nations and tax collectors as being beyond redemption. One of the latter, Matthew Levi, repented, sincerely ‘followed Jesus,’ and was even chosen as an apostle. (Mark 2:15; Luke 15:1) Consequently, if a sinner today does “not listen even to the congregation” and is excluded from it, we can wait to see if he, in time, will repent and make straight paths for his feet. When he does and is again a member of the congregation, we will then be happy to have gained our brother back in the fold of true worship.

20. What did Jesus say must occur if the sinner refuses to listen and repent?

21. What possibility remains open for one excluded from the congregation?

22. How may we yet gain our brother?

“ I HAD always dreamed of going into missionary work. As a single person, I served in Texas, U.S.A., where there was a great need for preachers. My wife joined me there after our marriage. When our daughter was born, I thought, ‘Well, that leaves me out.’ But Jehovah makes dreams come true, especially if they have to do with his will.”—Jesse, presently serving in Ecuador with his wife and three children.

Can You Serve in a FOREIGN FIELD?



"I had never imagined that I could do something like that without Gilead missionary school training. When I saw one of my Bible students giving a talk or preaching, it thrilled me, and I thanked Jehovah for having given me this opportunity."—*Karen, a single woman who pioneered for eight years in South America.*

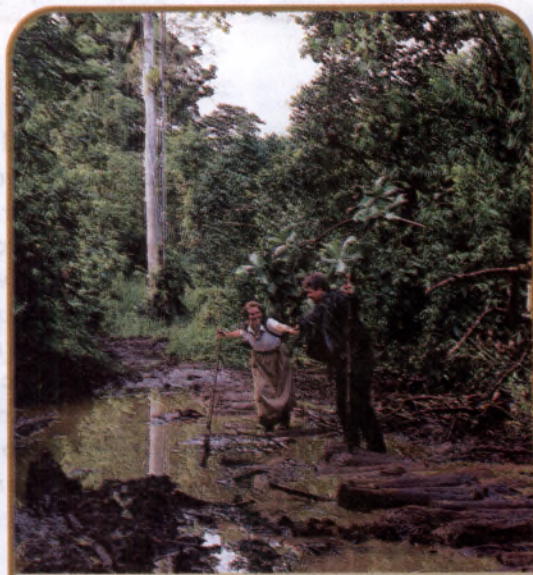
"After preaching full-time for 13 years in the United States, my wife and I felt that we needed a new challenge. We're happier than we've ever been before; it's truly a wonderful way of life."—*Tom, who pioneers with his wife, Linda, in the Amazon region.*

These appreciative expressions are from people whose circumstances did not permit them to receive missionary training at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Nonetheless, they have experienced the joys and challenges of foreign service. How did this come about? Is such service for you?

Right Motives Needed

More than a spirit of adventure is needed in order to succeed in a foreign field. Those who have persevered have done so with the right motives. Like the apostle Paul, they consider themselves to be debtors, not only to God but also to men. (Romans 1:14) They could have fulfilled the divine command to preach by engaging in the ministry in their home territory. (Matthew 24:14) But they felt indebted and were impelled to reach out and help those who rarely get the opportunity to hear the good news.

The desire to work in a more fruitful territory is often another motive—and properly so. Who of us upon seeing another fisherman having much success would not move closer to that area of the pond? Likewise, the heartening reports of exceptional increases in other lands have encouraged many to go where there is "a great multitude of fish."—Luke 5:4-10.



TOM AND LINDA ON A
REMOTE TRAIL, HEADING TO A
SHUAR INDIAN COMMUNITY

Count the Cost

Many countries do not allow foreign religious volunteers to do secular work. So those who wish to serve in a foreign country must usually be financially independent. How has this economic challenge been met? A number have sold or rented out their homes to obtain the necessary funds. Others have sold their businesses. Some have saved toward their goal. Still others serve in a foreign land for a year or two, return to their home country to work and accumulate some funds, and then go back to serve again.

A decided advantage of being in a developing country is that the cost of living is usually considerably lower than in a more developed land. This has allowed some to live adequately on a modest pension. Of course, one's expenses will largely depend upon the standard of living one chooses. Even in developing countries, very comfortable accommodations can be found but at a much higher cost.

MANY SERVE IN QUITO,
THE CAPITAL CITY OF ECUADOR



MAKIKO PREACHING IN THE
ANDES MOUNTAINS

Obviously, expenses must be calculated before a move is undertaken. Yet, more is involved than simply counting the economic costs. Perhaps the comments of some who have served in South America may be enlightening.

The Biggest Challenge

"Learning Spanish was a real struggle for me," recalls Markku, from Finland. "I assumed that since I did not know the language, it would be a while before I could serve

as a ministerial servant. What a surprise when I was asked to conduct a book study after only two months! Of course, there were many embarrassing moments. I especially had trouble with names. One day I called Brother Sancho 'Brother Chanchó (pig),' and I'll never forget calling Sister Salamea 'Mala-sea (wicked).' Fortunately, the brothers and sisters were very patient." Markku eventually served eight years in that country as a circuit overseer with his wife, Celine.

Chris, the wife of Jesse quoted earlier, relates: "I remember our first circuit overseer's visit, after we had been here just three months. I could tell that the brother was using illustrations and was saying something beautiful to try to touch our hearts, but I could not understand him. Right there in the hall, I burst into tears. These were not gentle tears; I was sobbing. After the meeting, I tried to explain my conduct to the circuit overseer. He was very kind and told me what everyone else kept telling me, '*Ten paciencia, hermana*' ('Have patience, sister'). Two or three years later, we met again and talked for 45 minutes, reveling in the fact that we could communicate."

"Study is essential," notes another brother. "The more effort we put forth in studying the language, the more we improve our communication skills."

All agree that such efforts bring many benefits. Humility, patience, and persistence are cultivated when a person is striving to learn a new tongue. A great door of opportunity is opened to preach the good news to others. For example, learning Spanish enables one to communicate in a language spoken by more than 400 million people around the world. Many who later had to return to their home country have still been able to use their language skill to help people whose mother tongue is Spanish.

What About Homesickness?

"When we first came to Ecuador in 1989," recalls Deborah, who served with her husband, Gary, in the Amazon region, "I used to get very homesick. I learned to depend more on the brothers and sisters in the congregation. They became like my family."

Karen, mentioned at the outset, observes: "I fought homesickness by engaging in the ministry every day. This way I wasn't daydreaming about home. I also kept in mind that my parents back home were proud of my work in a foreign field. Mom always encouraged me with the words: 'Jehovah can take better care of you than I can.'"

Makiko, from Japan, humorously adds: "After spending a full day in field service, I am quite tired. So when I get home and start feeling homesick, I usually fall asleep. Consequently, the feeling doesn't last very long."

What About Children?

When children are involved, consideration must be given to their needs, such as education. In this regard some have opted for home schooling while others have enrolled their children in local schools.

Al moved to South America with his wife, two children, and mother. He states: "We found that putting the children in school helped them learn the language very quickly. Within three months they were quite fluent." On the other hand, Mike and Carrie's two teenage boys study via an accredited correspondence school. The parents observe: "We found that such studies could not be left solely to our children. We had to take part in the course and make sure that the boys stayed up-to-date with the assigned curriculum."

David and Janita, from Australia, express their feelings about their two boys. "We wanted our boys to see firsthand how others live. It's easy to assume that the life-style

THE HILBIG FAMILY HAS BEEN SERVING IN ECUADOR FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS



we've grown up with is the norm, but actually we're in the minority. They have also seen how theocratic principles work all over the world, no matter what the country or culture."

"I was only four years old when our family moved from England in 1969," Ken reminisces. "Although I was disappointed that we didn't live in a mud hut with a grass roof, as I had envisioned, I felt that I had the most exciting upbringing a youngster could have. I always felt sorry for other children who didn't have the same opportunity! Because of good association with missionaries and special pioneers, I began auxiliary pioneering at the age of nine." Ken is now a traveling overseer.

"Ecuador is really our home now," agrees Gabriella, Jesse's daughter. "I'm so glad that my parents made the decision to come here."

On the other hand, there have been children who were not able to adapt for various reasons, and their families have had to return to their home countries. That is why a visit to the foreign country prior to moving there is advisable. In this way decisions can be made on the basis of firsthand information.

Blessings of Making the Move

Indeed, moving to a foreign field involves many challenges and sacrifices. Has it proved to be worthwhile for those who have made the move? Let them tell us.

Jesse: "In the ten years that we've been in the city of Ambato, we've seen the number of congregations grow from 2 to 11. We've had the privilege of helping to start five of those congregations, and we've worked on the construction of two Kingdom Halls. We've also had the joy of helping an average of two Bible students per year to qualify for baptism. I have only one regret—not coming here ten years earlier."

Linda: "The people's appreciation for the good news and for our efforts greatly encourages us. For example, in a small jungle town, a Bible student named Alfonso realized how beneficial it would be to hold public talks in his area. He had just moved into his newly constructed wooden house, one of just a few in the village. Deciding that his house was the only building in town worthy of Jehovah, he moved back into his grass hut and gave his house to the brothers to use as a Kingdom Hall."

Jim: "The time we spend actually talking with people in the ministry is ten times that in the United States. In addition, the pace of life here is much more relaxed. There is without doubt more time for study and field service."

Sandra: "Seeing how Bible truth can change people for the better brings me great satisfaction. I once studied the Bible with Amada, the 69-year-old owner of a little grocery store. She had regularly been adding two parts of water to every ten parts of milk. She further cheated her customers by selling them this diluted milk at less than full measure. But after studying the material under the subheading 'Honesty Results in Happiness' in chapter 13 of the

book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, Amada stopped these wrong practices. What a joy it was to see her get baptized some time after that!"

Karen: "I've never had to depend on Jehovah so much or been used by him as much as I have here. My friendship with Jehovah has grown deeper and stronger."

What About You?

Throughout the years thousands of Witnesses have moved to serve abroad. Some stay for a year or two, others indefinitely. They bring with them their experience, spiritual maturity, and financial resources, with the goal of furthering the Kingdom interests in a foreign field. They have been able to serve in areas where the local Kingdom publishers could not serve on account of the scarcity of secular work. Many have purchased four-wheel-drive vehicles for covering territory that is otherwise inaccessible. Others, preferring life in a city, have become a stabilizing factor in large congregations where few elders are available. Yet, without exception, all insist that they have received much more in terms of spiritual blessings than they have given.

Can you share in the privilege of serving in a foreign field? If your circumstances permit, why not investigate the possibility of making such a move? A first and essential step would be to write to the Society's branch office in the country where you are thinking of serving. The specific information that you receive will help you to determine your chances of making it a success. In addition, many practical suggestions can be found in the article "Go Out From Your Land and From Your Relatives," in the August 15, 1988, issue of *The Watchtower*. With proper planning and Jehovah's blessing, perhaps you too can experience the joy of serving in a foreign field.

A MILESTONE FOR LOVERS OF GOD'S WORD

In 1998 a significant milestone was reached for all lovers of God's Word. During that year, the 100 millionth copy of the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures" came off the press. It has thus become one of the most widely distributed Bibles produced in this century!

THIS feat is particularly remarkable considering that upon its release, this translation was subjected to severe criticism. Yet, it has not only survived but thrived, making its way into millions of homes—and hearts—all over the world! What is the origin of this unique translation? Who is behind it? And how might you benefit from using it?

Why a New Translation?

For over a hundred years, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the legal agency representing Jehovah's Witnesses, has distributed Bibles. Why, though, did Jehovah's Witnesses see the need to produce another version of God's Word? The book *So Many Versions?*, by Sakae Kubo and Walter Specht, observes: "No translation of the Bible can ever be considered final. Translations must keep pace with the growth in biblical scholarship and the changes in language."

This century has seen considerable growth in the understanding of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic—the languages in which the Bible was originally penned. Also, Bible manuscripts have been discovered that are older and more accurate than those used by previous generations of Bible translators. God's Word can thus be rendered more accurately today than ever before! It was for good rea-

son, then, that the New World Bible Translation Committee was formed to undertake the translation of the Bible into modern-day languages.

In 1950 the English-language version of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was published. The title itself was a bold departure from tradition, rejecting the designation of the Bible as made up of "Old" and "New" testaments. During the next decade, portions of the Hebrew Scriptures were published in installments. In 1961 the complete Bible in English was released in one volume.

Just who translated this remarkable Bible? *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1950, said: "The men who compose the translation committee have indicated their desire . . . to remain anonymous, and specifically do not want their names to be published while they are in life or after death. The purpose of the translation is to exalt the name of the living, true God." Some critics charged that the work should be summarily dismissed as the product of amateurs, but not all took such an unreasonable stance. Writes Alan S. Duthie: "If we know **who** the translators or the publishers of a particular Bible translation are, does it help us to decide whether that translation is good or bad? Not direct-

ly. There is no substitute for examining the characteristics of each *translation* itself.”*

Unique Features

Millions of readers have done just that and have discovered the *New World Translation* to be not only readable but scrupulously accurate. Its translators worked from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages, using the best texts available.† Unusual care was also exercised to render the ancient text as literally as possible but in language that would readily be understood.

Accordingly, some scholars praised this translation for its integrity and accuracy. For example, the *Andover Newton Quarterly* of January 1963 said: “The translation of the New Testament is evidence of the presence in the movement of scholars qualified to deal intelligently with the many problems of Biblical translation.”

The translators opened up a new world of Biblical understanding. Bible texts that had previously been only dimly understood became dramatically clear. For example, the perplexing text at Matthew 5:3, “blessed are the poor in spirit” (*King James Version*), was rendered in a way that made sense: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.” The *New World Translation* is also quite consistent and uniform in its rendering of key terms. The Greek word

* Interestingly, the jacket of the 1971 Reference Edition of the *New American Standard Bible* similarly stated: “We have not used any scholar’s name for reference or recommendations because it is our belief God’s Word should stand on its merits.”

† *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, by Westcott and Hort, served as the basic Greek text. R. Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica* was the basic text for the Hebrew Scriptures.

psy-khe’, for example, was translated “soul” in each of its occurrences. As a result, readers can quickly discern that contrary to religious theories, the soul is *not* immortal! —Matthew 2:20; Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; 17:33.

Restoring God’s Name

An outstanding feature of the *New World Translation* involved the restoration of God’s name, Jehovah. In ancient copies of the Hebrew Bible, the divine name is represented by four consonants that may be transliterated as YHWH or JHVH.

This distinctive name appears nearly 7,000 times in the so-called Old Testament alone. (Exodus 3:15; Psalm 83:18) Clearly, our Creator intended his worshipers both to know and to use that name!

However, superstitious fears caused the Jewish people to cease using the divine name. Following the death of Jesus’ apostles, copyists

of the Greek Scriptures began replacing God’s personal name with the Greek words *Ky’ri-os* (Lord) or *The-os* (God). Sad to say, modern translators have perpetuated this God-dishonoring tradition, eliminating God’s name from most Bibles and even concealing that God has a name. For example, at John 17:6 are Jesus’ words: “I have made your name manifest.” *Today’s English Version*, however, renders this: “I have made you known.”

Some scholars defend the elimination of the divine name because its exact pronunciation is unknown. However, such familiar Bible names as Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Jesus are routinely rendered in ways that bear little resemblance to their original Hebrew pronunciation. Since the form Jehovah is a

“The translation of the New Testament is evidence of the presence in the movement of scholars qualified to deal intelligently with the many problems of Biblical translation.”

—ANDOVER NEWTON QUARTERLY,
JANUARY 1963

legitimate way of rendering the divine name—and one familiar to many people—objections to using it ring hollow.

The New World Bible Translation Committee took the bold step of using the name Jehovah in both the Hebrew and Greek portions of Scripture. They had a precedent for this in early missionary translations for people in Central America, the South Pacific, and the Orient. Such use of God's name is not merely of academic interest, however. Knowing God's name is critical to coming to know him as a person. (Exodus 34:6, 7) The *New World Translation* has encouraged millions of readers to use his name!

Reaching Non-English Readers

Between 1963 and 1989, the *New World Translation* became available, in whole or in part, in ten additional languages. However, the work of translation was laborious, with some projects lasting 20 years or more. Then, in 1989 the Translation Services Department was established at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. Under the direction of the Writing Committee of the Governing Body, this department set out to speed up Bible translation. A method of translation was developed that combined Biblical word study with computer technology. How does this system work?

Once the Writing Committee has approved the translation of the Bible into a new language, it appoints a group of dedicated Christians to serve as a translating team. Teams can produce more balanced translations than can an individual working alone. (Compare Proverbs 11:14.) Generally, each team member has had experience in translating the Society's publications. The

team then receives thorough training in the principles of Bible translation and in the use of specially developed computer programs. A computer does not do actual translation work, but it can give a team access to important information and help them to keep track of their decisions.

A Bible translation project has two stages. During the first stage, the translators are given a list of words and expressions used in the English *New World Translation*. Related English terms, such as "atone," "atonement," and "propitiation," are grouped together, alerting the translators to subtle shades of meaning. They compile a list of vernacular equivalents. At times, though, a translator may have difficulty rendering a verse. The computer research system provides the translator with information on Greek and Hebrew terms and gives access to Watch Tower publications.

When the project moves into its second stage, the selected vernacular terms are automatically inserted into the Bible text. This builds considerable accuracy and consistency into the translation. However, the text resulting from this "search and replace" operation is hardly readable. Considerable work must be done to edit and rephrase Bible verses so that they read smoothly.

This translation system has proved to be remarkably effective. One group was able to translate the entire Hebrew Scriptures in just two years. Compare this to a group that worked on a related language without computer support. It took them 16 years. To date, the Christian Greek Scriptures have been printed in 18 additional languages

**"Translations
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SCHOLARS PRAISE THE *NEW WORLD* TRANSLATION

REGARDING the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, Edgar J. Goodspeed, translator of the Greek "New Testament" in *An American Translation*, wrote in a letter dated December 8, 1950: "I am interested in the mission work of your people, and its world wide scope, and much pleased with the free, frank and vigorous translation. It exhibits a vast array of sound serious learning, as I can testify."

Hebrew and Greek scholar Alexander Thomson wrote: "The translation is evidently the work of skilled and clever scholars, who have sought to bring out as much of the true sense of the Greek text as the English language is capable of expressing."—*The Differentiator*, April 1952, pages 52-7.

Professor Benjamin Kedar, a Hebrew



scholar in Israel, said in 1989: "In my linguistic research in connection with the Hebrew Bible and translations, I often refer to the English edition of what is known as the *New World Translation*. In so doing, I find my feeling repeatedly confirmed that this work reflects an honest endeavor to achieve an understanding of the text that is as accurate as possible."

since 1989. The *New World Translation* is now available, in whole or in part, in 34 languages. Thus over 80 percent of Jehovah's Witnesses have at least the Christian Greek Scriptures available in their mother tongue.

The United Bible Societies reports that of the world's 6,500 languages, portions of the Bible are available in only 2,212.* Hence, some 100 translators are working to produce the *New World Translation* of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in 11 and 8 languages respectively. God's will is "that

* Since many people are bilingual, it is believed that the Bible, in whole or in part, is translated in enough languages to be read by over 90 percent of the earth's population.

all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) The *New World Translation* will no doubt continue to play a major role in this regard.

We therefore rejoice that this translation has passed the milestone of 100 million copies, and we pray that many more millions will be produced in the future. We encourage you to examine it for yourself. You will enjoy numerous special features: clear type, page headings, an index that can help you to locate familiar verses, detailed maps, and fascinating appendix material. More important, you can read this Bible with confidence that it accurately transmits the very sayings of God in your language.

"A Strength of Character Inspired by Faith"

THE year 1998 saw the release, to much critical acclaim, of a new book in French entitled *Les Témoins de Jehovah face à Hitler* (Jehovah's Witnesses in the Face of Hitler), written by Guy Canonici. In his preface to the book, the highly respected French historian François Bédarida wrote: "This is a most welcome book. Not just because it fills a gap, but because the timing is right. . . . Apart from specialists, who knows of the fate of Jehovah's Witnesses under the Third Reich? Yet, throughout the 12-year regime, persecution fell on them with unrelenting ferocity and violence. They too experienced the horror of the concentration camps. They too paid a high price for their faith and convictions. Why has history forgotten these Christians? . . ."

"Why was there such brutal and systematic persecution of a small, scattered, and harmless sect? This is the heart of the paradox. Not only did the

Witnesses in Germany represent only a very small minority of the population—statistics show them to be some 20,000 for a total of more than 60 million inhabitants—but they were all peaceful citizens who respected the law and threatened nobody, who only wanted to work and bring up their children properly. . . .

"This persecution came up against the tenacious and victorious spiritual resistance of believers capable of matching the force of external pressures with the internal force of their faith in Jesus Christ, starting with the physical violence of the police State—to the point of heroism and martyrdom."

The story of Jehovah's Witnesses who suffered as martyrs for their Christian faith in the face of religious intolerance is a powerful one. In its review of the book, a leading French Catholic newspaper, *La Croix*, poignantly added: "Of their little-known history, Guy Canonici has brought together a mass of testimonies that leave one speechless in the face of a strength

of character inspired by faith expressed in the simplest of words, faith that right to the end was unbreakable even among children.

This commemoration should provide a backdrop to the current debate about the Christian nature of Jehovah's Witnesses."

