

Note to the speaker:

Make a tender appeal to victims of injustice to let go of anger and leave their frustrations in Jehovah's hands. Use verified experiences to illustrate the superiority of Christian peaceableness over protest and retaliation

The Bible foretold that "the last days" would be marked by selfishness and hatred

(2 Timothy 3:1-3) *But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, ³ having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness,*

Some victims of injustice retaliate with violence, fueling further anger w07 ! " # g \$! " \$

*** w07 4/15 p. 4 Will Cruelty Ever End? ***

Will Cruelty Ever End?

MANY would readily agree that selfishness is a key factor in the cruelty in the world today. The seeds sown decades ago by the so-called me generation have produced a society in which the majority are concerned primarily about themselves. Many will do whatever it takes to get their own way, often resulting in cruel acts. This is true not only of individuals but also of entire nations.

The lives of fellow humans no longer seem to matter. Some people even enjoy being cruel. They find it entertaining, much like criminals who confess that they harm others just for the thrill of it. And what about the millions whose preference for films featuring violence and cruelty encourages the motion picture industry to cash in on such themes? Constant exposure to brutal acts through entertainment and the news media desensitizes many.

Cruelty often does psychological harm and sets in motion a vicious cycle. Referring to the violence engendered by cruelty, Noemí Díaz Marroquín, who teaches at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, says: "Violence is learned, it's cultural . . . We learn how to act out in violent ways when our environment allows and encourages it." Thus, those who have been victims of abuse may well end up abusing others, perhaps even in the same ways that they were abused.

In other cases, those who misuse such substances as alcohol and drugs may end up behaving cruelly. Not to be overlooked are individuals who are dissatisfied with their government for not meeting the needs of the people. Some of them, being determined to make their views known, resort to cruel acts and foster terrorism, often at the expense of the innocent.

You might wonder though: 'Have men learned to act cruelly on their own? What is behind the present situation?'

*** g 6/11 pp. 5-6 Why Some Resort to Violence ***

Why Some Resort to Violence

JOSEBA, who lives in Spain, was asked why he became a member of a militant group. "The oppression and injustice we suffered at the time became unbearable," he said. "In the large city of Bilbao, where I lived, the police would come in, beat up people, and arrest them."

Joseba continued: "I was arrested one morning for expressing my feelings about such police tactics. I was so angry that I wanted to do something—something violent if necessary—to remedy the situation."

Oppression and Revenge

While not justifying violence, the Bible acknowledges that “oppression may make a wise one act crazy,” that is, in an irrational manner. (Ecclesiastes 7:7) Many become outraged when they are mistreated on the basis of their race, religion, or nationality.

For instance, Hafeni, mentioned in the preceding article, said: “Our land was taken from us by exploitation. Animals fight for their territories, so it seemed natural for us to fight for our land and our rights.” One militant suicide bomber in a statement published after his death said: “Until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight.”

Religious Motivations

Though militants are often motivated by secular causes, they frequently engage in violent acts for religious reasons. A world leader received this fax from a militant spokesman: “We are not crazy neither are we in love with power. We are in service of God and that’s why we are strict in our position.”

Concerning religious motivation, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon wrote in their book *The Age of Sacred Terror*: “In a world turning more religious, more adherents of the great faiths and new, burgeoning cults are placing violence at the heart of their beliefs.” Another researcher, after documenting a number of what he called “spectacular acts of terrorism across the globe,” observed: “All are united in the belief on the part of the perpetrators that their actions were divinely sanctioned, even mandated, by God.”

But many religious militants have extreme viewpoints that do not reflect the traditional teachings and values of the religion with which they are associated.

Etched Into Hearts

Joseba, mentioned earlier, was badly abused when he was arrested. He said: “The brutality convinced me that my hatred was justified. If I had to die to bring changes, it would be worth it.”

Often what is taught in the group adds to the members’ reasons for engaging in violence. “During our time in refugee camps,” said Hafeni, “there were rallies that taught us that the whites were constantly conceiving ways and means to dominate the blacks.” What was the result?

“I could feel my hatred for whites growing,” he added. “I distrusted all of them. Eventually, I couldn’t stand it, and I thought our generation must do something.”

Surprisingly, despite such strong positions, both Joseba and Hafeni changed their entrenched feelings of hatred and distrust. What was it that reached their minds and hearts? The following article will explain.

[Blurb on page 6]

“The brutality convinced me that my hatred was justified. If I had to die to bring changes, it would be worth it.”—Joseba

How can we keep from becoming consumed by anger?

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Jehovah God hates injustice and promises to eliminate it '()* +), - ./ 0

(Psalm 37:10, 11) *Just a little while longer, and the wicked will be no more; You will look at where they were, And they will not be there. ¹¹ But the meek will possess the earth, And they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.*

Human political solutions and protest movements are not God’s means of bringing justice) - /

(Daniel 7:13, 14) *“I kept watching in the visions of the night, and look! with the clouds of the heavens, someone like a son of man was coming; and he gained access to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him up close before that One. ¹⁴ And to him there were given rulership, honor, and a kingdom, that the peoples, nations, and language groups should all serve him. His rulership is an everlasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom will not be destroyed.*

God will use his Son, Jesus Christ, to remove all who oppress their fellow man + - /

(Psalm 72:13, 14) *He will have pity on the lowly and the poor, And the lives of the poor he will save.
14 From oppression and from violence he will rescue them, And their blood will be precious in his eyes.*

The Bible refers to the time when God will remove the wicked as “the day of Jehovah’s anger” 1(2

(Zephaniah 2:2) *Before the decree takes effect, Before the day passes by like chaff, Before the burning anger of Jehovah comes upon you, Before the day of Jehovah’s anger comes upon you,*

Unlike human anger, God’s anger is always justified and never excessive *it* .3

When God acts, the result will be an “*abundance of peace*” earth wide

To benefit, we must cooperate with Jehovah’s way of correcting injustice 1(2

(Zephaniah 2:3) *Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, Who observe his righteous decrees.
Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you will be concealed on the day of Jehovah’s anger.*

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Verse 18: “If possible, as far as it depends on you, be peaceable with all men”

Show your support for God’s solution to injustice by choosing to be peaceable

Avoid association with people who lash out in anger or who advocate vengeance ; / "

(Proverbs 22:24, 25) *Do not keep company with a hot-tempered man Or get involved with one disposed to rage, 25 So that you never learn his ways And ensnare yourself.*

Verse 19: “Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay,” says Jehovah”

Retaliation is self-destructive and feeds a cycle of hatred *w09* >!

*** *y09* pp. 212-213 **Lands of the Former Yugoslavia** ***

A SUSTAINING MESSAGE OF HOPE

While humanitarian organizations gave what material assistance they could, only Jehovah’s Witnesses provided help that brought lasting relief. Rather than wait idly for the war to end, our brothers did everything they could to share the good news of the Kingdom with others.

In Vukovar, near the border of Serbia, where some of the worst devastation occurred, most of the population, including our brothers, had to flee the city. There was, however, one sister, Marija, who stayed behind. For four years the brothers in Croatia had no contact with her, yet she zealously continued preaching to the few people left in the city. And how richly her zeal was rewarded! Imagine the surprise of the Croatian

brothers at seeing a group of 20 from Vukovar attend the 1996 district convention!

Our message of hope also has the power to change lives. At the beginning of the war, a young soldier made rapid advancement in an elite unit of the Croatian army. In 1994, while waiting for a train, he received the tract *Who Really Rules the World?* As he eagerly read the tract, he learned that Satan is responsible for the violence committed against man and that it is not Jehovah God. These truths made an overwhelming impression on him. One of the reasons he had trained as a soldier was to avenge the murder of his 19-year-old sister and two other family members who had been killed during the war. Though he had made plans to go to the village where the killers lived, the tract made him think. He began studying the Bible, and after several years of making his personality over, he was baptized in 1997. He finally did go to the village that was home to the killers of his family. But instead of vengeance, he was happy to take the good news of God's Kingdom to people who needed to learn about God's mercy.

The publishers' zeal for the ministry, even through the most bitter conflicts, resulted in thrilling increases in Croatia. From the start of the war in 1991 until the end in 1995, the number of pioneers increased by 132 percent. Bible studies increased 63 percent, and the number of publishers rose 35 percent. Yes, the local brothers boldly proclaimed God's Word, and Jehovah richly blessed their efforts.

Instead of retaliating, strengthen your faith that Jehovah God will act

Imitate Jesus, who had confidence that God would avenge unjust treatment (

(1 Peter 2:23) *When he was being insulted, he did not insult in return. When he was suffering, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the One who judges righteously.*

Verse 20: “But ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink’”

Break the cycle of anger and revenge by looking for ways to do good even to “your enemy”

A primary way to do good to others is to share with them the Bible's hope of relief from injustice
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Verse 21: “Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil”

If you feel powerless before oppressors, do not direct your frustration toward family or friends

Seek support from a mature friend whose thinking agrees with God's *g05* ! > .

***** g05 2/22 pp. 18-20 How Can I Control My Emotions? *****

Young People Ask . . . How Can I Control My Emotions?

“I get mad at my parents and say things I don't mean. I'll stay away from them until I get over it.
—Kate, aged 13.

“Insecurity is my biggest struggle. Sometimes I feel I'm dying inside.”—Ivan, aged 19.

EMOTIONS are powerful. They affect the way you think and act. They can motivate you for both good and bad. At times, they may even seem to overwhelm you. “I hardly ever feel that I'm good enough,” says 20-year-old Jacob. “Often, I fail to meet my own expectations. Sometimes I just cry, or I get so angry that I take it out on those around me. It's hard to control what I'm feeling.”

Part of becoming a mature, responsible adult, however, is learning to control one's emotions. Some experts now feel that the ability to manage emotions and to deal with people is more valuable than

intelligence. In any event, the Bible places a high value on controlling one's feelings. For example, Proverbs 25:28 says: "If you cannot control your anger, you are as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack." (*Today's English Version*) What makes it so hard to control one's feelings?

A Challenge for Youths

People of all ages and backgrounds struggle with controlling their emotions. However, the struggle can be particularly challenging during one's transition from adolescence to adulthood. Says the book *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* by Ruth Bell: "Most teenagers feel a jumble of crazy, beautiful, frightening, mixed-up emotions. A lot of people have several different feelings at the same time about the same things. . . . One minute you may feel a particular way, and then a minute later you may find yourself feeling the opposite way."

As a young person, you are also inexperienced. (Proverbs 1:4) So, as you encounter new situations and challenges for the first time, it is only natural to feel a bit insecure and perhaps overwhelmed. Fortunately, your Creator well understands your feelings. He knows even your "disquieting thoughts." (Psalm 139:23) In his Word he has set forth some principles that can help.

A Key to Controlling Emotions

One key to controlling your emotions is learning to control your thoughts. Negative thoughts can sap you of the energy you need to take action. (Proverbs 24:10) But how can you learn to think positively and thus be helped to control your emotions?

One way is to refuse to dwell on negative things that make you feel depressed or insecure. By following the Bible advice to focus on things that are "serious" and "righteous," you can replace negative thoughts with positive ones. (Philippians 4:8) Doing this may not be easy, but with effort it can be done.

Consider a young woman named Jasmine. "I feel so overwhelmed by all that I'm faced with," she once lamented. "New job, new responsibilities. My emotions are spent. I find it difficult to breathe." It is not surprising for a youth to feel that way on occasion, and it can cause one to feel insecure, unsure of oneself. The Bible tells us about a young man named Timothy, who was superbly qualified for the responsibilities he was given. Yet, it appears that he battled feelings of inadequacy.—1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 1:6, 7.

It may well be that you feel insecure when you are confronted with a new or unfamiliar task. 'I'll *never* be able to do this,' you may tell yourself. But you can control such feelings of insecurity by refusing to dwell on negative thoughts. Focus on learning to do the task competently. Ask questions, and follow instructions.—Proverbs 1:5, 7.

The more competent you become at a task, the less insecure you will feel. Do not dwell on your weaknesses, allowing them to paralyze you and prevent you from applying yourself to making improvement. One time when the apostle Paul was criticized, he replied: "Even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge." (2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6) Similarly, you can build your confidence by acknowledging your strengths and turning to God for help to cope with your weaknesses. God really can help you, as he did people in the past.—Exodus 4:10.

Another way you can help to control your emotions is to set modest, realistic goals and accept your limitations. Also avoid unfairly comparing yourself with others. At Galatians 6:4, the Bible gives good advice when it says: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person."

Slowing Down Anger

Managing anger can be another difficult challenge. Like Kate, mentioned at the outset, anger prompts many young ones to say and do things that are hurtful or destructive.

Granted, it is normal to feel anger at times. But remember the first murderer, Cain. When he became "hot with great anger," God warned him that such anger could lead to his committing serious sin. He asked Cain: "Will you, for your part, get the mastery over [sin]?" (Genesis 4:5-7) Cain failed to heed this divine advice, but with God's help you can control your anger and avoid sinning!

Again it comes down to controlling your thoughts. At Proverbs 19:11, the Bible says: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to pass over transgression." When someone upsets you, try to understand *why* he or she behaved that way. Was that person deliberately trying to hurt you? Could it be that he or she was acting impulsively or out of ignorance? Making allowances for the mistakes of others reflects God's own mercy, and it can help slow down your feelings of anger.

What, though, if anger is justified? The Scriptures say: "Be wrathful, and yet *do not sin*." (Ephesians 4:26) If necessary, talk the matter out with the individual. (Matthew 5:23, 24) Or perhaps the best thing to do is simply to let the matter drop—let go of the anger and move on with your life.

Interestingly, your friends can have an influence on how you deal with anger. The Bible thus directs: “Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger; and with a man having fits of rage you must not enter in, that you may not get familiar with his paths and certainly take a snare for your soul.”—Proverbs 22:24, 25.

Being around people who make an effort to control their anger can help you to develop self-control yourself. The Christian congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses are full of such mature individuals, many of whom are older and more experienced than you. Get to know some of them. Watch how they cope with problems. They may also be able to give you “skillful direction” when you face difficulties. (Proverbs 24:6) Jacob, quoted earlier, relates: “A mature friend who can remind me of God’s Word is priceless. When I remember that Jehovah loves me despite my insecurities, I’m able to feel in control and remain calm.”

Other Practical Steps

A popular exercise book says: “Countless studies have proven that how you move your body influences your mood through your biochemistry. Hormone and oxygen levels all change with the kind of movements you make.” There is no question about it, physical exercise is beneficial. The Bible tells us: “Physical exercise has some value.” (1 Timothy 4:8, *Today’s English Version*) Why not establish a modest routine of regular exercise? It can have a good effect on the way you feel. Maintaining a healthful diet can likewise bring benefits.

Consider, too, your choices of music and entertainment. A study published in *The Harvard Mental Health Letter* said: “Viewing violence . . . tends to stir angry and aggressive feelings. . . . People watching violent films thought more aggressive thoughts and showed a rise in blood pressure.” So make wise decisions when it comes to what you listen to and watch.—Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Ultimately, the best way to learn to control your emotions is to develop a close friendship with your Creator. He invites each of us to speak to him in prayer, to pour out our feelings and emotions. “Do not be anxious over anything,” encouraged the apostle Paul. “Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will *guard your hearts and your mental powers*.” Yes, you can develop the inner strength to face any situation in life. The apostle Paul added: “For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.”—Philippians 4:6, 7, 13.

Young Malika says: “I’ve learned to pray, pray, and pray. Knowing Jehovah cares helps me to feel calm and more in control of my emotions.” With God’s help, you too can learn to control your emotions.

[Blurb on page 19]

One key to controlling your emotions is learning to control your thoughts

[Picture on page 20]

Pour out your feelings to Jehovah in prayer + - "/ \$# ""

(Psalm 37:5, 6) *Commit your way to Jehovah; Rely on him, and he will act in your behalf. ⁶ He will make your righteousness shine like daybreak, And your justice like the midday sun.*

(Psalm 55:22) *Throw your burden on Jehovah, And he will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to fall.*

Verse 21: “But keep conquering the evil with the good”

Be willing to forgive others whenever there is a basis for doing so 2? / # g95 \$!3 . @\$ -

(Ephesians 4:31, 32) *Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious. ³² But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.*

*** g95 6/8 Forgive and Forget—How Possible? ***

How We Can Forgive and Forget

Be “freely forgiving one another,” urges Ephesians 4:32. According to lexicographer W. E. Vine, the Greek word rendered “freely forgiving” (*kha·ri·zo·mai*) means “to bestow a favour unconditionally.” When offenses committed against us are minor in nature, we may have little difficulty granting the forgiveness. Keeping in mind that we too are imperfect enables us to make allowances for the shortcomings of others. (Colossians

3:13) When we forgive, we let go of resentment, and our relationship with the offender may not suffer any lasting harm. In time, the memory of any such minor offense may well fade away.

What, though, if others sin against us in a more serious way, deeply injuring us? In extreme cases, such as incest, rape, and attempted murder, forgiveness may involve a number of issues. This would be particularly true when there is no acknowledgment of the sin, no repentance, and no apology on the part of the offender. (Proverbs 28:13) Jehovah himself does not forgive unrepentant, hardened wrongdoers. (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26) When a wound is deep, we may never succeed in completely putting what happened out of mind. However, we can be comforted by the assurance that in the coming new world, "the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart." (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:4) Whatever we remember then will not cause us the deep hurt or pain that we may now feel.

In other instances we may need to take some initiative to settle matters, perhaps by talking to the offender, before we can forgive. (Ephesians 4:26) In this way any misunderstanding can be cleared up, appropriate apologies made, and forgiveness extended. What about forgetting? We may never completely put out of mind what was done, but we can forget in the sense that *we do not hold it against the offender or bring the matter up again at some future time*. We do not gossip about it, nor do we completely avoid the offender. However, it may take some time for our relationship with the offender to mend, and we may not enjoy the same closeness as before.

Consider an illustration: Suppose you confide a deeply personal matter to a trusted friend, and you later learn that he divulged it to others, to your great embarrassment or hurt. You approach him to talk things over, and he is very sorry; he apologizes and asks for forgiveness. Hearing his sincere apology, your heart is moved to forgive him. Do you easily forget what happened? Likely not; you would no doubt be very cautious about confiding in him in the future. Yet you do forgive him; you do not continually rehash the matter with him. You do not harbor resentment, nor do you gossip about it with others. You may not feel as close to him as you did before, but you still love him as your Christian brother.—Compare Proverbs 20:19.

What, though, if despite your efforts to settle matters, the offender does not admit his wrong and apologize? Can you forgive in the sense of letting go of resentment? Forgiving others does not mean that we condone or minimize what they have done. Resentment is a heavy burden to carry; it can consume our thoughts, robbing us of peace. Waiting for an apology that never comes, we may only get more and more frustrated. In effect, we allow the offending person to control our emotions. Thus, we need to forgive others, or let go of the resentment, not only for *their* benefit but also for our own so that we may get on with our life.

Forgiving others is not always easy. But when there is sincere repentance, we can try to imitate Jehovah's forgiveness. When he forgives repentant wrongdoers, he lets go of resentment—he wipes the slate clean and forgets in that he will not hold those sins against them in the future. We too can work to let go of resentment when the offender is repentant. There may, however, be instances where we are not even obligated to forgive. No victim of extremes in unjust or cruel treatment should be forced to forgive an unrepentant wrongdoer. (Compare Psalm 139:21, 22.) But in most cases when others sin against us, we can forgive in the sense of letting go of resentment, and we can forget in the sense of not holding the matter against our brother at some future time.

[Footnotes]

See the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: How Complete Is God's Forgiveness?" in the December 8, 1993, issue of *Awake!*, pages 18-19.

Insight on the Scriptures, Volume 1, page 862, says: "Christians are not required to forgive those who practice malicious, willful sin with no repentance. Such become God's enemies."—Published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

[Picture on page 9]

Joseph and his brothers

Let go of resentment and leave matters in Jehovah's hands *w13 \$! " . @ " \$# w00 3! " " /*
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God's holy spirit can empower a person to overcome deeply rooted anger : . / "# ?2

(2 Corinthians 10:4, 5) *For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. ⁵ For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ;*

(Philippians 4:13) *For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.*

Ask God for help to replace angry thoughts with compassionate, peaceful ones *w10 \$! " @ 3 >*

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Many have applied Bible principles on peaceableness and enjoyed blessings as a result

They have broken free from a violent course *g \$! > # g \$! \$ -# g03 !3 3 .*

***** g 6/12 pp. 19-21 I Found True Love and Peace *****

I Found True Love and Peace

As told by Egidio Nahakbria

I grew up feeling abandoned and unloved. Yet, now I feel loved and have genuine inner peace. How did this transformation take place? Let me explain.

I ENTERED the world in 1976 in a dirt-floor hut in the mountains of East Timor, then a part of Indonesia. I was the eighth of ten children born to poverty-stricken parents. Because my parents could not feed us all, they kept my identical twin brother and asked my cousin to raise me.

In December 1975, just before I was born, Indonesia invaded East Timor, and that triggered a guerrilla war that lasted over two decades. Thus, my earliest memories are of violence and suffering. I vividly remember soldiers attacking our village and forcing all to flee for their lives. My cousin and I trekked to a lonely mountainside where thousands of Timorese had sought refuge.

The soldiers, however, discovered our hideout, and soon enemy bombs rained down on us. I have horrible memories of the terror, death, and destruction that followed. When we finally returned to our village, I lived in constant dread. Many of our neighbors disappeared or were killed, and I feared I might be next.

When I was ten, my cousin fell sick and died, so my parents sent me to live with my grandmother. She was a widow, who was embittered with life and viewed me as a burden. She worked me like a slave. One day, when I was too sick to work, she beat me and left me to die. Fortunately, one of my uncles took me to live with his family.

At age 12, I finally started school. Soon afterward, my uncle's wife fell ill and my uncle became severely depressed. Not wanting to burden them further, I ran away and attached myself to a group of Indonesian soldiers based in the jungle. I became their helper—washing clothes, cooking food, and cleaning camp. They treated me well, and I felt needed. But after several months, my relatives found me and pressured the soldiers to return me to my village.

Political Activist

After finishing high school, I moved to the capital of East Timor, Dili, and entered a university. There I met many youths with backgrounds similar to mine. We concluded that the only way to achieve national independence and social change would be through political action. Our student group organized many political demonstrations, most of which ended up in riots. Many of my friends were injured. Some were even killed.

When East Timor gained independence in 2002, the country lay in ruins, tens of thousands of people had died, and hundreds of thousands had been displaced. I hoped that conditions would improve. But widespread unemployment, poverty, and ongoing political upheaval continued.

A New Direction

At that time, I was living with some relatives, including a distant younger relative named Andre, who was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. As a devout Roman Catholic, I was not happy that my relative was involved with another religion. Still, I was curious about the Bible and occasionally read the copy Andre kept in his bedroom. What I read stirred my interest further.

When, in 2004, Andre gave me a printed invitation to the Memorial of Jesus' death, I decided to attend. Misreading the invitation, I arrived at the meeting place two hours early. When the Witnesses arrived, including locals as well as foreigners, they warmly shook my hand and made me feel welcome. I was impressed. During the Memorial discourse, I noted each cited scripture in a notebook and later checked them in my Catholic Bible to see if what the speaker said was true. It was!

The following week, I attended Mass at my church. Because some others and I arrived late, the priest grabbed a piece of wood and angrily drove us out of the church. As we stood outside, the priest ended the service by saying to the congregation, "May the peace of Jesus go with you." One brave woman called out, "How can you talk of peace when you just drove those people out of the church?" The priest ignored her. I left the church and never returned.

Soon afterward, I began studying the Bible and attending Witness meetings along with Andre. Our relatives were alarmed and began to oppose us. Andre's grandmother warned us: "I will dig a hole to bury you boys in if you continue to study with that new religion." Her threats, however, did not deter us. We were determined to make spiritual progress.

Making Changes

As I studied the Bible, I began to feel that I had never really known love. I was tough and defensive and found it hard to trust people. The Witnesses, though, took a genuine interest in me. When I fell very sick and my relatives ignored me, the Witnesses visited me and helped me. Their love was not "just words and talk" but "true love, which shows itself in action."—1 John 3:18, *Today's English Version*.

Despite my rough appearance and disposition, the Witnesses treated me with "fellow feeling" and "brotherly affection." (1 Peter 3:8) For the first time in my life, I began to feel loved. My personality softened, and I began to develop love for God and my fellow man. Consequently, in December 2004, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism. Andre was baptized soon afterward.

Blessings Amid Troubles

Following my baptism, I felt a burning desire to help other people who had never known true love or justice. Therefore, I took up the full-time Christian ministry, or pioneering, as Jehovah's Witnesses call it. Sharing the Bible's upbuilding message was far more refreshing than sharing in political demonstrations and riots. At last, I was truly helping people!

In 2006, political and regional tensions in East Timor erupted again. Factional groups battled over long-standing grievances. The city of Dili came under siege, and many easterners fled for their lives. Along with other Witnesses, I escaped to Baucau, a large town about 70 miles (120 km) east of Dili. There our ordeal turned into a blessing, since we were able to establish a new congregation—the first one outside Dili.

Three years later, in 2009, I received an invitation to attend a special school for full-time Christian ministers in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Witnesses in Jakarta took me into their homes and their hearts. Their genuine love deeply impressed me. I sensed I was part of a global "association of brothers," an international "family," who truly cared for me.—1 Peter 2:17.

Peace at Last!

After the school, I returned to Baucau, where I still live. Here I delight in helping people spiritually, just as others once helped me. For example, in one isolated village outside Baucau, I and others teach the Bible to about 20 people, including many older ones who cannot read or write. The entire group attends weekly meetings, and three individuals have joined our spiritual "family" as baptized members of the Christian congregation.

Several years ago, I met Felizarda, a warmhearted girl who accepted Bible truth and rapidly progressed to baptism. We married in 2011. I am happy to say that Andre, my relative, serves at the East Timor office of Jehovah's Witnesses. Even most of my relatives, including Andre's grandmother, who once wanted to bury us, now respect my faith.

In the past, I felt angry, unloved, and unlovable. But thanks to Jehovah, at last I have found true love and peace!

[Picture on page 19]

Egidio as a political activist

[Picture on page 21]

Egidio and Felizarda along with members of the Baucau Congregation, East Timor

Is a World Without Terrorism Possible?

"WE NEED to be struggling . . . for hearts and minds." That was the conclusion reached after a 20-year review of the personality profiles of so-called terrorists.

But what can change the hearts and minds of people who have been deeply involved in violent and vengeful activity?

A Book That Can Change the Heart

During the 1990's, Hafeni began to examine his own religious beliefs and decided to obtain a Bible. He said: "I started by examining the Gospels [the Bible books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John], which contain the life story of Jesus. As I read, I was quickly attracted to the personality of Jesus and his kind and impartial way of dealing with people. This warmed my heart."

Hafeni said that when he read further, "one passage from the Bible really hit home—Acts 10:34 and 35." It reads: "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."

"I concluded," Hafeni said, "that it is people themselves who are responsible for tribalism, nationalism, and racial prejudices. I came to realize that the Bible's message can change people's thinking and that the most important thing in life is having a good standing with God. This is more important than fighting in behalf of people of a particular tribe, race, or color."

Joseba, quoted in the preceding article, was the head of a small commando group that planned to blow up a police station. "But before we could carry out this attack," explained Joseba, "I was arrested and spent two years in prison." Later, his wife, Luci, began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Eventually Joseba joined those discussions.

"As I learned more about Jesus," reflected Joseba, "he became my role model. One of his statements really touched me, namely: 'All those who take the sword will perish by the sword.' I knew this was true." (Matthew 26:52) Joseba acknowledged: "Assassinating someone only provokes hatred and a desire for revenge by the family members. Violence brings only pain, not a better world." Joseba began to make adjustments in his thinking.

Both Hafeni and Joseba learned through personal experience that Bible teachings can powerfully affect one's life. The Bible says that "the word of God is alive and exerts power" and that it can discern the "intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) The power of God's Word has helped many to adjust their thinking and actions. But is there evidence that global unity exists among those who truly practice Bible teachings?

A Brotherhood Based on Love

When Hafeni began attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, he was deeply moved by the racial harmony he observed. "Sitting next to white people was an absolute thrill," he said. "I never thought that in my lifetime I would get the opportunity to call a white man brother. This cemented my conviction that the Witnesses must have the true religion, for they had the unity among themselves that I longed for and had love for each other despite racial differences."

Jesus said that his true followers would be identified by having 'love among themselves.' (John 13:34, 35) He also refused to take part in political conflicts and told his disciples: "You are no part of the world." (John 6:15; 15:19; Matthew 22:15-22) Love and neutrality were marks of true Christianity then, even as they are today.

Applying What Jesus Taught

But how can love survive in spite of the divisive forces that breed terrorism? When political issues cause hostilities, loyalty to race, nation, or ethnic roots often pits one person—or nation—against another.

For instance, back in 1914, ethnic pride moved Gavrilo Princip to assassinate Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. Princip was a member of an organization called the Black Hand, which, according to its constitution, preferred "revolutionary struggle rather than . . . cultural striving" in pursuing its goals. The assassination sparked war between so-called Christian nations, leading to World War I and the death of millions of combatants who claimed to follow Jesus, the "Prince of Peace."—Isaiah 9:6.

After the war ended, a prominent clergyman, Harry Emerson Fosdick, denounced professed Christian leaders for not teaching their members to follow Jesus' example. "We have bred men for war," he wrote. "We have made warriors our heroes and even in our churches we have put the battle flags." Fosdick concluded:

“With one corner of our mouth we have praised the Prince of Peace and with the other we have glorified war.”

In contrast, a sociological study published in 1975 stated: “Jehovah’s Witnesses have consistently maintained their stand of nonviolent ‘Christian neutrality’ through two major world wars and the subsequent military clashes of the ‘Cold War’ period.” Even though the Witnesses were mistreated and imprisoned, they “never responded with violence.” The study concluded: “The teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses stem from their conviction that the Bible is the inspired word of God.”

Value of Applying Bible Teachings

When a former prime minister of Belgium received from a neighbor a book about the life of Jesus entitled *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, he was deeply moved by what he read. “It is evident that if people would be more interested in the message of the Gospel and put into practice the principles of Jesus Christ,” he wrote to the neighbor, “the world today would look completely different.”

“We would not need a Security Council,” he added, “nor would there be terrorist attacks, [and] violence would be banned.” Yet, he concluded: “All of this is wishful thinking.” But is it really? Even now, in the midst of a world saturated with violence, the Bible has helped many individuals of all backgrounds to reject the use of violence and to overcome the bitter resentment that builds when people live through decades of wanton bloodshed.

As described in our opening article, Andre was almost killed by a bomb that took the lives of several of his friends. It had been planted by a militant group. He subsequently learned of and applied the Bible advice that one should ‘freely forgive.’ (Colossians 3:13) Later, Hafeni, who years after that bombing became a member of that same group, learned to apply Bible principles and renounced violence. (Psalm 11:5) Now both are Jehovah’s Witnesses and work together in a translation office of the Witnesses in an African country.

Confidence in a Secure Future

Millions of people worldwide are finding that study of the Bible builds in them confidence in a secure future. For example, one day Andre was showing a neighbor the Bible’s promise of a righteous new world. (Isaiah 2:4; 11:6-9; 65:17, 21-25; 2 Peter 3:13) Suddenly, soldiers with automatic weapons surrounded the house and ordered Andre to come out for questioning. After learning that Andre was a Bible teacher whom his neighbor greatly appreciated, the soldiers left.

Andre had just finished explaining that God will intervene in human affairs, as He did in the days of Noah, when “the earth [was] filled with violence.” (Genesis 6:11) God removed the world of that time by means of a global flood and preserved alive the peace-loving man Noah and his family. “Just as the days of Noah were,” Jesus said, “so the presence of the Son of man will be.”—Matthew 24:37-39.

Jesus, “the Son of man,” is God’s chosen Ruler of the heavenly government called the Kingdom of God, and he will soon lead God’s heavenly forces in removing violence from the earth. (Luke 4:43) As heavenly King, Jesus will ‘be fair with everyone, and there will be peace.’ He will protect his subjects “from cruel and violent deaths.”—Psalm 72:7, 14, *Contemporary English Version*.

Afterward, all who love what is right and who become subjects of this heavenly King will see the earth transformed into a peaceful paradise. (Luke 23:42, 43) “Peace and justice,” promises the Bible, will “rule every mountain and hill.”—Psalm 72:1-3, *CEV*.

Would you not enjoy living in a world ruled by such a king? Indeed, that will be a world without terrorism.

[Blurb on page 7]

Both Hafeni and Joseba learned through personal experience that Bible teachings can powerfully affect one’s life

[Blurb on page 9]

‘If people put into practice the principles of Jesus Christ, the world today would look completely different. We would not need a Security Council, nor would there be terrorist attacks, and violence would be banned.’—A former prime minister of Belgium

[Picture on page 8]

Applying Bible principles helped Hafeni and Andre to have genuine love for each other

*** g03 1/8 pp. 18-20 Freed From the Chains of Hate ***

Freed From the Chains of Hate

AS TOLD BY JOSÉ GOMEZ

I WAS born September 8, 1964, in Rognac, a small town in the south of France. My parents and grandparents were Andalusian Gypsies, born in Algeria and Morocco, North Africa. As is common in Gypsy culture, ours was a large extended family.

My father was a violent man, and some of my earliest memories include scenes of him hurting my mother. In time, my mother opted for divorce—something that is rare among Gypsies. She took my brother, my sister, and me to Belgium, where we lived peacefully for the next eight years.

Things changed, however. We children wanted to see our father, so Mother took us to France and was reunited with my father. Living with Father again presented challenges for me. In Belgium we went everywhere with Mother. But on my father's side of the family, men were to associate with men. Their macho mentality was that men have all the rights and women have all the duties. One day, for example, when I wanted to help my aunt clean up after dinner, my uncle accused me of being a homosexual. In his family, doing the dishes was strictly a woman's chore. Eventually, this unbalanced thinking rubbed off on me.

It was not long before my mother once again became the victim of my father's violent disposition. Several times when we tried to intervene, my brother and I had to escape through the window to avoid Father's blows. My sister was not spared either. As a result, I spent as much time away from home as possible. At 15 years of age, I had no direction in life.

In time, I became known for my violent temper. I enjoyed being a bully. Sometimes I would deliberately provoke other young men, but very few dared to defy me—especially since I was often armed with a knife or a chain. Soon I began to steal automobiles and sell them. In some cases I would just set them on fire and enjoy watching the firemen put out the flames. Later I took to breaking into shops and warehouses. I was arrested several times. And each time, I prayed to God for help!

Yes, I believed in God. While we were in Belgium, I had attended a religious school. So I knew that what I was doing was bad. Still, my belief in God did not have any effect on my conduct. I thought that all I had to do was ask and my sins would be forgiven.

In 1984, I was sentenced to 11 months in prison for stealing. I was sent to the Baumettes Prison, in Marseilles. There, I tattooed various parts of my body. One tattoo read "hate and vengeance." Far from being reformed, I allowed prison to deepen my hatred for authority and for society in general. Upon being released, after serving only three months in prison, I was filled with more hate than ever. Then, a tragedy changed the course of my life.

Vengeance Becomes My Goal

My family had a dispute with another Gypsy family. My uncles and I decided to confront them to resolve the matter. Both families were armed. In the argument that ensued, my uncle Pierre and a cousin of my father were shot dead. I was so distraught that I stood in the street, gun in hand, yelling in a fit of rage. One of my uncles finally wrestled my gun away from me.

The loss of Uncle Pierre, whom I viewed as a father, left me stricken with grief. I went into mourning according to Gypsy custom. For many days I did not shave or eat any meat. I refused to watch television or listen to music. I vowed to avenge the death of my uncle, but my relatives prevented me from getting a gun.

In August 1984, I was inducted into military service. At 20 years of age, I enrolled in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Lebanon. To kill or be killed was a risk that I accepted. At the time, I was smoking large quantities of hashish. In addition to giving me a sense of well-being, the drug made me feel that nothing could harm me.

It was easy to obtain arms in Lebanon, so I decided to ship weapons back to France to further my plan to avenge my uncle. I bought two pistols, along with ammunition, from local residents. I disassembled the guns, hid them in two radios, and sent them home.

Just two weeks before the end of my military service, three of my companions and I went absent without leave. On returning to barracks, we were locked up. While in jail, I flew into a rage and attacked a guard. It was inconceivable for me to be belittled by a *payo*—a non-Gypsy. The following day I had another violent clash, this time with an officer. I was sent to the Montluc Prison, in Lyons, for the remainder of my military service.

I Find Freedom—In Prison

On my first day in Montluc Prison, I was warmly greeted by a pleasant young man. I learned that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses and that he and others of his faith were in prison simply because they did not take up arms. That puzzled me. I wanted to learn more.

Jehovah's Witnesses, I found, had a genuine love for God, and their high moral standards impressed me. Still, I had many questions. In particular, I wanted to know if the dead can communicate with the living

through dreams—something that many Gypsies believe. A Witness named Jean-Paul offered to study the Bible with me, using the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.

I devoured the book in one night, and my heart was touched by what I read. Here, in prison, I had found true freedom! When I was finally released from prison, I took the train home, with my bag full of Bible publications.

To contact the Witnesses in my home area, I went to the Kingdom Hall in Martigues. I continued studying the Bible, now with the help of a young full-time minister named Eric. Within a few days, I stopped smoking, and I stopped seeing my former partners in crime. I was determined to act in harmony with Proverbs 27:11, which says: “Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.” In Jehovah, I had found a loving Father whom I wanted to please.

The Challenge of Changing

It was not easy for me to put Christian principles into practice. For example, I had a relapse with my drug problem that lasted several weeks. But the hardest challenge for me was to get rid of the desire for vengeance. Unknown to Eric, I always carried a gun and was still actively plotting my revenge against those who killed my uncle. I spent entire nights tracking them down.

When I told Eric about this, he clearly explained to me that I could not establish a good relationship with God while being armed and seeking vengeance. I had to make a choice. I meditated deeply on the apostle Paul’s admonition at Romans 12:19: “Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath.” This, along with fervent prayer, helped me to control my feelings. (Psalm 55:22) Finally, I got rid of my weapons. On December 26, 1986, after studying the Bible for one year, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism.

My Family Responds

The changes that I had made in my conduct encouraged my parents to study the Bible. They remarried, and my mother was baptized in July 1989. In time, several other members of my family responded to the Bible’s message and became Jehovah’s Witnesses.

In August 1988, I decided to become a full-time minister. Then I fell in love with a young sister in my congregation named Katia. We were married on June 10, 1989. Our first year of marriage was not easy, for I still had some adjustments to make in my attitude toward women. It was difficult for me to apply the words of 1 Peter 3:7, which encourage husbands to assign their wives honor. Repeatedly, I had to pray for the strength to swallow my pride and change my thinking. Things gradually improved.

My uncle’s death still causes me great pain, and at times I cannot hold back the tears when I think about him. I struggle with strong emotions triggered by memories of his murder. For years, even after my baptism, I was afraid of a chance encounter with members of the family with whom we previously had a vendetta. What would I do if they attacked me? How would I react? Would my old personality take over?

One day I gave a public talk in a nearby congregation. There I saw Pepa, a relative of the men who had killed my uncle. I will admit that seeing her tested every fiber of my Christian personality. But I put aside my feelings. Later, on the day of Pepa’s baptism, I embraced her and congratulated her on her decision to serve Jehovah. In spite of all that had happened, I accepted her as my spiritual sister.

Every day, I thank Jehovah for helping me to break free from the chains of hatred. Where would I be today without Jehovah’s mercy? Thanks to him, I enjoy a happy family life. I also have a hope for the future—that of a new world free of hate and violence. Yes, I have every confidence that God’s promise will be fulfilled: “They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it.”—Micah 4:4.

[Footnote]

Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

[Picture on page 19]

With UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon, 1985

[Picture on page 20]

With Katia and my sons, Timeo and Pierre

They have enjoyed better health and greater happiness ; .# %< " "/ >#g"!.\$ 3 >

(Proverbs 14:30) *A calm heart gives life to the body, But jealousy is rottenness to the bones.*

Some have helped former opposers to change : . / =< # yb10 \$ \$

(Romans 12:20) *But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap fiery coals on his head."*

Victims of injustice cannot change the past, but they can look forward to a bright future ' ()* +),
- 3/ >0

(Psalm 37:8, 9) *Let go of anger and abandon rage; Do not become upset and turn to doing evil. ⁹ For evil men will be done away with, But those hoping in Jehovah will possess the earth.*

We invite you to continue associating with Jehovah's Witnesses and learning to 'hope in Jehovah'

[Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read or commented on. See *Ministry School* A::8/ 2)C(+ " ""/ \$\$ \$>]

No. 65-E 7/16

TO BE COVERED IN 30
MINUTES