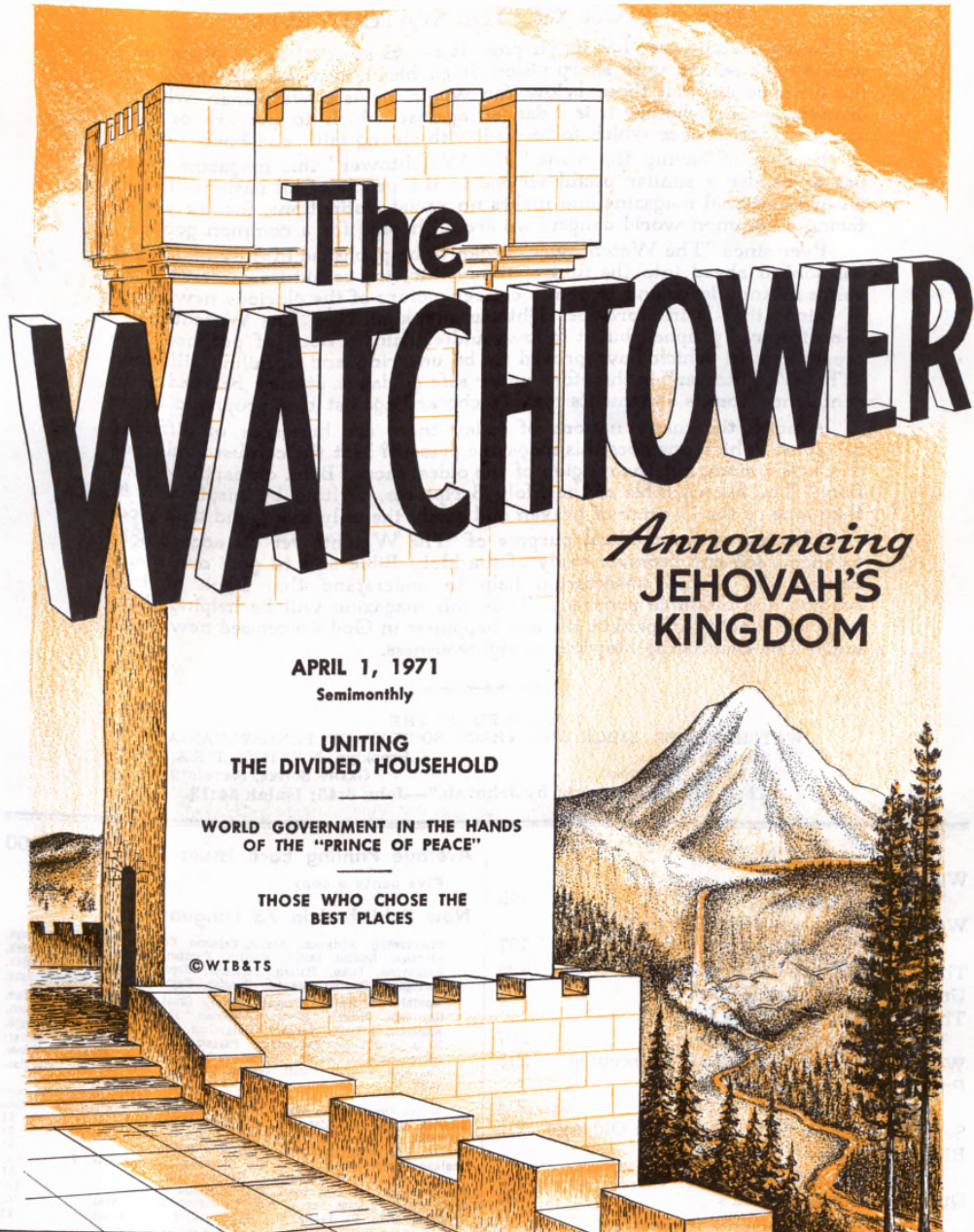


Exhibit R



"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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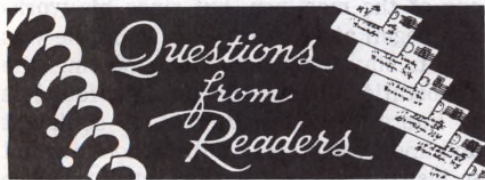
gregational meetings during the following week, even taking part in them.

The next Sunday it was much the same—meetings and luncheon, followed by a study in the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* from 2 to 11:30. That Wednesday they completed the study in the *Truth* book, upon which he asked, "What prevents me from getting baptized?" It was suggested that he get in touch with the congregation overseer, which he did. He soon completed reading the books "*Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot*" and *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*. Within three weeks from when he began the study in the *Truth* book—not six months—he was baptized!

The person continues as a zealous Christian witness of Jehovah, averages from forty to sixty hours a month, mostly in door-to-door preaching. Because of the

hours of his secular work he is able to take the lead in midweek witnessing. When his wife went away for a few weeks he had not begun studying. When she returned he was already a dedicated Christian minister of God, and waiting to be baptized. It was almost too much for her, but it was not many studies before she was telling her relatives about the wonderful things she had been learning from the Bible. Yes, what marvelous blessings can come from incidental witnessing!

So, if you are a Christian minister, take your ministry seriously. Try to reach all those who are not at home when you first call while going from house to house with the good news. Make return visits wherever persons show interest in God's purposes. And do not overlook the many opportunities for incidental witnessing. Remember, he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.—2 Cor. 9:6.



● What is the meaning of Proverbs 20:19, and how does this apply to a Christian's keeping certain matters confidential?—E. M., U.S.A.

The verse in question reads: "He that is going about as a slanderer is uncovering confidential talk; and with one that is enticed with his lips you must have no fellowship." The first part is quite plain. A slanderer is a person who intentionally spreads harmful talk designed to put someone in a bad light. Often to accomplish this he deliberately makes public and distorts things that were supposed to be kept confidential.

The second portion of the text is somewhat parallel, but it deals with "one that is enticed

with his lips." A person can be enticed with his lips just as with his eyes or hands in that any of these organs can allow him to be tempted and drawn into evil ways. (Matt. 5:27-29) One enticed with his lips is led astray into trouble because his mouth is open in speaking whatever he hears. He has no protection, for he does not control his speech. King David observed: "I will guard my ways to keep from sinning with my tongue. I will set a muzzle as a guard to my own mouth." (Ps. 39:1) The person that "is enticed with his lips" is just the opposite; he seldom keeps anything confidential. Proverbs 20:19 counsels, "You must have no fellowship" with him, for he can cause you just as much trouble as a slanderer.

○ There are actually two aspects of this topic of confidential matters. The latter half of Proverbs 20:19 focuses on one of them. The advice basically is to be careful as to the one to whom you entrust confidential matters. Sometimes a person has certain private information or plans that he does not want made public at present. Perhaps he tells these to an acquaintance, ex-

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pecting that one to keep the matters confidential, and he may even request as much. Later he learns that the second person spread to others the private information that was of no real concern to them. The wise man will learn from such an experience with an acquaintance and determine accordingly how much he will say in the future.

However, without in any way excusing the habitual betrayer of confidences, it must be admitted that all humans are imperfect. The disciple James wrote: "The tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed." (Jas. 3:8) Even persons with the best of intentions occasionally make mistakes and unintentionally mention or hint about things that they know ought to be kept private. Thus, a degree of responsibility rests on the person himself who has a matter that he does not want made public. The more persons to whom one tells a confidential matter, the greater is the possibility that it will become general knowledge. And when one tells such a matter to a person who has proved himself to be "one that is enticed with his lips" the possibility becomes a probability.

The other important aspect of this topic is that of personally being trustworthy. Proverbs 25:9, 10 recommends this, saying: "Plead your own cause with your fellow man, and do not reveal the confidential talk of another; that the one listening may not put you to shame and the bad report by you can have no recall." So there is a stigma affixed to the one who needlessly and without authorization reveals information that he was expected to keep confidential. And once a private matter has been publicized, there is no recalling it despite all the complications to which it may lead.

Let us consider some situations and relationships in life that bring to one's attention private information.

A husband and wife, being "one flesh," are aware of many family matters, plans or weaknesses that are understood to be confidential. (Matt. 19:5) If either mate got into the habit of thoughtlessly telling other people such things, many problems could result. For example, perhaps a husband kiddingly comments to others about an unusual personality trait his wife has. When this gets back to the wife, she easily might be offended. Though this is just an illustration, it shows how a wedge can come between the mate who expected the matter to

be kept confidential and the one who publicized it. On the other hand, how the bond of love between mates is strengthened when each sees that the other is worthy of full trust in regard to personal or family matters. (Eph. 5:25, 28) Children also can be taught to use discretion about repeating things they hear discussed within the family circle.

In one's relationship as a close friend or business associate a person sometimes knows of things of a confidential nature. It would be impossible to set any rules on just what should be kept confidential in these relationships. But a person can keep in mind that one strong binding force between close friends is mutual trust. (Prov. 18:24) If in your mind there is any question as to whether something your friend told you can be mentioned to others, it is best not to, or at least not until you have his permission. The same general view holds true in business matters, keeping in mind that one could severely hurt one's employer economically by revealing confidential business plans. The Scriptures urge those in the relationship of employees to exhibit "good fidelity to the full." —Titus 2:9, 10.

Other situations that should be considered involve the Christian congregation. In each congregation of Jehovah's witnesses there are mature ministers appointed to care for various assignments. (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) As they discharge their duties they often are told about confidential things, and it is essential that they respect this confidence. For instance, James 5:13-16 shows that a member of the congregation who has some spiritual problem, perhaps even having committed a sin, should go to the spiritually older men for help. Isaiah 32:2 prophetically pictured these men as places of comfort and protection. What a fine thing it is to be able to explain one's problem and get balanced spiritual help, and at the same time have full confidence that the matter will not become general knowledge in the congregation or community.

Those mature ministers will not discuss even with their wives and close friends what they thus learn in confidence. They know that if they did so it would undermine respect for their positions; it would make individuals hesitant to come to them; yes, in time it might even make it impossible for them to fulfill their role as spiritual shepherds. Another reason why they maintain this confidence is so as to avoid

burdening others. For instance, if a man tells his wife some confidential matter related to his ministerial duties, she is put under pressure to maintain that confidence. Is that fair to her as the "weaker vessel"? (1 Pet. 3:7) Even if in a moment of weakness she out of curiosity asked her husband what took place or why he was speaking with a certain person, the loving and correct course is for him to say kindly that it is a confidential matter regarding the congregation. In that way she does not have to carry unnecessary mental burdens. And if someone asks her about the matter, she can honestly say that she does not know the details.

All in the congregation should cooperate with the appointed servants by not trying to obtain the details on such confidential matters. Humans are somewhat curious by nature, and we usually like to learn new things. This is not bad. The number of new points about the Bible and the Christian ministry that we can learn and share with others is limitless. (Phil. 4:8) Yet we need to keep our curiosity in check when it comes to things that are confidential. Remember Samson and Delilah. When he would not tell her a secret that related to his theocratic assignment, she said in effect, 'You don't love me.' And "because she pressured him with her words all the time and kept urging him, his soul got to be impatient to the point of dying. Finally he disclosed to her all his heart." (Judg.

16:15-17) As a consequence, Samson suffered personally and he also temporarily hurt the cause of true worship by depriving Israel of his leadership. (Judg. 16:20, 21) Surely no Christian relative or friend today wants to copy Delilah's example.

There may be an occasion when the presiding minister announces to the congregation that its representatives have had to expel an unrepentant sinner or had to offer strong discipline to someone because of his unchristian conduct. The members of the congregation are informed so that they can avoid that one altogether or be careful in his presence, as the case may require. (1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15) But they should not try to ferret out all the details. Those are confidential and ought to be kept as such.

How thankful we can be that Jehovah provided in his Word perfect counsel on this vital topic. He had recorded, for example, the proverb: "The one walking about as a slanderer is uncovering confidential talk, but the one faithful in spirit is covering over a matter." (Prov. 11:13) He obviously knew that it was a common failing of imperfect human nature to talk about confidential matters that should be kept private. But by calling attention to this danger He helps all who want to please Him to guide their steps in a way that will encourage peace, friendship and unity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS
- May 9: Uniting the Divided Household. Page 201. Songs to Be Used: 56, 94.
- May 16: The Christian Wife and Children in a Divided Household. Page 207. Songs to Be Used: 60, 107.