

Exhibit C

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w89 12/1 pp. 24-27 "A Test of the Genuineness of Your Love"
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"A Test of the Genuineness of Your Love"

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"A Test of the Genuineness of Your Love"

WHAT do the above words bring to your mind? Persecution and hardship? Martyrdom? Those words were originally penned by the apostle Paul in a letter to Christians in ancient Corinth. They are of great importance to Jehovah's people today in that the 'genuineness of their love' is being similarly tested. But how? In answer, let us examine the setting of Paul's words.

The Basis for the Test

Some two decades after the founding of Christianity, the congregation in Jerusalem was in dire financial straits. Dwelling in that stronghold of Jewish opposition and prejudice, Christians had over the years "endured a great contest under sufferings," even experiencing a 'plundering of their belongings.' (Hebrews 10:32-34) Outside help had become imperative.

Certainly, their Gentile brothers should have been moved to respond to their plight. After all, they owed a special "debt" to the Christians in Jerusalem. Was it not from Jerusalem that the good news had spread to the Gentiles? Paul reckoned: "If the Jewish Christians shared their spiritual treasures with the Gentiles, the Gentiles have a clear duty to contribute to their material needs."—Romans 15:27, *The New English Bible*.

Organizing the Collection

Paul had been directed by the governing body to "keep the poor [Christians] in mind." (Galatians 2:10) So he sent word to Christians in Europe and Asia Minor regarding the situation in Jerusalem. Here are Paul's instructions: "Now concerning the collection that is for the holy ones, just as I gave orders to the congregations of Galatia, do that way also yourselves. Every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering, so that when I arrive collections will not take place then."—1 Corinthians 16:1, 2.

By budgeting their money in this way, no one would feel compelled or pressured when the collection was actually taken up. The brothers did not have any fear that their money would be misappropriated or wasted. Only 'approved men' would be allowed to deliver the collected funds, Paul accompanying them himself if deemed necessary.—1 Corinthians 16:3-5.

The Corinthians' response? Though the brothers apparently reacted favorably to Paul's admonition, the collection was never sent. (2 Corinthians 8:6, 10, 11) Perhaps the elders became preoccupied with ridding the congregation of dissension, immorality, and other problems Paul had written them about.

'Abound in Kind Giving'

At any rate, Paul wrote them another letter saying: "Now we let you know, brothers, about the undeserved kindness of God that has been bestowed upon the congregations of Macedonia, that during a great test under affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound. For according to their actual ability, yes, I testify, beyond their actual ability this was, while they of their own accord kept begging us with much entreaty for the privilege of kindly giving and for a share in the ministry destined for the holy ones. And not merely as we had hoped, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us through God's will. This led us to encourage Titus that, just as he had been the one to initiate it among you, so too he should complete this same kind giving on your part. Nevertheless, just as you are abounding in everything, in faith and word and knowledge and all earnestness and in this love of ours to you, may you also abound in this kind giving."—2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

The example of the self-sacrificing Macedonians gave the Corinthians much food for thought. Corinth was proverbial for its wealth, luxury, and commerce. Some of the brothers there may have been relatively poor, yet, as a whole, the congregation no doubt was better off than the Macedonian Christians who were in "deep poverty." Yet, the Macedonians had contributed "beyond their actual ability." They had needed no prompting from Paul to contribute. Why they 'begged' Paul 'with entreaty' to have a share in this contribution! This was evidence that the Macedonian Christians truly "gave themselves to the Lord [in unreserved dedication] and to [Paul and his companions]," submitting to their theocratic direction.

Tested as to Their Love and Generosity

Would the Corinthians likewise be moved to 'abound in kind giving'? When first visiting Corinth, Paul had been forced to support himself as a tentmaker. (Acts 18:1-3) He continued this policy of self-support even as a congregation developed there, refraining from using his "authority" as a full-time evangelizer to receive financial support.—1 Corinthians 9:3-12.

Says Bible commentator Thomas Scott: "Probably, he had witnessed some things in the disposition of the Corinthian Christians, which first induced him to decline

receiving any support from them.” Perhaps influenced by the selfish materialism surrounding them, the relatively affluent Corinthians may simply have been disinclined to be generous. Paul may also have feared that the commerce-minded Corinthians would question his motive if he accepted financial support. There might even have been those who, like some in Thessalonica, were lazy and wanted an excuse to live off their fellow Christians.—2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

Whatever the case, Paul and his companions chose to support themselves, “in order that we might not offer any hindrance to the good news about the Christ.” (1 Corinthians 9:12) In time, though, Paul fell into financial straits, word of which reached the poor brothers living in Philippi. Paul told the Corinthians: “Other congregations I robbed by accepting provisions in order to minister to you; and yet when I was present with you and I fell in need, I did not become a burden to a single one, for the brothers that came from Macedonia [apparently Philippi] abundantly supplied my deficiency. Yes, in every way I kept myself unburdensome to you and will keep myself so.”—2 Corinthians 11:8, 9; compare Philippians 4:15, 16.

True, Paul himself admitted that he would not ‘accept provisions’ from the Corinthians. But when Paul had tried to turn down the hospitality of the Philippian woman Lydia, ‘she just *made* them come.’ (Acts 16:15) Did the Corinthians show the same persistent concern for Paul’s material welfare? One wonders. At any rate, Paul discerned that the situation involving the Jerusalem congregation presented an opportunity to test whether the Corinthians had a tendency to be closefisted or whether they had grown in generosity. He thus exhorted:

“It is not in the way of commanding you, but . . . to make a test of the genuineness of your love, that I am speaking. For I do not mean for it to be easy for others, but hard on you [that is, not that others would be relieved and you would suffer]; but that by means of an equalizing your surplus just now might offset their deficiency, in order that their surplus might also come to offset your deficiency, that an equalizing might take place. Just as it is written: ‘The person with much did not have too much, and the person with little did not have too little.’”—2 Corinthians 8:8, 13-15.

Evidently, the Corinthians passed their test. Some time later Paul reported: “Those in Macedonia and Achaia [where Corinth was situated] have been pleased to share up their things by a contribution to the poor of the holy ones in Jerusalem.”—Romans 15:26.

Meeting the Test Today

Are we, however, passing tests of love and generosity that present themselves today? We are living in “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Financial pressures weigh upon many of us. And at times “the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life” create their own pressures. (1 John 2:16) How easy it is to become self-centered, insensitive to the needs of others!

On the whole, Jehovah’s Witnesses today have met tests of their brotherly love in an outstanding way. For example, on March 3, 1985, an earthquake struck Santiago, Chile. Hundreds of brothers lost their homes and possessions. Immediately, congregations organized relief efforts. “Within hours,” report the brothers, “some began arriving with food, clothing, blankets and other useful items.” Contributions also came in from around the world. Similar events have occurred numerous times over the years.

But we need not wait for disaster to prove our brotherly love. If a fellow Christian suffers a financial hardship, we can be sensitive to his needs, doing more than saying, “Keep warm and well fed.” (James 2:15, 16) And what of those in full-time service who “live by means of the good news.” Like Paul, such ones neither demand nor expect financial assistance from those whom they serve. Nevertheless, many have been moved to show generosity toward those who labor to ‘sow spiritual things’ in their behalf.—1 Corinthians 9:11, 14.

And what of the needs of the worldwide organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses? The 1989 Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses reports that “during the 1988 service year the Watch Tower Society spent \$29,834,676.97 in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments.” Great expenses were also incurred caring for and purchasing branch facilities, equipment, machinery, paper—not to mention the basic living expenses of the global Bethel family, which now numbers over 9,000! Additionally, some 18 construction and renovation projects are currently going on in various branches, and 19 at our headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Are you having a share in financing this global work?

As in the first century, today all share in caring for this responsibility, including the less well-off, who, with their small contributions, have proved to be the backbone of the Society’s financial support. Some find it helpful to follow the precedent set at 1 Corinthians 16:2 and regularly budget personal funds to be contributed at the local Kingdom Hall. Some may also decide to contribute money directly to the Watch Tower Society at 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to one of its branch offices.

Be assured that Jehovah takes note of those who, through their generosity, prove the genuineness of their love. Do not deprive yourself of blessings! Paul promised: “God, moreover, is able to make all his undeserved kindness abound toward you, that, while you always have full self-sufficiency in everything, you may have plenty for every good work.”—2 Corinthians 9:8.

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HOW SOME CONTRIBUTE TO THE KINGDOM WORK

□ **GIFTS:** Voluntary donations of money may be sent directly to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office. Property such as real estate, as well as jewelry or other valuables, can also be donated. A brief letter stating that such is an outright donation should accompany these contributions.

□ **CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT:** Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society to be held in trust, with the provision that in case of personal need, it will be returned to the donor.

□ **INSURANCE:** The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

□ **TRUSTS:** Bank savings accounts can be placed *in trust for* the Society. If this is done, please inform the Society. Stocks, bonds, and property can also be donated under an arrangement to benefit the donor during his or her lifetime. This method eliminates the expense and uncertainties of probate of will, while ensuring that the Society receives the property in the event of death.

□ **WILLS:** Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will. A copy should be sent to the Society.

For more information and advice regarding such matters, write to the **Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201**, or to the Society's local branch office.

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