Awake!

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NOVEMBER 8, 1968

THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE

News sources that are able to keep you awake to the vital issues of our times must be unfettered by censorship and selfish interests. "Awake!" has no fetters. It recognizes facts, faces facts, is free to publish facts. It is not bound by political ties; it is unhampered by traditional creeds. This magazine keeps itself free, that it may speak freely to you. But it does not abuse its freedom. It maintains integrity to truth.

The viewpoint of "Awake!" is not narrow, but is international. "Awake!" has its own correspondents in scores of nations. Its articles are read in many lands, in many languages, by millions of persons.

In every issue "Awake!" presents vital topics on which you should be informed. It features penetrating articles on social conditions and offers sound counsel for meeting the problems of everyday life. Current news from every continent passes in quick review. Attention is focused on activities in the fields of government and commerce about which you should know. Straightforward discussions of religious issues alert you to matters of vital concern. Customs and people in many lands, the marvels of creation, practical sciences and points of human interest are all embraced in its coverage. "Awake!" provides wholesome, instructive reading for every member of the family.

"Awake!" pledges itself to righteous principles, to exposing hidden foes and subtle dangers, to championing freedom for all, to comforting mourners and strengthening those disheartened by the failures of a delinquent world, reflecting sure hope for the establishment of God's righteous new order in this generation.

Get acquainted with "Awake!" Keep awake by reading "Awake!"

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Awake!
"It is already the hour for you to awake."
—Romans 13:11

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How to Comfort Others IN GRIEF

PERHAPS the majority of us will sometime during our lifetime meet persons who are greatly distressed and need our help. What can we say or do that will comfort them? When friends suffer injury or bereavement, we often want desperately to console them, but do we know how? When sending a letter or a card of condolence, for example, what can we say that will bring true consolation to the one who is sorrowing?

Many persons fall short of the mark when it comes to offering true comfort to mourners. Embarrassed and uncomfortable in the face of deep sorrow or death, they often do not know just what to say or do. Knowing just what to do when faced with this problem would, in fact, be a comfort to the comforter.

In order to be of greatest service to the grief-stricken one, one must be able to share his sorrow. This is not as hard as many people think. If you are normally compassionate, then just be yourself. Your presence will be felt and appreciated.

However, putting deep feelings into words is not easy for many persons. Often they do not know what to say and so may say very little. But this is not as objectionable as they may think. Some of the truest sympathy is conveyed through a warm handclasp or an embrace.

If the bereaved want to talk of their loss, let them; in fact, encourage them to. As they speak, this will help the timid or inhibited ones to speak up with words of encouragement and comfort. Sometimes it is not what is said that counts as much as one's being present with the bereaved.

Apply Human Understanding

When comforting people in sorrow, it is well to be understanding as well as compassionate. Comforting Bible talk can help some people escape from the silence that largely engulfs them. The warm thoughts of God are uplifting and encouraging at moments such as these. But the principle of moderation should be kept in mind.

Some hospitals advise being cheerful,

but here, too, the counsel needs to be qualified. A person with a heavy heart may be in no position to appreciate efforts at humor. Often a warm handclasp along with a word or two of encouragement are all that are needed. A light quip may be misunderstood. The bereaved may feel that the comforter is not aware of the depth of his distress. So be understanding.

To share the sorrows of others is to give a portion of oneself. When Jesus Christ visited the family of Lazarus, he did not feel called on to betray no emotions. No, he himself gave way to tears. (John 11:35) When tears are shed in sincerity, this lets the bereaved one know that there are others who deeply feel the loss too. Tears show not only feeling but understanding as well.

Christians, of all people, are compassionate. They are, in fact, told to 'clothe themselves with the tender affections of compassion.' (Col. 3:12) So it would be quite normal for them to shed tears. Said an understanding friend to one who felt utterly desolate: "Cry if you need to, but please don't insist on crying alone." So they sat together, sometimes talking and sometimes not. Sometimes there was an occasional sound of tears and a sniffle. This bereaved person said that this understanding person's quiet, compassionate manner gave her the strength she needed. "It was what she did not do that helped almost as much as what she did," the bereaved said. "She did not urge me not to cry; she did not try to distract me with constant chatter . . . She simply gave her presence as support, and I shall never forget it." She was neither frightened nor embarrassed by tears. Neither should we be. Her quiet manner showed that she understood how to bear the sorrows of others and thus was able to offer true comfort.

Offering Firm Encouragement

A woman who keenly felt the loss of her husband was helped by what her doctor said to her. Months later she said: "My doctor had been justified in reminding me—a little sternly—that my situation was not unique, that millions of other human creatures down the centuries have known the feeling of being forsaken, the physical frustration, the loss of zest for life. 'Above all,' he said, 'don't be ashamed of your feelings. You are flesh and blood. Just thank God for that!' " Many bereaved and depressed people have to be reminded of that fact. Firm reminders are often a source of encouragement.

Evidently Christians in the apostle Peter's day had need of similar advice. Writing to Christians who had endured much suffering and who were about to endure more, Peter said: "The same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world. But, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will make you firm, he will make you strong." (1 Pet. 5:9, 10) This encouraging advice is timely today, and Christians would do well to remind suffering fellow believers of it. There is a time when firmness can be an act of kindness resulting in encouragement and strength.

Use of the Scriptures

A timely discussion of the Bible's encouraging promises for the future can be most upbuilding to those who suffer deep sorrow. Christians can guide the thoughts of the mourner away from the immediate tragedy to the happy times that were enjoyed together in life. The hopeful promises of God for the future concerning a paradise earth can also be discussed. (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:4, 5) Mourners generally are comforted by the thoughts of

God. Deliver them from the heart and they may find their way to the heart.

In the small book *"Make Sure of All Things; Hold Fast to What Is Fine,"* under the heading "Death," on page 142, is a collection of Scripture texts that could prove invaluable on such occasions. Under the subheading "Cause of Death," scriptures are listed to show that man was created to live, not to die, that God warned against the course that would lead to death. Under another subheading, "Condition of the Dead," scriptures are presented to show that a dead person is unconscious and inactive in the grave. And under still another subheading, "Deliverance from Death," we find Bible proof that dead ones under the ransom, both the righteous and the unrighteous, will be resurrected by the power of God. Here are talking points to help mourners.

Helping Brooders

No one should want to ride roughshod over another person's needs for privacy and solitude, especially so during moments of sorrow. There are times when the grief-stricken person wants to be alone and should be left alone, and a good friend can usually distinguish between the genuine need and a kind of withdrawal and brooding brought on by depression. There is a tendency to want to shut the heart to others when a deep injury to the spirit has been sustained, lest hurt be heaped upon hurt. But there are times when friends must invade this area, to the good of the bereaved.

For example, a pioneer minister of Jehovah's witnesses told of her experience following her husband's sudden death. She said: "After my husband's death, I debated in my mind whether I should attend the meetings at the Kingdom Hall as we regularly did and to sit in our customary spot. The Kingdom Hall, of all places, was most intimately connected with my husband. He was a servant in the congregation for many years. My absence at meetings, I reasoned to myself, would be completely understood, perhaps even expected by some. Yet an instinct told me to take head-on the business of facing life. How thankful I was when my Christian brothers came by and insisted that I accompany them to the Kingdom Hall. It gave me strength to do what I knew to be right, but could not in my own strength bring myself to do."

Another woman who received aid said: "The person who helped me most after my uncle died was a friend who dragged me to the supermarket whenever she went shopping. I'm grateful that Anna persisted against my stubborn protests." These experiences teach us that the bereaved must face life anew, and the sooner they do, the better for them. However, at times they will need the assistance of friends to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed by their own depressions and sorrow.

Friends, relatives and loved ones are naturally moved at times of sorrow to manifest concern. This is right and proper. The bereaved should fully accept this love that flows from those concerned. The many friends we have will help sustain us with their manifestation of love and concern during dark, troublesome hours. 'People came with warm handclasps and instinctive sympathy. The love that flowed like a great tidal wave through our Kingdom Hall family blessed us all. I know now that the healing process for any of life's sorrows can begin the moment we stop resisting them,' said one who had suffered much grief. It is a lesson from which we all can benefit.

Comforting Children

Children who suffer loss are particularly sensitive and in need of tender, loving

care. A child's consolation may come mainly in knowing that he is not only loved but needed during the periods of sorrow. A wife said that her grief was diffused by worrying over her ten-year-old son. The son, on the other hand, found his load bearable when told: "Now you're the man of the house. You must be brave and encourage your mother during her time of deep sorrow." The boy sensed his responsibility and tried his best to behave as a man. It helped him carry his load.

Three children, whose parents died suddenly in an automobile accident recently, were encouraged with the Scriptural hope of the resurrection. They trusted so implicitly in God's promise to bring back the dead that they were able to absorb their tragic loss with only minor signs of emotional disturbances. The daughter always hopefully expressed to her school friends that she will see her parents in the resurrection. Her faith never ceased to amaze those who listened to her. Her relatives and friends helped considerably too by showing loving care for them, by giving them things to do and demonstrating concern and love.

Therefore, do not hesitate to discuss with children the encouraging promises of God's Word about the resurrection and the coming paradise earth. Their little minds and hearts will flash with interest. You will be encouraged at the sight of their unwavering faith. Children take great comfort in the words recorded at Revelation 21:4, which says that God "will wipe out every tear from [men's] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more." These hopeful promises need to be repeated to children over and over again, because they forget so quickly. And they never tire of them. Each time they are told their delight abounds.

Sending Cards and Letters

Today, with busy schedules facing so many people, more and more persons go to the store and buy sympathy cards. Cards and letters are indeed proper ways to express our sorrow and sympathy. Every manifestation of interest, every visit, every card, every letter, every telephone call helps heavy-hearted mourners. It tells them that someone cared enough to break the stride of his own daily schedule long enough to express concern. Those who wish to comfort the mourners in these ways show that they are willing to share some of the bereaved one's sorrows.

In addition to sending commercial cards with thought-out, printed messages, many persons like to add a few words of their very own. But what should one say? Putting deep feelings into words is hard for some. Even the simplest things are often difficult to express in one's own handwriting. What should one say in a card or letter? Simply put down on paper the loving thoughts that moved you to write. A few words in your own handwriting, expressed in your way, will likely carry more weight and warmth and meaning than all the beautiful commercial phrases in the world. They are your words, your thoughts, your sentiments, and that is what counts. "I can't put things fancy," a letter began, "but I just want to say that your father was my best friend and every child in the school looked up to him." The family cherished that letter above all the cards and other commercial notes that they received. Why? Because it was the person's very own, written from the warmth of his heart.

Continued Thoughtfulness

True consolation cannot be limited to a few days. It often needs to extend over a period of time until the bereaved has fully recovered from his loss. An individ-

ual once made this observation: "The bereaved person is usually surrounded by friends and cushioned by every comfort they can provide—at first. But what happens a few weeks later? The anesthetic of his initial shock has worn off. The sad little tasks that kept him busy are all accomplished. The friends drift off to their own concerns. He is left alone too soon." Where are those friends that flocked to his side during those early days? More than ever now he needs help. He feels empty inside, lonely. Therefore, some well-placed telephone calls, an invitation out to dinner, an occasional visit, a bunch of flowers, can be most helpful weeks and months after the shock of the tragedy has worn off.

How can friends further show their continued thoughtfulness? They can include the bereaved one in their own activities, taking that one with them on trips, inviting that one over when entertaining others, and so forth. Doing a person's household chores or shopping may take a little planning and extra energy, but the rewards are unforgettable. Such expressions never fail to have a healing effect on the bereaved. Their surprising effect is delightful. There may be errands that need to be run. Perhaps you can care for some of these or provide transportation. Anyone who has ever mourned can vouch for the lasting impact of such thoughtful gestures in the lonely weeks and months that follow the initial flurry of attentive callers.

So it is not just one simple call or card that comforts a mourning one, but steady interest and care born of love, until the mourner finds strength to return to the normal functions of life, to live to the glory and praise of Jehovah, "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort."—2 Cor. 1:1-3.

Defending Bible Truth in School

● By defending God's truth a young witness of Jehovah helped her teacher to learn who Jehovah is. Here is how she did it:

"One day we were studying a chapter in our school history book on ancient history. The particular chapter we were considering dealt with ancient Bible history of the nation of Israel. The history book made the statement that Jehovah was the name of the God of the Hebrews. At the conclusion of the chapter, our teacher gave us a written test. One of the questions asked was, Who is Jehovah? I remembered what the history book had said, but I knew that Jehovah is our God too and I wanted to make a point of this. So I wrote this down as the answer.

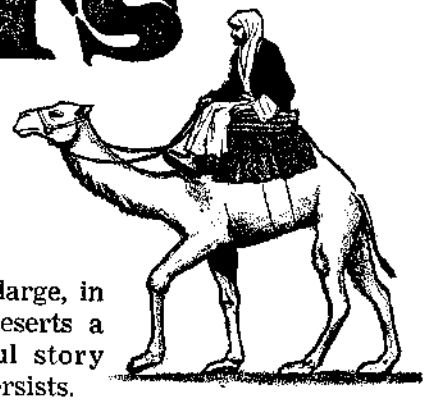
"When I received my test paper back I noted that it was marked ninety-nine. Looking down to see what I had missed, I saw that my answer about Jehovah was marked wrong. After I arrived home, I mentioned it to my parents. My father suggested that I go to my teacher and ask her why she marked my answer wrong.

"The next morning I approached my teacher and I asked her about it. She replied, 'Jehovah was only the Hebrews' God.' I took her Bible off her desk and showed her God's name Jehovah at Psalm 83:18. She exclaimed in surprise, 'I never knew that Jehovah was the name of our God before.' I also told her that she could find Jehovah's name in three other places in her Bible.

"On hearing this, she took my test paper and changed my grade to one hundred. Thus I was able to make known our God's name Jehovah to my teacher and also receive a grade of one hundred."

No doubt about it, if one is always ready to make a defense in a tactful, mild way, he will see good results. He will attract seekers of God's truth.—1 Pet. 3:15.

DESERTS
—Lands of Living Marvels



WE LIVE on a very special planet. Earth is full of life! Myriad forms of life thrive deep within its soils, throughout its skies and waters. In fact, life appears insistently amid seemingly unlivable circumstances.

Truly, the unconquerableness of life is nowhere better proved than within the nineteen areas listed as principal deserts of the earth. These arid showcases are lands of marvel. Imagine living where daily temperatures range from high above 100° F. to below freezing; where sand glare and dust give way to an emerald oasis when drenched by a quick rain; where vast amounts of precious ores and minerals are mined yearly. Furthermore, deserts are a specialized neighborhood tenanted by unique fauna (animals) and flora (vegetation). These animals and plants offer tenacious proof that many, many forms of life are really quite at home in desert lands.

The mighty king of these desert blankets is the some 3,000,000-square-mile Sahara, which is almost as large in area as the United States. Its enormity is better grasped by realizing that its greatest length is some 3,200 miles, or greater than the distance between New York city and San Francisco. The Sahara is followed by the great desert of central Australia, the Gobi Desert in Mongolia and the Kalahari Desert of South Africa.

The most extensively investigated deserts are those of the North American continent. However, deserts also appear in the Soviet Union, Peru and near the southern tip of South America. But whether small or large, in all the deserts a wonderful story of life persists.

Desert Areas Increase

With the passing of centuries the sizes of deserts have increased, and lands formerly lush with vegetation have become desertlike. Why? Authorities generally agree that man's neglect is a principal reason. In his book *Across the Great Deserts,* P. T. Etherton said: "Neglect and destruction of this protective vegetation . . . is said to be the reason why Iraq, Syria and Palestine, once 'lands flowing with milk and honey,' have become largely arid and barren."

Once man begins the scalping process, wind action, not lack of water, is thought to be more important in creating deserts. With the absence of trees and other soil-holding plants, the wind blows surface soil away and exposes the subsoil. One authority explains: "In bygone days much of the Sahara (great desert) was open grassland . . . even in the Gobi there is evidence of much greater communities having lived there than is the case today."

In the United States, too, neglect has produced alarming man-made barren wastes out of once proud virgin lands of forests. Nineteenth-century settlers rolled across the continent, felling vast forests to make room for farms and homesteads. From the deforested lands, winds swept away as much as twenty feet of topsoil

in a century. Dust storms carried soil from western prairies into houses and streets of New York, 1,500 miles distant, just as soil from the Sahara has settled in Central Europe and on ships at sea off the west coast of Africa. The marching dunes of the Sahara have even buried whole cities!

Yet, despite this neglect that has created and increased desert areas, deserts are lands of living marvels. Their story is of a very intense kind of life, a study of things that may jar and dismay persons conditioned by temperate circumstances where life is less intense. This intensity of life is reflected in desert animals.

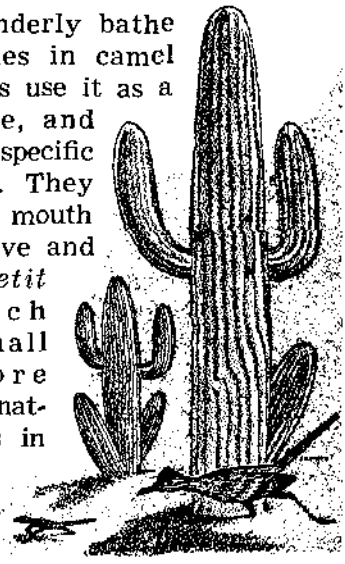
"Ships of the Desert"

The camel is just such an intense and vital creature. You may have heard him called the "ship of the desert." It has been said of him, "the camel is a boor." But in the desert he does not have much use for social charms. Since camels are natural pacers, that is, they move their great legs in lateral pairs, they do produce the rocking motion of a small boat wallowing in the troughs of the waves, and that may be why they were dubbed "ships of the desert." At any rate, what magnificent ships they are! Their dusty wake across a sandy skillet manifests an order of endurance that would wilt any other beast.

T. E. Lawrence owned a great camel named Ghazala that, as he reports, "averaged fifty miles a day; eighty was good; in an emergency we might do 110 miles in twenty-four hours; twice the Ghazala, our greatest camel, did 143 miles alone with me." Of course, these camels like Ghazala are the prize camels, always mares, whose ride is so smooth that Arabs call it "swimming." A book can be comfortably read astride them. On the other hand, the lowly untrained camels hardly ever do more than two and a half miles an hour, but then no one is in a particular hurry in the desert, especially not the Bedouin.

The Bedouin could tell you best about the camel. He calls the camel "God's gift," and, after all, the collapse of his great beast could mean his death. They really love their "gift," and therefore the poor social grace and complaining nature of the camel is understandably seldom seen. For example, the Bedouin will fondle and kiss the big animal, all the while murmuring endearments. And at intervals throughout the night it has been observed that the camel will come over, moaning softly, to sniff at his owner where he lies before going back to graze.

The camel is like a farm to the Bedouin, even like the tractor that goes with a farm, since the camel provides a mount and does often pull a plow. She furnishes milk at the rate of four or five quarts a day, also wool, leather, flesh for meat; even camel dung is used for cooking. Since water is vital to desert persons, they pursue any source of it intently, to the dismay of westerners when they encounter the strangest use of a camel's product. And that is the use to which its urine is put.



Mothers tenderly bathe newborn babies in camel urine, Bedouins use it as a cure for acne, and drink it as a specific against fever. They also use it as a mouth rinse, purgative and even as a *petit coup*, which means a small drink before breakfast. As naturally as girls in other lands use patent hair prepara-

tions, Bedouin damsels may use camel urine to wash their hair and as a henna rinse. Do you admire that alluring red tinge to the young Bedouin's beard? Can you guess where it came from?

Camel urine is used to kill parasites of the head, too, and as a face wash. It is also said to bring color to the cheeks or warm the hands during chilly weather. Nor is all this necessarily an offensive thing. One authority described the precious liquid, saying: "It smells sweetly of herbs and aromatic plants."

If the camel is like a farm, what an enduring farm indeed! Major Leonard once described its peerless endurance as follows: "It is simply wonderful to see him plod along although utterly worn out. He does not give up easily but clings to life, and goes on and on until he drops; and when he does drop, you may take it as a foregone conclusion that he will never get up again. . . . His calm, stoical endurance under intense pain and suffering has excited many a time my compassion as well as my admiration."

Other Intriguing Animals

Desert lands are also known for many animals besides the camel. The lurking lizards, snakes and vultures circling grimly overhead are only some of the supporting actors in the desert story, and by no means the only ones. A zoological list of them would fill many pages. And yet, remember that their array exists despite the fact that, of all land areas, the deserts seem one of the most unsuitable to life.

Each creature, therefore, is intent on being self-sufficient and quick to find and use the vital things. Happily, there are as many forms of this type of life on the desert floors as there are moods in life. There are funny little creatures, magnificent ones, frightful ones and friendly ones, all sharing the desert marvels.

An almost laughable contrast is seen in the kit fox and the clumsy Gila (*hee-la*) monster. The kit fox is the smallest of the foxes. It has short, stout limbs. It is not really as fast as commonly believed, but it has a most extraordinary ability to make quick turns and take advantage of any scant cover.

On the other hand, the Gila monster likes to spend the hottest days in a kind of stupor called estivation. Even when it moves it is very sluggish. It is thick-tailed and the possessor of fanglike teeth that communicate with poison glands in the lower jaw.

Some of the more magnificent desert creatures are the desert bighorn, or wild sheep. They find their most ideal conditions for existence in the almost waterless, desolate rocky ranges that jut up from the low desert plains. Even deer are desert neighbors. The California mule deer is a year-round resident of the deserts of Pima and Yuma counties along the lower Colorado River in midwestern Arizona.

Desert Birds

The sky over a desert home is beautified by a variety of large and small birds, the smallest being the desert hummingbird. Two unusual varieties of birds are the roadrunner and the verdin.

The verdin is a tiny bird and is of a nervous temperament, and yet, without appearing much disturbed, it will let you sit for hours under the nest while it comes and goes. Their nests are large and easy to see. Often they poke so much into a nest, it appears as if about to burst. They add color to the scene. The male is bright olive green and yellow, whereas the female has only two patches of color.

The roadrunner is a California desert comedy due to its strange punctuality and great activity. An invalid person living on the desert told of a roadrunner that

passed her porch regularly at 12:25 p.m. every day for over a week, never varying by over a few minutes. One observer spotted a roadrunner that would go into a cactus patch after a thirty-minute sunbath, whereupon it would perform a succession of dizzy leaps and jumps and hurried flights and runs, going round and round a cactus clump perhaps as many as twenty times, and then go annoy a family pet cat.

A rare find among birds is the hibernating poorwill. Hibernating is a trait observable in many animals, but was not established as an observed fact in birds prior to 1947. The Hopi Indians call this bird *Holchko,* "the sleeping one."

Insects of the Desert

The most inexhaustible stock of strange detail lies within the desert galleries of insect life. Most persons are familiar with the centipede, tarantula and scorpion, but what have we here?

It is a moving mass of colored fuzz covered with a deep cushion of black hair on head and thorax and brick-red hair on the abdomen. Look how fast it moves on its slender black legs. It is not an ant, even though those two large black eyes make it look like one. It is what insect specialists call a mutillid, a wasp. See it run out its long black stinger—a stinger almost as long as the abdomen itself. This little creature is called a "singing ant" by many persons because of its ability to force air in and out of the breathing tubes located on the sides of the body, causing a high-pitched singing note to be sounded.

A curious thing about the mutillid is what it lives on. It is said to subsist on the nectar of flowers, but where in dry, hot summer days and in autumn does the mutillid get either nectar or water? Said Edmund E. Jaegeer in *Desert Wildlife:* "Never have I seen a mutillid in a flower, even when flowers are plentiful. They are always seen on the ground. Yet hour after hour, day after day, they run rapidly over hot, barren rocks and sand, using up energy and losing water through the process of breathing."

So from the enduring camel to the mutillid the desert reveals a triumphant design of life!

Desert Plants

The power of life rises even from the blistering desert floor. But do you picture merely spiny cacti and tumbling scrub brush? Then meet one of the most overpowering beauties of the plant world that pushes its way up from a sandy floor: the *Reina de la Noche,* or Queen of the Night. It is also called the night-blooming cereus.

The flower of this plant is among the most fragrant and beautiful of all the cactus blooms. It blooms only on desert nights, losing the blossom before morning. The cereus offers the phenomenon of blooming so fast that one can actually see the petals open, releasing a very strong fragrance. In fact, the cereus has inspired poems and prose to be written in praise of its perfection.

Irresistibly life mounts up into the most amazing of plants, even in the desert! An entire forest of them stretches for miles in Tucson, Arizona, comprising the Saguaro National Monument. The saguaro *(sah-war-oh)*, or giant cactus, is actually classified as a tree. Towering fifty feet, sometimes it will weigh as much as ten tons, but is so thinly rooted that it is often strewn about the desert floor, blown over by the wind.

In his book *Desert Plants and People,* Sam Hicks refers to numberless little-known plants such as the desert *matarique, yerba del indio, pionia,* cardon and *damania.* These provide a sort of desert

pharmacy, teahouse and variety store all in one, because they are medicinal and make good teas. But, in addition, they are useful in many other ways.

Lands of Fascination

So, far from being lifeless, dull places, deserts are full of life and attractions. For different reasons humans have been drawn to them either as individuals, or as a people.

Photographers find the desert full of appeal, and many have been desirous of filming one of the desert's trick effects called "la dune blanche," which means a sand dune covered with hoarfrost. This phenomenon appears at sunrise for only a matter of seconds before the rays of the sun wipe it off.

The "sand rose" is another curiosity that testifies to the abundance of dew on the Sahara. The sand rose is not a living plant. About the size of a cauliflower, it is a beautiful cluster of sand crystals that grows into petals with veins like a flower petal. It is as hard as glass, resulting from the interaction of dew, sand and sun.

Even lightning on the desert produces strange phenomena. Striking the sand, it is like a dagger that fuses the sand around the bolt, often producing a hollow tube of "lightning glass."

Many persons have indeed found deserts to be fascinating places. Especially captivating are the unusual forms of life that make their home there. Truly, the deserts are lands of living marvels.

The Star of David

ONE of the most common symbols associated with modern Jewish religion is the six-pointed star frequently called the "Star of David" or "Mogen David" ("David's shield"). What is its origin? *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Volume 8, page 251), in commenting on this "symbol of Judaism," acknowledges that it is not based on the Bible. The encyclopedia goes on to say: "The Jewish view of God, which permitted no images of Him, was and still is opposed to the acceptance of any symbols, and neither the Bible nor the Talmud recognizes their existence. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the shield of David is not mentioned in rabbinical literature."

If this symbol does not come from God's Word and the history of his dealing with Israel, what is its origin? It does not appear that we can be certain at this late date. One author noted that "the sign of the Gnostics [an ancient religious group] consisted of a six-sided star, composed of the male and female triangles intertwined, just as the real pubic [areas] of the man and woman would also form this six-sided star during coition."* But, of course, it would be difficult to establish unequivocally a direct link between that use as oriented around sex worship and modern uses of the same symbol.

In any event, it is evident that the "Star of David" is of uncertain age, origin and meaning. Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer wrote: "The Shield of David, or *Mogen David*, is a six-pointed star made up of two triangles pointing in opposite directions. The star has no ancient Jewish origin or religious meaning. It became a popular symbol in Jewish life about three hundred years ago in Central Europe.

"A medieval mystic declared that the six-pointed star was identical to the royal shield of the House of David, while the five-pointed star resembled the 'Seal of Solomon.' Although the idea was just a figment of cabalistic imagination, it was gradually accepted as true and the Shield of David took on a very special significance for the Jewish community.

"Whatever its origin, the Shield of David has become a distinctly Jewish symbol. . . . But though it often stirs deep emotions of loyalty and pride, the six-pointed star cannot be considered in any sense a sacred symbol." —*What Is a Jew?*, pages 128, 129.

* *Sex and Sex Worship*, by O. A. Wall, 1920, page 522.

Assembles in Sweden

"A CRISIS of faith has overtaken the churches more rigorous, perhaps, than was ever true before. Structures of church life and congregational worship are under serious questioning. The Bible has increasingly ceased to be a book to be listened to. It is asked whether even Jesus points beyond man to God."

This comment was made by the president of the Methodist Church of Ceylon. His keynote speech marked the opening of the fourth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, at Uppsala, Sweden, in July. For the first time since 1961 the Council met to discuss the grave problems that confront the churches and to set the course for the future.

The Council represents 237 churches with about 300 million members, which includes most major Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches in the world. It has been in existence for twenty years. During that time it has seen the problems of the churches multiply rapidly. In fact, Eugene Carson Blake, the council's secretary-general, stated: "We are in a secularizing age, and therefore the idea of the church dominating culture or dominating government has gone. This is complete. Christendom is over."

Hence, the main objective of the Assembly, held at the university city of Uppsala, Sweden, was said to be twofold: (1) to decide about the Council's continued work in the future; and (2) to voice their views on the most burning questions of the day.

Hoping that some great sense of renewal would come forth from the meeting, they chose their theme from Revelation 21:5 (*AV*), which says: "Behold, I make all things new." As Secretary-General Blake said: "We hope that Uppsala 1968 will not be just an 'interesting Church meeting' but that it will mark a new era for Christianity."

Some New Things

One new item immediately became a controversial issue. It was the new artwork that decorated the delegates' dining room. The artists had painted grotesque pictures making direct reference to man's lust for money, the glorification of war, and the hunger that prevailed in the world. Other pictures depicted people crawling in pain, with their intestines pouring out. The archbishop of Uppsala was called upon to inspect this in the hope that he would condemn it so that it could be removed. However, the archbishop said: "After all, they are really not worse than the pictures that were painted on the walls of some of our medieval churches, where devils were tormenting people whose bodies writhed with pain." The pictures remained.

A new item, too, was the way the service in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King was held at Uppsala's Gothic cathedral.

Said the publication *Uppsala Nya Tidning* of July 19: "It had a form perfectly in keeping with the theme of renewal which has been the guiding line in the Assembly. The program was made up of several components which are often hard to combine: Jazz in a Gothic cathedral, come-as-you-are-style at a church concert."

Another of the new things that occurred at Uppsala was reported on by the New York *Times* of July 24: "Standing with her eyes closed and her feet close together, a young woman allowed her limp body to be passed slowly from hand to hand by four men standing in a small circle. 'The purpose is to see how much we are willing to trust ourselves and each other,' said the leader. Then each of the five participants walked up to the others one at a time, touched them on the hands or shoulders and told them 'what I like most about you.' . . . the occasion was an experiment in 'experiential' worship." However, one participant walked out in the middle of it, stating strongly that he was not willing "to call it the worship of Almighty God."

Also new to the Swedish church was the sale of candles just inside the entrance to the cathedral. At the booth a placard exhorted: "Take a candle, light it and put it on the tree." The tree was a metal figure called "The Tree of Reconciliation." Suggested too was this prayer: "Oh, God, I give this candle as a visible prayer: Unite the world's nations, races and groups in peace, justice and fraternity." Yet, nowhere in the assembly was it explained, as the Bible so clearly does, how God has purposed to do this.

What Spiritual Uplift?

What about the expectations for renewal, for spiritual uplift, for godly counsel in these troubled times? Was God's remedy for world distress highlighted to build faith?

No. On the contrary, additional conflicting ideas of men were brought forth. One of the more prominent of such ideas was promoted by the representative of the Church of Northern India. Among the main speakers, he told the delegates: "If we believe in progress and development let us not flinch at disorder and instability. . . . I would not condemn those who resort to violent action in order to bring about justice in society."

Some who attended the assembly recognized that such counsel was not at all in line with what the Bible teaches. Said Dr. David Hedegard, a translator of a modern-language "New Testament": "There has been all too little spoken of the Christian faith." Noting that the Council recommended political action, he concluded: "From the Christian biblical and theological viewpoint, the assembly was worse than expected. . . . It dealt with things that, according to the Bible, were outside the Church's commission and there was for this reason the risk of worldliness and a watering down [of the faith]."

That Dr. Hedegard was right in his observations is borne out by one part of the report issued by the Assembly, which said that the churches must work toward a change of political conditions so that all get a right to participate in the governing of their country. Yet, nowhere does the Bible authorize Christians to do this.

Another critical voice was that of the delegate from Colombia who said: "The assembly is a step backward, because its interest is first of all the problems concerning how the Church is to keep her position, her esteem and respect, her influence in the world."

Similarly, another delegate, a teacher at an Orthodox seminary in India, said:

"The World Council of Churches will never be able to accomplish anything. It is governed by a small faction that is eager to keep exercising power, and as soon as someone steps forward with a good suggestion and a strong will to get something done, he is pushed back, interrupted or placed in some harmless position."

Interfaith Promoted

The ecumenical spirit was strongly promoted. Although the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the Council, she sent observers to the assembly, as did the World Council to the Second Vatican Council in Rome. And Pope Paul VI sent a message in which he said: "We pray to the Holy Ghost that He may inspire your work and grant it full success. All that you are doing to further unity between all Christians will be blessed by the Lord."

A report approved by the General Assembly regarding the Council's relations with the Roman Catholic Church stated: "The World Council of Churches welcomes a decision by the Roman Catholic Church to form a group in cooperation with this Council that should work out an outline for cooperation between the churches." The Council also stated: "We want to speed up the unification of churches and seek a fuller unity with those churches that have not yet come into fellowship with us."

God's Blessing?

Will such efforts be blessed by God? Will the pope's prayer for success be answered? Well, why have not such efforts been blessed in the past? Why have these churches seen their problems worsening if they are supposed to have God's blessing?

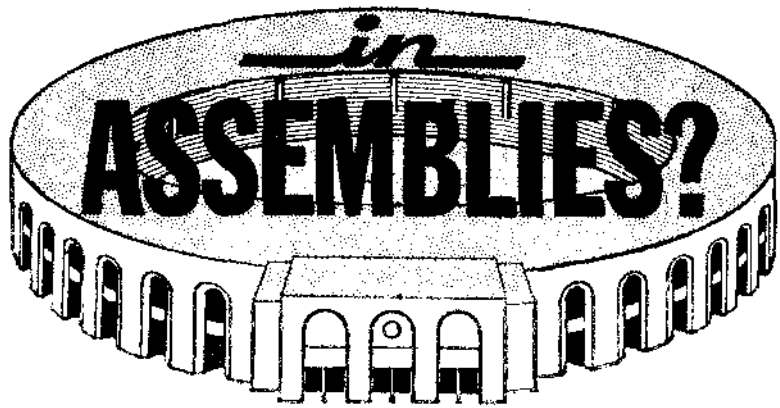
In its final report, the Council recommended: "The churches have to teach men how they should be politically efficient." It also recommended the use of violence to achieve social change if no other way was open.

Yet, God's Word teaches the opposite. It plainly says: "A friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) Jesus Christ said: "They [true Christians] are no part of the world." (John 17:16) He also declared: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought." (John 18:36) And God's Word also states: "Not paying back injury for injury . . . seek peace and pursue it."—1 Pet. 3:9, 11.

Hence, the recommendations of the Council are in glaring opposition to what God's Word teaches. Nor did the Council mention that God's kingdom is the one and only hope for mankind. This kingdom, this government, was the central teaching of Jesus. (Matt. 4:17) He told his true followers to pray for it because the Kingdom is the agency that God will use to bring an end to this wicked system of things. It alone will usher in an era of peace, happiness, health and life for man. And this vital teaching was ignored by the Council!—Dan. 2:44; Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:1-5.

No, there will be no "new era" for Christendom's churches as Secretary-General Blake hoped for. Instead, God's Word shows that such churches can expect His fiery judgments to be executed against them. Why? Because they have abandoned God's truths and have misled millions of others to do the same. It is just exactly as Jesus said of the religious leaders of his day: "You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. . . . It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines."—Matt. 15:6-9; 18:6; Rev. 18:4-8.

Why Do Jehovah's Witnesses Meet in ASSEMBLIES?



"WHY do Jehovah's witnesses hold conventions?" That was one of the many questions a sincere searcher for truth asked one of Jehovah's witnesses who had come from New York city to Lewiston, Maine, for the purpose of attending the "Good News for All Nations" District Assembly being held there July 4 through 7. The questioner himself had come thirty miles to get his questions answered.

Why do Jehovah's witnesses hold conventions? Why do they enjoy these so much that in the United States an estimated 25 percent attend more than one? Why are the assembly crowds so great that, time and again, closed-circuit television has been used to bring dramatic presentations to overflow crowds in adjoining halls? Why? Because of the blessings of giving and receiving that these provide. These assemblies help them to be better Christian witnesses of Jehovah, as regards both their conduct and their field ministry. Further, these assemblies also serve to advertise God's name and kingdom, even as was amply illustrated by the more than 120 assemblies held in upward of 25 different lands in the northern hemisphere this past summer.

Thus, with regard to their ministry, those attending these assemblies were delighted to receive one of the finest Bible textbooks for teaching beginners yet published by the Watchtower Society, *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. In clear, simple and direct language it presents the basic Bible truths essential to salvation and the Bible principles that should govern the lives of Christians. They were also happy to learn of a six-month Bible-study course using this textbook.

Those attending these assemblies also had stressed to them the importance of letting God's work come first in their lives and learned of the great need for more ministers in many lands. Very stimulated were they to receive the reports of the increase in proclaimers of God's Word during the past year and of the great distribution of Bible literature, the greatest ever. They also learned about the planned activity for the coming year and about the large international assemblies in prospect during 1969. No question about it, these assemblies better equipped them in both mind and heart for their ministry.

The Witnesses also gained an increased appreciation of all that God and the "good news" have done for them, and how happy their lot and how light their load are compared to those of the world! Those whose mates were unbelievers learned how to deal with their problem, and parents had their obligations clearly spelled out to them. All were counseled to build one another up both by word and deed, to get along peacefully with one another and, above all else, to guard their heart by

paying more than the usual attention to the counsel found in God's Word. Especially helpful were four beautiful, touching and gripping dramas that underscored the value of the Bible in our day.

The problems of youths were thoroughly dealt with, by means of dramas, lectures and experiences. They saw illustrated the folly of many modern youths and the blessings that come from following Bible principles. These programs, both by and for youths, clearly communicated with them and proved that there was no "generation gap" among these Witnesses.

One of the high points at each assembly was the baptism. An enlightening discourse told of the response that those with honest, wise and loving hearts make when they hear the good news, namely, they dedicate themselves to do God's will and are baptized. During these assemblies 17,613 were baptized. In Washington, D.C., the baptism was held right on the convention grounds, an eighteen-foot swimming pool, rented for the occasion, serving ideally. In Ottawa, Canada, an abandoned quarry was used.

Serving and Cooperation

Finding rooms for conventioners was one of the many ways in which Witnesses were able to cooperate and serve their Christian brothers. It took from two to six hours to find an accommodation, depending upon the housing situation; and this time those living in the host city were glad to devote. One Witness inquiring for rooms in the Kitchener–Waterloo area in Canada could hardly believe his ears when the gentleman at the door, after pausing a moment, said, "I would like to oblige with 700 rooms." It turned out that he was the warden of Waterloo University Village. In the Lewiston, Maine, area three colleges turned over upward of 250 rooms, and a college dormitory housed a thousand Witnesses attending the Pawtucket, Rhode Island, assembly, a convention bus service bringing the Witnesses back and forth.

One official in Toulouse, France, expressed great admiration for the way the Witnesses were able to get over 800 rooms by going from house to house; but 2,000 more were housed in two large exhibition halls. Noteworthy also was the way the public responded. In Ottawa, Canada, 633 rooms were given free to the Witnesses to use, and seventeen householders turned over their keys. In Ventura, California, some 50 percent of the rooms were given free by the public. Among the homes turned over for the use of the Witnesses on Vancouver Island was one that rented for $250 a month. Sometimes aid came from an unexpected source. Rooming work was going rather slowly in Sheffield, England, when the bishop there made a vitriolic attack on the Witnesses' efforts to get rooms. One lady was so outraged that she phoned the rooming committee and offered accommodations for ten. Also, a personal friend of the bishop phoned to say that previously she had turned down a request for rooms, but in view of the bishop's unwarranted attack, she would be glad to provide accommodations for two. Eventually enough accommodations were found for all.

There was also much cooperation in getting food for the assemblies. In Palm Springs, California, hundreds of Witnesses got up early July 4 to 6 and worked from 4 to 11 a.m., picking fifty tons of grapes for various assemblies, there being a grape pickers' strike on at the time. Tons of these grapes were shipped to assemblies as far as 3,000 miles away. For the Inglewood, California, assembly some Witnesses traveled as much as 350 miles to gather thirty-nine tons of fruit and thirteen tons of vegetables, all of which was gathered from fields already harvested

and would have been plowed under. Witness farmers around Memphis, Tennessee, donated tons of foodstuffs for the assembly there. In Eureka, California, volunteers went out in the woods and picked three hundred gallons of blackberries for assembly meals.

And all this activity in connection with the assemblies was not only a model of cooperation but also a model of efficiency. City and state officials took motion pictures as well as other pictures of the operation of the cafeteria and other departments. At one assembly in Denmark, Witnesses managed to park 580 cars in a place where usually only 370 were parked. The stadium inspector asked for details so as to show his own men that it can be done. At Columbus, Ohio, the assembly's sound department amazed the professionals who had furnished the sound for Billy Graham's program in the Stadium for $10,000. They asked all kinds of questions, because of the clarity and uniformity of the reception.

Advertise God's Name and Kingdom

Nor is there any question about these assemblies serving to advertise God's name and kingdom. For example, *The Daily Sun* of Lewiston, Maine, would not normally have published information about God's name and kingdom, but it did consider the assembly held there newsworthy; so much, in fact, that it had a large front-page picture about the assembly each day. All together, 1,300 column inches of publicity resulted from this assembly.

This was typical of most assembly cities. The Washington, D.C., assembly received more than 6,000 column inches of publicity; the one in Albuquerque, New Mexico, more than 4,000; the one in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, more than 1,600. A large front-page illustrated story in the Minot, North Dakota, *Daily News* told about the assembly in that city, and *The Voice Chronicle* of Corpus Christi, Texas, in addition to a large front-page story, devoted its entire back page to reprinting the Spanish convention program, voluntarily sponsored by the local hotels and motels. And nearly all lands reported by far the best publicity ever.

As a result of these assemblies there was also much advertising of Jehovah's name and kingdom by means of the radio and TV. In Washington, D.C., thirty-one hours of radio time and seven hours of TV time told about the Witnesses and their assembly. In Pawtucket twenty-one hours of radio and two and a half hours of TV did the same, and it was similar in many of the other assembly cities in the United States and other lands. Radio stations gave news stories, interviews and the thirty-minute recorded program "The Decisive Generation." TV stations presented similar news stories and interviews and the half-hour movie, "Heritage," dealing with family life and youths' problems. One of Washington's leading TV stations gave a half hour of prime time Sunday morning to an interview of several Witnesses regarding their beliefs and activities, and that in color. A Baltimore radio personality interviewed the Witnesses for an hour and was greatly impressed with what they were doing for youth and observed that what made the Witnesses stand out from the rest was love.

In particular do these assemblies serve to make known God's kingdom because of the advertising given the main talk by nearly every conceivable means as well as by the talk itself. The subject, "Man's Rule About to Give Way to God's Rule," was truly good news. Forcefully this lecture showed how man's rule, begun in Eden, has been dominated by Satan the Devil, and how the facts today show that

man is unable to govern himself properly. From the fulfillment of Bible prophecy we know that soon God will take a hand in man's affairs and have His rule replace man's rule. At assemblies held in more than 120 cities in some 25 lands upward of 920,000 heard this talk. In a number of cities it was broadcast either "live" or at a later hour. In Surinam the attendance at this public lecture was 1,509, more than three times as many as there are Witnesses in the entire country!

"Fine Works" Get Recognition

Their assemblies also help the Witnesses to fulfill Jesus' command: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:16) Among such fine works that the public press took note of was the racial harmony of the Witnesses. Representative is the article that appeared in the St. Petersburg, Florida, *Times,* July 14, 1968, entitled "Witnesses Practice Racial Harmony." It said: " 'Black and white together.' The Jehovah's Witnesses don't sing about it, they just practice it. Not only has the convention been a massive example [peak attendance was 16,577] of racial harmony with black and white worshiping together, but it has tucked some 700 Spanish-speaking Witnesses into its programs without a murmur."

That is why, when some opposition to the Witnesses using the Washington, D.C., Stadium developed, one of the members of the three-man armory board could state: "I am convinced that we as the Armory Board should work toward having these people in the city of Washington. It will be a stabilizing effect upon our community that is torn with racial strife. It would be a privilege to me, as the Commander of the National Guard in Washington, D.C., to have 50- to 55,000 people about whose conduct I would not have to be concerned visit this city." Of course, the convention went off peacefully, fully integrated.

A police officer assigned to the Olympia Stadium, Detroit, Michigan, bore like testimony: "Ever since you people have been here we have been having so few calls. It's just like in the winter at midnight. Usually at this time of the year we hardly have time to eat our lunch. But since the Witness convention has been here it's so quiet we just can't understand why." Incidentally, the Olympia Stadium, where the Witnesses held their assembly, is right in the heart of the area that was racked with riots a year ago.

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Pollution of the Air, Water and Land Is Ruining the Earth.**
- **Pope's Birth-Control Ban Stirs Dissent.**

In Trondheim, Norway, a man who had permitted 300 Witnesses to tent on his large plot of land near the assembly afterward stated: "I am very impressed. How is it possible for so many to live so peaceably together? What is even more surprising is the good behavior of the children of Jehovah's witnesses. It has been a pleasure to have Jehovah's witnesses live here, and you are welcome back some other time."

Newspaper Editors Impressed

Carrying their own particular weight in favor of the exemplary conduct of Jehovah's witnesses were the newspaper editorials and feature stories published in addition to the news coverage previously referred to. Here again Jehovah's name and kingdom received fine indirect publicity as the following few examples show:

The Rochester, New York, *Democrat and Chronicle,* July 13, 1968, on the third day of the assembly had this to say, under the editorial heading "Welcome to the Witnesses":

"The community welcomes warmly the thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses who have come to Rochester for their district assembly. Few gatherings of such size could rival this one for efficiency, orderliness and sheer good humor. The Witnesses, each one of whom is a minister, are sufficiently different in some of their beliefs to be controversial. . . . But because this is a democratic country, their right to be different must be respected.

"And however much people of other faiths may disagree with some of their interpretations of the Bible, the beliefs of the Witnesses are deeply and sincerely held. The Witnesses give the impression of living their religion daily. Walking among them and watching them at work makes it impossible not to be aware that these are warm, animated, clean-living people. At a time in our society when so many parents and children seem to go their own ways, the prominence at the assembly of family groups is noticeable. It's a pleasure to have them in town."

And the *Twin-City Sentinel,* Winston-Salem, North Carolina, July 16, had the following to say about the assembly in the "Church Notes" section under the caption: "Jehovah's Witnesses Are Praised":

"It might well be that the cleanest religious convention has come to a close in Winston-Salem . . . As Neil Bolton, Coliseum manager, put it: 'Without reservation, that's the cleanest, most orderly bunch of people that has been in the coliseum in the nearly 10 years I have been there.' He added that in meetings with other coliseum managers, the word is 'get the Jehovah's Witnesses to meet in your facilities if you want your place cleaned because they'll go over it with a toothbrush.' . . . Bolton said he 'didn't know about their theology, but I do know that they are the cleanest and hardest working people I ever saw and the best disciplined people I ever saw.' Others commented on their neatness in dress and speech, the orderliness of their meetings . . . 'It's an education to me,' Bolton said of the Witnesses, 'and I believe to the community too.'"

And on Tuesday, July 9, 1968, the Lewiston *Daily Sun,* under the heading "A Remarkable Convention," said: "It brought over 6,000 persons to this city, yet there was no fanfare, no disruption of community life . . . There was a quiet dignity in the proceedings which was exemplary . . . Regardless of one's religious beliefs, . . . this was an unusual demonstration of faith which was in itself uplifting. It was a fine example of how a convention should be and can be held, as well as clear proof of the seriousness with which these people take their Christianity."

And editorialized the Washington, D.C., *Daily News,* July 18, 1968:

"We like what we have seen of them —such clean, honest, simple, upright people. . . . Their strong regard for decent personal conduct is a refreshing tonic for a city whose citizens have been undergoing some organizing struggles with the problems of behavior . . . They are not here to ask for anything, they say, but are 'simply here to champion the Bible and its principles as the only workable solution to solving mankind's ills.' In this we wish them well."

No question about it, the conventions held by Jehovah's witnesses accomplish much good. If you have never attended one, be sure to do so at your next opportunity and experience for yourself how much joy and benefit one can gain from them. You may well feel like the queen of Sheba, who, upon seeing King Solomon's splendor, exclaimed, "I had not been told the half." (1 Ki. 10:7) Or you may even feel like one of her modern counterparts, a woman who came to one of the assemblies in Norway. She had been a student of theology but recently began studying with Jehovah's witnesses. She became so enthusiastic about the assembly that she sent two telegrams to her son, telling him: "If you want to experience heaven on earth take the first plane and come here. I'll pay the ticket."

CENTRAL AMERICA'S SUMMIT CONFERENCE

By "Awake!" correspondent in El Salvador

FOR seven years, five Central American countries have endeavored to coordinate their economic efforts much as Europe has with its Common Market. Central America's Common Market is made up of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. These countries contain thirteen million people in all.

Despite an almost sevenfold increase of trade among its members, it became obvious that this Common Market was beset with grave problems.

Problems

El Salvador is an example of the kind of problems confronting the Common Market members. El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America; indeed, in the entire Western Hemisphere. It is very hilly, with two-thirds of its land area broken up by deep gorges and ravines. Yet, with a population of 2,918,000, it is the most densely populated, with about 139 persons per square kilometer (less than four-tenths of a square mile).

The lifeblood of the country is agriculture, mainly coffee, cotton and sugar, which account for 75 percent of the national income. Coffee is the chief export and has been exported for over 100 years. It is believed that the mountainous nature of the land makes any other crop but coffee impractical to plant. Due to careful cultivation and using every available section of land, El Salvador produces more coffee per square foot than any other coffee-producing country.

However, serious problems arise for the entire country when its agricultural products cannot all be sold due to quotas in other countries, or when they are sold at a very low price on the world market. Then again, for generations much of the land has been cultivated without good conservation practices being employed. This has resulted in making large areas unproductive, and much waste has taken place due to erosion.

While the United States is the main buyer of what El Salvador produces, it is also the principal supplier of heavy machines, industrial products and other equipment. In this interchange, the figures show that El Salvador buys more than it sells. Thus in the last five years the United States has built up a trade balance in its favor of more than 88 million dollars, a very significant figure for such a small country as El Salvador.

Then, aside from territorial disputes between El Salvador and Honduras, some private sectors of the economy in member nations object to all-out economic integration for fear it would adversely affect their products. In addition, the prospects are poor for each country exporting all of its basic products.

Hence, the general opinion of economic experts was that the Central American Common Market would grow at a much slower rate in the future. To try to overcome some of the problems, better cooperation, understanding and leadership were needed. Also needed was more money. For these reasons the presidents of the five Central American countries came together in a summit conference.

A Historic Occasion

The host country was El Salvador. For the first time in its history it would be

visited by five presidents at one time. A summit conference of the Common Market was to be held July 5-7 in the capital city, San Salvador. The presidents of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua would attend, as well as the president of El Salvador. And their special guest would be President Johnson of the United States.

With only a few days' official notice of the visit, the Salvadoran hosts had much to do. Huge work gangs planted trees and shrubs in attractive patterns along the highway that leads into the city. Welcome banners blossomed. Portraits of the presidents and their wives sprang up all over the city.

Because of the recent terrorist activity in Guatemala, and the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy one month previously, the security of the visitors was of great concern. Hundreds of secret service men, police officials and other security guards arrived in the city several days before the conference. And along the route of the presidential cavalcade soldiers and police were stationed every fifty feet.

As each of the presidents arrived at the airport on July 5, they were greeted by a twenty-one-gun salute. They were also greeted by the diplomatic corps as well as the representative of the pope in Vatican City.

The Meeting

The purpose of the summit conference was to exchange opinions among the presidents and to discuss common problems and methods of solving them.

President Johnson stated: "I have come to San Salvador to learn, I have come to know through my colleagues, what it is that they have achieved in these nations for the betterment of the people's lives. I have come to ask what else there is that we can do together."

One thing that the huge North American neighbor could do was to supply the all-important commodity that these Central American countries needed—money. Thus, President Johnson announced that his country's contribution would be a huge 65-million-dollar loan to help the member nations work out their problems. It was a super vitamin pill for the ailing patient.

When the conference came to a close, a statement was issued. It was called "The Declaration of the American Chiefs of State." Its principal points were the acknowledgement that strength comes through unity and that economic integration was the best means of achieving it. Also, it was agreed to form a special court that would rule on Common Market difficulties when all other national means had been exhausted.

Soon the meetings were over. The presidents flew back to their respective countries. Another high-level meeting of heads of state had produced another document, the goals of which were noble. Yet, the harsh reality is that in spite of such summit conferences, common markets and other efforts of experts in all fields, the political and economic problems of this entire world are not really being solved. In most cases, such problems continue to grow in intensity. Only under God's kingdom, for which Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray, will all the problems of mankind be solved in a permanent way; and not for only one small region of earth, but for the benefit of mankind everywhere.—Matt. 6:9, 10; Dan. 2:44.

Entertainers Become Witnesses

AMONG the people most difficult to find at home are those in the entertainment field. Yet, when Jehovah's witnesses meet them, they find that there are some who are searching for Bible truth. Consider the following delightful experience from a Witness in Florida:

"One morning in August, 1959, I called on a young couple who were entertainers in Miami Beach. The wife answered and, on hearing why I was calling, told me that she was not interested in religion. She said she had not gone to bed until four that morning and she could not talk to me. I replied that I would gladly call back at a more convenient time and that no doubt she had questions concerning God and religion. I stated that the Holy Bible can answer all our questions.

"'Yes,' she said, 'there are some things I would like to ask you.' She invited me in. Her husband joined our discussion and we began finding the Bible answers to her questions. They were sophisticated but very cynical. Although the husband seemed interested in the Bible, his wife was skeptical.

"I explained to them how loving and merciful God is toward mankind. The woman asked me if God would accept anyone like her. I read Isaiah 1:18 to her and, as I did, tears filled her eyes and her attitude changed completely. She then told me about her experiences and problems with false religion and that she had always been afraid of God.

"They begged me not to leave, so I spent the morning with them. A Bible study was started with them and soon they were telling their family what they were learning. Six to eight regularly attended their study. In fact, another group started studying in another part of the city because of them. Today this couple and four of their relatives are dedicated witnesses of Jehovah.

"Consider the changes the truth made in their lives. Not long after they began studying, they decided to quit their association with the entertainment world. This meant giving up a monthly income of over a thousand dollars. They struggled to overcome the smoking habit and did so by May 1960, when they were baptized. They disciplined themselves to overcome the difficulties of living by day since they were so used to night work.

"Today the husband is the assistant to the presiding minister of a congregation of Jehovah's witnesses. His wife devotes her full time to preaching. From the fast, glamorous life as Miami Beach entertainers to zealous preachers of God's good news is a big step, and by Jehovah's spirit they made it."

Another Witness, in El Monte, California, tells this experience: "I knocked on the door of a house but no one answered. As we were leaving we heard a noise in the back of the house. We made our way through overgrown ivy and found a shed. I knocked on the door and, to my surprise, a very friendly young woman answered. She, her husband and their two children were living there in a single room. She invited me in, knowing who we were. She expressed her desire to come to the Kingdom Hall and gave me her telephone number.

"I began studying the Bible with her and found out that she was a 'Go-Go' dancer in a bar and had won several dance contests. Her associations were bad, for they drank heavily, cheated on their husbands and were even trying to break up her marriage. Gradually our discussions moved her to stop associating with these bad friends. Her clothing and her makeup reflected her work. When she saw how the Witnesses dressed, she announced she would change in time.

"She did, for she began to keep house much better, even painting a room in their new apartment. Now her shiny waxed floors give her great joy. She stopped going to bars and gave up the wild dancing. She became more moderate in her dress and took her responsibilities seriously. She stopped living merely for pleasure and learned how to pray to Jehovah and to talk to him about her problems.

"The day before she was to go out preaching, she wore a new dress. Her hair was neatly arranged and she had very little makeup on. She wanted me to see how she would look the next day and make any changes if necessary. The next day, while preaching, an elderly lady we met commented on her appearance. Yes, she looked lovely! Thursday has been our regular day for preaching together. In the beginning her husband opposed her, but now he has been studying and attending the meetings at the Kingdom Hall."

A Fiery VOLCANO AND ITS TRANQUIL NEIGHBORS

MAYON volcano rises 8,000 feet above the Bicol plains. It is a thing of beauty to behold, unlike so many other volcanoes that loom like sulking monsters over their surrounding landscapes. To see this volcano at its best, when there is only a ribbon of cloud on its summit, one should be there in the early morning. In the afternoons sudden, heavy rains often drench the countryside, veiling the majesty of Mayon.

From Manila it takes just one hour by plane to reach this area, but it takes two more days to climb to the top. The absolute top, as described by a European who climbed it many years ago, "consisted of a ridge, about ten feet thick, of solid masses of stone with crusts of lava bleached by the action of escaping gas." Thick fumes on top required visitors to cover their mouths and nostrils with handkerchiefs to avoid asphyxiation. The fumes contain deadly gases, one of which is said to be carbon monoxide.

At the top the climber is treated to a breathtaking panorama. Northward are the Camarines and Quezon provinces; to the south and west lie the Pacific Ocean and the islands of the Visayas, including Samar, Leyte, Masbate; down below are the abacá plantations, coconut groves, *pili* (an edible nut) orchards, cattle ranches and rice fields, as well as a ring of fourteen towns circling the volcano's base.

As a group of Jehovah's witnesses relaxed after a Saturday-evening session of their circuit assembly, a young man, a visitor to the Bicol region, looked up from his circle of friends to see a ball of fire blazing on the mountaintop. "Does Mayon usually act like that?" he inquired.

No, was the answer. There is always a tongue of fire playing at the tip and visible at night, but a ball of fire was quite unusual. The rumbling was also unusual. Mayon had not acted like that since 1947, the year of its last previous eruption. This began to look like the prelude to another eruption.

Rather, as things turned out, it was the beginning of a whole series of eruptions that got under way that evening and continued for two weeks. The following day, April 21, the strongest blasts came, and soon the whole nation was informed of the calamity.

Thick black smoke billowed into the sky, rising some 50,000 feet and darkening the countryside with falling ash and dust for miles around. Visibility was so poor that cars and buses had to crawl along with headlights on. People could hardly see one another in the ashy gloom. No sooner had the fallout following the heavy blast settled on rooftops and highways than the volcano erupted again, and again the land was darkened.

During the day Mayon was obscured

by thick clouds. In the evening, however, there was quite a display to behold. Lightning played hide-and-seek in the clouds, while chunks of fiery material spun in the sky to come tumbling down the slopes. Creeping rivers of hot lava slithered downhill, pushing huge rocks, trees and ash flows. Mud flows, too, smoked and hissed downward, one of them burying a rest house on the slope.

There was immediate response to the emergency. The Philippine army was detailed to help evacuate people on the slopes. Relief agencies set up water supplies and first-aid stations, assisting the refugees with shelter and food. Some 40,000 people from 39 *barrios* or small villages were housed in school buildings around Albay. The government distributed about 5,000 nose masks to prevent deaths from inhalation of ash and fumes, but at least one child died of asphyxiation. Ash flows damaged the water mains supplying Legaspi city and Daraga town. To meet the situation, artesian wells were bored.

When the heaviest eruptions had passed, Mayon had destroyed hundreds of precious hectares of coconut and abacá, ripped up railway lines, stopped up rivers, killed herds of wild pigs. There had been three human casualties. The land was blanketed with fine, irritating gray dust that took days to settle. The volcano had simmered down, but danger had not yet passed.

Lava and Mud Flows

Volcano experts reported that three towns were faced with the prospect of being engulfed, should heavy rains dislodge the lava flow 1,500 feet up on the slopes. During the eruptions lava had crept down on the southwestern slope and then branched out, one stream pointing toward one town, another threatening the next town. A twin avalanche could be disastrous.

The greater danger is from mud flows. Lava crawls at a speed of five or six miles per hour, losing speed as the terrain levels out and the lava itself spreads out and hardens. But a mud flow, hot or cold, rushes downward at speeds as high as sixty miles per hour. Lava flows consist of molten rock ejected from within the volcano, whereas mud flows may be caused by collapse of the crater walls, releasing any water dammed up within. This can precipitate an avalanche. In 1814 a town, Cagua, was completely buried, one lonely church tower now marking the spot where 1,200 people were entombed.

Often the mud flow or *lahar* is induced by heavy rains caused either by the volcano itself or by ordinary rain clouds. These wash down the loose soil, dust and ashes. Volcanologists warned the towns of Camalig and Guinobatan that they were facing danger from a mud flow of this type. At *barrio* Tinubaran, six miles from Camalig, they said, a *lahar* has paused temporarily. It was estimated to be twenty feet high and sixty feet wide. It needed only a strong rain to wash it down over Camalig, which it could bury within an hour. However, when this correspondent climbed the slopes above Camalig three weeks later, he found that the mud flow had solidified, becoming part of the mountain itself.

A greater threat to the people around Mayon would be the possibility of a more violent eruption that could spew out enough mud, ash and lava to destroy all the towns around its base. And the chief of the Philippine volcanology commission, Arturo Alcarez, feels that this could actually take place as early as 1970. The conclusion is based on intensive study of Mayon's history.

Since its first recorded eruption in 1616, Mayon has blown off thirty-two times, twenty-four of them in the nineteenth century. It has rested as long as twenty-seven years between eruptions, but during the fifty-year period from 1850 to 1900 the average was one eruption every three years. Since the April eruption ended a quiet period of more than ten years, it is no wonder that the experts are bracing for trouble ahead.

The Bicolano's Lack of Concern

Though most other Filipinos are concerned over the recent eruptions and the prospect of still more, the Bicolanos, a placid people, appear to be least concerned. They go about their business as usual, though wearing nose masks. While death rumbled overhead, *barrio* festivals went on as usual and some young men were photographed playing volleyball. Volcano-watching and picture-taking became the favorite evening pastimes. Roads were lined with people watching Mayon's mighty fireworks. Few in the towns even considered evacuating to safer ground.

Even in those *barrios* within the eight-kilometer radius rated as a "danger zone," people were loath to leave their homes. In some instances government officers had to arrange for forcible evacuation. Many farmers hurriedly tried to finish reaping their rice harvest before lava and mud buried their fields.

One *barrio* official, in search of a family who lived farther out and who had not yet been evacuated, was crushed by a falling boulder and burned to death. Another man had already reached safety, but returned to feed his hogs, only to be burned to death in a hot mud flow.

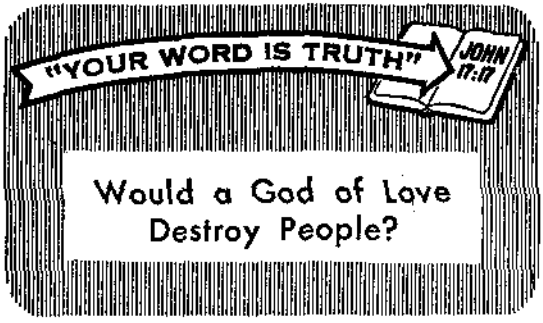
However, despite Mayon's periodic ravages, people in this region have come to view the volcano as an intimate friend. And no wonder! It guarantees abundant rainfall the year round, while the rest of the country swelters in tropic heat. Even during the dry season the Bicol region enjoys refreshing showers every afternoon. This is because the steam from the crater cools and falls in the form of rain. And an eruption produces more than the usual measure of rainfall, through what is termed "nucleation." Dust and ashes released by Mayon provide the nuclei around which raindrops form.

Mayon's other gift to the area, "tephra," the name applied to all volcanic material except gas and steam, means tons and tons of rich topsoil for the farms and forests. Nowhere else in the Luzon lowlands can one find a region so fertile. The people, healthy and well fed, reflect the riches of its productions. Says a writer in the *Philippines Free Press:* "When the rest of the country—or Luzon, anyway—lies dry and brown and depressing under the solstice sun, Bicolandia rustles green and fresh. The summer climate is delightful; balmy in the daytime, cool at night."

Yes, Mayon means all this to the Bicolanos, and it is majestic and beautiful besides, even after part of its crater has been blasted away. Yet, as its recent fiery rampage has shown, it is the course of wisdom to treat Mayon with respect and stay clear of its path when it spews death and destruction over the land.

DOGS AND CATS

There are at least 90,000,000 dogs and cats in the United States. Puppies and kittens are being born at the rate of nearly a quarter million a day, 10,000 an hour, 165 a minute.



Would a God of Love Destroy People?

THE Bible identifies the Most High as a "God of love," and also testifies: "God is love." (2 Cor. 13:11; 1 John 4:8) What boundless love Almighty God showed in giving man life and in creating this beautiful earth as his home! Even when the first human pair rebelled against Him, God lovingly provided his own dear Son to redeem all who would accept his marvelous provisions for everlasting life. Please turn in your Bible to John 3:16 and observe: "God loved the world [of mankind] 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." Truly, man's Creator is a loving, merciful God. —Ex. 34:6.

2 Unfortunately, however, not all appreciate God's tender mercy and loving provisions. They do not exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of his Son, and the world is filled with ungodly people. Is it wrong, then, to teach, as do Jehovah's witnesses, that such disobedient ones will be destroyed? Some persons believe it is. Under instruction from their church, they have told Jehovah's witnesses: "You preach a cruel and unreasonable God who is going to sweep most of his children away in a horrible battle of Armageddon. You make out that God is not good and kind. I want nothing to do with such a God. You Witnesses consider this world hopeless, and so you leave it to perish." So the question is raised: Would a God of love destroy disobedient people?

3 That God would do so is apparent from the fact that he already has in the past. The Christian apostle Peter explains: God "did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Pet. 2:5) God's own Son, Jesus Christ, verified that this destruction occurred, and even explained that God would bring a similar one, saying: "They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be." —Matt. 24:39.

4 God's destruction of the wicked was a blessing and relief to righteous, law-abiding ones. It was to righteous Noah. (Gen. 6:5, 9) And years later righteous Lot was relieved when God "rained fire and sulphur from heaven [upon Sodom and Gomorrah] and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:28-30) The apostle Peter explains why God's destruction of those people was such a relief to Lot: "For that righteous man by what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds." What a blessing for God to rid the earth of such lawless ones!—2 Pet. 2:6-9.

5 Today the earth is filled with lawlessness and violence. Mankind in general is just as disobedient and unappreciative of God as they were in Noah's day and in Lot's day. Bible prophecy shows that we have entered "the last days," despite the fact that some scoff. (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:3) According to the apostle Peter, this means we are rapidly nearing "the day of [God's] judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:7; 2 Thess. 1:7-9) For this reason the apostle John's admonition is now so appropriate: "Do

not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him . . . Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." —1 John 2:15-17.

[6] So it is not Jehovah's witnesses who have originated the idea that the present system of things is beyond reform. It is Almighty God himself who says so in his Word. Thus, when the disciples of Jesus asked him when the end of this system of things was coming, did Jesus say, 'Why, how can you think of such a cruel thing?' No, he did not. Rather, Jesus proceeded to answer his disciples realistically, giving them many evidences that would mark the time of the end. (Matt. 24:3-14) Jesus truthfully showed that only a comparatively few of mankind living then would avoid destruction.—Matt. 7: 13, 14; Ps. 145:20.

[7] This is not to imply that God takes delight in destroying wicked people. He would rather that they repent and change their ways. (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9) In fact, to encourage and help persons to do so, Almighty God has patiently sent forth his ministers, even as Noah preached before the coming of the flood. (2 Pet. 2:5) But if persons selfishly want to pursue their own interests and refuse to heed His messengers, God is certainly not unloving in destroying such ones from the earth in his war of Armageddon.—Rev. 16:14-16.

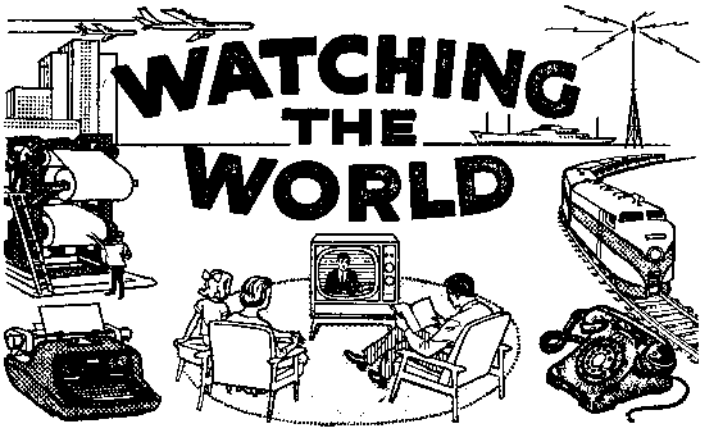
[8] Truly, it is loving on God's part to wipe from the earth this world of wicked people, with all their crime, violence, hate and war. Just imagine how wonderful it will be when God fulfills this Bible psalm: "For evildoers themselves will be cut off, . . . just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Ps. 37:9-11) Only God can selectively destroy just the wicked ones, and he will.—Jer. 25:31.

[9] In that new system of things after Armageddon, "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Pet. 3:13) Humans will live with one another in peace, happiness and contentment forever. What is more, they will enjoy perfect health, free from aches and pains. (Isa. 9:6, 7; Rev. 21:3, 4) This is what our loving Creator purposes for obedient mankind.

[10] Are you not moved to want to serve a God who loves his people so much that he will remove all wicked, hurtful persons from the earth and create a paradise? In order to appreciate more fully our loving Creator, we need to continue to take in knowledge of him through a regular study of his Word the Bible. This will lead to our enjoying eternal life in his new system of things.—John 17:3.

Can you answer these questions? For answers, read the article above.

(1) How has God's love been manifested toward mankind? (2) What attitude do some persons take toward the teaching that God will destroy disobedient ones? (3) What evidence is there that God destroyed ungodly people in the past? (4) How did the destruction by God of wicked people in the past prove a blessing and relief? (5) Are there prospects that God will destroy wicked people in the near future? (6) Did Jesus consider it cruel that God should destroy wicked people? (7) How do we know that God does not find pleasure in destroying the wicked? (8) What action on God's part will truly prove a blessing for his people? (9) What are some of the grand blessings that God has in store for obedient mankind? (10) What course is it vital that we now take?



Catholics Walk Out

◈ As Archbishop Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle began delivering a sermon on September 22 urging obedience to the birth-control edict of Pope Paul VI, upward of 200 Roman Catholics walked out of the cathedral. Catholic clergymen called the walkout unprecedented in the archdiocese of Washington and perhaps in the world. In other churches where the pastoral letter was read, unofficial checks showed that at least 235 persons at four other churches walked out during morning services. The walkouts dramatized the chasm that has developed between the Catholic Church and its people over the birth-control issue.

About Money and Taxes

◈ At the peak of World War II, all taxes took 25 cents of every dollar of America's output. All taxes—federal, state and local—in the United States today come to 27.3 percent of the nation's total production. In other words, 27.3 cents of every dollar goes for taxes, which is an all-time high. In 1966 a factory worker's weekly take-home pay was $98.57. This has climbed to $104.32 in 1968, but the "real pay" is actually down 72 cents because of the rise in the cost of living in this period.

Ban on Gambling

◈ When New York city police moved in on gambling in a Roman Catholic churchyard in New York's Little Italy, on September 24, a roar of denouncement went up by a nationwide American-Italian organization. It called the police action harassment of the Italian community, an "invasion of the sanctity of the church." Cries of neglect and discrimination were also heard. Donald D'Ippolito, pastor of the Church of the Most Precious Blood, revealed the reason for the uproar when he said that the police action had deprived his church of about $25,000.

New Oil Tankers

◈ When the Israeli-Arab war closed the Suez Canal, oil companies were forced to ship the crude oil around the southern tip of Africa—a very long and expensive route. To counteract this, they have begun to build gigantic tankers. This year saw the largest ship ever built; it can haul 2,500,000 barrels of oil at one time.

'Legalize Prostitution'

◈ A published Reuters dispatch from San Francisco stated that Episcopal Minister Robert Cromey urged authorities in August to legalize prostitution and bring street girls into the free enterprise system to increase the city's sales-tax revenues. He said: "I suggest we will never stamp out prostitution. Why not let the profession regulate itself? Put prostitution on the free enterprise system." While the churchman withheld any moral approval of prostitution, his suggestion certainly was no denunciation of the practice.

Lives of Despair

◈ Dr. D. M. F. McDonald, superintendent of Kingseat Hospital in New Zealand, said many suburban housewives live a life of quiet despair, with too many children, too little money and a husband who shows far too little affection. He said most New Zealand housewives were restricted to a daily routine that feeble-minded patients at the hospital could perform. The result has been that doctors' waiting rooms are now crammed with married women, mothers who confess that they fear they might kill either themselves or their children. How much they need the hope that only God's Word, the Bible, gives!

"Blood Lust in My Veins"

◈ A Roman Catholic bishop in England said that shooting birds with a shotgun is his favorite sport. "I'm mad about it. I've got a blood lust in my veins," he reportedly said. Bishop David Cashman, 55, of Arundel and Brighton, after saying he was 'mad about shooting,' went on to say: "I don't know anything on earth that gives me personally more excitement than waiting for a bird to come over my gun. It's the nearest thing to heaven in human terms that I know." When his comments were criticized as being "scandalous," Bishop Cashman was unrepentant. He said: "I might as well be honest and admit that I enjoy shooting."

Crowded West Germany

◈ West German residents live in an area slightly smaller than the state of Oregon. Some 60,000,000 of them inhabit this small area. Fourteen million are refugees from the east.

Keep Cosmetics Out of Reach

◈ Any cosmetic enriched with estrogen, the female sex hormone, should be kept out of the reach of children, because if a child rubs or swallows it, serious symptoms may develop. A three-year-old girl reportedly had been developing normally until, six months before being brought to the Hartford Hospital, her breasts became overdeveloped. Other body changes were like those of a young woman. Her height also was increasing rapidly for her age. Other body changes showed a "sexual precocity" beyond her age growth. Investigation showed that the child's grandmother once gave a discarded jar of this cosmetic to the girl to play with. It contained a very small amount of the cream, which the child rubbed on her face and swallowed. That had disturbed her normal growth drastically. Such cosmetics are not only hazardous for children, but they appear to contain far higher amounts of estrogen than can be regarded safe even for grown women.

Tractor Boosts

◈ Farm tractors are now getting a boost from a device that helped World War II airplanes to fly higher and faster, namely, the turbochargers. The turbo is currently boosting one tractor's power from 100 to 116 horsepower. One turbocharger, which is used in heavy diesel trucks and in many of this season's high-powered race cars, uses the engine's exhaust to power a compressor. The compressed air, fed back into the engine, improves fuel combustion and boosts the power. It also reduces exhaust gas and smoke and cuts down engine noise.

Religious Riches

◈ Under the subtitle "Who Owns America?" *The Saturday Evening Post* for December 30, 1967, had this to say: "Church and church-related institutions hold land and buildings alone—aside from securities—worth $80 billion. The Roman Catholic Church, the largest religious institution in the U.S., has assets estimated at $44.5 billion, or more than the combined assets of General Motors, R.C.A., General Electric, U.S. Steel and Standard Oil of New Jersey. The total assets of all corporations in the United States are well above $1.5 trillion. In 1966, the 500 largest corporations had total assets of $282 billion. By far the largest was A.T. & T. ($35.2 billion), more than $10 billion ahead of next-ranking Prudential Insurance Co. of America. The Prudential, it may be noted, is our largest private financer of home and farm ownership, holding the mortgages on some 505,000 city properties and 45,000 farms."

Boy Saves Mother

◈ One day seven-year-old Giovanni Soru watched a doctor massage a patient's heart on television. He remembered the technique. When his mother, Mrs. Elena Soru, 33, collapsed, the boy applied external massage to her heart for twenty minutes. Then he called his aunt to hurry over to his aid because he was afraid he would be late for a mathematics examination at school. After seeing his mother off to the hospital, Giovanni ran to school. His mother was reportedly doing well.

Smoking and Smaller Babies

◈ A survey, reported in the British journal of *Preventive and Social Medicine,* showed that smaller babies are linked with smoking. This was suspected for some time, but doctors felt that other factors might be involved. Charles Scott Russell, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sheffield University, however, said: "It was clear that the smoking effect, which was obvious in every comparison made, was independent of other factors." The survey also showed that women who smoke during pregnancy risk miscarriage. Nearly one in three women smokers who had very high blood pressure lost their babies, compared with about one in seven nonsmokers with high blood pressure.

Clergyman Rejects Ransom

◈ Clergyman T. Noffs of Sydney, Australia, does not agree with the apostle Paul, who stated, at Hebrews 9:22, that "unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place." The clergyman is quoted as stating: "What Christians have to discover is that what will save the world is not Christ's suffering, but ours. It is not his blood which counts, but ours. The followers of Jesus will not be saved by Jesus' blood, but by their radical obedience to God, humanity and truth." This minister's rejection of the ransom, at the Wayside Chapel at King's Cross, Sydney, is typical of the lack of faith in the Scriptures among modern clergymen.

Children Killed by Parents

◈ A published United Press International report stated that "every day one or two children 5 years old in the United States are killed by their parents." The infanticide rate among five-year-olds is greater than the combined total taken by tuberculosis, whooping cough, polio, measles, diabetes, rheumatic fever and appendicitis. In addition, every hour about five infants are injured by their parents or guardians, report Drs. Ray

E. Helfer and C. Henry Kempe of the University of Colorado.

Church and Gang

◈ United States senators were told in July how American taxpayers' dollars have been used to subsidize gangs in Chicago, Illinois. Witnesses told of gangsters using a Presbyterian church in Chicago as an arsenal. Lieut. Edward Buckney, commander of the gang unit of the Chicago Police Department, stated that "there are facilities for 'honeymoons' at the church. These 'honeymoons' are alleged to be part of initiation rituals performed by prospective female gang members with male members." Witnesses also testified of gambling, drinking, cleaning guns and smoking marijuana in the church. The church was reportedly a job-training center financed by more than $631,000 of the taxpayers' money from the Office of Economic Opportunity—an agency of the United States government's "war on poverty." In nearly a year of the program's operation, 83 trainees were placed in jobs, but only 53 of these were still on their jobs in mid-May. The cost to the taxpayers amounted to $11,900 for each of these trainees still working, according to a senator.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signed) Grant Suiter, Secretary-Treasurer

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