

August 1, 1982

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**Are You Ever Too Old
to Learn?**

The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

August 1, 1982
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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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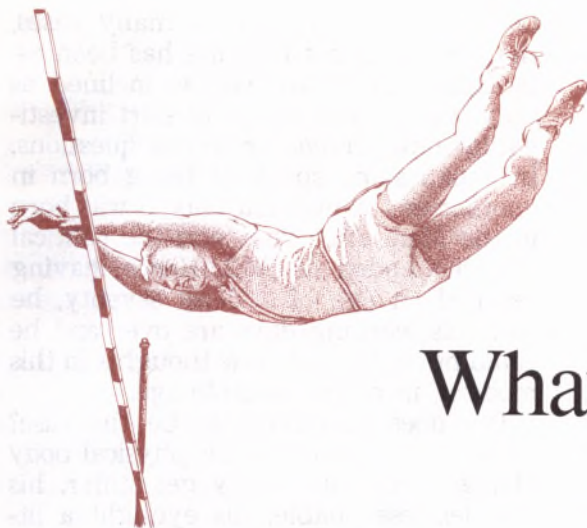
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What Older People Are Doing

THE athlete eyed his goal and started to run. He sprinted fifty-five feet, dug his glass-fiber pole into the ground and soared gracefully over a crossbar, nine and a quarter feet above the ground. The event? A track meet for junior high schools? No. The athlete was seventy years old, and this was a meet, reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, for 600 similarly aged athletes. At the same event, a seventy-seven-year-old ran the 100 meters in 15.7 seconds, and a seventy-year-old hurled a special discus to a distance of ninety feet.

Does it surprise you to hear of seventy-year-olds who are still competing in athletics? True, they cannot match what they used to do when in their twenties. But the fact that some can still throw a discus, sprint 100 meters and successfully pole-vault shows something important. It indicates that elderly people should not be "written off" as useless just because they have lived for a certain number of years. Unless some disease intervenes, older people have a lot more physical

potential than they are usually given credit for.

Is this also true with regard to their mental and intellectual capacity? That is, can old people learn new things and adopt new life-styles? Sometimes the elderly themselves play down their potential in this field. They may shrink from the challenge of something new and say, 'I'm too old to learn,' or 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks.' But is this necessarily so? At what age does the ability to learn fade away?

Growing and Learning

It is interesting to reflect that the person who protests, 'I am too old to learn,' was once a young, bright-eyed child full of curiosity. In the vocabulary of the majority of little boys and girls, the most used words are 'Why?' 'Where?' 'When?' 'How?' 'Who?' There is no question about their desire to learn.

Sometimes parents wish this desire was a little less intense and that their children would stop asking questions for a while. Yet the Bible takes note of the importance of what a child learns at this

stage when it says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Proverbs 22:6.

Soon the child attends school, and for a number of years his major project each day is taking in new knowledge about different subjects. His natural desire to learn is handled to some degree by his teachers. He learns new concepts, new skills, and the world gradually opens up for him.

All too quickly school years are over, and a young adult steps out into the world. He now has to learn how to deal with grown-up people and acquire skills for making a living. In most cases he ends up in a regular job, and here the learning process starts to slow down. Most young adults get married, have children, are burdened with pressures and responsibilities, and they gradually cease to enrich their lives with new learning.

When the family grows up, the parents find that now they have time for

themselves again. But, in many cases, the pattern of not learning has been established. They are not as inclined as they were when young to start investigating new things, or to ask questions. In Japan some speak of being born in another era. A man may say, 'I was born in the Meiji era.' That was the political era that ended in 1912. Hence, having reached an age of at least seventy, he feels his learning days are over and he could never pick up new thoughts in this modern, incomprehensible age.

But does that have to be the case? True, as a person ages his physical body changes. His joints may get stiffer, his muscles less pliable, his eyesight a little weaker and his hearing a little less acute. But unless he gets sick, this causes only a slowing down, not a stopping of all activities. The fact that a group of over-seventies could hold an athletic meet proves that. Is the same thing true for the mind? Or is it true that a person can be too old to learn?

Too Old to Learn? —“Never!”

IS IT possible to be too old to learn? Well, consider just a few of the things elderly people have achieved. At ninety-two years of age composer Irving Berlin was still writing music and pianist Arthur Rubinstein was still giving performances at ninety-four. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, at the age of ninety-two, took up the study of Greek. At the age of

eighty, Moses embarked on a new career as national leader and public speaker. (Exodus 7:7) And the apostle John must have been in his nineties when he was used to write his well-known Gospel and the book of Revelation.

No, age does not have to limit the mind's activity. There are some diseases that can slow down the thinking process—

es of the elderly. The main one of these is Alzheimer's disease, sometimes called senility, that causes physical deterioration in the brain. Some other diseases show similar symptoms. But the *vast majority* of older people do not suffer from such diseases. For these, one researcher said, "Creativity is ageless."

In tests at Cambridge University, England, the performances of some old people were as good as those of the young students. Dr. Weinberg, a psychiatrist and recognized authority on aging, reports that, unless some disease intervenes, a person's mind retains vigor and learning ability into a fine old age—particularly if older people keep physically

active and mix with people who care for them. "The future for the elderly is bright," says seventy-year-old Dr. Weinberg, "as long as they maintain their curiosity and their desire to learn and to grow."

For some, this has certainly been so. In fact, Dr. Weinberg's statement has been proved true doubtless in a more remarkable way than even he anticipated.

Time to Change Course

Consider, for example, Alice Okon in Nigeria. Her son was a practicing Christian, and he encouraged his mother to read the Bible and learn of the hope it offers. Eventually, she consented to study the Bible, was built up in faith and, at the age of eighty, was baptized in water to show her determination to use the rest of her life serving God.

She strongly believes the statement: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) And because she now exercises that faith, she looks forward confidently to the eternal life that God promised. At eighty years of age, she certainly was not too old to learn.

To Make Decisions

Old people can make tough decisions and live with the results of them. Seventy-nine-year-old Paul Iryang Atua, who also lives in Nigeria, had a difficult decision to make. All his life he had been seeking a religion that taught Bible truth. Eventually, Christian witnesses of Jehovah called on him, and he knew that



In tests at Cambridge University, England, the performances of some old people were as good as those of the young students

he had found what he was looking for. However, others were not pleased with his decision.

A minister from a religion with which Paul had previously associated visited him. When he saw a Bible on the table in Paul's house, he seized it, called it a false religious book and ripped it to pieces. Paul now had to deal with this irate man and calm him down, while trying to defend some of the Bible truths that he had learned.

The minister was not satisfied. He angrily left and tried to stir up persecution against Paul. Moreover, Paul's fellow villagers wanted to appoint him a village chief to distract him from his newfound faith. Paul rejected their offer, realizing their motive.

Then Paul had to take an even more difficult step. The Bible tells us that a Christian, to be pleasing to God, must be "a husband of one wife." (1 Timothy 3: 2) So Paul had to make arrangements,



At ninety years of age Iwaji Kato, although almost totally deaf, was not too old to learn the true religion

in harmony with Christian principles, to become a monogamist. This he did. His marriage was legalized, and, finally, he could be baptized.

Remember, Paul was seventy-nine years old when he made these major adjustments in his life. He says: "Even though all these changes have taken place in my old age, I am thankful to Jehovah that he has provided the opportunity to use my last days in his service." Paul, too, now has a much brighter view of the future than he used to have. Too old to learn? Not seventy-nine-year-old Paul Iryang Atua!

In Spite of Illness

Elderly people sometimes have health problems, but this does not have to prevent them from being curious about things and wanting to learn. A full-time evangelist named Michiyo Fujimi found this to be true. Michiyo was visiting people in the northern part of Honshu Island, Japan, when she met elderly Mr. Kato.

Mr. Kato attracted Michiyo's attention when he said: "The God of Christianity wants people to have life, not death. Is that not so?" It was an intriguing observation. However, a discussion was very difficult because the old man was almost totally deaf. He was interested in reading, however, and Michiyo left Bible magazines with him. She tried to help him to study the Bible, but he did not seem to understand the arrangement. So for three years, she regularly took Bible magazines for him to read. She learned to answer any questions he had by means of pencil and paper.

A few months ago Mr. Kato—now ninety years old—indicated that he had some things he wanted to discuss. He had gained a deep knowledge of the Bible from his reading. A magazine article had directed him to get in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses, since they could

help him to learn how to do God's will. He asked: "How do I get in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses?"

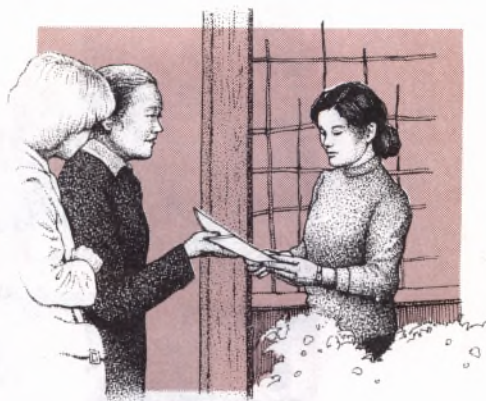
Michiyo raised her index finger to her nose—a Japanese gesture meaning "I am the one." Yes, she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The old man was delighted and wanted to know where the Kingdom Hall was. He had learned about that, too, from his reading. Now, in spite of his deafness, this elderly man is studying the Bible using the pencil-and-paper method of communication. He is getting a clear understanding of Bible truths and is associating with fellow Christians. Is Mr. Kato, at ninety, too old to learn? Certainly not!

And neither is Mrs. Takahashi. Compared with Mr. Kato, she may appear young—she is "only" seventy-three years old! But she has a problem. Forty-three years ago she went blind, and she never had the opportunity to learn Braille. Yet when she was contacted by Jehovah's Witnesses, she indicated that she wanted to learn about the Bible, so two evangelists studied it with her. Because of her blindness she had to memorize what she learned; hence, at seventy-three years of age, Mrs. Takahashi started to memorize parts of the Bible.

Now, she regularly attends religious meetings in spite of her affliction and age. And, although she is liable to suffer from travel sickness, she has traveled 600 kilometers (370 mi.) in order to attend a religious convention. Last year she was baptized. Too old to learn? Mrs. Takahashi did not think so!

Why They Say "No!"

Yes, as Dr. Weinberg said: "The future for the elderly is bright as long as they maintain their curiosity and their desire to learn and to grow." For those who in their old age develop a curiosity about God and his purposes, and a desire



Tei Takahashi, seventy-three years old and blind, shares with others what she has learned

to learn about him and to grow in faith, the future is very bright.

They realize that their life up to now—whether seventy, eighty or ninety years or more—has been a gift from God. They also realize that, even though they are old and experienced, there are still things they can learn. In fact, by God's reckoning, they are not *really* so old. The Bible says: "One day is with Jehovah as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8) By this calculation, an eighty-year-old man has lived for only about two hours! Hence, even an old person can learn from the wisdom of God, who lives "from time indefinite to time indefinite."—Psalm 90:2.

Moreover, God offers to all, young and old, the prospect of living as long into the future as he does. Jesus Christ said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Is it possible to be too old to respond to this offer from God? Around the world, elderly men and women are answering: "Never!"



Work That Refreshes

THE sign on the jobsite in the Atlanta, Georgia, suburb of Dunwoody announced the Kingdom Hall construction date: "23 and 24." This double date ignited the remark: "Can't they make up their minds whether to start on the 23rd or 24th?" People just could not comprehend that the sign meant: The Kingdom Hall will be started on the 23rd and finished on the 24th. Nevertheless, what have come to be called two-day miracles are happening about every month in all parts of the United States.

In the early dawn of Saturday in Dunwoody, piles of building materials were strategically placed on the 4,200-square-foot concrete slab that had been previously poured. Ben Kelley, who had supervised the pouring of this slab, pointed out that every item was precisely located for quick use when needed. "Notice the Sheetrock," he said. "It's stacked right in the middle of where the auditorium will be. We'll build around and over it, but when the time comes it will be exactly where the sheetrockers need it."

While he was talking the field kitchen was serving breakfast—at 6 a.m.—to three hundred volunteer workers.

Walls Up in Minutes

At five minutes to seven work began. All the workers ringed the concrete foundation as one consolidated crew, all wall builders. Hammers started whanging. Walls materialized out of precut studs. In a few minutes Wall One was raised. Then Wall Two. Then Three. And Four. The perimeter of the hall had risen in minutes, and its 2 by 6 studs were soon clothed with plywood panels and black insulating board. The banging of hammers subsided as bodies of workers disengaged themselves from wall raising to re-form as smaller crews—electricians, cabinetmakers, plumbers, masons, landscapers and others. Each crew was directed by a work leader who responded to a walkie-talkie on his hip.

A crew of insulators, mostly women, was packing the inside walls with glass-wool batts. Strong-armed men were

wrestling flip-floppy roof trusses toward one end. Partition walls were rising. Foyer, rest rooms, library, literature rooms, stage and the large half-oval auditorium itself—all were taking shape. Somehow the different crews sifted through one another as they performed their operations, none seriously impeding the work of the others.

"This is where we get down to what makes the system work," Stanley Peck explained. Peck, a builder and a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, had developed the method with the help of a corps of Midwest Witness builders. "In the first place," he said, "the system takes advantage of our having plenty of volunteer help and enough talented craftsmen and managers to use this unlimited help." Yet how do you coordinate three hundred workers on a single jobsite? "People are always asking us that," Peck replied. "Maybe a hive of bees can do it. Or a colony of ants. But humans? Not unless they are Jehovah's dedicated workers. Real craftsmen are in charge of every crew and every crew is directed by su-

pervisors. It's like in the Christian congregation, where God equips some with 'abilities to direct and some with abilities to perform helpful services.'"—1 Corinthians 12:28.

It should be added that putting up such a meeting hall so quickly could not be done anywhere and everywhere. As can be seen, it takes more than willing hands. It requires the availability of skilled tradesmen experienced in the type of planning, preparation and coordination necessary for such a building to take shape. And good cooperation from communal authorities and building inspectors is necessary.

"It Looks Like a Busy Anthill!"

The skeleton of the hall was rising so fast on its two-acre setting that by mid-morning astonished passersby began to understand the meaning of the two-day construction date. Masons were setting up scaffolding; support crews were getting bricks and mortar ready. Carpenters and roofers were swarming all around them. The masons accommodated themselves



With a crew like this a Kingdom Hall can be built in two days

to working around and under them and, sometimes, between the legs of finishers boxing in the overhangs. Meanwhile air-conditioning workers were threading power lines through the midst of all the other crews. Nearly a hundred workers were on the roof, laying down decking, unfurling rolls of felt, carrying and locating heavy bundles of shingles.

On the ground even more were scurrying about. Some were carrying building materials to where they were needed. Fencing crews were busy. Landscapers were transforming the grounds into sodded lawns, shrubbery and flower beds. Batteries of youngsters and oldsters moved about constantly to pick up every bit of trash—bent nails, discarded containers, odd pieces of lumber. Nothing

Sidelights on Dunwoody Kingdom Hall

THE city of Atlanta could not have cooperated more fully. Mr. Gardner, director of inspections, heard of our schedule, but his inspectors do not work on Saturday and Sunday. So he allowed Witnesses licensed in their trades to be responsible for inspections. In addition, a registered and licensed architect visited the site periodically over the weekend to see that the structure more than met the county building codes.

The three network television stations had their filming crews at the building site. One of the newscasters was impressed, stayed long after his filming crew had left and concluded his program of the twenty-third with: "The brothers and sisters will be back tomorrow, and so will we."

On the morning of the twenty-fourth, more than a hundred miles from Dunwoody, a Witness was going from door to door. At six differ-

was allowed to litter or impede anybody's progress. And from the beginning a mobile refreshment department—pairs of girls and boys—circulated throughout the project with snacks and cold drinks. One observer remarked: "It looks like a busy anthill!"

Day One is considered successful if, by late in the day, the sheetrockers and dry-wallers can take over. These workers have to wait for studded and insulated walls and raftered ceilings. Then they work into the evening nailing up the heavy plaster sheets. These surfaces must be spackled with a quick-set compound, sanded, and painted or papered before noon of Day Two. At that time all work stops and the congregation holds its first meeting in the new Kingdom Hall. At

ent doors he was told: "Well, you're the people that are on TV who are building the Kingdom Hall in just two days, down in Atlanta."

A businessman in Atlanta had house guests that weekend. Early that Saturday morning they passed the site and saw the walls going up. They were amazed at the activity and returned every two hours that day and the next to check progress. Subsequently this businessman talked about this event in the Philippines, Mexico and many of the Western states.

On the twenty-third at the Dekalb County Police Department, a lieutenant was being assigned to monitor traffic near the Kingdom Hall. Her captain explained that a church was being built there, but she argued that no church was being built in that area. Still insisting that the captain was wrong, she went anyway. Upon her arrival she stopped in the middle of the

Dunwoody the carpet had not yet been laid, so three hundred people sat on the concrete floor and two hundred others settled down outside the building to attend the weekly *Watchtower* study.

"We have visitors from Virginia and Florida," remarked Charles Leibensperger, secretary of the building committee. "Some of them are planning to build halls. They want to see how it is done. Now that Stan Peck has come and got us organized, we can begin planning to help them." Peck explained: "We have an arrangement whereby anyone who is experienced goes over their plans and their personnel preparations. Then arrangements are made to have two or more job veterans work with their building committee to organize everything

and check the list of building materials; and one or more of us arranges to be present during the two days of construction." No one is paid for any of this work.

As Day Two ended in Dunwoody and a group stood outside and looked at the hall where none had been early the day before, one of the Witnesses commented: "This is how Jehovah's spirit operates to accomplish work like this. It's simple. His people are responsive to his spirit. They cooperate for a common cause. They're doing everything not for personal gain but out of love for their brother and their God. Are these not the two great commandments of Mark 12: 28-31, to 'love Jehovah your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength,' and 'your neighbor as yourself'?"



road, blocking traffic, and exclaimed: "I don't believe it! That wasn't there yesterday!"

A Witness works as a waiter at the Perimeter Marriott Hotel in Atlanta. The restaurant manager was having dinner with his visiting parents, and he asked the Witness to tell them about the church that was built in two days. His father retorted: "It can't be done! I've been in construction for years and I know it *can't be done!*" He then asked, "What religion are you?" When told Jehovah's Witnesses, he said: "They could do it!" He had managed a convention hall that the Witnesses had used and had seen how they worked together. "Any other religion couldn't do it," he said, "but Jehovah's Witnesses could do it."

Streams of cars passed the building site during the two days to see what was going on. Many stopped to visit. At times up to eight hundred curious neighbors and passersby were on the

grounds. Some of them ate with the workers. The cafeteria department served thirty-five hundred free meals during the two days.

A few days after the hall construction, a salesman visited a Witness. He had heard about the hall on the TV news and was very much impressed. It reminded him of "ants on an ant-hill." His family was religious, but he was disillusioned with religion. He then said: "If any religious group could work together so efficiently and produce a building in one weekend, they had to have something that other religions don't offer." Later he and a companion came to a meeting at the Kingdom Hall.

A father was very upset when his daughter became one of Jehovah's Witnesses and would not listen to her explanations at all. But he is now eager to discuss the construction of the Dunwoody Kingdom Hall and said to his daughter, "I'm proud that you were a part of that."

God's Gift of Work for His Servants

**"I have glorified you on the earth,
having finished the work you
have given me to do."
—John 17:4.**

JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, is the chief servant of the Creator of heaven and earth. When Jehovah sent him to the earth for the purpose of vindicating His universal sovereignty and ransoming the world of mankind, Jesus became an object of amazement, particularly to mankind. This was as foretold in Isaiah 52:13, 14: "Look! My servant will act with insight. He will be in high station and will certainly be elevated and exalted very much. To the extent that many have stared at him in amazement—so much was the disfigurement as respects his appearance more than that of any other man and as respects his stately form more than that of the sons of mankind." This rare work he faithfully finished, just as he confessed in his prayer to Jehovah God, saying: "I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do." (John 17:4) He is an example to all fellow servants of God.

² Men and women have a need to work. It comes from the way they were made. "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness," Jehovah God said at the time of creating man as his servant

on earth. (Genesis 1:26) This likeness is not in any physical resemblance to God, who is spirit and unseen by human eyes. Rather, it means that certain attributes of God were given to perfect man, qualities such as justice, wisdom, love and others that set man apart from the lower animals. That this is the correct view is shown by Colossians 3:9, 10, where dedicated fellow servants of Jesus Christ are told to change their personality, in these words: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new *according to the image of the One who created it.*"

³ One feature of God's "image" is that of being a worker. Jehovah has absolute freedom to do as he pleases, and what he pleases to do is work. The opening words of the Bible introduce him to us as a tireless worker: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) This work did not leave him exhausted: "Jehovah, the Creator of the extremities of the earth, is a God to time indefinite. He does not tire out or grow weary."—Isaiah 40:28.

1. What did Jesus do about his work for which he was sent to earth?

2. In what sense are we in the image of God?

3, 4. (a) What do the opening words of the Bible show God to be? (b) In what sense was he refreshed upon completion of the work of creation?

⁴ Hence, it could not be in the sense of needing to recuperate that he refreshed himself at the end of the sixth creative day: "In six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day he desisted and proceeded to refresh himself." (Exodus 31:17, *New World Translation*, footnote, 1963 ed.) God did not rest from all work, but just from this particular creative work. Upon its completion he contemplated it and noted that it was very good, up to his standard of perfection, and he was refreshed and satisfied by the accomplishment of this work of highest quality. To see this fine work completed was a joy and a satisfaction and a refreshment to Jehovah the Creator of it all. (Genesis 1:31; John 5:17) From all of this we see that people, made in God's likeness, have an innate need not only to be workers but also to be refreshed by a feeling of accomplishment over work well done.

Man's Need for Meaningful Work

⁵ Additionally, Jehovah is a God of purpose and his works are purposeful. "Everything Jehovah has made for his purpose," including mankind. (Proverbs 16:4) Hence, it follows that man's works must also have purpose. "The striving to find a meaning in one's life," writes psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, "is the primary motivational force in man. . . . There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life." But many find it monotonous to perform repeatedly one operation on an assembly line on a product in which they have no interest or pride. Therein lies a partial key to the loss of the work ethic—much of today's work fails

to meet people's psychological need for meaning and a feeling of fulfillment.

⁶ Since everything God made was for a purpose, man was made for a purpose. He was made and put on earth to work. The work God gave him to do was meaningful, involving the use of both his mind and his hands in productive ways. "Jehovah God proceeded to take the man and settle him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to take care of it." Perfect man was to "have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth," and "Jehovah God was forming from the ground every wild beast of the field and every flying creature of the heavens, and he began bringing them to the man to see what he would call each

6. What purposeful work was the first man given to do?



God gave man meaningful work to do

5. (a) What else is God shown to be, and what follows from this? (b) What is a partial explanation of the decline of the work ethic?

one; and whatever the man would call it, each living soul, that was its name." —Genesis 2:15; 1:26; 2:19.

⁷ It was for man's pleasure and enjoyment and satisfaction that Jehovah assigned him suitable work. The work would fill his life, rout any possibility of boredom or dull monotony, and give him the satisfying feeling of being useful. It would be purposeful work because of being assigned by the Creator of the earth and the universe, the Almighty God of purpose. Rather than the divine attributes being repressed or frustrated or stagnated by disuse, as often happens in secular work, the work assignment from Jehovah allowed the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, free expression. And even after man's ouster from the garden of Eden and after he was told that work would be done "in the sweat of your face," it was still for man's good. —Genesis 3:19.

⁸ Recent scientific studies confirm the Scriptural truth that man was made to work. They have shown that the majority of elderly persons in good health do not want to retire, that retirement more often brings boredom instead of happiness. Investigators believe retirement makes bored and idle persons lose the will to live and actually shortens their life span. Hobbies do not satisfactorily replace work in the lives of retired persons. Hobbies may be enjoyable a few hours a week as a change and relaxation from regular work, but they become tiresome when pursued full time. They fall short of making us feel that our lives are serving a useful purpose. Wise King Solomon wrote: "My heart was joyful because of all my hard work, and this came to be my portion from all my hard work. With a man there is

nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work. This too I have seen, even I, that this is from the hand of the true God." So work in God's service is a gift from God.—Ecclesiastes 2:10, 24.

The Worker to Enjoy the Fruits of His Work

⁹ Jehovah does not want man deprived of the fruits of his labor. "The hard-working farmer," wrote the apostle Paul, "must be the first to partake of the fruits." Elsewhere he expounded this divine principle at greater length, saying: "Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not eat some of the milk of the flock? Am I speaking these things by human standards? Or does not the Law also say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written: 'You must not muzzle a bull when it is threshing out the grain.' Is it bulls God is caring for? Or is it altogether for our sakes he says it? Really for our sakes it was written, because the man who plows ought to plow in hope and the man who threshes ought to do so in hope of being a partaker." —2 Timothy 2:6; 1 Corinthians 9:7-10.

¹⁰ Even the working animals were to partake of the fruits of their labor. If Jehovah safeguards the interests of the working brute, how much more so will he champion the cause of human workers! Actually, he clearly indicates his intent to do this: "Look! The wages due the workers who harvested your fields but which are held up by you, keep crying out, and the calls for help on the part of the reapers have entered into the ears of Jehovah of armies."—James 5:4.

7, 8. (a) Why can work in God's service properly be called a gift from him? (b) Why do hobbies fail as a substitute for work?

9, 10. (a) What illustrations show that man is to enjoy the fruits of his labor? (b) Whose cries does Jehovah hear?

Jesus and His Followers—Workers

¹¹ Along with his heavenly Father Jehovah, Jesus is a worker. "My Father has kept working until now," he said, "and I keep working." (John 5:17) He does the work Jehovah assigned to him. He willingly and voluntarily does this work and expresses delight in the doing of it. He finds it as nourishing, as satisfying and as refreshing as food. More so, in fact, for on one occasion when his disciples urged him to eat, he responded: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) The joy of accomplishment would refresh him at the end of the work, dissipating any tiredness and leaving him satisfied and exhilarated. Those who profess to be Christian should take to heart this course and attitude of Christ Jesus. Why so? Because the Bible shows that Christ left "you a model for you to follow his steps closely."—1 Peter 2:21.

¹² By an illustration Jesus showed that work gives its own reward in joyfulness. A man was going on a trip. He summoned his slaves and distributed his goods among them according to their different abilities. He did not ask more of them than they were capable of, but he did expect them to produce according to their capabilities. After a long absence he returned for an accounting. The one given five talents doubled them, the one given two doubled them, but the one given one talent did nothing with it. How were the two industrious workers rewarded? With a vacation? No, but, of all things, more work! The master commended each one, saying, "Well done, good and faithful slave!" and then added: "You were faithful over a few things. I

will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master." The master's joy was in this work, and by getting more of it to do the industrious slaves entered more fully into his joy. But what about the lazy slave? The decision was: "Take away the talent from him and give it to him that has the ten talents."—Matthew 25:14-30.

¹³ Now the lazy slave could loaf. But was he happy? No, he ended up 'weeping and gnashing his teeth!' To be happy we need useful work. However, we also need periods of rest. Unlike Jehovah, we do get tired. But after a vacation has restored our physical and nervous energies and revived our spirits, we are ready for more work—eager, in fact, to get back to work. This is so unless the work is boring and repetitious, lacking in purpose and meaning for the worker, as much secular work is today.

¹⁴ But in addition to uninteresting work causing a decline in the work ethic, many today are ensnared by materialism. Yet, of what lasting profit are material possessions accumulated beyond legitimate needs? As moderns say, "You can't take it with you." Solomon expressed it more forcefully: "Just as one has come forth from his mother's belly, naked will one go away again, just as one came; and nothing at all can one carry away for his hard work, which he can take along with his hand. And this too is a grave calamity: exactly as one has come, so one will go away; and what profit is there to the one who keeps working hard for the wind?"—Ecclesiastes 5:15, 16.

¹⁵ Some involve themselves in another futile vanity: working to "keep up with the Joneses," as the saying goes. Or, more often, to get ahead of the Joneses. "I have also learned why people work

11. How did Jesus feel about work, and why must we take to heart his view of it?

12, 13. (a) What illustration shows it is proper to commend good workers, and what reward was given them? (b) What happened to the unproductive slave? (c) What purpose do vacations serve?

14. Of what lasting profit is a materialistic course?

15. By what further vanities are some ensnared?

- Why do people have a need to work?
- In what sense did Jehovah rest after making the heavens and the earth?
- What purposeful work did God originally give man to do?
- Why can it be said that even in man's imperfect state work is good for him?
- What shows that humans were meant to enjoy the fruits of their labors?
- How did Jesus show his attitude toward work?
- What fine work lies ahead for God's servants?

so hard to succeed," Solomon said. "It is because they envy the things their neighbors have." Or, "It means the rivalry of one toward another." (Ecclesiastes 4:4, *Today's English Version*; NW) Futile and vain indeed are the lives and works of the wicked: "You will become like a big tree the foliage of which is withering, and like a garden that has no water. And the vigorous man will certainly become tow, and the product of his activity a spark; and both of them will certainly go up in flames at the same time, with no one to do the extinguishing."—Isaiah 1:30, 31.

The Exhilarating Work Ahead

¹⁶ Work for people on the earth will not always be a striving after the wind. It will be as purposeful and meaningful as that originally assigned to the first human pair in Eden. Jehovah's purpose to have earth a global paradise cared for by righteous human creatures will be ac-

16. What satisfying work lies ahead for obedient mankind?

complished. (Isaiah 55:11) Over such an earthful of perfect people God's kingdom under Christ will reign. Life in that new system will never become monotonous or boring, because there will be plenty of work to do—not the vain and futile work of this old world that makes the workweek a grind and makes men speak of its beginning as Blue Monday. No, it will be the interesting and fascinating work of beautifying the earth, exercising loving dominion over the animals, rearing children, and educating resurrected humans, until the earth is filled with a righteous race and many other undreamed-of joys. Then busy people will 'long enjoy the work of their hands and use it to the full.'—Isaiah 65:22.

¹⁷ Besides works of the hands there will be problems to engage perfect minds, using thinking abilities to the full. Never can mankind know it all, for "mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish." "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!" (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 11:33) There will always be new challenges and mysteries to be researched and penetrated. Although servants of Jehovah will live forever, eternity itself will never suffice for them to learn all there is to know about the earth and the universe that Jehovah has created.

¹⁸ Before that exhilarating work will be our lot, however, there is a present work we must do to assure our getting there to become a part of that paradise earth. It is now a life-or-death matter for us to learn what that vital work is.

17. What shows that life will never become humdrum because we have learned it all and done it all?

18. What must precede our sharing in God's gift of work in a paradise earth?

“Keep Working Out Your Own Salvation”

“Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
—Philippians 2:12.

JEHOVAH'S works praise him. “Praise him, you sun and moon. Praise him, all you stars of light.” Without the power of speech, they speak his praises. So do the mountains and hills, the plants and animals, the birds and creeping things. (Psalm 148:3, 9, 10; 19:1-4) How is this praising possible when there are no words? It is possible because work reflects the worker. This is specifically stated concerning the works of Jehovah: “His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship.” (Romans 1:20) If speechless creations are to praise him, how much more so those who possess the power of speech! So it is appropriate that Psalms 146 through 150 open and close with the rallying cry, “Praise Jah, you people!”

² Just as Jehovah’s works reflect him, so our works reflect us. Do they reveal us to be seekers of wealth or praisers of Jehovah? The primary work Christians must now do is to fulfill Jesus’ words:

1. (a) Who or what praises Jehovah without words, and how is this possible?
(b) Who else are invited to do so?
2. What works should reflect our Christianity?

“This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” His parting words to his followers were: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) As we ‘bear witness thoroughly from house to house,’ our preaching work should be of high quality. Thus we may have a fine standing before the Kings Jehovah and Christ Jesus. “Have you beheld a man skillful in his work? Before kings is where he will station himself.”—Acts 20:20, 21; Proverbs 22:29.



Jehovah’s magnificent works reflect the kind of God he is. Our works tell what kind of persons we are

Do we search out and ponder over words of truth, to present them at the people's homes in a pleasing way?

³ For necessary instruction and training, the Bible is provided, in order that "the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." So by private and group study, by regular attendance at congregational meetings and by participation in training programs "do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Timothy 3:17; 2:15) Satan, the god of this present wicked world, has woven a gigantic tissue of religious lies and spreads it like a veil over the nations so that unbelievers are blinded to the enlightening good news of Christ's kingdom. But Jehovah's Word is like a two-edged sword and Jehovah's Witnesses must be skilled in wielding it to slash to shreds the blinding veil and let the light shine into the honest minds and hearts of sheeplike men, women and children.—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

Acceptable Sacrifices of Praise

⁴ Our words of praise to Jehovah are likened to the sacrifices required by the Mosaic law: "Let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." Words are also likened to "the young bulls of our lips." (Hebrews 13:15; Hosea 14:2) The sacrifices offered under the Law were to be unblemished, and priests who ignored this requirement

were rebuked by Jehovah, as described at Malachi 1:6-8:

"A son, for his part, honors a father; and a servant, his grand master. So if I am a father, where is the honor to me? And if I am a grand master, where is the fear of me? Jehovah of armies has said to you, O priests who are despising my name. 'And you have said: "In what way have we despised your name?"' 'By presenting upon my altar polluted bread.' 'And you have said: "In what way have we polluted you?"' 'By your saying: "The table of Jehovah is something to be despised." And when you present a blind animal for sacrificing: "It is nothing bad." And when you present a lame animal or a sick one: "It is nothing bad." 'Bring it near, please, to your governor. Will he find pleasure in you, or will he receive you kindly? "

⁵ Are our sacrifices today, "the young bulls of our lips" and our "fruit of lips," as unblemished as it is within our power to make them? Have we by study and the training and exercise of our faculties made our sacrifices of praise as fine as we can? Do we search out and ponder over words of truth, to present them at the people's homes in a pleasing way? "Besides the fact that the congregator had become wise, he also taught the people knowledge continually, and he pondered and made a thorough search, that he might arrange many proverbs in order. The congregator sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth."—Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10.

⁶ It is difficult for persons to acknowledge that they have been wrong and

3. How are we trained for this work, and why must we become skilled at it?

4. To what is our praise likened, and what failure is shown at Malachi 1:6-8?

5. How can we avoid offering blemished sacrifices of praise?

6. How can we make it easier for people to accept the Kingdom message?

Works of practicing what we are preaching are vital if we are not to be condemned as hypocrites

need to change their thinking, especially on something as emotionally charged as their religious views. Do we try to make it easier for them? Do we put ourselves in their place, as the apostle Paul did? He said: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those under law I became as under law, though I myself am not under law, that I might gain those under law. To those without law I became as without law, although I am not without law toward God but under law toward Christ, that I might gain those without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some. But I do all things for the sake of the good news, that I may become a sharer of it with others." —1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

⁷ Are we understanding and kind, healing in our words? "The one that is wise in heart will be called understanding, and

7. How can we make our preaching more persuasive?

In Our Next Issue

■ A Secure Future In Sight!

■ Solving Difficulties With Love

■ "Put Up a Hard Fight for the Faith"

he that is sweet in his lips adds persuasiveness. Pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones." Do we study so as to show insight when we witness to others concerning God's kingdom, thereby adding persuasiveness to our speech? "The heart of the wise one causes his mouth to show insight, and to his lips it adds persuasiveness." (Proverbs 16:21, 24, 23) Salt adds tastiness to food that would otherwise be bland or insipid, and Paul uses this fact to show that the spiritual food we offer to others should be pleasant to consume: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—Colossians 4:6.

Adorn Your Teaching With Fine Works

⁸ In addition to works of preaching the good news, works of practicing what we are preaching are vital if we are not to be condemned as hypocrites. The apostle Paul was very much aware of this. He denounced certain Jewish teachers of his day as being guilty of it: "Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal,' do you steal? You, the one saying 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You, the one expressing abhorrence of the idols, do you rob temples? You, who take pride in law, do you by your transgressing of the Law dishonor God?" (Romans 2:21-23) Paul was clearly aware of this danger in his case, saying: "I pummel my body and

8. What is vital if we are to avoid condemnation as hypocrites?

lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow.”—1 Corinthians 9:27.

⁹ This shows that Paul did not subscribe to the view held by many religionists today, namely, ‘Once saved, always saved.’ After accepting Jesus as our savior and redeemer, and dedicating our lives to Jehovah God, we have only started on the way to salvation, not finished it. So Paul counsels us to ‘keep working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.’ (Philippians 2:12) Why “keep working” and why with “fear and trembling,” if ‘once saved, always saved’? It is possible to fall away and impossible for certain of such ones to revive to repentance again, “because they impale the Son of God afresh.” And Jesus himself said that it is possible for someone to “take your

crown.” He also said in his remarks on the “conclusion of the system of things”: “He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Hebrews 6:4-6; Revelation 3:11; Matthew 24:3, 13) It is our current standing with God that counts, not what we once were, whether good or bad. (Ezekiel 33:12-16) That is why we must continue working at kingdom preaching, continue practicing right conduct, and do both with a healthy fear of falling short.

¹⁰ Christians are admonished to be ‘moderate in habits, sound in mind, reverent in behavior, not slanderers or heavy drinkers, loving in family relationships, chaste, clean in speech and good workers.’ And why all of this? “That the word of God may not be spoken of abusively.” Also, that by such conduct they “may adorn the teaching of our Savior,

9. What arguments disprove the religious fallacy ‘Once saved, always saved’?

10. What adornment should accompany our teaching, and with what results?



**Speaking
Bible truths
to others
is a
refreshing work**

God, in all things." Adding this adornment of fine conduct to their preaching, Jehovah's Witnesses become "an example of fine works." (Titus 2:1-10) "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things," the apostle Paul instructed, "not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment; to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life."—1 Timothy 6:17-19.

¹¹ This present life as the world lives it is not really living. "The one that goes in for sensual gratification is dead though she is living." (1 Timothy 5:6) This life, however, serves this one principal need, namely, "to be rich in fine works," 'to treasure up a right foundation for the future,' to "get a firm hold on the real life" in the realm of Jehovah's kingdom under Christ. We could have everything that this life has to offer, and yet if empty of fine works it would be wasted and worthless. The days of this life are few and full of trouble and pain, sorrow and suffering, grief and disappointment, wickedness and death. The days are few, but there are enough of them for us to get rich in fine works if we do not delay. To do such works brings us joy and satisfaction, peace and contentment, feelings of meaning and purpose, spiritual health and eternal life.

Refreshing Work Toward Salvation

¹² Strange though it may seem in these times of much indifference and opposition, to hold back from announcing Je-

11. What vital need is served by this present life, in spite of its few trouble-filled days?

12. What proves exhausting to faithful witnesses of Jehovah, but what brings refreshment?

☐ How do Jehovah's works praise him?

☐ What kind of sacrifices are acceptable to God today?

☐ How can we make it easier for others to accept the Kingdom message?

☐ With what fine works do we need to adorn our teaching?

☐ What activity proves to be refreshing to God's servants?

☐ What is this now the time to be doing?

hovah's kingdom is exhausting to conscientious witnesses of Jehovah. To speak is a relief and a refreshment to them. When Jeremiah decided not to preach, the message was like a fire in his bones, and he finally cried out: "I am worn out with holding it in—I cannot endure it." (Jeremiah 20:9, *An American Translation*) Elihu needed the relief of speaking truths long held in: "I am full of things to say, and my mind urges me to speech. My mind is like wine bottled up, ready to burst out, like new bottles. I must relieve myself by speaking." (Job 32:18-20, Moffatt) After doing this work Elihu felt refreshed. God was refreshed after completing his work of creation. Doing Jehovah's work was like refreshing food to Jesus. And accomplishing the preaching work now is refreshing to Jehovah's Witnesses. They "mount up with wings like eagles."—Isaiah 40:31.

¹³ Now is the time to study God's Word the Bible, to quit being fashioned after this old wicked system, to be transformed by making your mind over. "Do not be loving either the world or the

13. What is it timely for us to do now, and to whom and how is it helpful?

things in the world." "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; Romans 12:2) Equip yourself to comfort mourning ones with the good news of God's kingdom. Adorn your teaching by bearing spiritual fruits in your personal life—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22, 23) Help meek ones to make their minds over, to become rich in fine works, and to remain forever on a paradise earth. (Psalm 37:11, 29) Help them to work out their salvation as you keep working out your own.

¹⁴ These days are critical and the time

14. (a) What admonition for gaining salvation is given, and why is it now so timely? (b) By applying it to ourselves, what are we able to be and do?

is reduced, so the admonition from God is: "Preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season." "Become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord." "Do not loiter at your business. Be aglow with the spirit. Slave for Jehovah." (2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Romans 12:11) In all these ways "keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling . . . that you may come to be blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you are shining as illuminators in the world, keeping a tight grip on the word of life."—Philippians 2: 12, 15, 16.

Her Faith Was Unshakable

For two years 14-year-old Renata from Brazil had suffered from bone cancer in her left knee. Amputation and cobalt treatment had only postponed her death. Renata's Christian conscience would not permit her to accept a blood transfusion, in spite of a doctor's insistence that she have one. Prior to her last entry into the hospital, the doctor and a nurse went to Renata's home to see her.

"I agree to return to the hospital if Dr. — promises me not to mention blood

transfusion again. I am tired of having to meet that objection," declared Renata.

The doctor agreed and added that, even though Renata might be living her last moments, her faith was unshakable.

During the last eight months Renata was unable to lie down because of the intense pain. When the time came for a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses, she cried and said: "If I could just talk to everyone I would say, 'Use your

legs as much as you can. Maybe tomorrow you will not be able to walk and work for Jehovah. Do not miss your assemblies!'"

Renata's prayers were constant. One day her mother overheard her praying: "Jehovah, I know I will never get better again. The doctors cannot cure me, but You can. But I know that it is not yet time for it; only in the New Order. But

please don't let me swell up anymore; otherwise, mother won't be able to carry me to the bathroom."

If others, including her mother, cried in her presence, Renata would encourage them to be strong in faith. Her mother writes: "But I recall that one day after the amputation, a nurse said to Renata, 'How could you be so animated on the operating table? It's a good thing that you will be getting an artificial leg, isn't it?' Renata answered, 'No, I expect to have one of flesh and blood, which Jehovah God will give me in the New Order.'"

When confined to a hospital, Renata urged: "Do not miss your assemblies!"

Insight on the News

National Tax Fraud

The US Internal Revenue Service announced that if all taxes due on legitimate income were paid honestly, it would have collected an additional \$87.2 billion for the tax year that ended last April 15. That would have been almost enough to wipe out the nagging federal budget deficit, which is around \$100 billion. The majority of the unpaid taxes, \$83.3 billion, was owed by private individuals through underreported income and inflated deductions. The tax agency estimated that illegal businesses—prostitution, gambling and drugs—cheated the government out of possibly as much as another \$10 billion of taxes.

That tax fraud of this proportion is happening among people (including not a few prominent religious leaders) in a country where three quarters of its population are said to be Christians is a clear indication that the majority of them are "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (2 Timothy 3:5) The Bible clearly points out that there is "compelling reason" for Christians to "render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax." What is that reason? "Not only on account of that wrath but also on account of your conscience." (Romans 13:5, 7) So, rather than succumbing to the temptation to cheat, true Christians conscientiously follow Jesus' direction: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar,

but God's things to God."—Matthew 22:21.

Atheism's Rising Tide

According to the newly published, 1,010-page volume *World Christian Encyclopedia*, the condition of the world's religions has gone through drastic changes since the beginning of the century. At that time, the churches of Christendom—Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox—claimed 34.4 percent of the world's population, and atheism had a mere 0.2 percent following. That led to the optimistic goal of "the evangelization of the world in this generation."

What is the situation after 80 years? The publication shows that while Christendom has declined to 32.8 percent, the tide of atheism has swollen to 20.8 percent of the world. Evidently, if world evangelization had to depend on Christendom, it would never be realized.

To the contrary, what is happening is actually a fulfillment of Bible prophecy regarding Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion: "She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen." True worshipers of God must heed the prophecy's further words: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Revelation 14:8; 18:4) Today, Jehovah's Witnesses are helping sincere persons everywhere to get out of "Bab-

ylon," and flee to God's kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

Contradictions of Psychology

A recent issue of *Psychology Today* presented what eleven of "the best minds in the field" considered to be "the most significant work in psychology" in the last fifteen years. The scholarly eighteen-page article prompted *The New York Times* to publish an editorial that, in part, says:

"The 11 Best Minds in psychology agree on hardly anything. . . . Several contributors mention experiments of their own. Well, if they think that, there is no need for false modesty. But no such work is cited by any other Best Mind except for purposes of criticism; each trumpet blower blows his own tune, which makes for a conspicuous absence of harmony.

"The failure of the 11 psychologists to agree on almost anything evinces a serious problem in their academic discipline. . . . Can psychology be taken seriously as science if even its leading practitioners cannot agree on its recent advances?"

It is just this sort of contradictory and high-minded pseudo knowledge that the apostle Paul advised Timothy to guard against: "Have nothing to do with the pointless philosophical discussions and antagonistic beliefs of the 'knowledge' which is not knowledge at all."—1 Timothy 6:20, *Jerusalem Bible*.

Kingdom Preaching in Parts of Panama

WHAT would you be willing to endure to serve God? Would you walk through a jungle? What about facing the possibility of encounters with wild animals? Would you brave the sea?

My wife and I invite you to come along as we visit some of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in just one circuit in Panama. Then you can see for yourself what Christians in that Central American land are doing to serve their God, Jehovah.

In Cayo Paloma and Tobobe

Our first visits are in the province of Bocas del Toro, along the Caribbean coast. Here live the Guaymí Indians, a short, dark, robust people with straight, black hair. In Cayo Paloma and in the nearby congregation of Tobobe, most Kingdom preaching is done in the Guaymí dialect, although some witnessing is necessary in both Spanish and English. One of our Guaymí brothers named Ignacio speaks all three languages. He and his wife, Virgilia, have three children; yet they are special pioneers, full-time proclaimers of the good news.

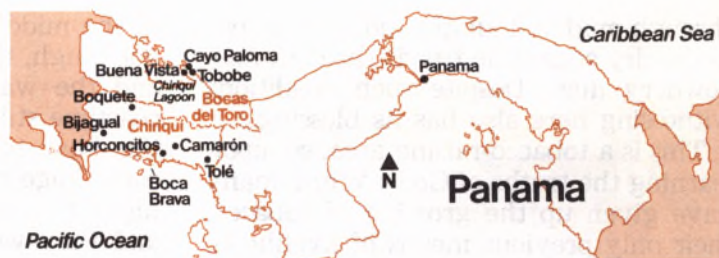
To reach the people in the preaching work in this area, we must walk along the beautiful beaches and over rocky hills and cliffs. Other areas are reached by sea. So Ignacio travels to these in his motorized *cayuco* (dugout canoe). Since it is the custom here for people to go barefoot, often my wife and I are the

only ones wearing shoes. But we soon learned how practical it is to walk along the beach without them.

Upon arriving at our first house in the territory, we observe that there is no door on which to knock. Most houses have just an open doorway, and some have few, if any, walls. This is practical in the warm tropical climate. The houses, made of bamboo and with thatched roofs of palm branches, are built on stilts. A notched log serves as a ladder to enter the home. Visitors customarily walk right in, perhaps taking a "seat" on the floor or on a bench before greeting the householder. Then generally all those present courteously pay attention as a witness is given. Being an agricul-



On the way to our preaching territory



tural community, often those who do not have cash will exchange produce for our Bible literature.

Another pioneer couple here are Natanael and Oliva. They regularly travel from Cayo Paloma to their territory in Buena Vista, a small coastal village in the Chiriquí Lagoon. It is a real adventure for my wife and me to share with them in their preaching work. We cross the peninsula by walking for about three hours through thick, dark jungle, filled with the sounds of tropical birds. We must use boots, because of the mud and the snakes. Also, it is necessary to take along a machete for use in an emergency. At times, we must contend with hornets or other insects. And many streams must be crossed by using "bridges" of fallen logs. Natanael and Oliva carry needed items in a *chacara*, a loosely woven hand-made bag. Whereas he carries it over his shoulder, she puts the strap across her forehead, carrying the bag on her back.

After the long walk, we arrive at a virtually still, green river. By *cayuco* we travel a half hour downstream, first through shallow waters under the shade of huge moss-covered trees. Then the river widens out and we come to the sea. In Buena Vista, Natanael has a second house on a hill near the shore. This home serves as the local Kingdom Hall, where forty or fifty persons meet regularly. Even in this faraway place our Christian brothers who have parts

on the meeting programs wear suit coats and ties. The meetings are held partly in Spanish and partly in Guaymí.

In Chiriquí

To get to Chiriquí province from Buena Vista, it is necessary first to travel about five hours by *cayuco* through shark-infested waters. Next comes an hour ride by train, and then a half-hour flight by small plane over the mountain range to the Pacific side of the country.

High up in a cool mountain pass lies the picturesque town of Boquete. Associated with this small congregation is a Christian sister who certainly sets a fine example of endurance. Even though her husband is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, she regularly attends the meetings on Sundays. Generally, she is accompanied by most, if not all, of her five children. She lives high in the mountains and must walk to the meetings, not just for a few minutes or half an hour, but for almost three hours! Often she and her children arrive home after dark, having walked uphill all the way in an area where there are snakes and sometimes puma. But she joyfully does it all the time in order to receive spiritual benefit from the meetings.—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

In another part of Chiriquí called Bijagual, sometimes the house-to-house preaching work is done on horseback. However, when a person is walking, during the rainy season he must plod

through mud and jump puddles, whereas in the dry season he treads through fine, powdery dust. Despite such conditions witnessing here also has its blessings.

This is a tobacco-raising area, so, upon learning the truths of God's Word, many have given up the growing of tobacco, their only previous means of livelihood. (2 Corinthians 7:1) This has been the case with a certain Baltazar. After quite a period of indecisiveness, he quit planting tobacco, legalized his marriage and was baptized along with his wife. After the first season of planting other crops, he said that he was even better off economically than he was formerly.

On the Sea

My wife and I would like to introduce you to Luís, Gumercinda and their three children, who are associated with a congregation along the Pacific coast. In January 1974 a special pioneer named Antonino rented Luís' house in Horconciitos, doing so through his father. Since Luís had a small farm on the island, he did not come into town until four or five months later. Antonino then began witnessing to him. When Luís returned to the island, he began reading the Bible literature left with him and telling others about what he was learning. Eventually, he and Gumercinda studied together, and each time they returned to town, they would ask Antonino questions. Despite much opposition and ridicule from family and friends, they expressed their desire to get baptized.

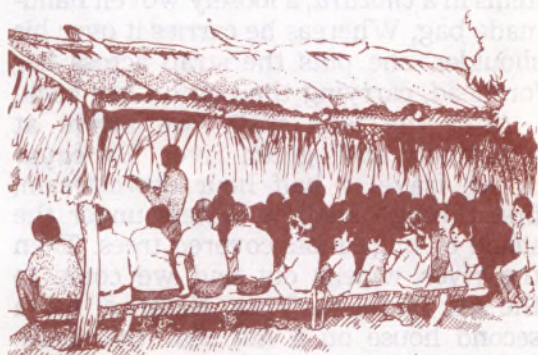
Their baptism was to take place at a circuit assembly in February 1975. When assembly time arrived, the whole family boarded a little boat and left the island on Thursday at two o'clock in the morning. But in February the sea gets very rough. So they had to return and wait. By 11 a.m. the breeze and sea had calmed, and they left again. At 2 p.m., almost

in the middle of the bay, the sea again got rough, the little boat bounced about and the waves came inside. Since the coastline still was far away, they rowed the boat to a place of refuge behind some huge rocks. By eleven o'clock that night the wind had calmed somewhat and they were able to reach Horconciitos by 5 a.m. on Friday. Although sunburned and tired, they caught a bus to the assembly location the next day and happily presented themselves for water baptism on Sunday.

Has Jehovah blessed them for such effort? He certainly has. For instance, Luís now is a ministerial servant in the congregation. And he has been able to help one of his brothers to progress to dedication and baptism.

In Camarón

In Camarón, located in Chiriquí province, there is a congregation composed almost entirely of Guaymí Indians. To visit them, first we go as far as we can by car, about half an hour off the highway. There the brothers meet us with horses. After crossing a river, we ride up into the mountains. Almost two hours later we arrive at the home of fellow



The Kingdom Hall in Camarón

believers who give us a small house to ourselves for our stay. After a delicious meal and a bath in the creek, we rest up for the meeting the next morning. From here, it is about an hour and a quarter walk uphill to the Kingdom Hall in Camarón. To get there, other brothers also have long distances to walk. You notice that the tin-roofed Kingdom Hall has no walls. But it has a sign, the year's Bible text and a battery-powered record player for the Kingdom songs.

After the meeting, we go to the nearest witnessing territory. It is only a twenty-five-minute walk away. Soon we have finished the few houses there. Where is the next territory? About another hour's walk farther away!

In Tolé

Do you sometimes find your preaching territory difficult to work? Then my wife and I invite you to share with us in preaching the good news at Tolé. In hilly terrain we turn off the Pan-American Highway. Soon we are entering the

town of Tolé, where the Kingdom Hall is situated along the main road. Often Catholic nuns here have followed the Witnesses so as to take away Bible literature placed with householders. In spite of this, however, several sincere persons have accepted Bible truth.

For example, there is an older Witness that we would like you to meet. He became interested years ago because a Witness store owner would not sell him tobacco. Appreciating the Christian meetings, he used to ride horseback for six hours one way in order to attend. However, he decided it would be better if he were to move closer to the Kingdom Hall. Now he lives only four hours away! On his way to meetings he crosses a river three times on horseback. Does he do this all the time? Yes, he has been doing it for over ten years now!

My wife and I have enjoyed giving you an idea of what it is like to visit congregations and share in the preaching work in parts of Panama.—*Contributed.*

Smile for a Stranger

"When two ladies smiled at this writer, I wondered for a moment if I had met them before," wrote Kazuhiko Nagoya, a writer for Tokyo's *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper in his "Spice of Life" column. "The way they smiled, it looked as though they had recognized me from a previous meeting and were happy to see me again." But this was not the case: "I looked hard at their faces and found that they were total strangers." When two other people did the same, he said, "I felt very happy. That is the way those people smile at a stranger, when they spot him at any of their meetings."

What people give such a welcome to strangers? "The place was Okoku Kaikan (The Kingdom Hall)," said Mr. Nagoya, "one of the many places in Japan where [Jehovah's Witnesses] get together." He also observed: "A remarkable

thing about the people who gather in the hall three times a week is that all of them are ardent followers of Christianity and none of them attend the meetings perfunctorily or just out of a habit. The power of faith brings together these men, women and children, who call each other 'kyodai' (brother) or 'shimai' (sister). And the power of faith has been attracting more and more people to the society over the years."

In conclusion the writer told of another visit to the Kingdom Hall: "When I was about to leave after the meeting, a boy, about 10 years old, came up to me and said: 'We are glad you came today. Please come back.' He had that special smile on his face. I was happy because this was the first time a child of that age who is a stranger to me had smiled and talked to me like that."



Moneylending and Christian Love

SOME time ago, a farmer's daughter was seriously ill. She desperately needed treatment, but the farmer was poor and could not afford to take her to a doctor. In the town where they lived—as in most towns in that country—there was a moneylender who lent money on a six-to-five basis. You borrow five dollars and the next month pay back six. This moneylender readily made the necessary cash available to the farmer, but, of course, the next month the farmer had to start paying the interest.

How would you view this arrangement? Would it be proper for a Christian to lend money on interest under such circumstances?

The apostle John told his fellow Christians that they should not 'shut the door of their tender compassions' on their needy brothers. (1 John 3:17) And the law that God gave to the Israelites specifically said: "You must not harden your heart or be closefisted toward your poor brother. For you should generously open your hand to him and by all means lend

him on pledge as much as he needs, which he is in want of."—Deuteronomy 15:7, 8.

Hence, the moneylender did well in making the money available for the sick girl's treatment. At least she received the medication she needed. But there was another feature of the law given to Israel. It said: "If you should lend money to my people, to the afflicted alongside you, you must not become like a usurer to him. You must not lay interest upon him." (Exodus 22:25) Why could the Jews not lend on interest to one another?

Remember that originally most Jews were farmers, not businessmen. If a farmer working his ancestral lot asked for a loan, it was most likely because he had come into need. The law took for granted that the one borrowing would be "afflicted." Perhaps he had had an accident, his crops had failed, or for some reason he needed money to get him through to the next harvest. Demanding interest under such circumstances would be making profit from a brother's adversity. It

would not show love, and the Israelites were commanded: "You must love your fellow as yourself."—Leviticus 19:18.

While Christians today are not under that ancient law, they are still obliged to love one another. Jesus said: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) Hence, a Christian, too, should not want to profit from the misfortunes of his brother by demanding interest when his brother comes into need and asks for a loan.

The fact is, in times of hardship Christians help one another with more than loans. They give gifts. In the first century Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to carry donations from the Christians in Asia Minor to their brothers in Judea who were suffering because of a famine. (Acts 11:29, 30) Similarly, today, whenever disaster strikes, Christians send gifts to assist their brothers.

In this same spirit, Jesus urged: "Do not turn away from one that wants to borrow from you without interest." (Matthew 5:42) Thus a Christian views the temporary difficulties of his brother as an opportunity to show love. He ought to help as much as he is able to, even to the extent of giving gifts or interest-free loans. Doubtless, if the moneylender mentioned earlier had been applying Christian principles, he would have viewed it this way too.

Repayment

In this, the borrower is not without obligation. Paul admonished Christians: "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing, except to love one another." (Romans 13:8) Hence, a borrower should be conscious of his obligation to pay his debt as soon as possible. He should not reason that, because the one who lent him the money is richer than he is, there is no need to repay. In the same way he should not expect a fellow Christian, such as a doctor or a lawyer,

to do him some personal service without reimbursement.

Jesus said: "Just let your word *Yes* mean *Yes*, your *No*, *No*." (Matthew 5:37) In other words, a Christian ought to keep his word. If he borrows money and promises to repay, or otherwise incurs a debt, then he should do all he can to repay that debt. To help him in this, and to be sure that there is no misunderstanding on either side, it is wise to have a written record, showing the amount, how it is to be repaid, and so forth.

Lending on Interest

Is it always unloving to ask for interest? Not necessarily. It is noteworthy that, while Jews were not to ask interest from fellow Israelites, it was different with foreigners. "You may make a foreigner pay interest," said the law. (Deuteronomy 23:20) Why the difference? Because a foreigner in Israel would likely be a businessman, and the loan would probably be for business purposes. Hence, it was only reasonable that the one lending money should share in any profits to be made, and he could do this by asking interest.

Jesus had no objection to the principle of lending money for interest. He indicated this in one of his parables. He told of a man of noble birth who went away for a while and left money with his slaves. When he returned he called for an accounting, and he found that most of the slaves had invested the money and made a profit. These were commended. One slave, however, had not invested the money; hence he had no profit to show. He had not even put it in a bank—in effect lending it to a bank for business use—and collected interest. This slave was reprimanded by his master.—Luke 19:11-24.

What of today? Two Christian women had a business arrangement. One

would lend to the other the equivalent of \$20 (US) each day. The borrower would then buy food and sell it in the market. At the end of the day she would have about \$25, of which she would give \$21 back to the lender, and keep \$4 for herself. In that country \$4 is not an unusual wage for a day's work.

In another part of the world, a Christian man was running a family business. Because of advancing technology, he knew that the business would shortly be obsolete. But there was an opportunity to branch out into another field. The only problem was, he needed more money. So he borrowed from a fellow Christian, and promised to pay a certain amount of interest on the loan each month.

Did either of these arrangements contradict the spirit of God's law to the Israelites that they should not ask interest from one another? Not at all! When a person is not in urgent need, but wishes to obtain a loan—perhaps for business reasons—there is no reason for the lender not to ask for interest. How much interest? This would depend, among other things, on the kind of loan being made, what each of the parties agrees to, and the law of the land. In the first arrangement just mentioned, 5 percent interest a day might seem quite high. Yet the borrower was actually making 25 percent profit and was happy to share some of this with the lender.

Of course, if problems arise later, it does not seem reasonable that the debtor should complain that the interest rate is too high, if he freely and voluntarily agreed to it originally. Here again, it is wise to have the terms of the loan *in writing*, to avoid misunderstanding afterward.

Opportunities to Show Love

When such transactions go smoothly, it can be beneficial to everyone. But this

is an uncertain world, and things often go wrong. For example, what would happen if the lady mentioned before who borrowed \$20 each day was robbed? Or suppose in the business arrangement between the two men the venture did not work out as hoped and the borrower could not afford to pay the promised interest?

The Bible gives no rules as to how such problems should be handled, but the obligation still applies: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) If both parties balance a genuine concern for each other's interests with a spirit of practical wisdom, seeing the situation realistically and accepting reasonable recommendations, then matters can usually be resolved in a fine way.

Certainly, the apostle Paul did not recommend that Christians take their brothers to court for financial reasons. He said: "Really, then, it means altogether a defeat for you that you are having lawsuits with one another. Why do you not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?"—1 Corinthians 6:7.

The Christian debtor, not being "greedy of dishonest gain," should really *want* to repay his debt. (1 Timothy 3:8) The Bible tells us that "the wicked one is borrowing and does not pay back." (Psalm 37:21) Even though unexpected difficulties may have arisen, he still does not want to be classed among the 'wicked ones.' He ought to want to be a person who is not "owing anybody a single thing," except love. (Romans 13:8) Hence, he should act honorably and not seek legal loopholes to escape his obligations.

On the other hand, the lender needs to be realistic in his expectations. He realizes that making loans involves a certain amount of risk. Hence, he should not put unbearable pressure on the debtor.

It may be that the money is just not there so he can be repaid. Many Christians in such circumstances have shown that they are 'not lovers of money' by extending the period for repayments, or accepting a sensible and reasonable settlement. (1 Timothy 3:3) Some have written the debt off entirely.

Mention of the problems that can arise in the borrowing and lending of money raises the further question: "Is it really necessary?" The Bible does not condemn the borrowing of money when it is necessary. But often it is not. Many times the "desire of the eyes" is stronger than the capacity of the pocketbook, and people borrow money to buy luxuries they

really do not need. (1 John 2:16) Eventually the bill must be paid. So the Bible straightforwardly warns: "The borrower is servant to the man doing the lending." —Proverbs 22:7.

However, when lending and borrowing has to take place between Christians, this often provides an opportunity to show Christian qualities. For example, an honest desire to fulfill obligations, a deep-seated concern for the welfare of others and a shunning of the love of money will help to ensure that the lending of money is done with Christian love. In this way the Biblical command will be obeyed: "Let all your affairs take place with love."—1 Corinthians 16:14.

Questions from Readers

■ How can Revelation 7:17 be applied to Christians today, for we still cry sometimes?

Revelation 7:17 says about the "great crowd" who have hope of everlasting life on earth: "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."

The apostle John was told that the great crowd have "come out of the great tribulation." (Revelation 7:9-14) We thus understand Revelation 7:14-17 to apply to persons who now take their stand on God's side, accept Christ's blood and survive when the present system of things ends in the "great tribulation."

Revelation says that 'they have washed their robes in the blood

of the Lamb, they hunger or thirst no more, the sun does not beat down on them,' and "God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." These words are not to be taken in a literal, physical sense. Why not? Well, they have not literally washed their clothing in Christ's blood. And on occasion they feel physical hunger and thirst, even as the perfect man Jesus did. (Luke 4:2; John 4:7, 8; 19:28, 29) So the primary application of Revelation 7:14-17 must be symbolic, or spiritual.

The book *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God,"* pages 207 and 208, explains these verses. It shows that the great crowd do not now hunger or thirst spiritual-

ly; they feed on God's Word and share in his service, which can be food and drink for them, as it was for Jesus. (John 4:32-34) They do not feel the heat of divine disapproval, nor will they during the great tribulation. Also they no longer weep (as they may have previously) over being ignorant of God or having a bad relationship with him. In this sense, God has already 'wiped out every tear from their eyes.'

But later, in Revelation 21:3, 4, we are assured that after the great tribulation and the establishment of a righteous new system faithful humans will experience physical blessings that will include no mourning, outcry or pain. Then it will actually be that tears of pain, disappointment and grief will be no more.

First Place

A reader of *The Watchtower* wrote: "While attending the Choctaw Indian Fair in Philadelphia, Mississippi, July 1981, we had the opportunity to see many interesting displays of Indian arts and crafts. Upon viewing the prize-winning displays we were pleasantly surprised to find in First Place among the religious literature *My Book of Bible Stories*."

