The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
June 1, 1987

Who Will Care for the Elderly?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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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 continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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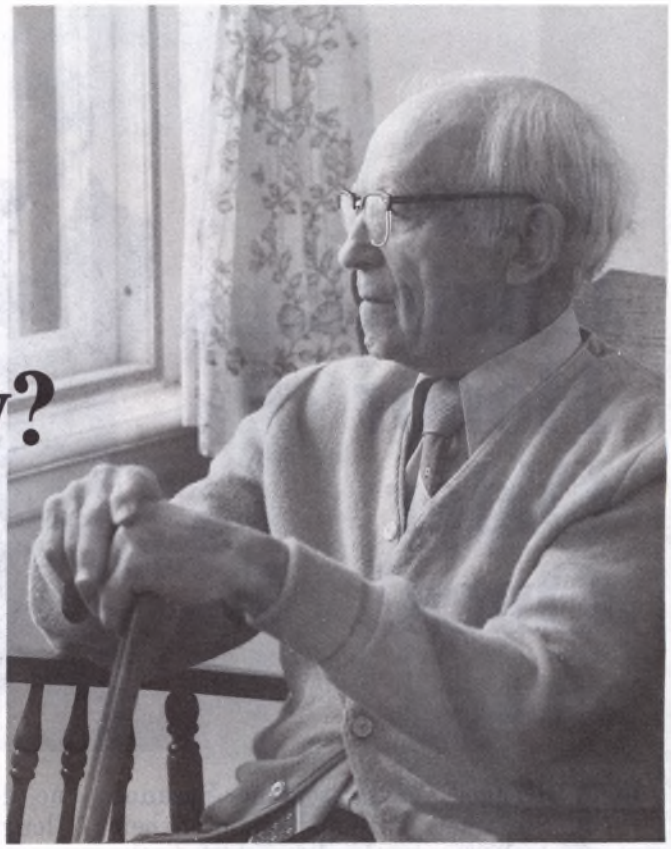
Is the Future Bleak for the Elderly?



"A YOUNG man I used to be," said King David. "I have also grown old." (Psalm 37:25) In Bible times the old were an esteemed minority. If present trends continue, however, the old might soon be neither a minority nor esteemed.

In the United States alone, there are an estimated 26 million people over 65 years of age. By the year 2040 this number could almost triple! According to the magazine *Asiaweek,* some Asian nations "expect the numbers of their elderly to double in the coming decade." The prospect of the old nearly outnumbering the young, however, does not bode well for the elderly. Already, an alarming number find themselves destitute and homeless. Others are being left to wither away in hospitals or nursing homes—alone, unvisited, and uncared for. Shocking cases of neglect and abuse are reported even in countries where parents have customarily been revered.

Wrote G. M. Ssenkoloto for *World Health* magazine: "Traditionally in most African countries, and indeed in most of the Third World, every family looked after its old women. A woman who had no children to care for her was looked after by neighbours or by the village as a whole." He reports, however: "Age-old values are changing. Adverse economic forces, the misallocation of resources, the yearning for material things, the struggle for self-esteem and status—all these factors are overtaking the traditional positive values as regards support for the elderly."

The words of the Bible writer Agur are thus proving true on a large scale: "There is a generation that calls down evil even upon its father and that does not bless even its mother." (Proverbs 30:11) Yes, the elderly are being toppled from the position of honor they enjoyed in times past. Many view them as social liabilities rather than assets. For the most part, their prospects look bleak.

How, though, do true Christians view the aged? Do they retain the "traditional positive values" regarding them?

True Christians Honor Older Ones!

"THE aged," says researcher Suzanne Steinmetz, "are at the end of their economically productive life, which is the basis on which our culture values individuals and provides them with deference, status, respect and rewards." Modern society's view of the elderly is thus a gloomy, negative one. Little wonder, then, that we often read of their being neglected and abused.

However, what view of the elderly does the Bible take? God's Word realistically acknowledges that growing old is not easy. Prayed the psalmist: "Do not throw me away in the time of old age; just when my power is failing, do not leave me." (Psalm 71:9) In his old age, he felt more need than ever of Jehovah's support. And the Bible's view is positive in showing that we, too, should give attention to the needs of the aged.

True, Solomon called old age "the calamitous days" in which one would "have no delight." (Ecclesiastes 12:1-3) But "length of days and years of life" are also associated in the Bible with *blessings* from God. (Proverbs 3:1, 2) To illustrate, Jehovah promised Abraham: "As for you, . . . you will be buried at a good old age." (Genesis 15:15) Surely, God was not sentencing faithful Abraham to dismal, "calamitous days" in which he could "have no delight." Abraham found peace and serenity in his latter years, looking back with satisfaction on a life spent in service to Jehovah. He could also look forward to a "city having real foundations," God's Kingdom. (Hebrews 11:10) Thus he could die "old and satisfied."—Genesis 25:8.

Why, then, did Solomon call old age "the calamitous days"? Solomon referred to the unrelenting deterioration of health that occurs in old age. However, one who has failed to 'remember his Grand Creator in the days of his young manhood' finds his declining years particularly calami-

tous. (Ecclesiastes 12:1) Because he has wasted his life, such an old person 'has no delight' in his latter days of life. His godless life-style may even have resulted in physical problems that aggravate the discomforts of old age. (Compare Proverbs 5: 3-11.) So when looking ahead, he sees no future but the grave. A person who has devoted his life to serving God also experiences "calamitous days" as his body weakens. But like Abraham, he can find joy and satisfaction in a life well spent and in using his remaining strength in God's service. "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness," says the Bible. —Proverbs 16:31.

In fact, old age even has certain advantages. "Youth and the prime of life are vanity," says Solomon. While young people may enjoy vibrant health, they often lack experience and judgment. Old age, though, brings with it a lifetime of experience. The elderly one 'wards off calamity,' unlike the impulsive youth who often rushes headlong into it. (Ecclesiastes 11: 10; 2 Timothy 2:22) Consequently, Solomon could say: "The splendor of old men is their gray-headedness."—Proverbs 20:29.

The Bible therefore honors the elderly. How does this affect the way in which Christians deal with them?

'Rising' Before Elderly Ones

God made respect for the aged a national policy in Israel. The Mosaic Law stated: "Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show consideration for the person of an old man." (Leviticus 19:32) Jews in later years evidently took this law quite literally. Says Dr. Samuel Burder in his book *Oriental Customs:* "The Jewish writers say that the rule was, to rise up to them when they were at the distance of four cubits; and as soon as they were gone by, to sit down again, that it might appear they rose purely out of respect to them." Such respect was not limited to men of prominence. "Respect even the old man who has lost his learning," declared the Talmud. One rabbi argued that this respect should also include an ignorant and unlettered old man. "The very fact that he has grown old," he reasoned, "must be due to some merit."—*The Jewish Encyclopedia.*

Christians today are no longer subject to the sanctions of the Mosaic Law. (Romans 7:6) But this does not mean that they are no longer obliged to show special regard for the elderly. This is evident from the instructions the apostle Paul gave the Christian overseer Timothy: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, . . . older women as mothers." (1 Timothy 5: 1, 2) Paul told young Timothy that he had authority to "command." (1 Timothy 1:3) Nevertheless, if someone older than he —especially one serving as an overseer— erred in judgment or made an incorrect statement, Timothy was not to "severely criticize" him as an inferior. Rather, he was respectfully to "entreat him as a father." Timothy was to show similar respect to older women in the congregation. Yes, he was still, in effect, to 'rise before gray hair.'

Christianity is thus a religion that respects the elderly. Ironically, though, much of the mistreatment of older ones takes place in nations professing to be Christian. There are, however, worshipers that still adhere to Bible standards. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, enjoy the presence of many thousands of elderly ones in their midst; they do not view them as a burden or a liability. While fragile health may prevent such older ones from being as active as they once were, many have long records of faithful Christian

service, and this encourages younger Witnesses to imitate their faith.—Compare Hebrews 13:7.

The elderly, however, are not expected to take a passive role in the congregation. They are urged to set fine examples in being "moderate in habits, serious, sound in mind, healthy in faith, . . . reverent in behavior," freely sharing their wisdom and experience with others. (Titus 2:2, 3) Joel prophesied that among those sharing in the proclaiming of the Bible message, would be "old men." (Joel 2:28) No doubt you have personally observed that many elderly Witnesses still delight to share actively in the door-to-door preaching activity.

Showing Them Honor "in Fuller Measure"

Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to give older ones special consideration in many ways. At yearly religious conventions, for example, they often arrange for seats to be set aside for older ones. Consideration is also shown them on an individual basis. In Japan one Witness gives up his seat in the family car so that an 87-year-old woman can have a ride to congregation meetings. How does he get to the meetings himself? By bicycle. In Brazil there is a full-time evangelizer 92 years of age. Observers report that Witnesses there "treat him with respect, talk with him . . . He is a useful part of the congregation."

This does not mean that there is no room for improvement in honoring older ones. Paul wrote to Christians in Thessalonica: "However, with reference to brotherly love, . . . you are doing it to all the brothers in all of Macedonia. But we exhort you, brothers, to go on doing it in fuller measure." (1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10) Similar counsel is at times needed today when it comes to our treatment of older ones. One 85-year-old Christian, for example, was very disappointed when he did not receive a copy of a new Bible-based publication. The problem? He is nearly deaf and did not hear an announcement reminding everyone to order the book; nor did anyone in the congregation think of ordering it for him. The situation, of course, was quickly rectified. It nevertheless illustrates that there is a need to be especially conscious of the needs of older ones.

There are any number of ways in which God's people today can do this "in fuller measure." Christian meetings afford an opportunity to "incite" older ones "to love and fine works." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) And while young and old already mix freely at Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses, perhaps even more effort can be made along those lines. For example, some parents encourage their children respectfully to approach and talk with senior members of the congregation.

Honor can also continue to be shown the elderly on an informal basis. In harmony with the principle Jesus set forth at Luke 14:12-14, more effort can be made to invite older ones to social gatherings. Even if they are unable to attend, they will certainly appreciate your remembering them. Christians are further exhorted to "follow the course of hospitality." (Romans 12:13) This need not call for something fancy or elaborate. Suggests one Witness from Germany: "Invite older ones over for a cup of tea, and let them tell their experiences from the past."

The apostle Paul said: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) Among Jehovah's Witnesses, appointed congregation elders especially take the lead in showing honor to elderly Christians. Often the elders are able to assign older ones appropriate tasks to perform, such as training new ones as evan-

In congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, older ones find much satisfying work to do

gelists or assisting with maintenance at Christian meeting places. Younger men serving as congregation elders show older overseers honor by humbly approaching them for advice, using discernment in getting their mature viewpoints. (Proverbs 20:5) At meetings of such elders, they follow the Biblical example of young Elihu and respectfully defer to older, more experienced men, giving them full opportunity to express themselves first.—Job 32:4.

Admittedly, it is easy to become impatient with elderly ones because they may not be able to move or think as fast as younger ones do. Dr. Robert N. Butler well describes some of the problems old age can bring: "One loses one's physical stamina, one's ability to keep up, and that in itself can be extremely frightening. One may lose important sensory elements such as hearing or vision." Appreciating this, should not younger ones show fellow feeling and be compassionate?—1 Peter 3:8.

Yes, Christians today are obliged to show true love, concern, and respect for the older ones in their midst. And among Jehovah's Witnesses, this is being done in an exemplary way. What happens, though, when elderly Christians—or the parents of Christians—become ill or impoverished? Whose responsibility is it to render them care? The following articles will explore how the Bible answers these questions.

Keeping An Eye On *the Interests of the Elderly*

"Keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others."
—PHILIPPIANS 2:4.

SHORTLY after Pentecost 33 C.E. "a murmuring arose [in the Christian congregation] on the part of the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution [of food to the needy]." No doubt a number of these widows were elderly and unable to fend for themselves. At any rate, the apostles themselves intervened, saying: "Search out for yourselves seven certified men from among you, full of spirit and wisdom, that we may appoint them over this necessary business."—Acts 6:1-3.

[2] Early Christians thus viewed caring for the needy as "necessary business." Years later the disciple James wrote: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation." (James 1:27) Did this mean, then, that the all-important preaching work was neglected? No, for the account in Acts says that after the relief work for widows was properly organized, "the word of God went on growing, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying in Jerusalem very much."—Acts 6:7.

1, 2. (a) How did the first-century governing body demonstrate an interest in the needs of the elderly? (b) What evidence is there that the preaching work was not neglected?

[3] Today we face "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Caring for the demands of family life and secular work may leave us little energy—or desire—to concern ourselves with the needs of the elderly. Appropriately, then, Philippians 2:4 urges us to be "keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just [our] own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." How can this be done in a balanced, practical way?

Rendering Honor to Widows

[4] In 1 Timothy chapter 5, Paul shows how early Christians looked after elderly widows in the congregation. He urged Timothy: "Honor widows that are actually widows." (Verse 3) Elderly widows were singled out as particularly worthy of receiving honor in the form of regular financial support. Such ones were cut off from all visible means of support and could only 'put their hope in God and persist in supplications and prayers night and day.' (Verse 5) How were their prayers for sustenance answered? Through the congregation. In an organized manner, *deserving* widows were provided with a modest livelihood. Of course, if a widow had financial means, or relatives capable of supporting

3. What encouragement is given at Philippians 2:4, and why is this particularly appropriate today?

4. (a) Why and how did the first-century congregation "honor" widows? (b) Were such provisions always necessary?

her, such provisions were unnecessary. —Verses 4, 16.

5 "But the [widow] that goes in for sensual gratification," cautioned Paul, "is [spiritually] dead though she is living." (Verse 6) Paul does not explain how some were, as the *Kingdom Interlinear* literally renders it, "behaving voluptuously." Some may have been fighting a battle with their "sexual impulses." (Verse 11) However, according to *Liddell & Scott's Greek-English Lexicon,* "behaving voluptuously" could also have involved 'living softly or in excessive comfort or indulgence.' Perhaps, then, some wanted the congregation to enrich them, to finance an extravagant, self-indulgent life of immoderation. Whatever the case, Paul indicates that such ones were disqualified from receiving congregation support.

6 Paul then said: "Let a widow be put on the list [of those receiving financial support] who has become not less than sixty years old." In Paul's day a woman over age 60 was evidently viewed as unable to support herself and unlikely to remarry.* "On the other hand," Paul said, "turn down younger widows [for enrollment], for when their sexual impulses have come between them and the Christ, they want to marry, having a judgment because they have disregarded their first expression of faith."—Verses 9, 11, 12.

7 Had "the list" been open to younger widows, some might hastily have declared an intention to remain single. As time passed, though, they might have had difficulty controlling their "sexual impulses" and wanted to remarry, 'having a judgment for disregarding their first expression of faith' to remain single. (Compare Ecclesiastes 5:2-6.) Paul averted such problems, further declaring, "I desire the younger widows to marry, to bear children."—Verse 14.

8 The apostle also limited enrollment to those with long records of fine Christian works. (Verse 10) The congregation was thus not a "welfare state" for the lazy or the greedy. (2 Thessalonians 3:10, 11) But what of elderly men or younger widows? If such ones fell into need, the congregation would no doubt have cared for them on an individual basis.—Compare 1 John 3: 17, 18.

9 Such arrangements were likely quite adequate for the needs of first-century congregations. But as *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* observes: "Today, with insurance income, social security, and job opportunities, the situation is very different." As a result of a changed social and economic picture, rarely is it necessary for congregations today to maintain lists of elderly beneficiaries. Nevertheless, Paul's words to Timothy help us appreciate: (1) The problems of the elderly are of concern to the entire congregation—particularly the elders. (2) The care of the

* Leviticus 27:1-7 refers to the redemption of individuals 'offered' (by means of a vow) to the temple as laborers. The redemption price varied according to age. At age 60 this price fell precipitously, evidently because a person that old was felt to be unable to work as hard as a younger one. *The Encyclopœdia Judaica* further says: "According to the Talmud, old age . . . begins at 60."

5. (a) How might some widows have 'gone in for sensual gratification'? (b) Was the congregation obligated to support such ones?

6, 7, and footnote. (a) What was "the list"? (b) Why were those under age 60 disqualified from receiving support? (c) How did Paul assist young widows from receiving an adverse "judgment"?

8. (a) How did Paul's guidelines protect the congregation? (b) Were needy younger widows or elderly men also cared for?

9. (a) Why would arrangements for the care of the elderly today differ from those made in the first century? (b) What does Paul's discussion of widows in 1 Timothy chapter 5 help us appreciate today?

All can have a share in honoring our older ones in the congregation

elderly should be properly organized. (3) Such care is limited to those truly in need.

As Elders, Keeping An Eye On Their Interests

[10] How do overseers today take the lead in showing an interest in older ones? From time to time they can feature the needs of the elderly on the agenda of their meetings. When specific help is needed, they can arrange for it to be given. They may not personally render the care, inasmuch as there are often many willing ones—including youths—in the congregation who can help out. However, they can closely supervise such care, perhaps by assigning a brother to coordinate the care given to an individual.

[11] Solomon counseled: "You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock." (Proverbs 27:23) Overseers can thus personally visit the elderly so as to determine how best to "share . . . according to their needs." (Romans 12:13) A traveling overseer put it this way: "Some elderly ones are very independent, and just asking them what needs to be done is no good. It is best to discern what needs to be done and get on with the job!" In Japan some overseers found that an 80-year-old sister needed much attention. They report: "We now see to it that someone has contact with her twice a day, morning and night, by visit or by telephone."—Compare Matthew 25:36.

[12] Overseers are also concerned that elderly ones get the benefit of congregation meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Do some need transportation? Are some simply unable to "listen and get the sense of" meetings because of hearing impairments?

10. How can elders today take the lead in showing an interest in older ones?
11. How can elders acquaint themselves with the needs of the elderly?

12. (a) How can elders see to it that elderly ones get the benefit of congregation meetings? (b) What good use can be made of tapes produced by the Society?

(Matthew 15:10) Perhaps it would be practical to install headphones for them. Similarly, a number of congregations now have meetings carried over the telephone lines so that infirm ones can listen in at home. Others record the meetings on tapes for those too sick to attend—in some cases purchasing the tape recorders for them. And speaking of tapes, an elder in Germany observed: "I have visited several elderly ones who just sat in front of the television and looked at programs that could hardly be described as being spiritually upbuilding." Why not encourage them to listen instead to tapes produced by the Society, such as those containing Kingdom melodies and Bible reading?

13 Some senior members of the congregation have become irregular or inactive as preachers. Age, though, does not necessarily prevent one from proclaiming the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) Some might respond to a simple invitation to work with you in the field service. Perhaps you can rekindle their love for preaching by sharing field-service experiences with them. If walking up stairs is a problem, arrange for them to work apartments with elevators or residential areas without steps. Some publishers can also have elderly ones accompany them on Bible studies—or hold the study in the elderly one's home.

14 'Money is a protection.' (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Yet many an aged brother or sister is in dire financial straits and has no relatives willing to help out. Individuals in the congregation, though, are usually happy to assist when made aware of the need. (James 2:15-17) The elders can also look into what government or social services, insurance policies, pensions, and so forth, are available. In some lands, however, such services are hard to come by, and there may be no alternative but to follow the pattern at 1 Timothy chapter 5 and arrange for the congregation as a whole to

13. How can older ones be helped to stay active as Kingdom proclaimers?
14 and box. (a) What can the elders do if an elderly brother or sister falls into dire financial straits? (b) How have some congregations met the needs of elderly publishers?

Helping the Elderly
—What Some Are Doing

A congregation in Brazil found a convenient way of caring for the physical needs of a brother who lives near their Kingdom Hall: The book study group assigned to clean the hall also cleans his home.

Another congregation there found a simple way to keep an infirm brother active in the Theocratic Ministry School. When his turn to give a talk comes up, a brother is assigned to take two or three publishers with him to visit the brother. A brief meeting is opened with prayer, and the brother delivers his assignment. Necessary counsel is given. What an encouragement this visit proves to be!

Traveling overseers have set a fine example in taking the lead. In one congregation an elderly brother who was confined to a wheelchair became quite irritable and as a result was seldom visited. A traveling overseer, however, arranged to give the brother a private viewing of his slide talk. The elderly brother was moved to tears by what he saw. Says the overseer: "I felt greatly rewarded to see how a little attention and love could bring such results."

Some elders in Nigeria made a shepherding call on an aged brother and discovered that he was seriously ill. He was immediately taken to the hospital. The aged brother was found to need extensive medical treatment, but he was unable to pay for it. When the congregation was informed of his need, the publishers came up with enough money to care for his expenses. Two elders took turns driving him back and forth to the hospital, although this required their taking time off from work. They had the joy, though, of seeing the brother recover from his illness and auxiliary pioneer until his death some four years later.

In the Philippines an elderly sister had no family. The congregation made arrangements for her care during three years of illness. They provided her with a small place to live, brought her meals each day, and cared for her hygiene.

provide relief. (See *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry,* pages 122-3.)

Publishers in Nigeria regularly assisted an 82-year-old regular pioneer and his wife with material gifts. After the government scheduled for demolition the building they lived in, the congregation invited them to move into a room attached to the Kingdom Hall until other accommodations could be arranged.

In Brazil a congregation hired a nurse to care for an elderly couple. At the same time, a sister was assigned to keep the house clean, prepare their food, and care for other physical needs. Each month the congregation sets aside funds for their use.

15 As in the first century, such provisions are for worthy ones who truly need them. Overseers are not obliged to meet extravagant requests or cater to unreasonable demands for attention. Elderly ones, too, must keep a 'simple eye.'—Luke 11:34.

As Individuals, Keeping An Eye On Their Interests

16 Some time ago an elderly sister was admitted to a hospital. The diagnosis was malnutrition. "If more in the congregation had taken a personal interest in her," wrote an elder, "perhaps this would not have happened." Yes, elders are not the only ones who must take an interest in the elderly. Paul said: "We are members belonging to one another."—Ephesians 4:25.

17 Doubtless some of you are already burdened with personal responsibilities. But 'keep an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters.' (Philippians 2:4) With proper personal organization, you can often 'buy out time.' (Ephesians 5:16) For example, could you visit an elderly one after field service? Weekdays are particularly lonely periods for some. Teenagers, too, can get involved in visiting the elderly and doing chores for them. Prayed one sister who was helped by a youth: "Thank you Jehovah for young Brother John. What a fine person he is."

18 At meetings, do you simply give older ones a cursory greeting? Granted, it may not be easy conversing with someone who is hard of hearing or has difficulty expressing himself. And since failing health takes its toll, not all elderly ones have cheery dispositions. Nevertheless, "better is one who is patient." (Ecclesiastes 7:8) With a little effort, a real "interchange of encouragement" can ensue. (Romans 1:12) Try relating a field-service experience. Share a point you read in *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* Or better yet, listen. (Compare Job 32:7.) Older ones have much to share if you let them. Admitted one elder: "Visiting that elderly brother did me a lot of good."

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15. (a) Are there limitations on the help the congregation can provide? (b) How might the counsel at Luke 11:34 be appropriate for certain ones who become overly demanding?

16, 17. (a) Why is it important for others besides elders to take an interest in the elderly? (b) How can busy publishers 'buy out time' for the elderly?

18. (a) Why may conversation with an elderly one be difficult at times? (b) How can one make a visit or a conversation with an older person mutually upbuilding?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What provisions were made in the first century for elderly widows?
- ☐ How can overseers organize the care of older ones in the congregation?
- ☐ How can individuals in the congregation display an interest in elderly brothers and sisters?
- ☐ What can older ones do to assist those rendering them care?

[19] Should not your concern for the elderly also extend to the families caring for them? One couple looking after aging parents reported: "Rather than encouraging us, some in the congregation have become quite critical. One sister said: 'If you keep missing meetings, you'll get spiritually sick!' But she wasn't willing to do anything to help us get to more meetings." Equally discouraging are vague promises such as, If you ever need help, let me know. These often amount to little more than saying, "Keep warm and well fed." (James 2:16) How much better it is to let your concern translate into action! Reports one couple: "The friends have been wonderful and supportive! Some will take care of Mom for a couple of days at a time so that we can have an occasional break. Others take her on Bible studies. And it really encourages us when others inquire as to her welfare."

19. (a) Our concern for the elderly extends to whom? (b) What are some ways in which we can prove helpful to families caring for older parents?

[20] By and large our older ones are well cared for. However, what can elderly Witnesses themselves do so that such work is done with joy and not with sighing? (Compare Hebrews 13:17.) Cooperate with the arrangements elders make for your care. Express thanks and appreciation for whatever deeds of kindness are performed, and avoid being overly demanding or overly critical. And though the aches and pains of old age are quite real, try to manifest a cheerful, positive attitude. —Proverbs 15:13.

[21] 'The brothers are wonderful. I do not know what I would do without them,' many older ones have been heard to say. Nevertheless, the prime responsibility of caring for the elderly rests upon their children. What does this involve, and how can this challenge best be met?

20, 21. What can older ones do to assist those rendering them care?

Practicing Godly Devotion
Toward Elderly Parents

"Let [children or grandchildren] learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God's sight."
—1 TIMOTHY 5:4.

AS A child, you were nurtured and protected by them. As an adult, you sought their advice and support. But now they have grown old and need someone to support them. Says the apostle Paul: "But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God's sight. Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his

1, 2. (a) Whom does the Bible hold responsible for the care of aging parents? (b) Why would it be a serious matter for a Christian to neglect this duty?

own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith."—1 Timothy 5:4, 8.

[2] Thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses today care for aging parents. They do so not merely out of "kindness" (*The Living Bible*) or "duty" (*The Jerusalem Bible*) but out of "godly devotion," that is, reverence for God. They recognize that to abandon one's parents at a time of need would be tantamount to 'disowning the [Christian] faith.'—Compare Titus 1:16.

'Carry Your Load' of Care

[3] Looking after elderly parents has become a real challenge, especially in Western lands. Families are often scattered. Costs have risen out of control. Housewives frequently have secular jobs. Caring for an aging parent can thus be a huge undertaking, especially when the one who gives the care is no longer young himself. "We are now in our 50's, with grown children and grandchildren that also need help," says one sister struggling to care for her parent.

[4] Paul indicated that the responsibility could be shared by the "children or grandchildren." (1 Timothy 5:4) Sometimes, though, siblings are unwilling to 'carry their load' of care. (Compare Galatians 6:5.) "My older sister has just washed her hands of the situation," complains one elder. But can such a course be pleasing to Jehovah? Recall what Jesus once told the Pharisees: "Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother' . . . But you men say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother: "Whatever I have by which you may get benefit from me is corban, (that is, a gift dedicated to God,)"'—you men no longer let him do a single thing for his father or his mother, and thus you make the word of God invalid by your tradition."—Mark 7:10-13.

[5] If a Jew did not care to assist his destitute parents, he needed only to declare his belongings "corban"—a gift set aside for temple use. (Compare Leviticus 27:1-24.) He was evidently under no immediate compulsion, however, to hand over this supposed gift. Thus he could hold onto (and no doubt use) his belongings indefinitely. But if his parents needed financial help, he could wriggle out of his duty by piously declaring that all he owned was "corban." Jesus condemned this fraud.

[6] A Christian who uses empty excuses to evade his duty is thus not fooling God. (Jeremiah 17:9, 10) True, financial problems, failing health, or similar circumstances may greatly limit how much one can do for one's parents. But some may simply value assets, time, and privacy more than their parents' welfare. How hypocritical it would be, though, to preach the Word of God but make it "invalid" by our inaction toward parents!

Family Cooperation

[7] Some experts recommend that when a crisis involving an aged parent develops, a family conference be called. One family member may have to shoulder the bulk of the responsibility. But by calmly and objectively engaging in "confidential talk," families can often work out ways to share

3. Why may the care of one's parents be a real challenge?
4, 5. (a) With whom does the Bible indicate that the load of care can often be shared? (b) How did some evade responsibility to their parents in Jesus' day?
6. What may motivate some today to evade their parental duties, and is this pleasing to God?
7. How can families cooperate in providing care for an aged parent?

A family conference can be held to discuss how the care of a parent can be shared

the work load. (Proverbs 15:22) Some living far away may be able to contribute financially and visit periodically. Others may be able to handle chores or provide transportation. Why, simply agreeing to visit the parents regularly may be a valuable contribution. Says one sister in her 80's regarding visits by her children, "It's like a tonic!"

[8] Families may face a delicate problem, though, when a member is engaged in full-time service. Full-time ministers do not excuse themselves from such obligations, and many have made extraordinary efforts to render their parents care. Says a circuit overseer: "We never imagined how physically and emotionally taxing the caring for our parents could be, especially when at the same time trying to meet the demands of the full-time service. Indeed, we have been brought to the limits of our endurance and have felt the need for 'power beyond what is normal.'" (2 Corinthians 4:7) May Jehovah continue to sustain such ones.

8. (a) Are family members in full-time service exempt from sharing in their parents' care? (b) To what lengths have some in full-time service gone to meet obligations toward parents?

[9] At times, though, after exploring all other possibilities, a family member has no alternative but to leave full-time service. Understandably, such a one may have mixed feelings over relinquishing his service privileges. 'We know it is our Christian responsibility to care for my aged and sick mother,' says an ex-missionary. 'But at times it feels very strange.' Remember, though, that 'practicing godly devotion at home is acceptable in God's sight.' (1 Timothy 5:4) Remember, too, that "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering." (Hebrews 6:10) One couple who left behind many years of full-time service says: "The way we view it, it is just as important for us now to care for our folks as it was for us to be in full-time service."

[10] Perhaps, though, some have left full-time service prematurely because their

9. What encouragement can be given to those who have had no choice but to leave full-time service to care for parents?
10. (a) Why may some have left full-time service prematurely? (b) How should families view full-time service?

relatives reasoned: 'You are not tied down with jobs and families. Why cannot *you* take care of Dad and Mom?' However, is not the preaching work the most urgent work being done today? (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Those in full-time service are thus doing a vital work. (1 Timothy 4:16) Too, Jesus indicated that, in some circumstances, God's service might hold priority over family matters.

[11] For instance, when a man declined an invitation to be Jesus' follower, saying: "Permit me first to leave and bury my father," Jesus replied: "Let the [spiritually] dead bury their dead, but you go away and declare abroad the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59, 60) Since the Jews buried their dead on the day they died, it is unlikely that the man's father was actually dead. Likely the man simply wanted to stay with his aging father till the father's death. However, since other relatives evidently were on hand to render this care, Jesus encouraged the man to "declare abroad the kingdom of God."

[12] Some families have similarly found that when all members cooperate, it can often be arranged for one in full-time service to share in his parent's care without his leaving full-time service. For example, some full-time ministers assist their parents on weekends or during vacation periods. Interestingly, quite a few elderly parents have insisted that their children remain in full-time service, even at considerable self-sacrifice on the part of the parents. Jehovah richly blesses those who put Kingdom interests first. —Matthew 6:33.

11, 12. (a) Why did Jesus advise a man to "let the dead bury their dead"? (b) What arrangements have some families made when one member is in full-time service?

"Wisdom" and "Discernment" When Parents Move In

[13] Jesus arranged for his widowed mother to live with her believing relatives. (John 19:25-27) Many Witnesses have similarly invited their parents to move in with them—and have experienced many joyful times and blessings as a result. However, incompatible life-styles, limited privacy, and the strain of providing daily care often make taking a parent into one's home frustrating for all concerned. "Caring for Mom has made me more tense," says Ann, whose mother-in-law suffers from Alzheimer's disease. "Sometimes I even lose patience and speak unkindly to Mom—and that makes me feel so guilty."

[14] Solomon said that "by wisdom a household will be built up, and by discernment it will prove firmly established." (Proverbs 24:3) Ann, for example, has tried to be more understanding of her mother-in-law's problem. "I keep in mind that she has an illness and is not acting up on purpose." Still, "we all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (James 3:2) But when conflicts arise, show wisdom by refusing to let resentment build or tempers flare. (Ephesians 4: 31, 32) Talk matters over as a family, and seek ways to make compromises or adjustments.

[15] Discernment also helps one communicate effectively. (Proverbs 20:5) Perhaps a parent has difficulty adjusting to the routine of the new home. Or maybe because of impaired judgment, he tends to be uncooperative. Under some circumstances, there may be no choice but to speak quite firmly. (Compare Genesis 43:6-11.) "If I

13. What problems can develop when a parent is invited to move in with his or her children?
14, 15. How can "wisdom" and "discernment" help 'build up' a family under these circumstances?

When nursing-home care is necessary, regular visits are essential to the emotional and spiritual well-being of older ones

didn't say no to my mother," says one sister, "she would spend all her money." One elder, though, finds at times that he can draw upon his mother's affection for him. "Many times when reasoning fails, I'll simply say, 'Mom, will you please just do it for me?' and she listens."

16 Since the wife often carries most of the burden of care, a discerning husband will watch that she does not become worn out—emotionally, physically, or spiritually. Says Proverbs 24:10: "Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty." What can a husband do to renew his wife's enthusiasm? "My husband would come home," says one sister, "and put his arms around me and tell me how much he appreciated me. I couldn't have made it without him!" (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29) He can also study the Bible with his mate and regularly pray with her. Yes, even under these difficult circumstances, a family can be "built up."

Nursing-Home Care

17 Says one gerontologist: "There comes a point where the family has neither the expertise nor the money to keep the [parent] home." As one husband puts it: "It got to where my wife's health collapsed from trying to give Mom 24-hour-a-day care. We had no choice but to place Mom in a nursing home. But it tore at our hearts to have to do this."

18 Nursing-home care may be the best care available under the circumstances. Yet, older ones placed in such facilities are often bewildered and upset, feeling that they have been abandoned. "We carefully explained to Mom why we had to do this," says a sister we will call Greta. "She has learned to adjust and now views the place as home." Regular visits also ease parents through the adjustment and prove the genuineness of your love for them. (Compare 2 Corinthians 8:8.) Where distance is a problem, keep in touch by telephone calls, letters, and periodic visits. (Compare 2 John 12.) Nevertheless, living amid worldlings has obvious drawbacks. Be 'conscious of their spiritual needs.' (Matthew 5:3) "We provide Mom with material to read, and we try to discuss spiritual things as much as possible," says Greta.

16. Why must a loving husband show "discernment" toward his wife? How can he do so?
17, 18. (a) What step have some families been forced to take? (b) In such cases, how can grown children help their parents to adjust?

[19] *The Wall Street Journal* reported on a study of 406 U.S. nursing homes in which "about one-fifth were deemed potentially dangerous to residents and almost half only met minimum standards." Sad to say, such reports are distressingly common. So if nursing-home care is necessary, be careful in selecting one. Visit personally to see if it is clean, well maintained, staffed by qualified personnel, homelike in atmosphere, and with adequate meals. Monitor as closely as possible the care given your parents. Be their advocate, helping them avoid awkward situations that can develop, perhaps in connection with worldly holidays or recreation. By doing your utmost to provide your parents the very best of care under the circumstances, you can relieve yourself of feelings of guilt that could otherwise disturb you.—Compare 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Cheerful Givers, Cheerful Recipients

[20] "It's been difficult," says one Christian woman regarding looking after her parents. "I've had to cook for them, clean, deal with crying spells, change the sheets when they were incontinent." "But whatever we've done for them," says her husband, "we have done joyfully—cheerfully. We have tried hard never to let our folks feel that we resent having to care for them." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Older ones are often reluctant to accept help and do not want to be a burden on others. The attitude you display is thus critical.

[21] At the same time, the attitude parents display is also important. Recalls one sister: "Whatever I did for Mom, it was never enough." So, parents, avoid being unreasonable or overly demanding. After all, the Bible says "the children ought not to lay up for their parents, but the parents for their children." (2 Corinthians 12:14) Some parents squander their resources and become an unnecessary burden to their children. Proverbs 13:22, however, says: "One who is good will leave an inheritance to sons of sons." To the extent possible, parents can thus plan ahead for their old age, setting aside funds and making some arrangements for their own care.—Proverbs 21:5.

[22] Paul put it well when he said that caring for one's parents amounts to "due compensation." (1 Timothy 5:4) As one brother says: "Mom took care of me for 20 years. What have I done in comparison to that?" May all Christians with elderly parents similarly be moved to 'practice godly devotion at home,' knowing that they will be richly rewarded by the God who promises to those honoring their parents: "You [will] endure a long time on the earth." —Ephesians 6:3.

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19. (a) What care should be taken in selecting and monitoring nursing-home care? (b) How does it benefit a Christian to do his utmost to care for a parent?
20. Why is it important that children be cheerful givers?
21. (a) How can parents be cheerful recipients? (b) Why is it wise for a parent to plan ahead for his old age?
22. How should a person view the efforts he puts forth to care for his aging parents?

Points to Remember

- How did some in Jesus' day seek to evade responsibility toward their parents?
- Who should care for elderly parents, and why?
- What problems can families experience when a parent moves in, and how can they be overcome?
- Why may nursing-home care be necessary, and how can parents be helped to adjust to it?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

A Happy Reunion in Brazil

Of the 67 Gilead-trained missionaries currently serving in Brazil, 63 got together at the branch office and posed for this historic picture. This happy reunion took place on November 18, 1986, during the visit of A. D. Schroeder, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

It was 41 years earlier almost to the day—on November 17, 1945—that two graduates of the first class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead came to Brazil. For one of them, Charles Leathco (rear, left of center), this was a special reunion because he and visitor Charlotte Schroeder were classmates in Gilead, and Brother Schroeder was one of their instructors.

Since that first class, a total of 258 missionaries have come to Brazil. Among them were 16 native Brazilians. One of them, Augusto Machado (front left), learned the truth from an early missionary, went to Gilead and returned to Brazil. He has served at the branch office for the last 30 years and is now the coordinator of the Branch Committee. Even though many of the missionaries are no longer serving in the missionary field, the good work they have done remains. In 1945 there were only 394 Kingdom publishers in that land; now Brazil has passed the 200,000 mark, reporting a peak of 201,226 publishers in February 1987.

What a joy it was for the Brazilian missionaries, young and old, to reminisce at this happy reunion about all the marvelous activity of the last 41 years.

'My Cup Has Been Full'

As told by Tarissa P. Gott

"WHY did this have to happen?" My husband and I asked this question as we sat in a horse-drawn hack holding a little casket in our arms. My baby boy had suffered colic and died in a matter of weeks. Back in 1914, not much was known as to what to do with that illness. It was such a terrible thing to love a baby for six months, to see him smile at you, and then have death snatch him out of your arms. My heart was broken.

My mother visited us at this sad time and started comforting us with the Bible's message of the resurrection. It meant so much to us. What a relief for my husband Walter and me to learn that it would be possible to see little Stanley again.

That was not my first contact with Bible truth. Some time before, my grandfather had obtained the first three volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures,* by Charles Taze Russell. What Grandpa had read in them, along with his study of the Bible, moved him to go out and preach. This infuriated the local clergy, who put him out of the churches in Providence, Rhode Island. Mother never went to church after that either. She and Grandpa now attended the meetings of the Bible Students, but I did not do much with the truth at that time.

At age 16, I married a young man, Walter Skillings, and settled in Providence. We were both anxious to associate with people who loved God's Word. Although by 1914 we had a six-year-old daughter, Lillian, it was not until our baby boy died that what my mother had told us about the truth sank in. The next year, 1915, my husband and I were baptized by the Bible Students. Our baptism took place in the summertime at a nearby beach. I donned a long, black robe with high neck and long sleeves, quite different from the bathing suits worn now. Of course, this was not standard beachwear of those days but was specially provided for the baptism.

After our baptism, our lives were changed. Walter worked for the Lynn Gas and Electric Company, and on cold winter days, he was sometimes sent into various churches to thaw out their frozen water systems. He used to take advantage of the opportunity to write Scripture texts on the church's blackboard, scriptures that showed what the Bible had to say on immortality, Trinity, hell, and so forth. —Ezekiel 18:4; John 14:28; Ecclesiastes 9: 5, 10.

Kingdom School being conducted in our home during the 1930's

Where Were We to Go?

In 1916 Brother Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, died, and it seemed that everything fell apart. Now many of those who had seemed so strong, so devoted to the Lord, began to turn away. It became evident that some had been following a man rather than Jehovah and Christ Jesus.

Two elders who presided over our congregation went with an opposition group and thus became members of the "evil slave" class. (Matthew 24:48) All of this just did not seem right, yet it was happening and it upset us. But I said to myself: 'Was not this organization the one that Jehovah used to free us from the bonds of false religion? Have we not tasted of his goodness? If we were to leave now, where would we go? Would we not wind up following some man?' We could not see why we should go with the apostates, so we stayed.—John 6:68; Hebrews 6:4-6.

Tragedy Strikes Again

My husband contracted Spanish influenza, and on the 9th of January, 1919, he died while I, too, was confined to bed with the disease. I recovered from my illness, but I missed Walter very much.

With Walter gone, I had to go to work, so I sold my home and moved in with a spiritual sister. I put my furniture in storage at another sister's home in Saugus, Massachusetts. Her son, Fred A. Gott, later became my second husband. We were married in 1921, and within the next three years, we became parents to Fred and Shirley.

The Flag-Salute Issue

Later, when Fred and Shirley were in public school, the flag-salute issue arose. The issue centered on the Bible's teaching to "flee from idolatry." (1 Corinthians 10:14) A young brother in the Lynn Congregation had refused to salute and pledge allegiance to the flag. Within a month seven children in the congregation were expelled from school, among them Fred and Shirley.

I must confess that it came somewhat as a surprise to us that our children took a stand in school as they did. Of course, we had taught them respect for the country

and the flag, and we had also taught them God's commandments about not bowing down to images and idols. As parents, we did not want our children expelled from school. Yet now that the issue had been forced, it seemed only proper that they take a stand for God's Kingdom. So in weighing things up, we appreciated that our children were doing the right thing and that if we trusted in Jehovah all would work out for a witness to his name.

Kingdom School Organized

The question now was, How will the children get their education? For a time we attempted to teach them at home with whatever textbooks we could muster. But my husband and I had a difficult time that first school year as we tried to educate our two children. My husband was working full-time, and I was taking in washing and ironing to supplement the weekly paycheck. In addition to that, I had a five-year-old son, Robert, to look after.

Just about then, in the spring of 1936, Cora Foster, a sister in the congregation and a teacher in the public schools of Lynn for 40 years, was dismissed from her job for not saluting the flag and not taking a teacher's oath that was in vogue at the time. It was therefore arranged that Cora would teach the children who had been expelled from school and that our home would be used as a Kingdom School. Cora had her piano shipped to our home along with some textbooks for the children to use, and some of the older boys fashioned desks out of orange crates and plywood. We started the school the following fall with ten children in attendance.

My younger son, Robert, commenced his education by attending the first grade at the Kingdom School. "Before we began our regular class work," recalls Robert, "Kingdom School opened with a Kingdom song every day, and then for a half hour we would study the *Watchtower* lesson for the coming week." In those days the Society did not print the questions for the paragraphs of the study article, so it became the responsibility of the children to come up with the questions for the paragraphs to be used at the congregation meeting.

Cora was a devoted teacher. "When I had whooping cough," reminisces Robert, and the school was closed till the contagious disease subsided, "Sister Foster visited the house of each student and gave homework." Despite her devotion, she must have felt frustrated at times, for she had to teach the students in all 12 grades in one room. At the end of the five-year period that we had the Kingdom School in our home, there were 22 children attending the school.

Prejudice and Kindness

The flag-salute issue brought not only a time of test and stress but also much publicity by newspaper and radio. It was quite a common thing to see photographers in front of our home taking pictures of the children as they arrived at the Kingdom School. Many of our neighbors, who had been quite friendly before, now became antagonistic. They thought it was a terrible thing for our children to refuse to salute the American flag. 'After all,' they would say, 'isn't this the country that gives you your bread and butter?' They did not appreciate that without Jehovah's watchcare, there would be neither bread nor butter.

On the other hand, there were others who understood the issues involved and gave us support. When people in the neighborhood boycotted a grocery store where our congregation's presiding overseer worked as manager, a well-to-do person interested in civil liberty bought up most of the groceries in the store and

Tarissa Gott with Robert, Shirley, and Fred

distributed them free to the brothers in the congregation.

It was not until 1943, when the United States Supreme Court reversed its position on the flag-salute issue, that my son Robert was allowed to attend public school.

'My Cup Has Been Full'

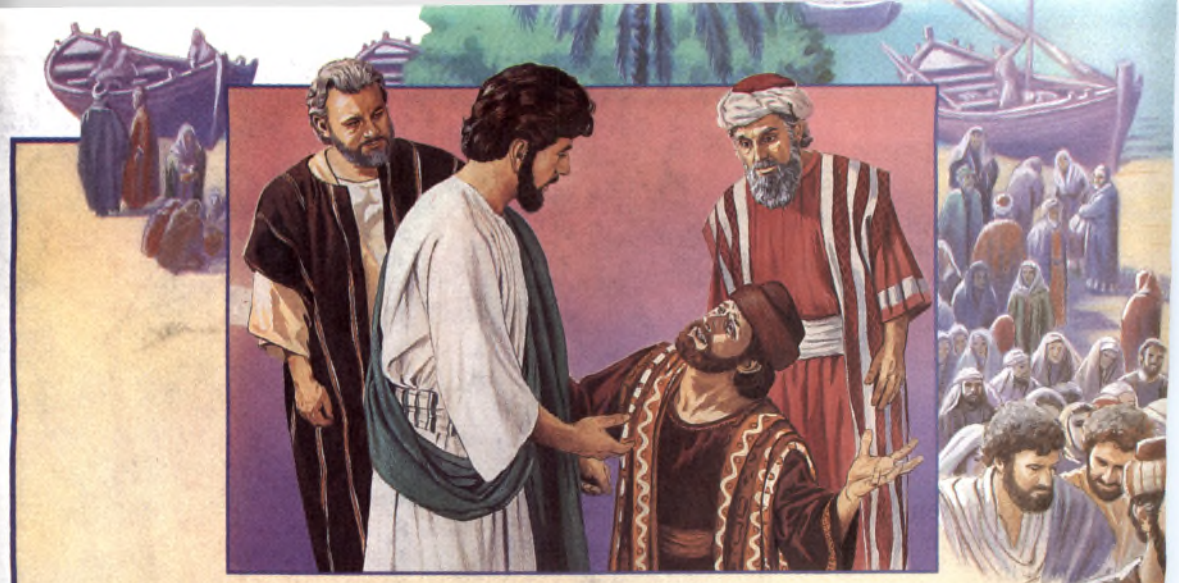
How happy I was to see Robert dedicate his life to Jehovah and get baptized at the convention in St. Louis in 1941. It was at that convention, too, that all three of my youngsters were privileged to be among the many children who received a free personal copy of the book *Children* from Brother Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society.

In 1943 my older son Fred took up the full-time pioneer ministry. This only lasted a few months, however, for World War II was being fought, and he was of draft age. When the local draft board refused to recognize his claims to ministerial exemption, he was subsequently sentenced to three years in the federal penitentiary at Danbury, Connecticut. In 1946 he was released, and by the end of that year, he was a full-time worker at the world headquarters of the Watch Tower Society in Brooklyn, New York, where he enjoyed several years of service. Now he is an overseer, serving with his family in Providence, Rhode Island.

In 1951 Robert, too, was invited to Bethel, and he remains there to this day with his wife Alice. He, too, is an overseer, in a New York City congregation.

Then there is my beloved daughter Shirley, who has remained at home. She looked after my husband and me until my husband died in 1972; since then she has been a great comfort to me. I really do not know how things would have gone without her, but I am grateful to Jehovah for her love and devotion.

I am 95 years old now, and yet the hope of Jehovah's new system is brighter than ever. At times I find myself saying, "If only I had the strength I had years ago." I can no longer go from house to house, but as long as I have a tongue, I will continue to praise Jehovah. I appreciate this privilege more today than I ever did in all my life. Yes, 'my cup has been full.' —Psalm 23:5.



She Touched His Garment

NEWS of Jesus' return from the Decapolis reaches Capernaum, and a great crowd assembles by the sea to welcome him back. No doubt they have heard that he stilled the storm and cured the demon-possessed men. Now, as he steps ashore, they gather around him, eager and expectant.

One of those anxious to see Jesus is Jairus, a presiding officer of the synagogue. He falls at Jesus' feet and begs over and over: "My little daughter is in an extreme condition. Would you please come and put your hands upon her that she may get well and live." Since she is his only child and just 12 years old, she is especially precious to Jairus.

Jesus responds and, accompanied by the crowd, heads for the home of Jairus. We can imagine the excitement of the people as they anticipate another miracle. But the attention of one woman in the crowd is focused on her own severe problem.

For 12 long years this woman has suffered from a flow of blood. She has been to one doctor after another, spending all her money on treatments. But she has not been helped; rather, her problem has become worse.

As you can probably appreciate, besides weakening her very much, her ailment is also embarrassing and humiliating. One generally does not speak publicly about such an affliction. Moreover, under the Mosaic Law a running discharge of blood makes a woman unclean, and anyone touching her or her blood-stained garments is required to wash and be unclean until the evening.

The woman has heard of Jesus' miracles and has now sought him out. In view of her uncleanness, she makes her way through the crowd as inconspicuously as possible, saying to herself: "If I touch just his outer garments I shall get well." When she does so, immediately she senses that her flow of blood has dried up!

"Who was it that touched me?" How those words of Jesus must shock her!

How could he know? 'Instructor,' Peter protests, 'the crowds are hemming you in and closely pressing you, and do you say, "Who touched me?"'

Looking around for the woman, Jesus explains: "Someone touched me, for I perceived that power went out of me." Indeed, it is no ordinary touch, for the healing that results draws on Jesus' vitality.

Seeing that she has not escaped notice, the woman comes and falls down before Jesus, frightened and trembling. In front of all the people, she tells the whole truth about her illness and how she has just now been cured.

Moved by her full confession, Jesus compassionately comforts her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be in good health from your grievous sickness." How fine it is to know that the One whom God has chosen to rule the earth is such a warm, compassionate person, who both cares for people and has the power to help them!

Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 5: 21-34; Luke 8:40-48; Leviticus 15:25-27.

- Who is Jairus, and why does he come to Jesus?
- What problem does one woman have, and why is coming to Jesus for help so difficult for her?
- How is the woman healed, and how does Jesus comfort her?

Rejoicing With Gilead's 82nd Class

"WE ARE not fair-weather Christians. We are just happy to be here." With these words the chairman opened a special all-day meeting at the Jersey City Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses on Sunday, the first day of March. Outside, it was raining heavily. Inside, it was graduation day for 24 students of the 82nd class of Gilead. Looking at the students' happy faces, chairman Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body went on to say: "It's evident that they are eager and joyful about their prospects. Since the Bible says 'rejoice with people who rejoice,' I am sure all of us feel the same way!" The applause that greeted this comment evidenced that all 4,557 in attendance agreed.

The first speaker on the program was John Barr, also a member of the Governing Body. Quoting extensively from Psalm 104, he showed that Jehovah not only created everything, animate and inanimate, but also created a place for each creation to occupy. He went on to say: "Now, as you go to your assignment, think: 'Jehovah has placed me here.' Never forget that."

Next to speak was a member of the Watchtower Farms Committee, John Stuefloten. He reminded the students: "The proverb tells us: 'Give to a wise person and he will become still wiser.'" (Proverbs 9:9) For five months the students had been given rich spiritual nourishment. Doubtless, on this graduation day they felt spiritually full. "But," said the speaker, "you have just barely started!" He encouraged the students to keep growing in wisdom and

mercy so as to be better able to help others. —Proverbs 3:27.

George Gangas of the Governing Body followed with some well-chosen words about happiness. He reminded the graduates that they serve the "happy God" and declared: "You will find happiness in your foreign assignments." Why? "Because Jehovah is sending you out to deliver people from bondage."

George Couch of the Brooklyn Bethel Committee spoke about anxiety. He recognized that the students were not strangers to anxiety. The challenges of coming to Gilead, living in Brooklyn Bethel, and preaching in New York City all caused some anxiety. Now the students were anxious about their missionary assignments. But reasonable anxiety is not an enemy. "Anxiety can help to spur us on to do our best," he explained, and he encouraged the students to trust in Jehovah and do their best in their assignments.

School instructor Jack Redford next came to the podium. He warned against unjustified criticism. Citing Biblical examples of hasty judgments that caused problems later, he quoted Jesus' words: "Stop judging that you may not be judged." (Matthew 7:1) The 82nd class represented a God of love. The students were being sent to their assignments to empathize, not to criticize.

Gilead instructor Ulysses Glass quoted the Bible proverb: "The swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle." (Ecclesiastes 9:11) The result of a matter does not always depend on our natural abilities. In missionary work, it is more often a matter of faith and willingness to accept a challenge. The speaker commended the 82nd class for being steady, dependable, and consistent. Such qualities would stand them in good stead.

The final speaker for the morning, Watch Tower Society president Frederick Franz, declared that the graduation of the 82nd class vindicated the faith of those who began the school back in the dark days of World War II. He spoke about the name Gilead, explaining that it is a Bible word meaning "Heap of Witness." (Compare Genesis 31:43-53.) Gilead missionaries who remain faithfully in their assignments serve as a heap of witness. They are a living testimony to the truth.

The students then received their diplomas, and the morning concluded with the reading of a letter of thanks from the 82nd class. The students noted that 'the blessing of Jehovah is what makes one rich.' In view of that, they said, "Jehovah has made us feel like the 24 richest people on earth!"—Proverbs 10:22.

In the afternoon, following an abbreviated *Watchtower* Study, the students presented a delightful program. It concluded with words of heartfelt appreciation to their parents, whose unselfishness and support allowed their children to go off and become missionaries.

The student program was followed by the presentation of a timely drama, after which the chairman, Theodore Jaracz, gave some final comments. And what a surprise the Society had stored up for these closing moments! The speaker announced that soon the Society will open a new school, the Ministerial Training School, for the training initially of single elders and ministerial servants. All took special note when the chairman announced one of the requirements for attending the new school: a willingness "to serve wherever there is a need in the worldwide field."

Enthusiastic applause greeted the news about this new school. (More details of this are given in the following article.) The program then concluded with song and a prayer of thanks to Jehovah. Everybody then went out into the cloudy New Jersey evening. There was still a little rain in the air, but few cared about it. All hearts were still rejoicing with the 82nd graduating class of Gilead.

Graduates of the 82nd Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

(1) Gish, L.; Evans, E.; Dean, S.; Hanson, R.; Suomalainen, A.; DuBose, D.
(2) Wallenberg, P.; Wallenberg, M.; Bauer, O.; Suomalainen, H.; Taylor, B.; DiStefano, G.
(3) Scott, K.; Evans, M.; Taylor, A., Jr.; Lindby, J.; Hanson, C.; Holmkvist, M.
(4) Sampson, T.; Gish, T.; Ball, D.; DuBose, J.; Dean, T.; Scott, D.

A New School to Open!

This article contains the substance of the chairman's concluding remarks at the graduation of the 82nd class of Gilead.

SINCE its beginning in February 1943, the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead has trained more than 6,000 dedicated ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses for missionary work. During the more than 40 years that these missionaries have been sent forth, scores of lands have been opened up to receive a thorough witness concerning the Kingdom. In looking back on what Jehovah has accomplished, God's people surely rejoice to see the fulfillment of a remarkable prophecy.

At Isaiah chapter 49, verses 9-12, the prophet foretold the release of righteously disposed people held as religious prisoners in "Babylon the Great." Through his anointed servant class on earth, Jehovah's commanding call has gone forth: "Say to the prisoners, 'Come out!' to those who are in the darkness, 'Reveal yourselves!' By the ways they will pasture . . . They will not go hungry, neither will they go thirsty, nor will parching heat or sun strike them. For the One who is having pity upon them will lead them, and by the springs of water he will conduct them . . . Look! These will come even from far away." Has there been a response? Indeed there has! Honesthearted ones by the hundreds of thousands have come, from all directions, revealing themselves to be hungering for truth, desiring to be fed and enlightened by God's Word, seeking to be liberated spiritually from "Babylon the Great." (Revelation 17:5) Now they are within the earthly realm of his Kingdom organization, feeding on an abundance of spiritual food.

Outstanding Increase

In the mid-1940's, lands in Latin America and the Caribbean area were among the first to benefit from Gilead missionaries. There were very few publishers in these places, which posed a real challenge to the giving of a thorough Kingdom witness. For example, Puerto Rico had only 25 publishers in 1944. Costa Rica had 181. Mexico had 2,431 publishers in 1944 when the first Gilead graduates arrived. But as truth-hungry individuals came out of religious darkness and revealed themselves to be seekers of God's Kingdom, they zealously preached, and some enrolled in the pioneer service. Men reached out for responsibility. The results? Today, Puerto Rico has reported 21,943 active ministers, four times as many as were active in the 12 lands reporting in the Caribbean area in 1947. Costa Rica has more publishers now than there were in all of Central America 40 years ago. In January of this year, Mexico reported a new peak of more than 206,000 publishers, which is about as many publishers as were preaching in the entire world 40 years ago.

In South America it has been similar. When missionaries were first sent to Argentina in 1947, there were 790 publishers. Today there are 63,613 active ministers, 26 times the number preaching in the 12 different countries in South America 40 years ago. And what about Brazil? When the first missionaries were sent there in 1945, only 394 publishers were carrying on the witness work. But they persevered, and Brazil has now surpassed 200,000 publishers. That is more than 80 times the number who were active in all of South America in 1947. Other countries on that continent have also recorded outstanding increases.

Turning to the Far East, we again see marvelous evidence of Jehovah's blessing as the liberating message of Kingdom truth enabled thousands to come out of darkness. When the first missionaries were assigned to Japan in 1949, a handful of eight publishers were reporting. In the eight Asiatic lands reporting activity 40 years ago, there was a total of 475 active ministers. Today, there are 116,272 in Japan alone.

In the South Pacific there were only two branches up until 1959. With the help of publishers from Australia who moved to serve where the need was greater, and the efforts of other congregation publishers and a few missionaries, thousands of people have been reached with the good news in various island territories. There are now six additional branches in that part of the field.

The history of Africa's development is also an exciting one. The 17 countries reporting in 1947 had a total of 24,896 publishers. But with missionaries helping to spread the good news rapidly, hundreds of thousands soon revealed themselves to be seeking Jehovah and his righteousness. Today, in Nigeria alone, about 130,000 Witnesses are zealously proclaiming the Kingdom message.

There is no question that Jehovah's liberating Word of truth is accomplishing that in which he delights. It is having certain success in that for which he has sent it. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) Now that such a great harvest is being gathered, that same Word assures us that Jehovah will raise up more trained shepherds. (Compare Jeremiah 23:4.) The Governing Body is keenly aware of the growing need for qualified men to care for responsibilities in the field as well as in the various branches of the Society. Steps have been taken to help meet this need.

The Ministerial Training School

You graduates of the 82nd class of Gilead, as well as all who have been present for this most upbuilding occasion, will be glad to know that in the fall of 1987 a new school will be opened. This Ministerial Training School, as it will be called, will be a part of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, thus enabling brothers from some other lands to attend. The first class is expected to commence around October 1 of this year in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., the initial center of the Society's early development. Following the completion of the first class, other classes will be conducted at regular intervals in different parts of the United States.

Definite Scriptural requirements must be met by those to be enrolled. Training will be given initially to single elders and single ministerial servants who are in good health. If some are pioneers, so much the better. Those invited to the school must be willing to serve, following their training, wherever there is a need in the worldwide field. This will call for the spirit of Isaiah, who offered himself willingly, saying: "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8) You graduates of this 82nd class, along with missionaries already serving in over a hundred lands, can look forward in due time to having other trained brothers working shoulder to shoulder with you.

An entirely new curriculum has been prepared for the Ministerial Training School. The school has been established for the purpose of training qualified brothers who have had some organizational experience as elders or ministerial servants in the congregation.

The Need for Progress

Following the festival day of Pentecost in 33 C.E., the Christian congregation was very active in spreading the good news in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and then, later, to the more distant parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8) About the year 60 C.E. the apostle Paul, who had spearheaded evangelizing activities among the nations, wrote to the Colossians, saying: "This hope you heard of before by the telling of the truth of that good news which has presented itself to you, even as it is bearing fruit and increasing in all the world." Then, he added that those fellow believers 'should not be shifted away from the hope of that good news which

In Our Next Issue

- **The Supreme Being —One Person or Three?**
- **Family Care—How Far Does It Extend?**
- **'God Will Finish Your Training'**

they heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven.'—Colossians 1: 5, 6, 23.

In a relatively short time, early Christians had spread the good news far and wide. Jehovah had given the increase, with the number of disciples multiplying very much. This called for more qualified men to teach in the congregation and to shepherd the flock. One of the young overseers charged with such responsibility was Timothy. What did the apostle Paul exhort Timothy to do? There was to be no letup in his training: "By giving these advices to the brothers you will be a fine minister of Christ Jesus, one nourished with the words of the faith and of the fine teaching which you have followed . . . Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim." (1 Timothy 4:6-8) This would be far more important than concentrating on some personal interest or pursuit, including even bodily exercises and training. To accomplish his ministry fully, Timothy had to pay attention to himself and to his teaching.

You graduates of this class of Gilead have received training for your missionary activity. Fine spiritual gifts have been imparted to you by overseers qualified to teach. Now there is in store a further fine teaching program for qualified men with some experience in caring for congregational responsibility. They will be trained with godly devotion in view, which will help them maintain the right perspective and equip them to focus on what Paul further wrote to Timothy: "Let no man ever look down on your youth. On the contrary, become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness. . . . Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons."—1 Timothy 4:12, 13, 15.

As in the case of Timothy, those brothers appointed to congregational responsibility today, including younger men, should realize that this is an appropriate and urgent time for them to make their advancement manifest. By doing so, they will give evidence in a heartfelt way of measuring up to divine standards and of having a genuine disposition to care for spiritual interests, thus being qualified for further privileges of service.—Philippians 2:20, 21.

In view of the need that exists at this stage in the outworking of the divine purpose, it is a privilege to be used by Jehovah anywhere within his organization. How grateful we are to him as our Great Shepherd and to the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for this new, timely organizational provision, the Ministerial Training School!

Questions From Readers

■ **Is it wise for a Christian whose mate has died to remain single in the hope of being reunited in the future?**

How fine it is that a Christian should feel love for his or her mate even after that one has died! Some in this situation have remained single, not because of being content with singleness, but in hopes of resuming the marriage after the resurrection. While not being insensitive to the human feelings behind those hopes, we encourage such ones to consider some Biblical points.

For instance, bearing on the matter are the apostle Paul's words: "A wife is bound during all the time her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in death, she is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is." (1 Corinthians 7:39, 40) This shows that the marital bond ends when one's mate dies. It was a kindness for God to inform Christians of this, for thus widows and widowers can weigh their emotional and other needs in deciding whether to remarry; they are not bound to the deceased.—1 Corinthians 7: 8, 9.

Does the Bible, though, indicate whether resurrected ones will be able to marry or to resume a previous marriage that was ended by a death? One ac-

count seems to bear on this question. It involved Sadducees who, while not even believing in the resurrection, came to Jesus trying to entrap him. They presented this problem involving brother-in-law marriage: "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless. So the second, and the third took her.* Likewise even the seven: they did not leave children behind, but died off. Lastly, the woman also died. Consequently, in the resurrection, of which one of them does she become the wife?"—Luke 20:27-33; Matthew 22:23-28.

Christians are not under the Law, but a similar difficulty could be raised concerning them. For example: Brother and Sister C—— were married and had two children. Then he died. Sister C—— loved and deeply missed him, but she felt a need for companionship, financial support, sexual expression, and help with the children. So she married Brother M——, which union was as Scriptural as the first. Later he became ill and died. If the former mates were resurrected and marriage were possible, whom might she marry?

Consider Jesus' response to the Sadducees: "The children of this system of things marry and are given in marriage, but those who have been counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. In fact, neither can they die anymore, for they are *like* the angels, and they are God's children by being children of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised up even Moses disclosed . . . when he calls Jehovah 'the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.' He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him."—Luke 20:34-38; Matthew 22:29-32.

Some have felt that Jesus was here referring to the heavenly resurrection, yet there are reasons to believe that his reply was about the earthly resurrection in the coming "system of things." What reasons underlie this view? Those questioning Jesus did not believe in him or know about a heavenly resurrection. They asked about a Jewish family under the Law. In reply Jesus referred to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men who hoped for life again on earth. (Genesis 42:38; Job 14:13-15; compare Hebrews 11:19.) Those patriarchs, and millions of others, who are raised on earth and who prove faithful will be "like the angels." Though mortal, they will not die once God has declared them righteous for endless life.

Human emotions today might make this a difficult conclusion to accept. But it is to be noted that nowhere does the Bible say that God's resurrecting the faithful means restoring their marital status. Hence, no one believes that if Aquila and Priscilla have gained life in heaven, they have resumed their marriage. (Acts 18:2) And Joseph and Mary will evidently live in different realms —he on earth and she in heaven. (John 19:26; Acts 1:13, 14) Since none of us have lived in heaven, we cannot say what feelings Aquila, Priscilla, and Mary might have there, yet we can be sure of their finding full contentment in their heavenly service.

Similarly, we have never lived as perfect humans. Thus we cannot be sure how we will feel about past relationships if and when we gain perfect human life in a paradise. It is good for us to remember that when Jesus made that statement he was a perfect human and therefore in a better position than we to appreciate the feelings of those who are "counted worthy of gaining that system of things." We can also trust that Jesus is able to 'sympathize with our present weaknesses.' (Hebrews 4:15) So if a Christian finds it hard to accept the conclusion that resurrected ones will not marry, he can be sure that God and Christ are understanding. And he can simply wait to see what occurs.

There is no reason now to overemphasize this matter. The psalmist wrote: "Know that Jehovah is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasturage . . . Give thanks to him, bless his name. For Jehovah is good." (Psalm 100:3-5) Our good God will certainly provide amply for our true needs if we are "counted worthy of gaining that system of things."—Job 34:10-12; Psalm 104:28; 107:9.

God's goodness is reflected also in his informing us that the death of a mate concludes the marriage. (Romans 7:2) Thus anyone who has lost a mate can know that he or she is free to remarry now if that seems needed or best. Some have remarried, thereby helping to fill their own present needs and those of their family. (1 Corinthians 7:36-38; Ephesians 6:1-4) Consequently, a Christian whose mate has died should not feel obliged to remain mateless now out of an expectation that former marriage mates will be reunited in the resurrection to life here on earth in the coming system.

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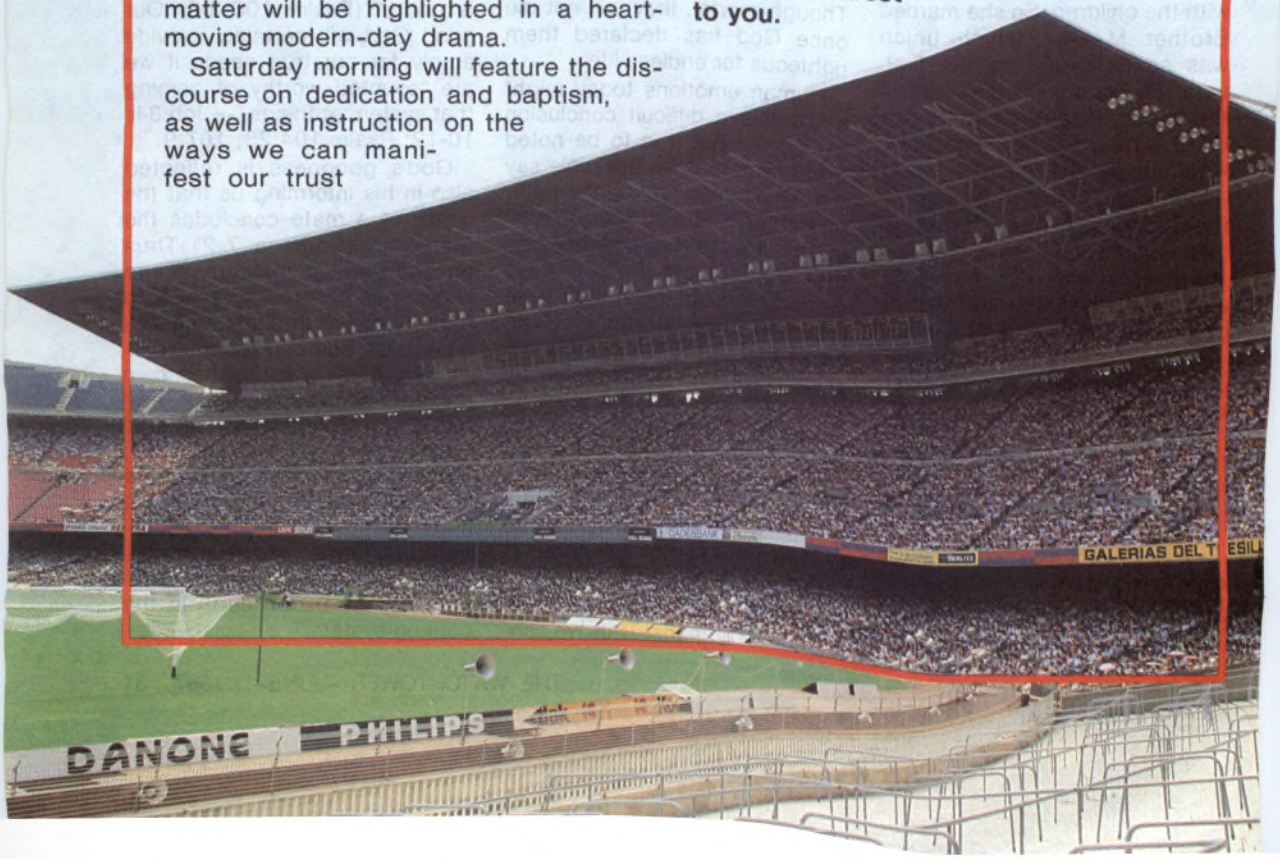
* If an Israelite died before his wife brought forth a son who could receive the inheritance, the man's brother had to marry the widow with the view of producing a son by her.—Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

"Trust in Jehovah"
District Convention—Do Not Miss It!

Three full, rewarding days of Bible instruction and wholesome Christian association await you at the "Trust in Jehovah" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. During June, July, and August, over 125 conventions are scheduled throughout the United States alone, so there will be one not far from your home. Plan to be present from the opening session beginning at 10:20 a.m. Friday, and stay until the concluding session Sunday afternoon.

The opening session will feature the informative talk "A People Set Apart From the World." In the afternoon, frank and pointed counsel will be directed to parents and then to youths. Youths will be helped to guard against living what could be called a double life. Then this matter will be highlighted in a heart-moving modern-day drama.

Saturday morning will feature the discourse on dedication and baptism, as well as instruction on the ways we can manifest our trust in Jehovah, in keeping with the convention theme. "Responsible Childbearing in This Time of the End" will be a principal address on the afternoon program, which will conclude with a symposium of talks on the theme "The Word of God Is Alive."

The Sunday program will feature the discourse "Detest Utterly the World's Disgraceful Course," as well as a full-costume Bible drama illustrating the urgency of our times. In the afternoon, the public talk "In Our Fearful Times, Whom Can You Really Trust?" will be another highlight of the convention.

Check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the time and place of the convention nearest to you.