

# OUR KINGDOM SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 1976

Vol. 19, No. 9

FOR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## Dear Kingdom Publishers:

As we carry on our sacred service here, we are encouraged to hear good news from visitors who come our way. Recently we rejoiced to hear a report from Brother Harold King from Hong Kong. For many years most of the missionaries serving there found little response, but in the last two years things have changed. Many younger people from fifteen to twenty years of age are accepting the truth and taking their stand on the side of God's kingdom. In one rural area some interested youths had been studying and had even participated in field service, but they had not yet been immersed. All nine wanted to share in temporary pioneer service, so a special baptism was arranged for the group, and immediately following immersion they went into the temporary pioneer service.

Recently at the assemblies there have been, on an average, forty newly dedicated persons immersed in Hong Kong. Because of crowded living conditions it is often a problem to conduct studies with the interested ones, for others in the family oppose. Therefore studies are sometimes conducted in the open or in parks or in homes of other interested persons. Also Kingdom Halls are well used, with small groups having studies or going over secondary articles in the magazines. Or one who knows English explains what newer books not yet available in Chinese have to tell. There are now nine congregations in Hong Kong. The number of publishers in Hong Kong increased from 278 in 1973 to 548 this past service year; 1,358 attended the Memorial. In April there were 158 temporary pioneers. Congregation publishers averaged 16.9 hours in field service and placed, on an average, 23.6 magazines. All this activity surely means that there will be more theocratic increase in Hong Kong.

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## Continue to Proclaim the Good News

<sup>1</sup> How did you learn the truth? Was it through your parents, other relatives, fellow workers or someone who called at your door? Whatever the case may be, are you not grateful that someone took an interest in you, helping you to learn who Jehovah God is and how to imitate him? That knowledge has opened up to you the opportunity to gain everlasting life.—John 17:3.

<sup>2</sup> When we recognize the value of knowing Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, we are moved to do what we can to aid those who show interest to learn more about the Bible. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4; Matt. 7:12) The new service year will offer many opportunities for assisting people to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

### NOT TOO DIFFICULT

<sup>3</sup> Do you feel that it is somewhat difficult to help interested persons? Is this because you need experience? Well, all of us need to continue learning about the Bible. And, individually, we may have limitations. Some find it difficult

to express themselves. Others may feel that they do not have enough knowledge. However, we are not called upon to proclaim what we do not know. Jesus instructed his disciples to tell what they did know about the Kingdom. (Matt. 10:7) And all of us know at least something about that subject.

<sup>4</sup> Our success in the field service is not determined by the quantity of literature we place. Our desire is to give a witness about the Kingdom and to reach hearts with the truth. So when completing a period of field activity, we might ask ourselves, With how many people did I speak about the Kingdom today?

<sup>5</sup> As pointed out in the February 1976 issue of *Our Kingdom Service*, there are various ways to start conversations with people about the truth. Questions are very effective. Then, too, being a good listener will help us to know the thinking of the person with whom we are speaking. This will make it easier to present the truth in a way that may capture his interest. It is good

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## Prepare to Make Return Visits

<sup>1</sup> We have good reason to want to help others to gain an accurate knowledge of God's Word. This requires calling back on any who manifest some interest in the Kingdom message, whether they accept literature or not. Is this something difficult that only a few in the congregation can do? No.

<sup>2</sup> Making return visits is really very simple. It may be just a matter of inviting an interested person to the public meeting. Or, you might share with him a point from a magazine article that you enjoyed and offer him the latest issues. Then, again, you could read just one scripture and make a brief comment about it. Doing any of these things is all that is needed to make a return visit that should be reported to the congregation.

<sup>3</sup> But what can you do to prepare for making productive return visits? First you need to know where the interested person lives. So preparation starts on the initial call when you write down the address. Perhaps you will need to remind yourself of keeping a record, for many have not as yet cultivated this good habit. Then, too, a good

practice is to double-check that you do have the correct information. Other things might also be noted—the person's name, what you talked about, what seemed to interest him, the time he would most likely be at home, what literature, if any, was placed, and the like.

<sup>4</sup> Then, perhaps the day before you decide to make certain return visits, why not get out your records? Take a few minutes to think about the people to whom you spoke about the Kingdom. What do you want to accomplish? Perhaps it is just a matter of sharing a Scriptural thought to build up the person's confidence in the Bible. It may be that you could start a Bible study with him. Or, if he is not ready for that but enjoys reading the publications, you may wish to leave him the latest copies of the magazines.

<sup>5</sup> It may take repeated calls before you gain a person's confidence. Each time you may be able to say little, perhaps sharing only one scripture with him. Nevertheless,

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# YOUR SERVICE MEETINGS

## WEEK STARTING AUGUST 29

**20 min:** Song 18. Field overseer considers with audience what constitutes a return visit. See *Organization* book, pages 126, 127. Informs congregation how many Bible studies apart from family studies were conducted during the year and how many were baptized and started in the field service. Discusses God's compassion for people. (Jonah 3:10; 4:11) Encourages audience to imitate God, thinking in terms of helping people when sharing in field service. Announcements on field service arrangements.

**20 min:** Highlighting the value of using the Bible with the offer for the month. Ask audience why we leave literature with people. Emphasize that the basis for our preaching is the Bible. Publications help householder appreciate value of the Scriptures and how they benefit him and his family. Then ask audience what chapter in the *Truth* book might be featured after Scriptural discussion and what texts could be read. (Have prepared comments.) After two or three answers proceed with the following demonstration: An experienced publisher, after greeting the householder, asks: "Have you ever asked yourself, Why does God permit so much suffering?" After householder's reply, publisher reads 2 Peter 3:8, 9 and directs his attention to *Truth* book (Chapter 8) for further information.

Then discuss with audience how the same presentation can be used with the *Evolution* book and the *Peace and Security* book (Chapter 5).

Conclude with another demonstration, using the same scripture but featuring the *Peace and Security* book. Householder refuses literature offer. Ask audience why we should make a note of this call. Inform congregation that this month the service meetings will discuss the return visit activity and how we can share in it. Meetings will show that everyone can share and that it is not too difficult. Encourage audience to think about people whom they might call on to stimulate further interest in the Kingdom message and, with them in mind, to take note of what is said on the service meeting programs.

**20 min:** "Continue to Proclaim the Good News." Question-and-answer discussion. Read paragraphs and consider the scriptures. Conclude the discussion of article in a warm, appealing manner, all local announcements having been cared for earlier. Song 25.

## WEEK STARTING SEPTEMBER 5

**25 min:** Song 58 and local announcements. "Doing Work with a Good Conscience Before God and Men" (Insert). Elder discusses with audience material down to subheading "Seeking Balance in Our View of Employment." Ease questions on the scriptures used, having selected texts read by audience. Read all the paragraphs under the heading "The Major Questions," doing so before discussing each paragraph.

**8 min:** Joys of Making Return Visits. Emphasize importance of disciple-making and interview two publishers who might relate personal experiences on joys of helping people to learn the truth.

**12 min:** "Prepare to Make Return Visits." Couple approach Bible study overseer, asking about how they can

prepare for return visits. They feel that it is hard. Elder highlights simplicity and joy of the work.

**15 min:** Discuss purpose of our field service. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Cor. 2:17-3:3; explain meaning of texts and tie in with need to make return visits.) Highlight Paul's concern about spiritual state of fellowmen. (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1) If he was so interested in those who even persecuted him, should we not rightly reflect deep concern for persons showing some interest? Involve audience in thinking about people whose interest they might stimulate in truth—neighbors, fellow workers, teachers, schoolmates, someone contacted in field. Make it clear that all have return visits that could be made. (*Organization*, page 126) Song 52.

## WEEK STARTING SEPTEMBER 12

**15 min:** Song 68 and local announcements. Talk on Study 18 of the *School Guidebook*, paragraphs 8-10. Show audience that there is no need to fear objections people present in the field service. Highlight how God's spirit helps us.

**10 min:** "Presenting the Good News—When People Are Not at Home." The one handling this part will go right into a question-and-answer discussion.

**20 min:** Things that could be done toward making return visits. Consider with a prepared panel the following questions: (1) Why should we keep a house-to-house record? (2) Why is it good to make a return visit as soon as possible? (3) What advantage is there if we can greet the householder by name? (4) How might we make the purpose of our call clear to the householder? (5) What factors might determine the length of our discussion with the householder? (6) If we have an opportunity to talk with him, why might it be good to encourage him to use his own Bible? (7) Why is it best to keep the conversation simple? (John 16:12) In answering questions, prepared publishers might illustrate with personal experiences.

**15 min:** "Buying Out the Opportune Time." Talk based on *Organization* book, page 110 paragraph 3 to page 112 paragraph 2. Encourage giving good support for afternoon activity when circuit overseer serves with congregation, as this time is set aside for Bible studies and return visits. Mention benefits of working with circuit overseer and his wife. Ask how many have talked about Kingdom with someone or placed magazines. Then encourage all to follow suggestions made this month in following through with return visits. Song 117.

## WEEK STARTING SEPTEMBER 19

**13 min:** Song 118 and local announcements. Imitating Our Happy God. Lively discussion among several publishers

## JUNE SERVICE REPORT

|              | Av.<br>Pubs.   | Av.<br>Hrs. | Av.<br>R.V. | Av.<br>Bi.St. | Av.<br>Mags. | Av.<br>121.2 |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sp'l Pios.   | 609            | 133.3       | 51.0        | 5.1           |              |              |
| Pios.        | 15,500         | 91.1        | 33.9        | 3.1           |              | 87.7         |
| Temp. Pios.  | 4,994          | 77.4        | 19.0        | 1.2           |              | 70.8         |
| Pubs.        | 492,388        | 8.6         | 3.6         | .4            |              | 11.3         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>513,491</b> |             |             |               |              |              |

Newly Dedicated Ones Baptized: 4,372

UNITED STATES GOAL FOR 1976

588,242 Publishers

based on Branch Letter and their own experiences in serving Jehovah; also Theocratic News.

**2 min:** Accounts report.

**30 min:** "Doing Work with a Good Conscience Before God and Men" (Insert). Elder discusses material from "Seeking Balance in Our View of Employment" down to "If He Has Doubts." At outset, prepared publishers can briefly state employment problems that come up locally and are mentioned in the insert. To the extent that time allows, read previously selected paragraphs before asking questions. Base questions on scriptures and aid all to make the correct application.

**15 min:** "Help Others to Make Return Visits"; also Question Box. Question-and-answer discussion. Warm conclusion encouraging all to make at least one return visit this week. Song 103.

## WEEK STARTING SEPTEMBER 26

**25 min:** Song 81 and announcements. Elder handles. Doing Work with a Good Conscience Before God and Men. Finish insert, starting from "If He Has Doubts." Questions and answers on section "If He Has Doubts," and have this portion of the insert read. Remainder of insert discussed by two or three elders, emphasizing their own responsibility in the matter.

**15 min:** Based on his report for the service year, presiding overseer can share with congregation what was accomplished, concentrating on positive aspects; include encouragement to continue having full share in field service in harmony with Jehovah's desire that people attain to repentance.—2 Pet. 3:9, 10.

**20 min:** This portion of the meeting can be used to consider what needs attention locally. Song 65.

## Branch Letter

(Cont'd)

In Idaho where failure of the Teton River dam caused a flood disaster, twelve families among the brothers lost homes and all belongings. None of the publishers lost their lives. Quickly brothers from surrounding areas provided relief. Publishers who were not affected opened their homes to accommodate families who lost everything. Food, clothing and household supplies were donated in abundance. Relief funds were sent from Brooklyn. Brothers are getting some aid from government assistance programs. Kingdom Halls were not destroyed in the flood. It is encouraging to see how loving brothers help one another in times of need.—Acts 11:29, 30.

All of us continue to show interest in others by using our many opportunities to speak of the good news and comfort those who have cause to mourn. Surely the new service year will prove to be a productive one with much praise to the name of Jehovah.

Your brothers,  
BROOKLYN BRANCH OFFICE

# Doing Work with a Good Conscience Before God and Men

AS JEHOVAH'S devoted servants we should be an industrious people, 'doing with our hands what is good work, that we may have something to distribute to someone in need.' (Eph. 4:28) While engaging in productive labor, we should want to be sure that our employment does not conflict with Bible principles. Otherwise we would be unable to heed the inspired admonition: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah."—Col. 3:23.

Though concerned primarily with being pleasing in God's eyes, we should also be thoughtful of our fellow humans. We want to avoid that which would cause these to be unnecessarily offended or which would give rise to reproachful criticism of the "good news."—Compare 2 Corinthians 4:2.

Along with this, we must be realistic about employment. As in other activities of life, we cannot avoid all contact or relations with this world's greedy persons, extortioners, idolaters and fornicators. Otherwise, as the inspired apostle wrote, "you would actually have to get out of the world."—1 Cor. 5:9, 10.

A Christian may work for an employer who is not fully honest. But, as long as the Christian does not personally share in or promote wrong ways, he does not thereby become responsible. A secretary, for example, could not reasonably be expected to pass judgment on every statement that her employer dictates to her for transcribing into letters. She must let him bear the responsibility for any lack of truthfulness or fairness in what he dictates. But if his dishonesty becomes sufficiently extreme, so that his business comes into serious disrepute, her conscience may move her to seek other employment.

Actually, everything connected with this sinful world has some undesirable features. This, then, calls for our using discernment to determine what is truly objectionable for the Christian worker and what is—even though in some respects not fully desirable—nevertheless allowable from the Scriptural standpoint.

## God's Own Example

To guide us in taking a balanced view toward employment, we have the example that Jehovah God sets in his attitude toward mankind. "He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matt. 5:45) God has not limited the wicked to the barest essentials of life. He has even been generous in allowing them to benefit from his provisions.—Acts 14:17.

By not discriminating between the righteous and the wicked in their receiving the benefit of his provisions, is God guilty of approving or condoning the idolatry, fornication, thievery and the

like that the wicked practice? Obviously not, as he has shown in his acts at the Flood and at other times of divine judgment. Nor is he thereby encouraging them to keep on in lawless practices. There is no clear connection or direct link between their benefiting from the sun, rain, wind and other provisions and their sinful practices. Really, by his undeserved kindness to the wicked, Jehovah God is patiently maintaining an appealing basis on which to exhort the unrighteous to abandon their wrong ways and turn to him.—Rom. 2:4; Ezek. 33:11.

God's servants, therefore, can conscientiously render many human services to worldly persons without discrimination. Such humans are, after all, the property of God and Christ, having all been purchased with the precious blood of the Son of God. (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) Though not all respond, God's desire is for all to repent and gain salvation, not to perish. (2 Pet. 3:9) So we rightly treat our neighbors among mankind in harmony with that fact. We are also governed by the principle: "All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matt. 7:12) We appreciate it when people do not discriminate against us in supplying food, clothing, shelter, transportation and other essentials in the form of goods and services. In turn, we should be willing to render common services to others.—Rom. 13:8-10.

## The Major Questions

Clearly there is a difference between doing work that benefits people just as fellow humans and work that directly fosters or directly gives support to wrong practices. The principal question is: "Does the work or activity to be performed *in itself* constitute an act condemned by God's Word? Or, if it does not, is it nevertheless so *directly linked* to such condemned practices that it would make those doing such work actual *accomplices* or *promoters* of the wrong practice?" In such cases Christian conscience should surely cause them to reject such employment.

To illustrate, we do not want others to commit violence against us, poison our bodies, seduce us into immorality or into idolatrous worship. Certainly, then, we could not engage in the manufacture, sale or promotion of things specifically designed for such purposes, such as harmfully addictive drugs, pornographic material, idol images and similar things. How could we teach others that the use of such things is Scripturally wrong and at the same time work in directly producing them or promoting their use? Such work would be wrong in itself.

Other work may be proper in itself but nevertheless wrong because it is an integral part of a

wrong operation or activity. Being a cashier is in itself proper employment. But what if one served as a cashier in a gambling establishment? The practice of gambling is out of harmony with God's Word, which condemns greediness and commands doing honest, productive work. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:11, 12) Though the cashier might not actually do any gambling, in the way that a card dealer does, would not his (or her) work involve the selling of the gambling chips that form an essential part of the operation? Would this not also be true of the individual whose work consists of repairing and maintaining the gambling equipment, such as slot machines, roulette wheels and similar things? There is clearly a direct link between the work done and the wrong activity itself.

#### Seeking Balance in Our View of Employment

But if the employment consists of work that is not of itself Scripturally wrong and is not directly linked to wrong practices, there may be other factors that the Christian will need to weigh when making a conscientious decision.

For example, working as a cook in a restaurant is an honest employment, food being something that all humans use and need in common. But what if one worked for a chain of restaurants, one of which was located within the grounds of a racetrack? Serving as a schoolteacher is proper employment. But what if the school is one owned by a religious organization that is not genuinely Christian? Serving as a housemaid is also proper employment. But what if the maid's duties require her to work in a home in an area set aside for purposes contrary to the principles stated at Isaiah 2:4?

Gambling at a racetrack is not dependent upon food. The school owned by the religious organization may not require the teacher to teach false religion; it may use textbooks provided by the government and may even be under government supervision. The maid's work may be simply cleaning, laundering and cooking. Would such work then place a Christian in the position of being subject to disfellowshipping from the congregation? Let us consider some Scriptural examples.

In the cases mentioned the individual is working on property owned by organizations carrying on unscriptural practices. But does this of itself mean that such work is to be condemned? One might call to mind the exhortation to "get out from among them, and separate yourselves . . . and quit touching the unclean thing." (2 Cor. 6:17) Are we to understand this as meaning that the ground itself or the buildings owned by such organizations are contaminating? Or is it not really the practices themselves that are "unclean" in God's sight?

Outward appearances are not always the determining factors. The Syrian Naaman, for example, determined that he would "no more render up a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other

gods but to Jehovah." Yet, in his position as a servant to the king of Syria, part of Naaman's work consisted of entering the temple of a false god, Rimmon, with the king and supporting the king (evidently somewhat feeble) as he bowed down to the idol. Naaman appears to have performed this service with some degree of regularity. Yet when he expressed conscientious concern about this matter, God's prophet Elisha replied: "Go in peace." (2 Ki. 5:15-19) True, an observer might assume by what he saw that Naaman was a worshiper of the false god Rimmon. But if he talked with the man he would find out otherwise.

Consider, too, the example of Jesus Christ. In his preaching and teaching activity he aided those who were known sinners. Did he restrict such association to public places, refusing to go into the sinners' homes to eat with them lest he thereby appear to be condoning their sinful life? No. However, some, such as the Pharisees, who were extremely scrupulous in such matters but lacking in mercy and compassion, attributed a wrong meaning to this association of Jesus with such persons, making it appear that he was condoning the wrongs the sinners committed. (Luke 15:1, 2; 19:7) But Jesus let his teaching and his course of life demonstrate the falseness of such wrong assumptions. In keeping with Jesus' example, we should be careful not to judge others simply on the basis of surface appearances, assuming that their being employed in certain places constitutes of necessity a condoning of wrongdoing.—Rom. 14:4.

#### Serious Concern for Effect on Others

Does this mean that the Christian need give no consideration whatever to such factors as the location of his employment, the type of organization that employs him and the appearance that this produces in the eyes of others? No, for such lack of concern would be another extreme to be avoided.

The apostle Paul's inspired counsel to Christians at Corinth aids us to see the balanced viewpoint in this regard. Though not discussing employment, Paul presents principles that apply there as well. In the Corinthian meat markets there was sold meat that came from animals offered up in sacrifice to idols. By buying such meat would the Christian be failing to "flee from idolatry" and would his paying for the meat cause him to become guilty of supporting such idolatry? Would his eating such meat make him unclean? Paul pointed out that this was not the case, since "to Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it." Looking upon the meat as actually from Jehovah and thanking him for it, the Christian would show he did not view the idol as being actually a god, nor did he worship such. He could eat with a clear conscience. At the same time Paul counseled the Corinthians not to use their freedom in such a way that someone else's conscience could be wounded.—1 Cor. 10:14, 18-33.

Earlier in his letter the apostle had pointed out that not all persons would see this matter so clearly. (1 Cor. 8:4-8) To those whose consciences did allow them to eat such meat, Paul therefore said: "Keep watching that this authority of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone should see you, the one having knowledge, reclining at a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be built up to the point of eating foods offered to idols?"—1 Cor. 8:9, 10.

The apostle does not say that the eating of the meat on the idol temple grounds was of itself a sin meriting disfellowshiping. But there was an inherent danger in such act. If seen by another who viewed it as implying a condoning of the false worship, that one's conscience might be emboldened to return to practices of false worship. So, while the act of itself was not wrong, to ignore the consciences of others to the point of actually stumbling them from the way of life would be "sinning against Christ," who died as a ransom for such ones.—1 Cor. 8:11-13.

Applying these same principles to employment, we can see that while certain work of itself may not be wrong, nor such as can be clearly defined as making one an accomplice to the actual practice of wrongdoing, the Christian will still be concerned to avoid becoming a cause of stumbling to others. To illustrate, a Christian may have worked in a restaurant that operated across the street from a racetrack. Perhaps the majority of the customers were persons frequenting the racetrack. Later, an opportunity might open up for the restaurant to lease facilities on the track grounds themselves, and it might transfer its operations there. The Christian's work would continue to be the same, simply the honest labor of providing food, and the customers of the restaurant might be very much the same. Yet in some persons' minds there might now be a linkage between his employment and the practice of gambling. As another example, a gambling house might operate a restaurant on its premises, providing meals at low cost to attract gamblers. So the Christian would want to consider any such connection and weigh the matter conscientiously. He would not want to embolden the consciences of some to engage in gambling, and if he found that such was the result of his work, no doubt his conscience would move him to seek other employment. His concern, then, would be not to become a source of actual stumbling to others and this, of course, would depend to a considerable degree on how seriously the appearance of things affected them. Also, he should consider the effect upon himself from working in unsavory surroundings, faced by pressures to get involved in wrong practices.

But what if the kind of work done of itself is not connected with wrong practices, but the *source of payment* is an organization that is primarily occupied in unscriptural activities? Again the Christian's conscience must

weigh the matter and the effect of his or her being paid by such an organization. A restaurant, for example, might be located next door to a gambling house and in course of time the gambling house might buy the restaurant. Thereafter the employees might be paid by the gambling house, perhaps with its checks. True, but the operations of the restaurant may continue exactly as before. So, again a Christian employed there, while recognizing that his work in itself may not make him a condoner of gambling nor an accomplice therein, would want to weigh his situation and the effect thereof on others. His decision would be governed by the degree of seriousness of that effect. The same would be true of a schoolteacher who might teach some subject such as mathematics in a school owned by a religious organization of Christendom. Though not contributing to the spread of false worship in his teaching, he would consider the effect of his employment on others and be governed by what he found to be the results thereof.

It seems evident from the Scriptures that the payment of money by a Christian to a person or organization of the world for goods or services or, vice versa, the receipt of money by a Christian *from* such person or organization does not automatically imply that the Christian supports or condones any wrongdoing in which such person or organization may engage. As seen earlier, Christians could buy meat that proceeded from pagan temples. The pagan temples benefited monetarily. This was not by direct contribution but indirectly through the sale of meat.

While the source of the payment for honest labor rendered by a Christian would not of itself determine the rightness or wrongness of his employment, he should show the same concern and caution in this respect as in the examples given previously involving the location of one's work. His desire would always be to advance the cause of the truth and the spread of the good news, not to hinder it unnecessarily. Also one must consider the effect upon himself, whether the circumstances of his employment may prove spiritually damaging to himself, perhaps constituting a spiritual risk or a serious temptation toward engaging in wrongdoing. He cannot afford to let his hatred of what is bad become weakened and softened, for this would lead to acts of compromise and the actual engaging in what is wrong.—Heb. 1:9.

#### "If He Has Doubts"

In many areas of life, including employment, we must allow our conscience, enlightened by God's Word and his spirit, to guide us. Another member of the Christian congregation may have no qualms of conscience about the propriety of a certain type of employment. But our own conscience may cause us to have doubts. Should we ignore these doubts and let the other person's conscience decide for us? The apostle Paul provides the inspired answer in his discussion con-

cerning the eating of meat, saying: "If he has doubts, he is already condemned if he eats, because he does not eat out of faith. Indeed, everything that is not out of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23) Thus, when a person feels ill at ease about certain work and cannot justify it in his own conscience, he acts wisely to make a change. He thereby avoids sinning in the sense of going against his conscience, wounding it. At the same time, one's uncertainty and "inward questionings" about the rightness of certain work should not cause him to become critical of others, making an issue of matters unnecessarily or judging them as violators of God's law when there is no clear Scriptural evidence to that effect.—Rom. 14:1-5.

We do well to keep in mind that problems regarding what is acceptable employment are nothing new. The worldly systems and people generally are disregarding the same righteous principles today as they did centuries ago, in the apostles' day and before. Yet the Bible does not provide a long list of rules as to what is acceptable or not in the way of work. Basically, the Bible provides us with three factors that should be taken into consideration: (1) Is the work itself definitely wrong, consisting of activity that is in itself sinful because it violates God's moral laws or contributes directly to the violation of such laws? (2) Is it probable that observers will be given the definite impression that Christians are approving of what is wrong and will likely be stumbled, becoming themselves involved in wrongdoing? (3) Does the Christian personally have doubts about his employment?

#### The Congregation's Responsibility

Where a brother engages in employment that clearly violates God's law, the congregation and its elders rightly become concerned in the matter. Where work or a product thereof is condemned in the Scriptures, or is such as to make one an accomplice or promoter in wrongdoing, the elders should first endeavor to help the person see the wrongness of his course. In such cases where the connection is definite and evident, it should be possible to make what the Bible says clear to him and enable him to see why it does indeed apply to him. It may, however, take a number of discussions, perhaps over a period of some weeks, to help him see the point and give prayerful consideration to what has been brought to his attention. If it is definitely established that his employment violates Christian principles and he, nevertheless, insists on continuing in it, he may be disfellowshipped from the congregation.

What of cases where the work is not of itself wrong but, because of the location of the employment, the source of payment, or similar factors, it might produce an undesirable impression on the minds of some observers? Here the elders must be careful not to let their own consciences dictate for others, as though they were 'masters over their faith.' (2 Cor. 1:24) The

master of a house can tell others what work they can do and what work they cannot do. But elders recognize God and Christ as the masters over the Christian congregation and let their word determine. Where there is no clear precedent in the Scriptures, the elders let the individual Christian's faith express itself as that one's conscience dictates.

Where the work done by a member of the congregation, though not of itself an unscriptural activity, nevertheless, gives rise to questions, the elders can discuss this with the one involved. While not condemning him, they can point out any inherent dangers or risks involved; they can discuss any potential cause for stumbling of others that exists. They may point out the advantages of maintaining a healthful distance from what might be a "borderline" situation. And if the situation develops to the point of being of considerable disturbance within the congregation or a source of adverse comment by those on the outside, they may decide that such a one should not be used in an exemplary way in the congregation. For what is "lawful" at the same time may not be "advantageous," as the apostle states. He therefore urges: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."—1 Cor. 10:23, 24.

Elders especially will need to study seriously God's Word and seek the discernment and insight that result in good judgment. They will recognize that "the wisdom from above is first of all chaste" and so they will remain firm for pure worship and steadfastly uphold God's laws. But they will recognize that this heavenly wisdom is also "reasonable" and hence they will avoid extremes in their application of Bible principles, not carrying them beyond what God's own example and his spirit indicate.—Jas. 3:17.

We need not fear that our refraining from setting up a specific code of rules about employment will harm the congregation of God spiritually. When God canceled the Mosaic Law code it did not leave the new congregation of spiritual Israel floundering in uncertainty as to what they should do to please God. The power of God's spirit operating on the minds and hearts of those whose consciences are trained and molded by the study of God's Word constitutes a far stronger force for righteousness than the Law code did. This is true down to this day.

Yes, that fruitage of God's spirit, love, will move the true Christian to reject work that God's Word clearly condemns. In other cases, where individual conscience must determine, love will move him to avoid being a cause of fatal stumbling to others. Practical wisdom, also, will help him to decide whether he should seek other employment in the interests of maintaining his own spirituality and avoiding pitfalls. (Rom. 13:10; Prov. 3:21-23) Thus the Christian will demonstrate that he is "no part of the world," and preserve a good conscience before God and men.—John 17:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19.

## Announcements

◆ Since the offer for September is any pocket-size book on a contribution of 25c, you may use whichever one your congregation has in good supply. If additional supplies are needed, Brooklyn has a good stock of the *Evolution, Peace and Security* and *Eternal Purpose* books, although other publications can also be ordered. October offer: *Awake!* subscription, with three booklets, for \$1.50.

◆ Some circuit assemblies have been adapting district assembly forms for circuit assembly use, using cards marked "Administration," "Volunteer," etc. This hardly seems necessary for an assembly of circuit-assembly size.

◆ The congregation accounts should be audited on September 1, or as soon thereafter as possible, by the presiding overseer or someone appointed by him.

◆ Out of Stock in U.S.A.:  
Elberfelder Bible —German  
Bible —Vietnamese

**Proclaim the Good News (Cont'd)**  
to keep in mind that our purpose in talking to people is to win hearts, not arguments.

6 Prayer is also essential in connection with our preaching work. While sharing in the field activity, is it not fitting to request Jehovah's assistance? Yes, we need His spirit. (1 John 5:14) That spirit helped those serving in the first century and it is still available to aid all of us today.—Acts 1:8.

7 Moreover, having a positive attitude in your house-to-house work will be beneficial. Approach the homes in a friendly manner and be cheerful in your greeting. This would harmonize with Jesus Christ's instructions to his apostles when sending them out to preach. (Matt. 10:12, 13) True, some may not appreciate what you say. But this is no reason to be upset or to feel that you are not qualified. The Scriptures make it clear that not all will respond favorably.—Matt. 10:14, 34-36.

8 How happy we can be that Jehovah God has granted us the opportunity to help others to gain salvation! This is a grand demonstration of his love and patience toward mankind. (2 Pet. 3:9) So may we make good use of our time in continuing to share with our fellowmen the good news of salvation.—2 Cor. 6:2.

### Suggested Presentation

Why God Has Permitted Wickedness.—2 Pet. 3:8, 9.

This can be used with the *Evolution, Peace and Security* and *Truth* books.

## Help Others to Make Return Visits

<sup>1</sup> Have you experienced the joy of stimulating others' interest in God's Word? Have you found that talking about the truth makes you much more aware of the help of God's spirit? Yes, Scriptural thoughts appear to come to mind quickly and it seems easy to make the right application for the benefit of interested persons. (John 14:26) Our awareness that holy spirit is aiding us certainly draws us closer to our heavenly Father.

<sup>2</sup> If this has been your experience, would it not be a fine thing to assist others in the congregation to make return visits? But whom might you help? What about your children or someone with whom you studied the Bible and who is now a proclaimer of the good news? Elders and ministerial servants might consider what they can do personally to help publishers in their book study groups and to enlist the aid of other experienced brothers and sisters.

<sup>3</sup> One of the best ways to help others is by example. As you work with a brother or sister in field service, why not show him or her how you plan for a return visit? Let this one see how you make a record of a call and explain why you write down certain information. After the publisher has observed how you fill out the house-to-house record for a call just completed then let him or her make a note of the interest for you on further calls. Of course, any explaining or making of notations should be done in a way that will not be needlessly obvious to people in the territory. We want to avoid calling undue attention to our presence and raising questions in the minds of observers.

**Prepare to Make Return Visits (Cont'd)**  
you are accomplishing something very vital. The individual is getting better acquainted with you and you are giving a witness. In time, your warm and friendly manner, or the impact of a particular scripture, may lead to the starting of a Bible study.

<sup>6</sup> There is no rule as to how you should go about making a return visit. The main thing to keep in mind is that you want to help people to learn more from the Bible and to be spiritually encouraged. The apostle Paul set a fine example in wanting to return to build up disciples, even in places where he had suffered persecution. (Acts 14:19-22) Do you have like concern for interested persons? You can rest assured that Jehovah will bless your efforts to make return visits.

<sup>4</sup> Also, as others accompany you on return visits, they will be able to see how you go about stimulating further interest and starting studies. By observing how simple it is, they will be encouraged to share in this important work.

<sup>5</sup> You might also consider getting together with another publisher in preparing for return visits. Together review your records. Talk about the calls you might make. Select some appropriate scriptures and points to highlight from the literature placed with interested persons. Discuss what you might say to them.

<sup>6</sup> If all experienced publishers would help just one other person to have a fuller share in making return visits, think of what that would mean. There would be twice as many publishers able to assist still others, and more interested persons would be started on the way to life. It may well be that you could assist members of your own family or one other publisher. Are you *willing* and *eager* to do so? And, if you need assistance, do you make yourself available for it? Remember, return visits are vital in acquainting people with the knowledge that leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

<sup>7</sup> Also you could progressively assist your Bible student to appreciate the value of starting a study himself. This will enable you to use some of the suggestions given at the district assemblies this past summer to aid your Bible student to see the need of sharing in the preaching work with the objective of making still other disciples. As you continue studying with him, develop in him a deep love for people so he will want to share with others the good things he is learning from the Bible. (Matt. 5:43-45) Help him to appreciate the need to continue visiting those who are willing to learn more about God's Word. In this way, when the time comes for you to invite him to go out in the field service, he will understand that you do not engage in the door-to-door work just to place literature, but to give a witness for Jehovah and to assist those individuals who are desirous of learning more about God's purposes as explained in the Bible.

<sup>8</sup> Results in helping others to make return visits may not come quickly. It takes time and patience on the part of the teacher. Paul said, "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Gal. 6:9.

# PRESENTING THE GOOD NEWS

# THEOCRATIC NEWS

## When People Are Not at Home

<sup>1</sup> When you share in the house-to-house work, do you find most people at home? Or, do you often end up with a long list of not-at-homes on your house-to-house record? And what about interested persons? Are your good intentions to make return visits unfulfilled because of your not finding them at home? Just what can we do to reach more people?

<sup>2</sup> It may help to call on a different day or at a different time of the day. On a weekday evening, for example, you may be able to reach some who are often away for the weekend. If for some reason you simply are unable to make certain calls at other times, why not give the addresses to someone in the congregation who could do so?

<sup>3</sup> Another thing that can be done is to leave behind something to read, perhaps a handbill. In many territories, however, care has to be exercised about putting magazines or tracts in front of doors when people are not at home. Some householders resent having anything visible left at their doors, since this advertises that they are not at home and can invite burglaries. So in areas where this might be a problem, we do well not to leave any literature that would be visible to outsiders.

<sup>4</sup> Some publishers write letters to interested persons or others whom they are unable to find at home after having made repeated calls. If you decide to do so, you may wish to consult Study 17 of the *School Guidebook*. When writing, be sure to include your name and address. People generally do not appreciate receiving anonymous letters. Depending upon the circumstances, you may also wish to provide your telephone number so that the person can get in touch with you. One brother received the following reply to one of his letters: "Thank you for your letter regarding the campaign for new subscriptions to *Watchtower* and *Awake!* We have pleasure in enclosing check for \$10 to cover the following new subscribers."

<sup>5</sup> Possibly you could reach the interested person by telephone. If you have his name and address, you may be able to get his telephone number. When you call, identify yourself by name and explain to him that, because of not finding him at home, you are calling to find out a convenient

time for getting together to discuss the Bible. The use of the telephone has been helpful in declaring the good news. One publisher placed thirty-four Bibles in one month, by using the telephone.

<sup>6</sup> Trying to contact people who are not at home requires perseverance. How many times would you call on a home where you are unable to find people? One publisher called back at a certain door five times on different days before he found the householder at home. Was his perseverance rewarded? The person he then met was so interested in the truth about Jehovah and His kingdom that in only two months she began telling others about it herself. Another young sister tried seven times to find someone at home and finally succeeded. The man she met took two magazines, and later on, with the assistance of her father, she helped this individual to start walking on the road to everlasting life. In Poland, a sister received a new territory. There was one house the door of which was locked and nobody answered. The publisher made a note of it, and every time she passed by the house she knocked on the door, but always in vain. She continued to do this for three months. Finally, an elderly woman answered the door; she said that because she had been robbed she was very cautious about opening her door. This is understandable and helps us to appreciate another reason for the need to keep calling until we find someone at home. This woman proved to be receptive to the Bible's message.

<sup>7</sup> It is important to make the effort and try to contact people who were not at home. In one case, no one was found at home for a period of three years. The woman who was finally contacted had been waiting all that time for a Witness to call and resume the Bible study that had been conducted with her prior to her moving to this place.

<sup>8</sup> So, we are wise if we do not get discouraged when we fail to find people at home in our field service. True, it takes patience and perseverance to find them at home. But, would you not be overjoyed if your efforts helped someone to get started on the road to life? Jehovah takes no delight "in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living." (Ezek. 33:11) May love move us to follow up not-at-homes.

♦ Since April 1969, under the direction of the Society, over 330 radio programs entitled "All Scripture Is Beneficial" have been produced. Throughout the country 291 stations are now broadcasting it. The program has helped to overcome prejudices and to stimulate interest in the field. In Texas, a man whose wife was separating from him heard a program that dealt with this matter. The information was instrumental in helping the couple to work out their problems and to start studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. A Tennessee University student one Sunday morning, by coincidence, heard the program, along with the announcement of meeting times. She came to the Kingdom Hall. A Bible study was started and seven months later she got baptized.

♦ Ivory Coast reports 1,156 publishers of the good news in May. This was their sixth new peak this service year.

♦ Japan reported a new peak in May of 37,128 publishers, the 106th successive monthly peak. There are now 100 temporary special pioneers working in 50 isolated territories to expand the work.

♦ Lebanon reports 1,539 publishers in April, a decrease compared with the previous year, as war conditions make service difficult. Still the brothers were able to average 9.9 hours. They were able to hold the Memorial during a lull in the violence.

♦ The Cook Islands government has registered the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, making this the sixth acknowledged religion in the islands. There are now 45 publishers sharing the truth with others.

♦ A report from Upper Volta tells of a new peak of 58 publishers. A fine circuit assembly in Bobo-Dioulasso was attended by 111.

## Question Box

• Might a discussion using the Bible alone be reported as a study?

Usually one of the Society's publications provides the basis for studying the Bible with an individual. But at times persons are unwilling to use any literature other than the Bible. Yet such persons may be willing to have us discuss the Scriptures with them on a regular basis. We can then systematically consider different themes, using six to eight scriptures found in a chapter of one of the publications. (See "Presenting the Good News," *Our Kingdom Service*, February 1976.) Such systematic discussions can be reported as a Bible study after they have been held at least three times. (See *Organization* book, page 127.)

As the individual gains confidence, an appropriate publication might be introduced. When this is done, we do not want to give the impression that we are changing from a Bible study to a book study. The householder should continue to feel that he is studying the Scriptures, which is what he is, in fact, doing when you read, highlight and explain the scriptures in the material.