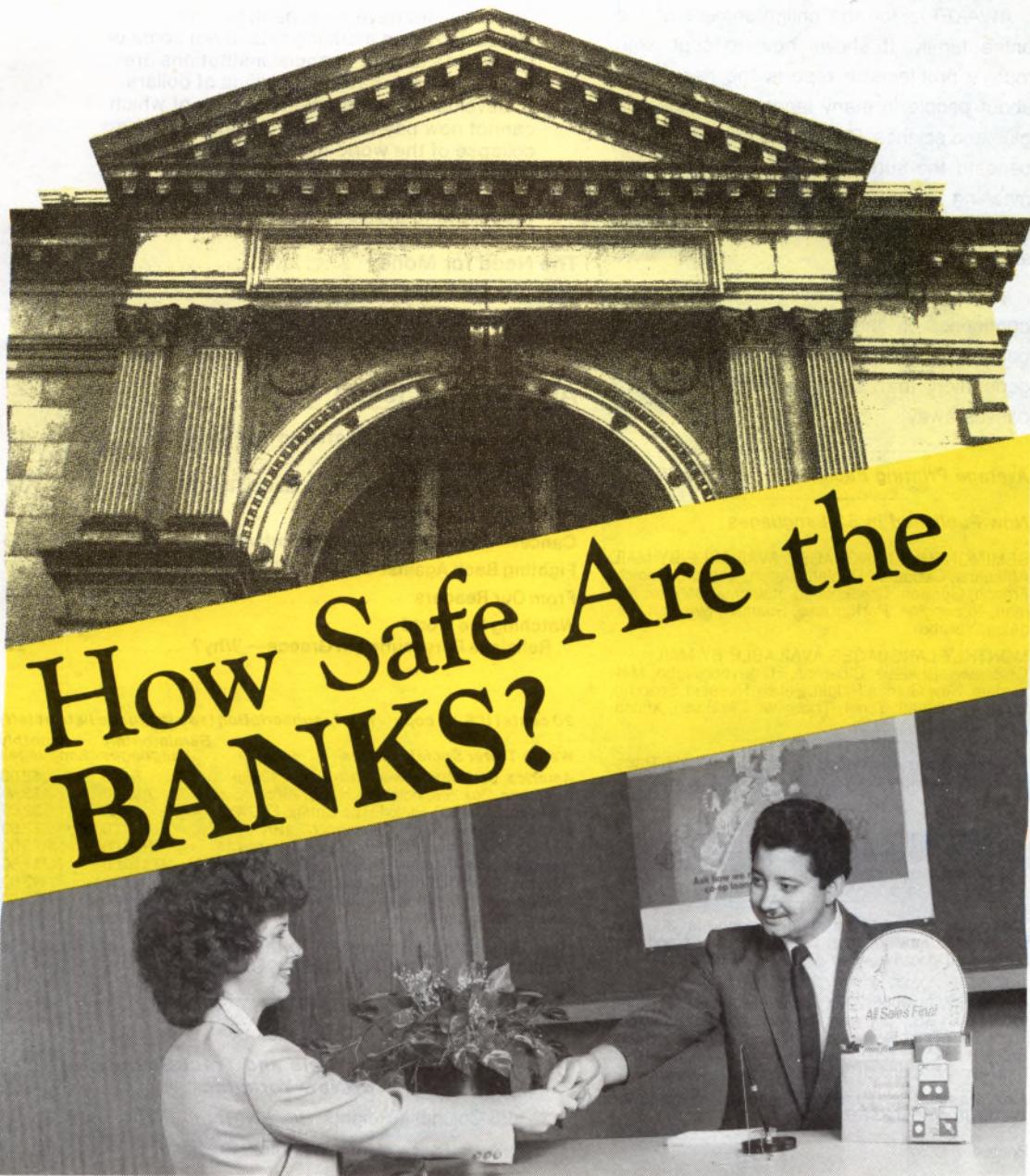


# **Awake!**

OCTOBER 22, 1986



## WHY AWAKE! IS PUBLISHED

AWAKE! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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*Awake!* (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly for \$4.00 (U.S.) per year by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Printed in U.S.A.

## Feature Articles

Recent years have seen bank failures increasing at an alarming rate. Even some of the world's largest financial institutions are in trouble. They have lent billions of dollars to developing countries—a number of which cannot now pay back even the interest! Is a collapse of the world banking system imminent? Is your money safe in the bank? These and other questions are discussed in the following articles

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<i>America</i> , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$4.00	\$2.00
<i>Australia</i> , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$7.00	A\$3.50
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Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

Published by

**Watchtower Bible and Tract Society  
of New York, Inc.**

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

Frederick W. Franz, President

**M**ONEY is the root of all evil." Have you ever heard anyone say that? Actually, it is only part of the statement: "The love of money is the root of all evil."\*

Yes, it is true that much evil has resulted from the selfish thirst for riches. And the majority of crimes are committed to get these. Yet, where would we be today if money did not exist?

There was, of course, a time when money was not used. And even after it was introduced, its usage was limited and irregular. The agricultural households were then fairly independent and took care of their own needs. They would barter for any items they could not supply themselves, directly exchanging their own goods for those of another. Yet, some difficulties were encountered, particularly for one who specialized in a certain trade or was a hired laborer.

Jesus made mention of such workers in an illustration of a householder who hired men to work in his vineyard. (Matthew 20: 1-16) The men hired received a stipulated amount of money, which reveals that the use of money was well established at that time. But just imagine if you were such a worker and instead of receiving money as wages you received a certain amount of grapes!

Now, you might love

\* The statement, written in Macedonia by the apostle Paul sometime between the years 61 and 64 C.E., is found in the Bible at 1 Timothy 6:10, *King James Version*.

# The Need for Money

grapes, but you certainly would not want a steady diet of grapes. You would want a more substantial and varied menu, including meat and vegetables. You would also have need of shoes, clothing, and fuel, as well as other goods and services. So you would have to locate people who would be willing to trade those items.

But what if those people did not like or want grapes? Then you would have to find someone who would take your grapes and give you something else that you could exchange for the items you needed. The whole trading process might take longer than the time it took you to earn the grapes in the first place!

Another problem that arises is that of assigning values to the items exchanged. For instance, how many grapes is one chicken worth? How many for a pair of



shoes? Every item traded would have to have a corresponding value in every other item. "If, for example, there were 1,000 different goods and services on the market," says the book *Money, Banking, and the United States Economy*, "instead of 1,000 dollar prices being available to measure their relative market worth, 499,500 exchange ratios would be required!"

Not only is that a lot to remember, but the list would need constant revision and adjustment as situations varied. And if the item you have for trade, such as a cow, is worth more than the ax blade you wish to acquire, how do you settle the matter? Who gets the cow if you wish to use its value to purchase several items from various persons? How difficult transacting any business would be under such circumstances! A common denominator for exchange of goods or services would certainly be needed. Enter the need for money.

Money, therefore, serves the following basic functions:

- It is a medium of exchange that enables us to have easy access to the goods or services of others.
- It serves as a measuring rod of value—a

standard unit of account—by which the values of all goods and services can be compared and expressed.

- It serves as a store of value, a means by which you can save, or accumulate, your earnings for later use.

The creation of money has made possible large, industrialized businesses with their vast array of consumer goods. By means of it, we have access to the latest and best of those goods and services. It is the lifeblood of economic growth, the factor on which commercial trade depends. Because of it, there can be extensive specialization.

"But money, which is such a useful and desired servant, at times misbehaves," writes John A. Cochran in his book *Money, Banking, and the Economy*. "Money can be either a great blessing or a great curse." Especially is this true in regard to the complex economy of our modern times, where fortunes can be made or lost overnight, businesses can rise or tumble, and governments can prosper or default. At the center of many incidents are those huge depositories of money—the banks. Lately, banks have been failing at an unprecedented rate. Is there cause for alarm?

## Why Banks Fail

IN 1970 when the Bank of Hawaii opened a branch on the Micronesian island of Yap, it had a problem: how to convince the people of Yap to deposit their money in the bank. "We had town meetings and began with the basics," explained bank official Dominic B. Griffin III. "In subsistence

economies, anything can be money. We had to explain why a pig wasn't money, but that a signature on a piece of paper was."

That problem underscores a basic point: Modern banking is based on trust. It is founded on the confidence that people—individuals as well as businesses—have

in the banks with which they do business and in the agencies that back them up.

Yap already had a bank—the stone-money bank. For ages its culture had used huge stone wheels for currency. So large are they that no vault is needed to store and protect them. Instead, they are propped against walls and trees alongside a road outside of Colonia. Quarried in the islands of Belau, southwest of Yap, their value was determined by how difficult it was to obtain them and bring them to Yap by small boats. The stone money is never moved. Everyone is familiar with each piece and its history. Ownership (but not the actual stone) is transferred from family to family as land or goods are purchased.

Yap, then, literally had to be taken from the "stone age" to the age of modern electronic banking, to be introduced to checking and savings accounts, foreign exchange, savings bonds, telegraphic remittances. The people had to learn the value of printed scraps of paper and to put

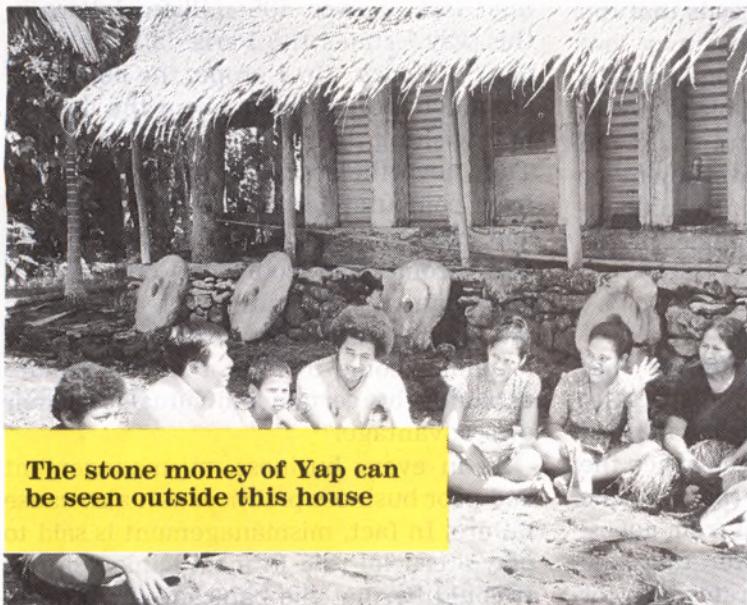
their trust in banks that would be handling money they could not see.

That situation exists worldwide today. No one really asks a bank to show him their money. In fact, most transactions take place electronically or by means of a check. People have faith that banks will produce the promised funds on demand or when term accounts become due. Yet banks actually carry in their vaults only the currency necessary for routine daily withdrawals. They know from experience just how much cash is needed at a particular time or season. Where, then, is all the rest of the money?

### **The Banking Business**

Banks are businesses. Like other concerns, they are in business to make a profit. But unlike most others, their product is money. In essence, they borrow money from one source and lend it to another. By lending at a higher rate of interest than borrowed, they make money for themselves, their shareholders, and their depositors, as well as cover their expense of operation. But banks also create money. How do they do this?

Dennis Turner explains in his book *When Your Bank Fails*: "The Fed[ederal Reserve System] requires banks to keep only a small percentage of their deposits on hand. While reserve requirements vary depending on the size of the bank and the type of deposit, they currently [1983] average 8%. If a depositor places \$100 in his account, the



**The stone money of Yap can be seen outside this house**

### U.S. Bank Failures\*

1977 -	6
1978 -	7
1979 -	10
1980 -	10
1981 -	10
1982 -	42
1983 -	48
1984 -	79
1985 -	120



\* Banks insured by the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation). This does not include failures of other savings institutions. An additional 1,196 banks were on the FDIC problem list as of March 11, 1986.

bank may loan \$92 of it. The borrower, whether he spends the money or deposits it in another bank account, will create \$92 in new deposits. Of this deposit \$84.64 may be loaned out, while \$7.36 is kept in reserve. This pyramiding process continues, so that with an 8% reserve requirement, a \$100 deposit may generate new money totalling \$1,200."

Banks usually lend up to the full limit permitted. But if a rumor spreads that the bank is in difficulty, depositors may lose their confidence in the bank and make a run on it. The bank will be unable to pay all the depositors on demand and could fail—unless rescued by the government or merged with a stronger bank. Even financially sound banks have gone under in this way.

### Other Reasons for Failure

Often it is the loans themselves that bring a bank into difficulty, especially when made for long terms at low interest rates. Usually there is no problem when the economy remains stable and the rates the bank pays for money received from depositors or other sources is lower than the interest on loans. But when rates paid for

money climb, as they did in recent times, the bank finds itself in the position of paying out more than it is taking in.

It is even worse when those who have taken out loans cannot pay them back. This is the situation right now with many farmers in the United States. Such default is causing many smaller regional banks to fail. "Exactly one-half of the banks on the 1985 failure list were designated as farm banks, that is, at least 25% of their loans were related to agriculture," says the financial newspaper *American Banker*.

Outright fraud and embezzlement is another reason for bank failure. The age of electronic transfers has made possible stealing of funds that makes old-time bank holdups look tame by comparison. "The American economy suffers an annual loss of over 500 million dollars in this way," states the Paris daily newspaper *Le Figaro*. "In Europe, the big banks are much more discreet about the figures, not wishing to reveal their problems. They nevertheless admit to greater losses from computer fraud than from holdups and common burglary. Computer fraud has become the scourge of our modern economy. . . . As soon as countermoves are discovered by computer experts, new loopholes come to light that are rapidly exploited by certain individuals to their own advantage."

As in every business, mismanagement and poor business practices can also cause failure. In fact, mismanagement is said to play a crucial role in most bank failures. It could be that the bank directors made

unsecured loans to their friends or relatives. Or perhaps they overextended themselves in more prosperous times. Or greed and an effort to make a killing and get rich quick fostered some reckless investments.

In some cases, fierce competition has led banks to take extraordinary risks. Some fall victim to their own overly aggressive lending policies. In a need to cover up when problems occur and to improve reserves and cash flow, some banks seek to entice depositors by offering unusually high rates of interest or even make further investments in risky ventures.

Governmental insuring of deposits—guaranteeing that, no matter what happens, depositors will be repaid—has also induced some banks to throw caution to the wind. But the future is unpredictable.

Some who made investments in oil and other energy fields when such were booming and prices were high, for instance, went into bankruptcy when prices plunged or ventures failed. Or if money disinflates, it can wreak havoc for those who expected to pay back borrowed money in cheaper inflated dollars.

These problems that lead to bank failures are not limited to small banks. Some of the world's largest financial institutions also find themselves in sore straits. Many have made millions, even billions, of dollars' worth of loans to Third World countries that cannot now pay back the interest, much less the principal. The rash of bank failures in recent years has raised questions worldwide. Is our trust misplaced? Just how safe are the banks?

## How Safe Are the Banks?

**"In our opinion it is just a matter of time—a relatively short time—until there is a general worldwide run on the banks, with virtually all banks closing."—When Your Bank Fails, by Dennis Turner.**

**"The banking system is completely safe. We have in place the mechanisms to take care of any problems, large or small, that might arise."—William Isaac, former chairman of Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, quoted in U.S. News & World Report.**

**F**EW people store money under the mattress anymore. Aside from the danger of loss due to fire or theft, money thus stored is stagnant. It does not increase in

amount and will most likely decrease in value because of inflation or devaluation of currency.

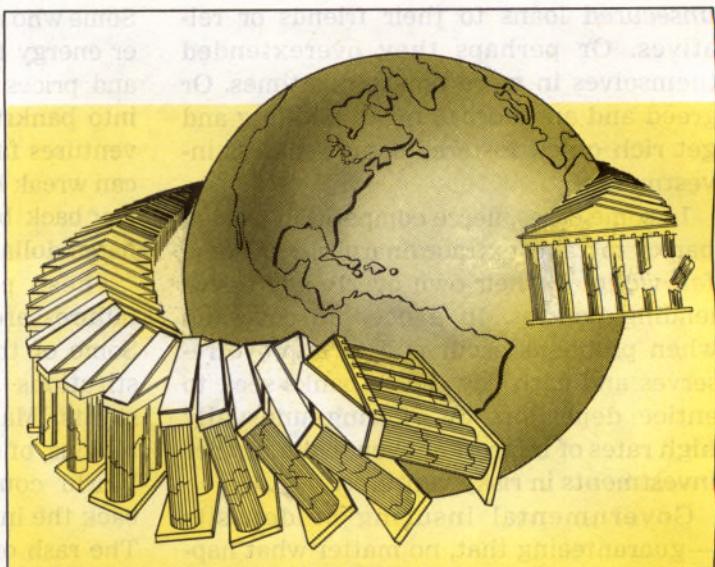
To increase one's savings, money must be

put to use. The means most widely accepted and used—both for safekeeping and for profit—is the banks. But how safe are they? As shown by the earlier quotations, there are widely divergent views.

### ***Is There Reason for Alarm?***

"The entire world banking system is very much interrelated," points out David Rockefeller, retired chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank. "Necessarily, banks do a lot of business with one another, so there is tremendous interdependence." As a result, no bank or nation really stands alone. So whenever a bank fails, there is concern that it may pull other banks down with it or reduce the confidence so essential to the banking industry. The possibility then exists that depositors elsewhere will rush to withdraw their funds and thereby cause the downfall of other banks in an uncontrolled domino effect.

Is there a chance that a bank collapse somewhere could pull down the international banking system? "The regulators in the U.S. and other countries are sure to take strong steps to prevent any major failure that appeared imminent,"



**If many big banks fail, a domino effect might cause the collapse of the whole banking system**

says Rockefeller. "I think it is most unlikely that it will happen."

So far, even though there have been some serious problems and failures around the globe in recent years, the governments have stepped in to bail out their troubled financial institutions. "The finance ministers and the bankers are more than ever haunted by the specter of 1929, and they will do everything they can to avoid a repetition of the financial catastrophe that happened fifty years ago—with the more or less conscious hope of avoiding its seemingly inevitable result, world war," explains the French weekly *L'Express*. Still, there is reason for concern.

### ***The Debt Problem***

Banks are inherently a risky business. They handle large amounts of money that is mostly not their own. Additionally, they create money and make loans far in excess of their net worth. While they may take adequate precautions, the banks know that some loans will turn bad. Therefore a certain amount is set aside as loan reserves to cover bad debts. But if an unusual number of loans turn sour, those reserves will not be sufficient to

## The Banking Situation—What Others Say

- "It is no overstatement to say that the governments of dozens of debt-ridden nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Federal Reserve Board, and hundreds of American and foreign banks together face the severest and broadest financial crisis since the 1930s."—*New York magazine*.
- "Present policies provide only a most precarious protection. The world's financial safety is balanced on a knife-edge. The debt crisis threatens not only development in developing countries but also the stability of the banking system of industrial countries."—Report by a Commonwealth group of experts, *The Guardian* of London.
- "The immense debt owed to the banks of the United States by third-world nations is poised like a potential avalanche above the American banking system."—*The New York Times Magazine*.
- "The total global debt is so massive that it has laid the groundwork for a first-rate debt crisis in the international banking system." "The supreme irony of the global debt crisis is that the banks are in so deep they can't get out without bringing down the whole house of cards."—*Savvy magazine*.
- "The situation today is more critical and more dangerous than it was in the 1930s."—West German economist Kurt Richebächer, *U.S. News & World Report*.

cover the large loan losses, or a run on the bank. "The more equity that's at risk because of bad loans, the weaker the bank gets financially," states *New York magazine*. "Bankruptcy (or failure) occurs when all the bank equity is used up."

More and more banks today are finding themselves in just that position—too many of their loans are turning sour, and there is insufficient capital to back them up. The reasons given are legion: the oil crisis, trade restrictions and deficits, downturns in the economy, unstable interest rates, capital flight, inflation, disinflation, recessions, overly aggressive lending policies, corporate bankruptcies, fierce competition, deregulation—even ignorance and stupidity.

But there are ways to stay alive—on paper. Reschedul-

ing the loans, stretching the debt over a longer period, is one means used and reused. Another is to list the loans at full value, though there may be little hope of having the principal paid in full. An oft used tactic is to lend the borrowers more money so that they can make their interest payments.

All these methods are currently being used by banks in regard to Third World debt, considered by many to be the greatest threat to the stability of the international banking system. According to a World Bank survey, the external debt of over a hundred developing nations reached a combined total of some \$950 billion at the end of 1985, an increase of 4.6 percent over the previous year. Although already too large, it is expected to reach \$1.01 trillion by the end of 1986. Why? Because many of those nations simply cannot repay and are pressing for more time and money. Taking into account the enormity of their loans, the banks have complied. As one person puts it: "If I owe you a dollar, I am in your power; but if I owe you a million, you are in my power."

Always looming ahead is the possibility that some deeply indebted nations, tiring of the hardships of

austerity programs, may just decide not to pay at all. The banks cannot force sovereign states to pay. "For banks, the meaning of the global debt crisis is simple," states *Savvy* magazine. "They earn most of their profits by making loans, and if countries cannot repay their huge loans, banks' profits, capital bases, and stock prices could fall precipitously. . . . Significant Third World defaults could stretch the financial system to the breaking point, possibly resulting in the collapse of major banks."

A default by just four nations—Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela—could bring about the collapse of the nine largest U.S. banks, experts warn. "That actual defaults have not taken place is remarkable," states *The New York Times Magazine*. "One could, of course, attribute it to semantics. Just as wars are no longer 'declared,' no one is now declared 'legally' in default."

#### **"Is My Bank Safe?"**

Can one tell if a bank is strong and solvent? "For most depositors it's difficult or impossible to find out what shape a bank" is in, states the magazine *Changing Times*. Adds *The New York Times*: "Recent experience has shown that it is extremely difficult for outsiders to judge the soundness of a bank. Practically every large

#### **Seventeen Heavily Indebted Developing Countries**

Country	Foreign Debt (\$ in U.S. billions)	Percent Owed Private Sources*
Argentina	50.8	86.8
Bolivia	4.0	39.3
Brazil	107.3	84.2
Chile	21.0	87.2
Colombia	11.3	57.5
Costa Rica	4.2	59.7
Ecuador	8.5	73.8
Ivory Coast	8.0	64.1
Jamaica	3.4	24.0
Mexico	99.0	89.1
Morocco	14.0	39.1
Nigeria	19.3	88.2
Peru	13.4	60.7
Philippines	24.8	67.8
Uruguay	3.6	82.1
Venezuela	33.6	99.5
Yugoslavia	19.6	64.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>445.9</b>	<b>80.8</b>

\* Mostly commercial banks

Source: *World Debt Tables*, 1985-86 edition, published by The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

bank that collapsed in recent years, or nearly collapsed, had been highly touted by bank-stock analysts. . . . Even bank regulators and auditors were unable to detect serious troubles until it was far too late."

Usually the most a customer does is examine the bank cosmetically: the types of services offered, the friendliness and speed with which he is served. In fact, where banks advertise, it is usually those things that they emphasize—the friendly banker, the quick loan, special accounts or services, convenience. Sometimes gifts are offered to lure in new depositors. But little is said about the financial standing of the bank. Of course, a bank's services are important. Also to be noted is the interest given and how it is compounded, as yields will vary. Of utmost importance to the depositor is the safety of his money.

Here, deposit insurance is the key. "Because of depos-

it insurance, unless there is an utter collapse of the banking system these are the problems of bankers and bank stockholders, not depositors," says *The Atlantic Monthly*. "It is extremely unlikely that bank failures today could bring thirties-style losses of life's savings to individuals."

So it is good to check if accounts are insured and by whom. Government insurance, of course, is best. An example of this is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in the United States. Some who were told that their accounts were insured later found that it was by a private agency with insufficient funds to repay all depositors when the bank failed. Check also the amount insured. If your account exceeds that limit, consider opening accounts in other banks so that all your money will be covered.

### **What Lies Ahead?**

Individual bank failures are expected to continue and the number may even rise. Yet, what is of utmost importance to the banking system is that confidence in it be maintained. "A crisis would occur only if depositors interpreted these financial lurches as a reason to withdraw their money from the affected banks," states *Fortune* magazine. Therefore, all-out efforts are being made to strengthen the system and keep that confidence strong.

Plans are also in motion to reduce the debt of Third World countries to manageable levels and aid them to meet their obligations. "In the final analysis, the enormous financial deficit will be absorbed by the taxpayers worldwide," states Albin Chalandon, former French Minister of Industrial Planning.

How safe, then, are the banks? One bank official put it this way: "The banks are as

safe as the governments that back them up." While that may seem reassuring now, it gives thinking persons reason for pause. Why? Because the Bible foretells the complete destruction of *all* earthly governments and their replacement by the everlasting Kingdom of God. (Daniel 2:44) And it points to events of this 20th century as marking the conclusion of the present system of things.—Matthew 24:3, 6, 7, 21, 22.

The Bible tells about people, at that time, throwing even their gold and silver into the streets as valueless to save them. (Ezekiel 7:19; Zephaniah 1:18) Since that will be true of these more precious substances, what trust can be placed in national currencies or in the financial institutions that depend on them? Gone will be the governments that back them up!

So Jesus aptly cautioned: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches."—Matthew 6:19-21, 24.

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## **In Our Next Issue**

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- *What Hope for Today's Youth?*
  - *Understanding the Stutterer's Challenge*
  - *Taxes—Must All Be Paid?*
-

# A Tragic Saturday That Shattered My Family

SATURDAY, April 27, 1968, began like any normal Saturday at our Catholic farm home near Mattoon, Illinois. As usual, my wife prepared a long grocery list. It took a lot of food to feed the 9 of our 12 children still living at home.

Our 16-year-old son Louis was getting ready to ride into town with my wife and me, since he wanted to purchase a new belt. He and his 15-year-old brother Timothy, along with an 18-year-old youth named Charles Fuller, had been working to make an old car into a dune buggy. Charles was dating Louis' twin sister, Louise, and would often come out to the farm on Saturday.

On this particular Saturday, our 14-year-old, Patty, and her 12-year-old sister Billie Colleen were expected to spend the day doing chores. Our little girls, Theresa Jean, 10, and Mary Katharin, 9, were anxious to get out-of-doors into the sun. Our 7-year-old, Gary, had asked me to take him fishing. However, I was able to get him to settle for a day later in the week, since I planned to work on the truck. Kenny, 5, the baby of the family, was delighted to have his older brothers and sisters home with him for the day.

Little did we know that this Saturday would change the rest of our lives.

## An Innocent Beginning

Between eight and nine in the morning, my wife and I and Louis left for town.

While we were gone, Charles Fuller arrived, and he and Tim went out hunting. The boys were back by the time my wife and I and Louis returned from shopping.

After lunch, Tim and I left to go to my brother's house to work on the truck. I asked Charles if he wanted to go along, but he declined. As I waved good-bye, I noticed Louis, Gary, and little Kenny spading up a spot for a flower bed. Theresa and Mary were playing on the car the boys were making into a dune buggy.

About three o'clock that afternoon, Louise thawed two pies for an afternoon snack. Charles always seemed anxious to help Louise, and we were impressed by his gallant attitude. Patty, who was doing chores that day, got too close to the stove. In an instant her blouse was on fire! She was burned so badly that my wife took her to the hospital. Louise and Billie Colleen were instructed to clean the kitchen while they were gone. As nearly as Louise and Billie can recall, Charles Fuller and Louis went outside about the same time. What happened during the next hour or two, we can only speculate.

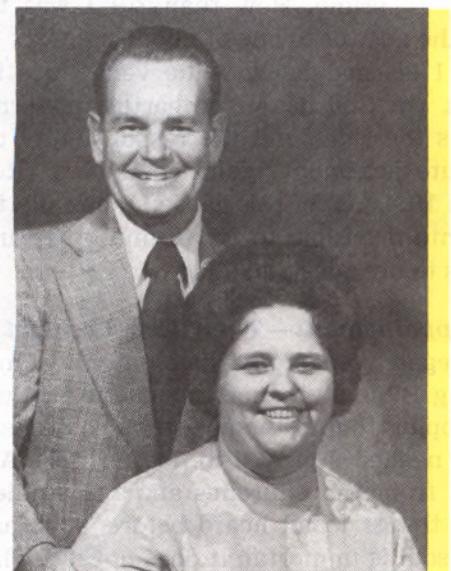
About five, Charles came inside and asked Louise when she would be finished. According to Billie, he said: "I've killed five little birds. Come on out and see." But Louise didn't go, telling him that I didn't approve of killing birds. Shortly afterward, my wife and Patty returned from the hos-

pital, and Charles went out to the car and asked for a ride back to town, about six miles (10 km) away. He said to tell Louise that he would be back later.

### ***Discovering a Tragedy***

It started getting dark, and my wife realized it was time for the children to come into the house. Billie was sent to call for them. When there was no answer, Louise went with Billie to look for the children. They found the bodies of Theresa and Mary about 200 yards (180 m) from the house in the corncrib. Running back to the house, they reported: "The girls must have fallen from the rafters." I was phoned and told that the girls were dead. 'Maybe hurt but not dead' were my thoughts as I hurried home.

When my brother and I drove up, Billie was by the road trying to flag down help. She told me to go to the corncrib. I knew at once that it was worse than I had thought. The bodies of the girls were cool as I picked them up, and I realized they were dead.



**My wife  
and I**

### ***"I've killed five little birds"***

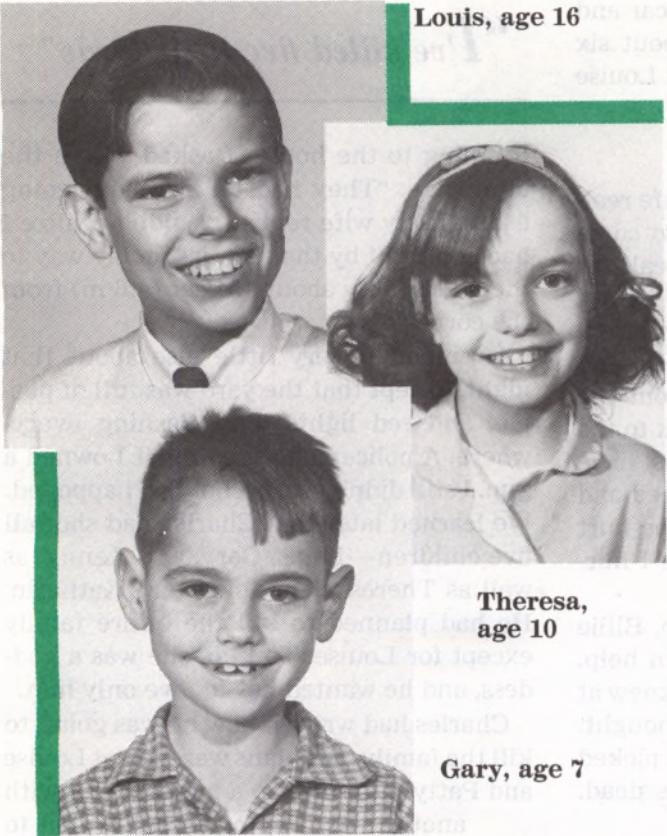
Running to the house, I asked where the boys were. "They had talked about going fishing," my wife replied. I didn't realize I had run right by their bodies on my way to the house, only about 15 feet (4.6 m) from the corncrib.

I remember very little else about that night, except that the yard was full of people, and red lights were flashing everywhere. A policeman asked me if I owned a gun. I still didn't grasp what had happened. We learned later that Charles had shot all five children—Louis, Gary, and Kenny, as well as Theresa Jean and Mary Katharin. He had planned to kill the entire family except for Louise. To him, she was a goddess, and he wanted her to love only him.

Charles had written how he was going to kill the family. His plans were to get Louise and Patty into town to a movie along with another boy. It was then his plan to pretend to go to the lobby for popcorn and drinks. Instead he would go to our home and kill all of us. Next he planned to return to the movie, tell Patty she was wanted at home, and when they arrived at the house, kill the boy and Patty. Then he intended to put the gun in the boy's hand. He wanted to make himself look like a hero to Louise, claiming that he killed the boy in an attempt to stop his massacre of the family.

### ***Searching for Answers***

The next few months were a nightmare for all of us. There were so many questions on my mind. Why would God let something like this



**Louis, age 16**

**Theresa,  
age 10**

**Gary, age 7**

happen to our children? Was Louis, our 16-year-old, in heaven or in hell? Were the other four in heaven, since they were too young to be accountable for themselves? Everything I had lived for seemed gone. I began to wonder if I really wanted to keep on living. But I had the other children and my wife; these were the reasons I kept going.

I began to search for answers by visiting our Catholic priest. He told me that I had five little angels in heaven: But that only raised more questions in my mind, such as: If our children are in heaven, why do we have to pay to have prayers said to get them out of purgatory? No one could give me a straight answer.

Also, since Charles Fuller had cold-bloodedly murdered our children, shouldn't he have been executed? As it was, he was sentenced to prison, and for many years now it has been very trying for my family and me to go to prison each year to stop his being paroled. 'Vengeance is mine, says the Lord,' I was told. 'Thou shalt not kill.' But I felt that 'life for life' seemed a more appropriate application of Scripture for this horrendous crime.—Romans 12:19; Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 19:21.

One day while talking with a friend about the death penalty, he encouraged me to look up Genesis 9:6. It says: "Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed." When I read that, my belief was reinforced that the boy should have been put to death for his crime. How thankful I was to find the answer to one of my questions!

As I learned later, while vengeance is God's, yet God has given earthly governments the right and the responsibility to execute judgment against evildoers. (Romans 13:4) All of this caused me really to dig into my Bible to try to find other answers to my questions.

#### ***Disappointment—Then True Comfort***

I began going to various churches and taking Bible study correspondence courses, hoping to find the answers I so desperately needed. I prayed to God for help. All I got from the churches and the studies were things I had heard before, such as: 'The soul is immortal, it does not die. The



Mary Katharin,  
age 9



Kenny, age 5

dead are living somewhere as angels,' which I later learned the Bible definitely does not teach.—Ecclesiastes 9:5; Ezekiel 18:4, 20.

Then one day, 11 months after the death of my children, a letter came from someone in California who had read about the murders in the paper. Along with the letter, the woman sent a little blue book called *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and a year's subscription to the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. I will never forget the day that letter came. It spoke of the hope of the resurrection for the dead. I looked up all the scriptures quoted, including John 5:28, 29. I was so happy that I cried!

I remember running into the room where my wife and my daughter Louise were, saying: "Look, the Bible says that if we live a good clean life, we can see our dead ones again, not as spirits as we have been told but as real people. Ones we can hold and love just as we did before they died." To my great surprise, my wife wanted nothing to do with the things I was reading. Her hostile reaction, however, did not dampen my desire to learn more.

I sat down and read the little blue book through and found the answers to the questions that had plagued me. I got in touch with Jehovah's Witnesses, and a Bible study was started at once. My family thought I had lost my mind. My wife burned all my literature and called the priest to have him talk with me.

When the priest came, he warned me to stay away from Jehovah's Witnesses. I replied that I felt I was being taught the truth about the only true God and that Jehovah's Witnesses showed the love for one another spoken about at John 13:35. The priest said he had a 2:00 p.m. appointment, but he would see me again soon. That was 16 years ago, and he has not been back. However, since our daughter Billie was going to a Catholic school, he

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***I felt that 'life for life'  
seemed a more appropriate  
application of Scripture***

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## **I was accused of being a drunk and a woman chaser**

would send home with her tracts against Jehovah's Witnesses.

But that was only part of the campaign to dissuade me from studying the Bible with the Witnesses. One of my brothers was a Baptist minister, and he spent three hours trying to tell me how to be a good Christian and to stay away from Jehovah's Witnesses. My father said that the Witnesses would brainwash me, to which I replied that my brain needed a good washing, since I had been taught so many untruths for so many years.

Also, my mother, who was a Pentecostal, had her minister come and try to talk me out of my new religion. He gave a talk in his church about Jehovah's Witnesses and sent a copy of his talk to me. However, through all the opposition I received, I did not give up what I knew to be true teachings from the Bible.

### **Vicious Rumors**

Not only has our family been the victim of a vicious crime but we have also been victims of vicious rumors. For instance, my daughter Louise was accused of helping to kill her sisters and brothers. And I was accused of being a drunk and a woman chaser. Such an accusation once had a quite humorous twist.

A friend and I were sitting in our vehicle when a man came out of the house and began talking with us. He noticed the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines in the car and asked who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. When I replied that I was, he began saying how Pastor Russell, the first

president of the Watch Tower Society, was an immoral man.

I was trying to think of how I could refute him so that my friend could see that he was not telling the truth. But then he started telling about the Witness William Cox, saying that he was a woman chaser and a drunk. He claimed that the night the Cox children were killed, William was up-town with a woman in a tavern. My friend knew that I was not that kind of person.

I asked the man if he would know Mr. Cox if he saw him? "Why, yes, I've known him for 20 years or more." By now my friend and I were about to die laughing, so I asked my friend if he'd like to tell the man whom he was talking to. "I sure would," he said, "Mister, you're talking to William Cox."

Even though my experience has been a tragic one, it has worked to my benefit at times, allowing me to witness to people who otherwise would not have listened. I recall one month when I was able to obtain over 50 subscriptions to *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*

### **Happy Prospects**

What has been the outcome for my family? My wife has come to appreciate the Bible teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the attitude of my children has changed tremendously. When my wife asked to have her name removed from the church membership roll, Patty and Billie Colleen had their names removed also.

My fervent prayer is that some day my entire family will become dedicated to Jehovah and have the same hope I have, that of being able to see our little ones when they are resurrected into the Paradise earth. There, no longer will violence and death plague us. (Revelation 21:3, 4)  
—As told by William Cox.

## Young People Ask...

# 'What's Wrong With Having a Good Time?'

**O**N FRIDAY evenings, Pauline (not her real name) used to go to Christian meetings. But as much as she enjoyed the discussions there, she knew that at the same time the kids from school were attending parties and dances.

Pauline says that when the meeting was over, she would pass by a local teen hangout on her way home. She recalls: "Attracted by the loud music and flashing lights, I would press my nose to the window as we passed and longingly imagine the fun they must be having." In time, her desire to enjoy herself with her friends became the most important thing in her life.



### 'Am I Missing Out?'

Is that how important having a good time is to you? Probably not. But perhaps every once in a while you feel, as did Pauline, that you are missing out on something. Your friends and schoolmates all seem to be having such a good time. And you? Stuck in a routine of school, homework, and household chores. Life can seem even more restrictive if your parents are Christians and insist on following Bible principles.

You want to watch that TV show all the others are talking about, but your parents say it is too violent. You want to go out with

**Do youths who follow Bible principles really miss out on a good time?**

some classmates, but *they* call them bad association. (1 Corinthians 15:33) You want to have some friends over for a gathering, but Mom and Dad insist on supervising it.

But some of your school acquaintances may have no such restrictions. Their folks permit—or ignore—their smoking marijuana, attending rowdy rock concerts, and even engaging in illicit sex. Not that *you* want to do these bad things. But you may envy your friends' freedom to do what they want. 'What's wrong with having a good time once in a while?' you ask.

### **Man—Made to Enjoy Life!**

As far as God our Maker is concerned, there is nothing wrong with an occasional good time. Evidence of this is shown in creation. Picture the sleek, bright-eyed little otter as it toboggans down its own homemade mud slide. Again and again it swishes down the slide, splashing headfirst into the water—just playing. The little critter never seems to tire of its joyous sport. Does this not tell you something about the personality of the One who made this playful creature?

Jehovah is a "happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) He wants his creatures not merely to exist but also to have real joy in living. Surely this would be especially true of us humans who are created in God's own image.—Genesis 1:26, 27.

God thus endowed the first human, Adam, with the capacity to enjoy himself. He was no mere robot. Nor was his a sterile, study-only, or work-only, personality. He had a real zest for living. To this end, God gave Adam the ability to sense and enjoy a limitless variety of sights, tastes, sounds, and smells. He further recognized Adam's need for association and provided him a perfect companion.—Genesis 2:18, 23.

So God does not deny young people a good time. Through the wise man Solomon, He says: "Young people, enjoy your youth. Be happy while you are still young. Do what you want to do, and follow your heart's desire."—Ecclesiastes 11:9, *Today's English Version*.

### **Anything Goes?**

But does this mean that when it comes to recreation, anything goes? Hardly. For after saying the above words, Solomon cautions: "But remember that God is going to judge you for whatever you do." True, God wants you to enjoy life to the full. But at the same time, he holds you responsible for your actions. "Remove vexation from your heart, and ward off calamity from your flesh; for youth and the prime of life are vanity," Solomon continues.—Ecclesiastes 11:10.

Bible principles must therefore not be sacrificed for the sake of having a good time. For what brings "fun" today often brings vexation tomorrow. Some youths, for example, say that smoking marijuana is fun. But lung cancer or brain and genetic damage are *not* fun; neither are the consequences of sexual immorality—pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases—fun.\* It is easy, though, to forget this and start envying the freedom some youths seem to enjoy.

The psalmist once felt that way. "I became envious of the boasters, when I would see the very peace of wicked people," he confessed. He even began to doubt the value of living by righteous principles. "Surely it is in vain that I have cleansed my heart and that I wash my hands in innocence itself," he said. But then a profound insight came to him: Wicked people are really "on

\* See the September 8, 1985, *Awake!* article "Can Smoking Pot Ruin My Health?"

slippery ground"—teetering on disaster! (Psalm 73:3, 13, 18) Inevitably they pay the price for violating godly principles.

Pauline, too, learned this—the hard way. Her desire for a good time overwhelmed her. So she stopped attending Christian meetings and made friends with pleasure-seeking youths. From there, it was all downhill. "I found myself practicing all the wrong things I had been warned against." Her wayward behavior even resulted in her being arrested and sent to a school for wayward girls! Yet all this heartache could have been avoided had she heeded Solomon's warning to "ward off calamity."

### **Finding a Balance**

This is why your parents lay restrictions upon you. They are not trying to rob you of a good time. Rather, they want you to "remove vexation from your heart" and spare yourself serious problems. However, 'removing vexation' means more than simply avoiding bad practices. It also means keeping your priorities in order. Solomon said: "For everything there is an appointed time . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to wail and a time to skip about." —Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4.

We live in a world that makes pleasure a top priority. A book on marketing strategy describes what it calls The New Theology of Pleasure: "There is also an important trend toward living in the present rather than the future; in having fun now rather than later. People want to live life now, and companies that provide products and services which allow consumers to do this have typically enjoyed remarkable success." The Bible prophesied that people today would be "lovers of pleasures." —2 Timothy 3:1, 4.

A Christian, though, endeavors to main-

tain a balance. Recreational activities are like rich spices. They certainly make a meal more appetizing. But would you feature them as the main dish? (Compare Proverbs 24:13 and 25:27.) Many youths, though, live their lives going from one form of entertainment to the next. The result is often a shallow form of gaiety that leaves them empty and frustrated. Said Solomon: "Anything that my eyes asked for I did not keep away from them. I did not hold back my heart from any sort of rejoicing . . . And, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind."—Ecclesiastes 2:10, 11.

No, recreational activities are not what life is all about. Jesus Christ kept recreation in its place. The Bible says that he attended a wedding feast in Cana. Such feasts included food, music, dancing, and upbuilding association. Jesus even made a contribution to the success of the wedding feast by miraculously providing wine. (John 2:3-11) He knew how to have a good time.

But Jesus' life was not a nonstop party. He spent most of his time pursuing spiritual interests, teaching people the will of God. Said he: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) Doing God's will brought Jesus far more lasting pleasure than some temporary diversion.

After her worldly fling, Pauline made drastic changes in her life. She, too, learned the joy of being wholly devoted to the doing of God's will. She now endeavors to keep recreation and entertainment in their place. But what about those times when recreation is needed and appropriate? What are some things you can do to fill those hours? A future article will discuss this.

# The Secret of Longevity

**A**S A normal person, you would like to live for a long, long time. But how long can you expect to live? What is the limit of the human life span? Can you do anything to extend your life span? What is the secret of longevity? These are good questions, and finding the answer to them might help you to live much longer than seems possible at present.

Before looking for these answers, we have to clarify the difference between two important expressions: "life span" and "life expectancy." Life span refers to the biological limit to the length of life. Life expectancy refers to the average number of years that a group of people born at the same time might be expected to live. Sadly, throughout history man's

life expectancy has fallen far short of his life span.

## ***Life Expectancy at Various Times***

"In a man's length of days he may see and suffer many things that he much mislikes. For I set the limit of man's life at seventy years." These were the words of Solon, an Athenian statesman and Greek lawmaker who lived about 600 B.C.E. Thus, according to him, the life span was 70 years. However, according to data from burial inscriptions, about 400 B.C.E. the life expectancy in Greece was approximately 29 years.

In ancient times, apparently the life expectancy in various countries of Europe did not vary substantially from that in ancient Greece. Because of the high death rate at an early age, the average life expectancy fell far short of the life span. The box on the next page gives the average age at death in some European countries, providing a comparison of that of ancient times with the life expectancy about the year 1900 and at the present time.

As you look at the figures in the box, you will note that a remarkable increase in life expectancy was reached during this 20th century. So, you may wonder, how long will this increase continue? Regarding the increase in life expectan-



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**"For hundreds of years, alchemists attempted to prepare rejuvenating elixirs, without success"**

cy, James F. Fries and Lawrence M. Crapo wrote in their work *Vitality and Aging*, 1981, pages 74-6:

"The average length of life in the United States has increased from approximately 47 years at the turn of the century to over 73 years today, an increase of more than 25 years. . . . A critical look at these data, however, shows that the increase in life expectancy results from the elimination of premature death rather than by extension of the natural life span. When life expectancy is calculated from particular ages, the higher the age, the less is the increase. From age 40, life expectancy has increased relatively little. From age 75, the increase is barely perceptible. Beyond the age of 85, an increase cannot be confidently determined at all. . . . The best projections we can develop indicate that the median natural human life span is set at a maximum of 85 years."

But what about the possibility of extending the life span significantly by diet, vitamins, drugs, and so forth? On page 18 of their work, Fries and Crapo explain:

"For hundreds of years, alchemists attempted to prepare rejuvenating elixirs, without success. Literally hundreds of substances, including herbs, drugs, vitamins, extracts of animal cells, fermented milk, and various serums and potions have been reported to have rejuvenating properties, without convincing evidence. In our

own country, the traditional snake oil potions have fallen into disrepute, but we do still have our vitamins. Recently, the drug gerovital has been promoted by Aslan in Rumania as an agent to prevent aging. Gerovital, whose main ingredient is the local anesthetic Novocaine, has been used in treatment of Khrushchev [1894-1971], Sukarno [1901-1970], Ho Chi Minh [1890-1969], and other dignitaries. There exists, of course, no evidence that this agent has any such effects, and there are no a priori reasons to assume that it should. The persons cited as examples of prominent users by gerovital proponents all died, and at unremarkable ages.

"In 1974, Packer and Smith published a paper in a prestigious American scientific

### Life Expectancy

Country	In ancient times*	About 1900	At present time
Austria	37	40	73
Bulgaria	39	40	72
England	33	50	74
France	28	47	75
Germany	35	47	73
Greece	29	40	74
Hungary	36	38	70
Italy	27	45	74
Romania	34	42 <sup>#</sup>	71
Spain	37	35	76
Yugoslavia	33	52 <sup>†</sup>	70

\* The ages for ancient times were compiled from burial inscriptions.

# 1932

† 1931-33

The data is from the *History of Human Life Span and Mortality*, by Gy. Acsádi and J. Nemeskéri, Budapest, 1970, page 222, and from *Old Age Among the Ancient Greeks*, by Bessie E. Richardson, page 234. For the period around 1900, data is from the *Demographic Yearbook*, 1967, by the United Nations, New York, 1968, pages 722-38, and from *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Volume 38, 1960, page 132. For the present time, data is from the *1986 World Population Data Sheet*, published by the Population Reference Bureau.

journal reporting experiments that seemed to show that vitamin E markedly prolonged the life span of normal human fibroblast cells cultured in a laboratory flask. Later, they retracted this claim, when neither they nor others were able to reproduce the experimental results. To date, no diets, lifestyles, vitamins, drugs, or tonics have been shown to extend the human life span. Of the 4 billion human beings who have lived and died, nearly every possible combination of diet, chemical exposure, and psychological life must have existed. The absence of super-centenarians argues strongly that there is no easy track to long life, or someone would have found it by now."

Clearly, humans have not been capable of extending their *life span*, although particularly by reducing the number of deaths from childhood diseases, *life expectancy* has been extended somewhat. From the human standpoint, the hope of extending the life span is dim indeed. However, there is a sure hope that the human life span will be extended. By what means?

### ***Extending the Human Life Span***

Almost 2,000 years ago Jesus Christ asked: "Who of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his life span?" (Luke 12:25) Nobody, of course! However, Jesus also said: "The things impossible with men are possible with God."—Luke 18:27.

God's original purpose was for man to live forever. The first man Adam had the opportunity to enjoy an endless life span, subject to obedience to God. (Genesis 2:15-17) However, because of disobedience, Adam forfeited that opportunity, and from him all the human race inherited sin and death.—Romans 5:12.

Many of the pre-Flood patriarchs, being closer to Adam's original perfection, pos-

sessed life spans approaching a thousand years. (Genesis 5:5-31) After the Flood, the human life span dropped suddenly, and by his time Moses could write: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things."—Psalm 90:10.

Later on, the prophet Isaiah foretold that God "will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces." (Isaiah 25:8) This promise was repeated in the last book of the Bible, where it says that God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Revelation 21:4.

You may ask, though: Will I inherit these blessings automatically, or will I have to do something in order to receive them? The Bible goes on to say: "Anyone conquering will inherit these things, and I shall be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and fornicators and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This means the second death."—Revelation 21:7, 8.

Yes, in order to live forever you have to be a conqueror, that is, you have to remain unconquered by the world with its practices mentioned in Revelation 21:8. Likewise, taking in knowledge about God and about his Son is essential.—John 17:3.

Will you be a conqueror? Will you be among the millions who are about to inherit the blessing of an eternal longevity? Proper action on your part will enable you to answer these questions affirmatively.

# Cancer —How Can You Be Supportive?

**"At the heart of any clinical practice is the necessity for the doctor to convey a sense of empathy and help the patient understand his or her illness."—Holistic Medicine.**

CARING for cancer patients is a major challenge, especially for the medical staff who have direct contact with the patient. They are caught between two difficult alternatives—the need to show empathy and communicate optimism and at the same time the need to avoid a subjective and sentimental approach to the sick person. What does this mean in practice?

Doctors and nurses who constantly deal with cancer patients cannot allow themselves to suffer with every patient, otherwise they would have a high emotional burn-out rate. *Awake!* asked a former hospital pharmacist about this factor. He stated: "I had to deal with all kinds of doctors and specialists at the hospital. The ones that always seemed to be down in the mouth or depressed were the cancer specialists."

At the same time, the medical staff cannot just be impersonal and aseptic, for the patient looks to them for hope. As Maurice Finkel wrote in *Fresh Hope in Cancer*: "Above all, what the cancer patient needs is hope. Hope to give him the energy to struggle with his illness—even if his struggle fails. . . . The quitter always dies, the fighter has a chance of surviving."

The doctor's role is delicate, like walking a tightrope. He has to gauge how much information about the disease will help the

patient to fight back against it. If he says too much, will the patient relapse into defeatism? These factors also vary from culture to culture.

*Awake!* interviewed Tomoyoshi Hirano from Japan who recently lost his parents-in-law to cancer. He explained: "Our Japanese culture tends not to express unpleasant facts. The doctor would not tell my father-in-law that he had cancer. In fact, he would not even tell the daughters. He was only willing to tell me, an 'outsider,' the harsh facts of the case. I was supposed to make all the decisions without ever informing my wife or her father. However, I felt that as a Christian, I had a duty to tell the truth in a tactful way and not hide the facts."

On the other hand, in Western culture, if the doctor does not clarify the situation sufficiently, will he later be blamed because the patient made decisions with insufficient information? In fact, much will depend on what the patient wants to know and when he wants to know it. As Dr. Charles F. McKhann put it: "I realized that if people are able to ask hard questions, the least they deserve is their doctor's willingness and ability to give reasonable answers."—*The Facts About Cancer*.

Therefore, it is very encouraging when the medical staff are genuinely compassionate toward their patients. This emphasizes the importance of choosing a doctor with whom you can have a good rapport. Dr. McKhann adds: "A doctor in whom you have real confidence can make

everything more tolerable. Your doctor should be compassionate, understanding, and interested in you as a person as well as a patient."

Indicating that not all medical staff are always sensitive to the patient's needs, a cancer-patient nurse wrote to *The New York Times*: "What amazes me most are patients and families who survive, not cancer, but health-care professionals and facilities, whose organization and structure seem designed to frustrate, depress and deprive them of the resources and support crucial to their situation." She ended her letter by suggesting that "we must mark well that sensitivity, common courtesy, laughter and human caring are also 'weapons' in the war against cancer."

Others, such as close relatives and friends, also play a vital role in supporting the sick. This is especially true in the case of the husband, wife, or children of a patient. To illustrate the kind of support that others can give, *Awake!* interviewed several supportive spouses and some cancer survivors.

#### **"I Had to Change My Priorities"**

The vital role of the supportive family is illustrated by Terry's case. She was 28 when she discovered on the last day of 1982 that she had "aggressive" terminal cancer. She was given from 6 to 12 months to live by the doctors. How did she and her husband Paul face up to the situation?

Paul explained to *Awake!*: "I felt that we had to face reality. She only had so many



**Medical staff, loved ones, and friends can all be supportive**

months to live, and I just wanted to try to make her ending as dignified as possible. You see, the chemotherapy treatment can be so devastating, with the loss of hair and the constant nausea and vomiting."

*Awake!*: How did this affect your life as a husband?

"It meant that I had to change my priorities in life. Possessions and money became less important. I realized that I would have to be almost a full-time nurse to look after her. I also learned to exercise patience and to shrug off embarrassment when she was sick in public or had seizures. Fortunately, she was very realistic and did not wallow in self-pity. That helped to make my role easier."

*Awake!*: What other suggestions would you offer to relatives and friends of cancer victims?

"Don't ever let your loved one feel that he or she is a burden to you. Show empathy. Learn to tune in to their feelings so that you will know what to talk about and when. Sometimes they want to unburden

themselves, and at other times it is the last subject they wish to talk about."

*Awake!*: What helped Terry endure her test?

"Our fellow Witnesses were very supportive in their visits and in helping us with meals. From a more permanent point of view, her study of the Bible gave her a clear vision of the resurrection hope and of the time when there will be no more death or disease on earth."

As the doctors had predicted, before the year was up, Terry died, in October 1983.

#### ***Quality of Life and Goals***

When one is struck by a deadly disease, the question arises, How much longer do I have to live? Weeks? Months? Years? At that point, quality of life becomes more important. Achievements, even minor ones, such as writing letters and reading books, become significant and make life worth while. To the degree that activity is possible, it is a therapy.

This point of view is supported by 46-year-old Barbara from England. In 1980 she discovered she had cancer of the breast. Since then it has spread to other parts of her body. However, chemotherapy and radiation therapy have helped her. How does she keep going? "I find that having short-term goals is good for me. I plan ahead only for easily achievable goals for the near future. Then I find that I can be reasonably happy and contented.

"Trying to think of others and being concerned for them certainly helps me. So I

#### **Positive Self-Help for Cancer Patients**

1. Don't let denial take over. Be *realistic* and face the issue. That way you can make the most of the time available.
2. Have viable *plans or goals* for things you want to accomplish. Keep a purpose in your life. Life without meaning is empty. It doesn't have to be that way—it depends on you.
3. To the degree possible, *keep active*. Even if physically restricted, your intellectual life has not ended. So why bring it to a premature close? Keep your mind active—reading, writing, painting, learning. Even include new projects.
4. Develop a *positive attitude* so that you can wisely use your resources. Self-pity is self-centered and self-destructive. Think in terms of what you can do for others. Your friends and relatives can be upbuilt by your positive attitude.
5. Try to retain a *sense of humor* and the ability to laugh at yourself. See the roses, not just the thorns. Appreciate the *fact* that you are *living*, not just the *idea* that, like everyone else, you are *dying*.

busy myself with sending cards to cheer up others who are not feeling well. I also get pleasure out of writing letters to others."

And how does her husband Stephen support her? "My taking a real genuine interest in Barbara's condition helps her too. We tackle everything together. For example, though we both enjoy reading, we find it good to read out loud to each other and thus share the experience."

#### ***A Heart Attack, Then Cancer***

Dode's husband Charles, a strapping man in his 60's, was struck down with a massive heart attack in 1985. He was in intensive care for nine days but came out of the experience with such determination that within six weeks he was back at work. Then in September of that year, he began

to have uncontrollable hiccups while eating. After examination it was suspected that he had cancer of the stomach. He was operated on in December. Four weeks later he was back to work!

How has Dode tried to support her husband during these difficult months? She answers: "We did not waste time and nervous energy on negative speculations. We waited to get the facts on the case before discussing it or determining our course.

"Accepting the recommendation of our doctors and surgeon on the necessary treatment, we went ahead with full confidence. We kept our conversations positive and thought in terms of cure. My husband has a fighting spirit, and I was determined to help him."

*Awake!:* What else did you do to keep him in a positive frame of mind?

Dode: "I discouraged or limited visits during his hospital stay. Visits had to be by appointment and they had to be brief. That way I could screen out the well-intentioned people who might be tiring to him. In fact, better than visits were the hundreds of get-well cards that he received."

*Awake!:* We know that you were a registered nurse and have worked with many doctors. But now, as a patient's wife, how do you think the doctors can be supportive?

Dode: "As the doctor did in our case, I believe he should communicate a positive outlook to the patient. He should only tell him as much as he wants to know and in accordance with his questions. Of course, I expected the doctors to be frank with me. But with my husband, I wanted them to sow seeds of hope, not despair. So unless a patient demands an answer, I don't think you should tell someone that he or she has only so many months to live. Let that de-

pend on the patient's condition and determination."

*Awake!:* What helps you to cope from day to day?

Dode: "Sympathy! The supportive mate is under constant stress in trying to put on a bold front. So it is nice when someone asks, 'How are *you* doing Dode?' Then I know that they also understand my test.

"I find, too, that a sense of humor helps us. Since we both like golf and he has been losing a lot of weight, I one day said to him, 'I don't know if your legs are number three woods or number four irons right now!' He laughed. And do you know, within six weeks of the operation, he played 18 holes of golf with me!"

What does Charles feel have been the most encouraging factors for him as a patient?

"I can list three—my wife, the hospital staff, and all our friends. We had magnificent support from the medical staff. They explained every step of the surgical process to us ahead of time and treated us as individuals, not as ciphers. As a consequence, we had full confidence in them, and that helped us to be optimistic.

"Of course, my best support was my wife. And her being an ex-nurse made it even better for me. Prayer was also a great comfort and strength to me. I prayed to be able to keep on working . . . and here you see me in my office!"

### ***Facing Reality, Living With Hope***

*Awake!* interviewed Ethel, whose husband Stan recently died of cancer at the age of 65.

*Awake!:* What kind of treatment did Stan undergo?

Ethel: "His cancer of the hip was first diagnosed in January 1985. Shortly after that, we discovered that he also had tumors

in a lung, an eye, and on the brain. He was given chemotherapy for the lung and then sessions of radiation for the other sites. For a while he seemed to get better and was making plans for a trip. Then one day he had severe vomiting, and we knew it was a relapse. More or less from that point onward, we both knew that he could not survive."

*Awake!*: Then how did the two of you react to that fact?

Ethel: "We talked freely about our situation, and Stan faced up to reality. In fact, by his attitude he helped me to face the truth of the situation.

"I am not the weeping type, and I tried to avoid breaking down in front of him. But I remember one day finding him weeping, and that set me off. I said to him, 'If you feel like crying, we might as well cry together and get it over with.' So we wept together, and I think it relieved us. He smiled sheepishly afterward, but I know it did us good.

"Another vital factor was our Bible hope of a resurrection. We often talked about

that. He would say: 'I'll just go to sleep for a while. And then I'll be back when the new system has taken over in this earth.' Our faith made a big difference."

### Cancer and Faith

Since cancer is a very personal battle, a strong faith can help. Prayer, which is communication with God, can have a very calming influence. As the Bible states: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

According to fulfilled Bible prophecy, the time is near when God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." Yes, under God's Kingdom rule, cancer, along with all other scourges, will be eliminated. That time is near.—Revelation 21:3, 4; Luke 21:29-33.

## Fighting Back Against Cancer

**J**eff Blatnik, champion Olympic wrestler, amazed the sports world by coming back from cancer (Hodgkin's disease) to win his gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling in 1984. Then his cancer recurred in a different part of the body. How did he react?

He admits he cried. But then he resolved to fight back. "I thought, 'Well, I beat it once, I'll beat it again.'" He continued: "It was like I was starting all over again. I took the whole thing as a chal-

lenge. That's all cancer is—it's just another adjustment in life."

Jeff has undergone chemotherapy, which often results in side effects. But he concludes: "So much is mental. Even reaction to chemotherapy. I was determined not to get sick, and I didn't. And you don't have to be an Olympic champion to have that attitude. . . . It's important for people to know that there's life after cancer."—*The New York Times*, April 8, 1986.

# From Our Readers

## Unborn Children

I have four very lovely children. I have never been touched so personally as I have with the "Letter From the Mother of an Unborn Child." (July 22, 1986) I have taken innocent lives from two people no one will ever know. And to think that Jehovah was their only friend hurts me, so that I can hardly bear it. I am now studying with one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I am sincerely trying to apply myself. This letter has made me realize what an awful thing I have done. I want that mother to know that her letter has given me the heartfelt courage and determination to teach my living children everything that I learn about Jehovah so that their lives can be saved. I understand now what the scripture means, 'receiving in one's self the full recompense.' [Romans 1:27] Thank you so much.

T. S., United States

I have just finished reading "A Letter From the Mother of an Unborn Child," and I found it very disturbing. Disturbing because I, too, am a mother of an unborn child. I also have three beautiful children, and when I look at them I wonder how I could have done such an awful thing. Though I was not in the truth at the time of the abortion, I still had guilt feelings. Now that I know about our wonderful Creator, Jehovah, I am tortured even more that I did this terrible thing to one of his creatures. I, too, would like to reiterate what the mother said in the letter. If there is someone out there thinking about having an abortion, please stop. The memory truly does haunt you for the rest of your life. Seek Jehovah and his righteous ways and rely on him to help you. Please don't make the same mistake that we did.

Another Regretful Mother, United States

I wish to express my appreciation for the "Letter From the Mother of an Unborn Child." I, too, am tormented by this ever-present guilt. Unlike the lady in the article who has three beautiful children, now I am not able to have any children. My conscience will not let me forget that I also murdered my own child. I have learned the truth now, and my reliance on Jehovah helps me to bear this. With deepest regret.

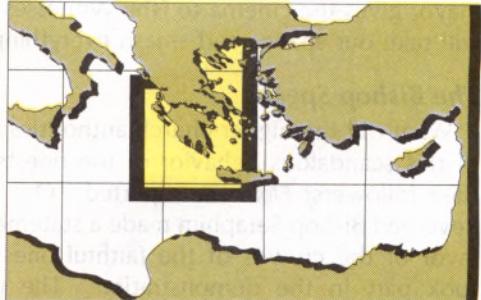
C. D., United States

I do not understand why you had to print the "Letter From the Mother of an Unborn Child." I understand that it was meant to prevent potential abortions, which I thoroughly agree with. However, many of us have come into the truth leaving behind life-styles that permitted such things. When we came to know Jehovah and his loving tender mercies, we counted on his forgiveness for this terrible sin. The article made me feel as if I should carry this guilt around with me constantly.

Trying to serve Jehovah with a clear conscience, United States

*The letter was an expression of the writer's feelings, and it was not intended to burden anyone else with her guilt feelings. We can certainly have confidence that if we confess our sins to God and correct our ways, God will not only forgive our sins but cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) Though God's forgiveness is genuine, it does not in this present system of things remove all the physical and emotional consequences of one's actions. We are assured, though, that in God's new system of things, the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. (Isaiah 65:17) The letter was published to show the sad consequences resulting from taking a human life.—ED.*

# Watching the World



Public interest in world affairs continues to grow.

**In this issue, "Awake!" devotes this entire section to a crisis that has arisen in 'the cradle of democracy.'**

## Religious Persecution in Greece—Why?

ON SUNDAY June 15, 1986, some 700 Christian Witnesses of Jehovah met together in a peaceful assembly at the Galaxias Cinema, in Larisa, Greece. They were holding their semiannual circuit assembly to study the Bible and to improve the application of its Christian principles in their daily lives.

This meeting was in harmony with the modern Constitution of Greece, put into law in 1975, which states that "Greeks shall have the right to assemble peaceably and unarmed." It also declares: "Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable." The Constitution adds: "All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of law."

However, at about 11 o'clock on that June day, sinister developments took place around the cinema where these Christian Witnesses of Jehovah were peacefully assembled. The local newspaper *I Larisa* tells what happened: "Hundreds of people, especially members of Christian [Greek Orthodox] organizations of our town, with a few priests taking the lead, started to gather and began to express their disapproval of those in the cinema—over 700 Jehovah's Witnesses. The crowd looked as if it was about

to go into the cinema and put a stop to the assembly."

The mob surrounded the cinema for hours, and the situation grew very threatening. What prevented this mob action against the Christian Witnesses from turning into violence against them?

### Mob Violence Averted

The newspaper account continues: "The district attorney arrived on the scene with a large number of police and controlled the protesters, who continued booing from the opposite pavement while they also sang their psalms and church hymns."

How did the Witnesses finally escape from this tense situation? The local daily *Eleftheria* relates: "The district attorney for the First Court, Mr. Spiros Spiliopoulos . . . had to remain there for several hours, using all his diplomatic abilities in order to disperse the crowds at about half past two in the afternoon, just as Jehovah's Witnesses were about to leave the cinema, thus avoiding potential violence."

The potential for violence on that occasion was well expressed in these words of a priest, quoted by the same source: "The next time the

mayor gives the cinema to [the Witnesses], we will take our spades and smash everything!"

### The Bishop Speaks

What did the higher church authorities think of this scandalous behavior of the priests and their followers? *Eleftheria* reported: "Our Most Reverend Bishop Seraphim made a statement in favor of the crowds of the faithful ones who took part in the demonstration." The paper added that he "expressed his sincere joy for the dynamic presence of the [Orthodox] people and wholeheartedly wishes that the Lord will support and strengthen the faithful ones so that when the need arises, they can make their presence felt in a dynamic and effective way."

The bishop criticized the town of Larisa for allowing the use of the cinema by the "enemies of the church and of our country for their antichrist assembly." He then issued this veiled threat against the political authorities: "Our country, gentlemen, is officially an Orthodox nation, and its ministers do not have the right actively to support its enemies." He added: "The Christian Orthodox people do not allow this and will not forgive their leaders for this."

### Press Reaction

Many Greek observers were disgusted by this further example of bigotry on the part of the Greek Orthodox Church. For decades the Witnesses have been subjected to persecution and humiliation at the hands of the clergy.

The local paper *I Alithia* published an article by Sarantos Vounatsos under the title "On the Fringes of Life—Acting Like Pharisees." Commenting on the mob action, he asked: "Why all these things? And who were the leading characters? If I'm not mistaken, the [Witnesses] had some kind of meeting. And the others? Some priests and the mob that followed!"

Vounatsos continued: "Let [the Witnesses] be impaled," shouted the mob. But were these people, this mob, Christians? That's what they

shouted, and fanatically at that! And, unfortunately, their 'leader' was a raving . . . priest! He threatened, blasphemed, preached ostentatiously, and at one point he reminded one also of a 'hijacker' because as he displayed his watch he gave all those inside five minutes notice to leave the cinema, otherwise . . . the execution would begin! 'Otherwise we will come in and smash their heads, my brothers,' he was heard to say."

The writer condemned the priestly action against the Witnesses and asked: "Why? Did they hurt you? How? With their meeting? Then why don't you hold a meeting? Did they slap you? Then turn your other cheek! But you apply an eye for an eye! Why? Did they put a knife to your throat? And will you impose yourself with violence? It was a mistake to become a priest! . . . Do you wish to impose yourselves with acts of pharisees? Well, be careful, because if you continue, you will no longer have [God's] mercy or grace, nor ours either."

In July, the Athens Sunday paper *Eleftherotipia* published an article under the title: "Religious Persecutions: Greece Is Being Charged by Europe When Church Fanatics Burn, Threaten, Beat Up." It noted that the foreign press has taken up the matter of freedom of worship in Greece. It quoted *The Wall Street Journal* of June 16, 1986, which published an article under the title "Greece's Orthodox Church Suppresses Activists of Other Sects, They Charge."

*Eleftherotipia* related that the Orthodox Church has an Anti-Heresy Department in Athens' embassy district. In an office there, the priest Antonios Alevizopoulos "pens tracts against the activities of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, all heretics in his view who 'threaten the individual and society.'"

A Protestant missionary is quoted as saying that many hundreds have been arrested for proselytism in the past few years, "including 890 Jehovah's Witnesses in 1983 alone."

The same report in *Eleftherotipia* went on to list some of the atrocities perpetrated against Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece. These included acts of arson against the homes of Witnesses, smashing of a lecture hall door and windows, and trying to break up Witness Bible meetings.

The culminating act was when a priest reportedly attacked a 76-year-old Witness in the street, resulting in the victim's eventual death. Little wonder that the same paper noted "the fragility of religious freedom in the birthplace of democracy."

Does it shock you to know that at this late date Greece, for centuries called 'the cradle of democracy,' should still see religious persecution and bigotry and that priests can stir up mobs? How is it possible that such a situation still exists in a country whose Constitution clearly allows religious freedom?

#### **Archaic Law**

What makes this possible is an archaic law that is still in existence, although not included in the Constitution. Back nearly a half century ago, in the late 1930's, Greece, although a monarchy, was ruled by the dictator Metaxas. At that time a law was approved with a view to controlling the construction of places of worship that were not Greek Orthodox.

That old law included the following provision: "Anyone practicing proselytism is penalized with imprisonment and a fine." But how was proselytism defined? That law stated: "The term 'proselytism' comprises the following: any direct or indirect attempt to penetrate the religious conscience of heterodox parties with a view to altering the content of their conscience."

On the basis of that definition, it would be illegal even to discuss differences of belief! That could be considered 'penetrating another's religious conscience with a view to altering its content!' But to persecute and imprison law-abiding people for exchanging opinions on re-

ligion is a throwback to the Dark Ages. Nowhere today is such a degree of intolerance practiced in any other Western democracy.

The application of this antiquated law is causing great injustice to Jehovah's Witnesses and others in Greece. And it is a great disservice to the fine principles of liberty guaranteed by the Constitution of Greece.

#### **Court Cases in Crete**

The issue of religious freedom also arose recently on Greece's island province of Crete. There Jehovah's Christian Witnesses instituted court proceedings for registration as a legally recognized association. That request was approved. But the bishops of Crete protested to the court and approval was withdrawn.

On what grounds? That the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses do not match the definition of what is a Christian as interpreted by the Greek Orthodox Church! But Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world are well known for being Christians who believe in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, the divine Son of God, and who obey his teachings. That Jehovah's Witnesses are a Christian religion has been so thoroughly established legally by governments worldwide that it makes the claim of the church absurd.

Jehovah's Witnesses have appealed their case to a higher Greek court. They trust that true justice will prevail without the overbearing influence of the Greek Orthodox clergy.

As it stands, the proselytism law (and the decision of the Crete court) is an embarrassment to the government of Greece. It is also an embarrassment to the country's international reputation as 'the cradle of democracy.'

Thus, it is hoped that Greek jurisprudence will render a decision in harmony with their fine Constitution and with the principles of freedom of religion found in the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, to which Greece subscribes.

