

The 1975 Date

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Expecting the End to come in 1975, caused the greatest increases in membership that the Watchtower Society had ever known. When the time passed, the resultant disappointment caused its greatest losses. How and why did it happen?

WHY WAS THE DATE SET?

Throughout the 1950s, the Watchtower Society enjoyed huge membership increases. But by 1960, the 12% increase they had enjoyed in 1959, was down to 6%. The next year, in 1961, it had dropped again, now to 3.9%. By 1966, it had dropped to the serious low of only 2.4% increase. It was in this year that the 1975 date was presented as the end of 6,000 years of man's existence. Time was running out, there were only a few short years before the expected Millennium!

WHAT EFFECT DID THIS DATE HAVE ON THE SOCIETY?

One has only to examine the statistics to see that there was an immediate upsurge in activity. In two years the percentage increase of membership had doubled. In another two years it had almost doubled again! In 1966, only 58,904 had been baptised, but by 1970 the number had jumped to 164,193. In the two years before the End was expected in late 1975, nearly 600,000 people were baptised! (See the charts of statistics on the opposite page.)

HOW WAS THE 1975 DATE SET?

It could be said that the date was set by *suggestion*. Years of date-setting and the tragedies these false prophecies had caused, had taught the Society something. In fact after the 1914, 1918 and 1925 dates failed, they resolved to *quit fixing dates*: "There was disappointment concerning the years 1914, 1918 and 1925, and they also learned to quit fixing dates for the future" Vindication, Volume 1, (1931) pages 338339. However, many years had passed and with a failing membership increase the temptation became too great! But this time they were careful not to make their prophetic statements too definite. Instead of saying the End *would come* in 1975, they would keep themselves covered by saying it *could come* in 1975. It would gain them the same ends, but be much safer. Notice the following statements:

"According to this trust worthy Bible chronology, six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 CE. So six thousand years of man's existence will soon be up." **Life Everlasting In Freedom of the Sons of God, (1966), page 29.**

"Thus, eight years remain to account for a full 6,000 years of the seventh day. Eight years from the autumn of 1967 would bring us to the autumn of 1975, fully 6,000 years into God's seventh day, his rest day. After 6,000 years of misery, toil, trouble, sickness and death under Satan's rule, mankind is indeed in dire need of relief, a rest. The seventh-day of the Jewish week, the Sabbath, would well picture the final 1,000 year reign of God's kingdom under Christ when mankind would be uplifted from 6,000 years of sin and death." **The Watchtower, May 1, 1968, pages 270-277.**

This was the first magazine article announcing the 1975 date more were to follow:

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO 1975?

"One thing is absolutely certain, Bible chronology reinforced with fulfilled Bible prophecy shows that six thousand years of man's existence will soon be up, yes, within this generation! (Matthew 24:34) This is therefore, no time to be indifferent and complacent. This is not the time to be toying with the words of Jesus that "concerning that day and hour *nobody* knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36) To the contrary, It is a time when one should be keenly aware that the end of this system of things is rapidly coming to its violent end. Make no mistake. **The Watchtower, August 15, 1968, pages 494-501.**

In this article the Watchtower Society were so sure that they knew the End was coming in 1975, that they told their people this is **not the time to be toying with the words of Jesus** that "concerning that day and hour **nobody** knows." The nobody is in italics because they were sure that they did know!

"6000 Years Nearing Completion. There is another way that helps confirm the fact that we are living in the final few years of this "time of the end" (Daniel 12:9) The Bible shows that we are nearing the end of a full 6,000 years of human history. What significance does this have? How fitting it would be for God, following this pattern to end man's misery after six thousand years of human rule and follow it with His glorious Kingdom rule for a thousand years!" **Awake, October 8, 1968, pages 13-16.**

“When Do 6000 Years End? How can it be determined when 6,000 years of human history will end? According to reliable Bible chronology Adam and Eve were created in 4026 BCE. From the autumn of 4026 BCE to 1 BCE = 4,025 years. From 1 BCE to 1 CE = 1 year. From 1 CE to 1968 CE = 1967 years. Total to autumn of 1968 = 5,993 years. This would leave only seven more years from the autumn of 1968 to complete 6000 full years of human history. That seven year period will evidently finish in the autumn of the year 1975.” *Awake, October 8, 1968, pages 13-16.*

Note the statement that Eve was also created in 4026 BCE! After the 1975 date failed the Society said it was not known when Eve was created, even though *reliable Bible chronology* had named the date.

PREPARING FOR 1975

The Watchtower Society's publications (see the previous page) announcing 1975, and emphasising the shortness of time before the End could come, whipped Jehovah's Witnesses into an excited frenzy of activity. The most sincere, gave up their jobs, sold their homes and went into full time pioneering work for the "few years that remained." The *Kingdom Ministry*, an internal paper just for their own members, in the March 1968, issue, even numbered the time left in months:

"Just think, brothers, there are only about **ninety months left** before 6,000 years of man's existence on earth is completed."

The *Kingdom Ministry*, May 1974, even commended those who had sold up their homes etc:

"Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the **short time remaining** before the wicked world's end. 1 John 2:17"

THE 1975 CHRONOLOGY PROVED UNRELIABLE!

Unfortunately for the faithful Witnesses who had implicitly believed the Watchtower, *the wicked world* did not *end* as suggested in 1975. However, the Society was ready to try and soften the blow, by stating they were now not sure what period of time elapsed between the creation of Adam and Eve. Previously they had said that Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E:

The Watchtower, 05/01/1968, page 271:

From the year of Adam and Eves Creation in 4026 BCE. *Awake*, 10/08/1968,

page 14:

When Do 6,000 Years End? How can it be determined when 6,000 years of human history will end? According to reliable Bible chronology Adam and Eve were created in 4026 BCE. From the autumn of 4026 BCE to 1BCE = 4025 years."

Also they had said they knew the time when the evening of the seventh creative "day" began: 4026 BCE: *God's Eternal purpose Now Triumphant* (1974), page 51: "**EVENING OF SEVENTH CREATIVE "DAY" BEGINS IN 4024 BCE.**"

Now with 1975 passed, and facing a disappointed and in some places a hostile membership, they now began to make explanations that the time of Eve's creation and the beginning of the seventh creative rest day is not known:

"Why then do we not know when God's "rest day" began and when it will end? Although the time of Adam's creation can be determined, the beginning of God's "rest day" cannot. Thus is so because there was a time lapse of unspecified length between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve. Not until after the creation of Eve did God's "rest day" begin. The start of that day being unknown, its end is likewise unknown." *The Watchtower*, 01/01/1976, Page 579.

So the Watchtower Society's reliable Bible chronology did not prove to be reliable! The above is not an apology for the tragedy, but this was to follow:

THE SOCIETY APOLOGISES FOR 1975

At first the Society tried to place the blame on its people for having "over-reacted" concerning their expectations for 1975. (In the 1975 *Yearbook*, page 146, they put the blame on their people for expecting too much in 1925!) However, this time they could not get away with it. Too many of their loyal people were hurting too much. They were now without their homes, employment, and for some they had given up their opportunities of gaining an education. Throughout the Society was noted a high rate of mental illness, and some even committed suicide. They felt they could no longer trust the Society, yet on the other hand they felt they could not return or go to any of the churches of Babylon the Great! Eventually to gain some credibility, the Society felt it would have to

make some sort of an apology. This they did in the 1980 *Yearbook*, pages 30-31, although they were still very reluctant to accept the full responsibility for the disappointment of 1975:

“The brothers also appreciated the candour of this same talk, which acknowledged the Society's Responsibility for some of the disappointment a number felt regarding 1975.”

A further apology appeared in *The Watchtower*, on the 15th March, 1980, page 17:

“With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting-in Freedom of the Sons Of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, there were other statements published that Implied that such realisation of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. It Is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a build up of the expectation already initiated.”

For thousands such apologies were too little, too late! They had already left the Society, but tragically most were now too bewildered and embittered to ever be helped. These false prophecies could be amusing if they were not so tragic! The 1975 horse was only one in a long line!

1975 ARTICLES

1975 "" .. To give aid today in this critical time to prospective sons of God,' announced President Knorr, 'a new book in English, entitled 'Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God,' has been published..' It did not take the brothers very long to find the chart beginning on page 31, showing that 6,000 years of man's existence end in 1975. Discussion of 1975 overshadowed about everything else. 'The new book compels us to realize that Armageddon is, in fact, very close indeed,'.. THE YEAR 1975 .. 6,000 years of human experience will end in 1975, about nine years from now. What does that mean? Does it mean that God's rest day began 4026 B.C.E.? It could have. The Life Everlasting book does not say it did not.. 'What about the year 1975? What is it going to mean, dear friends?' asked Brother Franz. 'Does it mean that Armageddon is going to be finished, with Satan bound, by 1975? It could! It could! All things are possible with God. Does it mean that Babylon the Great is going to go down by 1975? It could. Does it mean that the attack of Gog of Magog is going to be made on Jehovah's witnesses to wipe them out, then Gog himself will be put out of action? It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.' {WT Oct 15 1966 628-31}

1975 "Today, there are many teenage baptized servants of Jehovah.. how far should they go with a secular education? It would hardly be consistent for such a youth, of his own choice, to pursue extensive secular studies beyond what is required by the law and by his parents.. additional years of college education may present snares." {WT Sep 1 1975 543}

1975 "'How Much Longer Will It Be?' 6,000 Years Completed in 1975 .. In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975.. Hence, the fact that we are nearing the end of the first 6,000 years of man's existence is of great significance. Does God's rest day parallel the time man has been on earth since his creation? Apparently so. From the most reliable investigations of Bible chronology, harmonizing with many accepted dates of secular history, we find that Adam was created in the autumn of the year 4026 B.C.E. Sometime in that same year Eve could well have been created, directly after which God's rest day commenced.. There is another chronological indication that we are rapidly nearing the closing time for this wicked system of things. It is the fact that shortly, according to reliable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will come to an end.. After six thousand years of toil and bondage to sin, sickness, death and Satan, mankind is due to enjoy a rest and is in dire need of a rest. (Heb. 4:1-11) Hence, the fact that we are nearing the end of the first 6,000 years of man's existence is of great significance.. In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975. This is worthy of notice, particularly in view of the fact that the 'last days' began in 1914, and that the physical facts of our day in fulfillment of prophecy mark this as the last generation of this wicked world. So we can expect the immediate future to be filled with thrilling events for those who rest their faith in God and his promises. It means that within relatively few years we will witness the fulfillment of the remaining prophecies that have to do with the 'time of the end.'" {AWAK Oct 8 1966 19-20}

1975 "6,000 Years Nearing Completion.. The fact that fifty-four years of the period called the 'last days' have already gone by is highly significant. It means that only a few years, at most, remain before the corrupt system of things dominating the earth is destroyed by God. Today, many years later, we may ask, What does the phrase 'the immediate future' mean? How many years are 'a few years at most'? .. According to reliable Bible chronology, Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E.. There is another way that helps confirm the fact that we are living in the final few years of this 'time of the end.' (Dan. 12:9) The Bible shows that we are nearing the end of a full 6,000 years of human history. What significance does this have? When God gave his laws to ancient Israel, one of those laws involved keeping the sabbath day holy. On the seventh day of the week there was to be no labor. The people were to rest from all their toil. (Ex 20:8-11) The Bible states that 'the Law has a shadow of the good things to come.' - Heb. 10:1. Revelation chapter 20, verse 6, shows that

God's heavenly kingdom will rule over the earth for one thousand years after the end of this system of things. That millennium will bring a Sabbath like rest to the earth and all those then inhabiting it. Hence, the first six thousand years since man's creation could be likened to the first six days of the week in ancient Israel. The seventh one-thousand-year period could be likened to the seventh day, the Sabbath, of that week. - 2 Pet. 3:8. How fitting it would be for God, following this pattern, to end man's misery after six thousand years of human rule and follow it with His glorious Kingdom rule for a thousand years! .. only seven more years from the autumn of 1968 to complete 6,000 full years of human history. That seven-year period will evidently finish in the autumn of the year 1975.. Concerning political instability, former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson said in 1960: 'I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in 15 years from today (or, by 1975), this world is going to be too dangerous to live in!..' [Chart] 1975 C.E. END OF 6,000 YEARS .. In the book *Famine - 1975!* food experts W. and P. Paddock state: .. 'I forecast a specific date, 1975, when the new crisis will be upon us in all its awesome importance.'" {AWAK Oct 8 1968 14-5}

1975 "Would there be another creative 'day,' a seventh 'day,' at the close of the 'morning' of which the whole earth would be populated with a human family and be a global Paradise? 'Evening' of seventh creative 'day' begins, 4026 B.C.E." {GEPT 51} [4026 B.C.E. + 6000 years to take to start of the seventh day= 1975]

1975 "The time is fast drawing near for the reality that was foreshadowed by the Jubilee of liberty to be proclaimed throughout the earth to all mankind.. Most certainly the near future would be the most appropriate time for it. God's own written Word indicates that it is the appointed time for it.. In this twentieth century an independent study has been carried on that does not blindly follow some traditional chronological calculations of Christendom, and the published timetable resulting from this independent study gives the date of man's creation as 4026 B.C.E. So six thousand years of man's existence on earth will soon be up, yes, within this generation.. Since the time of Ussher intensive study of Bible chronology has been carried on. In this twentieth century an independent study has been carried on that does not blindly follow some traditional chronological calculations of Christendom, and the published timetable resulting from this independent study gives the date of man's creation as 4026 B.C.E. According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E. So six thousand years of man's existence on earth will soon be up, yes, within this generation. Jehovah God is timeless, as it is written in Psalm 90:1, 2: "O Jehovah, you yourself have proved to be a real dwelling for us during generation after generation. Before the mountains themselves were born, or you proceeded to bring forth as with labor pains the earth and the productive land, even from time indefinite to time indefinite you are God." So from the standpoint of Jehovah God these passing six thousand years of man's existence are but as six days of twenty-four hours, for this same psalm (verses 3, 4) goes on to say: "You make mortal man go back to crushed matter, and you say: 'Go back, you sons of men.' For a thousand years are in your eyes but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch during the night." So in not many years within our own generation we are reaching what Jehovah God could view as the seventh day of man's existence. So in not many years within our own generation we are reaching what Jehovah God could view as the seventh day of man's existence. How appropriate it would be for Jehovah God to make of this coming seventh period of a thousand years a sabbath period of rest and release, a great Jubilee sabbath for the proclaiming of liberty throughout the earth to all its inhabitants! This would be most timely for mankind. It would also be most fitting on God's part, for, remember, mankind has yet ahead of it what the last book of the Holy Bible speaks of as the reign of Jesus Christ over earth for a thousand years, the millennial reign of Christ. Prophetically Jesus Christ, when on earth nineteen centuries ago, said concerning himself: "For Lord of the sabbath is what the Son of man is." (Matthew 12: 8). It would not be by mere chance or accident but would be according to the loving purpose of Jehovah God for the reign of Jesus Christ, the 'Lord of the Sabbath,' to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence." {LEIF 26-30}

1975 "1975 - 6000 End of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn)" {LEIF 35}

1975 "In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be 'Lord even of the sabbath day,' his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series of thousand-year periods or millenniums. (Matt. 12:8, AV) Thus it would be a sabbatic reign. Since early in the existence of mankind Satan the Devil has been on the loose, making the human family to toil in hard bondage, causing the earth to be filled with violence before the global flood of Noah's day and inducing the same old earth to be filled with even greater violence today. Soon now six millenniums of his wicked exploiting of mankind as his slaves will end, within the lifetime of the generation that has witnessed world events since the close of the Gentile Times in 1914 till now, according to the prophetic words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34. Would not, then, the end of six millenniums of mankind's laborious enslavement under Satan the Devil be the fitting time for Jehovah God to usher in a Sabbath millennium for all his human creatures? Yes, indeed!" {WT Oct 15 1969 623, APTY 26-7}

1975 "More recently earnest researchers of the Holy Bible have made a recheck of its chronology. According to their calculations the six millenniums of mankind's life on earth would end in the mid-seventies. Thus the seventh millennium from man's creation by Jehovah God would begin within less than ten years." {APTY 25}

1975 "Interestingly, the autumn of the year 1975 marks the end of 6,000 years of human experience. This is ascertainable from reliable chronology preserved in the Bible itself. What will that year mean for humankind? Will it be the time when God executes the wicked and starts off the thousand-year reign of his Son Jesus Christ? It very well could, but we will have to wait to see.. A glorious new order is immediately before us." {WT May 1 1967 262}

1975 "According to reliable Bible chronology Adam was created in the year 4026 B.C.E., likely in the autumn of the year, at the end of the sixth day of creation. Then God brought the animals to man to name. Yet, of Adam, Genesis states these words of Jehovah: 'It is not good for the man to continue by himself.' (Gen. 2:18) Adam would realize this lonely condition very quickly, perhaps in just a few days or a few weeks. He would realize he needed another earthling with whom he could communicate, share his experiences, and his life. Nor would his naming the animals take an unduly long time. The basic animal kinds could have been relatively quickly named, for when such basic kinds were taken into the ark in Noah's day, it did not involve millions of beasts, but perhaps only a few hundred basic kinds. Thus Adam's naming of the animals and his realizing that he needed a counterpart would have occupied only a brief time after his creation. Since it was also Jehovah's purpose for man to multiply and fill the earth, it is logical that he would create Eve soon after Adam, perhaps just a few weeks or months later in the same year, 4026 B.C.E. After her creation, God's rest day, the seventh period, immediately followed.. Eight years from the Autumn of 1967 would bring us to the Autumn of 1975, fully 6,000 years into God's seventh day, his rest day.. The immediate future is certain to be filled with climactic events, for this old system is nearing its complete end. Within a few years at most the final parts of Bible prophecy relative to these 'last days' will undergo fulfillment, resulting in the liberation of surviving mankind into Christ's glorious 1,000-year reign. What difficult days, but, at the same time, what grand days are just ahead!" {WT May 1 1968 271-2}

1975 "Of what significance is this today? It means that by the fall of 1963 mankind has dwelt upon this earth 5,988 years. Does this mean, then, that by 1963 we had progressed 5,988 years into the 'day' on which Jehovah 'has been resting from all his work'? (Gen. 2:3) No, for the creation of Adam does not correspond with the beginning of Jehovah's rest day. Following Adam's creation, and still within the sixth creative day, Jehovah appears to have been forming further animal and bird creations. Also, he had Adam name the animals, which would take some time, and he proceeded to create Eve. (Gen. 2:18-22; see also NWT, 1953 Ed., footnote on Vs. 19) Whatever time elapsed between Adam's creation and the end of the 'sixth day' must be subtracted from the 5,988 years in order to give the actual length of time from the beginning of the 'seventh day' until now. It does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time." {ASII 286}

1975 "The Book of Truthful Historical Dates' .. Do we know that the seventh year from now will conclude the 6,000th year since Adam was created? And if we live to that year 1975, what should we expect to happen?" {WT Aug 15 1968 488}

1975 "WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO 1975? .. What about all this talk concerning the year 1975? Lively discussions, some based on speculation, have burst into flame during recent months among serious students of the Bible. Their interest has been kindled by the belief that 1975 will mark the end of 6,000 years of human history since Adam's creation. The nearness of such an important date indeed fires the imagination and presents unlimited possibilities for discussion.. of what benefit is this information to us today?.. why should we be any more interested in the date of Adam's creation than in the birth of King Tut?.. in the fall of the year 1975, a little over seven years from now .. it will be 6,000 years since the creation of Adam." {WT Aug 15 1968 494}

1975 "Adam Created At Close Of 'Sixth Day' .. in the fall of the year 1975, a little over seven years from now .. it will be 6,000 years since the creation of Adam, the father of all mankind! Are we to assume from this study that the battle of Armageddon will be all over by the autumn of 1975, and the long-looked-for thousand-year reign of Christ will begin by then? Possibly, but we wait to see how closely the seventh thousand-year period of man's existence coincides with the Sabbath-like thousand-year reign of Christ .. Are we to assume from this study that the battle of Armageddon will be all over by the autumn of 1975, and the long-looked-for thousand-year reign of Christ will begin by then? Possibly, but we wait to see how closely the seventh thousand-year period of man's existence coincides with the sabbathlike thousand-year reign of Christ. If these two periods run parallel with each other as to the calendar year, it will not be by mere chance or accident but will be according to Jehovah's loving and timely purposes. Our chronology, however, which is reasonably accurate (but admittedly not infallible), at the best only points to the autumn of 1975 as the end of 6,000 years of man's existence on earth. It does not necessarily mean that 1975 marks the end of the first 6,000 years of Jehovah's seventh creative 'day.' Why not? Because after his creation Adam lived some time during the 'sixth day,' which unknown amount of time would need to be subtracted from Adam's 930 years, to determine when the sixth seven-thousand-year period or 'day' ended, and how long Adam lived into the 'seventh day.' And yet the end of that sixth creative 'day' could end within the same Gregorian calendar year of Adam's creation. It may involve only a difference of weeks or months, not years.. This time between Adam's creation and the beginning of the seventh day, the day of rest, let it be noted, need not have been a long time. It could have been a rather short one. The naming of the animals by Adam, and his discovery that there was no complement for himself, required no great length of time.. One thing is absolutely certain, Bible chronology reinforced with fulfilled Bible prophecy shows that six thousand years of man's existence will soon be up, yes, within this generation! (Matt. 24:34) This is, therefore, no time to be indifferent and complacent. This is not the time to be toying with the words of Jesus that 'concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.' To the contrary, it is a time when one should be keenly aware that the end of this system of things is rapidly coming to its violent end. Make no mistake, it is sufficient that the Father himself knows both the 'day and hour.' .. There was a ring of alarm and a cry of urgency in all their [the apostles] writings.... And rightly so. If they had delayed or dillydallied and had been complacent with the idea the end was was some thousands of years off they would never have finished running the race set before them." {WT Aug 15 1968 499-501, in accordance with the Adam/Eve age-difference claims in AID 333/538}

1975 "It is just as a former United States Secretary of State noted in the June 13, 1960, issue of U.S. News & World Report. He declared that our time is 'a period of unequalled instability, unequalled violence,' and warned: 'I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in 15 years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in.' Fifteen years from 1960 brings us to 1975. He predicted that by 1975 this world would be too dangerous! Interestingly, this date is also the one indicated by the most reliable Bible research as marking the end of 6,000 years of rebellion of men and demons against God." {AWAK Jan 8 1968 19}

1975 ".. as reported back in 1960, a former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, declared that our time is 'a period of unequalled instability, unequalled violence.' and he warned: 'I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in fifteen years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in.'" {TLEL 9} [1960 + 15 = 1975; however TLEL 1981 ed 9 was amended so the words "and he warned: 'I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in fifteen years from today," disappeared and in their place appeared "Based on what he knew was then going on in the world, it was his conclusion that soon ""]

1975 "More recently, the book entitled "Famine-1975!" [by W. & P. Paddock, 1967, pp. 52, 55, 61.] said concerning today's food shortages: "Hunger is rampant throughout country after country, continent after continent around the undeveloped belt of the tropics and subtropics. Today's crisis can move in only one direction - toward catastrophe. Today hungry nations; tomorrow starving nations.. By 1975 civil disorder, anarchy, military dictatorships, runaway inflation, transportation breakdowns and chaotic unrest will be the order of the day in many of the hungry nations." {TLEL 88-9} [Elsewhere, the same source is quoted as stating "By 1975 a disaster of unprecedented magnitude will face the world. Famines, greater than any in history, will ravage the undeveloped nations."]

1975 "Making some special effort to do more than the usual helps us live up to our dedication. In view of the short period of time left, we want to do this as often as circumstances permit. Just think, brothers, there are only about ninety months left before 6,000 years of man's existence on earth is completed. . Do you remember what we learned at the assemblies last summer? The majority of people living today will probably be alive when Armageddon breaks out, and there are no resurrection hopes for those who are destroyed then. So, now more than ever, it is vital not to ignore that spirit of wanting to do more." {KMIN Mar 1968 4} [Mar 1968 + 90 months = Oct 1975]

1975 "The publications of Jehovah's witnesses have shown that, according to Bible chronology, it appears that 6,000 years of man's existence will be completed in the mid-1970's. But these publications have never said that the world's end would come then. Nevertheless, there has been considerable individual speculation on the matter." {WT Oct 15 1974 635}

1975 ".. millions of people now living will see the 'day' of Christ's coming to mete out justice upon this system of things .." {WT Jan 1 1975 11}

1975 ".. the Creator's promise of a new order of lasting peace and true security within our generation." {AWAK Jan 8 1975}

1975 "Another speaker, F. W. Franz, the Society's vice-president, forcefully impressed on the audience the urgency of the Christian preaching work. He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when "the human species [is] about to starve itself to death," as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. Franz added: 'There's no basis for believing that mankind, faced with what it now faces, can exist for the seventh thousand-year period' under the present system of things.' .. Does this mean that we know exactly when God will destroy this old system and establish a new one? Franz showed that we do not, for we do not know how short was the time interval between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve, at which point God's rest day of seven thousand years began (Heb. 4:3,4). But, he pointed out, 'we should not think that this year of 1975 is of no significance to us,' for the Bible proves that Jehovah is 'the greatest chronologist' and 'we have the anchor date, 1914, marking the end of the Gentile Times.' So, he continued, 'we are filled with anticipation for the near future, for our generation.' {WT May 1 1975 285} [tick tock, four months of 1975 over]

1975 "However, the Bible's time clock does indicate to us that 6,000 years of human history end in this year 1975.. Does this mean, then, that mankind has now reached 6,000 years into the 7,000 year period that God blessed and made sacred as his rest day? .. No, It does not mean that.. Well, the Bible record shows that God's creations on the 'day' just preceding that 7,000-year 'rest day' did not end with Adam's creation. It shows a time lapse between the creation of Adam and that of his wife, Eve. During that time, God had Adam name the animals. Whether that period amounted to weeks or months or years, we do not know." {WT Oct 1 1975 579} [tick tock]

1975 "Just think where we are in the stream of time! Its importance was deeply impressed on our minds back in 1966. God's people then received the absorbing book Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God. It did not take long for most of them to note the chronological chart in it that identified 1975 as the "end of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn)." This certainly raised questions. Does this mean that Babylon the Great will go down by 1975? Will Armageddon be over, with Satan bound, by then? 'It could,' acknowledged F. W. Franz, the Watch Tower Society's vice-president,.. '.. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short.'" {YEAR 1975 256}

1975 "However, suddenly, there came an end to World War I. It did not lead on, as Bible students expected, into world revolution and anarchy or the battle of Armageddon. And the sincere worshippers of Jehovah who were in the new covenant with him through his Mediator Jesus Christ, found themselves still in the flesh on the earth." {MSWD 98}

1975 "'Morning' of seventh creative 'day' begins, 526 B.C.E. The first half or 'evening' period of God's seventh creative 'day' was now closing, 3,500 years from creation of Adam and Eve." {GEPT 131} [so another 2,500 years of the 6,000 would bring us to 1975]

1975 ".. this marked the beginning of a period of education in the written Word of God from the standpoint that Bible prophecy is best understood after it has been fulfilled. So there needed to be a correction of our previous views, and the surviving remnant of spiritual Israel needed to be readjusted to the postwar realities and opportunities.. This revised program of Bible education had a profound effect on the remnant. It oriented their work in the right direction." {MSWD 191}

1975 "Jehovah's Witnesses have nothing in common with other religious groups and can never seek any affiliation with them." {AWAK Nov 22 1975} [In 1980, the State of California informed Jimmy Swaggart Ministries that tax was due for religious books and tapes sold in the state since 1974. The case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court. On June 22, 1989, the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society filed an 'amicus curiae' (friend of the court) brief on behalf of Jimmy Swaggart Ministries (No. 88-1374 in the Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1988). Others who acted similarly included the National Council of Churches and the Society for Krishna Consciousness. On January 17, 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against them declaring that the sales tax must be paid. 35 days later an official Society letter to (all) congregations failed to mention this but instead claimed set prices for literature items were being eliminated because 'By adopting a method of literature distribution based completely on donation, Jehovah's people are able to greatly simplify our Bible education work and separate ourselves from those who commercialize religion.' There has been rumored legal collaboration in 1999 with the Church of Scientology in one or more countries of what used to be the Eastern bloc.]

1975 "'Choosing the best way of life' .. In modern times such eagerness, commendable in itself, has led to attempts at setting dates for the desired liberation from the suffering and troubles that are the lot of persons throughout the earth. With the appearance of the book Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of mans existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, There were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated.. In saying anyone, the Watchtower included all disappointed ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, hence including persons having to do with the publication of the information that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date." {WT Mar 15 1980 17-8}

1975 ".. acknowledged the Society's responsibility for some of the disappointment a number felt regarding 1975." {YEAR 1980 30-1}

1975 "More recently, many Witnesses conjectured that events associated with the beginning of Christ's Millennial Reign might start to take place in 1975. Their anticipation was based on the understanding that the seventh millennium of human history would begin then." {AWAK Jun 22 1995 9}

1975 [NO MENTION!] {HIS2 Section 'Notable Dates' - Official 1993 version of WTBT's history of predictions}

1975 "Following Adam's creation, and still within the sixth creative day, Jehovah appears to have been forming further animal and bird creations. Also, he had Adam name the animals, which would take some time, and he proceeded to create Eve. (Gen. 2:18-22; see also NW, 1953 Ed., footnote on vs. 19) Whatever time elapsed between Adam's creation and the end of the 'sixth day' must be subtracted from the 5,988 years in order to give the actual length of time from the beginning of the 'seventh day' until now." {ASII 286} [1963 + (6000 - less than 5988) = more than 1975, allowing an escape from the 1975 prediction. However, see below AID 333/538, also WT Aug 15 1968 499 - at most, an extra year]

1975- 1976 ARTICLES

1975-6 "Adam at age 130 had a son, Seth.. Eve at age 130 had a son, Seth" {AID 333/538} [hence the difference in age between Adam and Eve is shown to be less than one year. So the postponement of the '1975 prediction' claimed in ASII 286 etc. can at most be more one year i.e. to 1976, as also claimed in WT Aug 15 1968 499. These previous statements are ignored in WT Jul 1976 436]

1976 ARTICLES

1976 "Although the time of Adam's creation can be determined, the beginning of God's 'rest day' cannot. This is so because there was a time lapse of unspecified length between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve. Not until after the creation of Eve did God's 'rest day' begin. The start of that day being unknown, its end is likewise unknown." {WT Jan 1 1976 30} [how then were predictions made on this basis in 1966 and with such confidence from 1968 to 1971?]

1976 "Would not a failure to respond to direction from God through his organization really indicate a rejection of divine ruler ship?" {WT Feb 15 1976 214} [excusing therefore the imprudent and indiscreet actions re 1975. But compare with "For the same reasons that Jesus did not organize congregations while present with his disciples in the Jewish harvest, we do not consider expedient or necessary organizations even simple and unsectarian as those established by the apostles." {WR Oct 1883 536}]

1976 "They do not claim infallibility or perfection. Neither are they inspired prophets." {WT May 15 1976 297} [1975 prediction having just failed]

1976 "He has put his word, his message of the hour, into the mouth of the spiritual remnant for them to confess openly before all the world, for their own salvation, and for that of responsive hearers." {SPIR 176} [So Society is not responsible for those who missed the few caveats re 1975]

1976 "The very fact that, as part of Jehovah's secret, no one today is able to find out how much time Adam and later Eve lived during the closing days of the sixth creative period, so no one can now determine when six thousand years of Jehovah's present rest day come to an end. Obviously, whatever amount of Adam's 930 years was lived before the beginning of that seventh-day rest of Jehovah, that unknown amount would have to be added to the 1976 date." {WT Feb 1 1955 95}

1976 "It is a serious matter to represent God and Christ in one way, then find that our understanding of the major teachings and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures was in error, and then after that, to go back to the very doctrines that, by years of study, we had thoroughly determined to be in error. Christians cannot be vacillating - 'wishy washy' - about such fundamental teachings. What confidence can one put in the sincerity or judgment of such persons?" {WT May 15 1976 298}

1976 "It may be that some who have been serving God have planned their lives according to a mistaken view of just what was to happen on a certain date or in a certain year. They may have, for this reason, put off or neglected things that they otherwise would have cared for. But they have missed the point of the Bible's warnings concerning the end of this system of things, thinking that Bible chronology reveals the specific date.. it is not advisable for us to set our sights on a certain date, neglecting everyday things we would ordinarily care for as Christians, such as things that we and our families really need. We may be forgetting that, when the 'day' comes, it will not change the principle that Christians must at all times take care of all their responsibilities. If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises." {WT Jul 15 1976 440-1}

1976 "Spirit of Life from God Entered into Them.. The announced purpose behind God's pouring out of his spirit upon all sorts of flesh was that the recipients thereof might prophesy. The facts substantiate that the remnant of Christ's anointed disciples have been doing that prophesying to all the nations for a witness in favor of God's kingdom. Logically, then, they must be the ones upon whom God's spirit has actually been poured out. That spirit is behind their worldwide preaching. Why argue about it?" {SPIR 148}

1976 "No obstacle put in His way by the enemies will prove to be insurmountable for Jehovah. Just as at Mount Sinai He put his word in the mouth of his chosen people through the mediator Moses and thereafter he led them under the protective shadow of his hand into the Promised Land, so he has done for the remnant of spiritual Israel. He has put his word, his message of the hour, into the mouth of the spiritual remnant for them to confess openly before all the world, for their own salvation and for that of responsive hearers." {SPIR 175-6} [So the Society is not responsible for those who missed the very few caveats expressed re 1975]

What About 1975?

By Alan Feuerbacher

It's interesting to note how Jehovah's Witnesses today often minimize what the Watchtower Society said about 1975 in the years before that date. The Society published a number of cautionary notes warning JW's about being too specific about the date, but they also published a good deal of material encouraging people to look forward to the date.

Here are set forth some published statements that show how strongly some of the Society's writers promoted the 1975 date. Some statements were definite that 1975 would bring Armageddon.

It all started with the release of the book *Life Everlasting--In Freedom of the Sons of God* in the summer of 1966. The chronological table it contained, which showed the end of 6,000 years of human history in 1975, along with explanatory comments that the date might very well see the beginning of Christ's millennial rule, created a sense of urgency among Jehovah's Witnesses that was reflected in subsequent Society publications, including and especially in *Kingdom Ministry* articles. For example, the October 1966 KM (for the U.S.) stated in the "Dear Publishers" letter (p. 1):

quote:

All of us who attended one of the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies this past summer were given much to think about, weren't we? The talks and the dramas made us feel the urgency of the times and the need of walking circumspectly before Jehovah.

This KM encouraged the placing of the special October 8, 1966 issue of *Awake!*, which considered the topic "Why Does God Permit Wickedness?" This issue contained the article "How Much Longer Will It Be?" in answer to the question "when will God bring an end to wickedness?" Under the subheading "6,000 Years Completed in 1975," it reasoned that the millennium would be the last 1000 years of a 7000-year rest day of God. On pages 19-20 it said:

quote:

The Bible shows that when God began to shape the earth for human habitation, he worked for six "days," or time periods. From the indications in God's Word, **each was apparently 7,000 years in length.** Then Genesis 2:22 states, Jehovah "proceeded to rest on the seventh day from all his work that he had made." **This seventh day, God's rest day, has progressed nearly 6,000 years, and there is still the 1,000-year reign of Christ to go** before its end. (Rev. 20:3, 7) This seventh 1,000-year period of human existence could well be likened to a great sabbath day, pictured by the sabbath day God commanded ancient Israel to keep after working for six days. (Ex. 20:8-10; 2 Pet. 3:8) After six thousand years of toil and bondage to sin, sickness, death and Satan, mankind is due to enjoy a rest and is in dire need of a rest. (Heb. 4:1-11) Hence, the fact that we are nearing the end of the first 6,000 years of man's existence is of great significance.

Does God's rest day parallel the time man has been on earth since his creation? Apparently so. From the most reliable investigations of Bible chronology, harmonizing with many accepted dates of secular history, we find that **Adam was created in the autumn of the year 4026 B.C.E. Sometime in that year Eve could well have been created, directly after which God's rest day commenced.** In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975. This is worthy of notice, particularly in view of the fact that the "last days" began in 1914, and that the physical facts of our day in fulfillment of prophecy mark this as the last generation of this wicked world. So we can expect the immediate future to be filled with thrilling events for those who rest their faith in God and his promises. It means that within relatively few years we will witness the fulfillment of the remaining prophecies that have to do with the "time of the end."

Continuing the theme of urgency, the December 1966 KM said (p. 4): "Never have we felt the nearness of Armageddon and the urgency of our work as we do now."

The February 1967 KM contained an insert with the sub-article "Serving Jehovah in the Time Remaining" (pp. 4-5). It commented on the number of "vacation pioneers" and asked, "what motivated them to vacation pioneer?" The answer included these comments:

quote:

Many of them had in mind Jesus' electrifying words: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." Our very generation is seeing the sign marking Jesus' second presence. Truly, "the time left is reduced." (Matt. 24:34; 1 Cor. 7:29) For this reason many of your brothers, young and old, appreciated the importance of serving God **in the time remaining.** Having Scriptural responsibilities that prevented them from sharing in the ministry as regular pioneers, missionaries or members of Bethel families, they demonstrated their appreciation of **the shortness of the time remaining** by vacation pioneering.

The lead article "All the More So" in the July 1967 KM (p. 1) said: quote:

Are you glad that you have remained faithful until now? Certainly! ... This being true, what should be our attitude toward meeting together **in the days ahead as the end of the old system draws near** and the outside pressures increase? The apostle Paul provides the answer in the verses that support our theme for the month of July. Read carefully Hebrews 10:23-25 and note Paul's encouragement to meet together and build one another up and to do this *all the more so* as we "behold the day drawing near." Obviously, then, we will need to give even more attention to supporting God's house in the time ahead.

The lead article "The Finest Work on Earth" in the October 1967 KM (p. 1) continued the theme of preaching with a sense of urgency:

quote:

It is a real pleasure to have a part in the finest work done on earth today, the work Jehovah is asking us to do in these "last days," isn't it? All of us appreciate that **there is little time left** for this present system of things. **In the remaining time** it is our desire to share in the preaching work as fully as possible so as to help many more honest-hearted persons to escape from Babylon the Great.

The lead article "Help Wanted" in the December 1967 KM (p. 1) said: quote:

"For what?" you may ask. To do the Kingdom preaching work. **The remaining time is short**, and, as Jesus put it, "the good news has to be preached first," before the old system comes to its end. (Mark 13:10) True, there are more than 300,000 helpers in the field in this country, but we know you will agree that more are needed to get the job done thoroughly.

The March 1968 KM contained an insert titled "An Opportunity to Increase Your Happiness" (pp. 3-6) that encouraged "vacation pioneering" in April. It contained some statements that were electrifying to many of the friends:

quote:

Since we have dedicated ourselves to Jehovah, we want to do his will to the fullest extent possible. Making some special effort to do more than the usual helps us live up to our dedication. **In view of the short period of time left**, we want to do this as often as circumstances permit. **Just think, brothers, there are only about ninety months left before 6,000 years of man's existence on earth is completed.** Do you remember what we learned at the assemblies last summer? The majority of people living today will probably be alive when Armageddon breaks out, and there are no resurrection hopes for those who are destroyed then. So, now more than ever, it is vital not to ignore that spirit of wanting to do more.

It is obvious that the Society was now strongly encouraging the friends to believe that Christ would begin his millennial rule very soon, likely by about the beginning of October 1975. The "Dear Publishers" letter in the June 1968 KM continued this theme:

quote:

Yes, Jehovah has surely filled our mouths with song, and as we move on into June's activities, expressing gratitude in a practical manner, we shall, in effect, be sharing in a victory procession--the joyful march toward mankind's grand millennium of deliverance!

Among the strongest of encouragements about the urgency of 1975 was the article "Why Are You Looking Forward to 1975?" in the August 15, 1968 *Watchtower*. Note that the question was not, "**Are** You Looking Forward..." but "**Why** Are You Looking Forward to 1975?" This is a clear indication that the Society told JW's that they **ought** to have been looking forward to 1975. Many JW's fully took this signal to heart.

The Society published many other statements about what 1975 was likely to bring. Some cautioned JW's not to be dogmatic about the date, but some were themselves dogmatic. Following are some statements that more or less threw caution to the wind.

The October 8, 1968 *Awake!* was a special issue on the topic "Is It Later Than You Think?" It contained the article "What Will the 1970's Bring?", which on page 14, under the subtitle "When Do 6,000 Years End?", said: "According to reliable Bible chronology **Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E.**" Note how this bolded statement is definite, in contrast to a similar bolded statement in the above-quoted paragraph from the October 8, 1966 *Awake!*. Nevertheless, the article went on to say some cautionary words: "Does this mean that the above evidence positively points to 1975 as the time for the complete end of this system of things? Since the Bible does not specifically state this, no man can say. However, of this we can be sure: The 1970's will certainly see the most critical times mankind has yet known." What message is the reader expected to get from these contradictory statements? Let the reader use discernment.

The May 1, 1968 *Watchtower* was quite definite about when Adam and Eve were created. Under the subtitle "The Seventh Day" (p. 271) the study question for paragraph 4 asked, "**When were Adam and Eve created?**" Paragraphs 4 through 6 answered and said:

quote:

... Thus, Adam's naming of the animals and his realizing that he needed a counterpart would have occupied only a brief time after his creation. Since it was also Jehovah's purpose for man to multiply and fill the earth, **it is logical that he would create Eve soon after Adam, perhaps just a few weeks or months later in the same year, 4026 B.C.E. After her creation, God's rest day, the seventh period, immediately followed.**

Therefore, **God's seventh day and the time man has been on earth apparently run parallel.** To calculate where man is in the stream of time relative to God's seventh day of 7,000 years, we need to determine how long a time has elapsed from **the year of Adam and Eve's creation in 4026 B.C.E.**

The seventh day of the Jewish week, the sabbath, would well picture the final 1,000-year reign of God's kingdom under Christ when mankind would be uplifted from 6,000 years of sin and death. (Rev. 20:6) Hence, when Christians note from God's timetable the approaching end of 6,000 years of human history, it fills them with anticipation. Particularly is this true because the great sign of the "last days" has been in the course of fulfillment since the beginning of the "time of the end" in 1914.

The 1969 edition of *Aid to Bible Understanding* (the equivalent of the *Insight* volumes) indicated that Adam and Eve were created in the same year. On page 333, under the subject "Chronology," it said that the time from Adam's creation to the birth of Seth was 130 years, and on page 538, under the subject "Eve," it said that at the age of 130 Eve gave birth to Seth.

The 1969 booklet *The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years* was also definite about 1975. On pages 2526 it said:

quote:

More recently earnest researchers of the Holy Bible have made a recheck of its chronology. According to their calculations the six millenniums of mankind's life on earth would end in the mid-seventies. Thus the seventh millennium from man's creation by Jehovah God would begin within less than ten years...

In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be "Lord even of the sabbath day," **his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series** of thousand-year periods or millenniums.

Note the language: for Jesus to be Lord of the sabbath, his Millennial reign **would have to be** (not "it might be") the seventh in a series. This is a definite statement.

At the summer district conventions in 1968 the Society instituted a new six-month bible study program that was to be based on the new "Truth" book -- *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* -- a.k.a., "the blue bombshell". This program was a direct result of acting on the belief that the times were particularly urgent. The September 1968 *Kingdom Ministry* (p. 8) gave details of the new program in the article "A New Outlook on Bible Studies" in the "Presenting the Good News" section:

quote:

Free home Bible studies are a hallmark of Jehovah's witnesses the world around. How helpful this work has been in aiding hundreds of thousands of persons to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth and to take their stand on Jehovah's side! **But now time is running short for this old system of things** and we want to help as many sheeplike ones as we can to learn the truth and act on it **while there is still time.**

So we have a new approach to use in the Bible-study work. Yes, it is still free of charge. But, as suggested at the "Good News for All Nations" district assemblies this summer, we will seek to help as many people as possible through a six-month Bible-study program.

To accomplish this, endeavor to hold your studies each week. If an unavoidable situation arises and you personally have to miss a study, perhaps another publisher with whom the householder is acquainted can conduct the study that week. Progress is directly related to the regularity of the study. Have in mind helping them learn enough of the truth so that they can act on it within six months...

At all times keep before interested ones the importance of beginning to associate with Jehovah's people at the meetings. If, at the end of six months of intensive study and conscientious efforts to get them to meetings, they are not yet associating with the congregation, then it may be best to use your time to study with someone else who really wants to learn the truth and make progress. **Make it your goal to present the good news on Bible studies in such a way that interested ones will act within six months!**

Many JW's were not happy about this new arrangement, because it was very hard to get Bible students under the best of circumstances. For those wanting to qualify to pioneer, it was especially difficult because one of the qualifications was holding several regular Bible studies, so pioneer-wannabes needed to hold on to every student they had. Prior to this time it was not unusual for a Bible student to continue for two to five years before making a decision.

During these years the Society constantly stressed the urgency of the times. The lead article "Making Known an Urgent Message" in the October 1968 KM plugged the above-quoted October 8 special *Awake!* on "Is It Later Than You Think?":

quote:

A few weeks ago you heard a letter read to your congregation about the October 8 special issue of *Awake!* But by now you no doubt have your own copy, and you have seen for yourself what it contains. Isn't it fine? How appropriate this material is for our magazine that bears the title "Awake!" With a powerful array of facts, persuasive argument and visual aids it drives home the point that we really are living in the "last days." Kindly but firmly **it emphasizes the fact that the time left is very short** and that, if a person wants to serve God and survive into his righteous new system, he must take the necessary steps now.

The November 1968 KM again emphasized the urgency of the new bible study program, and made it clear that publishers were to discontinue studies that were unproductive after six months. This was a two-pronged method that got publishers to be more enthusiastic door-to-door preachers, and forced bible students to really think about what they were learning. The article "In the Short Time Remaining" in the "Presenting the Good News" section (p. 8) gave suggestions on presenting the *Truth* book:

quote:

How often does your congregation cover its territory? Do you reach every home at least three times a year? Is it a thorough coverage each time, getting each not-at-home and speaking to different occupants in the house? In view of **the shortness of the remaining time**, it makes one stop and think, doesn't it?

Also, after you have found interested persons and started home Bible studies with them, think how long it takes to teach them the truth, bring them along to dedication and baptism, train them in the field ministry and assist them to progress to maturity! Yes, we all do well to think seriously about having a good share *now* in the door-to-door work, not postponing it until some later time.--Mark 13:10.

There are other reasons for sharing fully in the door-to-door work. With the improved method of conducting home Bible studies, many students will be making a decision much sooner than has been done in the past. Some will show the necessary initiative and will act. They will progress toward maturity much faster and the study can be stopped sooner. Others will not act on the knowledge they take in and we will discontinue the study. Thus it will not be a matter of conducting a study for years as some have done in the past but there will be a concluding of studies and a need to start new studies. It will require regular and effective door-to-door work in order for these new studies to be started. It will be good to be conducting more than one study at a time so that we will be regular in this feature of the work and thus will always be teaching someone the truth if one of our studies is discontinued.

The Society published the pointed article "Have You Been Studying for Six Months?" in the May 15, 1969 *Watchtower* (pp. 309-12). It was aimed at new bible students and gave publishers information helpful to get their students to make a decision. Again the idea was that a decision was necessary because of the urgency of the times. The article said:

quote:

ARE you among the over one million persons who are at present being helped by Jehovah's witnesses to learn what the Holy Bible teaches? If you are, likely you are using the Bible-study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Undoubtedly it has helped you to learn many wonderful things about God and his will for mankind.

Those of you who have been studying the Bible for about six months should by now be in position to decide whether you are going to follow through on what you have learned. Do you really want to become a dedicated and baptized worshiper of Jehovah God and do you want to share with others the life-giving truths from God's Word? ...

DECISION NOW IS VITAL

The urgency of the times in which we are living requires that we do all we can to bring our lives into harmony with God's will. From what you have learned you know why this system of things is rapidly deteriorating before our eyes. You know the meaning of the unrest and increased violence in all the earth. All this shows that **we have approached the very brink of the earth-cleansing destruction** of which Jesus and the Bible writers prophesied!

This is the most serious time in human history, and **you are living in this time of change**. "**The world is passing away,**" the Bible says, but those who do 'the will of God will remain forever.' (1 John 2:17) Your studying the Bible is to equip you to learn that will of God so you can do it. Yes, there is a purpose behind this study; there is a future attached to it...

In view of the short time left in which to do their work, Jehovah's witnesses do not continue to study the Bible with any who fail to respond to its urgent message within six months. **The nearness of this system's end** compels them to use their time in the most effective way possible. So they feel obligated to spend their time calling on someone else who might respond by attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall and by speaking to others about the Bible truths learned. Thus it may be that if you have not as yet responded by even becoming a regular attender at some of the congregation meetings, the one who is studying the Bible with you may cancel that study arrangement in order to give his time to someone else. This arrangement is not meant to be harsh, but **the urgency of the times in which we live demands it**. There are millions of persons who need spiritual help and God's servants want to reach all they possibly can.

We, therefore, urge you to consider very carefully your position. You have embarked on a course of study that has opened up to you the magnificent opportunity of life forever in eternal happiness. (John 17:3) If you love God and appreciate his provision for eternal life, do not turn your back on it. Realize that God has shown great consideration for you by making it possible for someone to come to your home to help you learn His will and purposes. Respond to his divine love by deciding now to do his will, along with the entire association of those who are serving God "with spirit and truth."-John 4:23, 24.

The May 1969 KM followed this up with the article "Have You Studied with Them for Six Months?" (p. 3). It instructed publishers who had been studying the *Truth* book with new ones for more than six months to evaluate how the student was doing. After considering a few negative specifics, it asked whether the student fit them and said:

quote:

If so, the fact that the book has not been completed is not a sound reason for spending more than six months with such a person who lacks appreciation. It might be better to go to chapter fourteen, if this has not yet been studied; study it together and then terminate the study if the householder is not taking any positive action to associate regularly with the congregation... Has the student begun to associate with the local congregation in a meaningful way? ... Has the householder demonstrated that he is taking the truth to heart and has set his mind on serving Jehovah? How? If he formerly had images around the house, have these been removed? ...If positive action is not being taken by the householder, it is likely that the study should not be continued... If you are planning to discontinue a particular study, it might be well to spend one or two study periods with the student having a heart-to-heart discussion about the things that have been learned and their significance and **the urgency of the times**, rather than going ahead with a regular study of additional material... **there is an urgency about our work** and we have a responsibility before God to use our time to aid persons who truly want to serve him... **We appreciate the urgency of the work we are doing**. When individuals show by their actions that they want to do Jehovah's will, we will continue to aid them. Where substantial progress is not seen, then, rather than continuing the study, we do well to spend that time each week trying to find and help someone who is sincerely interested in doing something about the truth.

In the March 1969 KM insert (p. 6) the Society urged new ones to begin sharing in field service: quote:

Remember that Jehovah's organization in heaven and on earth backs up those who serve Jehovah by proclaiming the "good news." (Rev. 14:6, 7) We recognize, as you do, that we are deep into the "time of the end." **There is little time left for this old system of things.**

The sense of urgency was effective in getting some students to make a decision. The June 1, 1969 *Watchtower* (p. 347) said:

quote:

Even folks who studied the Bible with the Witnesses for years without acting on what they learned are now taking a decisive stand to serve Jehovah. One family in the southern United States who had studied with the Witnesses for three years had done very little about what they had learned. But when they were told about the new six-month Bible-study arrangement, they were visibly touched. Now for the first time a real sense of urgency struck them. They could not bear the thought of having all connections with Jehovah's people severed. So they sent a letter of withdrawal to the Baptist church because they knew that they were not being taught the Bible's truth there. They began attending all the Bible meetings of Jehovah's witnesses and sharing with others the things they learned.

The lead article "Time Left Is Reduced" in the October 1969 KM again continued the sense of urgency (p. 1):

quote:

Time is passing by quickly, isn't it? Just think, each passing day draws us one day closer to the end of this wicked system of things and one day closer to the time when the peace of a thousand years will begin.

The letter from the Brooklyn Branch Office, "Dear Kingdom Publishers", in the December 1969 KM said (p. 1):

quote:

We are very thankful to Jehovah that he is giving such increases and gathering so many sheep like persons in these "last days." ... We hope there will be a large number of new publishers joining with us in the service during December and on into 1970. Indeed, we have good reasons to hold our heads up high **as we see our deliverance drawing near.**

Ironically, the lead article "Faith Builders at Work" in the December 1969 KM said:

quote:

If ever there was a need for faith building it is now. It makes one sorry to see so many people, young and old, with no faith in God and no hope for the future. **Expectations built up by the false promises of secular and religious leaders have been postponed so many times that the hearts of the people in general are sick.** But as the apostle Paul explained, "faith is not a possession of all people." It is, though, of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. We have confidence in the sure promises of the Word of God.--2 Thess. 3:2.

The *1970 Yearbook* (p. 34) stressed the urgency of the times: quote:

Jehovah's witnesses **feel the urgency** of getting this work done under Jehovah God's guidance. They feel **the time is near at hand** for the end of this wicked system of things.

The "Question Box" in the February 1970 KM (p. 4) asked the question, "How should we go about terminating unfruitful Bible studies?" and answered:

quote:

This is a question that we ought to consider if any of our present studies have been in progress for approximately six months. Are they coming to the congregation meetings as yet, and are they beginning to make their lives over in harmony with what they have learned from God's Word? If so, we want to continue to help them. But, if not, it may be that we could accomplish more good with our time by using it to witness to others.

If you realize that you should terminate a particular study, discuss it with the householder in a kindly way. Let him know that you have counted it a privilege to share with him what the Bible says, but remind him that it is a six-month free study course that we offer. Now it is up to him to decide what he will do about what he has learned and to take the initiative to follow through.--Josh. 24:14, 15.

Emphasize the urgency of the times and explain that we want to give others the same opportunity to learn the truth and take their stand on Jehovah's side.--Zeph. 2:3.

Explain to the householder that you will be available and that if he wants to get in touch with you you will be glad to help him spiritually. Encourage him to think seriously about the course he should take in order to please Jehovah and to pray about it. Urge him to come to the meetings, and let him know that if he really decides to serve Jehovah and regularly associates with the congregation, you will be glad to resume the study, using more advanced material to help him progress to maturity.

The March 1970 KM reported on how well publishers were doing in dropping unproductive bible students. The article "Become 'Intensely Occupied with the Word'" in the "Presenting the Good News" section said (p. 4):

quote:

A little over a year ago we were introduced to the six-month home Bible-study program. We immediately grasped that this would be an additional effective method **to help get the work done in the short time remaining.**

Now reports from the field show that Bible studies are being discontinued as publishers realize that the student is not making progress. This is entirely proper. There is no reason to spend our time with those who obviously are not really interested in doing something about the truths they are learning. Some publishers still ask, "How can I know whether to discontinue the study when they appear to be interested and still are glad to have me come?" The answer is that we discontinue studies when it is apparent that there is not the appreciation for the truth that there should be. There might be interest in continuing to take in knowledge. But is there appreciation for the knowledge already taken in? Appreciation for Jehovah and the truth is demonstrated by deeds...

Apparently the matter is being taken seriously by the brothers, because circuit servant reports show that many publishers unhesitatingly discontinue studies when the time comes to do so.

In view of the above information from various Society publications -- from *The Watchtower*, *Awake!*, *Kingdom Ministry*, *Yearbooks* and from various books and booklets that have not been quoted here -- it does no good for any of Jehovah's Witnesses to try to say that the Society never encouraged belief that 1975 would bring Armageddon. It is a documented fact that they did.

The Society itself candidly acknowledged some responsibility for the hopes raised by the 1975 expectation. The *1980 Yearbook*, on pages 30-31, mentioned a talk given at the 1979 District Conventions, by the title of "Choosing the Best Way of Life." The talk "**acknowledged the Society's responsibility for some of the disappointment a number felt regarding 1975.**" What did this talk say?

The March 15, 1980 *Watchtower* article "Choosing the Best Way of Life" contains, on pages 17-18, a partial text of the talk. It said:
quote:

In modern times such eagerness, commendable in itself, has led to **attempts at setting dates** for the desired liberation from the suffering and troubles that are the lot of persons throughout the earth. With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting-in Freedom of the Sons of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, **considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975.** There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, **there were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility.** It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated.

In its issue of July 15, 1976, *The Watchtower*, commenting on the inadvisability of setting our sights on a certain date, stated: "If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises." In saying "anyone," *The Watchtower* included all disappointed ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, hence including *persons having to do with the publication of the information* that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date.

In this case the "wrong premises" were entirely given to the community of Jehovah's Witnesses by the Society itself, in particular by "**persons having to do with the publication of the information** that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date."

Jehovah's Witnesses are encouraged by the Watchtower Society not to be bothered by the various false predictions it has made. Over the years a number of excuses and minimizations have been published. Note what the above-mentioned 1980 *Watchtower* went on to say:

quote:

Nevertheless, there is no reason for us to be shaken in faith in God's promises. Rather, as a consequence, we are all moved to make a closer examination of the Scriptures regarding this matter of a day of judgment. In doing so, we find that the important thing is not the date. What is important is our keeping ever in mind that *there is such a day* -- and it is getting closer and it will require an accounting on the part of all of us. Peter said that Christians should rightly be "awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." (2 Pet. 3:12) It is not a certain date ahead; it is *day-to-day living* on the part of the Christian that is important. He must not live a single day without having in mind that he is under Jehovah's loving care and direction and must submit himself thereto, keeping also in mind that he must account for his acts.

In conclusion I will again point out the irony in what the above-quoted December 1969 KM said: quote:

Expectations built up by the false promises of secular and religious leaders have been postponed so many times that the hearts of the people in general are sick.

The October 8, 1968 *Awake!* (p. 23) also ironically spoke about the Society's contention that the Bible indicates we are living in the last days. It emphasized that those who falsely predicted the end of the world were false prophets:

quote:

Still some persons may say: "How can you be sure? Maybe it is later than many people think. But maybe it is not as late as some persons claim. People have been mistaken about these prophecies before.".... True, there have been those in times past **who predicted an "end to the world," even announcing a specific date....** Yet, nothing happened. The "end" did not come. **They were guilty of false prophesying.** Why? What was missing? Missing was the full measure of evidence required in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. **Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that he was guiding and using them.**

With regard to misrepresentations, and particularly those of the Bible, the 1974 book *Is This Life All There Is?* said (p. 46), without regard for the motives of the misrepresented:

quote:

Knowing these things, what will you do? It is obvious that the true God, who is himself "the God of truth" and who hates lies, will not look with favor on persons who cling to organizations that teach falsehood. (Psalm 31:5; Proverbs 6:16-19;

Revelation 21:8) And, really, would you want to be even associated with a religion that had not been honest with you?

So, all you JW defenders, what will you do? Alan F

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