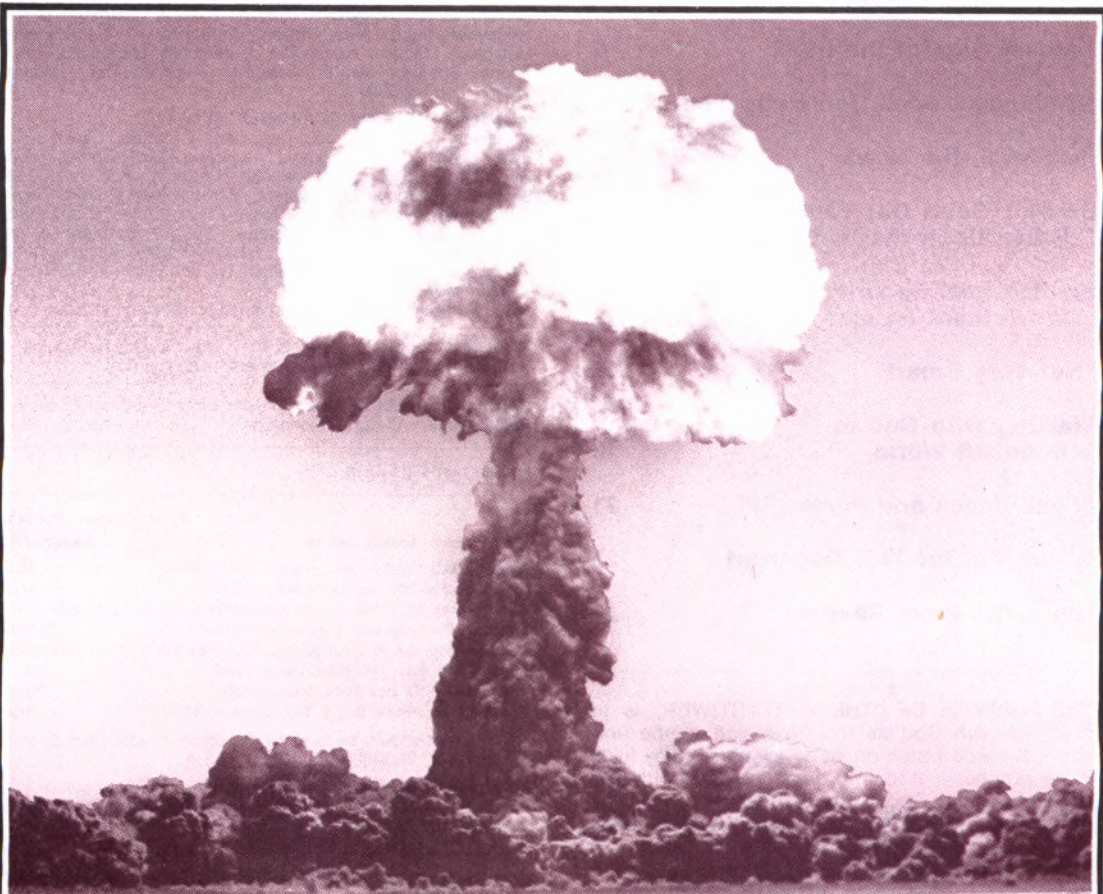


July 15, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



FEAR
A Sign of the End?

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

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Does Fear Affect You?

"THERE are great tragedies in the world today." Thus wrote René Dubos, scientist and philosopher, in his recent book *Celebrations of Life*. He continued: "Paradoxically, however, much of contemporary gloom originates not from the difficulties we are actually experiencing, but from disasters that have not yet happened, and may never happen." In other words, man fears the future because he lives in expectation of what is uncertain and uncontrollable.

According to Dubos, what are some of the disasters that loom as future possibilities? "We are profoundly disturbed by the possibility of nuclear warfare and of really serious accidents in nuclear reactors . . . We are collectively worried because we anticipate that world conditions will deteriorate if population and technology continue growing at the present rate. The earth will soon be overpopulated and its resources depleted; there will be catastrophic food shortages." Although an optimist himself, René Dubos recognizes that we live in an "atmosphere of gloom that now prevails over much of the world."

Alvin Toffler, sociologist and writer, spent five years interviewing a wide range of people on the effects of change and the future in their lives. "Nobel prizewinners, hippies, psychiatrists, physicians, businessmen, professional futurists, philosophers, and educators gave voice to their concern over change, *their anxieties* about adaptation, *their fears*

about the future." (Italics ours.) His investigation proved to him that anxiety and fear of the future have become common.

This feeling of foreboding that has been mankind's common experience during this century was aptly predicted by Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago. He had prophesied that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and his disciples were curious to know "when will these things actually be, and what will be the sign when these things are destined to occur?"—Luke 21:7.

In the first portion of his answer Jesus related events that many of that generation lived to see. But he took advantage of their question to include events on a global scale that would be witnessed, not by that last generation of Jewish worshipers at the temple, but, more importantly, by those who would live through the conclusion of this present world system. He warned: "Also, there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, *while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth*; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."—Luke 21:25, 26, 32.*

* The Spanish Catholic *Cantera-Iglesias* Bible offers a footnote on the parallel account in chapter 24 of Matthew. It states: "The temple's beauty gives Jesus the opportunity to predict its ruin; the disciples ask when will that ruin be (verse 3), and with that question introduce the theme of the final catastrophe of the world, its date and the preceding signs."

Obviously, men in past generations have also lived in fear—fear of local wars, plagues, catastrophes and social change. But did the generation of 1914 observe something different? Certainly, because the whole “inhabited earth,” all the nations, has been affected since that turning point. (Luke 21:25, 26) So much has been compressed into the past 69 years that older people who have experienced it are disconcerted and fearful. And now, due to the nuclear threat, people of all ages, even children, are anxious about

their life expectancy. It has been rightly said that the predominant sentiment, or chief emotion, of the 20th century is FEAR.

But maybe you think we are exaggerating. Is fear of present and future events sufficiently widespread for us to believe that it fulfills Jesus’ prophecy? Is it really part of the proof that we are in the time of the end? Is this the time period when “men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth”?



FEAR

A Sign of the End?

ARE we living in the twilight of an age of uncertainty and anxiety where “men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth”? Just a brief review of world events and the motives for fear since 1914 will refresh the memory and help us to see whether we are approaching the foretold “end.”—Luke 21:9, 25, 26.

Fear and War

Monuments to the dead of World War I in France bear the words “la Grande Guerre.” Yes, what we now term the first world war (1914-18) was originally called the Great War. It was so great and awful in death and destruction that men hopefully termed it the war to end wars. After such a dreadful lesson, surely it was thought civilized man would ‘learn war no more.’ (Isaiah 2:4) Only

another 18 years was needed to shatter that illusion with the outbreak of the terrible Spanish Civil War (1936-39) in which more than half a million Spaniards died. Germans and Italians participated in that conflict, which served as a rehearsal for what had to be called the *second* world war (1939-45). That world catastrophe ended with the holocausts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

With those atom-bomb explosions over Japan a new source of fear and anxiety burst onto the world stage—the fear of atomic war. How true the words of Professor Albert Einstein in December 1945: “The world was promised freedom from fear, but in fact fear has increased tremendously since the termination of the war”! Then he added, “The picture of our postwar world is not bright.”

That mounting fear is reflected today

by the millions of people all over the world who are demonstrating against nuclear weapons. Even the clergy are getting involved in the issue. Yes, nuclear weapons have transformed world politics and military strategy. As historian E. P. Thompson stated in his recent book *Beyond the Cold War*: "These weapons operate in the medium of politics, ideology and strategy; they are perceived as menacing and are intended to be so; *they induce fear* and they simultaneously enhance and frustrate feelings of aggression."—Italics ours.

This fear of nuclear war is universal. A recent Soviet booklet stated: "The Soviet Union holds that nuclear war would be a universal disaster, and that it would most probably mean the end of civilization. It may lead to the destruction of all mankind." Now the two main ideological blocs face each other in a tenuous stalemate based on what is known as Mutual Assured Destruction—MAD for short. Little wonder that mankind is in 'fear and expectation of the things coming on the earth'—just as Jesus prophesied.

Fear and Crime

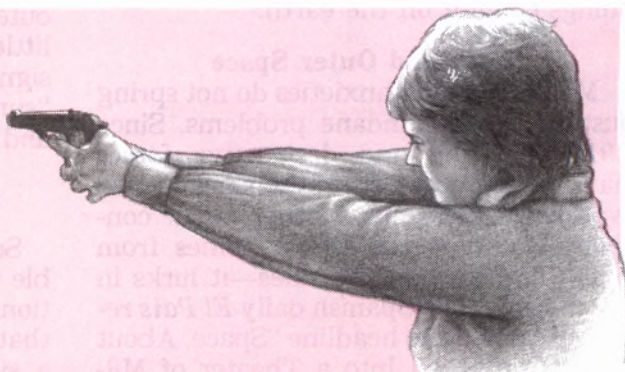
There is another kind of fear that strikes nearer to home. What is it? Fear of crime in your own neighborhood. There was a time when a burglar, or

robber, took only valuables. Now they take lives as well. There is little fear of the law, and crime does pay handsomely for many. Thus real fear strikes deep in the big cities and wealthy suburbs. For example, the number of people using the New York subway is the lowest since 1917. Why? One of the principal reasons is the fear of being robbed or murdered. A report from Britain states: "The much-needed community spirit is being destroyed by fear of crime which is keeping many people at home." Even in formerly secure cities like Barcelona, Spain, the sale of reinforced doors has increased, and many homes now have at least two or three locks and bolts on their doors. In the United States many women are learning to use handguns for self-defense. One study indicates that 52 percent of American families have guns! The same report warns, "Fear of crime is slowly paralyzing American society."

Inspired Bible writers knew that such extreme conditions would strike in the time of the end. Thus the apostle Paul warned: "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to



According to one study,
52 percent of American
families have guns



any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness." (2 Timothy 3:1-3) How many crimes are motivated by what the apostle lists here! And how much fear is spread by the ever-growing criminal population!

Fear and Unemployment

Another factor sowing fear and anxiety in the 20th century is the instability of the world economy, resulting in highs of relative prosperity and depressions that have left millions without a job. Even those with a job often feel insecure. 'Who will be next out on the street?' is the nagging question. With so many people living on credit, this real threat causes daily anxiety. There are more than 30 million jobless in the Western nations alone. One commentator even gave the somber warning that many of the unemployed may never work again!

International bankers are holding their breath as they watch one country after another go into virtual bankruptcy. As reported by *The Guardian*, "Altogether in the last three years around 25 countries have had to ask banks and governments for more time to pay their debts, most of them coming back more than once." Therefore the economic situation is one more factor in the fulfillment of the words of Jesus that 'men will become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming on the earth.'

Fear and Outer Space

Man's fears and anxieties do not spring just from his mundane problems. Since 1914 menacing and destructive forces have rained down from the skies in two world wars and many other major conflicts. But now the threat comes from much higher than the skies—it lurks in outer space. The Spanish daily *El País* recently carried the headline "Space, About to Be Converted Into a Theater of Mil-

itary Operations." The article continued: "Both the United States and the Soviet Union thus take one more step in the space race, the military aspects of which have been highlighted in a spectacular way in recent months. It can be said that the era of the offensive militarization of space has started."

The threat from outer space is confirmed by a statement made by Lieutenant General Richard C. Henry, deputy commander of the U.S. Space Command, who said: "Space is not a mission, it is a place. It is a theater of operations. It is now time that we treat it as a theater of operations." And General Robert T. Marsh, commander of the Air Force Systems Command, affirmed: "The space shuttle will change the way we do business. We will depend upon it for launching virtually all of our national security payloads [read here, military equipment]." These remarks show that space can no longer be viewed as a harmless vacuum. As the UN secretary-

“The era of the offensive militarization of space has started”

general warned: "We must oppose vigorously the increased militarization of outer space. We have time—but very little." Only time will tell what further signs will appear in the realm of the "sun and moon and stars" to cause fear and expectation.—Luke 21:25.

Different From Previous Generations?

Some are inclined to discount the Bible warnings, saying that earlier generations have experienced similar crises and that the present fear and anxiety are not a sign of the end as Jesus foretold it.

'Space is not
a mission
—it is a
theater of
operations'



Certainly it is true that previous generations have experienced calamity. The 14th century was the time of the Black Plague when people across Europe lived in dread of pestilence, famines and wars. But just compare the scale of things in our century.

Scientist René Dubos recently wrote: "I am as much disturbed as anyone by the thousand devils of the present social, technological and environmental crises. . . . I also realize that several aspects of the present world problems *make them quantitatively and qualitatively different from those of the past*. For example: . . . Today's problems are no longer isolated and confined to small population groups." (Italics ours.) He also listed the harmful effects on a *global* scale of certain agents such as radioactivity, acid rain and pesticides. Another factor is the greater interdependence of the nations so that all are affected by a crisis such as that precipitated in 1973 by the increase in the price of oil. That was not the case in past generations.

Therefore it just is not true that previous generations have been afflicted equally by fear and anxiety, and for the same reasons that Jesus stated in Luke chapter 21. No generation previous to

that of 1914 ever experienced a world war, never mind two. No previous generation ever faced the madness of "mutual assured destruction" by means of nuclear weapons. No previous generation ever ruined the earthly globe by such widespread contamination and pollution. —Revelation 11:18.

And one more vital factor—no previous generation has ever had so extensive a preaching of 'this good news of the kingdom in all the earth as a witness.' (Matthew 24:14) Jehovah's Witnesses are doing that effectively now in over 200 lands, in every nation where God has made it possible. That is one reason why you are reading this magazine right now. God's message of hope and judgment is being proclaimed on time. That is a sure sign that the end must soon come. Then what remains? Jesus answers: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:29-33.

If you would like more information on this interesting subject, feel free to write to the publishers of this magazine or contact the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses at their Kingdom Hall. Without any obligation to you, your questions will be answered.

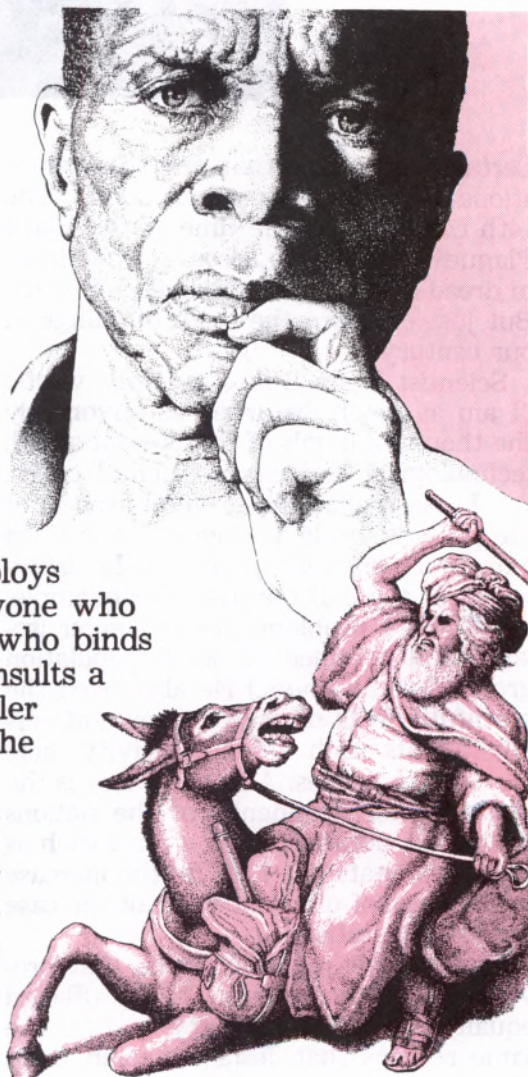
No Unlucky Spell Can Harm You

ARE you like this man? He is afraid that someone will hurt him by casting a spell, by the evil eye, by juju or by Obeah. Should you be afraid of such witchcraft or magic?

No, you need not fear. Although others have been harmed by such things, Jehovah God guarantees protection for those who obey him. "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower," the Bible says. "Into it the righteous runs and is given protection."—Proverbs 18:10.

God hates all spiritistic practices. The Bible says: "There should not be found in you anyone . . . who employs divination, a practitioner of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead."—Deuteronomy 18:10, 11.

The Bible tells about a man who practiced a form of spiritism called divination. This is the practice of trying to find out about the future, or about something unknown, with the help of unseen spirits. That man was Balaam, seen here beating his donkey. He was on his way to curse God's people when an angel stood



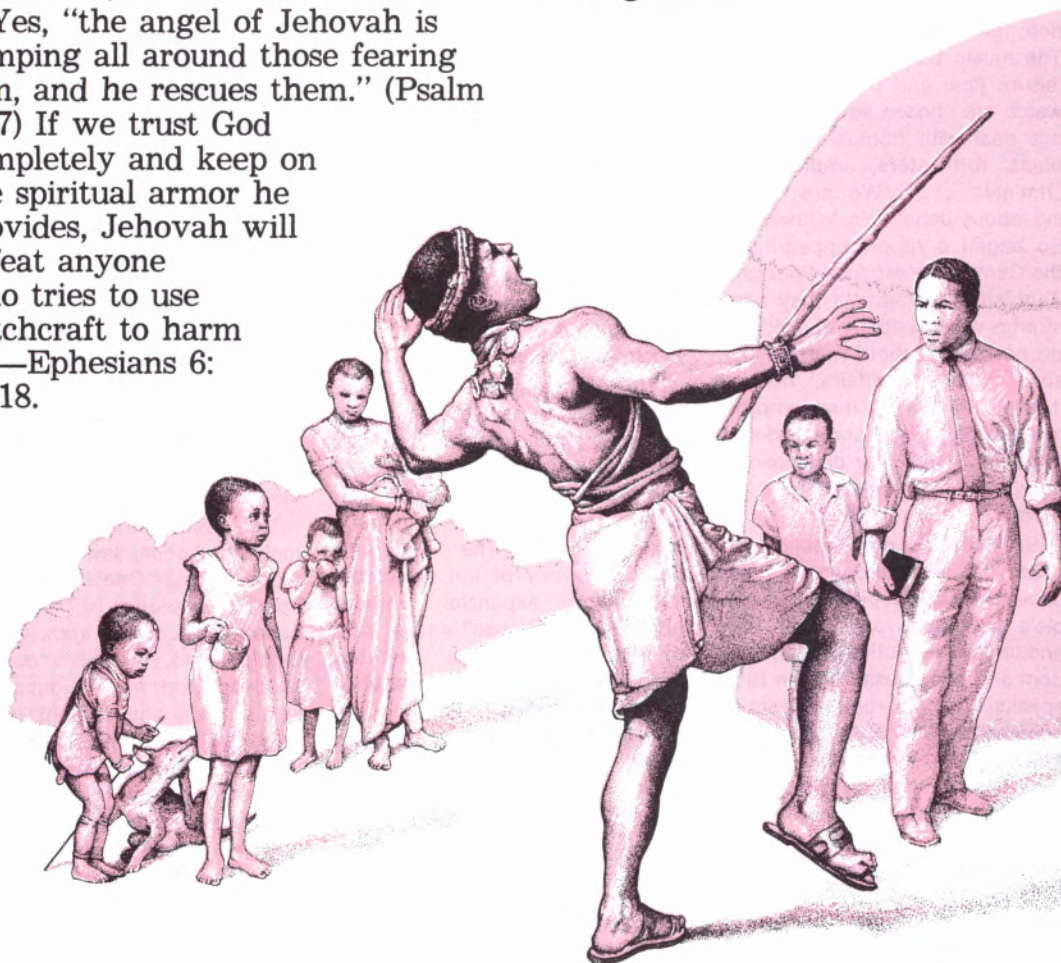
God's Word Is Alive

in the road, causing the donkey to lie down.—Numbers 22:7, 20-35.

Jehovah made Balaam's divination useless. He changed the curse into a blessing. Balaam had to admit: "There is no unlucky spell against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel."—Numbers 23:23.

Jehovah continues to defeat those who practice divination, so that they are unable to harm those who remain faithful to him. Do you see this witch doctor's magic becoming useless against Jehovah's Witnesses? He used witchcraft to harm people, but this time he failed. Jehovah's Witnesses said: "You will see that Jehovah, our God, is stronger!" They stood firm, and the witch doctor fell to the ground.

Yes, "the angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them." (Psalm 34:7) If we trust God completely and keep on the spiritual armor he provides, Jehovah will defeat anyone who tries to use witchcraft to harm us.—Ephesians 6: 10-18.



Insight on the News

'Strict, Yet Happy'

"Their dress is neither modern nor ultra conservative, their hair falls into place naturally; they attach no importance to attracting attention, unless it be through a well-balanced personality and a showing of unpretentious interest. The girls use make-up in moderation; the boys are gentlemen. . . . The music they listen to in their leisure time and the movies they watch are chosen so that they do not deal with homosexuals, lesbians, fornicators, adulterers or criminals. . . . We are speaking about Jehovah's Witnesses." So began a report appearing in the German newspaper *Badisches Tagblatt*. It added: "It may seem strange when sixteen-year-old girls do not speak about married persons as 'having affairs,' but call it fornication, when they lump homosexuals, thieves and murderers together, when they disfellowship unrepentant persons who have had premarital sex relations."

Such conduct may indeed seem "strange" in a world where young persons usually look upon the Bible's standards as out of date and unduly restrictive of their freedom and happiness. Yet the Bible speaks of God's requirements as "the perfect law that belongs to freedom" and states that the person who abides by it "will be happy in his doing it."—James 1:25.

Attesting to this, the reporter concluded: "But, despite all their strict standards, Jehovah's Witnesses do not appear to be unhappy. To the contrary. The young as well as the older Bible stu-

dents present an appearance of being unusually joyful and well balanced."

New Theory on Universe

A new theory on the formation of the universe is gaining recognition among cosmologists. Called the inflationary universe theory, it is challenging the formerly favored big bang theory that "all the stuff of the universe was there from the beginning" and exploded, forming the universe. Says *The New York Times*: "The new view proposes, essentially, that the universe was born from virtually nothing. Its substance and energy formed spontaneously during an initial period of expansion," starting from a small "seed."

Those who have been interested in the development of such theories might well ask the question: Why the new theory? Because of "several mysteries that have cast doubt on the big bang model," says the *Times*. The "extraordinary uniformity of the universe," its "uniform expansion" without any "wild turbulence" and a "rate of expansion" that is "just too lucky" in matching the "requirements of universe formation" just do not fit the explosive big bang theory. But the new theory also raises questions. For instance, it is based on an exception to the law of conservation—that matter cannot be created from nothing.

Yet, generally overlooked by scientists and fully in harmony with established scientific facts, is the Bible's explanation of the uni-

verse. It shows that Jehovah God, the source of all energy, created the universe and established laws governing it—to which its "uniformity" attests.—Isaiah 40:26; Revelation 4:11.

Something More Needed

The Moral Majority "raised all the right issues," says social scientist Amitai Etzioni, but its solutions are "technically incompetent." He continues: "I mean that if you would do to perfection what they asked for—if there wouldn't be a single abortion, if pornography would be banned and burned, and if they would hang criminals twice a month—that would do nothing to make people into religious beings, law-abiding, moral people." Instead, he advocates preserving the "traditional family" by increasing "basic parenting" and learning how to resolve disagreements.

Yet even more is needed to make 'religious, law-abiding and moral people.' One's thinking and heart motivation must be changed, based on accurate knowledge of God's Word, to where one truly loves God and neighbor and wants to do what is right. (Colossians 3:10) Thus the Bible's advice is to "put on the new personality" and to "be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 12:2) How pleasant it will be when, under God's Kingdom, this will be the situation earth wide!

Do You 'Send Out Your Bread Upon the Waters'?

LIKE many a typical family, a Witness couple in southern Brazil was busy just making a living. Besides looking after their three children, all under six, they also ran a family grocery store. Being dedicated Christians, however, they were concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children and two teenagers whom they hired as live-in help. This was back in 1946, and it was a real challenge. There were none of the fine, youth-oriented publications now available, and there were just eight Witnesses in the whole state of Santa Catarina, and only three in the city where they lived. What could they do?

In line with wise King Solomon's counsel to "send out your bread upon the surface of the waters" (Ecclesiastes 11:1), they decided to be generous in dispensing spiritual bread by making good use of the daily Bible text provided by *The Watchtower*. (This was before the *Yearbook* was published in their language.) The whole family, including the hired help, would come together for the noon meal, and this would be the occasion to consider the Bible text for the day. One of the family was assigned to locate the magazine with the comments on the text, and this was read aloud and each was free to comment. At first the young helpers found the custom strange, but soon they got used to it and began to share in the daily discussions.

Encouraging Results

The couple's faithful efforts over the years were greatly rewarded. Their eldest child, along with her husband, served as a special pioneer (full-time preacher) until the arrival of a baby, who is now 20 and has also taken up the full-time ministry. The second child, a son, has been serving Jehovah full time for almost 20 years.

Now he and his wife are serving in the Watch Tower Society's Brazilian branch office. The youngest son is a congregation elder and is now training his own son in the way of righteousness.

But what about the hired helpers? Over the years, a dozen young boys and girls worked with the family. Among the girls, Ester soon accepted the truth and, along with her husband and children, continues faithful in the preaching of the good news. Her eldest daughter has served for more than ten years as a special pioneer. Vitalina was a staunch Catholic when she began to work for the family. Later she admitted: "I was a 'hard nut to crack,' but now I am very happy serving Jehovah. I have been a special pioneer for more than ten years." Marta served for a time in the Watch Tower Society's branch home in Rio de Janeiro. Now she and her husband are busy training their own children to serve Jehovah. Two other girls, Nelci and Sueli, also accepted the truth and continued serving Jehovah faithfully.

And the boys? Rudibert and Pedro are both serving as elders in their respective congregations today. Abrilino and his family are also faithful servants of Jehovah.

Today, if all the family members were to be gathered together, there would be a group of 40 happy praisers of Jehovah, many in the full-time ministry. What a fine record of Christian faith and steadfastness! And all the result of a warm, happy family relationship and of faithfully putting to good use the fine provision of the daily text and comments. This family has indeed experienced that spiritual bread generously sent out upon the surface of the waters has been found again "in the course of many days."

Finding Real Security in Northern Ireland

THE view from the windows of the hospital, on its high vantage point above the city of Londonderry in the northwest corner of Northern Ireland, is beautiful. But the young male nurse did not have time to contemplate the beauties of creation. His mind was on other, more horrifying, things. He had witnessed firsthand the results of the bitterness and barbarism that mark the religious/political disputes that plague the province.

"It was horrifying," he said, "to see young men blown to bits. As a medical team, we could not afford to think of them as either Protestant or Catholic, but only as lives to be saved. It continually made me think, 'What is the point of it all? Why does God allow it to happen?'"

A Legacy From the Past

Like the young nurse, most people in Northern Ireland know from their history lessons at school that this is not a new problem. From the 12th century on there have been religious and political fights between the English and the Irish.

In time there came to be a Protestant concentration in the northern part of the country. Finally, early in this century the country was partitioned. This resulted in the predominantly Roman Catholic Republic of Ireland in the south and west, and the mainly Protestant province of Northern Ireland. Here the majority wish to maintain their close links with the rest of the British Isles.

Early Promoters of Real Security

Charles Taze Russell, first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, visited Northern Ireland four times—in 1891, 1903, 1908 and 1911. On his final visit to the city of Belfast a "class," or group, of about 40 Bible Students met with him. Their activity bore fruit slowly, mostly at first in Protestant areas. By the end of World War II in 1945 there were 120 Witnesses of Jehovah in Northern Ireland.

One of the early full-time workers was a slightly built, frail woman. In earlier days some of those to whom she preached threatened her with violence. For example, a woman chased her with a pitchfork, and a man tried to grab her by the throat after calling her a Delilah.

"On the whole it hasn't been bad," she explained recently before finishing her earthly course. "We got used to them shouting at us. If you pray for the Lord's protection he gives it to you." This faithful Witness became a familiar sight as she traveled all over Northern Ireland on her bicycle.

Another early worker tells about the time he and his companion were mistaken for Protestants while preaching in a solid Catholic area. They became the objects of a barrage of stones and other missiles. Getting into their car, they quickly turned around and headed back down the street that had only one outlet, trying to find a way through the gathering mob. As the car passed, the mob shattered the windshield and bat-

tered the car with iron bars. However, apart from the shock, no serious injuries were suffered.

Due to such sterling early examples of determination, there are now 778 persons sharing in the work of helping others to see the Bible's solution to the insecurity that has caused so much heartache in Northern Ireland. What is happening among the 30 congregations and smaller groups of Jehovah's Witnesses here?

Present-Day Experiences

In 1979 a young teacher of history, well aware of the tragedies of the past, came across a copy of *The Watchtower* at the home of a friend. Intrigued by what he read, he obtained more literature. "Being an avid reader I eagerly devoured it," he explained, "all the time becoming more and more impressed with how things all fitted together and, most importantly, made such good sense."

However, the man's own Protestant family did not appreciate what he was learning and bombarded him with anti-Witness literature. "I was rather taken aback by the opposition I encountered," he said, "until I read Matthew 10:36, which says that 'a man's enemies will

be persons of his own household.' So the literature, with its twisted, bitter comments, had the opposite effect. It only served to convince me that Jehovah's Witnesses did have the truth."

In the meantime, the man got married and his desire was that his wife would appreciate what he was learning. He explained: "One Sunday, after attending a particularly uplifting meeting, I prayed with all my heart to Jehovah. At home, I was astonished to find my wife reading her King James Version Bible. I began talking to her about what I had learned at the Kingdom Hall and was surprised that she listened intently. Then she surprised me even more by saying she would like to attend meetings with me. I learned that earlier in the day, while looking through her Bible for the first time since we got married, it was as if Psalm 83:18 had jumped out of the page at her: '*That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.*' This had triggered her interest."

This young couple are now dedicated and baptized servants of Jehovah with, as they describe it, "a deep resolve that no one will rob us of the prize of true



happiness now and everlasting life in the cleansed earth."

While in the past it was mainly Protestants who responded to Bible truths, this is no longer the case. Since the beginning of the present troubles it has become much easier to witness in Roman Catholic areas. Some of those contacted had been actively involved in the strife here.

For example, violence was nothing new to two fleshly sisters in their early 20's. As children, they saw a boy shot dead by the army. Their family was forced to leave their home by a gang of militant Protestant youths. On another occasion a nail bomb was placed on the window ledge of their home. As teenagers, they tried to correct what they thought were political and social injustices.

One of the girls joined a terrorist organization. At age 16 she was imprisoned for three weeks for illegally possessing a pistol. Both girls shared in demonstrations in support of terrorist organizations. Wearing blankets, they would frequent public bars to collect money for Republican prisoners who were demanding political status.

In time, however, as the girls observed the hatred in the hearts of some with whom they associated, they became disillusioned. In 1979 a person called at their home to share Bible knowledge. As they listened carefully they were very skeptical. That a good government would provide real security seemed farfetched. But gradually they came to appreciate that by means of God's Kingdom government such true security would become a reality.—Matthew 6:9, 10; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Daniel 2:44.

It was very difficult for the girls to believe that anyone in a city like Belfast could be neutral as regards the political situation. Yet as they associated with Jehovah's Witnesses they saw the real uni-

ty and genuine trust in God's Kingdom that exist among true Christians. "There is no political talk at the Kingdom Hall," they noted. The girls quickly progressed, taking a firm stand for God's Kingdom despite intense opposition.

Neutrality Brings Protection

A young full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses was calling on some interested persons in the small town of Newry near the southern border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Here there was strong support for terrorist groups.

Suddenly a car came up beside him. One of the occupants, gun in hand, ordered him into the front seat. "At first I thought I was going to be shot," the young Witness noted, "having been mistaken for a soldier in plain clothes. However, I was driven to a house and locked in a small coal shed in the back. After what seemed a lifetime, I was led blindfolded into the house.

"There I could hear persons going through my briefcase and commenting on the records I had made regarding people I had visited. They asked who I was and what I was doing in the area. Repeatedly I said that, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I was helping people to understand the Bible, and that those I had been calling on liked to read our magazines.

"One of the persons left the room, saying: 'Keep that gun on him and if he makes a move blow his head off!' Needless to say, I kept very still and continued to pray to Jehovah. After some time the first man returned and told the others I could be released. He must have found someone to corroborate what I had been saying. Still at gunpoint, I was led back to the car and released near the center of town."

There have been a number of similar

experiences in which the neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses has served as a real protection. This neutrality toward political affairs has made it possible for them to engage in their Bible education work in any area throughout the province.

Kingdom-Hall Building

Congregations here are usually relatively small in size, not many exceeding 60 to 70 persons. However, the Kingdom publishers are whole-souled and energetic in their activity. One fine evidence of this has been the building of many new Kingdom Halls. For example, in Belfast and in the area within 20 miles (32 km) of the city, nine congregations have built their own Kingdom Halls.

Such building activity has not been without opposition and difficulty. An elderly member of the Londonderry Congregation noted: "I remember that some in the congregation used to say, 'We'll never have a place of our own.' If only they were alive today they would see that Jehovah's spirit is with us in our new Kingdom Hall."

Even some small groups are getting their own meeting places, such as the congregation in Enniskillen, which had only 14 Kingdom publishers. For years they rented a place in which to meet, but then they realized they needed a hall of their own. Although they had limited resources, they went ahead with full faith in Jehovah's power to provide.

The congregation obtained a prefabricated building, located a good site for it and found problem after problem melt away. As other congregations heard of their need, contributions came in. An older member of the congregation noted: "This help from others made us in Enniskillen really feel part of our international brotherhood."

Real Security Not Just a Dream

Despite the ongoing troubles and the ever-present bitterness and division in the country, more and more people are finding real security as they learn about Jehovah's provisions to set matters right. You may have wondered, for example, about the young nurse who had witnessed such dreadful things.

When two of Jehovah's Witnesses of English origin called on him, his initial attitude was: "No foreigners should come and teach us religion in Ireland." But his attitude changed as he saw that everything they said was firmly based on the Bible. The man is now serving as a ministerial servant in the congregation. He, and many others like him, now have the firm confidence that we are living in the time when Jehovah will fulfill his grand promises to bring an end to all the conditions that cause grief and heartache and will see to it that, in time, Paradise conditions are established everywhere on earth.—Psalm 37:9-11, 29.

"Not Very Smart"

Lloyd S. Etheredge, associate professor of political science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, stated not long ago: "Col. Edward House, who was a senior political adviser to Woodrow Wilson, was once asked about his unflinching courtesy to other people . . . The colonel explained that he had grown up in the Old West when

most people you dealt with packed six-guns. Under those conditions, he thought, people learned fast that being arrogant was not very smart."

In this age of violence it is especially unwise to act arrogantly. The Bible warns: "He that is arrogant in soul stirs up contention."—Proverbs 28:25.

Walking With God in a Violent World

"Do not forget this: there will be terrible times in the last days."—2 TIMOTHY 3:1, *The New American Bible* (Catholic).

DO YOU not agree that these are terrible times? The word "terrible" in the Bible text just quoted is from the Greek word *khalepos*. This is also translated "hard to deal with," "perilous," "dangerous," "grievous," "hard," and "very difficult."* At Matthew 8:28 this same word is used in describing two demon-possessed men as being unusually "fierce" or "violent."† How true it is that we now live in terrible and violent times! They fulfill the above prophecy of the apostle Paul, showing that these unquestionably are "the last days"!

² What has spawned these terrible times, "the last days"? Is it not the condition that Paul foretold, in saying: 'Men will be lovers of themselves, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride'? And such godless men are egged on by the one whom the Bible describes as "the god of this system of things," "the one called Devil and Satan,

* *New World Translation, King James Version, Douay Version, English Revised Version, Moffatt, The Living Bible.*

† *New World Translation, The New English Bible.*

1. What indicates that these are indeed "the last days"?

2. (a) How have godless men brought on these terrible times? (b) What scriptures identify the chief source of today's woes, and how extensive have these become?

who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." The result is the shocking state of affairs that we observe all around us today—in government, in the business world, in religion, in human society in general.—2 Timothy 3:2-5, 13; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9, 12.

³ As we move deeper into the 1980's the world is experiencing an epidemic of violence. In 1980 alone, the United States reported 1.3 million cases of violent crime, a 13-percent increase over the previous year, with homicide becoming a leading cause of death of men between ages 25 and 44. In the decade ending in the same year, Britain reported murders increasing 50 percent, muggings 300 percent and vandalism 200 percent. In France, total crime has increased more than 260 percent since 1963. Similar reports come from around the world.

⁴ Historian Walter Laqueur reported: "The period up to the first World War was, on the whole, more humane. I'm sorry to say that human life has become cheaper in our time—partly as a result of the experience of mass killing of the first and second World Wars. Also, we now have these philosophers of violence who

3. Why may it be said that violence has reached epidemic proportions?

4. How has the human scene changed since 1914, giving rise to what questions?

did not exist in the 19th century—people who argue that violence is wonderful, that it does things for you psychologically, that we really need violence.” Since world war first erupted in 1914 violence has become rampant worldwide. How does God view this violence? How should Christians view it?

How God Views Violence

⁵ The Bible describes an earlier time in history, when “the earth became filled with violence.” That was more than 4,300 years ago, after the world of that time had got off to a bad start with the disobedience of Adam and Eve followed by their expulsion from the Paradise of Eden. In due course their first son, Cain, murdered his brother Abel. The divine record tells us: “Cain . . . originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother. And for the sake of what did he slaughter him? Because his own works were wicked, but those of his brother were righteous.” (Genesis 6:11; 1 John 3:12) Jesus identifies that “wicked one” as the Devil, saying: “That one was a manslayer when he began.” (John 8:44) Starting from Eden, Satan surely has built up an impressive record of inciting mankind to violence.

⁶ Following Cain’s murder of Abel, that original world moved on from bad to worse. Cain’s descendant Lamech is also named as a manslayer. (Genesis 4:23, 24) About that time “the seventh one in line from Adam,

5. (a) What early start was there to violence? (b) How did Jesus describe the originator of violence?

6. (a) What shocking things occurred in Enoch’s day, calling for what response from Jehovah? (b) Why did God ‘take’ Enoch? (Genesis 5:24)

Enoch [of the line of Seth], prophesied also regarding [the wicked], when he said: ‘Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him.’” (Jude 14, 15) God transferred Enoch out of that world, so that he no longer had to put up with the violence and abuse of those wicked people. How rewarding to him will be his resurrection into the peaceful “new earth” of Jehovah’s creation!—2 Peter 3:13; Hebrews 11:5.

⁷ In the time of Enoch’s great-grandson Noah the invisible wicked one, Satan, was joined by angelic reinforcements. These were spirit sons of God who disobeyed him by coming down to earth to marry the daughters of men, producing by them a hybrid offspring—the Nephilim. This name means “Fellers,” and true to that designation they pursued their murderous way among mankind. “They were the mighty ones who were of old, the men of fame. . . . After that God said to Noah: ‘The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence as a result of them; and here I

7. How did the ancient world come to be filled with violence?



These “last days” are indeed “terrible times”

am bringing them to ruin together with the earth.'"—Genesis 6:1-13.

⁸ The apostle Peter tells us: "The world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word [of God] the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." Fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that the present world is now very near that day of judgment. What must we do in order to survive? Well, what did Noah do, along with his family? The Bible informs us: "Noah walked with the true God. . . . Noah proceeded to do according to all that Jehovah had commanded him." (2 Peter 3: 6, 7; Genesis 6:9, 22; 7:5) This included his becoming "a preacher of righteousness." Through his faith "he condemned the world." (2 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 11:7) Should we not be following closely the splendid example of Noah and his household, as we seek salvation out of this modern world that truly "is lying in the power of the wicked one"?—1 John 5:19.

Escalation of Violence

⁹ There was an escalation of violence in the world before the Great Deluge—until God himself executed judgment in bringing to ruin those who were ruining the earth. (Genesis 6:13, 17) From the time of Noah's great-grandson Nimrod, the "mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah," there has again been an escalating of violence through the ages, perhaps gradual at first, but steadily gaining momentum. (Genesis 10:1, 6, 8, 9) There came in time the sword, the bow and

arrow, the spear; and in more modern times the musket, the cannon and other firearms. But World War I, starting in 1914, brought astonishing new weapons of violence—the airplane, the tank, and also poison gas. In that war, use of the submarine caused much terror and machine guns took literally millions of lives.

¹⁰ The Lord Jesus Christ had foretold such a development "in the Lord's day," where we have been since 1914. (Revelation 1:10) He described how he would ride forth on a white horse as a newly crowned King, followed by a rider on a fiery-colored horse. This one is "granted to take peace away from the earth so that they should slaughter one another; and a great sword was given him"—the sword of Total Warfare. That symbolic sword now embraces the most horrible and violent instruments ever devised and proliferated by man, including nuclear missiles capable by their combined power of blasting the entire human race off our globe many times over! If the presence of the giant Nephilim, combined with the abundant badness of man, in the days of Noah, was cause for Jehovah's 'bringing mankind to ruin because the earth was full of violence as a result of them,' with how much more reason should we expect the same Sovereign Lord of the universe "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth" today! (Genesis 6:4, 7, 13; Revelation 6:1-4; 11:18) Speaking of ungodly people of our age, the Lord Jesus himself said: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. . . . They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away."—Matthew 24:37, 39.

8. (a) How does the world situation now compare to that of Noah's time? (b) What example did Noah leave for us, and how may we benefit by following it?

9. (a) What resulted from the escalation of violence in Noah's day? (b) What parallel development followed the Flood, leading to what climax?

10. (a) How has Jesus' prophecy concerning events "in the Lord's day" been fulfilled? (b) Why should we expect Jehovah to execute judgment shortly?

The Christian View of Violence

¹¹ It is true that wars were fought by God's servants of ancient times. But we must remember that those were theocratic wars, commanded by God. Israel fought for the purpose of dispossessing depraved, demon-worshiping nations from God's "land." (Leviticus 18:24-27; Deuteronomy 7:1-6) Are the wars of the nations, and particularly wars fought for world domination since 1914, wars approved by God? When Catholics slaughter Catholics, Protestants slaughter Protestants, Buddhists slaughter Buddhists, or Muslims slaughter Muslims, are they acting in harmony with the God who "made out of one man every nation of men"? How must Christ, the Prince of Peace, regard the bloodshed that erupted in Christendom when World War I and later World War II, got started? (Acts 17:24-26; Isaiah 9:6) Let us note the new and higher standard that the Prince of Peace set for Christians just before he met a violent death.

¹² Having in mind his role in fulfilling prophecy, Jesus said to his disciples on the eve of his arrest: "Let the one having no sword sell his outer garment and buy one. For I tell you that this which

is written must be accomplished in me, namely, 'And he was reckoned with lawless ones.'" When they replied, "Lord, look! here are two swords," he said to them: "It is enough." (Luke 22:36-38) Enough for what? First, to fulfill Isaiah 53:12. Secondly, to drive home an important lesson for Christians.

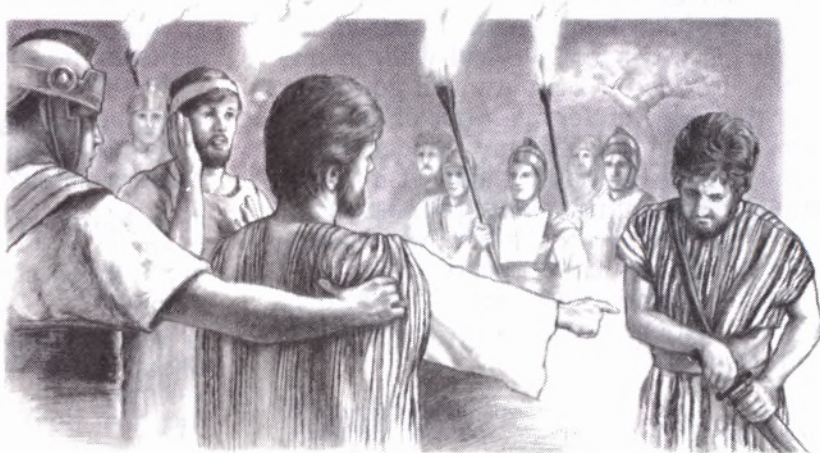
¹³ Surely there could have been no stronger reason for using a sword than protecting the Son of God himself! Yet it was not God's will for Jesus to be spared at that time. So when the apostle Peter used his sword against the slave of the high priest, Jesus told him: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52, 53; John 18:10, 11) Jesus thus made it plain that theocratic warfare from that time on was not to include the use of carnal weapons.

¹⁴ This clearly was in line with what Jesus had told his disciples earlier on that same evening, that they would be persecuted because of being "no part of the world." It was in harmony with Jesus' prayer to his Father, uttered that same evening, in which he emphasized

14. As stated by Jesus, what is involved in being "no part of the world"?

11. (a) Why did God approve of ancient Israel's wars? (b) How must God and Christ view modern-day warfare? (Compare 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4.)

12, 13. (a) Why did Jesus see to it that his disciples were equipped with swords? (b) What did Jesus then make plain about theocratic warfare?



Jesus said, "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword"

that, like him himself, his disciples are "no part of the world." It agreed with what Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." —John 15:19, 20; 17:14-16; 18:36.

¹⁵ Are you now separate from this world and its violent ways, as were Jesus and his disciples in the first century? If so, you have come to share in a wonderful worldwide unity experienced only by Jehovah's Witnesses. It is a unity engendered by obedience to God's laws and his will for the present day. For now a "great crowd" of peace-loving Christians "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" is streaming toward Jehovah's great spiritual temple for worship. (Revelation 7:9, 10, 15) They are described at Isaiah 2:2-4: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it all the nations must stream. And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem. And he will certainly render judgment among the nations and set matters straight respecting many peoples. And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."

15. (a) To what unity has separateness from the world led? (b) What various aspects of this unity are described at Isaiah 2:2-4?

¹⁶ No flag-waving ultranationalists are these, but one peaceful, united people out of all nations. They are truly neutrals in a warring world. After telling how they 'beat swords into plowshares,' Micah 4:1-5 describes their spiritual prosperity and their prospect of living forever on earth in unity. The prophecy contrasts them with peoples of this world, saying: "For all the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." But as we continue to walk in God's name, we meet up with many pressures from a violent world. How should we cope with situations that may arise? The next article gives the Bible's answer to this question.

16. (a) How do Jehovah's Witnesses contrast with the world? (b) What does Micah 4:1-5 foretell, as to the prosperity of God's people, the reason therefor and the final outcome? (c) In view of what does a further question arise?

What answers would you give to the following:

- ☐ How does the world situation point to our time as being the last days?
- ☐ According to the record in Genesis, how does God view violence?
- ☐ What parallels are to be noted between Noah's day and modern times?
- ☐ In harmony with Jesus' example and words, what separateness should Christians maintain?
- ☐ What do Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-5 tell us as to how we may walk with God, and the result of doing so?

“Seek Peace and Pursue It”

HOW may we follow through on the advice of the apostle Peter, quoted above, surrounded as we are by a world of violence? Peter answers, telling us to “turn away from what is bad and do what is good.” We need, then, to put forth earnest effort to come into a peaceful relationship with Jehovah God on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thereafter we pursue peace by following closely the standards that God sets forth in his Word. “For the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication; but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things.” (1 Peter 3:11, 12) When the wicked try to do bad things to us, we can earnestly supplicate Jehovah. We can call aloud to him by name for help, as when confronted by a rapist or other evildoer.—Compare Deuteronomy 22:25-27.

² In violent situations implicit trust in Jehovah has often been the key to survival. Time and again, the witness of Jehovah has been blessed in holding to the confidence that David expressed in prayer at Psalm 18:46, 48: “Jehovah is living, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. He is providing escape for me from my angry enemies; above those who rise up against me you will lift me up, from the

man of violence you will deliver me.” Those millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses today who look forward in strong faith to the fulfillment of God’s promise that ‘the righteous will possess the earth and reside forever upon it’ are assured also that “salvation of the righteous ones is from Jehovah; he is their fortress in the time of distress.”—Psalm 37:29, 39.

³ Whatever the situations that may arise in this violent world, Jehovah is able ‘to safeguard his people as the pupil of his eye.’ (Deuteronomy 32:10; Daniel 3:19-27) He is even able, if he so chooses, to preserve his own through such a horror as a nuclear holocaust. This was demonstrated on August 6, 1945, in the experience of a faithful servant of Jehovah who was undergoing persecutions in Japan’s Hiroshima prison. On that morning a departure from his usual schedule placed him in such a position that he was unharmed by the atom bomb’s explosion.* Most of the prison was flattened, but much as Rahab survived the fiery destruction of Jericho, Katsuo Miura survived the devastation in Hiroshima. (Joshua 6:23, 24) He was thankful to Jehovah, as he expressed it, that he was ‘atom bombed out of prison,’ in order to spend the remaining years of his life in

* For the complete account, see the article “In the Mushroom Cloud,” pages 17-19, *Awake!* of September 8, 1954.

1. (a) How may we “seek peace and pursue it” in this violent world? (b) In trialsome situations, why should we earnestly supplicate Jehovah?

2. When confronted by violence, we may hold to what confidence as expressed by David?

3. (a) What do Deuteronomy 32:10 and Daniel 3:19-27 indicate to us? (b) What is indicated by the manner of deliverance of Rahab, and also of a modern-day pioneer?

pioneer service. (Compare Psalm 116:15.) Nothing is too wonderful for our Sovereign Lord, "the true God, the great One, the mighty One, Jehovah of armies being his name."—Jeremiah 32:17-19.

Keep Close to Jehovah's Organization

⁴In order to face up to these violent days, we need the tender guidance of Jehovah's motherly organization. Since 1938 there has been an improved theocratic condition among God's people, as Jehovah had foretold: "I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners. No more will violence be heard in your land, despoiling or breakdown within your boundaries. And you will certainly call your own walls Salvation and your gates Praise." The peace and love of righteousness that now characterize Jehovah's organization worldwide have contributed much toward the "small one" of a few thousand Kingdom proclaimers of 64 years

4. How does Isaiah chapter 60 describe the condition of God's organization at this time?

ago becoming "a mighty nation" 2,477,000 strong, moving forward throughout 205 lands of the earth. Reports from the field show that, as we approach "the end," Jehovah is 'speeding it up in its own time.'—Isaiah 60:17, 18, 22; Matthew 24:14.

⁵Much of this expansion has taken place in the face of violence, such as that experienced by Jehovah's Witnesses in Hitler's concentration camps and in war-time mob attacks in the United States. Violence continues to escalate in many parts of the earth. Few countries, if any, have experienced more violence in recent years than has Lebanon. Yet our brothers there are strong. What has kept them strong? Implicit trust in Jehovah and determination to keep on associating in their meetings and other Christian activity.—Psalm 73:28; 149:1.

⁶This should drive home to us that

5. As stated in the Psalms, what has kept Jehovah's people strong in the face of violence?

6. How should we regard regular meeting attendance, and why?

The Escalation of Violence—Where Will It End?

"An all-out nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union could result in the death of . . . about 80 percent of the world's population."—*The Express*, March 29, 1982, based on interview with a California senator.

"Bombed out of their Brains—The danger is that the political leaders, Soviet and American . . . will be persuaded that nuclear war is thinkable. The fact is, of course, that any nuclear war in which all, or a significant part, of the Soviet and American nuclear arsenals are used would utterly devastate the Northern hemisphere."—Dr. Frank Barnaby, peace researcher, December 26, 1982.

"If readiness for war is a prerequisite for peace, then peace must never have been better guaranteed. A million Hiroshimas stockpiled on earth, and this is still

not preventing each of its 4,200,000,000 inhabitants from spending £115 a year on arms."—Andre Fontaine, *Le Monde*, republished in *The Guardian*, January 9, 1983.

"U.N. Chief Says Threat of Nuclear War Grows—'The choice is between new generations of weapons and future human generations,' he said."—*The New York Times*, February 16, 1983, quoting Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

"A generation is going, and a generation is coming; but the earth is standing even to time indefinite." "And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ecclesiastes 1:4; Psalm 37:10, 11.

Jehovah's Witnesses Endure Violent Times in Tripoli, Lebanon

"They really went through some tough times but never missed a meeting. They told us that while holding their district convention one group of 117 was gathered at a brother's home, and when the last sister entered, a rocket exploded right outside the door. All through the meeting the rockets and mortars fell all around them like rain. They showed us the shaved-off lamp posts and the surrounding buildings peppered with shrapnel—but nothing hit the apartment where they were gathered!

"Two families on one occasion wondered if they should try to go to the meeting because of the shelling. They decided to go ahead, and their lives were saved because,

while they were at the meeting, the house of one family was bombed and completely destroyed, and the other house was so sprayed with shrapnel that no one could have survived.

"One Witness family living in leftist territory where the rightists invaded were to be taken out and executed. But a relative not in the truth and in the party heard of it and got to them before the execution squad arrived. He took them to the headquarters of the party where they explained all about the neutrality of the Witnesses, gave a good witness and were released. This is the story many times over."—*As reported by a visitor.*

in violent times we must never forsake the gathering of ourselves together. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) If this is so important in bracing ourselves against the violence of Satan's world, it is necessary also in gaining strength to cope with the more subtle machinations of the Devil. Our regular meeting attendance means life to us!

⁷ In these terrible times, Satan seeks to subvert God's people by making them "lovers of themselves, lovers of money [and the glittering material things that it buys], . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." These are the things that may draw us away from regular association with God's people. (2 Timothy 3:1, 2, 4) Rather than imbibe Satan's spirit of violence and immorality, which is glorified by certain TV programs, some video games and the like, how important that we continue, through our personal study, meditation and our meetings, to take in and apply the accurate knowledge that

7. (a) How does Satan seek to subvert God's people? (b) In what specific ways does Satan whip up the spirit of violence and immorality? (c) How may we pursue peace, and with what goal in view?

"means everlasting life"—John 17:3; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11.

Where Is Our Protection?

⁸ Violence is striking fear in the hearts of people of the large cities of the earth. According to a recent Gallup poll, 45 percent of Americans are afraid to go out alone at night within a mile of their home. Many carry guns. But is this the road that Jehovah's Witnesses should take—to meet possible violence by preparing to be violent? The many accidents involving "weapons of self-defense"—with young children even killing other youngsters—should cause us to pause and examine the situation. It is well known that a professional gunman, when he sees another gun, will shoot—and shoot to kill. What chance then does the gun-toting amateur have!

⁹ The Christian will find protection, not in possessing firearms, but in 'seeking peace and pursuing it.' (1 Peter 3:11)

8. (a) How do many worldlings react to these violent times? (b) With examples, show why their course is unwise.

9. Where and how will the Christian find protection?

Trust in Jehovah. If you are confronted by a criminal, make it known that you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Do not resist the one who threatens violence; give him the material belongings that he demands. Your life is more valuable than these. When cornered and threatened, call on Jehovah for help. Remember: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection."—Proverbs 18:10.

¹⁰ However, would there not be occasions, such as in traveling through dangerous insurgent territory, when Jehovah's Witnesses might be better off carrying firearms for self-defense? The answer emphatically is No. (Compare Ezra 8:21-23, 31; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.) Take for example our traveling overseers in a certain African country. In recent years these brothers often were required to pass through war zones when serving the congregations. At times they were accosted by guerrillas or by security forces. If firearms had been found on them it would have cost them their life. With few exceptions, their identity as Jehovah's Witnesses, along with the absence of any weapons of violence, gave them passage to their destination. It is the same in strife-torn Northern Ireland, where it has been said that "death is part of the landscape." The neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses is well known, and as peace lovers they find protection in both Catholic and Protestant areas.

¹¹ The Scriptures, backed up by the modern-day experience of Jehovah's Witnesses, make it plain that it is inadvisable for individual Christians to carry, or

have in their possession at home or in other locations, a firearm or other lethal weapon for use against human attackers or intruders. (Isaiah 2:4; 1 Peter 3:11) One who prepares for violence invites violence. Rather, the Christian's main trust should be in Jehovah, his God.—Psalm 18:48; 140:1, 4; Proverbs 3:5-7.

¹² In line with Romans 13:1, 4, the worldly "superior authorities" may set up certain peace-keeping agencies, such as police, that are armed officially to protect citizens and property. Since such arrangements permitted by God are described as "God's minister, an avenger to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad," it would be in order for the Christian to request and receive protection from such an agency. But even if he finds it necessary to defend himself or his loved ones by whatever is at hand, he should not use firearms. Nor would he take the law into his own hands. In many countries it is illegal even to possess firearms for self-defense.—Matthew 22:21; compare Exodus 22:2.

¹³ However, for private self-defense, might not the Christian take training in the martial arts, such as the Chinese *Kung fu*? Let it be noted that this most lethal of the Oriental arts was developed more than 1,400 years ago by Zen Buddhist monks of the Shaolin Monastery on the slopes of Songshan, one of China's sacred mountains. From this religious source came also the martial arts of Japan—*Bushido*, meaning, literally, "The Way of the Warrior." Many experts in the arts of judo, kendo and karate still draw inspiration from religious meditation. Karate has as its objective incapacitating the victim, which could

10. (a) With regard to self-defense, what do the accounts in Ezra chapter 8 and 2 Corinthians chapter 11 indicate to us? (b) What do reports from Africa and Ireland tell us as to the folly of carrying firearms?

11. (a) What makes it plain that Christians should not arm themselves with lethal weapons? (b) According to the Scriptures, where should our trust be?

12. (a) Why, Scripturally, may Christians request police protection? (b) Would a Christian ever use firearms in an emergency, or take the law into his own hands?

13. Why would a Christian not use the martial arts for self-defense?



Meet violence with violence
or trust in Jehovah?

result in serious injury or death. Surely, those who trust in Jehovah would not turn to the martial arts for defense! —Proverbs 3:31.

¹⁴ Would it be fitting for the Christian to possess firearms for the purpose of hunting animals for food? Since the Flood, God has permitted the killing of animals for food, though the blood must be poured out on the ground, not eaten. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Deuteronomy 12:23-25) When allowed by local law, some Witnesses keep guns for protection against wild animals or for shooting game. (Matthew 22:21) To them this may be an important or practical source of food. But

14, 15. (a) Why would it be fitting for a Christian to hunt or kill animals for food? (b) But what might lead to a Christian's being ineligible for special privileges, and why?

never should anyone think that Jehovah would approve of taking animal life for sport, for the thrill of killing—as has been the way with ancient and modern “Nimrods.” Since “the soul of the flesh is in the blood,” this is precious in Jehovah’s sight.*—Leviticus 17:11, 14.

¹⁵ If a sizable number of Witnesses in a congregation should be disturbed in that someone is hunting animals merely for sport, and not for obtaining food, he might not be in position to receive special service privileges, because of his offensive reputation.—1 Timothy 3:2.

¹⁶ It is similar if one of Jehovah’s Witnesses insists on carrying or having firearms for protection against humans, or on learning the martial arts. The spiritual elders should take immediate steps to counsel and help him to remedy the situation. (Micah 4:3) Anyone who thus continues to carry personal arms or otherwise equips himself to become “a smiter” would cease to qualify for special privileges in the congregation.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

Use of Arms in Civilian Employment

¹⁷ If someone has employment that involves carrying a weapon for use against other humans, or if he is required to be trained in the martial arts, such as judo and karate, what should he do? In making his personal decision he must bear in mind that a follower of Jesus is to pursue peace. (Romans 12:17, 18) In view of what is stated at Isaiah 2:4, most of Jehovah’s Witnesses avoid such employment. Even though the employment may be for the purpose of protecting the public

* See *Awake!*, March 22, 1976, pages 18-20.

16. How may elders help, but what may result to those who fail to follow the Scriptural counsel in paragraphs 9 to 15 above?

17. Why do most Witnesses avoid employment involving the martial arts or the carrying of firearms?

(or property) in harmony with Romans 13:4, experience has shown that there is always the danger of incurring blood-guilt by taking life with the weapon, with harm to the individual's conscience, as well as there being a danger of injury or death to oneself due to retaliation. (Psalm 51:14; compare Numbers 35:11, 12, 22-25.) Certainly it is best to avoid such dangers by selecting employment where they do not arise.

¹⁸ During these "last days," many employees are expected to carry a firearm. Bank or security guards, watchmen and policemen may even be required to do so to hold employment. But what of the Christian, who is obligated to "provide for those who are his own"? (1 Timothy 5:8) His Bible-trained viewpoint would be different from that of worldly persons, who feel free to carry such weapons and to use them as they see fit in any dangerous situation that may arise. (Ephesians 5:15-17) He will want to avoid bloodguilt, having in mind Jehovah's viewpoint on the sanctity of blood. (Genesis 9:6; Psalm 55:23) A mature Christian should try to find unarmed employment.* Some Witnesses by talking with their employer have been successful in changing to a job that does not require carrying a weapon.

¹⁹ As the world becomes increasingly violent we can no longer regard as exemplary a brother who continues in armed employment. He could be allowed six months to make a change. If he does not make a change, he would not be in a position to hold special privileges of

* See also *The Watchtower*, February 15, 1973, pages 127, 128.

18. (a) How would the viewpoint of a mature Christian differ from that of the world? (b) To keep a clear conscience, how might he try to adjust matters?

19. For what privileges might a brother be ineligible until an adjustment is made? (2 Corinthians 13:11)

service and responsibility in the congregation.—1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5, 6.

Let All of Us Pursue Peace

²⁰ In pursuing the path of peace Jehovah's Witnesses have so many times found protection—physically, morally, spiritually! Clearly this Scriptural course is the one to be followed. In the few cases where there have been casualties among faithful Christians, their fearlessness to the death has placed them in line for an early resurrection. (Hebrews 11:36-40; Revelation 2:10) At times Jehovah permits Satan to place severe tests on His people, as in the case of Job, though the final outcome to that integrity keeper was a happy one. (Job 1:18, 19; 42:12-15) But whatever may come in these violent times, let it never sway us from our integrity. Let us trust in God. "For, as regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

20. (a) Why is the path of peace to be recommended? (b) Despite severe tests, and even death, what will be the outcome to integrity keepers? (c) In whom do you trust?

How would you answer?

- ☐ In all situations threatening violence, where must the Christian place his trust?
- ☐ What benefit is there in keeping close to Jehovah's organization and its counsel?
- ☐ Why is it folly to carry firearms or learn the martial arts for self-defense?
- ☐ With regard to armed employment, what course is counseled for Christians, and why?

Watch Out for This Deceiver!

SUPPOSE you encountered someone who seemed quite friendly. You might be inclined to invite him into your home because he appeared to be good company. But then you discovered that he was a notorious criminal who was secretly corrupting the neighborhood. How would you react?

Well, you may not have realized it, but there is such a deceptive criminal who endangers all of us. He is Satan the Devil, and the Bible tells us he has been 'hurled down to the earth along with his angels.' (Revelation 12:9) That makes them dangerously close. Moreover, Satan often acts as if he wants nothing more than to give us a good time. So we need to watch out for this Deceiver. If we let him in, as it were, we lay ourselves open to all kinds of destructive influences, even as the apostle Paul indicates in saying: "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." —2 Corinthians 11:14.

Now please consider some of the seemingly innocent ways people amuse themselves today. However, note how these give evidence of satanic influence.

The Games People Play

On a rainy Saturday afternoon many people enjoy getting together in a friend's home, sitting around a table and playing games. Many such games are harmless, but at least two are far from harmless.

One of these is the Ouija (pronounced "wee-ja") board. Invented about 1890,

this is a board with an alphabet and other signs on it. Friends sit around the board, place their fingers on a pointer and ask questions. The pointer moves from one letter to another on the board, spelling out answers.

What kind of answers does it give? One purchaser of a Ouija board wrote to the manufacturer: "It was with great distress that we finally decided the total inaccuracy of the answers means only one thing—the Ouija board we own lies." Another wrote: "I have one of your Ouija boards and use it with my friends. It gives very good answers early in the day and very dirty answers at night."

Selena used to own a Ouija board and she reports that on one occasion the board spelled out that it liked her. When she asked why, the answer was: "Because you are a woman, and that makes all the difference." There are many similar reports of lies, immorality and obscenity coming from the Ouija board.

What makes the board answer questions? An English newspaper noted: "The game, Ouija, is based on a Spiritualist method of 'communicating' with the dead, and is played with a board like those used at seances." Consistent with this, many who use the board speak of getting in touch with spirits. Denise wrote to a newspaper and said that through a Ouija board she contacted a spirit that called itself Bob. She complained: "Bob has turned mean. He says he's not a good spirit, but a demon in hell. He tells



Some games are dangerous

me I'm going insane and that soon he will take over my spirit and give me to the devil."

If the Ouija board is made to work by spirits, what spirits are they? Certainly not spirits of the dead, because "the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) It is unthinkable that any spirit from God would be responsible for giving out lies or immoral messages. So we can only conclude that the Ouija board is activated by demonic forces, the foremost of whom, Satan, is "the father of the lie." (John 8:44) Clearly, the Ouija board, as well as all other forms of spiritism, should be shunned by those who wish to avoid Satan's unclean influence.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Another popular game is called Dungeons and Dragons. In this, players assume the roles of monsters, demons and demigods, as well as of murderers, arsonists, rapists and torturers. Pleasant company to have in your living room? It often involves players' acting out spiritism and magic. Does that sound healthy to you? It certainly is not, for uncleanness and the practice of spiritism are among "the works of the flesh" that will

bar a person from inheriting God's Kingdom.—Galatians 5:19-21.

One "Dungeon Master," John Holmes, writing in the magazine *Psychology Today*, said: "I don't think this imaginary violence is any more likely to warp the minds of the participants than is the endless stream of violence in TV, movies, or literature." Well, many feel that "the endless stream of violence" in modern entertainment *does* warp the minds of those exposed to it. What do you think? Does it not sound as though the Deceiver, Satan the Devil, is trying to use this game to get us to think

like him?

The Movies They Watch

What sort of entertainment are people seeking today for relaxation at the movies? Millions choose immorality or luridly detailed violence. Or they are intrigued by horror and demonistic movies. These latter ones are dangerous because they cater to an unhealthy fascination with uncanny things, which ultimately are harmful. (2 Chronicles 33:6) And they can have serious immediate effects on susceptible persons.

Some years ago Roxanne went to see the movie *The Exorcist*, which spawned a host of imitations. She says: "The movie had a terrifying effect on me. I had to leave before it was over because I was afraid I would be sick to my stomach and felt like fainting. For about two months after seeing the movie, I continued to be terrified and would have nightmares. I wouldn't go anywhere alone, would watch over my shoulder all the time and was even afraid to wash my hair for fear something would be hovering over me." Another woman, who saw the same movie on television, later cut out her

four-year-old daughter's heart because she believed the girl was demonized.

Satan is called "the god of this system of things," and "the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2) Can anyone doubt that the widespread demonism, violence and immorality in movies today is a result of his influence?

The Music They Listen To

Many complain at the loudness of some modern music. Those who take the trouble to read the lyrics are often horrified by the words. Former disc jockey Cal Walker says that in much modern music there are five basic themes: "Sex, drugs, violence, occult and rebellion."

Some music groups are reported as being deeply involved in the occult. Certainly, the design of many of the album covers has an uncanny or occult appearance. And often the lyrics appear to promote occult themes. Can you discern the Deceiver's influence in this?

Immorality, occultism, and so forth, are certainly not godly influences. The Bible warns: "But as for . . . 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 . . . the second

death." (Revelation 21:8) Music may be basically good and wholesome. But wise persons will be careful to avoid allowing a pleasant diversion to become an opening for demonic influence.

The Exercise They Do

In many parts of the world people are jogging, doing aerobic exercises, engaging in sports, swimming and in other ways trying to make themselves more fit. Is there anything wrong in that? Not when it is done in moderation. "Bodily training is beneficial for a little," said the apostle Paul. (1 Timothy 4:8) But there is a form of exercise that could cause unexpected problems: yoga.

Yoga (a Sanskrit word signifying "union of the individual soul with the Supreme Spirit") consists of physical and mental exercises, postures, breathing exercises and intense meditation and concentration. Originating in India, it has been westernized and used to reduce tension, lose weight and gain energy. Books on the market such as *Practical Yoga for Businessmen* and *Yoga for Parents* indicate its popularity. Would you practice yoga?

If so, consider this fact: real yoga is not merely a form of exercise. It is a Hindu religious practice. "The chief aim of the Yoga philosophy is to teach the means by which the human soul may be completely united with the Supreme Spirit," according to Dr. B. S. Surti. That seems a long way from *Yoga for Businessmen*, but it is what yoga exercises were originally designed to achieve.

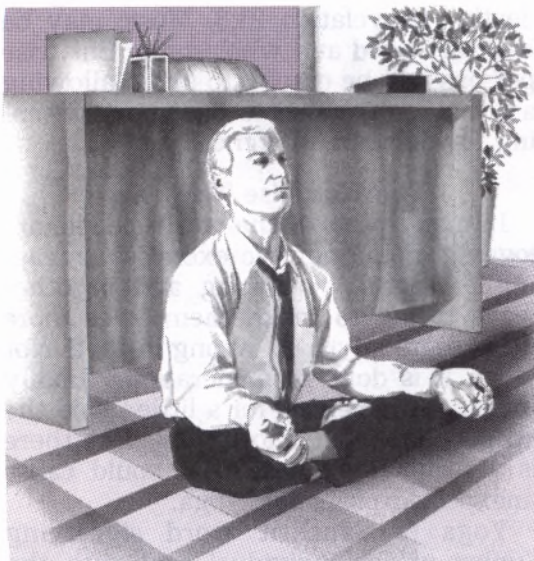
Particularly problematical is yoga-type meditation. Some may point to the fact that the Bible, too, encourages meditation. However, Christian meditation is an active meditation, pondering on upbuilding and beneficial matters. (Psalm 63:6; Proverbs 15:28; Philippians 4:8) Yoga-style meditation is something else. "The

In Our Next Issue

■ **Why So Many Suicides?**

■ **Hope for Despairing Ones**

■ **Israel and the "Times of the Gentiles"**



Should you practice
yoga-type meditation?

soul's essence, pure intelligence, is obscured by mental activities, whose suppression is the main purpose of Yoga. The mind is to be controlled by constant practice of meditation and nonattachment to material objects. The ultimate result is the suppression of all mental tendencies, conscious or latent."—*The Encyclopedia Americana*.

Is such emptying of the mind healthy? One practitioner reports that during one extended period of exercise and meditation, he felt frequent attacks by invisible forces. The demons can take advantage of a mind that is empty and fill it with their own thoughts. (Luke 11:24-26) So beware! This practice could make you their prey.

The Video-Game Craze

In recent years, a new fad has swept the world: video games. Each year, billions of dollars are poured into arcade machines, and billions more are spent on home video games. Are the games harm-

ful? 'No,' say some. 'They may even be beneficial.' But they are banned in some lands, and local communities in other lands have tried to keep them out. Is this an overreaction?

Well, consider the kind of games that are played. Some are based on sports, but most are not. "The ultimate object of virtually all video games," says the magazine *Natural History*, "is survival. In the space games you must shoot them before they shoot you. In the Pac 'person' genre, you eat them before they eat you. And in the comic character games, you assault the creature . . . before it assaults you." Why is it the violent games that have caught the imagination? Historian Jack Colhoun feels: "These games are a product of our times." We live in a violent world, and young people are trained to view violence as exciting rather than repugnant. Yet the Bible says: "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates."—Psalm 11:5.

The magazine *Psychology Today* indicates the harmful effect these games may have: "The video games . . . may not only be socially isolating but may actually encourage violence between people." Young people can be especially harmed by such an influence. Hence, columnist John Rosemund insists: "Video games are junk food for the mind. The younger the mind, the more detrimental their effects."

Video games may even be addictive. A university professor explained that addiction to video games is both physical and psychological. He said: "Players experience adrenaline rushes, elation and, finally, despair, as well as whole ranges of aggression and violent reactions." A mother in England says this about the addiction of her 14-year-old son: "It is

like having a teenage alcoholic in the house. These machines have corrupted him . . . He is like a caged animal if he can't get to them." An extreme case? Perhaps. But the widespread occurrence of "Pacman finger," "Space Invader wrist tendinitis" and other game-related physical problems shows that addiction is not uncommon.

Youths naturally crave excitement and are fascinated by novelties. But how wise it is for Christian youths to be careful to let nothing prevent them from living "with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things"! (Titus 2:12) They

thus will not allow the Deceiver to rob them of their time, or their mental and emotional energy, by getting them addicted to video games.

Some physical exercise, certain music, many games and various movies are entertaining and relaxing. But remember: Such things can also be a vehicle for unwholesome influences. Be alert and on guard against these. The Great Deceiver, Satan, may seem interested in your having a good time. But in the end, his influence will harm you. Do not let him into your home or into your life. "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." —James 4:7.

Questions From Readers

■ Since a brother who continues in armed employment would not be regarded as exemplary, would it be wrong for one of Jehovah's Witnesses to seek the protection of armed law-enforcement officers?

Jesus stated: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) In line with this principle, mature Christians are admonished to avoid employment that requires them to carry a firearm (the modern equivalent of "the sword"). However, this does not mean that they could not seek and receive the protection of armed police officers. Why do we say so?

Romans 13:1-4, in referring to human governmental "authority" that operates by God's permission during the present system, says this: "It is God's minister to you for your good. But if you are doing what is bad, be in fear: for it is not without purpose that it bears the sword; for it is God's minis-

ter, an avenger to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad." So God approves of the arming of such "superior authorities," that a measure of law and order may be preserved among mankind. However, when Christ as "Prince of Peace" brings in the 'abundance of endless peace,' the use of all weapons of violence will be a thing of the past. Consistently with the Scriptures, then, Christians today may accept protection from the "authority," though they themselves have 'beaten swords into plowshares' in anticipation of God's incoming Kingdom.—Isaiah 2:4; 9:6, 7.

We might compare the situation today with that back in Jeremiah's time. It was then that

Jehovah used the army of "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant" to execute judgment on the apostate kingdom of Judah. Did Jeremiah and Baruch arm themselves for protection in that critical situation? No, for Jehovah himself made Jeremiah "a fortified city and an iron pillar and copper walls against all the land." And though they did not join the army of Jehovah's executive "servant," they accepted deliverance by that "servant" when Jerusalem was destroyed.—Jeremiah 1:17-19; 25:9; 39:11-14.

Likewise today, Jehovah's Witnesses pursue peace as they proclaim the Kingdom message in a violent world. However, as long as Jehovah permits governmental authorities to bear the "sword" or its modern-day equivalent in preserving order, they may rightly accept the protection of that "sword."

