

April 15, 1986

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



The Bible
—A Book for
All Mankind

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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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How Would You Choose a Book for All Mankind?

IF YOU, in spite of all the day-to-day things that you must do, could somehow manage to read one book a week, you would be able to read over 3,000 volumes in your lifetime. Remarkable as that may seem, it is no more than a drop in the bucket when you consider that each year more than ten times that many new publications are printed in the United States alone. And that does not even include the thousands of standard classics that every educated person is supposed to have read.

Clearly, when it comes to books, an observation made some 3,000 years ago is today as appropriate as ever: "To the making of many books there is no end, and much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh."—Ecclesiastes 12:12.

But out of this proliferation of books, is there one that is so valuable and important that it stands out above all the rest as a book that everyone should read? Is there one that transcends national, cultural, and language barriers and qualifies to be called a book for all mankind?

The question of what we should read is of more than mere academic interest because it ultimately influences our way of thinking, our values, and our judgment. It



has occupied the attention of educators, parents, and others—past and present. Numerous surveys about what constitutes essential reading have been conducted, and the results have been most revealing.

The Experts' Choice

In 1890 a book publisher took up the subject with many of the leading literary figures of the day. He asked them to name the books that they felt were most significant. The result? "The Bible, Shakespeare, and Homer were the overwhelming favorites of men of letters during the nineteenth century," reports one reference work. "And," it adds, "the honor roll would remain essentially unchanged today."

More recent surveys have agreed with this. For example, in September 1982, *Time* magazine published the response of eight prominent professors, historians, and librarians to the question, "What five books should every educated person have read?" Though there was not full agreement among the experts, five of the eight—a clear majority—included the Bible in their recommendations. Regarding a similar survey, *Psychology Today* reports that

"of the 165 books cited, the Bible got the most votes: 15. No other book came close."

Particularly interesting are the findings of a poll conducted by *The Korea Times* to determine how the non-Christians of the nation view the Christian churches. "The poll report showed that Christians, compared to non-Christians, are more egoistic, more money-grabbing and less conscientious," says the paper. However, the report goes on to say: "Regardless of their nonfaith, 70 percent of the pollees highly evaluate the greatness of the Bible."

The Ultimate Choice

Many similar polls and surveys can be cited to show that time and again the Bible

has been selected as the book that stands out far above all others. For various reasons, it has proved to be the ultimate choice among books, past and present, east and west.

More importantly, though, what is your personal view? If you live in a Western country, do you perhaps feel that the Bible is no longer up to date in our modern, scientific world and that it is of little value in dealing with today's problems? If you live in an Eastern country, do you view the Bible as a Western book and thus of no real importance to you? Or does the Bible have a message that all people today need to hear? Does it come to grips with the problems that people everywhere face today? Is it really a book for all mankind?

THE BIBLE

—The Book for All Mankind

LOOK! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne."

What kind of crowd is that? And what are they doing?

"There were palm branches in their hands," the account goes on to say. "And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" No, it is not a violent mob demanding something or demonstrating for some cause. Rather, it is a happy, joyful crowd that has just gone through a most exhilarating experience. "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation

. . . They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, . . . and God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."

A Message for All Mankind

The portrayal of that international "great crowd" is found in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, in chapter 7, verses 9 to 17. In a pictorial manner, it gives us a forward look to the time when mankind will no longer be divided by race, language, and nationality but will unite in peace and harmony and enjoy true freedom from fear and want. That, in essence, is a unique message that the Bible holds out for all mankind.

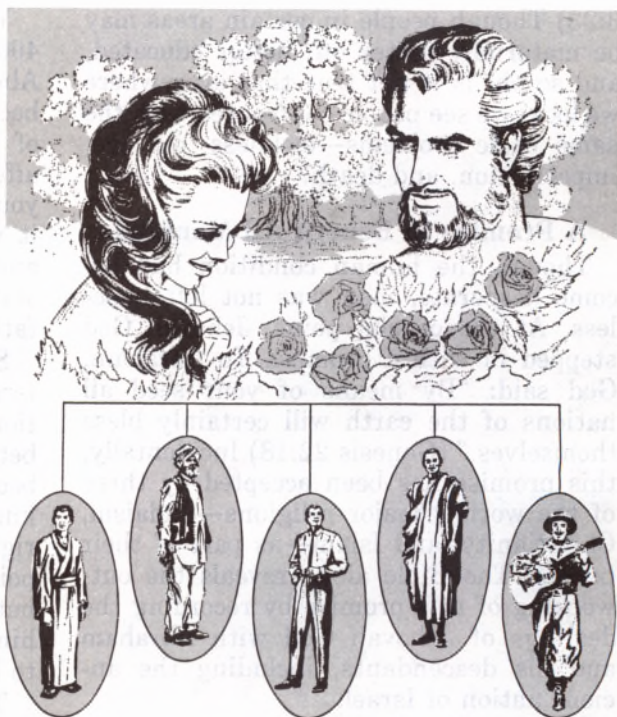
'But,' you might ask, 'in what way is

that message unique? Have not people all around the world been talking about peace and unity?' Indeed, they have. In this age of international tension, aggravated by political, racial, economic, and religious struggles, who in his right mind is not concerned about world peace? But long before there were such international struggles and long before mankind's survival was ever an issue, the Bible spoke about a time when all mankind would enjoy peace and unity under one government, God's Kingdom.

A World View From the Start

Right from its beginning, the Bible presents a world view when it comes to mankind's future. "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it" was the first command given to Adam and Eve by their Creator, Jehovah God. (Genesis 1:28) Adam and Eve were not to be the ancestors of one particular race or nation. Rather, they were to be the progenitors of the *human* race. The apostle Paul testified to this fact when he brought the Bible's message to Greeks in Athens. He told them that God "made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth."—Acts 17:26.

We must admit that the concept of the entire human race's being brothers and sisters was far in advance of the thinking of the people in general. Even today, in spite of all the talk of world peace and brotherhood, is it not true that racial prejudice and nationalism continue to be among the most divisive forces plaguing mankind? Yet, the Bible transcends these and other barriers. It speaks to people of all nations as one large family and speaks



Adam and Eve were the progenitors of the human race

of the earth as one large home for the entire human race. In this sense, it is truly a book for all mankind.

The prospect of having the whole human race live as a happy family earth wide would have been realized had Adam and Eve remained obedient to Jehovah God. But it did not turn out that way. "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned," the Bible tells us.—Romans 5:12.

In the light of this, no race or nation is superior or inferior to any other race or nation. Here again, the Bible addresses all mankind without prejudice or favoritism. It simply shows that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans

3:23) Though people in certain areas may be materially better off, better educated, and so on, is it not true that everywhere we look, we see people confronted with the same basic problems—sickness, old age, imperfection, and death?

A Promise to Benefit All Mankind

Though the human condition had become desperate, man was not left hopeless. At the crucial point, Jehovah God stepped in with a promise. To Abraham, God said: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) Incidentally, this promise has been accepted by three of the world's major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—as part of their beliefs. The Bible alone reveals the outworking of this promise by recording the dealings of Jehovah God with Abraham and his descendants, including the ancient nation of Israel.

But here is where many people would take exception. They feel that this is a typical case of nationalistic favoritism or prejudice. On this basis they dismiss the Bible, or at least much of the Hebrew Scriptures, as mere tribal lore. Yet is this sound reasoning? Why did Jehovah show such confidence in Abraham and make the promise to him?

The Bible explains: "Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness," and he came to be called 'Jehovah's friend.'" (James 2:23) Interestingly, the Islamic holy book, the Koran, also points to faith as the reason for Abraham's being accepted by God as a friend. "Who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allah? And he is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Ibrahim [Abraham], the upright one, and Allah took Ibrahim as a friend."—SURAH IV, verse 125, *Holy Qur'an*, translated by M. H. Shakir.

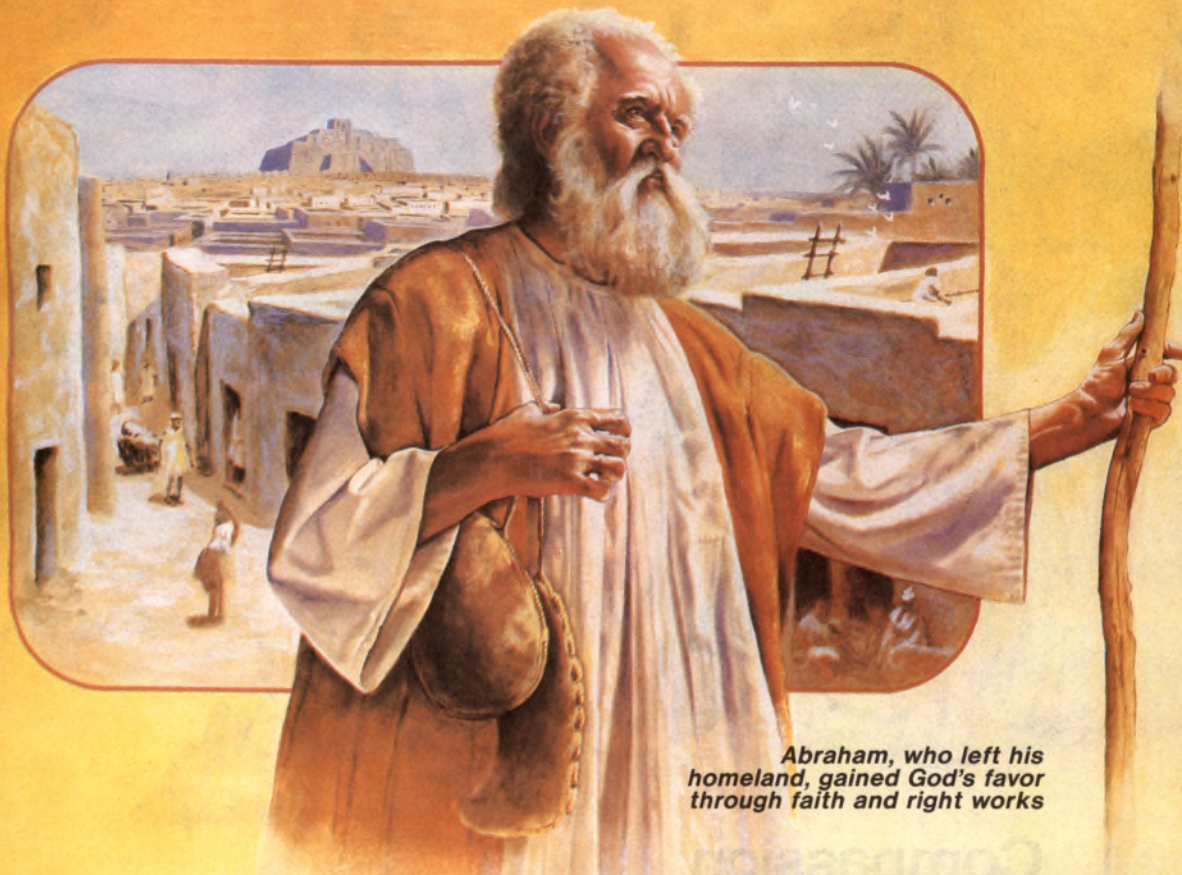
What about the Israelites? More than 400 years after God made the promise to Abraham, Moses told them: "It was not because of your being the most populous of all the peoples that Jehovah showed affection for you so that he chose you, for you were the least of all the peoples. But it was because of Jehovah's loving you, and because of his keeping the sworn statement that he had sworn to your forefathers."—Deuteronomy 7:7, 8.

So it was not because Abraham or the Israelites were of a superior race or nation, or because they were in any way better than other people. Rather, it was because of God's love and undeserved kindness shown on the basis of faith and right works. The apostle Peter made this point when he said: "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

Thus, although Jehovah God dealt exclusively with the nation of Israel for a time, he really had the welfare of all mankind in view. His dealings with Israel were not recorded in the Bible to promote the spirit of nationalism or to elevate one nation over another. Rather, "all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) Yes, these events highlight God's love and patience in working out the hope that all mankind will once again be united in peace and harmony. How is this hope to be realized?

An Administration for Peace

"It is according to [God's] good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth,"



Abraham, who left his homeland, gained God's favor through faith and right works

explained Paul. (Ephesians 1:9, 10) What is this "administration"?

The term is translated from the Greek word *oi-ko-no-mi'a*, which basically means "the management of a household." Thus, even though mankind is divided politically, racially, economically, and religiously, God has purposed to eliminate all these divisive forces and to bring all obedient mankind together again as a happy family earth wide. How will he do this? He will accomplish it through the Messianic Kingdom in the hands of his Son, Jesus Christ.—See Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 9:6, 7.

Today, amid global tension and problems, millions of people around the world have responded to the Bible's message about peace and harmony. They have come forth as that unnumbered "great

crowd" described in the book of Revelation. Symbolically, they are already waving palm branches before God's throne, offering their praise and submission to the one "who is seated on the throne," Jehovah God, "and to the Lamb," Jesus Christ.—Revelation 7:9, 10.

Does that message appeal to you? Regardless of your race, nationality, or language, by investigating and accepting the Bible's message now, you can join that international "great crowd." With them, you can confidently say: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to [God's] promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

Indeed, the Bible can be the Book for you!



Compassion for a Leper

AS JESUS and his four disciples visit the cities of Galilee, news about the wonderful things he is doing spreads throughout the district. Word of his deeds reaches one city where there is a man sick with leprosy. The physician Luke describes him as being "full of leprosy." In its advanced stages, this dreadful disease slowly disfigures various parts of the body. So this leper is in a pitiful condition.

When Jesus arrives in the city, the leper approaches him. According to God's law, a leper is to call out in warning, "Unclean, unclean!" to protect others from coming too close and risking

infection. The leper now falls upon his face and begs Jesus: "Lord, if you just want to, you can make me clean."

What faith the man has in Jesus! Yet, how pitiful his disease must make him appear! What will Jesus do? What would you do? Moved with compassion, Jesus stretches out his hand and touches the man, saying: "I want to. Be made clean." And immediately the leprosy vanishes from him.

Would you like someone so compassionate as this for your king? The way Jesus treats this leper provides confidence that during his Kingdom rule the Bible prophecy will be fulfilled: "He will

feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one." Yes, Jesus will then fulfill his heart's desire to help *all* afflicted ones.

Even prior to healing the leper, Jesus' ministry has been creating great excitement among the people. In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus now orders the healed man: "See that you tell nobody a thing." He then instructs him: "Go show yourself to the priest and offer in behalf of your cleansing the things Moses directed, for a witness to them."

But the man is so happy that he cannot keep the miracle to himself. He goes off and begins spreading the news

everywhere, apparently causing such interest and curiosity among the people that Jesus cannot openly go into a city. Thus Jesus stays in lonely places where nobody lives, and people from all over come there to listen to him and to be cured of their sicknesses. **Luke 5: 12-16; Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:2-4; Leviticus 13:45; 14:10-13; Psalm 72:13; Isaiah 42:1, 2.**

♦ What effect can leprosy have, and what warning was a leper to give?

♦ How did a leper appeal to Jesus, and what can we learn from Jesus' response?

♦ How did the healed man fail to obey Jesus, and what were the consequences?



IN EVERYDAY life, we are quite conscious of time. For example, when a clock shows that it is evening and we see the sun setting and the skies darkening, we know that nighttime has approached. Too, in certain parts of the earth, when the calendar shows that it is late autumn and we see the temperature dropping week by week and the leaves of trees falling off, we confirm that winter is near. So the evidences of what time or season it is verify what clocks and calendars tell us.

² Not being able to tell times and seasons would turn much of life today into a sort of anarchy. For instance, think of hundreds of airplanes trying to land at a busy airport if there was no way of telling time in order to schedule them! Or think of millions of people trying to get to work on schedule if they had no way of telling time!

³ Who originated times and seasons? It was the Creator of the universe, Jehovah God. Genesis 1:14 states: "And God went on to say: 'Let luminaries come to be in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night; and they must serve as signs and for seasons and for days and years.'"

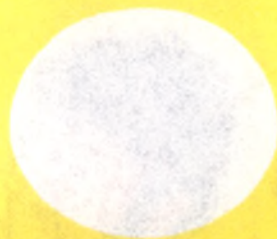
1, 2. (a) In what ways are humans conscious of time? (b) What would happen to much of life today if we had no way of telling time?

3. Who originated times and seasons?

Jehovah— The God of Times and Seasons

**"For everything there is
an appointed time."**

—ECCLESIASTES 3:1.



More Important Times and Seasons

⁴ Although knowing the time or the season is important for human activities, there is something far more important: What time or season is it from God's viewpoint? Ecclesiastes 3:1 states: "For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens." While this is true from the human viewpoint, it is even more so from God's viewpoint. He has definite times and seasons for accomplishing his purpose. If we do not harmonize our lives with this fact, then all the arranging of our lives to conform to clocks or to calendars will eventually prove to be useless.

⁵ Why is this so? Because Jehovah has a purpose for this earth and for human creatures on it; otherwise he would not have created them. If we do not coordinate our lives with that purpose, we will not be included in it. And his purpose is certain to be carried out right on schedule. He declares: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:11.

⁶ Thus we need to ask: What time or season is it from Jehovah's viewpoint? How do the nations and peoples of this world fit in with his timetable? Indeed, how do *you* fit in? Have you planned your life in harmony with God's purpose and timetable?

Is This World Fulfilling God's Purpose?

⁷ Many people feel that they are included in God's purpose because they say that

they believe in God. Yet, when you ask them to show you from God's own Word what that purpose is, they are unable to do it. They go their own way, and still they feel that somehow God will favor them. Most world rulers have had a similar attitude throughout the centuries. They have felt that God was working out his purpose through them, regardless of their actions. But they, too, are unable to say what that purpose is.

⁸ Does the Bible show that God backs this world, including the rulers and people who have a religion? Consider this: God's power is awesome. He created the universe, which includes billions of galaxies, each containing many billions of stars. (Psalm 147:4) In addition, God has infinite wisdom. If God, with his power and wisdom, were backing the nations, would they have experienced so much violence, war, injustice, and suffering for so many centuries? Would God direct national leaders and millions of their people to go to war and kill other national leaders and millions of their people who also claim to be directed by God? Is that reasonable?

⁹ The Bible tells us at First Corinthians 14:33 that "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." Further, Jehovah tells those who are truly his people: "You should all speak in agreement, and . . . there should not be divisions among you . . . that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought." (1 Corinthians 1:10) If any among God's people do not conform to this standard, what then? Romans 16:17 counsels: "Keep your eye on those who cause divisions . . . contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them." So national and religious

4-6. (a) What is more important than knowing times or seasons for human activities? Why? (b) What questions should we ask?

7. What view do most religious people have, but why is it without substance?

8. Why is it unreasonable to think that the Creator could be backing the rulers and people of this world?

9. What does God's Word say must be the spiritual condition of his true servants?

divisions and conflicts are clear evidences that God is not backing such nations, religious leaders, and their followers.

¹⁰ Then who actually is backing them? First John chapter 3, verses 10 to 12, states: "The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother." Also, First John chapter 4, verse 20, says: "If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen." Thus Jesus laid down this rule at John 13:35: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."

¹¹ Do you see any resemblance between the love and unity that must exist among God's true servants and the course that world leaders and people in general have followed for centuries? In our century alone, the slaughter of religious people by other religious people has taken tens of millions of lives. Often those killing one another have been of the very same religion! That is sure evidence that God is not backing them. Instead, as God's Word shows, their backer is no one else but Satan the Devil. That is why the apostle John could say: "We know we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Yes, Satan is "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) He is the power behind the leaders and people of

10, 11. What scriptures show who is backing the rulers and people of this world?

this world whose actions *show* that these men cannot be from God.

Jehovah's Purpose for Meek Ones

¹² However, when Jehovah created humans, he purposed that the entire earth should become a paradise like the garden of Eden, populated by perfect, unified, happy people. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; Isaiah 45:18) That purpose has not been canceled by rebellious humans and wicked spirit creatures. Also, since Jehovah is a God of times and seasons, his purpose will be accomplished at the appointed time that he has set for it. He will not allow human rule independent of him to continue fighting against his purpose beyond the allotted time.

¹³ Jesus had complete confidence in Jehovah's purpose for this earth. He said to an evildoer who showed some faith in him: "You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) That was the earthly Paradise to come. On an earlier occasion, Jesus had said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5) Here, Jesus likely referred to the thought in Psalm 37:11, which says: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."

¹⁴ Who are these who will inherit the earth? Psalm 37:34 states: "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it." Verses 37 and 38 add: "Watch the blameless one and keep the upright one in sight, for the future of that man will be peaceful. But the transgressors themselves will certainly be annihilated together; the future of wicked people will indeed

12, 13. What is God's purpose for this earth and for humans?

14. What kind of people will inherit the earth?

be cut off." Thus people who will inherit the earth must come to know Jehovah, believe his promises, and be considered by him upright and blameless because they obey his laws. As First John 2:17 declares: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."

¹⁵ However, for those changes to take place would require an enormous reversal of the state of affairs that now exists. For one thing, it would have to mean the removal of all present rulerships of the earth, since human rule has never brought about desirable conditions. But such earthshaking changes are well within the ability of Jehovah. For example, the Bible states: "He is changing times and seasons, removing kings and setting up kings." —Daniel 2:21.

Removing Opposers

¹⁶ Consider what Jehovah has done to powerful rulers and dynasties in the past, especially to those who have tried to interfere with his purposes. They have been broken and scattered to the winds like mere dust, as have their empires. For instance, there was the Pharaoh of Egypt who had enslaved God's people. But Jehovah had a purpose for his servants, and he sent Moses to tell Pharaoh to free them. Instead, Pharaoh arrogantly declared: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should

15. For major beneficial world changes to take place, what is one vital thing that must happen?

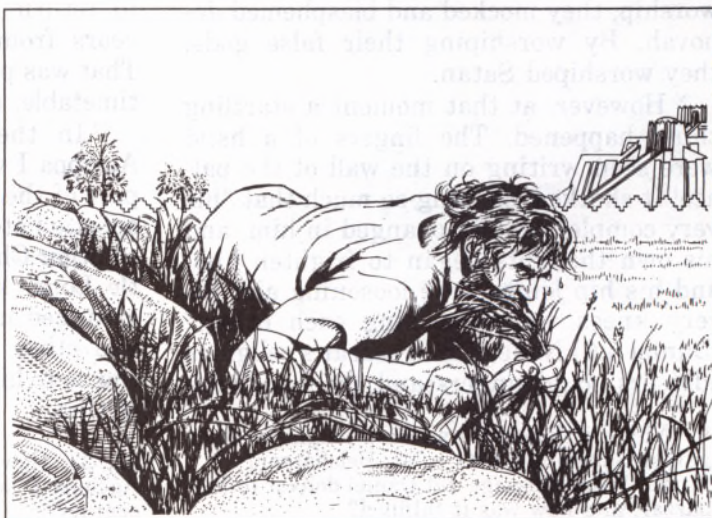
16, 17. (a) How did Jehovah deal with the Pharaoh who opposed His purpose? (b) How was Jehovah's prophetic word confirmed?

obey his voice?" He added: "I do not know Jehovah at all and, what is more, I am not going to send Israel away." —Exodus 5:2.

¹⁷ Jehovah gave Pharaoh many opportunities to change his mind. Yet, time after time, as Exodus 11:10 says, Pharaoh 'became obstinate.' However, Jehovah has irresistible power. When his appointed time came, he drowned Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea. Exodus 14:28 says: "Not so much as one among them was let remain." On the other hand, Jehovah's servants were protected and freed. This, moreover, came at the exact time that Jehovah's prophetic word had foretold, at the end of a 400-year period he had spoken about to faithful Abraham centuries before.

¹⁸ Then there was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He got to boasting about his power and accomplishments, as though he were a god. But Daniel 4:31 says that "while the word was yet in the king's mouth, there was a voice that fell from the heavens: 'To you it is being said, O Nebu-

18. What did Jehovah do with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon? Why?



chadnezzar the king, "The kingdom itself has gone away from you." Jehovah told him that he would be brought low like a beast of the field until, as verse 32 says, he would know "that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and that to the one whom he wants to he gives it." That is just what happened at the exact time that Jehovah had purposed for it.

¹⁹ The last king to rule in Babylon was Belshazzar. It was then Jehovah's time for that monstrous empire to fall. Why? Because the Babylonians held Jehovah's people captive and blasphemed Jehovah. Daniel chapter 5 relates that Belshazzar made a big feast for a thousand of his officials. Then Belshazzar "said to bring in the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken away from [Jehovah's] temple that was in Jerusalem, . . . and from them the king and his grandees, his concubines and his secondary wives drank." (Daniel 5:2, 3) Note what they did next: "They drank wine, and they praised the gods of gold and of silver, copper, iron, wood and stone." (Daniel 5:4) By drinking from the sacred utensils that had been used in Jehovah's worship, they mocked and blasphemed Jehovah. By worshiping their false gods, they worshiped Satan.

²⁰ However, at that moment a startling thing happened. The fingers of a hand were seen writing on the wall of the palace! It shocked the king so much that "his very complexion was changed in him, and his own thoughts began to frighten him, and his hip joints were loosening and his very knees were knocking each other." (Daniel 5:6) None of Belshazzar's religious advisers could understand the handwriting.

19. Why did Jehovah's adverse judgment come against Babylon and its ruler, Belshazzar?

20, 21. What message did Daniel deliver to Belshazzar, and how was it fulfilled?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why is it so important to know Jehovah's times and seasons?
- ☐ Why is God not backing the rulers and people of this world?
- ☐ What kind of people will inherit the incoming Paradise on earth?
- ☐ How has Jehovah shown his ability to bring down rulers who oppose him?

ing, so Jehovah's servant Daniel was called in to interpret it. Daniel informed the king that the message was from Jehovah, and it was this: "God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has finished it. . . . You have been weighed in the balances and have been found deficient. . . . Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians." —Daniel 5:26-28.

²¹ That very night, Medo-Persian armies invaded the city through gates carelessly left open. As Daniel 5:30 concludes: "In that very night Belshazzar . . . was killed." Babylon's fall allowed for Jehovah's people to return to their homeland exactly 70 years from the start of their captivity. That was precisely according to Jehovah's timetable, as revealed at Jeremiah 29:10.

²² In the first century, King Herod Agrippa I was the last ruler of Palestine, part of the Roman Empire. Herod had the apostle Peter imprisoned, and he persecuted other Christians. He even had the apostle James killed. (Acts 12:1, 2) Herod also arranged murderous gladiatorial combats and other pagan shows. All of this gave the lie to his claim that he was a worshiper of God.

22, 23. How did Jehovah deal with King Herod Agrippa I, who opposed Christians in the first century?

²³ But, then, Jehovah's due time came for executing this opposer. Acts 12:21 to 23 tells us: "On a set day Herod clothed himself with royal raiment and sat down upon the judgment seat and began giving them a public address. In turn the assembled people began shouting: 'A god's voice, and not a man's!'" What happened next? The Bible says: "Instantly the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory to God; and he became

eaten up with worms and expired." Here was another example of Jehovah's "removing kings," as Daniel 2:21 had stated.

²⁴ Such historical events testify that Jehovah has his times and seasons for his purposes. They also demonstrate that he surely has the ability and the power to fulfill his purpose to transform this earth into a paradise where "righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

24. To what do such historical facts testify?

What Jehovah's Times and Seasons Mean for Our Day

**"Every tree not
producing fine
fruit gets cut
down and
thrown into
the fire."**

—MATTHEW 7:19.

THE record of history testifies to the fact that Jehovah can change "times and seasons, removing kings and setting up kings." (Daniel 2:21) In previous centuries, when it suited his purpose, he removed Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Herod Agrippa I, and others. 'However,' some may say, 'those events were all ancient history. What do they have to do with us?' They have a lot to do with us because there are powerful lessons in them. What we learn from those events is that when Jehovah's time for it comes, he brings an end to the rulership of world leaders. And when he has chosen to do so, he has put into power the ruler of his choice.

² In our day, Jehovah's time has again arrived for "removing kings and setting up kings." Having now 'set up' the King of his choice, God will soon remove all of this world's rulers, as well as the entire system of things that they dominate. Why? Because they, like Belshazzar of ancient Babylon, "have been weighed in the balances and have been found deficient." The situation today is just as it was when God's servant Daniel told Belshazzar: "God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has finished it." (Daniel 5:26, 27) Therefore, in our time Jehovah "will certainly break kings to pieces on the day of his anger. He will execute judgment among the nations."—Psalm 110:5, 6.

1. What can we learn from the way that Jehovah dealt with some rulers in the past?

2. For what has Jehovah's time arrived in our day?



“Found Deficient”

³ How have earthly rulers been “found deficient” with regard to world developments? They must take a major share of the blame for what has happened to the human family in our time, a time filled with calamities unlike any other age. For instance, just since 1914 about a hundred million people have been killed in various wars! Today, nuclear weapons threaten the survival of life on earth. Right this minute, thousands of nuclear missiles, with firing crews at the ready, are pointing at population centers.

⁴ Regarding nuclear war, *Science* magazine reported this chilling analysis: ‘In any large-scale nuclear exchange, the extinction of a major portion of plant and animal life on earth is likely. The extinction of humankind cannot be excluded.’ A government official in Europe said: “Losses would not be counted in terms of cities but in terms of whole continents.” The president of a Latin American country

3, 4. With regard to peace, how have world rulers been “found deficient” in this century?

stated as to the cost of defense: “Mankind is sailing in a fragile ship which may well founder . . . If it does go down, it could take everyone with it.” And a Japanese newspaper observed: “The world seems further from [peace] than at anytime in history.”

⁵ Yet, the nations keep spending more and more on armaments. The cost has now risen to about a trillion dollars (U.S.) a year! One source notes that the world spends about 50 times as much money on each soldier as it does on each school-age child. Consider, too, a United Nations report that shows that at least 450 million people throughout the world are hungry, and their numbers are growing. Another report states that “every year 30 to 40 million people starve to death” in underdeveloped lands. It says, too, that about half of those dying are children under the age of five.

⁶ A government official of one large country in South America says that

5, 6. What is the economic condition of many lands and peoples?



"40 percent of the work force lives in absolute poverty." In another country there, the lack of employment in its capital city affects 51 percent of the labor force. A report concludes: "A continent of 260 million people has sunk into its deepest depression in a half century." Then notice these three headlines from different lands: "Poverty Rate Called 'Alarming.'" "Poverty Rate Is Up." "Poverty, Painful Experience." Were these reports from underdeveloped lands? No, they were from government officials in Canada, the United States, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Yes, even so-called wealthy nations are mired in difficulties.

⁷ In many lands these problems are mirrored by an avalanche of crime, violence, and terrorism. For example, in the United States the Federal Centers for Disease Control notes that each year more than 50,000 Americans are murdered or commit suicide! Thus an editorial in *The New York Times* concluded: "Things are out

7. What observations have been made about the crime and violence so rampant in our time?

of control." Another editorial observed: "This is a time of international anarchy." So, in spite of centuries of effort, experience, and technological progress, world leaders are unable to give many of their people their basic needs.

⁸ Surely, the record of history, both ancient and modern, testifies that man, on his own, does not have the answers. The political, economic, and religious leadership of this world can never bring the peace, security, happiness, health, and life that we want and need. Therefore, this world must go! And it will go because that is what Jehovah has purposed for it. It is as the Bible says: "The ax is already in position at the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, not producing fine fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire."

—Luke 3:9.

Another Reason for Judgment

⁹ The bad fruitage that this world and its leaders have produced is one reason why Jehovah, having weighed the world in the balances, has found it deficient and will destroy it. But there is another reason: World leaders have left Jehovah—the Creator and Universal Sovereign—out of their considerations. They have no real interest in his purposes or times and seasons. That is why First Corinthians 2:8 accurately says of them: "This [divine] wisdom not one of the rulers of this system of things came to know." Thus Psalm 146:3 counsels us: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs."

¹⁰ Instead, Proverbs 3:5, 6 urges: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not

8. To what does the record of history testify?

9. How do world leaders generally regard Jehovah's purposes?

10, 11. (a) What should be done by those who want to know Jehovah? (b) How are God's servants able to know what others do not?



Many now exercising faith will survive the closing time for this world

lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight." People who do this will not remain in the unenlightened hopelessness of this world. Jehovah will bless them with his spirit so that they will come to know his purposes and his times and seasons for them. As Acts 5:32 says, Jehovah gives his holy spirit "to those obeying him as ruler."

¹¹ So God's servants know what this world's rulers do not. They know Jehovah's purposes and his seasons. First Peter 1:11 says that, in the past, God's servants "kept on investigating what particular season or what sort of season the spirit in them was indicating." With God's spirit indicating this, the apostle Paul could say to true fellow worshipers: "You people know the season." (Romans 13:11) Since Jehovah's servants of today obey him as ruler, God's holy spirit also

reveals to them what season it is from his viewpoint. Amos 3:7 says: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets."

Still Another Reason

¹² This brings us to still another reason why Jehovah has found this world and its leaders to be deficient and will finish them. Recall what Pharaoh, Belshazzar, Herod, and other rulers in the past did to Jehovah's servants. They opposed, persecuted, and even killed them. God held those rulers accountable for that.

¹³ It is similar in our day. Various world rulers have opposed, persecuted, and even killed Jehovah's peaceful servants. Such rulers "speak even words against the Most

12, 13. What is another strong reason why Jehovah finds this world and its leaders deficient?

High, and . . . harass continually the holy ones themselves of the Supreme One." (Daniel 7:25; 11:36) But the inspired account at Isaiah 54:17 declares: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success . . . This is the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah." Hence, all opposers will be brought low, just as were others in the past. On the other hand, Jehovah promises the survival and prosperity of his people.

Closing Time Nears

¹⁴ So, what time is it from God's viewpoint? It is closing time for this world. Its sun is setting. Nighttime is fast approaching for it. Its winter is nearly upon it. All the evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecy and Jehovah's timetable shows that we live in "the last days," at "the conclusion of the system of things." (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14) Thus we need to take to heart Jesus' warning: "Keep praying that your flight may not occur in wintertime." (Matthew 24:20) When this world's nighttime, or winter, comes, it will be too late to seek Jehovah's favor.

¹⁵ The time for bringing this god-dishonoring world to an end comes on apace. When it comes, Jehovah will forcibly remove all world rulers from office. However sincere they may be, their fruitless and hopeless plans will cease. True, the rulers may try to cheer up their people with arms treaties and various plans for peace and security, even with 'holy years'; but the march toward the final showdown at God's war of Armageddon continues relentlessly.—Revelation 16:13-16.

¹⁶ Also, recall that not only is Jehovah

"removing kings" but he is also "setting up kings." (Daniel 2:21) The heavenly armies that Jehovah will use to execute his judgments at Armageddon will be led by the Ruler that he has 'set up' for all the earth. That one is his faithful Son, Christ Jesus, now in heavenly power and glory. Revelation 19:16 calls him "King of kings and Lord of lords." Daniel 7:14 says: "To him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin."—See also Daniel 2:44.

¹⁷ In plain language God's prophetic Word tells what will happen to those who do not acknowledge Jehovah and his appointed Ruler for all the earth. It states: "I saw also an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly in midheaven: 'Come here, be gathered together to the great evening meal of God, that you may eat the fleshy parts of kings and the fleshy parts of military commanders and the fleshy parts of strong men and the fleshy parts of horses and of those seated upon them, and the fleshy parts of all, of freemen as well as of slaves and of small ones and great.'"—Revelation 19:17, 18.

¹⁸ Jeremiah 25:33 describes it this way: "Those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be gathered up or be buried. As manure on the surface of the ground they will become." Yes, it is closing time for Satan's

14, 15. (a) In what time period do we live, and what warnings should we heed? (b) Despite any efforts by world leaders, what comes on apace?
16. To whom has Jehovah given world rulership?

17, 18. (a) What does God's Word say will happen to those who do not acknowledge him and his appointed Ruler for this earth? (b) Who else knows that there is not much time left?

entire corrupt system of things. And even *he* knows it! Revelation 12:12 states that he knows he has only "a short period of time" left.

Seek Jehovah Now

¹⁹ When the nighttime, or winter, of Satan's system is over, what then? Then it will be Jehovah's time to usher in a bright new day, a thrilling new springtime season. It will be time to begin Jehovah's righteous new system under the rule of his heavenly King, Christ Jesus. In that new system, violence, injustice, suffering, sickness, and death will be no more. Humans will be lifted to perfection, with eternal life in view. What an inspiring outlook! —Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Revelation 21:4.

²⁰ However, before this system ends and the new system begins, it is Jehovah's season to do something vital for meek ones of the earth. It is his time to collect together those who want to learn about him, who want to submit to his will, and who will bow to the King of his choice. By doing this, they come under Jehovah's protection: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection." —Proverbs 18:10.

²¹ Today, people in great number are doing this—in fact, millions of them are. They come from every nation on earth. These are described at Zechariah chapter 8, verses 20 and 21: "This is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'It will yet be that peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will come; and the inhabitants of one city will certainly go to those of another, saying: "Let us earnestly go to soften the face of Jehovah and to seek Jehovah of armies."'" Verse 23 adds: "It will

19. What thrilling day and season will begin after this system is brought to an end?

20, 21. How are people in great number from all nations now seeking Jehovah?

be in those days [yes, in our time] that ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew [anointed praisers of Jehovah], saying: 'We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.'"

²² Therefore, worship Jehovah with his people and come to his place of security. Have a share in the most important work that is being done on earth today—the gathering together and training of those who will survive Armageddon and who will have the wonderful prospect of cultivating a paradise on earth and living in it forever. Appreciate what time and season it is and do what Isaiah 55:6 urges: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near." Yes, "seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." —Zephaniah 2:3.

22. What must we appreciate and do if we want to survive the day of Jehovah's anger?

Questions for Review

- ☐ In what ways have world rulers been "found deficient" in God's eyes?
- ☐ Why do Jehovah's servants know His times and seasons when world rulers do not?
- ☐ Why do world rulers merit God's adverse judgment?
- ☐ What time and season *has* arrived from Jehovah's viewpoint?
- ☐ Why and how should we seek Jehovah now?

Insight on the News

Religion's Fruits

The commercialization of religion has led to "corruption, immorality and other forms of indiscipline in our churches," declared the patriarch of the Methodist Church of Nigeria. He admitted, according to Nigeria's *Daily Times*, that the church contributed to a wave of crime in Nigerian society by "soliciting and receiving gifts from criminals and corrupt public officers." He also said that the misbehavior of religious leaders and members had turned the church into "a place for mischief-makers, cheats, and immoral acts."

Femi Abbas, a commentator on Islamic affairs, likewise associated the increased rate of crime with the influx of people into highly commercialized religious groups. Writing in the *National Concord* of Nigeria, he observed that leaders of these groups gained their following through a "sweet tongue, smartness and the ability to outwit others," and he commented that they only "masquerade under the cloak of faith."

Such bad fruits are to be expected when religion focuses on material things. They prove the accuracy of the Bible's prophecy that "in the last days" people would be "lovers of money, . . . having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." "They will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled." On the other hand, true religion can be expected to emphasize spiritual rather than material things. It would thus motivate people whose honorable lives

make them better citizens as well as faithful servants of God.—2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3; Matthew 6:19-21, 33; 7:16-21.

Treating the Symptoms, Not the Disease

"British Girls Can Get Pill Without Consent," read a headline in *The New York Times*. The article revealed: "By a 3-to-2 vote, the House of Lords' law lords said that parents do not have absolute authority over their children and that the law must keep pace with changing social attitudes." As a result of this decision, British doctors are now legally able to prescribe contraceptives to girls under 16 without consulting their parents. This ruling by the upper house of the British Parliament was praised by the Labor Party, the British Medical Association, and various family-planning associations.

The purpose of this law is said to be 'control of unwanted teenage pregnancies and abortions.' But does not such an approach to a difficult and growing problem amount to treating only the "symptoms"? Is it not a measure of our times that lawmakers, backed by doctors and social organizations in a country proud of its Christian traditions, should pass a law that indirectly promotes the "disease" of teenage immorality?

Surely the best way to protect teenage girls from manifesting the "symptoms" of unwanted pregnancies and abortions is to teach them moral values that safeguard them from sexual misconduct. A proved repository of

such values is the Bible, which also puts the treatment of this "disease" where it belongs—with parents who are made responsible for the conduct of their children.—Ephesians 5:5; 6:1-4.

Life Before Birth

"Earlier than we had before assumed, the senses of the unborn begin displaying themselves; and much earlier than recently believed, fine structures and abilities of the brain begin developing." So write the authors of the booklet *Life Before Birth*, published in 1984 in the Federal Republic of Germany by the Federal Minister of Youth, Family and Health. They speak of unborn life as being life in its "frailest form," pointing out that "the child's first bonds to its parents are already formed in the womb." They say that although many scientists formerly believed that unborn life goes through an evolutionary process, developing from a cell into a fish and then into an amphibian before becoming human, this theory has now been rejected because "science has made advances." They concede that "no one seriously contends anymore that unborn life is not personal human life. A human does not become a human first at birth."

These findings agree with the way the Creator of life views the unborn—as a living entity. Addressing his Creator, God's servant David wrote: "You kept me screened off in the belly of my mother. I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made . . . Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing."—Psalm 139:13, 14, 16.

Happy Climax to 80 Years of Gathering

INDIA! A land of many contrasts—in culture, religions, customs, and climate. It is a country different and mysterious to many, yet intriguing to everyone who visits her fascinating shores.

Throughout this vast subcontinent, teeming with 775 million people, lovers of Jehovah God were reflecting on a special event in the small town of Lonavla, high up in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra State. It was Sunday, January 20, 1985.

Why, on that particular day, were so many thoughts fixed on this one lovely hill station 70 miles (110 km) from the congested metropolis of Bombay? The answer lies with the 80 years of gathering of Jehovah's precious things—his people—in India. It is a cause for rejoicing not only to the over 7,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses here but to the entire association of God's people worldwide.

But to appreciate better the significance of this special event, let us briefly explore how the foundations of truth were made secure over the last eight decades.

Light of Truth Comes to India

In 1905 an Indian science student, S. P. Davey, visited the United States of America. While there, he attended a Bible lecture by C. T. Russell, then president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Davey became keenly interested in

the truth, returned to his native Madras on India's east coast, and eventually established 40 Bible study groups.

At about this same time, a young Indian man was seeking answers to questions on the Trinity doctrine and infant baptism. A. J. Joseph was then a member of the Church of England, but he received by mail a copy of Russell's book *At-One-Ment Between God and Men*. This publication enabled Joseph to see the truth about Jehovah's supremacy. Joseph, his father, and a cousin were soon spreading Bible truth through the rice-growing villages and coconut plantations of what is now the state of Kerala. Following a visit to India in 1912 by Brother Russell, Joseph became a full-time Kingdom proclaimer. In 1924 he single-handedly undertook a 3,600-mile (5,800-km) speaking tour of India, enabling many people to hear the truth. Brother Joseph was a zealous worker until his death in 1964.

The second president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford, visited England in 1926. While there, he asked Edwin Skinner, a colporteur (full-time preacher): "How would you like to go to India?" Without hesitation, Brother Skinner responded: "When do you want me to go?" Within three weeks he and his partner were headed for India!

For the next 50 years, Edwin Skinner served as branch servant, initially having oversight of India, Ceylon, Persia, Afghanistan, and Burma. He traveled through much of India by rail, alternating with his partner between office responsibilities and the traveling and preaching work. Later they acquired a "house car" and extended their witnessing to areas not accessible by train. At the age of 91, Brother Skinner is still an enthusiastic worker in the India branch office and an outstanding proclaimer of the good news.

Graduates of the Watch Tower Bible

School of Gilead began to arrive in 1947. British-born Richard Cotterill was one of the first of these, and he is still active after 38 years. For some time now, government policy has prohibited the entry of any new foreign missionaries into India. But 17 brothers and sisters, with an average of 30 years each as missionaries, are faithfully serving in the country.

The Indian brothers themselves have made great spiritual advancement, and many now qualify as special pioneers and as traveling overseers. In 1983 two ten-week classes of the Watchtower Bible School were held at the branch office. The 46 special pioneers enrolled were encouraged and prepared better to meet the great demands of India's gathering work. They have been instrumental in extending the work to new areas.

Fruitage Despite Obstacles

In spite of the diverse challenges of the sprawling Indian territory—large and overcrowded cities, entire communities of people on the fringes of survival, ingrained religious traditions governing daily activities from birth to death—the gathering goes on. Among India's teeming millions, some are searching for the solution to mankind's problems and desiring a deeper understanding of God.

One such person is Dadu. As a young man, Dadu had puzzled over the fact that countless numbers of people worship so many gods. He started to read the Bible, but much of it was not understandable to him. He then went to Hindu temples and began reading books of that religion.

"I was told that Lord Krishna was the controller of all religions and that each



Edwin Skinner (second from right) with "house car"

religion is represented in a bead of the necklace he wears around his neck," Dadu recalls. "I thought that if that was so, then why was there hatred among the different religions, so often resulting in bloodshed?" Later investigation of the Muslim religion led Dadu into believing that he was in touch with several of his deceased ancestors. But from studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, Dadu and his wife learned the origin of the world's many religions and that the so-called good spirits they had communicated with were impostors, demons. "We are thankful to Jehovah God for the knowledge that freed us from their influence," says Dadu. Now both he and his wife are full-time ministers.

Seven years ago, a mother obtained a Bible and Bible literature from Jehovah's Witnesses. Although she and her family moved to areas where there were no Witnesses, she continued to study on her own. Recently contacted by the Witnesses again, she related: "During these past years, I could not forget about the truths I had learned from the Bible. It was impossible for me to turn back to my former ways of worship."



New branch headquarters south of Bombay

Literature in Many Languages

Fifteen major languages are spoken throughout India, and nine separate character scripts are used. Providing spiritual food in all these languages has been a challenge. Even as early as 1912, Brother Russell arranged for booklets on Bible subjects to be translated into Hindustani, Gujarati, Malayalam, Marathi, Telugu, and Tamil. Other vernacular languages were later included, with the bulk of this literature being printed overseas and shipped in. Then in the early 1960's a government ruling prohibited the importation of any Indian vernacular publications.

Since it was not economically feasible for the branch to do its own printing, the Society contracted with commercial printers. Selected pioneers were taught to look after the publication in their locality. At present, there are 11 different printing locations, producing Bible literature in 16 languages, including 9 editions of the *Watchtower* magazine. Soon, with the installation of MEPS (the Society's Multi-language Electronic Phototypesetting System), the composition and layout of the publications will be done at the branch office, freeing many pioneers to spend

more time in the gathering work.

Fruitage of 80 Years

As a nation with the second-largest population on earth, a tremendous work remains to be done in India. Only about 6.6 percent of the population have thus far been reached with the good news. Compared to that of most countries, the growth of Jehovah's people in India has been slow. It took 53 years to reach just the 1,000-publisher mark.

But the missionaries and local brothers have continued persistently and patiently in doing their Father's will. (Isaiah 60: 22) Now we rejoice to see a 10-percent increase over last year, and a new peak of 7,410 publishers in the country's 340 congregations and isolated groups.

This steady growth signaled the need for larger branch quarters. However, expansion of India's branch in Bombay was impossible. And land in that city was scarce and expensive. Bombay's air quality, too, was said to reduce one's life expectancy by ten years. Thus in 1978 a site was obtained in the hill resort of Lonavla, the first location south of the city of Bombay where road and rail meet. Situated at an elevation of 2,000 feet (610 m), the town has relatively unpolluted air.

Six Years of Work

Preliminary work involved building walls, reaching a height of 15 feet (4.6 m) in places, both to protect the land and to retain the soil of neighboring properties on the hilly slopes. Deep depressions needed to be filled in, and the land had to be cleared of heavy undergrowth that was full of poisonous snakes, such as cobras

and vipers. Several bungalows and other existing buildings required extensive renovation to serve as living accommodations and temporary office space.

Commercial contractors were hired, but qualified brothers supervised every stage of the construction, and many others rendered assistance wherever they could. One contractor, employed to pave the road inside the property, decided that work should be delayed six months, as necessary watering of the rough road surface could not be arranged. What a sight it was as the entire branch family hauled buckets of water to the road evening after evening so that work could be done on schedule!

The sound of bulldozers was never heard, as most work in India is done manually. Thus work proceeded smoothly up to completion of the first floor of the main building. Just at this time, there was a serious cement shortage. But, happily, the Korea branch of the Watch Tower Society arranged for the shipment of 10,000 bags, allowing for all construction to be finished as planned. So in 1984 the beautiful new branch building stood completed—to Jehovah's praise.

The Final Results

Eight structures now stand within the Society's 4.6-acre (1.9-ha) compound,

In Our Next Issue

- **The Bible—Practical for Modern Man?**
- **Is Your Eye "Simple"?**
- **Professionals Who Found Real 'Lifetime Employment'**

which is landscaped with banana, mango, fig, and papaya trees, along with many flowering plants and shrubs.

The main building of the branch has two floors and a basement, which houses a garage and a laundry. Factory space on the ground floor has room for three small printing presses, as well as cutting, folding, and stitching (stapling) machines. On this floor also are the MEPS computer rooms and the shipping area, from which literature produced locally is mailed to 56 other countries. Offices, library, and bedrooms fill the second floor.

The new Kingdom Hall is on the front edge of the property. A corner stage, paneled with hand-carved teakwood, faces an auditorium that can seat 250. Nearby, renovated buildings offer residence, kitchen, and dining-room space for the branch family of 31 people. Some vacant land also exists if further expansion is needed.

A Special Event

So it was, after 80 years of the gathering in of Jehovah's precious things, attention was focused that delightful January day on the dedication of India's new branch facilities.

These 80 years of preaching were traced during the dedication program. Highlights of the construction work were given. Zone overseer Günter Künz noted in his dedication talk that there has been a 30-percent increase of Jehovah's people worldwide in the past five years. But he was glad to report that India had surpassed that with a 34-percent increase, and he reminded listeners that with much hard work India would continue to move forward.

All present were thrilled with this evidence of Jehovah's blessing. The brothers in India are determined to work diligently so that many more can be helped to respond to the Kingdom good news.

"Legal Issues in Transfusion Medicine"

THE most recent, and potentially most dangerous, disease of the twentieth century, AIDS." Thus Dr. L. A. Laskey (Senior Scientist, Genentech Corp.) described a problem that led to a conference on September 19-20, 1985, in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

You likely know that AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has been linked to blood products and to transfusions. The printed program put it this way:

"No single health concern in our memory has created as much discussion and fear among the general public. AIDS cases may double in the next year, and as many as one million Americans [and countless more in other lands] may be affected. The potential legal liability flowing from AIDS, therefore, is great."

Some 200 doctors, lawyers, and blood-bank personnel gathered for the conference on "Legal Issues in Transfusion Medicine." The jobs or careers of most of these were linked to blood transfusions. But some of Jehovah's Witnesses also attended. Let us share with you excerpts from what the speakers revealed.

The main concerns were the risk of spreading AIDS by blood and the legal risks for those in their industry who collect, process, or sell blood. This latter concern was evident from the first talk, on the 'organization, economics, and regulation of the blood-banking system.' Such regulation, Dr. P. J. Schmidt said, dates to the 1600's. French physician Denis was involved "in the first malpractice suit in transfusion" history, for giving "lamb's blood to a young man, who died." Is regulation still need-

ed? Schmidt admitted: "I think there are a lot of unknowns. Still, the very act of transfusion is an enormous day-in-day-out challenge. A million times a month in this country it is an experiment in immunology, in epidemiology, often without legal precedent."

Later, Dr. Paul Ness (The Johns Hopkins Hospital) spoke on "What Can Go Wrong With Transfusion." He felt that in just "a half of an hour it is very difficult to talk about all of what can go wrong with blood transfusion." In fact, he intended to show a slide that said, "Warning," as if it were a label, "the following can go wrong with blood transfusion," listing "about 50 different things . . . [But] I knew that list wouldn't be complete in any way."

Dr. Johanna Pindyck (Greater New York Blood Program) said that 'non-A non-B hepatitis is the most pressing transfusion-transmitted disease problem confronting us in the transfusion field.' This form of hepatitis "is thought to be caused by at least two viral agents, but their exact nature has not been identified. Study has been going on for many years—a good 10 to 15—but we haven't discovered the cause yet." Concerning the best testing available to screen blood for this hepatitis, she commented: "I'd say, probably 10 percent of the blood supply is currently being tested, or maybe even slightly less than that."

When discussing AIDS, Dr. Pindyck and others expressed the hopeful view that current screening tests now enable blood banks almost to eliminate "blood product transfusion as a source of AIDS transmission." Can

Can patients trust that a blood bank will be able to detect AIDS-contaminated blood? Dr. Myron Essex, chairman of the department of cancer biology at Harvard School of Public Health, recently said: "It's extremely unlikely that the test is picking up more than 90 percent, and my best guess is it's 75 to 80 percent. I'd be shocked if it's any better than that."—The New York Times, October 4, 1985.

"The new blood test, approved last April and used by all blood banks, detects only antibody to the AIDS virus, HTLV-III. What it, unfortunately, does not detect are people who harbor infectious AIDS virus and who have not as yet produced antibody to the AIDS virus . . . Therefore, a small but significant number of the approximately one million people harboring the AIDS virus will not yet reveal antibodies to the virus on current routine testing at blood banks."—Sanford F. Kuvin, M.D., Jerusalem, November 17, 1985.

they? Dr. Laskey later stated that present tests 'are incredibly expensive, are dangerous to produce, and are not completely accurate.' What about a newly developed method that he feels is superior? He told of experiments with patients having AIDS or the AIDS Related Complex. With a number of them, the tests failed to reveal the AIDS connection. 'Nobody [that is, none of the tests] would have [detected] the AIDS, he said.

You can thus understand why many are considering storing their own blood or accepting blood only from a friend or a relative. But Dr. Joseph Bove (Yale-New Haven Hospital) opposed this, holding that it would be expensive and would lead to shortages. He added: "One of the major causes of transfusion-related fatalities is administrative error—getting the wrong blood into the wrong person. I'm embarrassed to . . . say that in 1985, with all the technology we have, with computers and everything else, we can't get the right unit of blood into the right patient. But the truth of the matter is, we don't always do it, and that's how we kill people."

As a result, the conferees had much to say about legal issues. How can a blood bank protect itself against malpractice suits? Now that tests are available, if a donor's blood tests positive for AIDS antibodies, should the blood bank notify those who received his blood in the last few years? Dr. Schmidt (director of a blood bank) said: "I am an anti-notifier at the moment. We're doing just what we have to, and no more than that." Should court orders be obtained to force blood on those refusing it, such as Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse for religious reasons?

Actually, Jehovah's Witnesses were considered in Dr. William Dornette's talk, "Negligence and Liability Issues." He explained that one basis for Witnesses' refusal of blood "is

this chapter from Genesis [9:3, 4]. And it specifically says that 'I do give it all to you. Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat.'" How reasonable is that position, and what legal right do Witnesses have to refuse blood?

Dornette, a doctor both of medicine and of law, advised: "For many, many years the members of the Jehovah's Witnesses faith have been considered a bunch of oddballs who don't know what they're doing, because 'I the medical profession—the doctor—know everything.' We have to realize that, first of all, they are deeply religious. Secondly, they are American citizens . . . Third, they do have the right to practice religion, and they are interested in getting well . . . They believe in medical care. And I think we've got to respect their rights as individuals to practice religion freely." He added: "Failure to obtain any consent at all is a battery. Failure to obtain consent for a transfusion is a battery. . . . If you obtain a competent patient's informed refusal, you have absolved yourself from exposure to liability in a court of law."

Another speaker, lawyer Susan Lentz, stressed this, saying: "It's important to understand that informed consent is really meaningful only if you recognize that it includes not only the right to give consent but also the right to withhold consent." She added that "in this very year there have been three or four [court] decisions affirming rights of Jehovah's Witness patients to decline transfusions." She concluded: "As what you've been hearing about for the last day and a half regarding AIDS and related problems become more of a problem, at least in the mind of the public, problems related to refusal may also increase."

(Additional useful information on AIDS will appear in *Awake!* of April 22, 1986.)

What Career Will You Choose?

ARE you young and in school? If so, you are likely blessed with the assets that youth brings—good health and lots of vim and vigor. Your life stretches before you like an untraveled road. How will you use that life in the years ahead?

As you think about your future, no doubt questions run through your mind. Should I go to a university and seek a career as a doctor, a lawyer, or a scientist? Does the dream of climbing the corporate ladder to financial success and recognition intrigue me? Would I become a famous name in the arts through acting or painting? Or, as a youth devoted to Jehovah God, should I choose the full-time ministry as my lifetime career, thus ‘remembering my Creator in the days of my youth’? —Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Newspapers and magazine articles often paint the life of well-known people as exciting and colorful, but what do you know about the life of a full-time minister? Is it dull or boring? Or is it truly interesting and exciting? Considering some real-life experiences of those who have been in the full-time ministry for many years may help you make up your mind.

Why They Chose the Full-Time Ministry

While war was raging in Vietnam, Harry was attending the University of Hawaii, studying to become a history teacher. He was also studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. Like many of his classmates, he got involved in the popular



student radicalism of that time, began experimenting with drugs, and found LSD particularly fascinating. One morning he woke up in his apartment to confront a tremendous disarray of broken liquor bottles, cigarette butts, and men and women scattered about on the floor. Harry had only a vague memory of an argument with the police about a search warrant and subsequent threats of eviction from his landlord. It was at this point that he decided either to stop studying the Bible or to clean up his life. Wisely, he chose the latter.

As Harry increased his Bible knowledge, the goal of pursuing a university education and teaching career lost their appeal. He quit college, got a part-time job, was baptized, and soon qualified to become a pioneer—a full-time preacher. Harry thus embarked on a new career, one filled with challenge and wholesome, interesting experiences.

From the special pioneer ranks, Harry and his wife were assigned as missionaries to the beautiful “rock islands” of Belau in the Western Pacific, where they still serve. What is missionary life like in these islands?

Witnessing by Boat

Much witnessing in the islands of Micronesia is done by boat and on foot. Harry and his wife, Rene, remember their first time witnessing by boat on an outer island. "We stayed at a home that was located many miles up a long winding river that snaked its way through mangrove thickets and jungle so dense they wove a canopy of green over our heads," he recalls. "From our home base, we traveled on the river, stopping to preach to people who lived along the riverbanks. One evening, just before dark, we were returning from field service and rushing to get up the river to our home for the night. Suddenly Rene yelled. I spun around just in time to see a splash and a long reptilian tail slide into the water. It was a salt-water crocodile—the largest species in the world. Thankfully, we arrived home safe and sound. Although it was time for a bath in the river, after having seen that mammoth crocodile, we thought it safer to tie a rope on a bucket and haul the bathing water into our boat."

Since many villages and houses are not accessible by land vehicle or by boat, missionaries spend hours walking through beautiful coconut-lined jungle paths to reach the friendly, humble people. Harry states: "We always find ears receptive to the truth. These isolated people often show their hospitality. They climb a coconut tree, pick a fresh coconut, cut its top off with a machete, and offer you a drink right out of the original 'carton.' It is most refreshing, tasty, and nutritious."

How have the preaching efforts of the missionaries in Belau been rewarded? They now have a congregation of 42 true Christians. On the average, 10 were in the full-time ministry each month last year, and 193 attended the Memorial of Christ's death in 1985.

After 17 years in full-time service, how

does Harry now feel about his decision to use his life completely in service to Jehovah? "Had I not found God's truth 17 years ago, my time and life would have been wasted in worldly pursuits," he says. "I would never have found the peace of mind and the security that I have known during my years as a pioneer and missionary, both as a single person for many years and later with Rene with whom I have shared the past eight years of missionary service."

Recommending Full-Time Service

Milton was attending high school in Hawaii. Others were encouraging him to reach out for a promising career with financial security, but the examples of his sister and two older brothers, who were already in the full-time pioneer service, encouraged him to consider entering the full-time ministry too. In addition, he heard a talk about the blessings of the full-time service and how Jehovah will provide our material needs if we trust in him and put him first in our lives. Milton relates: "This motivated me to choose the full-time ministry as my career in life. Therefore, prior to finishing high school, I was baptized and entered the full-time service."

When Milton began pioneering, there were fewer than ten pioneers in the congregation. What did he do about that? "I invited young brothers to work with me in the field service," he says. "As a result, many of these later joined me in the full-time service."

"My brother-in-law was an elder and a pioneer," continues Milton. "We were in the same congregation and worked together to encourage others to pioneer. It was decided that I would encourage the teenagers, and he would encourage the housewives. After several months, there were 25 full-time ministers in the congrega-

tion. When the circuit overseer came, he invited ten of these to apply for special pioneering and move to nearby congregations. We then discussed the goal of helping ten more to enter pioneer service to replace those who had been sent out. By the next circuit overseer's visit, 15 more had taken up full-time service. We now had 30 pioneers. Again the circuit overseer asked ten of them to move to other congregations. And again we set out to gain replacements. Before the next circuit overseer's visit, 20 more applied for pioneer service!"

The contagious pioneer spirit had rubbed off on the young ones. By the time they reached high school, practically all of them had set full-time service as their goal. At 13 years of age, one sister decided to pioneer. She said: "It seemed like the natural thing to do." She and the other youths in the congregation never gave a serious second thought to anything else. Group witnessing was arranged after school, and eventually 60 students from three different schools were supporting this activity along with the pioneers. During summer months, it was most encouraging to see as many as 130 assemble for group witnessing!

Pioneering Led to Greater Privileges

"In 1974," Milton reminisces, "I was invited to accept missionary work in an assignment 4,000 miles [6,400 km] from home—the islands of Belau in Micronesia." One challenge that it took time to get used to was walking long distances through tropical greenery and traveling by boat.

One hot, humid day after walking for hours over dusty trails, Milton remembers, "we were exhausted when we reached the home of an interested family. The mother sent her son down to the

river. He came back with a huge, river-cooled watermelon for us. We ate more than half of it, and how refreshing it was!"

After a year in his missionary assignment, Milton desired to see three goals accomplished in Belau, namely, the local brothers eventually taking over the congregational responsibilities, the youth entering full-time service, and the congregation building its own Kingdom Hall. He now comments: "After ten years here, my prayers for achieving all three goals are being answered."

Does Milton feel that he made the right choice 14 years ago when he took up full-time service as his life's career? "One thing I have learned from all my years in full-time service is this: If we are willing, Jehovah will use us at the right time," he answers. "We must never give up but continue to offer ourselves willingly in his service. You will never regret pursuing the career of serving Jehovah as a full-time minister."

How Will You Use Your Life?

Youths, how will you use your future? For yourselves or fully for Jehovah? (Romans 14:8) Prayerfully consider the goal of full-time service now in your youth. Imitate Jesus by living the rest of your life "for God's will." (1 Peter 4:2) It will prove to be a protection from harmful worldly ambitions, careers, and associations. Analyze your circumstances and set a specific date as your goal for entering full-time service. Work toward it. Pray for Jehovah's help to attain it.—Ephesians 6:18.

The choice of pioneering as a career could lead you to many fine privileges of service beyond your expectation. Your life will be filled with happiness, security, and love. It will be exciting, interesting, and satisfying. Above all, it will be a life pleasing to Jehovah.—Proverbs 27:11.

Do You Remember?

Have you given careful thought to recent issues of *The Watchtower*? If so, you will likely recall the following:

□ To what extent did Jesus show his love for mankind?

He voluntarily left a heavenly home of peace and security to come to eat, sleep, and associate with diseased and dying mankind. After this, Jesus voluntarily gave up his perfect human existence so as to provide a ransom for the benefit of mankind. (Matthew 20:28)—12/15, pages 3, 4.

□ What personal benefits result to the Christian who cultivates self-control?

The Christian gains greater self-respect by exercising self-control. Also, he enjoys greater peace and happiness in family, congregational, and daily relationships. Above all, self-control helps him to build a good relationship with his Creator and to identify himself as a true Christian.—12/15, page 24.

□ What should be the underlying motive in showing hospitality?

Although it is gratifying to receive expressions of thanks from others and to realize that our efforts have been appreciated, we should want to show hospitality primarily because it is the right and loving thing to do. Moreover, it pleases Jehovah God that we do so.—1/15, page 22.

□ How does the rider on the white horse, described in Revelation 6:2, affect your life?

Jesus is the rider on the white horse, and he began his heavenly ride in 1914. Foretelling how people would be affected by his reign, he said: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory . . . he will

separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Today, all mankind is being separated, and how you respond to the Kingdom message will mean either life or death for you. (Matthew 25:31-33; 24:14)—1/15, page 6.

□ What are some means by which Jehovah comforts and sustains his servants?

Jehovah comforts and sustains his servants by means of his holy spirit. (1 Peter 4:12-14) He also comforts them by responding to their prayers. (Philippians 4:6, 7) Further, God's Word is a great source of comfort, assuring his servants that nothing can happen to them that Jehovah does not see or cannot control.—2/1, page 19.

□ What is the apocalypse that is foretold in the Bible?

It is God's chosen intervention in human affairs.—2/15, page 7.

□ What is the meaning of Jesus' expression "life in yourselves," at John 6:53?

In John chapter 6, Jesus equates "everlasting life" with having "life in yourselves," that is, entering at last into the fullness of life. The "little flock" of Kingdom heirs experience that at their resurrection into the heavens, and the "other sheep" do so after the end of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ Jesus. (Revelation 20:4, 5)—2/15, page 19.

□ What principle emphasized throughout the book of Nehemiah is a lesson for us today?

The principle is that "unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it." (Psalm 127:1) Today, in all our undertakings, we

will succeed only if we have Jehovah's blessing.—2/15, page 26.

□ What sustained Job during his trials, and how can this help us today?

Job was confident that this life is not all there is. (Job 14:13-15) Having this same confidence today, that Jehovah will resurrect his faithful servants, can help us to face any tests that Satan may impose upon us. (Hebrews 6:10; 11:6)—3/1, page 20.

□ What lesson can parents learn from the outcome of David and Bath-sheba's sin?

Jehovah extended mercy toward David because of the Kingdom covenant, thus permitting him and Bath-sheba to continue living. However, Jehovah's spokesman said to them: "Because you have unquestionably treated Jehovah with disrespect by this thing, also the son himself, just born to you, will positively die." (2 Samuel 12:14) This should emphasize to parents that their conduct can greatly affect their children.—3/15, page 31.

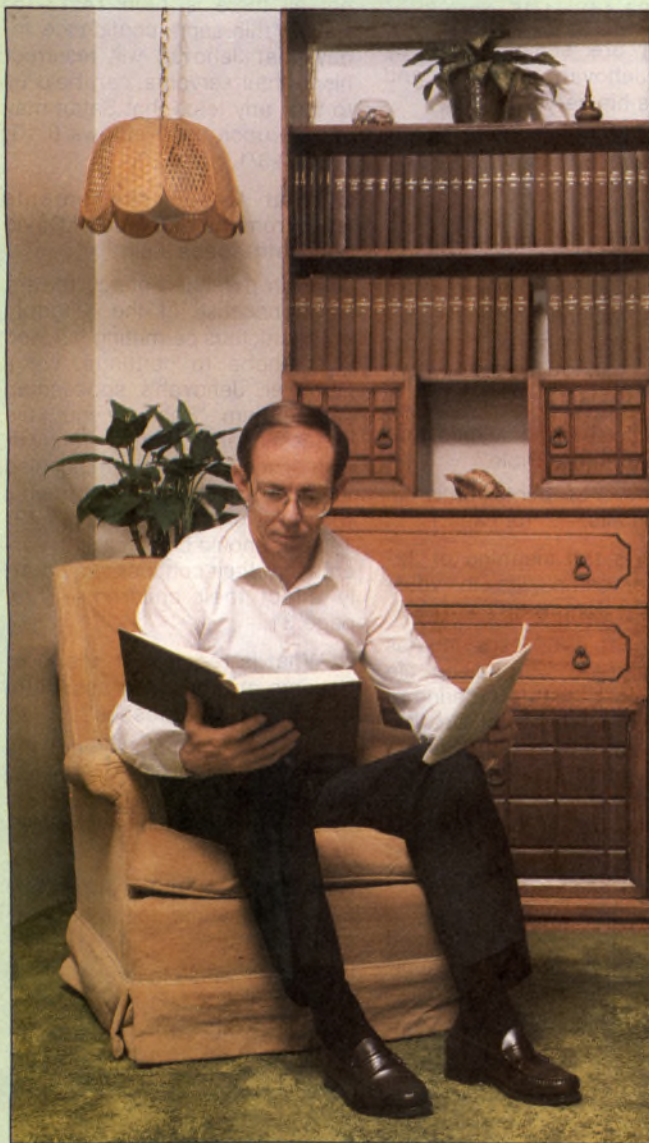
□ What is required if one is to become an approved associate of Jehovah's Witnesses?

Such a person must accept the entire range of Bible teachings, including those Scriptural beliefs that are unique to Jehovah's Witnesses.—4/1, page 31.

□ If bad thoughts enter our minds from time to time, what should we do?

We should refuse to let our minds dwell on these bad thoughts. To help us do this, we ought to go to Jehovah in prayer immediately, "throwing our burden upon Jehovah." (Psalm 55:22)—4/1, page 25.

A Rich Library of Information



That is how readers of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* consider these magazines.

Writing in behalf of himself and his family, a man from the Philippines thanked the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society for supplying back issues, saying:

"As in every edition of your magazines, they contain a wealth of information. Not only do they shed light on matters of religion but they afford wide coverage of fields such as science, medicine, history, government, and language. It seems that every issue carries with it articles of special interest to us.

"I might also mention that we had our past issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* bookbound. There are now four such volumes stacked on the shelves of our private library. They make excellent reference material, and we keep coming back to them for helpful advice and inspiration."