

Awake!

JULY 2012



**WILL OUR WORLD
EVER CHANGE?**

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?
WHAT *MUST* CHANGE?
WHAT *WILL* CHANGE?

A composite image featuring three individuals of diverse ages and ethnicities holding large white protest signs. The signs read 'WAR', 'POLLUTION', and 'PREJUDICE'. They are positioned in front of a large, stylized globe that serves as the background. The globe is light blue and white, showing continents and oceans. The overall tone is serious and focused on global issues.

What Would You Change?

◀ Which factor about our world disturbs you the most?

Which of the following would you most like to see?



PEACE BETWEEN NATIONS

AFFORDABLE AND BETTER HEALTH CARE

END OF DISCRIMINATION

PLENTY OF FOOD AND DRINKING WATER

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

JUSTICE FOR EVERYONE

Will your vision of a changed world ever be achieved? Some would say that the answer rests with government. Can world rulers change our world for the better? What do the facts reveal?

What *Must* Change?

“Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.”

—Ronald W. Reagan, in his inaugural address as 40th president of the United States.

MORE than three decades have passed since Ronald Reagan made that statement. At that time, the United States faced a colossal challenge—“an economic affliction of great proportions,” Reagan called it. “We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history,” he explained. “For decades we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children’s future for the temporary convenience of the present. To continue this long trend is to guarantee tremendous social, cultural, political, and economic upheavals.”

As bleak as his outlook may have seemed, Reagan was not entirely pessimistic. He stated: “The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, *but they will go away.*”—Italics ours.

How does the situation appear today? A 2009 report of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stated: “Increasing numbers of people are . . . vulnerable to overburdened infrastructure, inadequate housing, and outmoded health systems. In fact, [the United Nations agency] UN-HABITAT projects that within three decades, one of three people will live in near total despair—lacking sanitation and clean water, exposed to the imminent effects of climate change, fueling the spread of disease and possible pandemics.”

A Global Concern

Regardless of where you live, consider the following questions:

● Do you feel more secure financially than you did a decade ago?

Awake!® **THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED** for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today’s problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

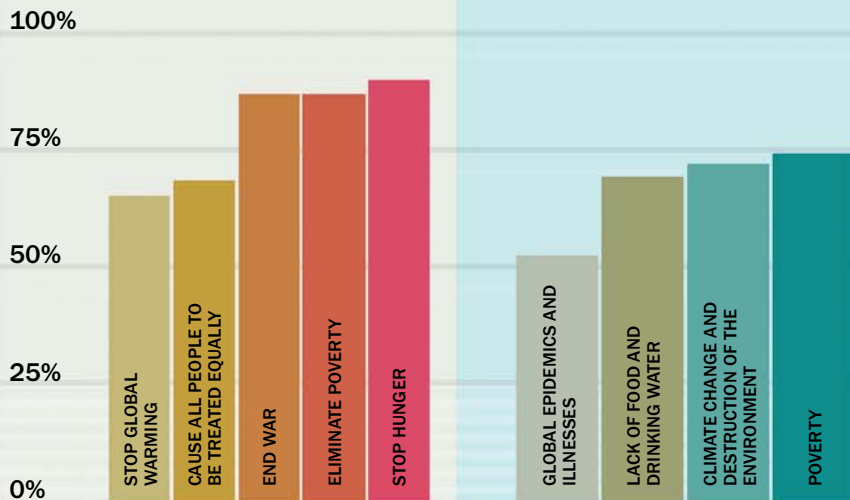
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What do young people say they would change about the world? According to the Web site 4children.org, a survey in **Britain** of some 2,000 children between the ages of 4 and 14 revealed that they would do the following:

A 2009 survey conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation in **Germany** revealed the greatest concerns of some 500 young people between the ages of 14 and 18.

Among the issues that young people considered to be of less importance were terrorism and the growing population. Even the financial crisis registered low on their list of priorities. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation's interpretation, this may be because the young respondents have not yet been affected by these problems in real life.



- Do you believe that your health care is more than adequate for you and your family?
- Do you see cleaner surroundings and an improved environment?
- As you look to the future, can you see things improving over the next 10, 20, or 30 years?

A Social Contract

Many governments have what is called a social contract—a written or implied agree-

ment between rulers and citizens that specifies the rights and duties of both sides. Generally, for example, citizens are expected to abide by the laws of a country, to pay taxes, and to contribute toward a safe environment. Rulers, in turn, usually promise such things as adequate health care, equality, and economic security.

How have governments performed in those three areas? Consider the evidence on the following three pages.

LANGUAGES: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)[°] (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,[°] Danish,[°] Dutch,⁺⁺ English,⁺⁺ Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,[°] French,⁺⁺ Georgian, German,⁺⁺ Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,⁺⁺ Japanese,⁺⁺ Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Korean,⁺⁺ Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,[°] Polish,⁺⁺ Portuguese,⁺⁺ Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,⁺⁺ Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,⁺⁺ Swahili, Swedish,[°] Tagalog,[°] Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

WOULD YOU WELCOME MORE INFORMATION OR A FREE HOME BIBLE STUDY?

Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address. America, United States of: 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Australia: PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. Britain: The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. Canada: PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Germany: 65617 Selters. Guam: 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. Jamaica: PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. Japan: 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. Puerto Rico: PO Box 3980, Guaynabo, PR 00970. South Africa: Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. Trinidad and Tobago: Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

⁺ CD also available. [°] MP3 CD-ROM also available.
[°] Audio recordings also available at www.jw.org.



Adequate Health Care

What people would like to see: Affordable treatment and effective cures.

The reality:

- A report on sanitation and hygiene released by the World Bank states that “every day 6,000 children die from diseases associated with inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene, and unsafe water. Diarrhea alone kills one child every 20 seconds.”

- A major investigation in 2008 by the World Health Organization (WHO) into the way health care is handled in “rich and poor countries” concluded that it is “dangerously out of balance” and is “failing to respond to rising social expectations for health care that is people-centred, fair, affordable and efficient.”

Two years later, WHO found that “governments worldwide are struggling to pay for health care. As populations get older, as more people suffer chronic diseases, and as new and more expensive treatments appear, health costs soar.”

- A deadly twist to health care has emerged: So-called miracle drugs may no longer work. Infections that used to kill millions of people years ago, such as leprosy and tuberculosis, were tamed by antibiotics, the first of which were introduced in the 1940’s. But now, according to WHO’s report *World Health Day 2011*, “the emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens has accelerated. More and more essential medicines are failing. The therapeutic arsenal is shrinking.”

What must change: We need to see the fulfillment of the Bible prophecy that foretells a time when “no resident will say: ‘I am sick.’”—Isaiah 33:24.

Justice and Equality

What people would like to see: An end to prejudice against minority groups and mistreatment of women; a balance between the extremes of wealth and poverty.

The reality:

- A report by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund stated: “Violence directed at individuals, houses of worship, and community institutions because of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin remains unacceptably high and continues to be a serious problem in America.”

- “Millions of women worldwide continue to experience injustice, violence and inequality in their homes, the workplace and public life,” says a United Nations press release based on the report *Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice*. For example, in Afghanistan, some 85 percent of women have no medical assistance when they give birth. In Yemen, there are no laws against domestic violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on average, more than a thousand women are raped each day.

- In October 2011, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated: “Our world is one of terrible contradictions. Plenty of food but one billion people go hungry. Lavish lifestyles for a few, but poverty for too many others. Huge advances in medicine while mothers die everyday in childbirth . . . Billions spent on weapons to kill people instead of keeping them safe.”

What must change: We need to see fair treatment of minority groups and women and an end to those who “wrest away justice from the afflicted ones.”—Isaiah 10:1, 2.





Economic Security

What people would like to see: Employment for all; financial security.

The reality:

- Worldwatch Institute reports that “there are more potential workers to drive economic expansion, but the number of available jobs may not keep pace. Given the current economic downturn, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that the ranks of the unemployed reached 205 million people in 2010.”

- “The global economy is on the verge of a new and deeper jobs recession that may ignite social unrest, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has warned,” states a *BBC* news report. “The recent slowdown in growth suggested that only half the jobs needed would be created. . . . The group [ILO] also measured levels of discontent over the lack of jobs and anger over perceptions that the burden of the crisis was not being fairly shared. It said scores of countries faced the possibility of social unrest, particularly those in the EU and the Arab region.”

- In the United States, “average credit card debt now exceeds \$11,000, triple what it was in 1990,” says the book *The Narcissism Epidemic*, published in 2009. Many people go into debt, the authors assert, simply to project an image of wealth. “Americans see people with fancy cars and clothes and assume they must be rich,” the book says. “In reality, it is often safer to assume that they are in debt.”

What must change: There should be employment for all, along with a balanced view of spending. The Bible acknowledges that “money is for a protection” but also warns that “the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things.”—Ecclesiastes 7:12; 1 Timothy 6:10.

From the information on pages 4 through 8, it may seem that there is little basis for confidence in the future. However, the situation is not hopeless. Our world *will* change for the better—but not through the efforts of human governments.

What Will Change?

"Nation will not lift up sword against nation."

"No resident will say: 'I am sick.'"

"Death will be no more."

THE statements above might seem too good to be true. But we can be sure that they are more than wishful thinking. Why? Because those are not the empty pledges of politicians who are powerless to change our world. Rather, the promises quoted above are found in the Bible.*

Many people feel that the Bible is an ancient book that has no relevance to our day. Is that what you believe? If so, why not take a closer look at what the Bible contains? The fact is, the Bible is the only sacred book that traces mankind's history to the very beginning. It explains the following:

- How the human race fell into despair.—Romans 5:12.

- How God purposes to remedy the situation.—John 3:16.

- Why governments cannot change our world.—Jeremiah 10:23.

- Why we can trust God's promise to do so.—Joshua 23:14.

Will God really eliminate starvation, war, sickness, and death from the human experience? Such a prospect is not difficult to believe once you accept the following:

1. God created us.
2. He cares about us.
3. He has the power to change the world.
4. He purposes to do so.

* The quotations at the top of this page are from Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 33:24; and Revelation 21:4.



Are there good reasons to accept those four points? Jehovah's Witnesses, who publish this magazine, invite you to find out for yourself through a study of the Bible.

Perhaps you own a Bible but seldom read it or do not read it at all. Even many people who read the Bible say that they find it difficult to understand. If that is true of you, we invite you to contact Jehovah's Witnesses for a free home Bible study. Millions of people worldwide are benefiting from that arrangement. How does it work?

Each week, without charge, one or two of Jehovah's Witnesses can come to your home or another convenient location to discuss the Bible with you. These Bible study sessions will help you to answer such questions as, Why do we suffer? Why are man's governments powerless to change the world? What is God's Kingdom, and how will it accomplish what human governments cannot?*

For more information on how you can benefit from a home Bible study, contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally or visit our Web site www.jw.org. You may also write to the appropriate address found on page 5 of this magazine.

* See also the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Who Can Change Our World?" on pages 26 and 27 of this magazine.