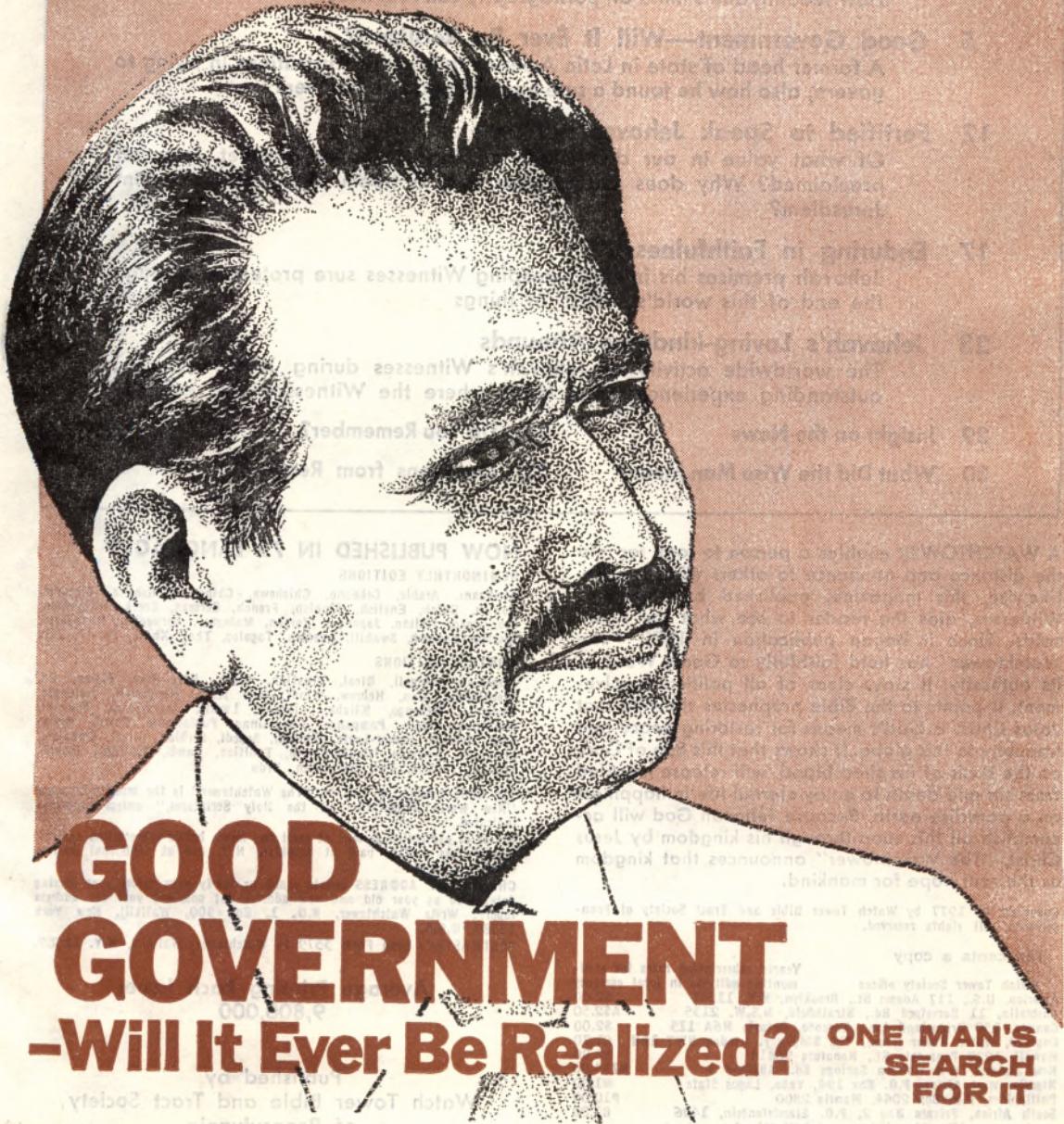


JANUARY 1, 1978

# THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



# GOOD GOVERNMENT

-Will It Ever Be Realized?

ONE MAN'S  
SEARCH  
FOR IT

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# "ABHOR WHAT IS WICKED"—WHY?



"HE ENTERTAINED himself with pornography." In fact, his filthy Yonkers, New York, apartment was filled with "pornographic litter and smeared graffiti." He also got a great deal of pleasure from reading newspaper clippings telling of his shocking crimes.

Who was this man? He was the 24-year-old confessed "Son of Sam," whose notoriety had reached even the front pages of the official organs of the Vatican and Soviet Russia. In 13 months the killer had murdered six young people, five beautiful women and a handsome youth, and had wounded seven others. Indicative of his flamboyant conceit is his bragging, "I only shoot pretty girls."—*Newsweek*, August 22, 1977.

Could there be any connection with the kind of material this man liked to read and his sick mentality? Seeming to indicate so is his boasting about killing only pretty girls.

Lending weight also to this conclusion is what history records about the French libertine Marquis de Sade (1814 C.E.)—from whose name comes the word "sadism." He combined pornography with sex crimes. Repeatedly arrested for his crimes, de Sade spent the closing years of his life in an insane asylum, to the end trying to get the inmates to produce his pornographic and sadistic plays.

**"Abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good. In brotherly love have tender affection for one another."**

—Rom. 12:9, 10.

True, not a few persons insist that pornography furnishes harmless entertainment. For example, some years ago a commission appointed by the president of the United States concluded that pornography plays no "significant role in the causation of social or individual harm." Six of this 18-member commission, however, strongly disagreed. A person simply cannot ignore the fact that a great increase in pornographic material has been accompanied by an increase in venereal disease, illegitimate births, abortions, rapes and other sex crimes. In fact, one American researcher who interviewed men in prison for sex crimes found that they testified that almost invariably they got started on their downward course by perusing pornographic literature.

Well has it been observed that 'pornography is intellectual rape or fornication.' This conclusion agrees with what Jesus Christ stated in his Sermon on the Mount: "You heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." These are the words of one who understood human nature better than any man who lived before him or since his time.—Matt. 5:27, 28.

Not without good reason does the Bible tell us to "hate what is bad." (Ps. 97:10) In fact, it makes this even stronger by admonishing us: "Abhor what is wicked." (Rom. 12:9) Yes, "abhor" is a stronger word than "hate," even as "wicked" is a stronger word than "bad." "Abhor" comes from a root meaning 'to bristle, to shudder, to shiver,' and is related to the word "horror." So, to abhor what is wicked, is to regard it with horror, with repugnance, to loathe it, to detest it and to turn away from it.

Why should we abhor this kind of wickedness? Why should we turn aside from it when it is thrust upon us? For one thing, if we entertain what is wicked, it is bound to harm us sooner or later. We cannot escape it: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh." (Gal. 6:7, 8) We cannot be morally or spiritually healthy while feeding on moral poison. The grosser the wickedness, the greater the harm. —Rom. 1:26, 27.

Secondly, we should want to abhor what is wicked because it interferes with our having good relations with others. Married men who indulge in pornography weaken the ties of tenderness binding them to their wives, for it is actually cheating on their wives. Disloyalty in thought often is the first step toward marital unfaithfulness. The wise counsel of Solomon for husbands to find delight in their wives precludes their taking pleasure in pornography. —Prov. 5:15-20.

It is equally imperative that single men abhor this kind of wickedness. Only thus can their relations with the opposite sex be wholesome, upbuilding, enjoyable, truly friendly. Not without good reason did the apostle Paul repeatedly counsel the single man Timothy along this line: "Flee from the desires incidental to youth." "Become

an example . . . in chasteness." "[Entreat] older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1, 2) To love our neighbor as we do ourselves we must also avoid contaminating him or her with what is bad.—Rom. 13:8-10.

However, most important of all, we should abhor what is wicked because it interferes with our having good relations with our Maker, Jehovah God. In his Word, he repeatedly stresses the fact that he is a holy, good, pure God, a righteous God. (Deut. 32:4; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16) He cannot look with approval upon what is wicked.

Today sexual immorality is a tool that Satan the Devil is using on a large scale to corrupt humankind and to turn people away from God and his righteous principles. He used this snare to deflect angels from their heavenly estate. (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) He caused the death of 24,000 Israelites by this same snare just before they were to enter the Promised Land. (Num. 25:1-18) And professed Christians' yielding to this snare today is one of the clear evidences that we are living in the foretold "critical times hard to deal with."

—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Therefore, let all who would be wise, who love their neighbor as themselves, and who would be pleasing to God, heed the inspired counsel: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct . . . nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks."—Eph. 5:3-12.

Fill the mind with the things that are true, righteous, chaste, lovable, well spoken of, virtuous and praiseworthy. (Phil. 4:8) Doing so will serve to protect you from the snare of pornography. Yes, as the apostle Paul wrote at Romans 12:9: "Abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good."

Did you ever hear someone say about the conditions in his country: "If my group were in power, we could improve things"? Have you ever known anyone who overthrew a government and became a ruler in his country? The following is the account related by a man who did these things. But, as you will see, he learned that bringing about good government is not that easy.

**I**T WAS October 25, 1960. The Central American country of El Salvador was about to receive a new government. Our revolt began at 10 p.m.

A military force surrounded the private residence of President José María Lemus and told him that we had taken power. He reached for a phone, but found it was dead—our people had taken control of the national communications center.

A few miles away in my office at El Zapote fort, across from the *casa presidencial* (official presidential residence), I quickly advised the officers under my command of our actions. Then, from the communications room, I hurriedly called the commander of each military unit in the country. I explained who had already sided with us, and asked: "Do you agree?" Only one important colonel opposed us. I reminded him that we could destroy him. So he had no choice but to accept what we were doing.

At the time, I was second in command at El Zapote fort. My commander, who also did not favor the take-over, returned at midnight. But one of my men, guarding the entrance, advised him to go home. Wisely he did so, and he did not come back.

At 6 a.m. all the commanders and the members of our new government assembled in my headquarters at the fort. Our coup d'état had succeeded, without any blood's being shed. Cannons were fired in celebration, and the radio let the people know that a new six-man government—which we called "La Junta"—had taken charge. It was an exciting time!

#### WHY WE OVERTHREW THE GOVERNMENT

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. A newspaper at the time also called it the "most industrialized and most prosperous of the Central American republics." We believed that it needed a radical change, a better government, and others agreed. Shortly after our take-over the

New York Times of November 5, 1960, observed:

"Even those who

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fear what may follow the overthrow of President Lemus agree that his regime had become increasingly authoritarian and brutal, and had earned the hatred of moderates as well as liberals."

In keeping with such sentiments, the statement that we issued said that Lemus had "governed outside the law, trampled on the Constitution and the rights of citizens, committed illegal acts and created a climate of general discontent."

Under his rule student demonstrators had been shot in the streets. Others had been tortured. The newspapers reported that women were raped in prison. Weapons from my regiment had been used as false evidence in the arrest of a man accused of having too many weapons. Lemus had declared the country to be under a state of siege, a modified form of martial law.

I felt that military action could solve these problems and would bring better conditions. You may understand better why I felt this way if you know something about my background.

#### MILITARY BACKGROUND

I was born in 1925, the third of seven children in a farming family in Paraiso de Osorio, El Salvador. When I was 15 I began four and a half years' training in *Escuela Militar*, our country's military academy, graduating in July 1945. I learned the strong discipline—obeying and commanding—traditional in Latin-American armed forces.

At age 19 I became an officer, at 21, first lieutenant, at 25, captain. I went to Mexico and studied for three years in that country's general staff school *Escuela Superior de Guerra*. There I learned how to organize and direct military training.

On my return to El Salvador, I was told: "We need an infantry school." So, with authorization to set one up, I helped to

establish the *Escuela de Armas*, El Salvador's infantry school, in 1954. Later, in 1958, I set up the *Escuela de Artillería*, El Salvador's artillery school.

Also, I was an observer to the United States' 504th Field Artillery Battalion in the Panama Canal Zone. As military aide to the El Salvadorian minister of defense, I traveled to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Panama.

As you can see, I had a successful military career, with many achievements. So, at the time, it was only natural for me to think that military change could bring a better government to our land.

#### OUR NEW GOVERNMENT

I had been contacted by friends—political leaders who wanted to overthrow the Lemus government. As for myself, I was not a politician, but the prospect of political power was appealing to me. I had high ideals and felt that I was honest enough to help to change a situation that needed changing. In agreeing to become part of the new government, it was on the condition that I be given complete control of planning and executing the military part of the overthrow.

Our government would be made up of six persons: three civilians, two colonels and myself. I was a captain-major, a rank below colonel, but my position at El Zapote fort put me in a strategic spot. For eight months we worked on the details. Then on the night of October 25, 1960, everything went into action.

It was our publicly announced intention to recognize all political parties, follow a democratic program, remain in the Western bloc of nations and hold power only until the next presidential elections were held. We really felt that we could be instrumental in changing conditions in El Salvador for the better.



"La Junta"—the six men who made up our government

However, things did not go as we planned. Shortly after we came to power, the archbishop called me. He said that he wanted to talk to the Junta in private, and that the discussion should be kept secret.

The archbishop told us, in effect: 'You are a new government and I am in position to support this government from the pulpit. In return, you can support us.'

We knew what he was talking about. From the records available to us, we knew that Catholic religious institutions had been receiving financial support from the previous government. The archbishop obviously was interested in seeing a continuation of such considerations to the Church by our new government.

I was a Catholic, but I could see that such preferential treatment was not proper; it was not constitutional. The other members of the Junta agreed. So the six of us refused to provide the Church financial support. The archbishop was visibly upset and suggested that we would regret our decision.

Shortly, a campaign started from church pulpits. The priests asserted that our government was pro-Castro and pro-Communist. We had tapes made of these talks, so we knew the charges being made. But we felt it might do more harm than good to suppress this campaign, since the Church carried much weight with many.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE CHARGES?

An adverse effect on our government was soon felt. There came to be suspicion about our political orientation. The United States was concerned and withheld recognition of us. But what were the facts?

In time the Church-sponsored charges were seen to be unfounded, and the United States extended us recognition. The *New York Times* of December 1, 1960, said:

"The tendency to see communism and the new appeal of 'Fidelismo' in every drive for political and social change in Latin America is a dangerous one. . . .

"The three civilian members of the junta, despite loose accusations of 'Fidelismo,' are liberals and democrats. . . . All six

men have pledged themselves to a democratic program and they deserve every chance to prove their goodwill."

Despite the vindication, great harm to our credibility had been done by the Church-sponsored vilification campaign. But there were also other forces working to undermine our new government.

#### OUR HOPES DASHED

The army was not pleased with us. It had been our intention to take the army out of the political situation, but the army did not want to lose its special privileges. Another group that had been planning a coup while we were preparing ours offered to let the army keep its privileges, and thus got the officers on their side.

Evidently they talked to the commanders of the different military posts, just as I had done. On January 25, 1961, an aide came to my house to tell me that the communications had been seized. At once I went to the *casa presidencial*. My men said: "We support you—we will die for you."

Obviously, though, none of us really

wanted to die. Though the area was surrounded, I crossed the street to El Zapote fort, where the officer opened to me. I started organizing the defense. My orders were obeyed, and I felt strong enough to stand against the new coup.

A colonel, a friend of mine, was sent to advise me that the situation was very serious. He said: "If you surrender there will be peace. Otherwise there will be a battle here." Under his guarantee of peace, I surrendered.

I was taken to the new group's headquarters, and that was the end of the Junta. Its other members already had been captured. I could hear shouting and machine guns in the street. The newspapers said that many were killed. One young man is reported to have used his own blood to write on the street: "*Libertad se escribe con sangre*," which means: "Liberty is written with blood."

Three days later I was in exile. I stayed in Mexico till December, then I returned secretly to El Salvador. Once there I made my presence known and began working



XII 11A The archbishop in private meeting with members of our government

## "I could hear shouting and machine guns in the street"

toward establishing a new government. The following September I was told to leave the country or I would be killed. In face of that threat, I came to the United States, arriving October 7, 1962.

### CHALLENGE OF A NEW LIFE

We settled in Los Angeles, California. At age 37, I had to start all over. Customs were much different, and I didn't speak the language. I had practically nothing in a material way. There was just my family: my wife María and our four children, Ruben 13, Miriam 11, Jorge 9 and Gustavo 7.

On November 2, 1962, within a month after arriving in Los Angeles, I got a job with the Bekins moving company as a driver's helper. I still carried hate in my heart and a tremendous desire for vengeance against those who overthrew our government. But I recognized and accepted my immediate responsibility to support my family. So I worked hard and lived peaceably.

As a result, I became closer to my family than at any time before. So I could see that, in a way, the sudden change of circumstances was a blessing in disguise. Then things happened to change my thinking, and eventually my very personality. My hatred and desire for vengeance began to drain away. In its spring 1972 issue, an article in the moving company's paper, *Bekinews*, entitled "The Warehouseman Who Ruled A Nation," noted about me:

"He learned both English and warehousing fast and well. In 1969, he was promoted to Warehouse Foreman at the Beverly Hills/Santa Monica district's facility on Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica. . . .

"'Ruben,' says District Manager Tom Fowler, 'has displayed a combination of

efficiency, courtesy and good humor that has made for excellent customer relations. It seems that everyone who deals with him likes him and our nominating him for Warehouseman of the Year attests to his excellent operating record."

Just a few years before nobody could have said such pleasant things about me. I had been arrogant, as well as immoral. As a military commander, I had the prestige and power that provided me opportunity to realize many immoral relationships. Earlier experiences had contributed to such a way of life, even as the radical change in my personality has resulted from altogether different experiences in life.

### RELIGION'S INFLUENCE

I had been a Catholic, as were most people in El Salvador, but that didn't stop me from having a number of women besides my legal wife. This is common among men in Latin America. The priests themselves commonly set the example. I know that a priest in Cojutepeque, where I used to live, had a woman. It was public knowledge. He even had sons by her. 'So why should we be any different from the priests?' is the way I excused my conduct.

But it wasn't just the priests' sexual immorality. It was their unethical conduct—the archbishop's trying to make that shady "deal" with our new government was one example. Also, I learned that the archbishop had a diplomatic passport—a privilege to which he had no right. So, when we had the authority we took the passport away from him. I must say that from what I saw going on, I had little respect for religion.

Actually, I knew nothing about the Bible. I had never read one. I hadn't even owned a Bible. The Catholic Church never encouraged this in El Salvador. I had studied the Catechism and had received first Communion. And my mother had taught me some Church doctrines, such as

the infallibility of the pope, purgatory, hellfire, Trinity, and so forth. But none of these teachings encouraged me to want to learn more about God. So you can see why, after our moving to the United States, religion wasn't much a part of our family's life.

#### MY SON INFLUENCES ME

It was quite a surprise one day when Ruben, who was about 17 years old at the time, asked: "Father, would you mind if I study the Bible?" A schoolmate of his was studying with one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and he had talked to Ruben. I had no real objection. So Ruben soon became very interested in the Bible, and started going to the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. In time he wanted to be a Witness.

This didn't please me at all. I wanted Ruben to go to college and "make something" of himself. But he wanted to use his time in sharing his newfound beliefs with others. He stood firm in his convictions, and I began to oppose him strongly. However, the Witnesses advised him to obey me as his father, and he did. Yet he continued to spend a great deal of time preaching.

Ruben's conduct began to impress me, and made me curious about his new religion. One incident stands out in my mind.

I told Ruben that if a particular friend of mine called on the phone he was to tell him I wasn't home. I was surprised, and I must add impressed, when he said that his conscience wouldn't permit him to lie. Ruben would bring friends home, and eventually I accepted the invitation of one of them to study the Bible.

#### THE BIBLE MAKES SENSE

What impressed me was the reasonableness of what the Bible teaches. Many Church teachings, such as purgatory, hellfire and Trinity, never did make much sense to me. But now I began to see that these things were not even taught in the Bible. I found our studies extremely interesting, particularly when it came to discussing practical matters that involve government and the administering of affairs on earth.

With my background, I recognized the need for an honest government with the power to enforce righteous laws. It was our hope to provide such a government for the people of El Salvador. But now it became clear to me that men simply are not equipped to govern fellow humans independent of God's help. Yes, the Bible is true when it says: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jer. 10:23.

Isn't it a fact that all human efforts, regardless of how well meaning, have never been able to bring justice and peace? For thousands of years men have tried; they have set up many kinds of governments. But one man's good intentions are overcome by another faction with different ideas, and injustice remains. As the Bible says: "Man has dominated man to his injury." (Eccl. 8:9) But why is this so?

A primary cause is human imperfection. Humans not only get sick and grow old but are inclined toward pride and selfishness, real obstacles to good government. From a study of the Bible the reason for

## In Coming Issues

- **A World Without Violence  
—Is It Possible?**
- **Maintaining the Family  
Circle**
- **Basis for a  
Purposeful Life**

**The Bible says:**  
**"It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step"**

this basic defect of humans became clear to me. It is because the first man and woman rebelled against God's rule, and so lost their precious relationship with God. This resulted in imperfection and eventually death, not only for themselves, but for all their yet-to-be-born offspring as well. (Rom. 5:12) But I began to appreciate another reason why man's efforts at self-government have failed.

The first human pair were enticed to rebel against God's rulership by another rebel. It was a spirit son of God. To settle issues raised by the rebellion, God allowed this angelic opposer a free hand for a period of time. So complete was his freedom to act that the Bible calls this one "the ruler of this world," and the Bible also states that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19) With that superhuman influence, it became clear to me why even well-meaning men have been helpless to bring about good government. What hope is there then?

This is where the Bible really began to make sense. From childhood I had learned the "Our Father," in which Jesus taught his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) As we studied, I could see that God's kingdom was the theme of Christ's preaching, yes, and *the very theme of the Bible itself!* It became obvious to me that this kingdom is a government, with Christ himself the principal ruler. In time I became convinced that God's kingdom is the only hope of realizing good government on earth. But how will this government take control?

The vast majority of humankind have no genuine interest in God's government. They have been so blinded that they even oppose it. Thus the Bible says: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . *It will crush and put an end to all these [human] kingdoms*, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

That may sound farfetched to you; it did to me when I first heard about it. I couldn't believe that God would really bring an end to all earthly governments and set up his own government. But the more I studied, the more sense this Bible teaching made. Then something convinced me of its truthfulness.

#### A SURE PROSPECT

I had been studying with Veron Long for about a year when I finally accepted his invitation to attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall. I was impressed by the friendly welcome. The freedom from discrimination was amazing. I was moved to attend regularly.

Why were these people so united, happy and peaceful? It took a while, but I became convinced of the answer: *They were conforming their lives to God's laws, the laws that will govern those who live under God's kingdom.* So, when the Kingdom destroys all present-day human governments, these are the people Jehovah God will preserve to start a new earthly society.—1 John 2:17.

I wanted to be part of this united family of Christians. So in August 1969 I symbolized by water baptism my dedication to serve God. I have had the joy of seeing my entire family, as well as some relatives in El Salvador, join me in serving our loving Creator, Jehovah. How happy I am to have learned that soon the whole earth will enjoy good government, under the rule of God's kingdom!—Contributed by Ruben Rosales.

# FORTIFIED TO SPEAK JEHOVAH'S WORDS

JEREMIAH was faithful as a prophet. Because he was zealous in proclaiming Jehovah's "words," the entire nation called down evil upon him. But when he cried to Jehovah for relief, his God reassured him, saying: "I have made you to this people a fortified copper wall; and they will certainly fight against you, but they will not prevail over you. For I am with you, to save you and to deliver you." That "utterance of Jehovah" gave him strength to endure.—Jer. 15:10, 15, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah was obedient in declaring "all the words" of the powerful judgment message that Jehovah gave him to speak. He 'did not take away a word.' (Jer. 26:2) He minced no words in exposing the wickedness of the Jewish nation, its rulers and its people. This called for courage on Jeremiah's part, and for explicit faith in Jehovah's power to sustain His prophet.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondingly, in modern times, Jehovah has raised up the small remnant of his anointed witnesses to serve as a Jeremiah class, particularly in the realm of hypocritical Christendom. They, too, 'must speak all the words that Jehovah commands.' These words contain a message, not only of doom for Christendom and all other nations, but also of encouragement and hope for the true Christian

"This is what Jehovah has said, '... you must speak... all the words that I will command you to speak to them. Do not take away a word.'”—Jer. 26:2.

congregation. These spiritual Israelites have been brought into the "new covenant" described by the prophet in the glowing words of Jeremiah 31:33, 34:

"'For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, 'Know Jehovah!' for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.'

<sup>4</sup> For this spiritual "seed of Israel" Jehovah builds a heavenly city, one that will not be uprooted, neither will it be torn down anymore to time indefinite. (Compare Hebrews 9:13-15.) This prospect reminds us of how Jehovah strengthened faithful Abraham by holding before him the hope of "the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." (Heb. 11:10) And now we are living in the day when Christ's bride, the "holy city, New Jerusalem," is nearing its completion in the heavens, whence figuratively it will 'come down' to bestow everlasting blessings on mankind.—Rev. 21:2-5, 9.

1. What kind of prophet was Jeremiah, and how did Jehovah fortify him?

2. What desirable qualities did Jeremiah show? (Heb. 13:6)

3. Who serve as a modern "Jeremiah," and into what covenant have these been brought?

4. Like Abraham, to what hope do God's people look forward? (Heb. 13:12-15)

<sup>5</sup> This city is the heavenly kingdom toward which Jehovah, through Jesus Christ, shepherds the remnant of his sheep. At present the elders among these serve as faithful undershepherds to his congregated people on earth. (Jer. 23:3, 4) They are ambassadors for the kingdom of the "righteous sprout," the Greater David, Jesus Christ, of whom the prophecy says:

"A king will certainly reign and act with discretion and execute justice and righteousness in the land. . . . And this is his name with which he will be called, Jehovah Is Our Righteousness." (Jer. 23:5, 6; compare Isaiah 32:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 5:20.)

How eager we should be to make known to others Jehovah's "words" concerning that righteous kingdom! But Jehovah also commissions the modern-day Jeremiah class to proclaim a message of doom!

#### CHRISTENDOM DOOMED

<sup>6</sup> The clergy of Christendom claim to be Christian. But do their teachings and actions support this claim? Or, rather, do they fall into the same class as the religious leaders of Jeremiah's day? Of these, Jeremiah said:

"It is men that they catch. As a cage is full of flying creatures, so their houses are full of deception. That is why they have become great and they gain riches." (Jer. 5:26, 27)

They have covetous men, either attracting them with an outward display of piety or converting them at swordpoint, as in the days of imperial colonization. But their religion is founded on ancient Babylonian mysteries, not on God's Word. (Rev. 17:5) Their god is a mystifying "trinity." Falsely teaching that the soul is immortal, they have instilled in many the fear of "hellfire," and have enriched themselves financially by praying in behalf of those

supposedly suffering in a mythical purgatory. They worship the cross, as the Egyptians did long before Christ. They deck the images and icons of their saints with halos and rosaries, after the pattern of Oriental religions.

"They have grown fat; they have become shiny. They have also overflowed with bad things."—Jer. 5:28.

<sup>7</sup> In Jeremiah's time, the majority of the people chose to remain with the doomed system. They loved its dishonesty, its corruption, its immorality. Is it not the same with many persons in Christendom today? Jehovah expresses his judgment:

"Should I not hold an accounting because of these very things," is the utterance of Jehovah, 'or on a nation that is like this should not my soul avenge itself? An astonishing situation, even a horrible thing, has been brought to be in the land: The prophets themselves actually prophesy in falsehood; and as for the priests, they go subduing according to their powers. And my own people have loved it that way.'" (Jer. 5:29-31)

Let the clergy continue to preach Babylonian falsehoods. Let them make themselves prominent in support of corrupt politicians. Let them wink at, or even come out in support of, permissive sex, homosexuality, gambling and other practices condemned by God's Word. This may be popular, appealing to the masses. Many people may 'love to have it that way.' But God declares that he will execute judgment on all such religious hypocrisy in the very near future.

<sup>8</sup> In the time of Israel's early judges, the tabernacle and ark of Jehovah were located at Shiloh. But the priesthood became so permissive, corrupt and immoral that Jehovah 'held an accounting.' Israel suffered crushing defeat by the Philis-

5. (a) What "words" should we eagerly make known to others? (b) What twofold message must the Jeremiah class proclaim? (Compare Isaiah 61:1, 2.)

6. How do Jeremiah's "words" fit Christendom's clergy?

7. In what ways do many in Christendom compare with those in the Jerusalem of Jeremiah's day?

8. Of what is Shiloh's doom prophetic? (Jer. 7:12)

tines, the ark was captured and high priest Eli and his immoral sons died. (1 Sam. 2:12-29; 4:2-18; 3:10-14) According to Jehovah's words, Jerusalem of Jeremiah's time was doomed to suffer as Shiloh suffered:

"And now for the reason that you kept doing all these works," is the utterance of Jehovah, "and I kept speaking to you, getting up early and speaking, but you did not listen, and I kept calling you, but you did not answer, I will do also to the house upon which my name has been called, in which you are trusting, and to the place that I gave to you and to your forefathers, just as I did to Shiloh." (Jer. 7:13, 14)

The religions of Christendom, which claim a relationship to God through Christ Jesus, would do well to heed these words.

<sup>9</sup> Christendom's "works" have included her giving support to man-made schemes for peace, whereas Jesus taught true Christians to pray for God's kingdom as the instrument for bringing peace to this earth. (Matt. 6:10) Catholic and Protestant leaders alike have hailed the United Nations as 'man's last hope for peace.' At the same time they seek political favors by giving blessing and support to U.N. member nations that are arming for disaster at the staggering rate of \$350 billion a year. Jeremiah's words aptly apply to religious leaders in the modern "Jerusalem," the realm of Christendom:

"From the least one of them even to the greatest one of them, every one is making for himself unjust gain; and from the prophet even to the priest, each one is acting falsely. And they try to heal the breakdown of my people lightly, saying, 'There is peace! There is peace!' when there is no peace."—Jer. 6:13, 14; see also 8:11; 14:13-16; 23:17-20.

<sup>10</sup> Christendom's religious leaders pass off the moral breakdown of their flocks

9, 10. (a) How do Christendom's "works" contrast with those of true Christians? (b) As prophesied, how do Christendom's religious leaders regard the moral breakdown and efforts for peace? (c) How will true peace come?

lightly, saying that all is well when in reality the situation is deplorable and deserving of divine retribution. And where will their cries of 'Peace! Peace!' lead them? The apostle Paul answers: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." (1 Thess. 5:3) For peace comes, not by the schemes of nations that are frantically arming for nuclear warfare, but through God's kingdom after it destroys the warmongering nations.—Dan. 2:44.

<sup>11</sup> Since the "appointed times of the nations" came to the full in 1914, these nations have angrily sacrificed 69 million lives in two world wars, as well as many other lives in smaller conflicts. (Luke 21:24) The religious clergy have blessed these conflicts, serving often as army chaplains on both sides. In approving the sacrifice of human lives they have been like apostate Jerusalem, which Jehovah condemned, saying:

"In your skirts there have been found the blood marks of the souls of the innocent poor ones."

"This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said: 'Here I am bringing a calamity upon this place, of which when anyone hears, his ears will tingle; for the reason that they have left me . . . and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent ones.'

Jehovah severely punished Judah's inhabitants for sacrificing "their sons and their daughters in the fire." The people of Christendom are in line for a like punishment.—Jer. 2:34; 19:3-5; see also 7:31.

<sup>12</sup> However, Christendom's false religions have done even more than incur blood-guilt. They have embraced the doctrines

11. Compare Christendom's bloodguilt with that of apostate Jerusalem.

12. What kind of festivals in Christendom are condemned by God's Word, and how do these compare with those of ancient Jerusalem?

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'Look! My anger and my rage are being poured forth upon this place.' "—Jer. 7:18-20.

#### 'BUILDING AND PLANTING'

<sup>13</sup> The Jeremiah class of modern times have been proclaiming God's judgments on Christendom now for some 60 years. The time draws near for the execution of those judgments. So this foretells a work of 'uprooting, pulling down, destroying and tearing down' the error of false religion. It also foretells a 'building and planting,' by making known to honest persons the "good news" that God's

13. In what dual work is the Jeremiah class now engaged?

and formalisms of ancient Babylon, the cradle of the vast world empire of false religion.

Their Christmas, their Easter and many other of their festivals find their origin in religions of pre-Christian times. Why, Easter is even named after Astarte, the Phoenician goddess of fertility and sexual love! Concerning similar festivals in Jeremiah's day, "the utterance of Jehovah" was as follows:

"The sons are picking up sticks of wood, and the fathers are lighting the fire, and the wives are kneading flour dough in order to make sacrificial cakes to the 'queen of the heavens'; and there is a pouring out of drink offerings to other gods for the purpose of offending me. . . .

kingdom will replace the corrupt rule on earth today. It involves building in their hearts an appreciation of Jehovah, of his goodness and the opportunity for everlasting life under paradisaic conditions, made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—Rev. 7:9-17.

<sup>14</sup> According to Jeremiah chapter 24, Jehovah made the prophet to see two baskets of figs, placed before the temple of Jehovah. The one basket contained bad figs, representing those who do not act in faith on Jehovah's promises, so that they suffer loss. The good figs were "very good," and pictured, in the first instance, those Jews who would act in faith in returning from Babylonian exile after 70 years to restore Jehovah's worship in Jerusalem. In modern-day fulfillment, they represent the faithful remnant who have returned from captivity in Babylon the Great, particularly from Christendom's religions, from 1919 onward. Concerning these restored ones, and others who would join them later, Jehovah says through his prophet:

"I will set my eye upon them in a good way, and I shall certainly cause them to return to this land. And I will build them up, and I shall not tear down; and I will plant them, and I shall not uproot. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they must become my people, and I myself shall become their God, for they will return to me with all their heart." (Jer. 24:6, 7)

These "good figs" develop a very intimate relationship with their God, Jehovah. Having a right heart condition, they trust implicitly in Jehovah to direct their steps.—Jer. 10:23, 24; 20:12, 13.

#### JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah was a true prophet. He spoke in the name of Jehovah, directed the peo-

ple to Jehovah's worship, and every word that he uttered concerning Jerusalem, Judah and the other nations came true. Likewise, the major fulfillment of his prophecy is certain today. And note, in its modern-day fulfillment, this utterance of doom embraces, not only the nations of Christendom, but all the nations of the entire earth. Jehovah instructed Jeremiah:

"Take this cup of the wine of rage out of my hand, and you must make all the nations to whom I am sending you drink it. And they must drink and shake back and forth and act like crazed men because of the sword that I am sending among them." (Jer. 25:15, 16)

After the destruction of all the nations that oppose God's righteous will, the "ruler of this world," Satan the Devil, will be abyssed. (John 12:31; Rev. 19:11-16, 19, 21; 20:1-3) This will prepare the way for lasting peace and happiness here on earth.—Rev. 21:3-5.

<sup>16</sup> Should we be fearful that we now stand face to face with this final execution of judgment? Should we fear what the enemy may do to us as we boldly proclaim this message of doom? Jeremiah was not afraid. He feared only Jehovah. (Jer. 10:2-7) In obedience to Jehovah, he stationed himself conspicuously at the gates of Jehovah's house and called the people's attention to the detestable things that were being done in God's name. As Jehovah kept "getting up early and speaking" to that people by means of his prophets in earlier times, so his prophet Jeremiah was also up early to be about his work. What a fine example for us today, that we should never slack the hand or "sleep in" when the work of Jehovah is to be done!—Jer. 7:1, 2, 13, 14; 25:3, 4.

<sup>17</sup> While we declare the 'tearing down' of the nations and kingdoms and their

14. How is the illustration in Jeremiah chapter 24 fulfilled?

15. Who, all together, are embraced in the fulfillment of Jeremiah's utterance of doom?

16. (a) Why should we not be afraid? (b) What fine example have Jehovah's prophets set for us?

17. How extensive will be the extermination from Jehovah?

replacement by God's kingdom, we look forward confidently to Jehovah's settling his controversy with the nations. At his due time he will act! None of the wicked will escape. It will be a complete extermination:

"And 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."

As the tempest of destruction sweeps over the earth, the national "shepherds" and the "majestic ones" of their flock will howl and wallow about, and "fall like a desirable vessel." There will be consternation like that in a household when a priceless vase crashes to the floor. They will be "rendered lifeless because of the burning anger of Jehovah."—Jer. 25:31-37.

<sup>18</sup> Happily, honest-hearted persons out of all nations who learn of Jehovah's goodness are joining themselves to the Jeremiah class. They will find deliverance when God's burning anger breaks forth, to "make all the nations" drink the bitter potion of destruction. (Jer. 25:17) The execution of that judgment hastens on! For a short time longer God's enemies may fight against the Jeremiah class and their companions. But as "a fortified copper wall" we will continue to resist enemy pressure against speaking "all the words" commanded by Jehovah. Always, we draw strength from his promise: "They will not prevail over you. For I am with you, to save you and to deliver you," is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jer. 15:20.

18. (a) How may honest-hearted persons find deliverance? (b) From what assurance will we continue to draw strength?

## ENDURING IN FAITHFULNESS

"O Jehovah, are not those eyes of yours toward faithfulness?"—Jer. 5:3.

JEHOVAH asked concerning ancient Jerusalem: "Why is it that this people . . . is unfaithful with an enduring unfaithfulness?" It was because they followed a stubborn course, taking "the popular course, like a horse that

1. How did Jerusalem's course contrast with that of Jeremiah?

is dashing into the battle." And their fleshly way of viewing things brought calamity, for they 'did not come to know the judgment of Jehovah.' (Jer. 8:5-7) In striking contrast Jeremiah endured in faithfulness. For 40 years, until the destruction of Jerusalem, and beyond that time, he continued to fulfill his commission in proclaiming Jehovah's judgments.

<sup>2</sup> It appears that Jeremiah did not know in advance the day or hour that Jerusalem's destruction would come. But he was aware of the "great pounding from the land of the north"—Babylon. He knew that the executional forces were drawing near, and that God's judgments were sure. Likewise, Jehovah's people today see clearly the "sign" of the approach of "a tribulation such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation."—Jer. 10:22; Mark 13:4, 19.

<sup>3</sup> For close to 60 years now, Jehovah's Christian witnesses have been proclaiming to the nations outside and inside Christendom that this world is in its "time of the end" since 1914, and that the entire system must shortly perish in "a time of distress such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time." (Dan. 12:1, 4) Demonic forces are gathering the nations to Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:13-16) As the modern-day Jeremiah class proclaim these tidings they endure in faithfulness. To their faith they supply endurance.—2 Pet. 1:5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> The Jeremiah class, along with all those newly flocking to the ranks of the Kingdom publishers, need continued encouragement to press on to victory. Jehovah provides just such encouragement. In contrast with the one "who puts his trust in

2. With regard to the approaching tribulation, how did Jeremiah's situation correspond with that of God's people today? (Jer. 4:5, 6; 6:1)

3. (a) What have Jehovah's Witnesses been proclaiming in modern times, and for how long? (b) What have they supplied to their faith?

4. What is the source of our encouragement, and how is this illustrated at Jeremiah 17:5-8?

earthling man and actually makes flesh his arm," those whom Jeremiah pictured put their trust in Jehovah and make him their confidence. They "become like a tree planted by the waters," so that they can send forth roots to drink in all of Jehovah's life-giving provision. Neither the "heat" of persecution nor the "drought" resulting from bans and restrictions can make them "leave off from producing fruit." Like a productive tree, they are "luxuriant" in bringing forth praise to Jehovah. In this, they are "blessed."—Jer. 17:5-8.

#### MEETING THE TEST OF ENDURANCE

<sup>5</sup> Have some today set their eyes on material goals, rather than on the priceless treasure of Kingdom service? Have some found it hard to endure? Well, remember that, at times, Jeremiah found it hard to endure. He even thought of quitting. But then it was that he found the word of Jehovah to be in his heart 'like a burning fire shut up in his bones.' That word impelled him to fight on and to triumph over his enemies. (Jer. 20:9) When we examine some of the problems that Jeremiah grappled with and overcame, surely this should instill in us the desire to endure for the victory!

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah was bitterly opposed by his own townsfolk in Anathoth, who told him: "You must not prophesy in the name of Jehovah, that you may not die at our hand." His own brothers and the household of his father dealt treacherously with him. It seemed that he had enemies everywhere that were calling down evil upon him. (Jer. 11:21; 12:6; 15:10) But Jeremiah found strength for enduring. Where? In prayer to Jehovah, and in realizing the privilege that he had of bearing Jehovah's name and word:

5. What example of Jeremiah's endurance should stimulate us?

6. (a) Where did Jeremiah find strength for enduring? (b) In line with Jeremiah's example, what fellowship should we avoid?

"Your words were found, and I proceeded to eat them; and your word becomes to me the exultation and the rejoicing of my heart; for your name has been called upon me, O Jehovah God of armies. I have not sat down in the intimate group of those playing jokes and begun exulting." (Jer. 15:16, 17)

Jeremiah found joy in Jehovah's words and in bearing His name. He found no pleasure in the empty joking of godless men and wisely avoided their company. Should we do any less?

<sup>7</sup> As a sign that his message was sure, Jehovah commanded Jeremiah not to marry. Thus he would not bring forth children for destruction. He did not complain about his single status, but became absorbed in the work on hand. In time, Pashhur, an official in the house of Jehovah, took offense at Jeremiah's words, struck him and put him in stocks overnight. But on his release Jeremiah once again fearlessly declared to Pashhur that all Judah would be given into the hand of the king of Babylon.—Jer. 16:1-4; 20:1-6.

<sup>8</sup> When wicked King Jehoiakim came to the throne in 628 B.C.E., Jehovah gave Jeremiah a powerful prophecy to pronounce, and again He told him: "Do not take away a word." So, standing in the courtyard of the temple of Jehovah, Jeremiah spoke all the words that Jehovah had commanded, truly a message of doom for Judah and Jerusalem. What was the outcome? The record answers:

"When Jeremiah had completed speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying: 'You will positively die. Why is it that you have prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, 'Like that in Shiloh is how this house will become, and

7. (a) What enabled Jeremiah to accept uncomplainingly his single status? (b) What was Jeremiah's reaction to Pashhur's harsh treatment?  
8. How did Jeremiah display fearlessness during Jehoiakim's reign?

this very city will be devastated so as to be without an inhabitant'?" And all the people kept congregating themselves about Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah." (Jer. 26:1-9)

The princes of Judah came to the scene, and the priests and the prophets called for judgment of death. But in a stirring speech Jeremiah made it plain that Jehovah had sent him to prophesy, that he had obeyed Jehovah's voice and that they would shed innocent blood if they put him to death.—Jer. 26:10-15.

<sup>9</sup> Then it was that the princes and all the people spoke up on behalf of Jeremiah, saying: "It was in the name of Jehovah our God that he spoke to us." Certain elders also supported Jeremiah, one of these being Ahikam, the father of Gedaliyah. (Jer. 26:16-24) Jeremiah continued, therefore, fearlessly prophesying. This temporary letup in the Judeans' hounding of Jeremiah reminds us of some relief that came in the experience of our brothers in Malawi. Some recent reports have indicated that many of these have been released from prisons, and have been permitted to return to their homes and cultivate their fields. Some youths who were formerly their persecutors are said even to be studying the Bible with them. However, in other parts of the country, local officials and relatives make it hard for Jehovah's people to live a normal life. But Jeremiah-like, they continue to endure in their integrity.

#### THE CONTEST OF THE PROPHETS

<sup>10</sup> It was also during the reign of Zedekiah that Jeremiah acted out a prophetic illustration. At Jehovah's direction, he placed yoke bars of wood upon his neck, declaring that Judah and surrounding na-

9. (a) Who spoke up in behalf of Jeremiah? (b) Of what recently does this remind us?

10, 11. (a) What prophetic illustration was acted out by Jeremiah and Hananlah? (b) How was Jeremiah proved to be a true prophet?

tions should put themselves under the yoke of the king of Babylon, or receive severe punishment. But the prophet Hananiah removed the yoke bar from Jeremiah's neck and broke it, declaring that Jehovah would easily break the yoke of Babylon from off the nations within two years.—Jer. 27:2-15; 28:1-11.

<sup>11</sup> Who would win out in this contest of the prophets? Was Jeremiah or Hananiah the true prophet of Jehovah? Jehovah left no doubt as to this when he commanded Jeremiah to prophesy that the yoke bars of wood were to be replaced by bars of iron, and that Hananiah must die within the year. Not only did Hananiah die in the seventh month of that year, but the yoke of Babylon at last proved truly to be a yoke of iron.—Jer. 28:12-17.

<sup>12</sup> How like Hananiah are those modern-day false prophets who try to 'tear down' the work of Jehovah's Witnesses with evil intent! Some of these may even have walked with God's people for a time, but they become disgruntled at not seeing selfish ambitions fulfilled and they return to the very teachings that previously they had vomited out. They preach "through envy and rivalry," certainly not "through goodwill," for they have nothing upbuilding to say. (2 Pet. 2:22; Phil. 1:15) They hold forth expectations contrary to the Jeremiah class with respect to the coming of the "great tribulation."

<sup>13</sup> However, just as surely as Jehovah replaced the broken wooden yoke with a yoke of iron, so the "great tribulation" is certain to come at God's appointed time. And just as surely as Hananiah died under Jehovah's judgment in that same year, so these opposing prophetic groups must be executed in due time. They are without joy and do not have Jehovah's spirit or "word" to sustain them.—Jer. 23:16-19; 31:1, 12.

12, 13. (a) What modern group acts like Hananiah, and how do they make out? (b) What sustains God's true witnesses?

#### HOLD FAST YOUR CONFIDENCE!

<sup>14</sup> Like Jeremiah, we should have unshakable confidence in Jehovah's prophetic "word." As a token of such confidence, Jeremiah obeyed "the word of Jehovah" in buying a hereditary field in Anathoth, and that just one year before the Babylonian armies moved in to devastate the land! (Jer. 32:8-25) In these final days, we should likewise be confident that Jehovah will fulfill every word of his promise to protect and establish his people. (Jer. 32:38-41) The time for the heavenly assault forces under Christ Jesus to strike is perilously close! It is therefore urgent that we keep ever on the watch, proclaiming God's "word."—Mark 13:10, 32-37.

<sup>15</sup> The way was hard for Jeremiah. But his confidence in Jehovah and his loyalty to his commission carried him through. He was able also to encourage his faithful companion, the scribe Baruch, when that one became downcast. After Jeremiah had been prophesying some 20 or 30 years, Baruch declared:

"Woe, now, to me, for Jehovah has added grief to my pain! I have grown weary because of my sighing, and no resting-place have I found."

But Jehovah conveyed to him through Jeremiah these words:

"Look! What I have built up I am tearing down, and what I have planted I am uprooting, even all the land itself. But as for you, you keep seeking great things for yourself. Do not keep on seeking. For here I am bringing in a calamity upon all flesh," is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will give you your soul as a spoil in all the places to which you may go.' (Jer. 45:1-5)

Yes, this faithful servant of God had grown weary with the passage of time. But Jehovah assured Baruch that His due time for 'tearing down and uprooting,' His time

14. (a) Like Jeremiah, what confidence should we display? (b) Why should we be ever on the watch?

15, 16. (a) What sustained Jeremiah? (b) What problem did Baruch encounter? (c) Jehovah's warning to Baruch is of what encouragement to us today? (Rev. 2:3)



-After Jeremiah was thrown into an empty cistern, Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, gained the king's permission to have him rescued; God rewarded this loving deed

soul as a spoil' in the realm of God's kingdom by Christ Jesus, beyond the storm of Har-Magedon.

#### LOYAL COMPANIONS

<sup>17</sup> Jeremiah had other friends. These appeared only after many years of faithful service, and by Jehovah's direction. While wicked Jehoiakim still ruled, Jehovah had Jeremiah bring to the temple the Rechabites, the descendants of Jonadab, who had identified himself as being

on Jehovah's side in the days of King Jehu, some 250 years earlier. (2 Ki. 10: 15-17) Jonadab had given his descendants the command that they must drink no wine "to time indefinite." And now, at the first approach of the Babylonians, the Rechabites had taken refuge in Jerusalem. Jeremiah placed wine before them. But they refused it, in loyal obedience to their forefather, Jonadab. Jehovah then contrasted the disobedience of Judah and Jerusalem

17. Who were the Rechabites, and what led to Jehovah's rewarding them?

with the enduring loyalty of the Rechabites, and declared:

"There will not be cut off from Jonadab the son of Rechab a man to stand before me always."

Thus the descendants of Jonadab received a grand reward, deliverance during the tribulation on Jerusalem.—Jer. 35:1-19.

<sup>18</sup> These Rechabites have their counterpart today—persons of honest heart and right principles, who may even have tried to find escape from these "critical times" in the religious confines of modern "Christendom." (2 Tim. 3:1) But their real refuge lies in Jehovah's provision through Christ. He sends to them the modern-day Jeremiah class, with a message that means their salvation. No, the safety of such "Jonadabs" is not to be found in broken-down Christendom, but squarely on the side of Jehovah's modern-day "prophet."

<sup>19</sup> It was the last king of Judah, Zedekiah (617-607 B.C.E.) that called on Jeremiah to pray to Jehovah on Judah's behalf. But Jeremiah continued to proclaim the impending destruction of Jerusalem. Later, after being harshly treated and imprisoned many days, he was brought before the king, who asked him privately: "Does there exist a word from Jehovah?" Back came Jeremiah's forthright answer: "There does exist [a word]! . . . Into the hand of the king of Babylon you will be given!" (Jer. 37:3-17) In like manner, Jehovah's Witnesses today are forthright in pointing to the divine judgment. They are not interested in interfaith movements or in softening the message proclaimed against Christendom.

<sup>20</sup> Because of his persistence in declaring Jehovah's judgments against the city, Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern, where

18. Who are the modern-day 'sons of Jonadab,' and where do they find protection?

19. How should Jeremiah's stand before Zedekiah encourage us?

20. (a) What led to Ebed-melech's rescuing Jeremiah, and how was this Ethiopian rewarded? (b) Who in modern times have acted like Ebed-melech, and what will be the outcome to them? (Matt. 25:34, 40)

he sank down into the mire. He seemed doomed to a miserable death. But an Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech, went to the king and pleaded on Jeremiah's behalf. At the king's direction, Ebed-melech took 30 men, and by the use of worn-out rags and cloths, they drew Jeremiah out of this cistern and restored him to a place in the Courtyard of the Guard. There he remained until Jerusalem was destroyed and he was set free. But what of Ebed-melech? While Jeremiah was still in the courtyard, the word of Jehovah came to him, saying:

"Go, and you must say to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, 'This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said: "Here I am bringing true my words upon this city for calamity and not for good, and they will certainly happen before you in that day. And I will deliver you in that day,"' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and you will not be given into the hand of the men of whom you yourself are scared. For I shall without fail furnish you an escape, and by the sword you will not fall; and you will certainly come to have your soul as a spoil, because you have trusted in me,'" is the utterance of Jehovah."

Thus, when the armies of Babylon came crashing in from the north, Ebed-melech escaped with his life. In modern times, too, there have been many, including even government and prison officials, who have shown kindness to the persecuted witnesses of Jehovah. Later some of these have become Witnesses in line for salvation when the heavenly executional forces of Christ Jesus go into action at Har-Magedon.—Jer. 38:6-13; 39:15-18; Rev. 7:14-17; 16:16.

<sup>21</sup> It is a joy to note that there are still on earth today persons of the same caliber as Jeremiah, Baruch, the Rechabites and Ebed-melech. The report of the worldwide activity of Jehovah's Witnesses for their service year of 1977 proves this to

21. (a) How do modern-day servants of Jehovah compare with those of Jeremiah's time? (b) In what ways do they show endurance? (Rev. 14:12)

be so. True, there may have been some who, becoming tired like Baruch, have turned aside to selfish interests for a time, but these should remember that Baruch, though tested, stayed right there with God's prophet. Yes, it is worth enduring, with the prospect of everlasting life in

view following the "great tribulation." And may lovers of righteousness of the disposition of the sons of Jonadab and Ebed-melech continue to be found. Great will be the reward to all who diligently exercise faith in Jehovah's promises, and who endure to the end!

## Jehovah's Loving-kindness Abounds

**I**N PRAYER to the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, Jeremiah acknowledged Him as "the One exercising loving-kindness toward thousands." (Jer. 32:17, 18) How true is this among Jehovah's people today! During the past year, Jehovah's loving-kindness abounded toward the 2,223,538 Witnesses who served in 216 countries and territories. His spirit enabled them to give a grand witness.

The chart on the following pages summarizes the work accomplished in different sections of the earth. These zealous Witnesses were very busy, devoting 321,424,305 hours to the work of proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom and conducting 1,282,246 Bible studies in the homes of interested persons. Although magazine placements decreased somewhat, they distributed 24,972,749 Bibles and books explaining the Bible, an increase of 917,700 over the previous year.

Throughout the service year of 1977 there has been most commendable support of the full-time "pioneer" service, especially auxiliary pioneering. As shown by the chart, a number of countries that had many pioneers in the field enjoyed a fine increase. This has also been true in congregations where there has been a true pioneer spirit, and it is hoped that more and more congregations will foster pioneering.

As we approach the end, times get harder. (2 Tim. 3:1) Also, in many countries the people's attitude is hardening. It

is the same as in Jeremiah's day, when Jehovah said of the people: "They have hardened their neck in order not to obey my words." If your congregation has to work among a 'hardnecked' people, take courage! Rather than slow down in Kingdom activity, let us do as Jeremiah exhorted: "Sing to Jehovah, you people! Praise Jehovah!" (Jer. 19:15; 20:13) Yes, let us expend ourselves as co-workers with God while he gathers the remaining ones of his "sheep."—1 Cor. 3:9; Jer. 23:3.

Faithful shepherds, elders in the flock who serve under the headship of Jesus Christ, continue 'actually to shepherd the flock,' and this is shown by the generally fine meeting attendances in the 41,635 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth. (Jer. 23:4) A highpoint in attendances was reached on Sunday, April 3, 1977, when a total of 5,107,518 assembled to observe the Memorial of Jesus' death. The "sheep" are still being gathered, and we rejoice that, during 1977, 124,459 new Witnesses were baptized. Do you use every opportunity to share zealously in this great gathering work?

### REPORTS THAT STIMULATE

Although they are banned or otherwise restricted in some 46 countries today, Jehovah's Witnesses are not dispirited. Tactfully they continue to give the witness, and with excellent results, as the report from these "OTHER COUNTRIES" on

# 1977 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLD WIDE

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Country	Population	1977 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Publisher to:	1977 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. over 1976	1976 Av. Pubs.	1977 No. Bptzd.	Av. Plo. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
<b>AFRICA</b>												
Algeria	16,776,000	20	838,800	17	-44*	1,733	10	15	3	1,079	17	34
Benin	2,700,000	1,113	2,426	975	-6*	266	14	23	72	85,472	301	2,158
Botswana	661,000	275	2,404	249	-2*	149	19	4	11	61,222	251	879
Burundi	4,000,000	173	23,121	146	-4*	11,886	740	5	4	23,043	132	207
Cameroon	6,500,000	12,085	538	11,449	-4*	3	411	735,430	7,345			13,855
Central Afr. Emp.	2,000,000	1,072	1,866	887	-20*	1,112	38	76	48	134,403	536	1,925
Chad	3,870,000	155	24,968	131	3	127	11	34	11	61,132	232	579
Congo	1,300,120	1,610	808	1,305	-19*	1,618	18	88	43	148,429	805	2,402
Djibouti	125,000	6	20,833	4	-20*	5			1	267	3	21
Equatorial Guinea	285,000	17	16,765	16	-36*	25			1	3,307	30	57
Ethiopia	27,000,000	1,824	14,803	1,811		1,809	85	136	50	367,290	2,174	4,974
Gabon	975,000	339	2,876	306		305	20	15	11	42,687	259	690
Gambia	493,000	11	44,818	10		6		4	1	4,324	19	32
Ghana	10,053,350	22,508	447	21,531	-1*	21,776	1,191	1,174	433	3,652,404	19,117	70,797
Guinea	5,143,284	249	20,656	210	-8*	228	14	69	15	110,364	459	713
Guinea-Bissau	517,000	4	129,250	3	-40*	5	2	1		3,400	56	41
Ivory Coast	6,670,000	1,207	5,526	1,168	4	1,127	135	99	41	259,735	1,538	3,865
Kenya	14,000,000	1,972	7,099	1,929	3	1,868	204	240	90	551,797	2,052	5,584
Lesotho	1,181,900	599	1,973	568	-9*	622	51	50	25	124,668	451	2,936
Liberia	1,300,000	1,009	1,288	979	-4*	1,020	64	106	23	246,071	1,244	3,517
Libya	2,440,000	4	610,000	3	200	1				184	1	8
Mali	5,000,000	32	156,250	31	19	26	6	10	1	16,235	106	63
Mauritania	1,500,000	2	750,000	1	-50*	2					151	
Morocco	18,334,000	179	102,425	162	-8*	177	8	12	4	30,746	107	292
Niger	2,870,000	69	41,594	53		53	4	23	6	36,348	102	110
Nigeria	79,758,969	104,973	760	99,163	-8*	107,924	5,248	5,106	2,097	15,953,016	69,794	248,271
Rhodesia	6,740,800	12,429	542	11,592	-4*	12,127	735	621	527	1,917,089	8,025	33,811
Rwanda	4,500,000	76	59,211	62	63	38	12	21	4	37,985	137	212
Senegal	5,000,000	334	14,970	322	2	316	11	56	8	108,043	420	686
Sierra Leone	3,002,426	1,138	2,638	1,095	-5*	1,155	71	273	51	462,450	2,298	3,803
South Africa	26,129,000	29,072	899	27,149	-2*	27,770	1,572	1,570	842	4,610,841	17,128	77,357
South-West Africa	850,000	315	2,698	288	-7*	309	8	19	11	52,925	213	639
Sudan	17,500,000	96	182,292	89	-7*	96	1	12	2	25,285	133	159
Swaziland	480,000	606	792	601	-7*	644	33	33	27	117,515	494	1,708
Tanzania	15,500,000	1,466	10,573	1,358	-10*	1,512	100	113	76	279,775	1,047	3,535
Togo	2,312,100	2,628	880	2,418	-4*	2,520	62	237	72	551,604	2,829	9,144
Tunisia	5,772,000	47	122,809	45	2	44	3	1	1	4,457	25	77
Uganda	11,400,000	151	75,497	139	-12*	158	23	18	10	40,240	195	394
Upper Volta	5,258,141	77	68,288	69	28	54	7	25	5	43,695	201	349
Zaire	25,000,000	19,446	1,286	18,153	-3*	18,696	1,901	1,930	630	4,758,561	25,431	73,807
Zambia	5,700,000	55,288	103	52,629	-5*	55,616	2,399	1,680	1,162	7,081,752	50,296	217,770
<b>AMERICAS</b>												
Alaska	420,000	1,210	347	1,164	-3*	1,196	70	89	22	186,267	548	2,753
Argentina	25,050,000	31,846	787	29,111	-9*	32,079	1,072	748	612	2,493,704	18,781	58,575
Belize	130,000	589	221	542	-3*	557	40	51	14	117,486	504	2,043
Bolivia	4,687,718	2,466	1,901	2,240	5	2,133	251	364	62	674,366	2,433	8,864

Brazil	114,000,000	106,254	1,073	102,503	1	101,298	8,051	4,488	1,990	13,543,567	65,748	296,322
Canada	22,660,000	63,090	359	60,940	1	60,573	2,307	3,156	1,033	8,819,565	25,016	120,958
Chile	10,656,000	16,078	663	15,339	-4*	15,947	1,601	940	278	2,355,676	14,352	46,013
Colombia	25,176,752	16,310	1,544	15,696	1	15,608	1,138	959	277	2,734,104	15,554	62,490
Costa Rica	2,234,000	5,249	426	4,832	3	4,698	402	186	109	681,856	3,729	14,402
Ecuador	6,729,999	5,716	1,177	5,400	-5*	5,712	483	446	105	1,077,403	5,595	23,094
El Salvador	4,290,037	6,055	709	5,768	2	5,632	681	342	118	1,059,835	6,069	20,263
French Guiana	45,000	230	196	218	12	194	19	13	3	41,980	261	678
Guatemala	5,626,273	5,211	1,080	5,079	3	4,940	421	265	80	856,569	4,654	16,597
Guyana	740,000	1,380	536	1,327	-3*	1,367	57	180	33	308,796	1,186	3,516
Honduras	2,656,948	3,243	819	3,149	5	3,013	372	277	67	720,872	4,236	15,297
Mexico	64,594,402	93,751	689	89,606	9	82,098	6,661	6,778	3,585	15,305,853	78,514	354,985
Nicaragua	2,200,000	3,432	641	3,282	4	3,144	318	227	63	627,092	3,732	10,985
Panama	1,700,000	3,030	561	2,927		2,931	306	206	68	557,800	3,346	9,253
Paraguay	2,646,000	1,505	1,758	1,439	6	1,363	161	142	47	304,441	1,162	3,500
Peru	16,000,000	12,655	1,264	12,011	5	11,465	1,231	1,243	254	2,650,893	12,645	38,695
Surinam	375,000	908	413	886	-1*	896	46	98	12	201,003	752	2,447
U.S. of America	214,714,000	554,018	388	530,374	-3*	544,644	27,995	29,160	7,438	76,065,701	273,564	1,270,172
Uruguay	2,763,964	4,758	581	4,377	-6*	4,634	442	344	90	822,305	4,111	12,228
Venezuela	13,400,000	13,835	969	13,310	3	12,951	1,137	666	167	2,213,269	12,137	47,121
<b>ASIA</b>												
Abu Dhabi	235,662	9	26,185	8		8	1			322	2	37
Afghanistan	16,560,000	6	2,760,000	5	-38*	8			1	965	1	13
Bangladesh	80,000,000	1	80,000,000	1		1				11	1	
Bhutan	1,304,774	1	1,304,774	1	New					3		
Burma	31,170,000	846	36,844	816	-1*	823	39	166	62	290,912	791	2,061
Dubai	206,861	21	9,851	6	-14*	7				349	2	
Hong Kong	4,500,000	691	6,512	640	21	530	100	132	9	231,518	897	1,367
India	610,000,000	4,730	128,964	4,534	2	4,449	488	530	267	1,028,791	3,233	11,389
Iran	32,000,000	61	524,590	49	44	34	2	12	1	18,983	76	92
Iraq	9,498,362	20	474,918	16		16	3	1	1	2,081	6	32
Israel	4,763,000	261	18,249	250	-5*	262	8	17	5	44,110	142	483
Jordan	2,560,000	65	39,385	54	15	47	4	2	1	5,461	32	142
Korea	36,436,000	29,361	1,241	27,655	-12*	31,393	1,418	2,376	509	4,579,918	16,962	54,620
Kuwait	990,000	20	49,500	17		17				1,263	7	49
Lebanon	3,213,000	1,800	1,785	1,663	5	1,591	144	85	45	256,446	973	3,380
Macao	375,000	9	41,667	8	14	7			1	7,055	20	21
Malaysia	13,001,900	464	28,021	433	4	415	48	52	19	122,254	664	962
Nepal	12,300,000	17	723,529	14		13				1,043	4	
Pakistan	70,380,000	191	368,482	181	1	180	13	31	5	56,581	191	469
Saudi Arabia	7,200,000	7	1,028,571	5	67	3				361	3	4
Sharja	88,188	8	11,024	7	New					115	1	8
Syria	6,895,000	209	32,990	170	-9*	186	4	8	5	25,392	70	340
Thailand	43,213,711	734	58,874	723	2	709	50	121	27	206,917	570	1,463
<b>EUROPE</b>												
Andorra	32,500	81	401	70	15	61	7	5	1	10,149	31	142
Austria	7,521,800	12,613	596	12,349	1	12,172	557	626	214	1,924,439	5,826	22,409
Belgium	9,754,576	19,126	510	18,180	-4*	18,870	832	761	281	2,686,629	6,451	37,034
Denmark	5,089,411	13,992	364	13,426	-3*	13,899	331	657	234	1,702,546	3,897	23,168
Finland	4,733,000	13,131	360	12,592	-2*	12,908	432	879	251	1,844,933	5,221	20,905
France	52,988,000	67,549	784	64,546	2	63,428	4,582	2,249	1,194	9,305,816	32,444	123,774
Germany, Federal Rep. of	59,660,000	100,213	595	97,760	-1*	98,648	3,194	3,213	1,398	12,684,570	31,814	162,458
Gibraltar	31,000	85	365	81	-2*	83	1	4	1	11,120	35	168
Greece	9,000,000	18,843	478	18,712	1	18,571	455	811	454	2,750,799	6,578	31,887
Italy	56,014,166	66,315	845	63,896	12	57,255	8,289	3,649	1,222	11,547,790	44,388	147,341

Country	Population	1977 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Publisher to:	1977 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. over 1976	1976 Av. Pubs.	1977 No. Bptzd.	Avg. Pbs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Avg. Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
Liechtenstein	24,169	21	1,151	19	-5*	20	2	1	3,522	18	54	
Luxembourg	424,677	831	511	799		799	53	58	141,087	504	1,709	
Netherlands	13,733,578	28,656	479	27,776	-4*	28,954	797	1,960	287	4,640,611	9,045	45,329
Norway	4,044,386	7,352	550	6,982	-3*	7,201	201	225	197	784,191	2,033	12,697
Portugal	9,000,000	20,335	443	18,708	8	17,319	1,836	784	355	2,630,914	15,043	47,787
San Marino	19,621	60	327	57	10	52	1	4	10,797	28	120	
Spain	34,907,003	38,465	908	36,242	9	33,352	2,993	2,753	673	6,970,825	25,420	75,690
Sweden	8,236,179	16,778	491	16,212	2	15,913	544	1,214	302	2,553,376	7,485	27,507
Switzerland	6,297,600	10,112	623	9,873	1	9,821	562	336	222	1,358,588	5,778	19,366
West Berlin	1,985,000	5,340	372	5,196	-4*	5,387	130	154	62	648,845	1,647	7,773

## ISLANDS OF THE SEA

American Samoa	30,000	71	423	62	-27*	85	2	5	1	12,430	54	168
Anguilla	6,524	14	466	12	-8*	13	1	3	1	2,950	7	36
Antigua	70,794	208	340	189	15	164	9	15	4	36,573	150	546
Aruba	62,288	354	176	332	-2*	338	11	9	5	46,394	211	1,002
Australia	13,987,600	28,960	483	28,078	1	27,936	1,330	1,816	527	4,778,969	11,263	56,823
Azores	292,200	272	1,074	254	14	223	61	26	12	58,154	252	715
Bahamas	210,000	504	417	463	-6*	492	36	19	8	68,992	426	1,697
Bahrain	216,000	2	108,000	2	New					41		4
Barbados	254,000	1,314	193	1,220	5	1,159	77	55	16	164,735	742	2,908
Bequia	5,400	25	216	22	-4*	23	1	1	1	3,250	13	50
Bermuda	60,000	218	275	210	4	202	17	13	4	35,787	162	484
Bonaire	8,983	31	290	29	-3*	30	1	2	1	6,620	34	95
British Isles	54,640,200	77,593	704	75,136	-2*	76,694	3,527	4,086	1,108	11,001,459	33,901	153,227
Canary Islands	1,322,861	1,247	1,061	1,163	8	1,075	126	83	25	214,687	745	2,749
Cape Verde Rep.	350,000	80	4,375	68	28	53	18	17	4	32,423	203	430
Carriacou	8,500	31	274	27	13	24	1	4	1	6,424	29	64
Cayman Islands	15,000	21	714	17	-19*	21	1	1	1	2,742	18	58
Comoro Islands	306,000	3	102,000	2	100	1	1	1	1	923		3
Cook Islands	18,937	55	344	51	21	42	8	4	2	9,672	38	197
Curaçao	156,209	711	220	691	6	649	58	47	7	142,097	920	1,916
Cyprus	650,000	851	764	830	1	824	32	31	12	106,045	247	1,365
Dominica	70,302	199	353	188	-7*	203	18	17	8	38,660	96	524
Dominican Rep.	4,977,701	6,503	765	6,324	-1*	6,395	299	535	113	1,294,741	7,758	23,729
Faroe Islands	41,575	74	562	67	-8*	73	14	4	4	12,193	27	125
Fiji	588,068	621	947	590	-1*	594	58	65	23	137,367	582	1,992
Gilbert Islands	54,500	2	27,250	2		2	1	1	1	108	4	30
Greenland	49,719	82	606	76	-11*	85	3	22	8	19,459	41	143
Grenada	100,000	307	326	278	-2*	283	16	26	5	55,626	242	628
Guadeloupe	324,000	2,649	122	2,535	3	2,470	175	55	36	339,569	1,834	6,650
Guam	98,580	117	843	102	-6*	108	15	1	1	27,082	97	336
Haiti	5,000,000	3,700	1,351	3,407	-2*	3,492	251	260	73	693,851	4,319	17,805
Hawaii	865,000	4,803	180	4,653	-2*	4,750	211	730	58	1,159,909	4,410	11,226
Iceland	220,918	154	1,435	144	-6*	154	7	11	3	25,230	87	274
Ireland	4,580,000	1,874	2,444	1,745	-2*	1,774	96	304	66	519,338	814	3,350
Jamaica	2,100,000	6,506	1,233	6,277	-2*	6,383	323	227	169	845,984	4,382	17,843
Japan	111,969,603	41,695	2,685	40,176	11	36,180	4,762	10,195	947	15,176,223	55,813	87,497
Kosrae	3,989	21	190	18	New				4	3,589	25	122
Madagascar	9,000,000	845	10,651	811	5	772	72	55	21	151,441	991	2,919
Madeira	265,600	319	833	289	27	228	57	18	8	51,070	246	793
Malta	318,500	90	3,539	75	-10*	83	7	5	1	12,709	48	237
Malvinas Islands	2,089	5	418	3	50	60	2	3	1	226	3	7
Manus Island	29,650	8	3,706	6	20	5	3	1	1	3,105	7	22
Marquesas Islands	5,419	2	2,710	2	New				2	473		

Marshall Islands	25,044	192	130	173	3	168	4	26	3	42,922	246	539
Martinique	330,000	1,087	304	1,048	-1*	1,055	88	41	17	158,083	871	3,013
Mauritius	880,781	365	2,413	353	-3*	363	29	24	7	64,345	281	792
Montserrat	12,335	23	536	19	-27*	26	1	2	1	3,678	20	73
Nevis	11,230	50	225	44		44	4	5	1	9,854	23	122
New Britain	199,225	216	922	184	1	183	9	29	13	61,500	196	699
New Caledonia	135,000	387	349	370	11	332	46	10	6	45,518	257	887
Newfoundland	530,000	1,149	461	1,086		1,086	44	104	33	205,637	499	2,170
New Guinea	1,531,300	459	3,336	433	-5*	455	32	51	22	99,896	334	1,588
New Hebrides	99,325	54	1,839	48	14	42	6	2	3	8,647	64	125
New Ireland	68,217	57	1,197	48	2	47	1	4	4	8,911	21	270
New Zealand	3,140,100	7,089	443	6,606	-4*	6,903	282	376	116	987,987	3,144	14,624
Niue	3,969	18	221	14	17	12			1	1,163	15	114
North Solomons	106,928	53	2,018	44	33	33	9	4	3	10,535	49	100
Okinawa	1,066,706	874	1,220	859	-3*	889	93	166	21	287,058	1,005	1,903
Palau	12,674	31	409	30	3	29	1	12	1	19,008	112	109
Papua	739,200	723	1,022	681		680	46	55	34	129,304	620	2,305
Philippines	42,000,000	69,205	607	65,381	-11*	73,223	2,825	5,782	1,952	10,503,159	25,822	166,256
Ponape	19,262	94	205	77	-10*	86	1	11	1	19,425	69	223
Puerto Rico	3,030,000	16,761	181	16,402	1	16,161	878	518	227	2,280,838	10,722	41,991
Réunion	479,600	523	917	503	2	491	66	25	10	84,561	361	1,280
Rodrigues	27,049	14	1,932	13	18	11		1	1	1,225	5	43
St. Eustatius	1,335	3	445	3	New	96	3	2		681	2	
St. Helena	4,952	99	50	92	-4*	2	1	2		9,076	35	199
St. Kitts	35,135	154	228	133	2	130	5	13		25,446	103	354
St. Lucia	107,000	293	365	271	4	261	9	18		45,927	242	744
St. Martin	10,423	65	160	51	31	39	3	4		8,636	49	173
St. Pierre & Miquelon	6,200	4	1,550	3	50	2	1	2		2,793	7	13
St. Vincent	95,000	150	633	130	-9*	143	9	14		31,033	112	346
Saipan	14,335	23	623	20	-17*	24		8		13,477	39	63
São Tomé	69,032	2	34,516	2	New	2	1	1		99	3	14
Seychelles	62,000	50	1,240	46	2	45	2	3		9,632	53	124
Solomon Islands	196,708	580	339	524	-7*	564	26	72	30	130,889	527	2,507
Sri Lanka	14,000,000	552	25,362	535	1	528	49	84	17	156,422	593	1,662
Tahiti	131,963	442	299	404	11	365	32	28	12	68,050	298	1,106
Taiwan	16,678,145	1,067	15,631	987	-11*	1,108	31	132	48	222,870	677	2,873
Tobago	40,000	121	331	114		114	6	14	2	28,051	111	260
Tokelau Isls.	1,603	6	267	5	67	3	1	1		431	4	
Tonga	90,128	26	3,466	21	-5*	22	3	2		3,946	18	75
Trinidad	1,041,550	2,947	353	2,801		2,811	206	198	42	476,076	2,498	6,959
Truk	31,600	39	810	34	-6*	36	7	1		10,594	64	264
Turks & Calcos Isls.	6,000	17	353	16	16	16	2	1		4,765	39	69
Tuvalu Isls.	6,000	4	1,500	3		3				515	3	45
Virgin Is. (Brit.)	10,500	78	135	71	-7*	76	11	2		8,656	66	242
Virgin Is. (U.S.)	75,500	488	155	453		452	33	16		60,731	329	1,263
Western Samoa	151,275	142	1,065	131	8	121	12	16		31,704	145	566
Yap	7,869	39	202	37	9	34	5	8	1	16,380	92	200
198 Countries	1,996,881		1,909,297	-1.2*	1,932,823	114,786	115,845	37,645	301,958,665	1,185,055	4,773,100	

## OTHER COUNTRIES

† 18 Other Countries	226,657	207,897	1.1	205,714	9,673	3,444	3,990	19,465,640	97,191	334,418
GRAND TOTAL (216 countries)	2,223,538	2,117,194	-1.0*	2,138,537	124,459	119,289	41,635	321,424,305	1,282,246	5,107,513

MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLD WIDE: 10,080

\* Percentage of decrease

† Work banned and reports are incomplete

page 27 indicates. That the enemy has 'not prevailed against them' is shown by messages that filter through from time to time. For example, a 17-year-old sister writes from an Asian country that the missionaries had to leave more than two years ago. Using figurative language, she says:

'We are doing quite well spiritually. (Ps. 44:8) I am having much progress in the fishing trade, especially informal fishing. I have caught three big fish recently, also many small fish. We like very much Psalm 27:1, 13, 14 and Isaiah 51:12-14. We received the food you sent and cooked it in the [local] manner, so that all can digest well.'

From an African country, where the Witnesses may meet only in small groups of two or three families, and where hundreds have been in and out of prison, comes the report that the Memorial attendance was more than 8,500, two and a half times the number of Kingdom publishers. One young Witness, who is awaiting baptism, is conducting Bible studies with a total of 60 persons.

From a restricted country in the Americas come these interesting experiences:

"Since the Watch Tower Society's literature is banned, some have used other versions of the Bible in their preaching work. Calling at one door, a Witness started to read texts from a Catholic Bible that uses old Spanish. After listening to several scriptures the lady commented that these were hard to understand, and if he would wait a moment, she would bring him a much easier Bible. Much to his surprise she came out with the banned New World Translation of the Bible."

"In one place authorities raided a house with three apartments, searching the first and the last, but not the middle one. Here our brothers were gathered for study!"

Despite growing professions of freedom of religion, some Eastern European countries continue to oppress the Witnesses. From one land comes information that the brothers have to report to the police once

or even several times a day. Another place advises that the authorities take drastic steps in trying to stop the preaching work. When they tried to kill a brother by running a car into him on the street, he made use of his nimbleness as a former circus rider to jump clear and survive.

This interesting report comes from still another European country:

'In some regions where there are no Witnesses the angels seem to find other means of speeding up the work of ingathering. A sister from another country felt the urge to visit her relatives with the "good news," though this necessitated a trip of several thousand kilometers. One of her sisters-in-law showed intense interest and within three days they studied through the *Truth* book. Then, left on her own, this sister-in-law found another person eager to learn the truth. After studying twice through the same book, she too embraced the truth. The closest Witness was 1,600 kilometers [1,000 miles] away, but this brother made several return visits, and the next summer these persons were baptized. A year later, there were five baptized persons. Each year several more accepted the truth. After six years, the sister who first visited wrote her sister-in-law, inquiring guardedly, "How many trees do you have in your garden?" Back came the reply: "There are 38 trees in my garden; 28 have been washed and 10 will be washed next year." What joy this letter brought!'

Truly Jehovah's people have great joy in seeing the truth prevail. But the time for the "great tribulation" grows rapidly nearer. Zephaniah, who prophesied some time before Jeremiah, warned: "The great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." (1:14) In the meantime, the last ones of the "sheep" must be gathered. Will you share fully in this work? Enemies may fight ever more viciously against us. But we will continue to take courage in that precious promise given to the Jeremiah class: "They will not prevail against you, for 'I [Jehovah] am with you . . . to deliver you.'"—Jer. 1:19.

# INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- Saying that "no sex act ever killed anybody," Catholic priest Depaul Genska of Chicago believes that the Church should stop condemning prostitutes and homosexuals. He favors legalizing prostitution, stating that "prostitution is just like any other business," reports "The News" of San Antonio, Texas.

But wrong sex acts can kill, in several ways. In ancient times countless numbers of people were wiped out by venereal disease transmitted by immoral sex relations. Today, these diseases still kill many people each year, or result in crippling disabilities such as blindness and deformed children. Also, God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because the people "had committed fornication excessively and gone out after flesh for unnatural use," which included homosexuality and sodomy. (Gen. 19:1-25; Jude 7) And immoral persons will lose their lives when God judges this world because his Word states: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God's kingdom."—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

The priest made reference to the words of Jesus who said that "the harlots are going ahead of" the religious hypocrites into God's kingdom. (Matt. 21:31) But what the priest failed to mention was that neither harlots nor hypocrites will get into God's kingdom unless they change their course of action. True, Jesus and his followers took their message to all types of sinners. But these men of God clearly taught that to gain God's favor the wrongdoer would have to stop breaking God's laws.

That is why, after declaring that immoral persons would not get into God's kingdom, the Bible says: "Yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean." (1 Cor. 6:11) Such previously immoral persons became acceptable to God after they abandoned their immoral course, and then conformed their lives to God's will.

- The huge stockpile of atomic weapons of annihilation has caused many to be fearful

## Immorality Can Kill

of the future. So have the persistent economic, family and other social problems that seem to defy solution. A great cause of fear is concern for one's personal safety because of the huge increase in crime and violence.

The New York "Post" said regarding New York city: "Fear is the dominant mood in many neighborhoods, in small shops, in classrooms and even in offices and homes. It poisons the life and climate of the city." This newspaper further observed: "The dread empties the streets and parks at dusk, discourages business, frightens visitors and imprisons residents in their double and triple-locked apartments."

Nor is any neighborhood now considered "safe." Regarding the crime rise, the "Post" said: "The rise was sharpest in middle-class neighborhoods once considered safe refuges. Crime haunts the minds of multitudes."

How accurately God's Word foretold this very condition! In his great prophecy about our generation, Jesus said that it would be characterized by people becoming "faint out of fear" because of what they see coming upon the inhabited earth.—Luke 21:26.

● How can parents who want their children to do homework or other reading get their youngsters away from the television set? Dr. R. Stubblefield of New Canaan, Connecticut, answers: "The best way is for the parent to set the example. Children still model most of their behavior after their parents'—so you have to be prepared to turn the set off and pick up a book yourself."

He also remarked: "Remember that a child preoccupied with television is likely to be functioning at six to 18 months below his or her age level." Too much television can cause hyperactive behavior, loss of appetite, sleeping difficulties, refusal to play with other children, and can even interfere with the development of walking and talking.

So when God's Word counsels parents to train children, that training cannot be done apart from parental example. (Prov. 22:6) Often "actions speak louder than words."

# WHAT DID THE WISE MAN MEAN?

After a thorough investigation of the whole scope of human affairs, King Solomon committed his findings to writing. Regarding his efforts to help others to benefit from his research, he wrote: "Besides the fact that the congregator had become wise, he also taught the people knowledge continually, and he pondered and made a thorough search, that he might arrange many proverbs in order. The congregator sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth."—Eccl. 12:9, 10.

The Greek Septuagint Version of Ecclesiastes 12:9 and 10 reads: "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, because he taught mankind wisdom; that the ear might find what is comely from parables, the preacher made diligent search to find pleasing words and a writing of rectitude—words of truth." (Thomson; 1 Ki. 4:29-34; see also *The New English Bible* and Ginsburg's Commentary) In his writings he tried to reach the readers with delightful words, with interesting and truly worthwhile subjects. Since he was aided by



God's spirit, we today can accept Solomon's findings without question. Besides, they have endured the test of time.

What was Solomon's conclusion about all the literature existing in his day? He writes: "The words of the wise ones are like oxgoads, and just like nails driven in are those indulging in collections of sentences; they have been given from one shepherd. As regards anything besides these, my son, take a warning: To the making of many books there is no end, and much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh."—Eccl. 12:11, 12.

The most beneficial writings, therefore, are those that reflect the wisdom of the "one shepherd," Jehovah God. Excessive attention to other sources of instruction, however, can wear a person out needlessly, without his gaining much of real and lasting value. Especially when such writings are a product of worldly reasoning, and they conflict with godly wisdom, are they unwholesome and faith-destroying. On the other hand, the words of those having god-

## WHAT IS THE WISDOM THAT COUNTS?

ly wisdom will, like oxgoads, prick the listeners or readers to advance in harmony with the wisdom stated. Also, those who occupy themselves with collections of sentences, that is, genuinely worthwhile wise sayings, are like nails. This may be because their good words, reflecting the wisdom of Jehovah God, can serve to stabilize and support the hearers.

Summing up his entire investigation, Solomon says: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring

every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad." (Eccl. 12:13, 14) A wholesome fear or regard for the Creator will protect us against adopting a foolhardy course of life that could bring untold trouble upon ourselves. Also, our recognizing that nothing escapes the notice of the Creator can serve as an incentive in observing his commandments. The Most High will judge all things, including those hidden from the view of humans. Since his commands are designed to promote our lasting welfare, is it not right and truly wise to observe them?

## do you remember?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you will doubtless recall these points:

● What is the primary function of elders in the Christian congregation?

Their primary responsibility is to care for the spiritual interests of the congregation. This calls for their taking the lead in the proclamation of the "good news," and in teaching, helping, reproofing, correcting, exhorting. They must be actively interested in the spiritual welfare of each individual.—Pp. 598-600.\*

● In what sense is the way leading to life narrow?—Matt. 7:14.

It is narrow in that it restricts those who follow it from doing things that would result in injury to themselves and/or to others.—Pp. 621, 622.

● Why could Jesus say, "I have conquered the world"?—John 16:33.

Jesus triumphed over the world by not becoming like it. He did not permit himself to be absorbed by the world.—P. 638.

● What identifies a person as being in "want of heart"?—Prov. 6:32; 10:13, 21; 12:11.

A person in "want of heart" is one who is inexperienced or who ignores the serious consequences that could result from a wrong course. Besides lacking good motive, he is a person without heart appreciation.—Pp. 659, 660.

\* All references are to *The Watchtower* for 1977.

● How can we understand Psalm 16:7, where David speaks of his kidneys as correcting him?

In the Bible, the kidneys represent what a person really is, his underlying personality. Being situated very deep in the body, the kidneys could be spoken of as being in the innermost recesses of a person. In the case of David, the advice of Jehovah had become a part of his personality. That advice was embedded deep inside him, as it were in the kidneys. So, his kidneys, that is, the advice of Jehovah embedded inside David, could correct him during the wakeful hours of the night.—Pp. 664, 665.

● How might a person guilty of gross wrongdoing also become guilty of sin against the congregation, making it necessary for him to seek the congregation's forgiveness?—Compare 2 Corinthians 2:7.

The gross wrongdoing of one of its members may, in some cases, give a congregation a bad name in the eyes of others. Through its representative elders, the congregation cannot forgive the wrongdoer for serious sin itself, as this is done by Jehovah God. But the elders, upon determining whether the wrongdoer is truly repentant, can forgive him for whatever reproach, trouble and sorrow his sin may have brought upon the congregation.—P. 693.

# QUESTIONS from READERS

- Is it improper to make tape recordings of public prayers?

- Some Christians personally choose not to do so. But the Bible does not speak against making a record, written or otherwise, of the words of a prayer.—2 Chron. 33:18.

A person may make a tape recording of a Christian meeting so he can review it later or share it with others who could not attend. In making such recordings, some Christians begin recording after the opening prayer and stop recording before the concluding prayer.

They may reason that, basically, prayer is not a means of formally instructing others. Prayer, rather, is considered a personal expression to God, though others present may listen and concur by saying "Amen." Furthermore, a person making a recording of the meeting

knows that if the prayer were on the tape he would not later listen to it and say "Amen," as if the recording were a prayer wheel that 'sent up' a prayer each time it was played.

It is of interest, though, that many prayers are written down in the Bible. (Gen. 24:10-14; Matt. 26:36-39; John 11:41, 42; 17:1-26; Acts 4:23-30) In reading these prayers we do not look on them as requiring our "Amen."—Rom. 8:26, 27.

Of course, these prayers are part of the Bible; they are there because God wanted them to be included. (2 Tim. 3:16) And some persons may respond differently to a tape-recorded prayer from the way they do to a prayer in the Bible. Consequently, as long as no request has been made not to make a recording, the individual Christian may determine for himself whether he will include the prayers if he records a Christian meeting. There is nothing Scripturally wrong with this.

#### **"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS**

February 5: Fortified to Speak Jehovah's Words. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 44, 72.

February 12: Enduring in Faithfulness. Page  
17. Songs to Be Used: 76, 88.