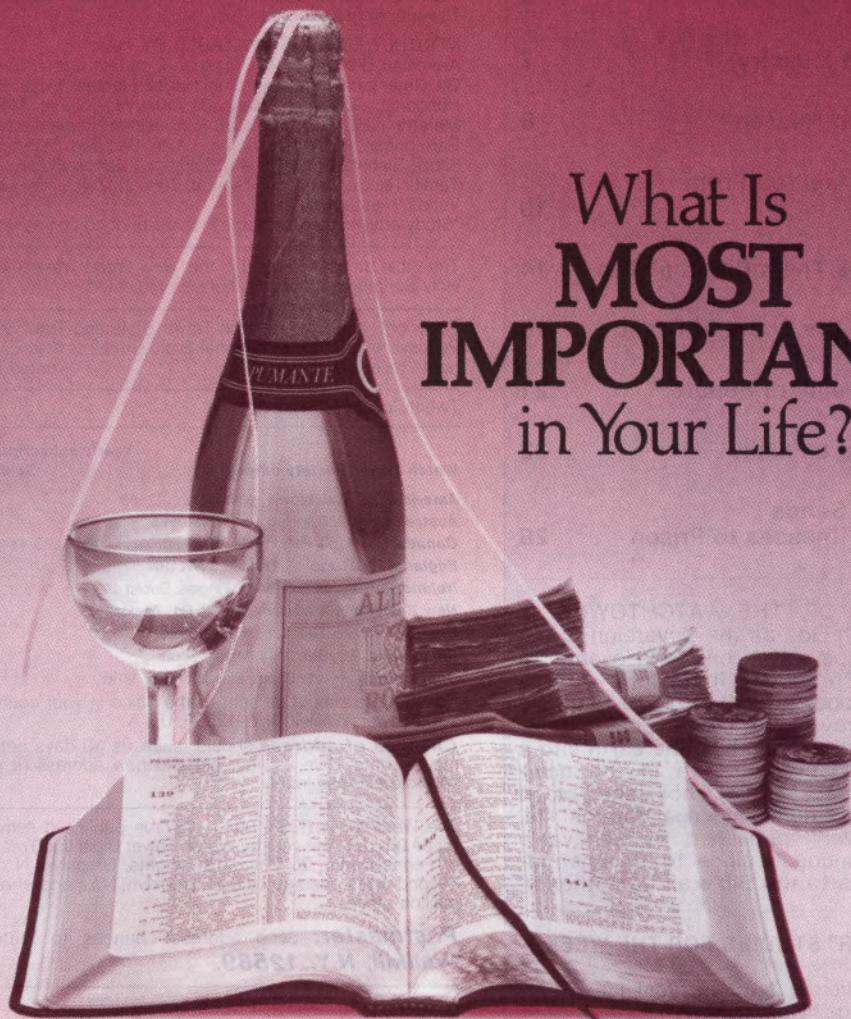


April 1, 1985

# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

What Is  
**MOST**  
**IMPORTANT**  
in Your Life?



Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

# The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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

### "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 5: How Different Are You From the World?  
Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 2, 160.

May 12: Keep Avoiding the Snare of Greed. Page 16.  
Songs to Be Used: 217, 62.

Average Printing Each Issue: 11,150,000

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\*Study articles also available in large-print edition at same cost.

The Bible translation used is the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

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Printed in U.S.A.

Twenty cents (U.S.) a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates Semimonthly
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America, U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$4.00
Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$6.00
Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$5.20
England, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£5.00
Ireland, 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11	£5.00
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	\$7.00
Nigeria, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	N3.50
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	P50.00
South Africa, Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406	R5.60

Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

**Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly for \$4.00 (U.S.) per year by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

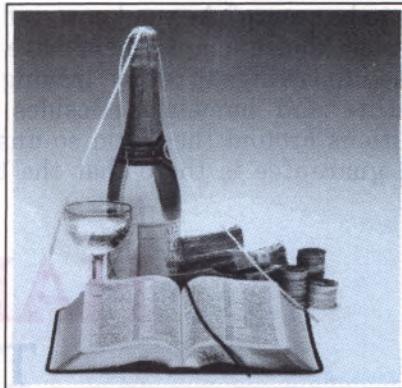
**Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Published by  
**Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society  
of Pennsylvania**

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

Frederick W. Franz, President

# What Is MOST IMPORTANT in Your Life?



**H**E WAS reputed to be the richest man in the world. His personal fortune ran into billions of dollars. He was admired by many as having reached the pinnacle of success. Yet two years before he died, J. Paul Getty said: "Money doesn't necessarily have any connection with happiness. Maybe with unhappiness."

In the pursuit of what many consider important in life, the famous oil magnate certainly had succeeded to an outstanding degree. But did he sound like a man who had found happiness through what he had worked so hard to acquire? Or did he sound more like one who had come to realize finally that what he had worked so hard for was not that important after all?

## Ideal and Reality

What do you consider most important in your life? Some people may say that *freedom* is what they treasure the most. Others may say that *success* means the most in their lives. Still others put *personal fulfillment* ahead of everything else.

Though they do not want to admit it, many people's life pattern and actions betray that *money* and *pleasure* are really the most important things in their lives. They are so determined to get rich or are so bent on 'having a good time,' that they

do not mind neglecting their family, their health, and their spiritual well-being in doing so. And interestingly, the Bible foretold that in "the last days" people would become "lovers of themselves, lovers of money" and "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God."—2 Timothy 3: 1, 2, 4.

## Something More Important

Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, posed a thought-provoking question. "Does a person gain anything if he wins the whole world but loses his life?" he asked. (Mark 8:36, Today's English Version) Think about that. What would a person be able to do without life? Nothing! —Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

You may still be young and so feel that you have plenty of time to do all the things you want to do. But do you really? Wars, crime, diseases, and accidents have struck down countless able-bodied men and women—suddenly and unexpectedly. What happened to all their plans and goals?

You may have a family or may be along in years. So you may feel that you must put all your time and effort into building a secure future for yourself and your loved ones before you can think about anything else. But what would you con-

sider to be secure? As you know, inflation, recession, and unemployment have eaten up the life savings of many, leaving them destitute and homeless. Besides, with conditions around the world so unstable, what guarantee is there that the things

you worked hard for will not be eliminated by some unexpected turn of events?

Doubtless you see, therefore, the importance of examining your personal goals. So, what do you really consider most important in your life?

# HAPPINESS Through a PRECIOUS RELATIONSHIP

**A**LIVE dog is better off than a dead lion." (Ecclesiastes 9:4) In those few words, King Solomon of old stated the fundamental truth that life is more important than any material possessions or any ambitious goals we may hope to achieve. Without life, we cannot benefit from any of these things. Yes, life is essential in our pursuit of happiness.

## Something "Better Than Life"

As precious as life is, however, there is something that is even better. 'Is that possible?' you might wonder. 'What could be more precious than life itself?'

King David of ancient Israel supplied us with the answer. Addressing the Creator, Jehovah God, he said with deep appreciation: "Because your loving-kindness is better than life, my own lips will commend you." (Psalm 63:3) David's heartfelt words show that to be the recipient of God's loving-kindness, which is based on having a fine relationship with him, is even more precious than life itself. Why is this so?

## What Makes Life Possible

Suppose you were given a gift, something that you really liked. Of course you

would be very happy to receive the gift and perhaps get a great deal of enjoyment from using it. But you would be ungrateful, indeed, if your thoughts did not go beyond the gift to the giver. Was it not the personal relationship between you and the giver that prompted the gift? If that relationship did not exist, there would have been no gift and no enjoyment of it.

The same is true with life. Precious as it is, we must bear in mind where our life came from and how it has been sustained. Certainly we did not create it ourselves, nor can we sustain it independent of all the marvelous provisions Jehovah has made on earth. (Psalm 100:3; Acts 14:17) The very fact that we have life, and undoubtedly we are enjoying it in some measure, is an expression of loving-kindness on the part of the Grand Creator, Jehovah God. Can we not see why King David wholeheartedly felt that God's "loving-kindness is better than life"?

There is another reason why having an approved relationship with the Creator is more important than having life itself—our future depends on it. Let us see how this is so.

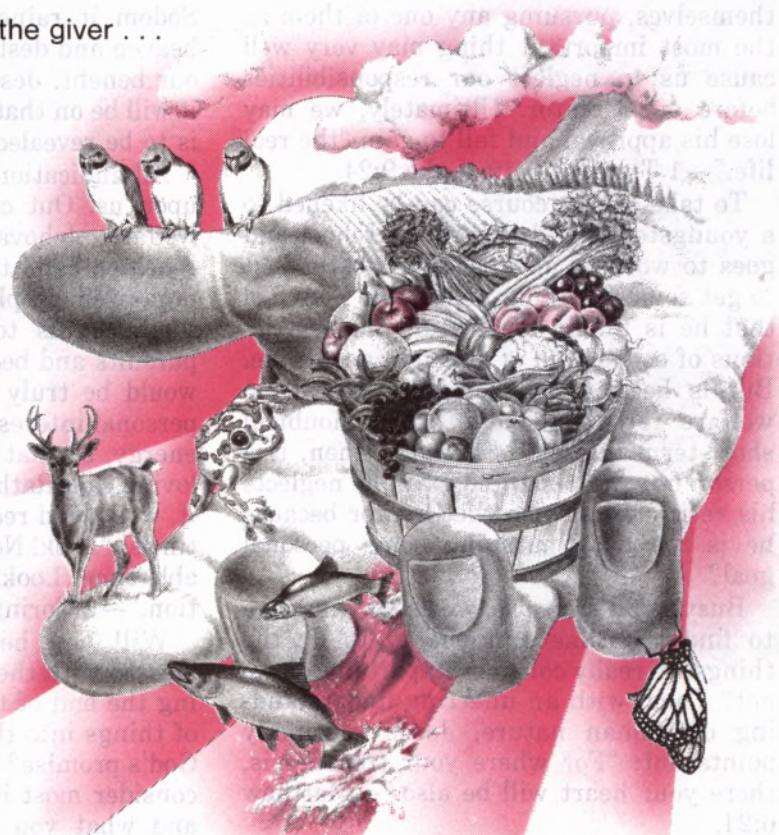


If you are grateful to the giver . . .

Do you not agree that life is transitory and full of uncertainties? A person may work very hard for many years in order to achieve some materialistic goal he considers worth while. Yet, death soon robs him of everything he has attained. It is just as wise King Solomon said: "What does a man come to have for all his hard work and for the striving of his heart with which he is working hard under the sun? For all his days his occupation means pains and vexation, also during the night his heart just does not lie down. This too is mere vanity."—Ecclesiastes 2:22, 23; compare 2:3-11.

In spite of this, it is the purpose of our loving Creator that all those who love and obey him will be liberated from the frustration and futility that is our lot today. Jehovah assures us with this wonderful promise: "They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full."—Isaiah 65:22.

Is this expression of God's loving-kindness not better than our present limited and uncertain life? To be the recipient of his loving-kindness, yes, to live in that



. . . what about the greatest giver, Jehovah God?

New Order and to enjoy life filled with purpose and meaning would certainly be a most worthwhile goal. To realize that happy prospect, one must gain Jehovah's approval now and maintain a close relationship with him and his people.

### Short-Term Interest Versus Long-Term Benefit

In view of the foregoing points, it certainly would be shortsighted and unwise for us to occupy ourselves solely with the pursuit of self-interest, be it fame, fortune, career, academic achievement, personal fulfillment, or anything else considered worth while in this system of things. While these goals may not be wrong in themselves, pursuing any one of them as the most important thing may very well cause us to neglect our responsibilities before our Creator. Ultimately, we may lose his approval and fail to gain "the real life."—1 Timothy 6:19; Luke 9:24.

To take such a course can be likened to a youngster who drops out of school and goes to work as an unskilled laborer just to get some spending money. He may feel that he is finally freed from the restrictions of school and is having a good time. But is he not sacrificing his long-term welfare for the sake of some doubtful short-term interest? Similarly, then, is a person not short-sighted when he neglects his relationship with the Creator because he is too busy pursuing some personal goal?

Busy as all of us are, we usually manage to find the time and energy to do the things we really consider important, do we not? Thus, with an unerring understanding of human nature, Jesus succinctly points out: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."—Matthew 6:21.

So on what sort of "treasure" have you set your heart? The glitter and tinsel of

the world may seem very attractive. But ask yourself: How lasting are the supposed benefits gained from such things? Do they bring true happiness or just temporary pleasures, like a drug, leaving an undesirable or even painful aftermath?

### Make a Wise Choice

There is a valuable lesson to be learned from the people of Lot's day. "They were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building," said Jesus. In other words, they were busy pursuing what they considered important, without paying any attention to God's will. The result? "On the day that Lot came out of Sodom it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all." Then, for our benefit, Jesus added: "The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed."—Luke 17:28-30.

All indications are that "that day" is upon us. Out of concern for our eternal welfare, Jehovah God has been issuing repeated calls through his Word and his organized people in all the nations. The invitation is to turn back from selfish pursuits and become reconciled to him. It would be truly unwise for us to let our personal interests occupy *all* our time and energy, so that we fail to respond to this loving call. Rather, as the apostle Paul put it, we should recognize the urgency of the times: "Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation."—2 Corinthians 5:20; 6:2.

Will you be among those who are blessed with the happy prospect of surviving the end of the present wicked system of things into the righteous New Order of God's promise? That depends on what you consider most important in your life now and what you do about gaining an approved relationship with God. The choice is yours!

# Jesus' Life and Ministry

Beginning with this magazine issue, a new feature on the above theme will appear in *The Watchtower*.

FOR the past five years, since March of 1980, *The Watchtower* has once a month carried the two-page, illustrated feature "God's Word Is Alive." By means of pictures combined with an easy-to-read text, many Bible doctrines and historical accounts were discussed in a vivid, easy-to-understand manner. Now a new feature, highlighting the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, will replace "God's Word Is Alive."

On the following two pages you will see the first segment of this new feature. For the next several months, you can look forward to receiving a new installment in each issue of *The Watchtower*. This new series of articles will have the same generously illustrated, two-page format of "God's Word Is Alive."

It is appropriate that Jesus Christ be featured in this way in *The Watchtower*, for Jesus has had a greater influence on the history of mankind than any other human. Yet, much more importantly, the lives of millions of people of all races and nationalities have been beneficially changed when they have come to appreciate his life and teachings.

You probably already know much about Jesus and his ministry. But do you have fixed in mind the time and place of events so as to relate them to one another and so as to remember them better? For example, when did Jesus choose his 12 apostles

—early in his ministry or considerably later? Was it before or after the Samaritan woman identified him as the Christ? And where was he when he chose the 12, or miraculously fed the 5,000, or gave the Sermon on the Mount? Since this new feature will chronologically tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry and provide both visual settings and descriptive commentary, it will help you fix more indelibly in your mind these momentous events.

This feature will be helpful to long-time Bible readers as well as to newer Bible students, and to parents when they study with their children. Questions are provided for this purpose. What a fine way to acquaint them with the founder of Christianity and his teachings! You may foresee ways you can use these articles in ministering to your family and others. Remember, practically everyone likes stories, and many enjoy them in serial form where they receive segments at regular intervals.

So, right from its first installment, encourage others to keep up with this continuing story. You will observe that Bible quotations are paraphrased for easier understanding, with the Bible source being provided at the end of each story. Encourage the reading of these Bible accounts. Yes, put this new feature in *The Watchtower* to good use in your disciple-making work!

# Messages From Heaven

**T**HE entire Bible is, in effect, a message from heaven, having been provided by our heavenly Father for our instruction. However, two special messages were delivered nearly 2,000 years ago by an angel who "stands near before God." His name is Gabriel. Let us examine the circumstances of these two important visits to earth.

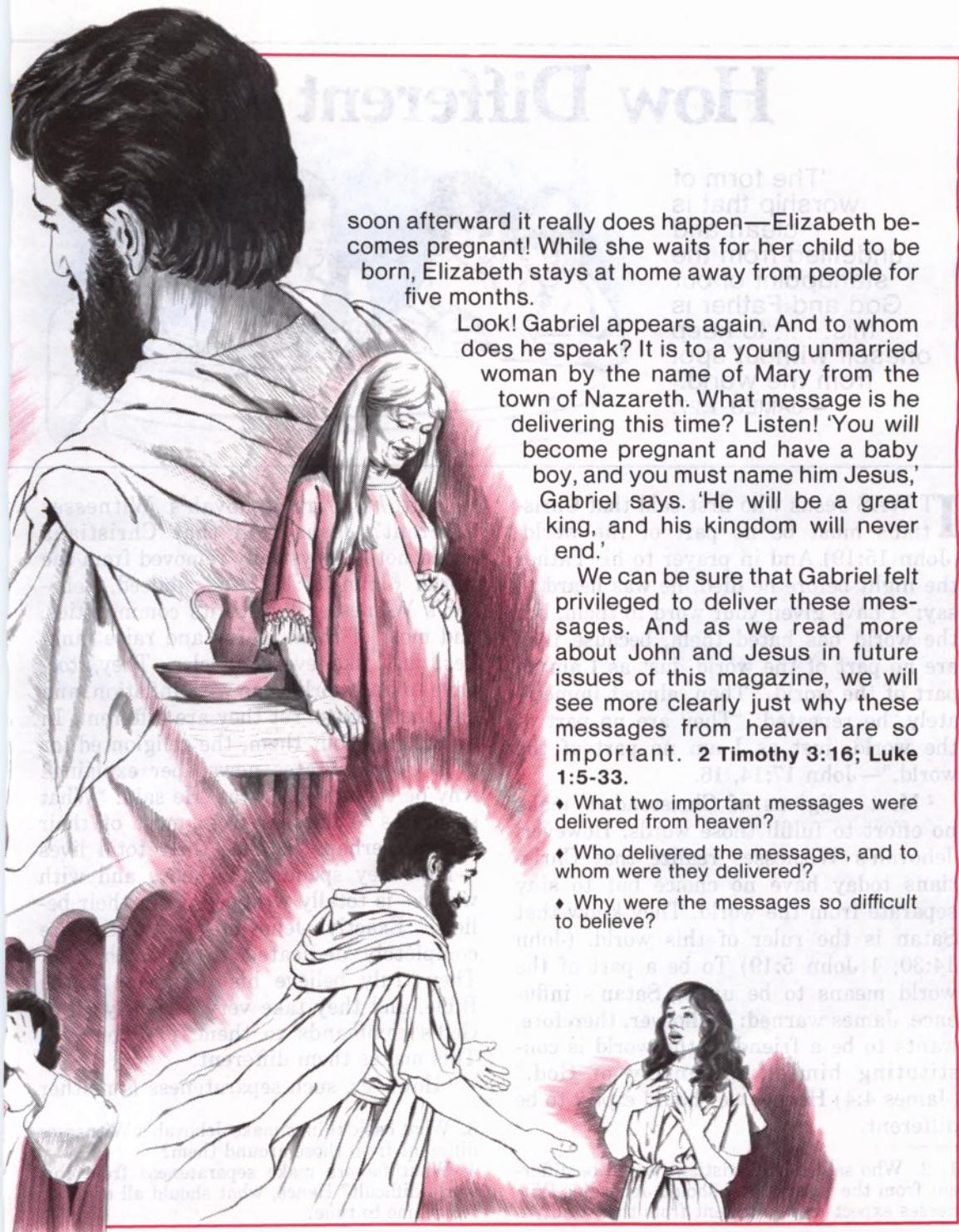
The year is 3 B.C.E. In the Judean hills, probably not too far from Jerusalem, lives a priest of Jehovah by the name of Zechariah. He has grown old, and so has his wife Elizabeth. And they have no children. Zechariah is taking his turn at priestly service in God's temple in Jerusalem. Suddenly Gabriel appears at the right side of the incense altar.

Zechariah is very much afraid. But Gabriel quiets his fears and says: 'God has heard your prayers. Elizabeth will have a son, and you must name him John. He will get ready for Jehovah a prepared people.' But Zechariah cannot believe it. It seems so impossible that, at their age, he and Elizabeth could have a child. So Gabriel says, 'Because you have not believed me, you will not be able to speak until these things happen.'

Well, in the meantime, the people outside are wondering why Zechariah is taking so long in the temple. When he finally comes out, he cannot speak but can only make signs with his hands, and they realize he has seen something supernatural.

After Zechariah finishes his period of temple service, he returns home. And





soon afterward it really does happen—Elizabeth becomes pregnant! While she waits for her child to be born, Elizabeth stays at home away from people for five months.

Look! Gabriel appears again. And to whom does he speak? It is to a young unmarried woman by the name of Mary from the town of Nazareth. What message is he delivering this time? Listen! 'You will become pregnant and have a baby boy, and you must name him Jesus,' Gabriel says. 'He will be a great king, and his kingdom will never end.'

We can be sure that Gabriel felt privileged to deliver these messages. And as we read more about John and Jesus in future issues of this magazine, we will see more clearly just why these messages from heaven are so important. **2 Timothy 3:16; Luke 1:5-33.**

- ♦ What two important messages were delivered from heaven?
- ♦ Who delivered the messages, and to whom were they delivered?
- ♦ Why were the messages so difficult to believe?

# How Different Are You

"The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: . . . to keep oneself without spot from the world."

—JAMES 1:27.



**I**T WAS Jesus who first said that Christians must be no part of the world. (John 15:19) And in prayer to his Father the night before he died, he was heard to say: "I have given your word to them, but the world has hated them, because they are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." Then, almost immediately, he repeated: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world."—John 17:14, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Most religions of Christendom make no effort to fulfill those words. However, Jehovah's Witnesses realize that Christians today have no choice but to stay separate from the world. They know that Satan is the ruler of this world. (John 14:30; 1 John 5:19) To be a part of the world means to be under Satan's influence. James warned: "Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4) Hence, we should expect to be different.

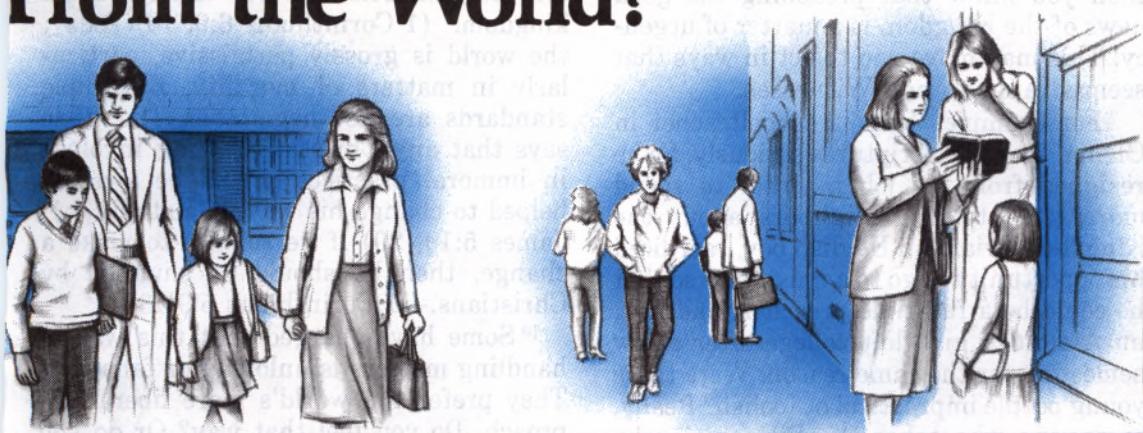
1, 2. Who said that Christians would be different from the world? Why should Jehovah's Witnesses expect to be different from the world?

<sup>3</sup> But how are Jehovah's Witnesses different? Jesus said that Christians would not be physically removed from the world. (John 17:15) And, indeed, Jehovah's Witnesses live in its communities, and most of them marry and raise families, just like everyone else. They, too, have to find work, cope with inflation, and pay their taxes. Yet they are different. In an article about them, the religion editor of a United States newspaper explained why he thought this was. He said: "What separates Witnesses from most of their critics, perhaps, is that their total lives —how they spend their hours and with whom—is totally wrapped up in their beliefs." Exactly! Jehovah's Witnesses are completely dedicated to Jehovah God. They truly believe his promises in the Bible, and they take very seriously all of God's commands to them. (1 John 5:3) This makes them different.

<sup>4</sup> However, such separateness is neither

3. What basic things make Jehovah's Witnesses different from those around them?
4. What factors make separateness from this world difficult? Hence, what should all of us do from time to time?

# From the World?



popular nor easy. In our day-to-day lives, the pressure toward conformity is strong. Most of us have an instinctive desire to be not too different from everyone else. When issues arise involving neutrality, it takes strong conviction to be different and obey Jehovah's commands. (Acts 5:29; 15:28, 29) Hence, it is wise for each individual to examine himself from time to time to see how he stands in the matter of being separate from the world.—2 Corinthians 13:5.

## Zealous in Field Service

For example, Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for their zeal in preaching. This truly makes them different. Some admire them for it, while others are annoyed by it. Missionaries from one evangelical organization report that wherever they go in the world they meet up with local people who are active, zealous witnesses for Jehovah! "Talk for very long to almost any . . . missionary anywhere in

the world about local situations, and you'll hear Jehovah's Witnesses mentioned," said one of their publications. Why are the Witnesses so zealous in this work? The reason is that preaching the good news is God's will and an identifying mark of a true Christian. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Ephesians 6:14, 15; Revelation 22:17) Today, this preaching by Jehovah's Witnesses is a public demonstration of their loyalty to God's Kingdom and their desire to help others to worship Jehovah.—Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 24:14.

How important is the preaching work to you? In the world, most feel that making a living, or even recreation, is more important than religious practices. (2 Timothy 3:4; 1 John 2:16) However, Paul wrote to Timothy: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Timothy 4:16) Do you have this view? Do you also remember the warning of the apostle Peter that you

5. (a) What do some non-Witnesses say about Jehovah's Witnesses' zeal in the preaching work? (b) What are some Bible principles that move the Witnesses to be zealous in this work?

6. What are some questions we should ask ourselves to examine our feelings toward the work of preaching the good news of the Kingdom?

should 'keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah'? (2 Peter 3:12) If so, then you know that preaching the good news of the Kingdom is a matter of urgency. This may move you to act in ways that seem strange to non-Witnesses.

<sup>7</sup> For example, John, a schoolteacher in Ghana, took the Scriptures seriously. So he resigned from his job in order to spend more time telling neighbors about the Kingdom. Brian, an English boy, sacrificed his opportunity to go to a university so that he could be a full-time preacher; and Eve, an American girl, left college after a few semesters for the same reason. Were these young people impractical or foolish? Really, to anyone who takes the Bible seriously, what they did was reasonable and logical. Far from endangering their future, they were helping to *ensure* it. As Paul said, the work they chose means salvation, 'both to them and to those who listen to them.'

—1 Timothy 4:16.

### A Different Kind of Conduct

<sup>8</sup> Here is another principle that makes Christians different from the world: "You loved righteousness, and you hated lawlessness." (Hebrews 1:9) In the context, these words are addressed to Jesus Christ, but Jehovah's Witnesses recognize that they provide a standard for Christians too. (1 Peter 2:21) We have to love what God says is right and hate what God says is lawless.

<sup>9</sup> The apostle Paul identified some kinds of lawlessness in these words: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor

7. What step have many taken with regard to the preaching work? Why?

8. What Biblical principle in Hebrews 1:9 also helps to make Jehovah's Witnesses different?

9. (a) What are some forms of lawlessness? (b) How does a Christian congregation's attitude toward lawlessness differ from that of the world?

men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Today, the world is grossly permissive, particularly in matters of morality. But Bible standards are not negotiable. The Bible says that any Christian getting involved in immoral practices should be lovingly helped to change his way. (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19, 20) If he refuses to make a change, then he should be shunned by Christians.—1 Corinthians 5:9-13.

<sup>10</sup> Some have charged that this way of handling matters is unloving or fanatical. They prefer the world's more liberal approach. Do you feel that way? Or do you realize that such actions show not so much a lack of love for the sinner as a hatred of his lawless acts. And do you understand that the Christian congregation *must* act in this way if it is to remain Christian? James said: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: . . . to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27, *New International Version*) How could a group claim to have the true religion if it allowed itself to be polluted by serious sin?

<sup>11</sup> A Christian's 'hatred of what is bad' goes further. The Bible says: "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 foolish talking nor obscene jesting." (Ephesians 5:3, 4) So *real* Christians are known among their associates for not using filthy language, telling dirty jokes, or getting prurient enjoyment out of discussing unclean things. Clean minds and clean speech are increasingly rare today.

10. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses *have to* protect themselves from lawless acts?

11. How do Christian standards affect a Christian's speech?



Jehovah's Witnesses have learned to be cautious about the entertainment offered by the world

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses even differ when it comes to entertainment. Since "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," they have learned to be cautious about entertainment offered by the world. (1 John 5:19) They avoid completely the many party games, magazines, videos, films, music, and television shows that have demonic or pornographic content, or that highlight sick, sadistic violence. They are wary, too, of so-called family entertainment that promotes promiscuous or permissive ideas that Christians cannot approve. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Anyone who takes the Bible seriously would not look for entertainment in things that should not even be mentioned among Christians.

12. How are Jehovah's Witnesses different from the world when it comes to entertainment?

<sup>13</sup> Is this your opinion? Or do you feel that such views make Jehovah's Witnesses narrow-minded or restrictive? If so, consider: When a food product is discovered to be polluted and is immediately removed from the store shelves, consumers do not complain that their freedom is restricted because they can no longer purchase it. Rather, they are grateful to be protected from food poisoning. Jehovah's Witnesses, similarly, do not complain that their freedom is somehow restricted when the pollution of much worldly entertainment is pointed out to them. Rather, they are relieved to be protected from the danger such pollution poses.

### They Love One Another

<sup>14</sup> Here is another measure of a Christian's separateness from the world. The night before he died, Jesus said to his followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Why would love be a sign to outsiders? Because, as a whole, the situation in the world today is just as Paul said it would be: "Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . having no natural affection." (2 Timothy 3:2, 3) In such an environment, a worldwide community of people who have love among themselves would be a phenomenon. Such a brotherhood exists among Jehovah's Witnesses.—1 Peter 2:17.

<sup>15</sup> This love is very noticeable and often draws comments from outsiders when the Witnesses get together at their conventions. When there are large-scale disasters, the Witnesses are quickly on the

13. Is it narrow-minded to restrict ourselves so much in the matter of entertainment? Explain.  
14. What quality did Jesus say would make the Christian community stand out from the world around it?

15. What are some situations in which Jehovah's Witnesses have the opportunity to show love for one another?

scene, bringing aid to their brothers. And within the congregation, genuine Christians show love and consideration for one another. Even when there are personality problems, they try hard to 'put up with one another and forgive one another freely.'—Colossians 3:12-14.

### They Do Not Stumble One Another

<sup>16</sup> Such love makes the Witnesses different in another way. Today, many are concerned with and jealously protect their

16. (a) What situation did Paul discuss that gave first-century Christians a fine opportunity to show the depth of their love for one another? (b) What principle did he explain that has many modern applications?

rights. The apostle Paul, however, set a different standard: "Let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:19) In the context, Paul was speaking about a problem that existed then regarding food. Christians, unlike the Jews under the Mosaic Law, were free to eat whatever they wanted as long as they were not gluttons. Some, though, who from childhood had viewed certain foods as repugnant, were disturbed when they saw fellow Christians eat them. Did those other Christians insist on their right to eat anything they wanted anyway? Not if they followed Paul's counsel.

## Honesty Makes Them Different Too

HIS heart sank when he saw the parking ticket under the automobile's windshield wiper. The fine was \$25 (U.S.), and he was pained because it was unjust. There were no signs prohibiting parking. Worse yet was the fact that he was from a distant place and could not afford to return to the city to appeal his case. So he took photographs of the area to prove that there were no warning regulations posted anywhere. And being one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he asked a fellow Witness to appear in traffic court for him.

Here is his friend's report of what took place in court that morning:

"When you are called before the judge, you must give your name and address. Then they administer the oath of truthfulness. Before they gave me the oath, the court clerk, an older gentleman, asked me to repeat my street address. When I said, '124 Columbia Heights,' he evidently recognized it as the address of the world headquarters of the Watch Tower Society and Jehovah's Witnesses. Turning to the judge, he said: 'You have nothing to worry about here, Judge. These are good people. They do not lie! They never lie! They cannot lie! Their religion does not allow it, and they hold strictly to it. I have never known any of their men or even their women to tell a lie. They are as honest as you can get. I have seen plenty of times when they could have escaped a parking ticket just by telling a little fib, but they would not do it.'

"Then, turning to me, he declared, 'I know you would not tell a lie because you know who would roll over in his grave if you did?' 'Who is that?' I asked. 'The Judge, Judge Rutherford [onetime president of the Watch Tower Society],' he answered. 'I used to deliver mail to him 47 years ago. I knew Jehovah's Witnesses before they grew big. The Judge was some man!'

"After all of this, the court judge did not even bother to swear me in with the oath. He asked me to present my case, which I did. His verdict? 'Not guilty.'"

Jehovah's Witnesses 'wish to conduct themselves honestly in all things.' (Hebrews 13:18) And their adherence to honesty is one of the many ways that they differ from the world.

He said: "It is well not to eat flesh or to drink wine or do anything over which your brother stumbles." (Romans 14:21) What loving counsel! Can you see how it could guide us in some other areas?

<sup>17</sup> For example, the Bible permits Christians to drink alcoholic beverages in moderation. (1 Timothy 3:8; 5:23) But some are sensitive about strong drink. Others are not used to it or cannot handle it. If you were at a gathering with someone like that, would you try to pressure or shame him to join you in drinking alcohol? Or would you yourself not rather abstain so as not to cause him problems?

<sup>18</sup> Consider another example: the matter of clothing. The Bible does not describe what kind of clothing a Christian should wear, although it does say that it should be modest and neat. (1 Timothy 2:9) Today, most countries have certain dress codes that are considered acceptable in formal society. Usually, this code allows for reasonable variety, but any wide deviation from it seems egocentric, sensuous, or eccentric. Christians, both men and women, have to bear this in mind. Are you willing to limit your freedom in the matter of clothing for the sake of the good news and so as not to stumble your brothers?

<sup>19</sup> Yes, Jesus was right when he said that Christians would be "no part of the world." (John 17:16) In preaching the good news, in shunning what is bad, and in love and consideration for one another, Jehovah's Witnesses really are different. This separateness brings blessings to the

17, 18. (a) How can the principle at Romans 14:21 be applied in the matter of strong drink? (b) How can it be applied in the matter of clothing? (c) What other areas can you think of in which applying this same principle will help us to show love for one another?

19-21. (a) Why do Jehovah's Witnesses work to maintain their separateness from the world? (b) In what other field do we have to strive to be separate from the world?

Witnesses, not least because it protects them from many of the problems that plague the world today.

<sup>20</sup> Do you treasure and cultivate this separateness in your own life? Remember, if Jehovah's Witnesses were any less separate, they would be more similar to the world, of which Satan the Devil is the god. (2 Corinthians 4:4) They would lose their clear identification as a 'holy people,' and would fail to keep themselves "uncontaminated by the world." Thus, they would no longer have "pure, unspoilt religion, in the eyes of God." (James 1:27, *The Jerusalem Bible*; 1 Peter 1:14-16) If you find yourself wishing you could be more like the world, remember the warning at James 4:4.

<sup>21</sup> The apostle Paul prophesied that another trait would dominate in the world today. He said that men would be "lovers of money." (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) True to his words, pursuit of money is now such a powerful force that for many it is the strongest influence on their lives. Are Christians different in this too? Is it possible to survive in today's world without being a 'lover of money'? We will discuss this in the succeeding article.

### Can You Recall?

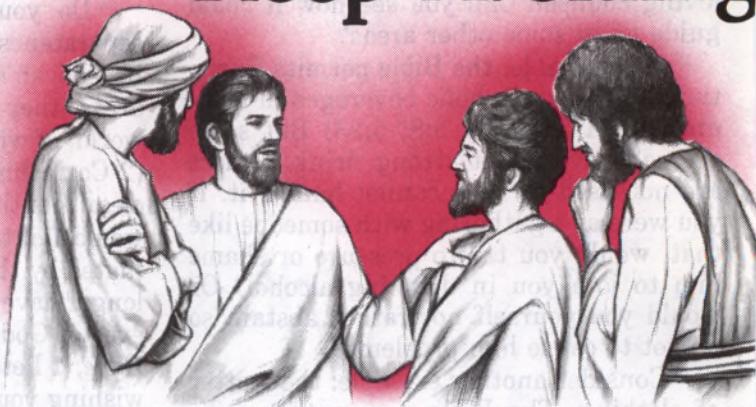
- Why should a Christian expect to be different from the world?
- What scriptures help Jehovah's Witnesses to have a right view of the preaching work?
- In what different ways does the application of Hebrews 1:9 make Jehovah's Witnesses different from the world?
- What effect does applying the principle explained in Romans 14:21 have on their conduct?

# Keep Avoiding

"Be on your guard against greed of every kind, for even when a man has more than enough, his wealth does not give him life."

—LUKE 12:15,

*The New English Bible.*



**W**E ARE living in a world that worships material prosperity. Commercial interests constantly appeal to people's greed to enrich themselves. Success is usually measured by the size of a paycheck. Hence, the Bible's many warnings against greed and the related vice of covetousness are timely. (Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:10) According to the dictionary, greed and covetousness share the element of "having or showing a strong desire for possessions and especially material possessions." Greed can be as serious as fornication or idolatry, for Paul warned: "Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a *greedy person* or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man."—1 Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:3, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus warned his followers: "Guard against every sort of covetousness." (Luke 12:15) And Jehovah himself included a commandment against this vice among the Ten Commandments: "You must not

1. Why is Paul's warning against greed timely?
2. What warnings did Jesus and Jehovah give us against covetousness?

desire your fellowman's house. You must not desire your fellowman's wife, nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his ass nor anything that belongs to your fellowman."—Exodus 20:17; Romans 13:9.

## No One Can Relax

<sup>3</sup> The fact is, no one can lower his guard against greed and covetousness. When Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, it was because of greed: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was something to be longed for to the eyes, yes, the tree was desirable to look upon." (Genesis 3:6) On one occasion in the wilderness, the Israelites showed disgusting greediness. When, in response to their complaints about having only manna to eat, Jehovah provided an abundant supply of quail, they acted like gluttons and were severely punished.—Numbers 11:4-6, 31-33.

<sup>4</sup> Later, at the battle of Jericho, it was

3. How did greed overtake Eve and later the Israelites?
4. What other historical examples show the dangers of greed?

# the Snare of Greed



greed that prompted Achan to steal some silver and gold and an expensive garment from the spoils of the city. (Joshua 7:20, 21) Greed caused Gehazi, Elisha's attendant, to try to gain financial advantage out of the miraculous cure of Naaman's leprosy. (2 Kings 5:20-27) King Ahab was another greedy man. He allowed Jezebel, his pagan wife, to plot the death of Naboth, his neighbor, so that he could get his hands on Naboth's vineyard. (1 Kings 21:1-19) Finally, Judas Iscariot, a member of Jesus' intimate circle, greedily used his position to steal from the common fund. And greed led him to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.—Matthew 26:14-16; John 12:6.

<sup>5</sup> All these greedy ones were punished. But did you notice the different types of people that fell into the snare of greed? Eve was a perfect woman living in Paradise. Achan and the Israelites had personally witnessed Jehovah's miracles. Ahab was a king, perhaps the richest man in the land. Gehazi and Judas were blessed with

5. What do we learn from the experiences of different types of people who fell into the trap of greed?

rich spiritual association and high privileges of service. Yet they all became greedy. Thus anyone—however rich, however high his privilege of service, or whatever his experience—can fall into this trap. No wonder Jesus warned: "Guard against every sort of covetousness"!—Luke 12:15.

<sup>6</sup> But how can we do that? Only by self-control and constant self-scrutiny. Greed starts in the heart. To avoid the snare of greed, we have to examine our hearts constantly to see if some manifestation of greed is taking root there. The Bible helps us to do that. How? For one thing, it records what Jesus and his disciples said about greed. When we examine those comments, they suggest some searching questions that we should ask ourselves to see where we stand in the matter of greed.

## Examining Our Motives

<sup>7</sup> Jesus' warning against covetousness

6. What is needed if we are to avoid the trap of greed?
7. How does Jesus' answer to the man involved in an inheritance dispute help us to examine ourselves?

was prompted by a request from one of his listeners: "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus answered: "Man, who appointed me judge or apportioner over you persons?" (Luke 12: 13, 14) Then he went on to warn against covetousness. Jesus did not want to get involved in a quarrel over material things, in view of the important spiritual task he was here to fulfill. (John 18:37) But this conversation suggests searching questions that we could ask ourselves. Suppose we were not in any particular need, but we felt we had a claim to some disputed property or wealth, or to a disputed inheritance. To what extent would we fight to succeed in our case? How much would we sacrifice of our service to Jehovah or of our relationship with our brothers to win what we viewed as our rights?—Proverbs 20:21; 1 Corinthians 6:7.

<sup>8</sup> Consider another comment by Jesus. He warned his followers: "Look out for the scribes who . . . devour the houses of the widows." (Luke 20:46, 47) What a cruel manifestation of greed! Christians, of course, are obligated to care for widows, not prey on them. (James 1:27) However, suppose you knew a widow who had received a sizable insurance settlement, and you needed money in a hurry for an emergency. Would your first thought be to approach the widow, feeling that she would be the easiest to persuade, or that she *ought* to help because 'she's got plenty of money'? Or suppose you have already borrowed money, and now you are having problems paying it back. Would you feel justified in holding off repaying the widow, because she 'won't cause too much trouble,' or perhaps because you think 'she doesn't really need the money'? We have to be careful not to let our thinking

8. How can we avoid being like the scribes mentioned by Jesus in Luke 20:46, 47?

on principles become warped when we face financial problems.

<sup>9</sup> Jude also described a way that greed may ensnare us. He spoke about persons who had infiltrated the Christian congregation and were corrupting it with their greed and loose conduct, "proving false to our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 4) Also, they were "admiring personalities for the sake of their own benefit." (Jude 16) We would not want to be like that. But consider: Do we find ourselves preferring to spend time with wealthier Christians and not giving so much attention to the poorer ones in the congregation? If so, could it be that we hope to benefit in some way? (Compare Acts 20:33; 1 Thessalonians 2:5.) When we show hospitality to responsible ones in the organization, do we do so out of love or because we hope for some privileges in return? If the latter, perhaps we, too, are 'admiring personalities for the sake of our own benefit.'

<sup>10</sup> One manifestation of greed that irritated Jesus very much was when he "found in the temple those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats." Zeal for Jehovah's house made him drive these out of the temple and exclaim: "Stop making the house of my Father a house of merchandise!" (John 2:13-17) Do we have a similar zeal? Then it would be good to ask ourselves: Would I discuss business matters at the Kingdom Hall? Do I promote business ventures among fellow Christians because their being spiritual brothers makes it harder for them to say no? Do I use the many friends I have in the organization to widen my business contacts? Certainly,

9. How may we fall into the trap of 'admiring personalities for our own benefit'?

10. In what ways is it possible to make financial profit out of our worship of Jehovah? If we do this, whose example are we following?

*we* should not greedily make financial gain out of exploiting our relationship with our brothers.

<sup>11</sup> Does that mean that Christians can never do business together? No. It is just that there is a time and place for business, and another time and place for worship. (Ecclesiastes 3:1) However, when Christians do have business relationships, they should not forget Bible principles. When a Christian makes a business agreement, he should not seek legal loopholes to get out of his moral obligations. (Matthew 5:37) Neither will he become relentless or vindictive if a business goes sour and he loses money. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Really, then, it means altogether a defeat for you that you are having lawsuits with one another. Why do you not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?" (1 Corinthians 6:7) Could you, for the sake of the congregation, choose to be defrauded rather than go to court?

<sup>12</sup> Any Christian engaged in business needs to be very careful. Today many business practices are cutthroat, yet a Christian cannot act like that. He must never forget that he is a disciple of Christ. He does not want the reputation of being dishonest or of resorting to sharp practices. (Compare Proverbs 20:14; Isaiah 33:15.) And he should never forget Jesus' warning against making wealth a god, or John's warning against "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16; Matthew 6:24) As a Christian businessman or businesswoman, can you resist the temptation to appeal to other people's greed in order to increase

11. What Christian principles help us to maintain a right attitude when we conduct business with one another?

12. What Bible principles will help those engaged in business to avoid the trap of greed?

## When doing business together, Christians should never forget Bible principles

sales? Or would you play on their vanity or pride to further your business? Do you conduct your secular work in such a way that you are not ashamed to talk to Jehovah about it in your prayers?—Matthew 6:11; Philippians 4:6, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Finally, Paul wrote to Timothy: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin." (1 Timothy 6:9) Being rich is not a sin, although wealth brings its own problems and temptations. (Matthew 19:24-26) The danger is 'being determined to be rich.' For example, one elder said: "The problem often arises when a man looks at his wealthy Christian brother and says: 'Why can't I be like that?'"

<sup>14</sup> The Bible urges: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For he has said: 'I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5) If you are wealthy, do you view that as a gift, something you can use in Jehovah's service? On one occasion, Jesus told a rich young man that if he wanted to follow him, he would have to give away all his wealth. If Jesus had said that to you, would you have chosen to keep your wealth or to follow Jesus? (Matthew 19:20-23) If you are not wealthy, can you be

13, 14. (a) What balance do wealthy Christians have to maintain? And those who are not wealthy? (b) How does the prayer at Proverbs 30:8 help us to learn reasonableness in the matter of wealth?

content with that? Can you avoid the trap of covetousness? Are you willing to trust Jehovah's promise: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you"? —See also Proverbs 30:8.

### Be Rich Toward God

<sup>15</sup> When Jesus warned his listeners to "guard against every sort of covetousness," he went on to tell of a farmer whose fields produced exceptionally well. The man "began reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, now that I have nowhere to gather my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my storehouses and build bigger ones, and there I will gather all my grain and all my good things; and I will say to my soul: 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy yourself.'" However, that very night, the man died. All that accumulated wealth helped him not one little bit. Jesus concluded: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God."—Luke 12:16-21.

<sup>16</sup> Did the man commit any overt sin, such as extortion or theft? The parable does not say so. Still, he had a problem. He relied on his wealth for a secure future and forgot something more important: being "rich toward God." It is precisely because true Christians make their relationship toward God the most important thing in their lives that they can avoid the trap of greed and thus are no part of the world.—John 17:16.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus once counseled: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we

to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing." (Matthew 6:31, 32) True, all of us face the same problems that "the nations" face. Most of us have to work hard for a living to buy the necessary things to eat, drink, and wear. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12) But we refuse to let such concerns overshadow our being "rich toward God."

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah is the source of all wealth. (Acts 14:15, 17) He has promised to take special care of his servants. Jesus said: "Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:32, 33; Psalm 37:25) Do you believe that promise? Are you confident that Jehovah will keep it? Will you be satisfied with the provisions Jehovah makes? If so, you will be able to avoid the snare of greed. (Colossians 3:5) Your service to Jehovah and your relationship with him will always have first place, and your whole way of life will be a demonstration of your faith in him.

18. How will trust in Jehovah enable us to avoid the snare of greed?

### Do You Remember?

15, 16. (a) What illustration did Jesus use to strengthen his counsel about covetousness? (b) What was the basic problem of the man in Jesus' parable?

17. How does a balanced Christian view the problem of earning a living?

- What kinds of people are affected by greed?
- How can we guard against greed?
- How does greed sometimes manifest itself?
- What questions help us to see whether we are avoiding the snare of greed or not?
- What is a great protection against greed?

# Kingdom Proclaimers Report

## Angelic Direction of Our Ministry

EXPERIENCES often show that the Christian ministry has angelic direction. (Revelation 14:6, 7) Did not an angel direct Philip to the sincere Ethiopian eunuch who wanted to understand the Bible? (Acts 8:26, 27) And when the right-hearted Gentile Cornelius earnestly prayed to God for help, was not an angel sent to help him? (Acts 10:3-33) The following experience from Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., helps us appreciate that our ministry today has angelic direction as we search for those sincere of heart.

□ In their house-to-house ministry, two of Jehovah's Witnesses were told by the lady of the house that she was very busy. One Witness asked her if she ever wondered if one could speak to the dead? The Witnesses were invited in and scriptures were read about the cause of death, the condition of the dead, and the hope of the resurrection. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; John 5:28, 29) The woman was interested and a Bible study was arranged. After three months of study she asked if the Witnesses in the future could come at 4:30 p.m. for the study. This they agreed to.

The next week the woman and her husband were waiting for the Witnesses, as the husband wanted to know what his wife was learning. He asked many questions, one of which was: "Who is the antichrist and the man of lawlessness?" This question was answered satis-



factorily from the Bible by the Witnesses, and he then asked for six copies of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

The following week the man and his wife, with their six children, were present for the study. The children were well mannered and obedient. Soon all of them began to attend the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses at the Kingdom Hall.

The man asked the Witnesses to call on his married daughter and her husband and also on his aunt and her daughter. This was done and Bible studies were arranged with both families.

After a year of Bible study, this man, his wife, and two teenage daughters asked to get baptized in symbol of their ded-

ication to Jehovah. It was then learned that this man had been a Methodist minister. But after two months of Bible study with the Witnesses, he and his family had left the church. It was also learned that at the time of the initial call, the wife had planned to take her life and had prayed to God to take care of her family thereafter.

From that initial call, ten persons have accepted the truth. The man is now an elder, one of his daughters is a pioneer, and his son-in-law is a ministerial servant.

It is evident that angelic direction was on the ministry of those two Witnesses. Now these ten persons who were helped to a knowledge of the truth are all happily serving Jehovah, free from the bonds of false religion.

# Serving God as a Family

As told by Otto Rittenbach



CAROL and I were married in November of 1951. The following year our first child, Brenda, was born. In the next six years we had five more children—Rick in July 1954, Rhonda in June 1955, Jo-Dene in May 1956, Wayne in June 1957, and Kenan in July 1958. By then I was still only 27 and Carol just 23. Indeed, heavy family responsibilities for a young couple!

Today, we are thankful that all of us are united in God's service. Rick serves at Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. Carol and I, along with our younger sons Wayne and Kenan, are at Watchtower Farms about 95 miles (150 km) north of Brooklyn. And Brenda, Rhonda, and Jo-Dene each graduated from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and are now missionaries—Brenda in the Middle East and Rhonda and JoDene in Colombia, South America.

Never in our fondest hopes did we envision that our entire family would have these grand privileges of service. We were just a young couple with a bunch of kids who tried our best to keep up with the

directions that we received from God through his Word and visible organization. It wasn't always easy. There were difficult times. But we all agree that keeping God's service our first priority has resulted in our living rich and rewarding lives. Let me tell briefly about our background and the rearing of our family.

## Learning Bible Truth

I was born in 1930 on a farm in the prairie area of North Dakota, the 13th of 14 children. The Nylens, another farm family, lived about four miles (6 km) away. They were known in the community as Jehovah's Witnesses, even though they were not baptized and did not regularly attend congregation meetings.

In the course of taking care of farming business, I made frequent visits to their farm and became acquainted with Carol Nylen. Our relationship grew, and soon after Carol graduated from high school we were married. Two months later, early in 1952, I was drafted and spent two years in the army, including 14 months in Germany.

After I returned from Germany, we

rented a farm about a quarter mile (.4 km) from the Nylens. We had practically no money so we had to get FHA (Farmers Home Administration) loans to buy a herd of milk cows and some farm machinery. Farming was very time consuming in those days. Yet, with encouragement from Carol and my in-laws who by then were active Witnesses, I accepted a home Bible study. It was faithfully conducted with me by Carol's brother Roland. With additional spiritual help from visits of circuit overseers and other Witnesses, I eventually made a dedication to Jehovah and was baptized in August of 1956.

### A Hardworking Companion

Life on the farm in those days lacked many modern conveniences. Our rented farm house, for example, had no running water or indoor plumbing, so all the water had to be carried from the well, and we had to go outside to use the toilet facilities. We had few home furnishings, but we made do with what we had and what was given to us. Carol became so adept at home decorating that even the owners said the place was like a doll's house. She also made all the kids' clothes, mainly out of old garments given to her. And she often gave me a hand outside with the chores, including milking the cows, which we did by hand.

During those years Carol, whose mother had been a schoolteacher, did a marvelous job training the children. In addition, reading the Bible and Watchtower publications had impressed upon us the value of training our children from infancy. (2 Timothy 3:15) So, regularly, each morning from about 9:30 to 11, one end of our small kitchen became a school. Among the earliest memories of all the children is sitting in little red chairs in a semicircle around a blackboard. Today, these instruction sessions are recalled by the chil-

dren with fondness. The ones that were yet infants would learn to sit quietly and fold their hands for up to an hour. Afterward they were ready for their regular forenoon nap.

By the time the children were about a year and a half old, they were active participants. Carol taught them the alphabet and how to read and write by use of home-made flash cards. She also helped them to memorize key Bible texts, as well as the names of the apostles, and related to them Bible stories along with the practical lessons that these taught. It was intriguing to watch how easily and how much our children were able to learn at an early age. Some may find it hard to believe, yet they were able to recite the names of all 66 books of the Bible by the time they were a year and a half old, and by the age of two or three each of them could read.

In addition, we had a regular family study during which we would prepare with the children the lessons to be studied at our regular congregation meetings. Of course, this meant breaking the material down so that they could understand it, especially when we were studying the book "Your Will Be Done on Earth," and later "Let Your Name Be Sanctified," as well as lessons in the Watchtower magazine. This training helped the children not only to progress spiritually but also to excel in school.

### Dealing With Problems

Yet, despite all our efforts, not everything went as smoothly as we would have liked. For example, when Brenda came home from her first day at school, we excitedly asked her about her day. One of our questions was about the flag salute. She answered, "Oh, no, I didn't salute the flag; I just pledged allegiance." Something, obviously, had been missing in our instruction!



JoDene, Brenda, and Rhonda learned Bible stories at an early age

Then there was the occasion when a turkey dinner was served in the school cafeteria just before Thanksgiving vacation. Rick, who was in the first grade at the time, refused to eat it. Only after persistent explaining by the teacher that it was not Thanksgiving Day nor a real Thanksgiving dinner, and after a phone call to Carol, did Rick's conscience allow him to eat that meal.

There were also problems of another kind, ones we could hardly believe would arise, but which illustrate the wayward inclinations of youth. (Genesis 8:21; Proverbs 22:15) Rhonda seemed intent in the third grade to have a ready-made, store-bought coat. So she fabricated the story that the teacher said she had to have one by May 1! She almost had us convinced.

Then there was the matter of stealing. When Wayne and Kenan were in the second and first grades, they took candy from the teacher's desk. When we learned of

this, we reasoned with them, trying to draw out of their hearts what motivated them to do this bad thing. We had them make retribution by buying candy and presenting it to the teacher and telling her what they had done. We tried to root out bad motives from our children's hearts once these were discerned and tried to replace them with good and pure motives by reasoning with them.

### Full Attention Required

Very early on we realized that rearing a family in Jehovah's service is a career that requires full attention. We found that children need to be kept busy, to be given a sense of order and scheduling. They need to know when to get up in the morning, when nap time is, when it is time to eat, and so forth. All of this needs to be inculcated while they are yet infants and carried through and expanded as they grow older.

We began teaching our young ones obedience in infancy. When we asked them to do something, even if it was as simple as, "Fold your hands," or, "Sit down," we expected and received immediate compliance. We made sure that *each* command was carried out. Wholesome control and guidance from infancy to adulthood drastically reduces problems at a later date. One practice that we exercised in their infancy was to wrap our children in a swaddling manner when it was time for them to sleep, even as Jesus was wrapped as an infant. (Luke 2:7) This helped them to feel secure and to go to sleep almost instantly.

From a very early age we also taught the children to work. Under the watchful eye of my wife, they learned to pick up things, to wash dishes, and to fold clothes. Later they learned to darn socks, to sew on buttons, to make bread, to plant and weed the garden, and to help with the canning and freezing of its produce. Both

the boys and the girls learned all these things. They also learned to make minor repairs around the house, to do painting, and to keep the yard looking attractive. We taught them to be thorough at whatever they did, to do a good job, and we saw to it that they did. It took time, but it really paid off in later years.

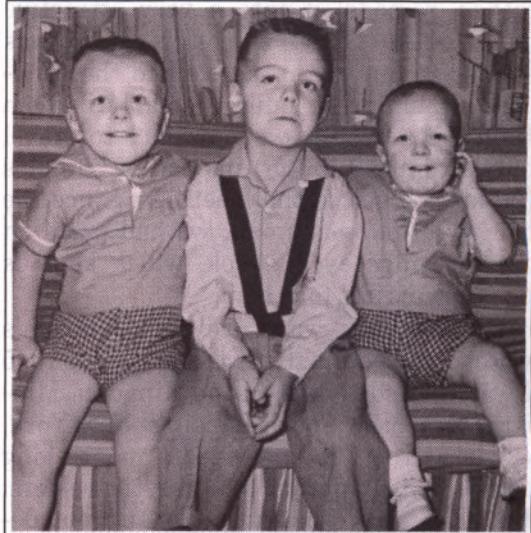
We also recognized the need of recreational activities. These, however, seldom included watching television. In fact, our family made a combined decision NOT to have one. Our recreation mostly consisted of doing things together—playing games, having picnics, enjoying congregational activities, and going to assemblies. Often, in connection with travel to the assemblies, we scheduled vacation trips to interesting places.

We always placed priority on spiritual activities. At first we had to travel 55 miles (90 km) each way to the Kingdom Hall, and North Dakota winters can be severe. But by taking reasonable precautions and being blessed with relatively good health, we seldom missed a meeting. Circuit assemblies were real highlights in our lives, sometimes involving a trip of 250 miles (400 km) to share in a three-day program back in those days.

The field ministry was a regular feature of every weekend, regardless of -20° F. (-29° C.) weather. Some people may think it extreme to have young ones out in such weather, but it helped to impress upon the children that nothing should stand in the way of our service to Jehovah.

### Keeping Kingdom Interests First

In 1961 we were faced with a big decision when the farm that we were renting came up for sale. Should I buy the farm, or should I seek different employment? Farm life was good for the children, and as the boys grew up it could become their means of livelihood. However, to do it



Wayne, Rick, and Kenan  
—now all in Bethel service

justice, farming would take most of our time, and we reasoned that it could become a snare to us. Earlier my dad had given me some land, which was really not large enough to farm. I sold this and bought a backhoe and related equipment and went into excavation work.

We moved to the nearby town of Butte, North Dakota, population about 200. I excavated basements and installed farm sewers, and I learned to lay cement blocks and to do plumbing. To supplement what was a rather meager income, I also drove the school bus. Yet we always could feel Jehovah's concern and help for us as our family put spiritual things first. Despite our being a large, relatively poor family and our having to contend with severe weather at times, we always managed to attend congregation meetings and assemblies, and also to share regularly in the field ministry.

In time we were able to buy an old house and, with the generous help of Carol's

father, remodel it into a very attractive but modest home. A congregation was formed in our area, and we had the privilege of helping to build a small Kingdom Hall. As a result, we now had to travel only 15 miles (25 km) instead of 55 miles (90 km) to get to the meetings. Since the congregation was small, we had parts on the meetings every week, which kept us busy preparing for them.

In so many ways we felt Jehovah's watchcare. To illustrate: In March of 1965 I was invited to attend the Kingdom Ministry School in South Lansing, New York, which at the time provided a month-long course of instruction for Christian elders. But the car we had was old and not dependable enough for my family to get to the meetings and a circuit assembly while I would be away. So we went to the biggest nearby town to look for a car. We had looked unsuccessfully most of the day when, about 45 minutes before I had to return home to drive the school bus, I stopped at one more dealer.

The salesman took me to a dark underground garage and showed me a car that I thought would serve our purposes. A test drive revealed that it ran well, but the salesman said the price was \$300, much more than I could pay. As I was about to leave, the salesman said to wait while he asked the manager what was the least he could take. The manager stalled, pondered, and reluctantly said, \$150. We made the deal and drove the car home.

Later that spring, money was tight. I had just returned from the Kingdom Ministry School. It was too early to start outside work as the frost was still in the ground. I had a job coming up right across the street to dig a waterline and sewer and put in a bathroom and plumbing. It would be a month or more before I could do it, but one day, to my surprise, our

neighbor called up. He said he would like to advance me \$500 on the job!

In 1967 I received a job offer in a town about 100 miles (160 km) away. I decided to accept it. One reason was that my excavating business was taking me farther and farther away from home, and it was at the point where I would need to expand and become more involved with the business at the expense of spiritual activities. So we sold our house and moved to New Rockford, North Dakota, where I became a bulk fertilizer salesman for a farm store. Although this new job did not allow me the freedom that being self-employed did, I decided to take it since the children were now older and well established in the Christian way.

### A Happy Family in the Full-Time Ministry

Because the children turned down scholarships upon their graduation, their teachers and others in the community thought their scholastic abilities were being wasted. Yet, despite pressures to continue their secular education, on completing high school each of them started in the full-time ministry as a pioneer.

Brenda started pioneering in 1970, followed by Rick in 1972. He then went to Bethel that December. The following year both Rhonda and my wife began pioneering. In 1974 JoDene and I joined them in the pioneer work, and the following spring Wayne brought the number of pioneers in the family to six. In 1976 Wayne went to serve at Watchtower Farms, but Kenan graduated and kept the number in the family pioneering at six.

When I decided to pioneer, my employer refused my request for part-time work, so I quit the farm store. I was subsequently hired as a fuel-truck driver, but when my employer insisted that I become involved in dishonest business practices, I quit there also. However, I was by this time

Part of the  
Rittenbach family today  
—all in full-time service

pioneering with Carol and the children, the desire of a lifetime, so nothing could now deter me.

Within a week of quitting my job, I was called by another employer who asked me if I could work two days a week during the winter servicing furnaces. Amazing? Not really, for hadn't we been promised that if we put Kingdom interests first, we would be cared for? (Matthew 6:33) The children by this time each had part-time jobs, and their contributing to household expenses made possible our pioneering together as a family.

Then, in June 1977, Carol and I along with Kenan were invited to Watchtower Farms. Being a mother and leaving behind our home and three darling daughters tugged at my wife's heart. But she reasoned that it was Jehovah's leading and truly an inestimable privilege. The girls viewed it that way, too, and urged us to go. The following summer we returned on vacation, sold our house and other material possessions, and helped our daughters move to their first special-pioneer assignment about 100 miles (160 km) away.

While the girls were serving as special pioneers in Grand Island, New York, they were called to Watchtower Farms in August 1981 to work along with us until they entered the 72nd class of Gilead School



commencing that October. The following March they graduated, and soon all three were on their way to a missionary assignment in Colombia, South America.

Rhonda and JoDene are still in Colombia, but Brenda married a Gilead classmate in March of 1983 and joined him in the Middle East. Then, in March of 1984, Rhonda married a Gilead graduate who joined her in Colombia. Also, each of the boys married lovely pioneer girls who are now serving with them either at Brooklyn Bethel or at Watchtower Farms. So our pioneer family has grown to 13, including my wife and me.

All of us are truly happy to be in the full-time service of our God, Jehovah, and as a family we know that to continue enjoying these privileges of service, we must behave in a manner worthy of the good news. (Philippians 1:27) We are grateful for the fine counsel that Jehovah has provided through his visible organization, since it has been the application of it in our lives that has resulted in our now enjoying as a family our present glorious treasure of service.

# Turkish Court Sends Jehovah's Witnesses to Prison

ON DECEMBER 12, 1984, a shocking decision was rendered by the State Security Court in Ankara, Turkey. It sentenced five of Jehovah's Witnesses to prison, each for six years and eight months, with an additional two years and two months in exile! Eighteen other Witnesses were sentenced to four years and two months in prison, with another year and four months in exile. Other Witnesses are to have a separate trial before a criminal court.

What was their "crime"? They were found guilty of violating article 163 of the Turkish Penal Code. According to this, it is a crime 'to make religious propaganda with the aim of changing the social, economic, political, or legal order of the state.' So it was claimed that a very small number—a mere handful—of Jehovah's Witnesses were trying to change the existing governmental order in Turkey. But how could this tiny group of people who are peaceful, unarmed, and totally untrained in political subversion be a threat to overthrow the entire established system of the nation?

## Law-Abiding People

Jehovah's Witnesses are well known throughout the world as a law-abiding people. For example, a governor-general of Nigeria said of them: "They have added greatly to the spiritual upbuilding of our people in Nigeria." He also said: "If all the

religious denominations were like Jehovah's Witnesses, we would have no murders, burglaries, delinquencies, prisoners and atomic bombs. Doors would not be locked day in and day out."

Also, Jehovah's Witnesses never have mixed in politics. Their neutrality in such affairs is well known. The Italian publication *Il Corriere di Trieste* said that "Jehovah's Witnesses should be admired." Why, among other reasons? Because, it said, their religion teaches them 'not to mix politics with religion and not to serve the interests of political parties.'

Thus, during their more than a hundred years of history, they never have tried to change any political order of any state. Rather, they do what the Bible tells them to do—accept the existing governments as "superior authorities" to which they must give respect. (Romans 13:1) Therefore it is against their religious convictions to engage in any subversive activity. That is why nations that are not dictatorial recognize that Jehovah's Witnesses are certainly a religion and have given them the freedoms of other citizens, including the freedom of worship.

The sentences are also completely unwarranted for another reason. On March 24, 1980, the Supreme Court of Appeals in Turkey ruled that Jehovah's Witnesses cannot be punished, as their religion does not violate the law. The court

had acquitted them of charges of subversion.

### Events Leading to Trial

So the question arises: What information did the court use to reach its decision? Have Jehovah's Witnesses changed their activity or beliefs since 1980? Let us briefly consider the circumstances that led up to the trial, as well as the court records.

On November 20, 1974, a district court in Istanbul gave legal approval to Jehovah's Witnesses as a religion. Accordingly, the Witnesses could legally register their religion on their identification cards, which they did. And from December 1974, Jehovah's Witnesses began to meet freely for worship in various cities of the country. The military government that came to power in September of 1980 also permitted their public meetings in their "Halls of Worship."

However, in March of 1984, three families in Eskişehir applied to the court to have their religion registered as Jehovah's Witnesses. That event made headlines in the local newspaper. Being former Muslims, their application aroused the animosity of fanatical Muslims, who began to attack and defame Jehovah's Witnesses in various newspapers.

Among the opposers was the "High Council of Religion in the Directorate of Religious Affairs," a Muslim governmental office. This council stated: "This movement [Jehovah's Witnesses], which in no country is being accepted as a religion . . . is a Christian order under Jewish influence." It further stated that "if this movement will be permitted [in Turkey] it will be a danger for the State as well as for Islam."

After the malicious newspaper campaign, suddenly two Witnesses were arrested in Ankara for offering their publi-

cations to another person. Yet, those publications were being printed legally in Turkey.

During the following days, the police in Ankara arrested the five elders of a congregation, as well as others who were known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Altogether 31 were arrested. Some were arrested at their homes, others at their place of work, and some after their meeting at their "Hall of Worship." Of the 31 originally arrested, 23 were held and the others released.

### False Charges

As the court hearing proceeded, it became more and more evident that it was not actually a case of violating the law. Rather, it was a religious issue that the court was deciding.

For example, as supposed evidence of guilt, the prosecution used a statement from the Directorate of Religious Affairs. In this statement, Jehovah's Witnesses are labeled as "a crazy Christian movement" that has "no prophets and no special holy book." On the contrary, Jehovah's Witnesses are known as a very sane, law-abiding, peaceful society of people. And they most assuredly have a prophet—Jesus Christ—who, incidentally, even Muslims acknowledge as a prophet. And

## In Our Next Issue

■ A Cure for All Diseases  
—It Can Be Found!

■ Accept God's Help  
to Overcome Secret Faults

■ Mourning Customs  
—How Do You View Them?

## Jehovah's Witnesses do not subvert any government

they need no other "special holy book," for they already have one—the Holy Bible, which is "inspired of God."—2 Timothy 3:16.

It was also claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses do not accept "the existent nations and states and their national boundaries." This, too, is totally false. Their religion specifically requires them to "be in subjection to the superior [governmental] authorities" and all the laws that do not conflict with God's laws. That is what the Bible says to do.—Romans 13:1; Acts 5:29.

In addition, the Directorate of Religious Affairs claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses engage in an activity "to establish a Bible-based religious order over the entire world," and that God's Kingdom would be established between the "Euphrates and Nile" rivers. This statement tries to prove that Jehovah's Witnesses would change the established political order in Turkey, since the Euphrates River passes through Eastern Turkey.

That is another totally false charge. Jehovah's Witnesses have never believed that the Kingdom of God will be on earth. Instead, they have always taught that it will be a heavenly rule. So it could not possibly be located in any part of Turkey.  
—Matthew 4:17; 6:9, 10.

### False Religious Testimony

The court also appointed three "experts" to examine the publications and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. One was a member of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The second was an assistant professor of

an Islamic faculty. The third was an assistant professor of the legal faculty of the University of Ankara.

The defense counsel objected to the appointment of two of the religious "experts." These had already expressed their opinion against Jehovah's Witnesses in a book. Therefore, it could not be expected that they would give an unbiased opinion to the court. However, the court refused the request of the defense and allowed these prejudiced religious persons to participate.

When these three handed in their report, it was as expected. The religious examiners found Jehovah's Witnesses guilty. However, the law expert did not find any guilt. He stated: "They are expecting the coming change in the world by God after the war of Armageddon," and not by any human intervention.

The religionists claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses are not a religion. That is obviously another false charge. They also claimed that the belief of Jehovah's Witnesses in God and in Jesus Christ "serves only as a religious cover in order to hide the real purpose." And what would that "real purpose" supposedly be? The religious advisers said: "Under the appearance of the Kingdom of God they lay a foundation for some political developments in an unknown future." Quoting unrelated passages from the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, they concluded that they were 'a secret organization under Zionistic influence that is using religious meetings as a cover.'

However, these two religious persons did not produce a single piece of evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses have ever tried to subvert the Turkish state. They could not produce such evidence because the Witnesses do not subvert existing governments. It is God himself who holds governments accountable. He is the Judge,

## **How could such a thing happen in a country that claims to be democratic?**

not any human. And anyone who is familiar with the Witnesses knows that they have no connection whatsoever with Zionism.

### **Defense Provides Evidence**

On the other hand, the defense provided much evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses were not guilty of violating any law. In addition to the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeals on March 24, 1980, the defense presented three other decisions of the Supreme Court. These also had previously acquitted Jehovah's Witnesses from the same charges.

The defense also presented a second opinion from another professor of law who had examined the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses. He did not find any violation of law in them.

The court was also referred to about 20 other court decisions rendered during the past 30 years in Turkey. All those courts had acquitted the Witnesses from the same charges.

Last, but not least, even the police officer who had been appointed to control the meetings of the Witnesses testified before the court. He declared that he had "not observed any violation of the law during the entire year" that he had controlled the meetings.

### **Court Rejects the Evidence**

Nevertheless, the court rejected all the evidence of the defense! It accepted only the slanderous and totally unfounded writings that the prosecutor presented.

These were the statements from the Directorate of Religious Affairs and also the report from the two prejudiced religious commentators.

The sentences raise serious questions. Were the judges of the court also prejudiced by their Muslim beliefs? Was the court put under religious pressure to sentence Jehovah's Witnesses?

Of course, the decision is being appealed. So the Supreme Court will have the opportunity to review the matter. It is hoped that this court will render a judgment in full harmony with the facts. Unfortunately, until that time the 23 Witnesses—15 men and 8 women—remain in prison.

Certainly, fair-minded and freedom-loving people throughout the world ask: How could such a thing happen in a country that claims to be a democratic state? How could Turkish courts do such a thing when the Turkish government also has signed the Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of religion?

If you feel indignant at peaceful, innocent persons being so unjustly sentenced to prison, you have the opportunity to express your opinion. You can write to any or all of the officials below and let them know how you feel about this matter:

#### **President of the Republic:**

**His Excellency Kenan EVREN, Bakanlıklar, Ankara, Turkey**

#### **Prime Minister:**

**Mr. Turgut ÖZAL, Bakanlıklar, Ankara, Turkey**

#### **Minister of Interior:**

**Mr. Yildirim AKBULUT, Bakanlıklar, Ankara, Turkey**

#### **Minister of Justice:**

**Mr. M. Necat ELDEM, Bakanlıklar, Ankara, Turkey**

**Also, you may write to the Turkish Ambassador in your area.**

# "My Guide, My Counselor"

The book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* has served as such for a youth from Senegal, West Africa. "As a Muslim," he explains, "I was greatly impressed by the way you examine problems of youth. You wisely deal with adolescence. Your book is for me more than a book—it is my guide, my counselor, and will be so for always.

Being a fatherless child since the age of eleven, I lived with my grandmother until I was nineteen. Now I am twenty. If my way of life has a good influence on people around me, it is thanks to the *Youth* book. I cannot count how many times I have read and reread it. Every subject you deal with gives me the feeling it is especially for me. I have also shared your book with all my friends. They, too, say it is a treasure house of knowledge."

## YOUR YOUTH

*Getting  
the Best out of It*

"I bought *Your Youth* last summer at second-hand bookstores just to quickly familiarize myself with its contents. You can pass the information on to us to help you feel about your situation and your family's problems."

Brooks Clegg of the *Washington Times Herald* writes: "This excellent book by PARREN, Parson, Parker, Vines, and Tammie Prime Ministers is a must for every library." Mr. Tammie GALT, Executive Editor of *Parsons Journal*, writes: "An excellent addition to libraries." Mr. William ARRELLANT, Superintendent of Schools, Naples, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our school library." Mr. W. Meier ELDEN, Superintendent of Schools, Tampa, Florida, writes: "A good addition to our library." Mr. John DUNN, Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Education Foundation, writes: "A valuable addition to our library." Mr. James L. HARRIS, Superintendent of Schools, Pensacola, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our library." Mr. Robert J. KELLY, Superintendent of Schools, Tallahassee, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our library." Mr. W. Meier ELDEN, Superintendent of Schools, Tampa, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our library." Mr. James L. HARRIS, Superintendent of Schools, Pensacola, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our library." Mr. Robert J. KELLY, Superintendent of Schools, Tallahassee, Florida, writes: "A valuable addition to our library."