

Awake!

CHANGES IN THE CHURCHES

**WHAT DO THEY MEAN
FOR YOU?**

APRIL 22, 1970



THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE

News sources that are able to keep you awake to the vital issues of our times must be unfettered by censorship and selfish interests. "Awake!" has no fetters. It recognizes facts, faces facts, is free to publish facts. It is not bound by political ties; it is unhampered by traditional creeds. This magazine keeps itself free, that it may speak freely to you. But it does not abuse its freedom. It maintains integrity to truth.

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Awake!

"It is already the hour for you to awake."

—Romans 13:11

Volume LI

Brooklyn, N.Y., April 22, 1970

Number 8



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CHURCHES?

How could this possibly be so? you may wonder. To help us understand this, let us first see what is happening in the churches. In what ways are they changing?

For one thing it is apparent to most people that the churches and their leaders are becoming more and more 'worldly.' Ministers often march in civil rights demonstrations. Some now approve the use of violence and of revolution; others say that homosexuality, fornication and even adultery are all right. Many clergymen also say that evolution is true and that the Bible is myth.

Another big change in the churches is the spirit of rebellion that is growing among both the clergy and the laity. They publicly criticize church teaching, and openly challenge the heads of their religious organizations.

The Catholic Church especially has been swept by the winds of change. The music, language and ceremonials of their Mass have been changed, use of idols has been minimized, and changes have occurred in connection with the worship of saints and the eating of meat on Friday.

HAVE you noticed the rapid changes that have been taking place in the churches? No doubt you have. The winds of change are blowing everywhere.

Many persons have been affected directly, and are concerned. Perhaps you are one of these. But even if you are not, the changes nevertheless do affect you and your family. And in the very near future you, and every other person on earth, will be affected to an even greater extent. This is true whether you attend church or not.

However, the Catholic journal *America* notes two opposing views of changes: "For some Catholics, the changes are going too far and too fast, and look as if they will go farther and faster. For others, the changes are too little and too late, and there is no hope of stepping up the tempo."

Persons who see the changes as "going too far and too fast" often are devout Catholics who have accepted without question the church's teachings and way of doing things. Thus they are disturbed by the changes taking place.

On the other hand, Catholics who view the changes as "too little and too late" want more things changed. For instance, they have openly denounced the pope's ruling banning artificial birth control. Al-

so, thousands of priests and parishioners have spoken out against the church rule that forbids the clergy to marry.

The result of such happenings is that the foundations of the churches are being shaken. Many fear what the changes imply. *The Christian Century* of April 2, 1969, (p. 445) observed: "The present year finds the Christian churches in a state of ferment. . . . It is less clear whether the ferment is a new spring or a last spurt before rigor mortis [which follows death]."

What do you think? Is what is happening in the churches evidence of a "new spring"? Or could it be "a last spurt" before death? Really, just what is the condition of the churches?

Why Religious Leaders Are Worried

THE leaders of every major religion in Christendom are worried. As Canadian minister Bruce McLeod said: "The church isn't working the way it used to and they're scared."

It is not only changes in church teachings or ceremonies that worry the clergy. A far more serious kind of change worries them. What is that?

For the first time in centuries almost every orthodox religion in Christendom sees the ranks of its clergymen growing smaller. Each year more and more are leaving. Enrollment at most seminaries sinks even faster. And now there is also a drop in church attendance. Hence, many

religious leaders fear that their churches are dying!

True, you personally may not have noticed all this. Or it may be that your community, your church, has not been affected greatly so far. But this religious decline is going on all over the world. Nothing like it has happened in centuries. A former counselor to Pope Pius XII said of his church: "The crisis that the Church is going through is more serious than the Protestant Reformation."

Before commenting on *why* all this is happening, let us first look at *what* is happening. When we examine the facts, they show that the situation is far more serious than most people suspect.

Clergymen Leaving

One of the most worrisome problems for church leaders is the growing number of clergymen leaving the ministry now. The well-known Presbyterian minister David Poling stated bluntly: "We are watching the collapse of an historic profession—the clergy."

For centuries the ranks of the clergy grew. However, some years ago the increase slowed down, then stopped. Now it is in reverse! In the last few years more and more clergymen of different religions are leaving. Last year, 1969, saw the greatest exodus of all.

Pope Paul VI said that the defections of Catholic priests were his "crown of thorns." But his church is by no means alone. In the book *The Last Years of the Church* clergymen Poling correctly observes: "The disillusionment of ministers and the general disarray in their ranks is just as complete in the Protestant churches, though not so obvious because of the many divisions and denominations."

So the trend is the same everywhere. For instance, in Greece some dioceses of the Greek Orthodox Church are 50 percent understaffed. The Sydney *Morning Herald* reports that in every diocese of northern Greece "a quarter of all benefices (priestly positions) were vacant. . . . With 250 benefices becoming vacant every year, the situation was worsening steadily."

Sweden has seen a drop in the number of priests of the State Church. But the



Pope Paul VI says that defections of priests are his "crown of thorns"

so-called "Free Churches" there are also having sharp losses. Note this sample:

	1962	1968
Baptist ministers	324	256
Salvation Army officers	1,326	1,055
Mission Alliance pastors	675	617

The situation in the Roman Catholic Church is striking. *Newsweek* described it in this way:

"Everywhere they turn, the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church are faced with statistics underscoring what many of them—out of personal experience—already know: that more of their priests are leaving the ministry. . . . In the next decade, predicts sociologist Father Andrew Greeley, the church in America may well lose half its 59,000 priests."

A report showed that the number of American priests leaving the ministry in 1968 was up 31 percent over a simi-

lar period in 1967. And *Chicago Today* said: "What was then [two years ago] a trickle of Roman Catholic clergy leaving the religious life has swelled into a stream that threatens to become a torrent."

From all over the Catholic world come similar reports. Of the Netherlands, the *New York Times* states: "The number of priests leaving the ministry is five times what it was in 1965." For 1968 in that country the following figures were given:

Priests who left ministry	196
Priests who died	189
Total—	385
New priests ordained	145
1968 Deficit—	240

According to the Catholic source *Herder Correspondence*, "where figures are available, they are alarming." In the Netherlands diocese of Haarlem, "Vicar-Monsignor" H. Juipers says: "In 1968, 46 priests in our diocese left the profession. . . . In the same year only two priests were ordained."

An official investigation in Brazil revealed that 643 Brazilian priests left their duties from 1960 to 1968. In Peru

El Comercio reports: "The Church of Peru is decimated," noting that there are now "scarcely 400 Peruvian priests

for a population that nears 14 million." During 1969 Argentina saw the worst crisis in the history of the Catholic Church in that land: 28 priests resigned at one time in the Rosario archdiocese alone.

So the alarm of church leaders is well-founded. Indeed, if you were the captain of a large passenger liner, would you not be alarmed if you saw more and more of your crew abandoning ship?

Greater Drop

Many church leaders are even more alarmed at what is happening in the seminaries of most religions, where future clergymen are trained. David Poling says in *The Last Years of the Church*:

"If the church watchers had kept a journal or diary of the early warning signs of decline in ecclesiastical control, they might have first noted the slip in seminary enrollment. What has become an alarming drop in recent years began a decade ago with just a faint decrease from one year to the next.

"So now seminaries are closing, and some rushing to last-gasp mergers."

Similarly, *The Australian* said just a few months ago: "Even more striking

than the defection from the priesthood, however, is the 25 percent drop in the number of men studying for the priesthood within the past four years [in Australia] . . . with indications of a further significant drop this year." In Chile, *Mensaje* says: "Today the big seminaries stand out like empty barracks."

Ordinations for the priesthood in the Netherlands decreased 36 percent in just the last two years. In France, the archbishop of Lyons revealed a 41-percent drop in the number entering Catholic seminaries there in 1969. In Eng-

land, the number becoming Anglican priests fell by 22 percent in the last five years.

A similar condition has overtaken religious orders. The *Windsor Star* of Canada reports this from Ireland: "Many convents in Ireland will have to be turned into hotels in the next 10 years, a Franciscan priest said there recently."

In the United States, the 1969 *Official Catholic Directory* showed a huge decrease of 9,175 nuns from the year before. Catholic clergyman Ernest Bartell of Notre Dame University stated: "All of the religious orders have had a large drop in new enrollments. I know of one which has a new building designed for the training of 100 girls, and now they have only four." Similar reports come from almost every country in Christendom.

Church Attendance Down

Growing losses in clerical ranks are matched by losses in church attendance. It is not just the 'crew' that is abandoning ship. The 'passengers' are too!

Church attendance in England has seen

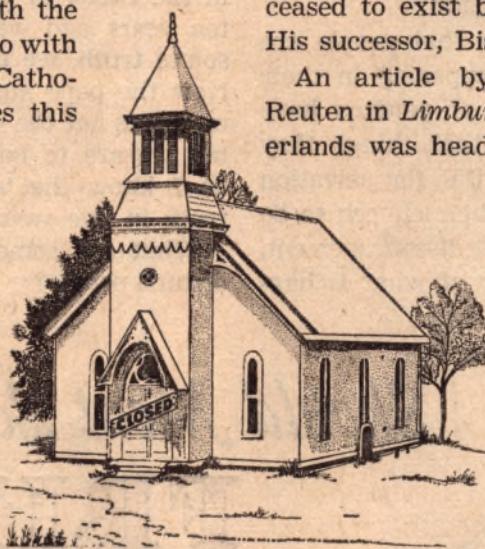
a fantastic drop: only 8 out of every 100 baptized now attend Anglican services on Easter! In Canada, typical is this report from the Toronto *Daily Star*: "If membership of the 150 United churches in Metro Toronto continues its alarming drop there will be no churches or members left within 15 years." And the Catholic Church in Germany estimates that it is losing members at the rate of 50,000 a year.

From the Netherlands *De Stem* relates: "Church attendance in the Netherlands is decreasing, not only with the Roman Catholics but also with the Protestants." The Catholic parish of Zeist gives this typical report:

Year	Attendance
1965	1,639
1966	1,426
1967	1,208
1968	983
1969	832

Such drops in attendance reflect the attitude that people have toward religion these days. A Gallup poll in 1957 found that only 14 percent of those interviewed felt that religion was losing its influence. But in 1969 a similar poll found that five times as many—70 percent—said that religion was losing its influence!

This is affecting the financial support that people are giving the churches, and their school systems. For instance, in the past six years more than 1,000 Catholic parochial schools in the United States have shut down. Enrollment dropped by 771,000—14 percent.



"Time" magazine says: "England's 10,000 country churches are sad reminders of a vanishing way of life. . . . Each year their congregations grow ever smaller."

What Is Ahead?

When church leaders look into the future, their gloom grows. *The West Australian* quoted clergyman David Woodroffe as saying: "Nothing now can stop the disintegration of church institutions and structures."

Bishop Ralph Dean, who in disgust quit his job as the worldwide executive officer of the Anglican Church, stated: "The church as it is structured today may have ceased to exist by the end of 10 years." His successor, Bishop John Howe, agreed.

An article by Catholic priest Joost Reuten in *Limburgs Dagblad* of the Netherlands was headlined: "Last Moment of the Church Has Arrived." He said:

"I really mean it that the very last moment for the church in the Netherlands has arrived. I have two reasons for this: First, no new generation of ministers is forthcoming, and second, the group in the 18 to 35 years bracket falls away from the church."

Pope Paul VI also expresses alarm often, declaring recently: "The Church is experiencing a time of disquiet, self-criticism, one would even say of self-demolition." He said it was being 'crucified.'

Yes, the 'captains' of religion are alarmed. But if you were the captain of a ship, would you not be alarmed too if you saw both your crew and your passengers abandoning ship?

Why are these amazing events taking place? What has led to this swift decline? Where will it end?

CHANGES that DISTURB PEOPLE

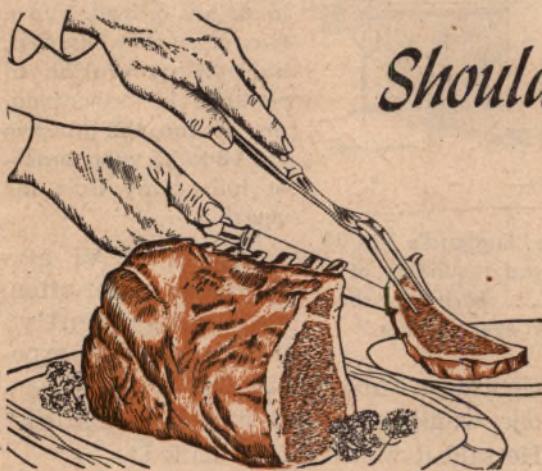
THE churches are in rapid decline. Even in the United States, where religion still enjoys perhaps the greatest popularity, nearly three out of four persons polled said that it is losing influence. Why is there this decline in religion?

One of the reasons is that people are disturbed by what is happening in their churches. Yes, millions of persons have been shocked to learn that things they were taught as being vital for salvation are now considered by their church to be wrong. Have you, too, felt discouragement, or even despair, because of what is hap-

pening in your church? A businessman in Medellin, Colombia, expressed the effect the changes have had on many.

"Tell me," he asked, "how can I have confidence in anything? How can I believe in the Bible, in God, or have faith? Just ten years ago we Catholics had the absolute truth, we put all our faith in this. Now the pope and our priests are telling us this is not the way to believe any more, but we are to believe 'new things.' How do I know the 'new things' will be the truth in five years?"

What are some of these changes that disturb people?



Should Meat Be Eaten on FRIDAY?

FOR centuries Catholics abstained from eating meat on Fridays. It was a Church law. Many sincerely believed it was a law of Almighty God. But now this has changed.

The fact is that the meatless-Friday rule was made an obligation only some 1,100

years ago. Pope Nicholas I (858-867) was the one who put it into effect. And how vital was it considered that Catholics abide by this rule?

A publication that bears the Catholic imprimatur, indicating approval, states: "The Catholic Church says that it is a mortal sin for a *Catholic* to eat meat on Friday knowingly and wilfully, without a sufficiently grave and excusing reason." It adds: The "Church says that if a man dies in unrepented mortal sin, he will go to hell."—*Radio Replies*, Rumble and Cartty (1938).

Thus the devout carefully avoided eating meat on Fridays. They sincerely believed

that failure to obey could lead to their eternal punishment in a fiery hell.

But then, early in 1966, Pope Paul VI authorized local Church officials to modify this abstinence requirement in their countries as they saw fit. The pope was acting in line with recommendations made at the recently completed Second Vatican Council. Thus, in one country after another, meatless Fridays were virtually abolished—in France, Canada, Italy, Mexico, the United States, and so on.

The Effect

The effect upon many devout Catholics has been devastating. "All these years I thought it was a sin to eat meat," explained a housewife in the mid-western United States. "Now I suddenly find out it isn't a sin. That's hard to understand."

If you are a Catholic, can you understand how a practice that was considered by the Church a "mortal sin" can suddenly be approved? If it was a sin five years ago, why is it not today? Many Catholics cannot understand.

When a woman in Canada was asked how she felt about the changes in her church, she replied: "I don't know. Maybe you can tell me. What are they going to do with all those people sent to hell for eating meat on Friday?"

Not just a few Catholics have asked such questions. The change in teaching has shaken their confidence in the Church. Would you not feel the same way if what

you had always been taught to be vital for salvation was suddenly considered unnecessary? Would you not be inclined to question other teachings of your church also?

The Catholic Church, however, has not completely changed its position on Friday meat abstinence. Even now Catholics are still required to abstain from eating meat on "Good Friday." Also, in some places they must not eat meat on Fridays during the Lenten season.

But why is it considered wrong to eat meat on "Good Friday," but permissible to do so on other Fridays of the year? It has caused thinking persons to wonder.

Many persons have begun to ask questions regarding the basis for this teaching, as well as about other Church teachings. And what especially disturbs them is that they

have not received satisfying answers.

What Becomes Evident

The inability of the Church to explain its position Scripturally makes evident an important fact: The Catholic Church has not based its teachings upon what God's Word says. Rather, it has founded many of its beliefs and practices on the unstable traditions of men.

This is obviously true with regard to Friday meat abstinence. For, look as you may, nowhere in the Bible will you find that Christians were ever instructed to refrain from eating meat on *any* Friday of the year, or on any other day. It is not a requirement of God. In fact, the Catholic



edition of the Revised Standard Version Bible says that enjoining or commanding "abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving" is an evidence of a departure from the faith.
—1 Tim. 4:1-4.

Thus, many truth-seekers are having

their eyes opened to see that the Catholic Church has not been holding strictly to God's Word. And they are wondering whether any religion that does not do so is worthy of their confidence and support.

But there are other changes that are also disturbing people today.

DROPPING OF SAINTS CAUSES CONFUSION

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 10, 1969

200 Catholic Saints Lose Their Feast Days

By ALFRED FRIENDLY Jr.
Assigned to The New York Times
ROME, May 9.—Two of the last vestiges of the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church, Valentine, patron of sweethearts, and Christopher, patron of travelers, were dropped from the official liturgical calendar today in a sweeping change that has removed 200 saints from the list of saints whose feast days are celebrated by the whole church.

The latest round of cancellations of 22 other saints, including St. George of England and St. Nicholas, who has long been known as Santa Claus, were made public.

The revised calendar, including 38 obligatory saints' feast days, was formally approved by Pope Paul VI yesterday.



LAST May Catholics were shocked by front-page newspaper stories that announced the dropping of many of their saints from the Church's official liturgical calendar. Many Catholics evidently understood "dropped" to mean the abolishing of their saints. Confusion and discontent were widespread, and have not died out.

A retired school principal in Argentina said: "What I can't explain is how after so many centuries of worshiping saints just recently the Church declares that it must not be done."

A young man in the Netherlands observed: "Either our forbears have always been cheated or we are now."

Especially were Catholics disturbed in sections of Italy where demoted St. Januarius is worshiped. "Heavens! What on earth are you saying!" exclaimed one woman when the news was brought to her. "One doesn't understand anything anymore. I believe in St. Januarius and I'll keep him."

What do these changes mean? Does the Catholic Church now prohibit veneration of saints? Are religious medals to be discarded?

Conflicting Practices

It depends upon where one lives as to what is practiced. In some places images of saints have been discarded from Catholic churches. Thus a Catholic woman in Canada lamented: "Nothing is the same; they have taken down the statues; even the Virgin Mary had to go from our church."

But in other places little, if any, change has occurred. Catholics still venerate their favorite saints, even though these have been officially 'dropped' or 'downgraded.' A Catholic in a South American country observed: "The Church's declaration is ambiguous, because the Church says that in those towns where these are patron saints there is nothing wrong in continuing the worship of them."

It has caused many persons to wonder: Is it proper for a religion to discard images

as wrong in certain places, and yet permit the use of them in worship in other places? Could Almighty God approve of a religious organization that tolerates practices that are so opposed?—2 Cor. 6:14-16.

A Stand for Truth?

True religion does its utmost to correct error and inform people of the truth. Yet, when the Vatican announcement regarding the dropped saints was made last spring, the official spokesman for New York city's Cardinal Cooke commented: "These changes are not really surprising, as for many, many years there has been doubt as to whether some of these saints were actually saints or simply revered, legendary heroes."

Yes, religious leaders of the Catholic Church for a long time knew that these saints probably never existed, yet they tolerated and even encouraged veneration of them. And they still do! In fact, after the announcement about the dropping of the saints was made, a Vatican weekly observed: "If a saint really never existed God would still see the faith of him who

prays [to the saint] and listen to his supplication."

But is this really true? Does God approve of prayers said to "saints"? Jesus Christ made clear the only way of approach to God, saying: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *No man cometh to the Father, but by me.*" (John 14:6, Douay) These words of Jesus clearly rule out any approach to God by means of prayers said to "saints."

Furthermore, there is nothing in the Bible to show that a religious organization can create "saints." God is the one who sanctifies humans, setting them apart for his holy service. (1 Thess. 5:23) But even those whom God sanctifies are not to be venerated, as evidenced by the fact that Cornelius was not permitted to do obeisance to the apostle Peter. The Bible shows that worshiping even an angel is wrong.—Acts 10:25, 26; Rev. 19:10.

Is it not evident, therefore, that the Catholic Church has not been holding fast to God's truth, and that this has contributed to the religious confusion? But there are still other disturbing changes.



What's going on at CHURCH SERVICES

HAVE you noted that in recent years church services have changed considerably? Almost all religious denominations have been affected.

One young person observed recently: "I don't know what has happened to the

church I knew as a child. Everything has turned so modern, so . . . jazzy." Have there been changes in the church services you attend?

Probably there have been, and no doubt other church services in your community

have experienced similar changes. But you may be surprised to learn to what extent changes have occurred in many places.

What Is Going On

The New York *Times* described one modern church service: "A pall of heavy smoke hung over 300 Episcopalians, huddled on the marble floor, their faces masked. The thudding of an amplified heartbeat reverberated through the stone archways . . . a red spotlight flashed through the haze, and a white one. . . . The beat of a bass guitar replaced the heartbeat as young girls moved into the congregation, drew people up, took off their masks and started to dance."

A rare and isolated occurrence, you say? The paper reported: "Rock services like this one today are common." Yes, many churches have introduced such features to bolster sagging attendances. Even from the Vatican radio has been heard the rush of a beat sound and of a pop singer intoning the lyrics of the song "God Is Dead."

In São Paulo, Brazil, the newspaper *Jornal da Tarde* reported on the adulation bestowed upon a pop singer in a cathedral, and noted editorially: "A few years ago nobody would have imagined it possible to witness such a scene as this. Today, however, all seems quite normal. The consequence is that the people . . . are not able to note the difference between a temple and a television auditorium and its fans."

Remarkably, religious leaders have taken the lead in such innovations. Recently 450 clergy and lay delegates met for the 45th annual British Columbia Conference of the United Church of Canada. The Vancouver *Sun* reported: "They belted each other with balloons. They yelled for more recorded rock—already blaring loud enough to deafen the Archangel." Is it any wonder that people are disturbed?

What should be the purpose of religious services? Should it not be to study the Bible and to learn more about God? Yet is this really the main purpose of church services today? Perhaps you feel like the woman who wrote in *Redbook* of March 1969: "I want a church service where God is the principal theme. . . . But I don't find Him much in church any more."

Many Are Angered

It is a fact that many are unhappy with their church services. In one parish in Italy worshipers strongly expressed their disapproval of the 'beat mass' in which the prayers were alternated with songs accompanied by guitars and organ. "The squabbles quickly degenerated into disorder that was settled only upon the intervention of the police," *Il Messaggero* reported.

Even official changes in the Mass, ordered by the pope to be used in all Catholic churches by November 1971, are being strongly opposed by many Catholics. When the changes were first put into effect in the churches of Italy on November 30, 1969, dissent was widespread. Protest leaflets littered St. Peter's Square even as Pope Paul begged the crowd for indulgence for "this new rite."

It is clear that confusion and unrest are widespread throughout Christendom's churches. They are being battered hither and thither by the winds of change, like a ship that has lost its moorings. They have no apparent guidelines. Rules prescribed yesterday are no longer valid today, and so people conclude that today's rules will not be applicable tomorrow. Not even the Bible is accepted as an authority any longer.

The changes going on in the churches have undoubtedly contributed to their rapid decline. But there are other reasons for the churches' decline.

DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCHES

Add to Confusion

THE changes in the churches have caused confusion among both clergy and laity. Yet, other things that have not changed are also causing as great, or even greater confusion!

One such is the birth-control issue in the Roman Catholic Church. This teaching has not changed for decades. But this very fact is causing division.

Another issue in the Catholic Church is whether priests should be free to marry. In recent years increasing numbers of them have been asking for a change in the Church's law on celibacy.

Then there are doctrinal matters. Clergymen of all religions are disagreeing with the teachings of their own church and are demanding changes.

BIRTH-CONTROL (ISSUE) DIVIDES CHURCH

A LARGE number of Catholics long desired an easing of the Church's ban on artificial methods of birth control. Also hoping for a change were world leaders who are plagued by the problems of poverty and hunger due to 'exploding' populations. In addition, the majority of a commission set up by the pope recommended a change.

Yet, in July of 1968 Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human

Life), in which he restated the Church's position. It banned all methods of artificial birth control, including birth-control pills. The encyclical stated that "each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life."

Widespread Reaction

The pronouncement came like a bomb. It produced an explosion. A front-page headline in the *New York Post* declared:

"POPE'S EDICT STIRS STORM." And the San Francisco *Sunday Examiner & Chronicle* commented:

"It was Pope John XXIII who launched the church on the seas of change with the Ecumenical Council. But it was Pope Paul VI who had to hold the helm as the winds grew stormier over the last five years....

"With the pontiff's birth control encyclical the helm has nearly been wrenched from the . . . Pope's grasp.

"The Barque of St. Peter, as the Church is often called, is rocking badly in the waves of dissent from priests and laymen."

Large numbers of Catholics everywhere were shocked and angry. Rarely had so many of them spoken out so strongly. A Catholic mother in the United States said: "Who is the Pope to come into my bedroom?" A Frenchman with four children declared: "I think the Pope is wrong. I shall ignore the Pope's ban."

In Argentina a poll taken by the magazine *Manchete* found that the great majority of women of childbearing age disagreed with the pope. Even 52 percent of the women over 50 years of age said the pope was wrong. And 84 percent felt that family planning was a personal responsibility that should not be dictated by the Church.

It is said that about 70 percent of Catholic women in the United States use birth-control devices. Few of these had their minds changed by the encyclical. This point was noted by priest Robert Fox from Chicago's Loyola University, who stated bluntly: "There are millions of people to whom the pope seems to be saying, 'You are in sin.' . . . They're answering back, 'The hell we are!'" This attitude was shown in a manifesto issued by an 800-member layman's association in Los Angeles. It declared: "We simply reject Pope Paul's ban on birth control and ask all mature Catholics to do the same."

The pope's encyclical also received

shocking jolts from many clergymen. Catholic theologian John G. Milhaven told a large crowd assembled at Fordham University in New York: "I cannot accept this teaching as true, nor do most of my colleagues, nor do most Catholics under the age of 45—and many over that age, too." At this, the audience, which included about 300 priests and nuns, broke into vigorous applause.

Jan Bluyssen, Bishop of Den Bosch in the Netherlands, stated flatly: "I cannot agree with the encyclical." French bishops showed they could not completely accept it either, for the Houston *Chronicle* reported: "The Roman Catholic Church of France has ruled artificial birth control among church members 'not always sinful.' A declaration from 120 French bishops Friday said Roman Catholics should decide individually whether to use contraceptives in spite of Pope Paul's ban."

However, in some places Catholic priests who spoke out against the ban were disciplined by conservative bishops and removed from their posts.

The Effects

So some Catholic clergymen rejected the ban; others tried to bend it; conservative ones upheld it. These theologians disagreed with one another publicly, and often angrily. The result was to be expected—more confusion. The average churchgoer's confidence in his church was further shaken. Many thousands, in disgust, joined others leaving the church.

Church authorities admit that the ban has widened the gulf between Catholics and their hierarchy. They also admit that it will encourage many priests and nuns to leave their assignments, as well as discourage young people from entering a religious life.

Not only has great confusion been caused by this division of opinion in the

Church, but it has exposed the whole idea of papal authority to fierce criticism. Said the Manchester *Guardian Weekly* in this regard:

"Undoubtedly a long-term effect of the Pope's encyclical will be to weaken respect for his moral authority and for the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. When the shock has worn off . . . there will remain the

scars of a new wound inflicted on the Church by her leaders. . . .

"For many Catholics at least, this latest pronouncement . . . is painfully reminiscent of the . . . condemnation of Galileo."

This bitter division over birth control puts the Church far from the unity that God's Word says must exist in the true Christian congregation.—1 Cor. 1:10.

Should Priests Be Free to Marry

ANOTHER issue dividing Catholic clergymen is the question: Should priests be free to marry?

Church law forbids a priest to marry. He must remain celibate. If a priest marries without a dispensation freeing him from his vows, he is to be excommunicated.

But in recent years, many priests demanded a change. They wanted the right to marry and remain priests. In 1966 a poll by the *National Catholic Reporter* revealed that 62 percent of the priests questioned said they should be free to marry.

However, in 1967 Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (Priestly Celibacy). It reaffirmed the



'hard line' of the Church on this question and disapproved public discussion of it. The pope declared: 'Priestly celibacy has been guarded by the Church for centuries as a brilliant jewel, and retains its value undiminished.'

But this did not stop priests from publicly talking about the problem. All over the world they continued to mount objections.

For instance, early in 1969 a report from Paris by the *Melbourne Herald* stated: "A group of 425 French Catholic priests today condemned the authority of the church, and demanded the right to marry." Later in the year a survey of priests in Italy showed that the majority favored priests marrying.

Roman Catholic cardinal John Wright

of Pittsburgh said that the Church's strong stand on celibacy was a major factor in the dropping number of Catholic priests. Giving weight to this opinion, the *New York Times* noted that the number now asking for dispensation from their celibacy vow "was more than 10 times that in 1963, according to a secret Vatican report disclosed today by the Turin newspaper *La Stampa*." Others did not ask. They just left.

Also being affected are young men who were thinking about becoming priests. Catholic writer Daniel Callahan says:

"One of these new circumstances is a recent and accelerating decline in the number of candidates for the priesthood . . . Though this decline is by no means exclusively traceable to the celibacy issue, it is one common reason given by young men for not entering the priesthood.

"The situation is already acute in some parts of the world. During the Second Vatican Council, a Brazilian bishop, Peter Koop, stated, 'We have to make a choice right away; either to multiply the number of priests, both celibate and married, or look forward to the collapse of the church in Latin America.' "

Where Did It Originate?

Some people feel that celibacy must have originated with Jesus Christ or his apostles. So they are surprised to read statements such as that of former Pope John XXIII, who said:

"Ecclesiastical celibacy is not a dogma. The Scriptures do not impose it. It is even easy to effect a change. I take a pen, I sign a decree and, the next day, priests who wish to may get married. But I cannot."

Why not? One of several reasons is that it is such a deep-rooted Church tradition. The first Church council forbidding marriage for the higher clergy was held at Elvira, Spain, in the fourth century. Over

the centuries, other decrees reinforced this. Then, during the period of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent passed legislation enforcing celibacy. It has remained much the same up to the present time.

Thus, celibacy has been acquired by tradition. As former high-ranking Catholic theologian Charles Davis said:

"The taboo was not Christian in origin; it is a very ancient one in the history of religion. Its introduction into Christianity was part of the general shift toward paganism . . .

"The insistence upon celibacy was reinforced in the Middle Ages by concern to keep Church property from passing under secular control."

No, neither Jesus nor his apostles required celibacy among God's servants. While they showed that a single person would have more freedom to serve God, they did not lay down a law of celibacy.
—Matt. 19:11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:32-38.

God's own Word, the Bible, according to the Catholic *Douay* version says: "It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife . . . One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all chastity." It also says: "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife: who rule well their children, and their own houses." (1 Tim. 3:2-4, 12) So the doctrine of priestly celibacy does not originate with God, for his own Word clearly shows that his ministers are free to marry.

From where, then, do such doctrines that go contrary to God's will originate? God's own Word answers: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in after times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies hypocritically, and having their conscience branded. They will forbid marriage."—1 Tim. 4:1-3, *Catholic Confraternity*.

It is no wonder, then, that there is such confusion in the Catholic Church on this matter. And that confusion will likely continue, for German theologian Hans

Kung said: "There will be no peace in the Catholic Church until such time as celibacy has again become a matter for individual choice, as it originally was."

TEACHINGS IN CONFFLICT

IT USED to be that you knew what a clergyman would teach just by noting his religion. He would teach the beliefs of that religion. But this is no longer the case.

Today, within every church system in Christendom, clergymen in good standing with their religion are disagreeing. Not only do they disagree with other clergymen in their religion, but they disagree with the teachings of their own religion. This includes basic doctrinal beliefs.

Doctrinal Differences

For instance, most church systems officially hold to the doctrine of hellfire. This says that gross sinners will be tormented with physical pain for eternity. Indeed, during the ecumenical council, the Catholic Church reaffirmed the reality of hell as a place of eternal punishment for sins.

Yet, more and more priests and ministers of all religions are teaching different things about hell. They may say that hell is only a state of mind, or that it is merely separateness from God, or that it is just

'hell on earth,' thus contradicting their own religion's official belief. Pastor Kaj Jensen of Denmark said in his book *Where Do We Go?*:

"The talk of everlasting perdition is crazy. It is not Christianity. It was only in times past that there were hell preachers who from the pulpit thundered about the devil and the inextinguishable fire. But that time is over."

How do you think people feel who have believed their church's teaching of hellfire all their lives when they hear such statements by their clergymen now?

Three Australian Presbyterian clergymen publicly expressed disbelief in the immortality of the human soul, although their church system teaches this. One of the clergymen, Ian Steer, said: "The problem is that to some extent there is a double standard. This is not confined to the Presbyterian Church. Ministers are taught one thing and sometimes teach another."

From childhood, Catholics were taught total obedience to the authority of the Catholic Church. But when 37 prominent priests, nuns and other Catholic leaders in the Netherlands were asked how they felt about this obedience to the Church's authority, many said they could no longer give such obedience.

In regard to Church authority, Catholic theologian John L. Mackenzie, a Jesuit priest who has taught at Notre Dame

University, said bluntly that the Church was run by "an ecclesiastical Mafia." The Toronto *Daily Star* added: "He [Mackenzie] goes so far as to liken the institutional church today to a rat-hole. 'And one does not like to hear that one has poured one's life into a rat-hole,' he says."

Younger clergymen are especially outspoken in contradicting their church's teachings.

Sexual Morality

Most churchgoers expect their clergymen to promote high moral standards. But clergymen now are greatly divided on the subject of sexual morality. More and more of them are saying that fornication, adultery and homosexuality are not wrong.

In England, Methodist minister Lord Soper said: "The idea that sex should be confined to marriage is ridiculous." Episcopal minister F. C. Wood told an all-girl college in Maryland: "There are no laws attached to sex. I repeat: absolutely no laws. . . . Premarital intercourse . . . can be very beautiful." And director of the Roman Catholic Newman Center at Arizona State University, priest Thomas Walsh, said:

"It's not such a big deal for a girl to say she is a virgin if she has never permitted herself to be touched. She makes the grade [stays a virgin] by being inhuman. I would prefer a person who was loving and outgoing to others, even if she is not a virgin. . . . It's not our place to preach morality."

But if men who profess to be ministers of God will not preach morality, who should? And how do you view the decision of ninety Episcopal priests in New York who agreed that the church should classify homosexual acts as "morally neutral"?

To determine what you really think of this new trend toward approval of fornication, adultery and homosexuality, ask

yourself: Would I approve of my daughter committing fornication? Would I approve of my wife having sexual intercourse with another man, or my husband sleeping with another woman? Would I tell my son it is all right for him to become a homosexual?

You should also consider something even more important: What does God think of the matter? Of that there can be no doubt. He tells us in his Word: "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 Effect

All of this confusion and division in the churches over what they should teach is having its effect. Many people now feel the same as British author Malcolm Muggeridge, who said:

"Institutional Christianity, it seems to me, is now in total disarray, and visibly decomposing, to the point that, short of a miracle, it can never be put together again with any semblance of order or credibility."

"In its present state of decomposition, institutional Christianity is . . . just a joke."

Many church members are disgusted with the divisions within the churches on so many teachings and practices. They have lost confidence in their clergymen. So they are abandoning the churches.

But it is important for you to know that the divided churches of Christendom do not represent Christianity. Their very divided state proves that, for the Bible counsels that true Christians "should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought. Does the Christ exist divided?"—1 Cor. 1:10, 13.

True Christians are not divided. But the churches are.

INVOLVEMENT in WORLDLY AFFAIRS



Disturbs Many

of their political agitating. And in the United States, the *Chicago Tribune* noted: "Of 441 persons arrested in recent street disturbances there, 61 of the adult males—26 percent—were clergymen."

Is It Proper?

Do you think it is proper for clergymen thus to meddle in worldly affairs? Many persons do not think it is, and they are disturbed and even angered.

In South Africa, a government leader, Ben Schoeman, angrily said: "We are growing tired of political bishops. They use their pulpits to justify their dirty attacks on the government." Similarly, in Bridgend, Glamorgan, England, members of a Baptist church became incensed by political sermons. One member said: "The minister is a fanatic about politics. . . . We go to chapel to hear the Gospel—not that nonsense."

The *Berlin Morning Post* noted that the political meddling of church leaders has incurred the "indignation and anger of many," and concluded: "A church, which believes politics are more important than preaching . . . has become offensive."—August 29, 1969.

Do you feel the same way? Have you wondered how such activity could possibly be Christian? But many persons also find offensive the advocating by some clergymen of violent revolution. And these ministers have official church justification for their views!

For example, at its Uppsala, Sweden, assembly in 1968 the World Council of Churches, which has some 237 member churches, declared: "The building of political structures suitable to national development involves revolutionary changes in social structures. . . . In countries where the ruling groups are oppressive . . . the revolutionary change may take a violent form."—*Uppsala Speaks*, page 48.

CLERGYMEN are frequent-
ly in the news today. When you pick up a newspaper or magazine it is not unusual to read about their involvement in worldly affairs. Many of them now join in protest activities, participate in civil disobedience and even advocate revolution and violence under certain circumstances.

The Argentine news magazine *Analysis* observed: "In the last weeks of 1968, some 150 Catholic priests created political expectation in various parts of the country. Thus in Córdoba they advocated the need for violent revolution: in Neuquén, Chaco and Tucumán, they harassed the government . . . while in Buenos Aires they presented [President] Onganía with a petition."

In Brazil, too, church leaders have come into conflict with the government because

And Joseph Michenfelder, a Maryknoll priest who directs the Catholic Information Service in Peru, explains: "The Catholic revolutionaries are basing their efforts on the Popes' encyclicals, especially the recent 'Development of Peoples,' which [supports] . . . violent revolution."

What Does God's Word Say?

But does God's Word advise Christian ministers to meddle in worldly affairs, and even participate in violent revolution? Never do we read of this in the Bible!

Rather, the Bible says: "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) In full agreement, Jesus Christ said: "My kingdom is no part of this world." And he also said that his true followers "are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 18:36; 17:16) But what about the organizations of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism?

How clear it should be that they *are* part of the world, often working hand-in-glove with political leaders. What should this mean to you? Well, if the churches are not following the proper example set forth in God's Word, should you continue to go to church? Could the churches really be approved by God? Certainly in this matter they are not doing God's will!

No Basic Change

Nor should the recent publicity to these matters cause you to think that the churches' deep involvement in worldly affairs represents a basic change for them. Not at all! They have long meddled in politics, even requiring support by their peoples of worldly wars. Thus Catholic historian Gordon Zahn admits: "The Church did become an agency of social

control operating in behalf of the Nazi state insofar as insuring wholehearted Catholic support of the [second world] war was concerned."—*German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*, page 202.

Nation's Business of August 1964 accurately notes the result of this support of the world wars by the churches:

"The armies of 1914 were composed of Catholics, Protestants and Jews in roughly equal numbers on both sides. Equally acclaimed, or disregarded, on both sides were the teaching of the Hebrew prophets and of Christ Himself. Disdain of religious precepts, it is noted, became even more pronounced in the second war."

A Catholic, distressed by the unchristian course of the churches, wrote in a Catholic journal:

"See how in World War I, the German and Italian Catholics hated and killed their American and English brothers and we, acting in a like manner, killed our German brethren in Christ. In World War II this same horrible scene was repeated when most Catholics obeyed their respective States and in hatred and fear killed those whom Christ insists they love. . . .

"If the State would order us to kill ourselves we would refuse to obey . . . However, if the State tells us to kill our innocent brother living in another land we generally do so, forgetting entirely, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' and that 'Love does no evil to a neighbor.'"—*The Sign*, September 1955.

The bloodguilt of Christendom cannot be denied. Pope Paul, on the first day of 1970, acknowledged: "Our hands are still bloodstained from the last World Wars."—*New York Times*, January 2, 1970.

Yet the churches continue their meddling in worldly affairs, becoming ever more involved. But more and more persons grow disgusted with them, so their decline rapidly gains momentum. And what eventually happens to the churches will directly affect you. Why so?

What Will Happen to the Churches?

TO UNDERSTAND what will happen to the churches, you

first need to appreciate just why they are in such confusion today. The basic reason the Bible gives is this: "Look! They have rejected the very word of Jehovah, and what wisdom do they have?"—Jer. 8:9.

Would you trust the scribbling of a baby as a road map for a dangerous journey instead of a map produced by highway authorities? You know you would get lost if you did that. The churches have done this with the Bible. They have abandoned the guidance of man's infallible Creator and have turned to the ideas of imperfect, sinful men. So now the churches are lost.

God inspired the Bible as a guide for man. It tells us the truth about the Creator, who he is and what his purposes are toward man and the earth. We are assured: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

The apostle Paul appreciated God's Word, saying: "When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in

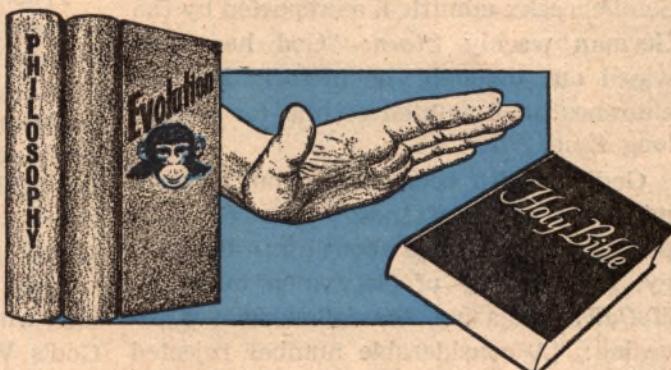
—The Meaning for You

you believers." (1 Thess. 2:13) To safeguard fellow believers, Paul warned: "Do not go beyond the things that are written," in order that you may not be puffed up individually in favor of the one against the other."—1 Cor. 4:6.

Abandoning God's Word

The clergy of Christendom's churches generally do not have that attitude toward the Bible today. Growing numbers of them do not accept it as the Word of God. Note just a few of many such reports about their real attitude:

Methodist clergyman Robert Anders of the United States: "The Bible is the greatest collection of mythology in the history of Western Civilization."—Time magazine.



Growing numbers of clergymen do not accept the Bible as being the Word of God, but give first place to the philosophies of men

"America's leading Presbyterian Church has rejected the traditional doctrine that the Bible is infallible."—*Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, Australia.

Dean Rosco Brong of Lexington Baptist College, Kentucky: "Baptist churches are being overrun and their testimony destroyed by a flood of infidels masquerading as ministers poured out of modernistic colleges and seminaries—infidel preachers who deny the Bible, serve self instead of Christ."—*Ashland Avenue Baptist*, Lexington, Kentucky.

Such represents the general trend among clergymen today. Even the *Reader's Digest* acknowledged this, saying: "Many of the church's top leaders today—especially in what are called the 'mainstream' denominations—are sorely failing its members in two ways: 1) by succumbing to a creeping tendency to downgrade the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and 2) by efforts to shift the church's main thrust from the spiritual to the secular."

Killing Belief in God

By killing the Bible in the eyes of the people, the clergy have helped to kill belief in God. Many people reason that if the Bible is not God's guide for man and since the churches are in such confusion, then perhaps God does not exist. Even the Dutch Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx admitted, as reported by the German weekly *Stern*: "God has been wiped out through the picture that the churches have painted of him for a long, long time."

God has also been "wiped out" in the minds of many of those who were supposed to teach people about him—the clergy. In a survey of clergymen taken by *McCall's* magazine, the following was revealed: "A considerable number rejected altogether the idea of a personal God."

While this killing of the Bible and belief in God by the clergy has picked up

speed in recent years, it is not really new. The Victoria, British Columbia, *Colonist* stated: "So-called modern ideas of the Bible have been taught to every Anglican and United Church theological student since 1920." This is true of students in practically every seminary in the world. Thus, commentator Louis Cassels, in a United Press International dispatch, stated:

"People look to the church, and especially to its ordained ministers, to help them find their way to a living, renewing, transforming faith in God. But how can a pastor point anyone else to such a faith if he himself is devoid of it, as a substantial number of young ministers (and some not so young) privately confess themselves to be?"

Cassels also said: "The more famous the seminary, the more corrosive the atmosphere of skepticism pervading its faculty and student body is apt to be."

What About Your Clergyman?

Has your clergyman taught you God's Word? Have you learned from him the Bible's answers to vital questions such as these: Why does man die? Where are the dead? Why has God permitted wickedness for so long? What is God's remedy for this world's troubles? What does the future hold for you?

True, your clergyman may say that he respects the Bible. He may even quote from it. But does he accept it all as being God's inspired Word? Has he really taught you from it? You can find out quickly by applying this simple test: Can you go to the Bible and show someone else the answers to the questions in the previous paragraph?

Also, does your religion tolerate clergymen who do not accept the Bible as being God's Word? Does your own clergyman defend the Bible against these enemies of God's Word who are increasing in all the churches of Christendom? The Bible

warns: "A little leaven [yeast] ferments the whole lump." (Gal. 5:9) One rotten apple, if not removed, will spoil the whole barrel of apples. But church systems have not removed from their ranks clergymen who downgrade the Bible; rather, they remain in good standing. That is why the churches are so thoroughly infected with ungodly teachings.

Paying the Price

The Bible also warns: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) The clergy have sown disrespect for the Bible and its Author, Jehovah God. Their harvest cannot be good.

Some of that harvest is already being reaped by the clergy: great confusion in the churches; church members leaving by the tens of thousands; enrollment in seminaries and religious orders dropping swiftly; priests, ministers and nuns quitting in record numbers.

Since the clergy say that the Bible is no longer to be relied upon and even question belief in God's existence, many people now logically wonder why they need the clergy at all. Thus, the clergy have sown the seeds of their own destruction! As England's Lancashire *Evening Post* of November 12, 1969, said:

"The lost authority of the pulpit as well as less respect for statements made by church ministers were mainly due to the less regard for the Bible, claimed the Rev. Frank Ocken-den, Supt. Minister of Garstang Methodist Circuit.

"In his monthly newsletter, he says: 'Having been told by so many whose office requires them to teach that the Bible is the word of God, that it is not so, an authority has been destroyed for which there is no substitute.' . . .

"The result has been a disastrous loss of confidence in the Christian religion and an abandonment of Christian standards of moral behaviour."

The Future

However, do not think that the future of the churches will be only a continued drop in church members and clergymen. True, that will likely continue to pick up speed in the next few years. But something far more serious than that is in store for them.

Jesus Christ said: "A good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire."—Matt. 7:17-19.

What kind of "fruit" are the clergy producing? Since they are turning people away from God and his Word, the truthful answer must be that they are producing "worthless fruit." What kind of "tree" did Jesus say produces that kind of fruit? A "rotten tree." Where will such a "tree" end up? It "gets cut down and thrown into the fire."

Make no mistake about it. The clergy of Christendom are NOT serving God today. They are NOT his representatives. To such ones Jehovah in effect says: "I myself did not send them or command them. So they will by no means benefit this people." (Jer. 23:32) Ask yourself: If God was with the churches, would they be in such confusion today? The Organizer of the fantastic universe of thousands of millions of stars and planets—could he not organize the churches if they were his? Their very condition is proof that God is not with them, for "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." —1 Cor. 14:33.

What, then, is God's judgment for the churches? Speaking of all false religion as though it were a harlot, the Bible says: "In one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong."

(Rev. 18:8) Destructive forces "will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire."—Rev. 17:16.

That judgment from God will rid the earth forever of churches and clergymen who turn people away from the right worship of God: "She will never be found again." (Rev. 18:21) Then, God will turn his attention to the rest of this wicked world, including other haters of God and his Word. The Bible clearly shows that their end is also nearing, for the destruction of false religion comes just before God destroys the rest of this wicked system of things.—Rev. 19:17-21.

So the real meaning of what is happening in the churches is that we are very close to the time when "the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

Thus, the doing of God's will in these days is a matter of life or death for us all. That is why it is now urgent for you to examine your relationship to God. Nothing you will do in the next few years will be more important than that. You need to find out if your way of worship meets with God's approval, for you could be connected with a religion that God has abandoned to destruction.

How to Identify the TRUE RELIGION



BUT you may ask: How can a person know what is the right way to worship? How can he determine which is the true religion? Is there any sure way of identifying it?

Yes, there is. Jesus Christ gave the rule for doing this. He explained that the true servants of God could be distinguished from the false ones by what they produce. He said: "By their fruits you will recog-

nize them." (Matt. 7:16) Therefore, it is possible to identify the true religion by the fruitage produced by its people.

What, then, are some of the fine fruits that true worshipers would produce? Is there really one religion whose people stand out as different from all the others because of their producing these fruits? Let us see.

Love Among Themselves

Jesus said that having love among themselves would distinguish his true followers from other people. He said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." —John 13:35.

This love that would distinguish Christ's true followers is not expressed merely with the lips, but it deeply affects their way of life. It influences their attitude toward peoples of all races and nationalities. Do the churches with which you are acquainted instill in their members such genuine love? For example, what happens when grievances between worldly nations lead to war?

The facts show that by far the majority of religions have blessed their members who have taken up weapons and slaughtered their fellow believers of another race or nationality on the battle-fields. Do you think that such a course is demonstrating love toward fellow believers? Could you, for instance, imagine Jesus preaching a sermon urging his disciples to kill one another at the command of the State just because they happened to be living in different nations? No, such a course is not in accord with the Bible, nor does it reflect the spirit of God.—1 John 3:10-12; Matt. 5:44.

There is a religion, however, that refuses to become entangled in such strife in any way, regardless of the pressures brought upon it to do so. Magdalen Goffin, London history scholar, noted that during the second world war "the only group consistently to stand up to Hitler (and they are today repeating their defiance in the Soviet Union) were the Jehovah's Witnesses." Emphasizing the contrast, she said: "Both the Evangelical Church and [the] Catholic Church . . . became the tools of Fascism. For this the Catholic bishops and the Papacy must shoulder the

main responsibility."—*The New York Review of Books*, August 21, 1969.

Just think how pleasant life could be if all persons on earth would demonstrate the Christian fruitage of love! But actually, such pleasant relations between peoples are possible. The Sacramento, California, *Union* commented editorially: "Suffice it to say that if all the world lived by the creed of the Jehovah['s] Witnesses there would be an end of bloodshed and hatred, and love would reign as king." —July 9, 1965.

Respect for God's Word

Another way in which the true religion can be identified is by its attitude toward God's Word the Bible. Jesus at all times demonstrated respect for God's Word, time and again appealing to it as the final authority on matters. (Matt. 19:4-6; Luke 24:44, 45) How do the churches of Christendom measure up in this regard? Do they have such deep respect for the Bible?

Well, what have we seen in connection with a number of church teachings; for example, the Roman Catholic teaching on celibacy? Why, even Pope John XXIII said that "the Scriptures do not impose it." The Scriptures, in fact, show that marriage for Christian ministers is proper. (1 Cor. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12) Yet the church continues to impose celibacy upon its clergymen. Is it showing respect for the Bible to prescribe rules that are in opposition to Bible teachings?

But there is a religion that is outstandingly noted for its adherence to and respect for the Bible. Last summer *France-Soir*, a leading French newspaper, said: "The doctrines of Jehovah's witnesses are based on the Bible." England's *Weekly News*, September 27, 1969, also observed: "Perhaps the real secret of the Witnesses' success is because they know their Bible so well, they're able to answer any ques-

tion convincingly with a Biblical quote."

Jehovah's witnesses also build respect and confidence of others toward God's Word, as the Catholic magazine *Ave Maria*, February 24, 1962, notes: They "are willing to spend any amount of time studying with an interested householder."

Sanctify God's Name

The true religion also stands out from all others because of the concern it shows for God's name, which the Bible reveals is Jehovah. (Ps. 83:18)* Jesus set the example in honoring the name of God, making it known to his disciples, and even teaching them to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your *name* be sanctified." —Matt. 6:9; John 17:6, 26.

Well, then, do the churches of Christendom sanctify God's name? Do they treat it as something holy, and make it manifest to mankind, as Jesus did? Is there a religious group that is prominently known for publishing the name of God?

Yes, there is one religion whose people are outstandingly noted for their devotion to Jehovah! Marcus Bach, writing in *Adult Student* of November 1956, observed: "In the ranks of Jehovah's witnesses are people of every class and culture; but they all hold one element in common: allegiance to Jehovah."

Proclaim the Kingdom of God

The true religion can further be identified by its preaching of God's kingdom. Jesus Christ also set the example in bearing this fruitage, for he journeyed "from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God." (Luke 8:1) And his first-century followers imitated him, call-

ing with the Kingdom message "from house to house."—Acts 20:20, 25.

Who, then, are taking the Kingdom message to the homes of the people today, and doing it in the way Jesus and his apostles did? When you see a minister calling from house to house and you hear him talk about God's kingdom as mankind's true hope, with what religion do you usually associate him?

Identifying that organization, Charles Samuel Braden writes in his book *These Also Believe*: "No single religious group in the world displayed more zeal and persistence in the attempt to spread the good news of the Kingdom than the Jehovah's Witnesses."

Separate from the World

Yet another distinguishing mark of the true religion is its obedience to the Bible requirement to keep separate from the world and its affairs. Jesus Christ showed the proper position of true worshipers when he said: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." —John 17:16.

But what about the churches in your community? Are they and their clergy really "no part of the world"? Do they keep separate from its affairs? You know the answer to such questions.

However, you probably also know about a people in your community who refrain from involvement in the world and its affairs. Commenting about Jehovah's witnesses, *Chicago Today*, October 18, 1969, said: "Their belief pattern, moreover, calls for total noninvolvement with the political society in which they dwell." They really are "no part of the world."

Has not this examination been helpful in identifying the true religion? Yes, it is by such an investigation that the true servants of God can be distinguished from

* Some translations substitute the title Lord for the name Jehovah. However, in the original Hebrew the proper name of God appears. This name is usually translated Jehovah, but the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* renders it Yahweh.

the false ones. But there is another factor that bears consideration.

Prosperity of True Religion

While the churches and their clergy are in confusion, disintegration and decline, there is a religion today that is enjoying marvelous spiritual prosperity. *Newsweek* of January 5, 1970, observes: "The Catholic diocese of Rothenburg [Germany], for example, reports that 'entire families are suddenly converting to the Jehovah's witnesses.'" Actually thousands of persons every week, on the average, are

now associating with Jehovah's witnesses and taking up true worship.

What does all this indicate? Who are showing true Christian love? What religion is noted for its high regard for the Bible? Who are sanctifying, that is, treating as holy, God's name Jehovah? What people are diligent in proclaiming the kingdom of God? And who keep separate from the world and its affairs?

Yes, what religious group does *all* of these things? And which group has the evidence of God's blessing?

THE WISE COURSE TO TAKE

SURELY the wise course to take is to investigate further, proving to your own satisfaction which is the true religion. Do not conclude that this is too difficult to do, or that there is no provision for such an investigation. There is.

True, the churches have woefully neglected study of God's Word. But Jehovah's witnesses in your community will be happy to assist you to learn the basic teachings of the Bible. They have a program designed for this purpose. Commenting on the benefit of their regular Bible discussions, one person wrote in a prominent Canadian church magazine, *The United Church Observer*:

"It has only been through Jehovah's Witnesses that I have been able to discuss and argue and finally develop a keener understanding of Christianity, of God and his works, because with them, we always look up questions in the Bible. It's

not possible to absorb much in an hour on Sunday, and there's so much difference of opinion amongst our clergy that you can't take anyone of them too seriously."

The program of Bible study offered by Jehovah's witnesses discusses the basic Bible teachings. This will allow you to see whether yours or any other religion measures up to what the Bible actually teaches. How rewarding this can be! Many questions that you perhaps have always wondered about will be answered to your satisfaction. Questions such as, What happens to a person when he dies? Where are the dead? Why has God permitted wickedness? What future is there for the earth and man?

Would you not enjoy learning the answer of God's Word to these and many other important questions? They are all covered in the Bible-study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Truly it is



Those who take the wise course now will enjoy forever the peace of a Paradise earth under God's kingdom

significant that, next to the Bible, this is the most widely circulated book in the Western world. In less than two years over 25 million copies of this book have been printed in more than 40 languages.

This book is designed especially for Bible discussions, with printed questions on the material under discussion being provided at the bottom of each page. Over a million persons are now benefiting from such weekly discussions that are conducted free of charge in the privacy of their own homes. Jehovah's witnesses in your

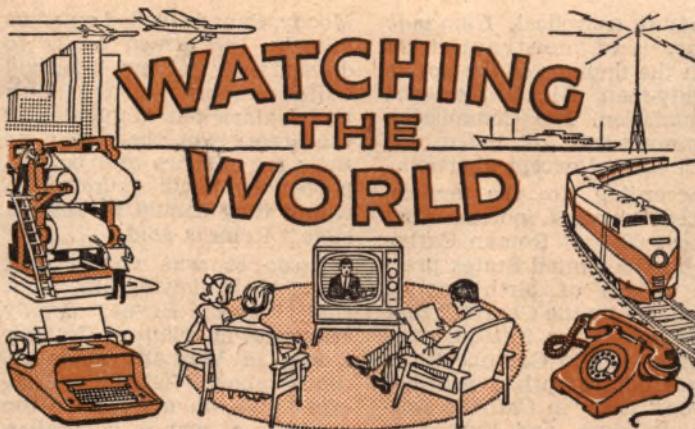
community also will be happy to assist you in such a study.

And what can persons who take the wise course now expect? "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth."—Prov. 2:21, 22.

Those who do God's will are promised survival when this wicked system ends. They will be ushered into a righteous new order of things: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisi-

site delight in the abundance of peace. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Ps. 37:11, 29; Rev. 21:3, 4) Everlasting life on a peaceful earth—what a grand blessing from God!

Truly the wise course to take in these momentous times is to study carefully God's own Word the Bible. Only in this way can you be sure of worshiping Jehovah God in the way that he approves, and avoiding false religion that will soon experience his judgment. Jesus Christ emphasized the importance of taking this wise course when he said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Therefore, do not put off beginning a serious study of God's Word!



Deserting Churches

◆ A special report out of Paris shocked many when it revealed that some 18,000 churches and chapels have been abandoned or are at the point of being abandoned in France. The Toronto Star stated that that figure would mean that "about half of the places of worship in France face either extinction or decay in the relatively near future unless religious and lay authorities intervene promptly."

One religious commentator is quoted as saying: "Not since the wars of religion in the 16th century have churches in France suffered so much!" They are suffering from neglect, from dwindling attendance, from lack of funds, and from vandals with an eye for valuable antiques. Also some parish priests, in order to finance improvements in their churches, are selling furniture, vases, carpets, candelabras and chandeliers.

Clergy Disavow Bible

◆ When 10,000 Protestant clergymen in the United States were asked what they believed, over 7,400 gave replies. They were asked: "Do you believe that Jesus' resurrection is an historical fact?" Fifty-one percent of the Methodist ministers said "No." Thirty percent of the Episcopal priests of America could not accept it, nor

could 35 percent of the United Presbyterian preachers, 33 percent of the American Baptist preachers, 13 percent of the American Lutheran preachers and 7 percent of the Missouri Synod Lutheran ministers.

When asked if they believed in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ as a biological miracle, 60 percent of America's Methodist preachers said emphatically "No," as did 44 percent of the Episcopal priests and 49 percent of the Lutheran ministers.

When they were asked about the Bible itself, 82 percent of the Methodist preachers said they did not believe it is the inspired Word of God, and the same reply was given by 89 percent of the Episcopal priests, 81 percent of the Presbyterian clergy, 57 percent of the American Baptist clergy and 57 percent of the American Lutheran clergy.

If you are wondering what has happened to faith in America, look at its teachers. "My brothers, a fig tree cannot produce olives or a vine figs, can it?" (Jas. 3:12) Neither can faithless men build faith.

"Crisis of Disunity"

◆ The Roman Catholic Church is facing a "crisis of disunity," said a Roman Catholic bishop from Canada and an American Jesuit priest. The only way the crisis can be remedied, they

said, is to let bishops, priests, religious and the laity share in the decision-making responsibilities. They believe all levels of the church must have a voice in directing its destiny. The first step toward this goal, they said, would require a closing of the 'communications gap' between priests and bishops.

Priest Joseph H. Fichter, a sociologist on the faculty of Harvard University, stated that the American church had become "disunited, polarized and pluralized to the point of open disagreement on important issues." He stated that "in many instances clergy and laity are moving apart. . . . Some of them [the laity] are going their own way, and they 'couldn't care less' what the priests say." The clergy, too, he said, are walking away in spectacular and increasing numbers.

"Is Religion Obsolete?"

◆ Thirty-nine-year-old Presbyterian minister Robert Larson quit his Pittsburgh pulpit to become a television program director. He is using the television network to stir up debate on the question: "Is religion obsolete?" Larson is concerned over declining church attendance among young people. He says they blame the drop in part on hypocrisy of the traditional church structure. "You can't fool these youngsters," he says. "They can tell whether the church is truly involved in community problems or is just piously ministering to the spiritual comfort of the elderly well-to-do."

A sample remark from a Harrisburg girl was published: "All the churches are so concerned about getting all the members they can and keeping the members and getting the money. Everything the church does is for its own survival. They're ignoring everything that religion is really supposed to stand for." Baptist minister Paul Gehris contends: "It's

not religion that's obsolete, it's the vast, wealthy church corporation." And he says: "If American churches don't make more changes, they'll see more and more decline."

Priest in Politics

◆ Jesuit priest Robert F. Drinan tossed the biretta of a Roman Catholic priest into the political arena in Massachusetts. The forty-nine-year-old vice-president and provost of Boston College and dean of its law school is running for a Congressional seat. He saw no church-state problem in his candidacy. As far as can be determined, only one Catholic priest has ever served in the United States Congress, although several Protestant ministers have served in the House of Representatives.

New Freedom for Nuns

◆ It is estimated that about 5,000 nuns left Roman Catholic religious orders in 1969 in the United States. Some left to marry, some to enter the secular world, others simply to melt away into the mass of humanity. They are not content with the traditional concepts of religious service. Nun Joan O'Shea, dean of students at Rosary College in River Forest, sees a time when many convents will become "apartments or houses" in which women may serve for short periods of time, rather than taking vows for life.

Science, the Church and the Pill

◆ Professor of Biology Jeffrey J. W. Baker, presently at Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Connecticut, took a critical look at the inability of the Roman Catholic Church to reconcile conflicts between science and Vatican dogma. In an article entitled "Science, Birth Control, and the Roman Catholic Church," which appeared in the February 1 issue of *BioScience*, Dr. Baker examined Pope Paul VI's 1968 birth-

control encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, and contrasted it with the findings of the pope's twenty-man Birth Control Commission. The Commission recommended all means of birth control except abortion.

According to the article, "recent surveys indicate that almost 80% of Roman Catholics in the United States practice means of birth control forbidden by the Church," that there are "over 900,000 abortions a year in Catholic Italy, where contraceptives are outlawed," that "in Catholic Austria, Belgium, and France, it is estimated that there is at least one abortion for every live birth," that "in Uruguay the ratio is three abortions to every live birth." Dr. Baker appealed to the academic community for support of those Roman Catholic laymen and clergy who, often at great personal sacrifice, have spoken out against the pope's encyclical.

'Is Armageddon Near?'

◆ The above question was asked by a California newspaper focusing attention on the population explosion problem. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, room must be found for about 100,000,000 more Americans by the year 2000. The paper says: "In light of already severe environmental problems, such figures have prompted some scientists to circle a date on the calendar for an Armageddon sometime in the middle or latter years of this decade." It adds that scientists who are most alarmed about environmental deterioration consider the population boom already so far out of hand that global famine, pestilence and war probably are unavoidable.

Priest Raps Chaplains

◆ Roman Catholic priest James Roberts of St. Joseph's Parish Community, Port

Moody, Canada, called on chaplains in the armed forces to discard their military titles and uniforms and to relinquish their salaries as employees of the state. "Let them give up their fat salaries and be supported by their churches to whom they should be responsible," Roberts said.

Roberts was commenting about the following statement that Daniel Byrne, deputy command chaplain of Catholic troops in Vietnam, made recently about Vietnam massacres: "We do not debate the morality of war in general or the morality of any particular war. Our job is to look after the spiritual welfare of the men."

"Words like this stun the mind," said priest Roberts. "How can the morality of war, which Pope Paul calls the greatest moral issue of our day, be exempted from 'the spiritual welfare of men'?" "Today the theology of views like those of Chaplain Byrne are exposed as morally bankrupt for all the world to see," said Roman Catholic priest Roberts.

Presbyterian Church

"Out of Touch"

◆ A national survey sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Canada revealed the church to be "slow to change, stuffy and stodgy, out of touch, in-grown" and badly in need of renewal. The 125-page report showed that "in nearly all sectors there exists a state of confusion as to the mission of the church." In addition, the report said there was a lack of communication with young people. The report follows hard on the heels of a similar study prepared for the United Church in Canada, which predicted that there would be virtually no United Churches in the Metro area of Toronto within the next fifteen years if the drop in interest and membership was not halted.

Easy on the Criminals

◆ In a recent statistical report from the federal bureau of prisons, it was disclosed that a large number of persons convicted of crimes never go to prison. The District Attorney of Oklahoma said the statistics are appalling. In Oklahoma they show that in 1960 a total of 86.7 percent of persons given prison time served less than three years. Many received sentences up to 20 and 30 years. A man who was sentenced to two fifteen-year sentences after he pleaded guilty to two armed robberies was paroled in less than a year. The "do-gooders," said the District Attorney, "are emptying the prisons faster than juries can convict known felons."

"Eclipse of the Century"

◆ The first total solar eclipse to be seen over heavily populated areas of the United

States since 1925 was greeted with curiosity and passing awe on March 7. Millions of people watched as the moon crossed the path of the sun. In some areas where the eclipse was total, buzzards went to roost and some animals were thrown into confusion. Many people entered a holiday spirit and thousands of spectators crowded beaches and parks to view this rare spectacle. However, in New York city, where 96 percent of the sun was blacked out, the Saturday crowds hardly slowed down to notice the "eclipse of the century."

Transfusions Blamed

◆ Dr. J. Garrott Allen, professor of surgery at the Stanford School of Medicine, said that blood purchased from un-screened donors by commercial blood banks is responsible for 90 percent of infectious hepatitis cases. Each year more than 5,000 cases of hepatitis are

attributed to transfusions in California alone.

Family Farms Disappearing

◆ Nearly 100,000 family-operated farms in America are disappearing each year. The total number of farms is down to about 3 million, the lowest number since the 1870's, more than 20 percent fewer than in 1960, and 56 percent fewer than the peak farm number of 1935. Since the end of World War II, the population of the United States has increased by 55 million, or 37 percent. In the same period the farm population declined by nearly 15 million, or nearly 60 percent. Since 1960, the exodus of persons from farms has been going on at a rate of 811,000 a year, according to the United States department of agriculture's economic research service. The average size of the American farm, however, has increased from 212 acres in 1950 to 369 acres in 1968.

If you believe the Bible . . .

No doubt you believe the Bible is of value to you. But, do you know in what specific ways? For example, could you say why the letters of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians are of real benefit to us in this twentieth century? or how we can receive the most good from the Psalms, the Gospels, the prophetic books like Isaiah and Jeremiah or the books of Kings? Every book of the Bible is discussed in detail in the book "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial.*" Send for your copy today. Only \$1.

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