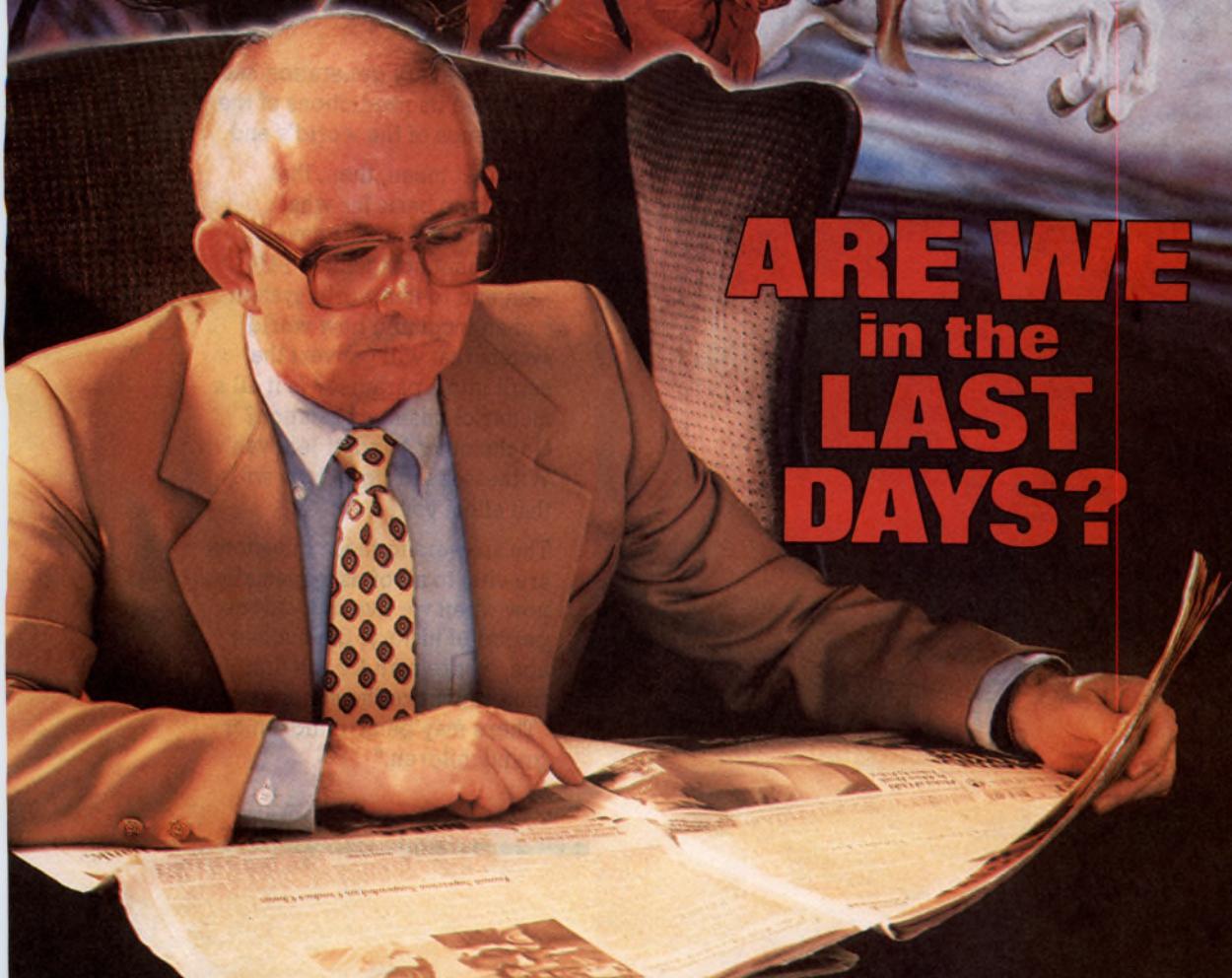
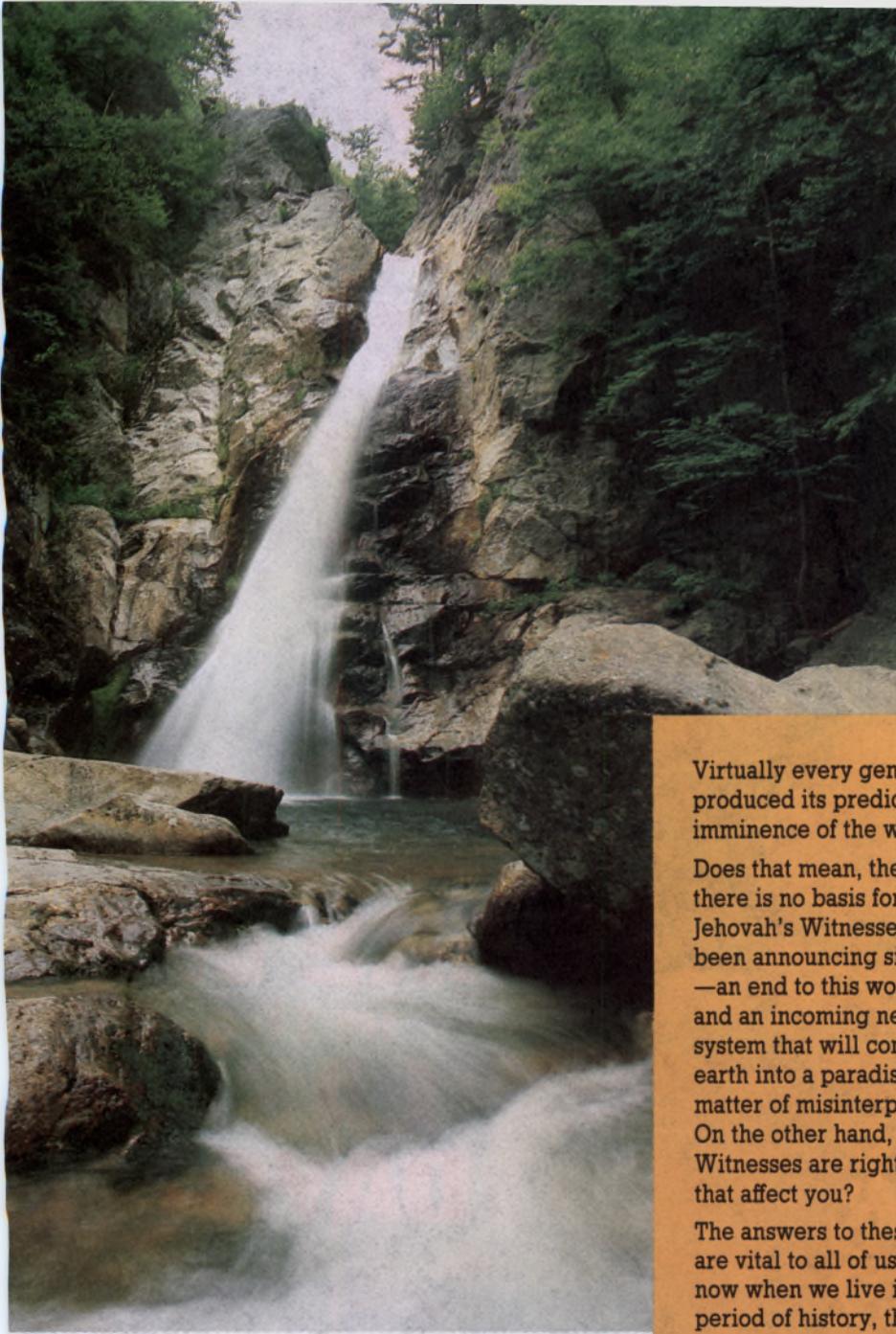


Awake!

April 8, 1988



**ARE WE
in the
LAST
DAYS?**



Virtually every generation has produced its predictions of the imminence of the world's end.

Does that mean, then, that there is no basis for what Jehovah's Witnesses have been announcing since 1914 —an end to this world system and an incoming new world system that will convert the earth into a paradise? Is it all a matter of misinterpretation? On the other hand, if Jehovah's Witnesses are right, how will that affect you?

The answers to these questions are vital to all of us, especially now when we live in a unique period of history, the nuclear age, where man for the first time can make the statement, "There may be no children or grandchildren."

THE LAST DAYS

What Evidence?

SINCERE persons in previous generations have mistakenly believed they were living in the last days. In the above-quoted case, it was the bubonic plague that was viewed as the sign of the end of the world. Some estimates say that it killed one third of the population of Europe. But the end did not come. It was not yet the time for God's intervention.

So how can anyone be sure that Jehovah's Witnesses are right in announcing the imminent end of the present world system and the extension of God's Kingdom rule over the earth? Only by investigating their claims and comparing them with the Bible's predictions. What, then, are the specific prophecies that outline the events marking the last days?

War, Famine, and Plague

Some of the major features of these prophecies are summed up in the famous vision of the horsemen of the Apocalypse at Revelation 6:1-8, and they are:

"A fiery-colored horse; and to the one seated upon it there was granted to take peace away from the earth so that they should slaughter one another."

"And no bells tolled and nobody wept no matter what his loss because almost everyone expected death. . . . And people said and believed, 'This is the end of the world.'" —An Italian chronicler writing on the effects of the Black Death in the 14th century.

Please note that the rider of this horse would take peace from *the earth*, not from just a few nations. Therefore, it symbolizes a time of worldwide war and slaughter. Have we seen that during the 20th century?

"A black horse; and the one seated upon it had a pair of scales in his hand." This aptly symbolizes hunger, food shortage, and famine. Do these conditions exist in our generation?

"A pale horse; and the one seated upon it had the name Death. And Hades was closely following him. And authority was given them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with a long sword and with food shortage and with deadly plague and by the wild beasts of the earth." Here, untimely death, whether due to war, famine, plague, or wild beast, heaps its victims into the premature grave (Hades). Have not tens of millions gone into such a grave in our time?

Along with these visions go the conditions that Jesus foretold, some of which are: "Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be

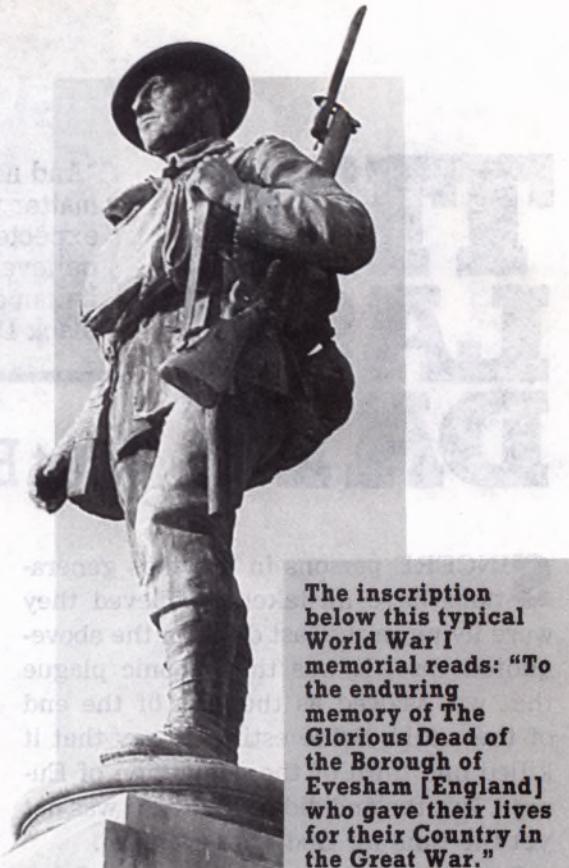
famines and earthquakes . . . Many false prophets will arise; they will deceive many, and with the increase of lawlessness, love in most men will grow cold." (*The Jerusalem Bible*) He also foretold a worldwide witness work, or preaching of the "good news of the kingdom," before the end would come.

In addition, the Christian apostle Paul described people's reactions, saying that during the last days "men will love nothing but money and self . . . with no respect for parents, no gratitude." He added: "They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of religion, but are a standing denial of its reality."—*The New English Bible*.*

Let us remember that while Jesus' prophecy indicates a climax in man's history as all these events come together *in the same generation*, they do not require that they be greater in number or magnitude than in any previous generation, even though that might be so.

Have you seen these events and conditions during this 20th century, especially since 1914? Do you see them even now in

* These prophecies can be found in detail in the following Bible texts: Matthew 24; Luke 21; Mark 13; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.



The inscription below this typical World War I memorial reads: "To the enduring memory of The Glorious Dead of the Borough of Evesham [England] who gave their lives for their Country in the Great War."

1988? As a reminder, let us review some of the outstanding events that have affected and are affecting mankind and answer the question, Do they indicate that the time for God's intervention by his Kingdom is near?—Luke 21:29-33.

WHY "AWAKE!" IS PUBLISHED

AWAKE! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

Most importantly, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

Contents: Feature Articles

The Last Days—What Evidence?	3
The Last Days—"Kingdoms Against Kingdoms"	5
The Last Days—A Unique Feature	7
The Last Days—Famine, Plague, Pollution—And Kingdom Preaching	9
The Last Days—What's Next?	13

Also in This Issue

I Saw the Futility of War	17
Young People Ask ... "Honor Your Father and Your Mother"—But Why?	22
"Like the Stars of the Heavens"	25
The Bible's Viewpoint	
Abortion—The Answer to Overpopulation?	26
From Our Readers	28
Watching the World	29
Is It Worth the Risk?	31

—Bible translation to English

—First Bible translation to English

THE LAST DAYS

'Kingdoms Against Kingdoms'

THE war of 1914-18 was so great in destruction and loss of life that in France to this day, you can find monuments dedicated to the fallen in *La Grande Guerre*, the Great War. American writer Ernest Hemingway later called it "the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on earth." The Great War was renamed World War I when the world was blighted with World War II (1939-45).

World War I was distinct from previous wars in many ways. Massive million-man armies slaughtered one another in the fields and woods of Western Europe. The machine gun held sway as it reaped great swaths of moving infantry. As Gwynne

"The conflict of nations from 1914 to 1918 was not some 'dull rumor of some other war.' The struggle ushered in a new scope of war, the first total war in the experience of mankind. Its duration, intensity, and scale exceeded anything previously known or generally expected. The day of mass warfare had arrived." —*The World in the Crucible*, by Bernadotte E. Schmitt and Harold C. Vedeler.

Dyer states in his book *War*: "Within two months [of the start of the war], over a million men were dead . . . Machine weapons—quick-firing artillery and machine guns spewing out six hundred bullets a minute—filled the air with lethal steel sleet." The tank, the submarine, and the airplane changed thinking and tactics. Now death fell from the skies and rose up from the waters.

Trench warfare, with the added use of poisonous gases, pushed men to the limits of endurance, suffering, and degradation. The Great War was distinct in another way: "This was the first war in which prisoners numbered in the millions (8,400,000 altogether) and were detained for long

Awake!®

April 8, 1988
Vol. 69, No. 7

SEIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Cebuano, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Yoruba

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Chicheŵa, Chinese, Cibemba, Hiligaynon, Igbo, Malayalam, New Guinea Pidgin, Polish, Russian, Setswana, Sinhalese, Swahili, Tahitian, Tamil, Thai, Twi, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Zulu

Printed in U.S.A.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly for \$5.00 (U.S.) per year by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 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.**

Average Printing: 11,350,000 Published in 54 Languages

25 cents (U.S.) a copy

Watch Tower Society offices

Semimonthly Languages	Monthly Languages
<i>America</i> , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$5.00
<i>Canada</i> , Box 4100, Halton Hills, Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$7.00
<i>England</i> , The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£5.00

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).

Copyright © 1988 by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., and International Bible Students Association. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* used.

periods of time." (*The World in the Crucible*) It was also the first war that involved virtually the whole of the civilian population, either in defense and armaments production or as victims of invasion and battle.

Jehovah's Witnesses back then in 1914 saw in that terrible war the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus' fateful prophecies. But worse was to come.

World War II —Unique Destructive Power

Another evidence that, even from a human standpoint, these could be the last days is man's potential for self-destruction. Dr. Bernard Lown stated in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture: "The Second World War introduced total war—unprincipled in method, unlimited in violence, and indiscriminate in victims. The ovens of Auschwitz and the atomic incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki inscribed a still-darker

chapter in the chronicle of human brutality."

Did mankind learn compassion and mercy from this dreadful experience? He continues: "The prolonged agony that left 50 million dead [almost equivalent to the total population of Britain, France, or Italy] did not provide an enduring basis for an armistice against barbarism. On the contrary, arsenals soon burgeoned with genocidal weapons capable of the equivalent of many thousands of World War IIs."—Italics ours.

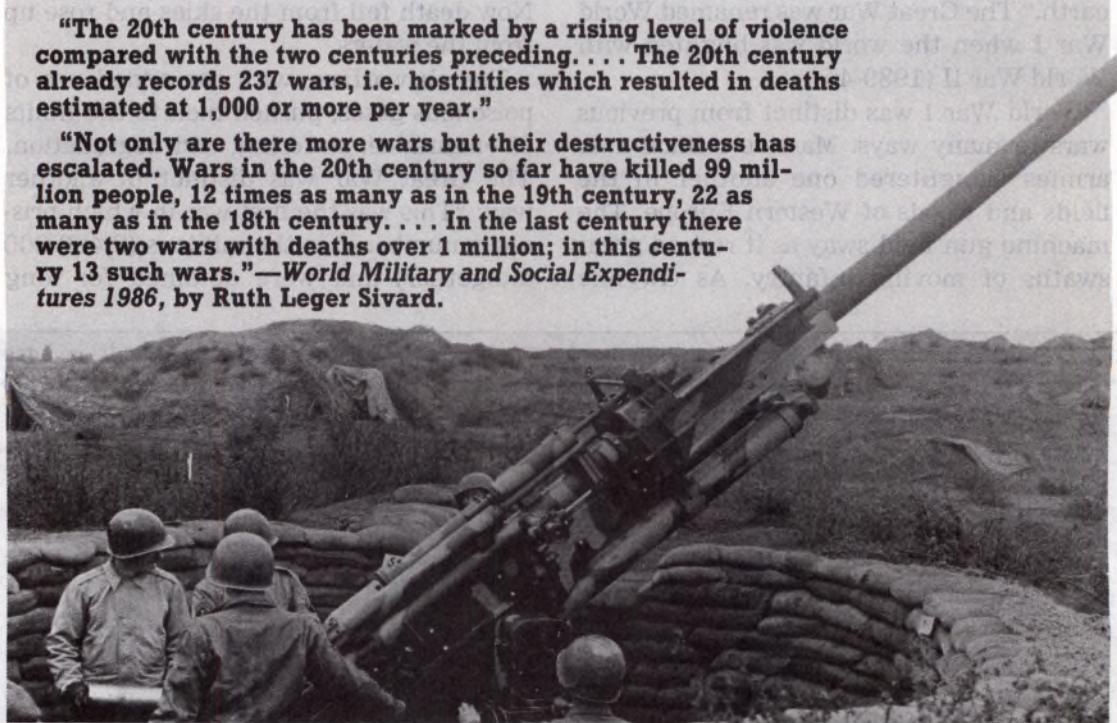
No doubt about it, we have seen 'nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom,' and the rider of the fiery-colored horse of Revelation has spread slaughter across the earth. (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:4) But what further significance would the invention and development of nuclear weapons have for our "last days"?

—2 Timothy 3:1.

U.S. Army photo

"The 20th century has been marked by a rising level of violence compared with the two centuries preceding. . . . The 20th century already records 237 wars, i.e. hostilities which resulted in deaths estimated at 1,000 or more per year."

"Not only are there more wars but their destructiveness has escalated. Wars in the 20th century so far have killed 99 million people, 12 times as many as in the 19th century, 22 as many as in the 18th century. . . . In the last century there were two wars with deaths over 1 million; in this century 13 such wars."—*World Military and Social Expenditures 1986*, by Ruth Leger Sivard.



THE LAST DAYS

A Unique Feature

THE use of the atom bomb in 1945 changed the world. It marked another turning point in the history of war. That is how one of the bomb's inventors, Robert Oppenheimer, saw the situation. When the test explosion took place in New Mexico, Oppenheimer quoted the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, saying, "I am become death, the shatterer of worlds." Oppenheimer also stated, "The peoples of this world must unite, or they will perish."

In 1949 an advisory committee of scientists to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, which included Oppenheimer, warned against developing the much more lethal hydrogen bomb. Their report stated: "This is a super weapon; it is in a totally different category from an atomic bomb." This was because the hydrogen bomb's destructive power could be multiplied by adding very inexpensive deuterium fuel. In a matter of four years, the atom bomb had become a mere toy.

Enrico Fermi and Isidor Rabi, also members of the advisory committee, gave an even stronger warning. "The fact that no limits exist to the destructiveness of this weapon makes its very existence and the

"Oppenheimer [who helped design the atom bomb] was right in his basic perception that history changed its course in 1945. Never again can a major war be fought in the style of World War II."—*Weapons and Hope*, by Freeman Dyson.

knowledge of its construction a danger to humanity as a whole. It is necessarily an evil thing considered in any light." (Italics ours.) They knew that man could now destroy himself. Their advice against developing the hydrogen bomb was ignored.

How Would You Answer? Since 1914 . . .

1. What major wars have been fought?
 2. How many major earthquakes can you recall?
 3. Has mankind suffered any major diseases and plagues?
 4. What major famines and food shortages have afflicted the world?
 5. Have false prophets and false messiahs presented themselves?
 6. Is there evidence of increased violence and lawlessness?
 7. Has there been a waning of love and neighborliness?
 8. Has any organization claimed that it will bring peace to the world?
 9. Is there anguish of nations and fear of the future?
 10. Do you see proof of a worldwide Kingdom-witnessing work?
- (For answers, see page 11.)

As things stand now, world war can occur only once more—as a nuclear war. Then there will be no nations or kingdoms. This one factor alone makes our times unique and adds strength to the description “the last days.”—2 Timothy 3:1

'Prophecies of Doom With Scientific Basis'

The incredible power to destroy that man now has is exemplified in one fact quoted by Dr. Lown, copresident of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War: "A single modern submarine has approximately eight times the total firepower of World War II—sufficient to destroy every major city in the Northern Hemisphere." Please note—that is the destructive potential of just *one submarine!* The great powers have dozens of submarines and surface ships carrying nuclear weapons. Adding to these the land and air weapons, it makes a total of over 50,000 nuclear warheads!

When before in history has man ever had such awesome and dreadful power in his hands? Dr. Lown admits that every historic period has had its unheeded prophets. What is the difference now? He explains: "Our era is the first in which prophecies of doom stem from objective scientific analyses." If there should ever be a nuclear conflagration, he says, "it is sheer hubris [arrogance] to pretend that there would be human survival after such a man-made catastrophe."

Increased "Anguish of Nations"

In 1945 man released the evil genie of nuclear warfare from his magic lamp of scientific knowledge and has no way of

ever getting it back in again. He may destroy his nuclear weapons, but how will he annul the knowledge that can always lead back to them? Therefore, the actual events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki plus the development of super nuclear weapons have increased the potential for "fearful sights" and "great signs" from heaven, for "anguish of nations . . . not knowing the way out" since 1945.—Luke 21:11, 25.

Anguish of nations has also been multiplied by our ability to achieve instant communication. Only in this 20th century have modern systems of communication (radio, TV, computers, satellites) allowed all mankind to know instantly of wars and disasters, thus spreading fear and anguish of nations in a way that was never before possible. Not only does the world public know of them but by TV they can watch wars and bloodshed as they occur!

The Scars of War

In this year of 1988, there are millions of families all over the world that have experienced part of the proof that we are in the last days. How so? They have lost one or more loved ones in the two world wars or in one of the other major conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, Iraq-Iran, Lebanon, and so forth) that have decimated mankind. Perhaps your family is one of those that can remember a lost father, grandfather, uncle, or brother. Also, millions of mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts died in wars and in the European Holocaust.

**"A single modern submarine has approximately eight times the total firepower of World War II
—sufficient to destroy every major city in the Northern Hemisphere"**

In addition, during our generation, armies have raged back and forth across Europe and the Far East, raping and pillaging the civilian populations. Thus, the survivors, especially the women, carry the scars of their mistreatment with them to this day. Has man ever sunk so low on such a scale of degradation and stupidity?

soft dflw snitfsl2 foy, gflq bma noltedq In
bfrow to bfo edr hz shofla maf uflndesq
-num esrd notifm 02 emos flos das fsls
mof and pafchonqg applying maf uflndesq
nd dflw maf sld assaflo dflw maf
mof m afifam bmf vnfaflo to fls edr
Hts goqf bmf vnfaflo to fls edr
mof m afifam bmf vnfaflo to fls edr
mof m afifam bmf vnfaflo to fls edr

The fiery-colored apocalyptic horse of war and slaughter and the pale horse of Death have surely trampled across the earth in an unprecedented way since 1914.
—Revelation 6:4.

But what about the "black horse" of famine? (Revelation 6:5) Has it struck our generation?

"Hunger comes in another form. It is the day-in-day-out hunger that over 700 million people suffer. . . . Every year this largely invisible hunger kills as many as 18 to 20 million people—more than twice the number who died each year during World War II."—*World Hunger—Twelve Myths*, by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins.

THE LAST DAYS

Famine, Plague, Pollution —And Kingdom Preaching

JUST as Jesus foretold, our generation has also had its share of famines and food shortages but with less justification in some cases than previous generations. Why so? Because modern technology and methods of communication and transport should have made famine a thing of the past. Yet, landowners and politicians have used people as pawns, regardless of the suffering inflicted on the poor and the landless.

Hunger and famine continue to haunt Africa. As recently as September 1987, warning was given that Ethiopia was again under siege as "hunger was again spreading rapidly in that impoverished African coun-

try," reported *The New York Times*. Ethiopia's former head of famine relief stated: "It appears there are now about five million people affected by famine, and we don't know how bad it may get."

At the same time, reports from the vast subcontinent of India paint another grim picture caused by drought. The national Minister of State for Agriculture said: "About 60 percent of our total population will be hurt by this drought." He added that "this figure was far higher than earlier estimates and meant that about 470 million of the population of 780 million were affected." Can we really digest and absorb those

figures and their impact on the human family?

Add to the constant cycle of famines, floods, and droughts the terrible price paid in hunger during the two world wars and their aftermath. As one writer on the situation in 1945-46 reported: "There was a worldwide food shortage as a consequence of the war and the situation throughout Europe . . . was calamitous. There was soon to be serious famine in parts of Russia and Rumania and in Greece thousands would starve to death. Even in Britain bread was to be rationed for the first time in the nation's history."

Yes, the black horse of famine, with its rider swinging a pair of scales in the air, has

plunged through the nations and is still galloping over humankind.—Revelation 6: 5, 6.

Pestilence and Plague

Jesus prophesied that part of the sign of the last days would be "pestilences." (Luke 21:11) Has our 20th century seen its share of pestilence and plague? Starting with the Spanish flu that struck at the end of World War I and took some 20 million lives, mankind, as in previous generations, has been afflicted with diseases. But even with the advances of science and medicine in these last days, the toll of sick and dying still runs into the millions each year.

In the affluent Western world, we hear

FAO photo



Famine is afflicting large sections of the globe

Millions of people are affected by various diseases



Man is polluting the biosphere that he shares with all other living creatures

A unique warning work is being done in some 200 languages worldwide



constant appeals for funds and cures for cancer, heart disease, and AIDS. True, hundreds of thousands are dying each year from these and other afflictions. Yet, there are diseases that are wiping out *millions* every year in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In his book *Mirage of Health*, René Dubos wrote: "Malaria, other protozoan infections, and worm infestations are the source of physiological and economic misery in most underprivileged areas." As a consequence, "millions upon millions of human beings in Asia, Africa, and Latin America suffer and die every year from hook-worm disease, African sleeping sickness, or malaria." The misery caused by these diseases is not measured just by the number who die as a result of them. Dubos states: "Microbial diseases have not been conquered."

Dubos continues: "In contrast, [the white man's] selfishness makes him endow with scientific glamour any discovery that bears on his own well-being." Thus, the emphasis in the Western world is on cancer and heart disease—and not to be forgotten are sexually transmitted diseases. One medical journal states that there are approximately three million new cases of gonorrhea *annually* in the United States alone.

But whether we examine the developed or the underdeveloped world, we see evidence of the 'pale horse of Death and deadly plague,' the fourth horse of the Apocalypse.—Revelation 6:8.

Ruining the Earth

On a world scale, man is already ruining and destroying the delicate balance of nature in his own slim biosphere by means of pollution, exploitation, neglect, and deforestation.

Answers to Questions on Page 7*

1. **Matthew 24:7**—Two world wars (1914-18; 1939-45); Spanish Civil War (1936-39); Korean War; Vietnam War; Iraq-Iran; Middle Eastern wars and others.
2. **Matthew 24:7**—Earthquakes: 1920 and 1932, Kansu, China, 200,000 and 70,000 dead respectively; 1923, Kanto, Japan, 142,000 dead; 1935, Quetta, Pakistan, 60,000 dead; 1939, Chillán, Chile, 30,000 dead; 1939, Erzincan, Turkey, 30,000 dead; 1960, Agadir, Morocco, 12,000 dead; 1970, Peru, 66,700 dead; 1972, Managua, Nicaragua, 5,000 dead; 1976, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 23,000 dead; 1976, Tangshan, China, 800,000 dead.
3. **Luke 21:11**—Heart disease; cancer; AIDS; onchocerciasis (river blindness); malaria; sexually transmitted diseases.
4. **Luke 21:11**—Famine: 1920-21, northern China, an estimated 20 million affected; 1943-44, India, 1,500,000 died; 1967-69, Nigeria, more than 1,500,000 children died; 1975-79, Kampuchea, 1,000,000 deaths; 1983-87, Black Africa, 22 million people affected.
5. **Matthew 24:11**—Charismatic religious leaders, TV messiahs, and gurus continue to mislead millions.
6. **Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:13**—Crime, violence, delinquency, and drug abuse are rife in most parts of the world. The world drug trade has produced a breed of ruthless drug barons and killers.
7. **Matthew 24:12**—Doors are now bolted and barred; attack dogs are used to protect property; neighbors are often strangers.
8. **Revelation 17:3, 8-11**—The League of Nations and the United Nations.
9. **Luke 21:26**—Two world wars caused untold suffering and anguish. The threat of nuclear annihilation since 1945 has spread fear and anguish to all the world.
10. **Matthew 24:14**—Over three million of Jehovah's Witnesses are preaching the 'good news of God's kingdom' in some 200 languages.

* This list gives a sampling of events; it is not complete.

Acid rain or precipitation, due to the mixing of rain and snow with exhaust products (nitrogen oxides and sulfur) from coal- and oil-burning power plants, is affecting the lakes and forests of the Northern Hemisphere. As the writers of the book *Earth* state: "One result of acid precipitation has been the transformation of many lakes in places like New England and Scandinavia from biotically rich and productive ecosystems to impoverished, sometimes virtually dead, bodies of water. For instance, all the fishes have been killed in hundreds of lakes in the Adirondacks, and almost 50,000 Canadian lakes are threatened with a similar fate."

As for the forests, many are suffering from "forest death." "Symptoms of 'forest death' have been observed in forests in Eastern Europe, the USSR, Italy, Spain, Canada, Britain and the upper Midwest of America." The same writers continue: "In a sense, humanity is running a gigantic experiment, poisoning much of one hemisphere (and probably parts of the other hemisphere), then waiting to see what will happen."

Pressure on the biosphere is increased by another inexorable factor—world population recently passed the five billion mark. Biologists Anne and Paul Ehrlich state: "Virtually all of Earth's life-forms are suffering from the expansion of *Homo sapiens*." Man expands and exploits. Future generations must care for themselves.

Rivers, seas, and oceans are being contaminated by man's conscienceless abuse of these resources. Sewage, garbage, and chemical pollutants are dumped into the oceans as if these were a local swill bin, a superfluous adjunct to life on earth.

This, therefore, is the first generation in human history that has been able literally to ruin the earth. Now, for the first time,

the prophecy of Revelation 11:18, which says that God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth," can be fulfilled. That must take place at the culmination of "the time of the end."—Daniel 12:4.

A Unique Warning Work

There is still another facet of Jesus' prophecy that is being fulfilled in a remarkable way. He foretold that a great preaching work, a witnessing work, would be carried out in all the nations before the end would come. (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10) And it would be done within the lifetime of the generation of 1914. This has been possible only in the 20th century when modern advances in transport, communication, computers, and printing have permitted Jehovah's Witnesses to extend their vast educational work in some 200 languages throughout the earth.

Now the Witnesses are producing the *Watchtower* magazine in 103 languages! More than 13 million copies of each issue are distributed. The magazine you are reading is published in 54 languages, and over 11 million copies are printed of each issue. Nearly three and a half million Witnesses are regularly announcing the good news of God's Kingdom government in their ministry in 210 countries.

This unique work is being accomplished in spite of the worldwide persecution that Jesus also foretold for his true followers. Yes, the very activity and survival of Jehovah's Witnesses on a world scale are living proof that we are in the last days!—Mark 13:9, 10.

The Climax Is Near

Thus, in the modern fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, all these events form a composite sign of Jesus' invisible presence and of the last days, or "the conclusion of the sys-

tem of things." (Matthew 24:3) (See box on page 11.) They come together like a jigsaw puzzle, making a complete picture that says, "These are the last days for this system of things."—See also 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 12, 13.

While many of the conditions Jesus foretold have individually existed also in earlier generations, *a combination of all of them in the same generation has never*

been known before in the history of the world. (Matthew 16:4; 24:3)

THE LAST DAYS

What's Next?

JESUS, when explaining "the sign . . . of the conclusion of the system of things," said to his amazed disciples the words quoted above. (Matthew 24:3) Now just what did Jesus mean by the word "generation"? And what events would lead into the end of the system of things? In other words, what events should we be looking for in the immediate future?

How Long Can a Generation Last?

The American Legion Magazine pointed out that 4,743,826 U.S. men and women had participated in World War I. But in 1984 only 272,000 remained alive, and they were dying off at an average of nine every hour. Does that mean, then, that the generation of 1914 has already disappeared?

taken place before. As we have seen, some have never occurred in any earlier generation, nor could they have done so. Some still await a complete fulfillment before this generation runs out. And there are other events that Jehovah's Witnesses now await with great interest. Those events are the prelude to God's extending his Kingdom rule over this earth. So the question now is, What's next?

"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."—Jesus Christ, Matthew 24:34, *New International Version.*

The Greek word for generation is *geneá*, used by Matthew, Mark, and Luke in their accounts of Jesus' words. It can have different applications according to the context. However, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* defines it as: "Those born at the same time . . . Associated with this is the meaning: the body of one's contemporaries, an age." A *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* states: "The sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time *generation, contemporaries.*" These definitions allow for all those who were born around the time of a historic event and all those who were alive at that time.

Generation—"The sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time."—A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament'

J. A. Bengel states in his *New Testament Word Studies*: "The Hebrews . . . reckon seventy-five years as one generation, and the words, *shall not pass away*, intimate that the greater part of that generation [of Jesus' day] indeed, but not the whole of it, should have passed away before all should be fulfilled." This became true by the year 70 C.E. when Jerusalem was destroyed.

Likewise today, most of the generation of 1914 has passed away. However, there are still millions on earth who were born in that year or prior to it. And although their numbers are dwindling, Jesus' words will come true, "this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." This is yet another reason for believing that Jehovah's thieflike day is imminent. So, what events should alert Christians watch for?

"Peace and Security" Soon?

"You yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantantly upon them."—1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

Ever since the end of World War II in 1945, mankind has teetered on the brink of war as the two opposing powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, have contend-ed with each other. The Cuban missile crisis

of 1962 was a dangerous direct confrontation. But the Soviet Union withdrew its missiles from Cuba, and the United States quietly removed its missiles from Turkey. This was just one of the many manifesta-tions of the Cold War.

Disarmament has been a subject for debate for decades and has usually finished up as a propaganda exercise for both countries. Now, in the waning months of President Reagan's term and in the thawing atmosphere of Secretary Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) policy, there appears to be seri-ous talk about defusing the nuclear arms situation. Whether this is a prelude to bring about a supposed peace and security for the world in general, we cannot foresee. But in accordance with Bible prophecy, that is what Christians are looking for. When it happens, then what?

Careful students of the Bible will not be fooled "whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!'"—whether it emanates from the United Nations or indepen-dently from the great powers themselves. The Bible clearly shows that true peace and security can only come from righteous ruler-ship, God's Kingdom government by Christ.

For that reason a future significant glo-bal announcement of peace and security by world leaders will be the signal for God to move into action, "exactly as a thief in the night," taking the unbelieving world by surprise. Yes, "sudden destruction" will then befall the ecclesiastical and political powers that have spurned Jehovah and his witnesses. How do we know this?

Decisive Action by the Rider of the White Horse

Returning to the vision of the four horse-men of the Apocalypse, there is one rider that we have not mentioned—the first one,

After Armageddon, in God's new world of peace and righteousness, 'the former things will have passed away.'

—Revelation 21:3, 4

Bible prophecy indicates that radical political elements in the United Nations will turn against the world's meddling religions

mounted on a white horse. The Bible writer describes him: "I saw, and, look! a white horse; and the one seated upon it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to complete his conquest." This is the same one that is described in chapter 19 of Revelation: "Look! a white horse. And the one seated upon it is called Faithful and True, and he judges and carries on war in righteousness.... And out of his mouth there protrudes a sharp long sword, that he may strike the nations with it, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron." And who is this one? The same account tells us that he has a name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords." It is the resurrected Son of God, Christ Jesus.—Revelation 6:2; 19:11-16.

What, then, calls for action by this "King of kings"? A point is reached where "the king of the north" (the anticapitalist camp) and "the king of the south" (the capitalist nations under the United States' umbrella), highlighted in Daniel chapter 11, achieve a stalemate. (As Daniel 11:40 foretold, "the king of the north" has already overflowed into many lands, especially since 1945.)*

So, what else must take place before God's decisive intervention to bring an end to the present system of things?

Bible prophecy indicates that at some point the radical political elements in the United Nations will turn against the world's

* For a detailed consideration of this conflict, see the book "*Your Will Be Done on Earth*," chapter 11, "The Appointed Time of the End," published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

meddling religions and unmask them, destroying their power and control over the superstitious people.—Revelation 17:16, 17.*

This destruction of the false religious elements of the world will no doubt have as a sequel an assault on Jehovah's Witnesses. This in turn will trigger a counterattack by Jehovah's King, the Rider of the white horse. (Ezekiel 38:10-12, 21-23) And what does Daniel 2:44 say about the result? "In the days of those kings [present political powers] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. ... It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Yes, God's battle of Armageddon against Satan's visible political elements on earth will result in total victory for Jehovah and his King of kings.—Revelation 16:14-16; 19:17-21.

What will follow? Why, the agelong desire of peace-loving, God-fearing Christians—the Millennial Rule of God's Kingdom government over obedient mankind! Then will be fulfilled the glorious promises of Revelation 21:3, 4: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

If you would like more information about those remarkable Bible prophecies and what they mean for us individually, please contact Jehovah's Witnesses in your area or write to the publishers of this magazine in your country.

* For a detailed consideration of this prophecy, see the Watchtower publication "*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*" *God's Kingdom Rules!*, chapter 26, "The Judgment Upon the Great Harlot," also published by the Watchtower Society.

IT WAS 1944 on the Philippine island of Leyte. We were out in the steaming jungle on reconnaissance patrol looking for the enemy—Japanese soldiers hidden in the trees and undergrowth. I was a 19-year-old medical corpsman and usually among the last in the line, ready to rush in with bandages and aid during a skirmish. Somehow on this occasion, I was the first in line, the point man. Nerves were on edge waiting for booby traps and surprise attacks. Then, suddenly, something incredible happened.

A Japanese officer leapt up a few yards in front of me, waving a white cloth and shouting, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I'm from Chicago! I'm from Chicago!" Our trigger fingers were too edgy not to have a reflex action. The soldier behind me fired off several rounds from his rifle—and missed. The rest of us held our fire as the officer continued to scream, "I'm from Chicago!"

He hastened to pull some photos out of his pocket as he explained his story in clear American English. I was astonished. Here we were in the middle of the jungle, and this Japanese captain was showing us photos of his wife and children in Chicago. It was really true—he was a Japanese-American!

"They Won't Surrender"

It turned out that he had gone from Chicago to visit his parents in Japan just before war was declared. He was drafted into the Japanese army, and here he was fight-



I Saw the Futility of War

As told by former U.S. Army medic Russell Dixon

ing against the United States. We asked him, "Any more with you?" He pointed to one hidden in the undergrowth a few feet behind him. We ordered him to get out of there fast! Out stepped a youthful Japanese soldier about my own age. "And where are the rest?" "Back there." The captain pointed to the jungle behind him.

We started to bargain with the captain. "We'll take you prisoner if you get the rest of your men to surrender. If not, we'll kill you!" our sergeant said. The officer's answer confirmed what we knew: "They won't surrender. They will kill us if we try to get them to do it." We forced him to send the young soldier back to his men. Within a minute or so, we

heard a shot. We looked at the Japanese officer, and he said: "They've killed him." Deep down inside, I felt sorry for that young soldier. It was the same feeling that I had had so many times before and would have many times more, the feeling that war is so futile.

While a couple of our men took the officer back to our base camp, the rest of us advanced down the trail. As the medic, I kept to the rear of the group so that I could be ready to patch up any of our men who might get hit. A few more yards and we found the rest of the enemy. During a short skirmish, they were all killed.

But we had accomplished something almost unique—we had captured a Japanese-American officer—one of the relatively few that were taken alive. But I was sick at heart at the constant killing.

Often I asked myself, what was I, the son of an Oklahoma country doctor, doing out in that island jungle? The truth is, if I had followed my father's principles, I would never have been there at all. I would probably have landed in prison. 'How is that possible?' you might ask.

When All Was Peace

I was born in 1925, the fourth of five sons, and raised in the peaceful farming atmosphere of the southwestern United States, in a small town called Mooreland, Oklahoma. Our parents were peace-loving Bible Students, known since 1931 as Jehovah's Witnesses. They used to take us boys to the Bible meetings regularly, and I recall that on occasion I accompanied my father from house to house with a phonograph, witnessing to our neighbors. We also participated in what we called information marches through surrounding towns, announcing public Bible talks. But I had other interests in life.

I loved sports, especially basketball and baseball. Not that I was exceptional, but as a typical boy, I enjoyed them. The end result was that at about the age of 16, and like my brothers, I drifted away from the Witness meetings and association. At that time, we did not appreciate spiritual values. This must have grieved my parents.

The Realities of War

In 1943, at the age of 18, I was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a GI (member of U.S. armed forces). Since I had given up my association with the Witnesses, I had no strong convictions about Christian neutrality, and therefore I avoided the issue that could have led to imprisonment. Eventually, I was assigned to Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas, for training as an army medic. To this day I have no idea as to why they chose that training for me. Perhaps

With my wife in front of the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses where we work



the fact that my father was a doctor had something to do with it.

After that medical training, I was sent to New Caledonia, an island in the South Pacific, to a replacement depot for U.S. soldiers. My first combat assignment was to a New York unit, the 77th Infantry Division on Guam. That strategic island, about half-way between Australia and Japan, was occupied by the Japanese. We landed there on July 21, 1944, along with the 3rd Marine Division. We immediately went into combat. I quickly received my first experience in real warfare.

My outstanding impression of Guam was rain, knee-deep mud, and chaos. Then came my first experience on the receiving end of heavy artillery fire and mortars. There was the initial "whoomf" of the gun being fired, followed by the eerie whistle of the shell through the air. I waited to see how near each shell would land. I must be truthful—like most GIs, I was scared on many occasions. I prayed to God and foolishly tried to bargain my way out of this mess. If he would get me out of it, I would serve him! Yes, I was nothing but another foxhole believer!

I feared the nights most of all. You had to dig yourself a slit trench about 18 inches to two feet deep, if the ground was not too rocky. The idea was that you should sleep there (what a hope!) without being visible to the enemy or to your comrades. This was important, since the rule at night was: 'If it moves, kill it. Ask questions afterward.' So I made sure that I kept below ground level, even if it meant, as it often did, that I had to sleep in rainwater and mud.

What were our basic instincts during those gory battles? I can assure you that in most cases it wasn't "God and country." Like so many other young boys, I saw lives snuffed out by rifle fire, flamethrowers,



U.S. Army photo

mortar and artillery shells, suicide attacks, knives, and bayonets. I soon became aware of how futile it all was. I felt trapped in a hopeless situation with no way out. My principal objective, like most others, was survival.

In that respect, our approach was different from that of the Japanese. They had been thoroughly indoctrinated and considered it an honor to die for the glory of the emperor and Japan. That is why they could send in kamikaze (suicide) planes against the naval vessels and troopships. And on the ground, their suicide soldiers would try to crawl into our trenches with a satchel charge tied to their backs and blow us and themselves to pieces. How the ruling elite, using false religious ideas, had deluded them!

But Guam was only the beginning. After a period of rehabilitation on Manus island, just north of Papua New Guinea, we were sent to our next battlefield, Leyte in the Philippines.

"Am I Going to Die?"

It was the same story of battles, of wounded and dead. I was kept busy

crawling through mud, trying to patch up the wounded. On many occasions, I would be lying alongside a buddy in the mud, applying a tourniquet and trying to patch him up with compresses before dragging him back to a safer spot. Often I had to cut open the sleeve or the trouser leg and give a quick injection of morphine sulfate to help kill his pain. Some would ask me, "How bad is it, Doc? Am I going to die? Don't leave me here!" At times there were so many to attend to that all I could do was try to calm them and tell them that we would be back for them. The truth is that in many cases we got back too late. They had died. Such is the futility of war.

Our next battle assignment was the little island of Ii-shima, just off the coast of Okinawa, then occupied by the Japanese. There was one friend with whom I had been in several battles. He was always very careful, not taking any unnecessary chances or doing anything foolish on the battlefield. Like the rest of us, he wanted to survive. One day, in the final mop-up operations on Ii-shima, several of us were lying belly down trying to protect ourselves from enemy fire. He was a few feet in front of

me, when suddenly one of our own tank machine guns carelessly swung too far to the right, fired a burst of rounds, and killed him and three other GIs on the spot.

On another occasion we were strafed by our own planes, and several of our men were killed. Human error and more futility.

On this same island, Ernie Pyle, a famous wartime correspondent, met his death in April 1945 by a sniper's bullet. On one occasion, he wrote sentiments with which I came to agree: "I don't see how any survivor of war can ever be cruel to anything, ever again." Unfortunately, experience proves otherwise. Man's cruelty continues.

Pinpointed by a Mortar

Our next move was across the channel that separated us from Okinawa. The Japanese were dug in, hiding in caves and once again difficult to get out.

One day I was sitting on top of a big boulder on a ridge, observing a battle taking place in a ravine just ahead of me. Suddenly, I heard the distinctive sound of a Japanese knee mortar. In a matter of seconds, a shell landed a few yards ahead of me. It struck me as odd that one should fall so near to me on the fringe of the battle. Next thing I knew, another one was fired and landed just behind me! It suddenly occurred to me that perhaps the enemy was zeroing in on me. I quickly climbed down and got behind the boulder. The third shell was a direct hit on the spot where I had been sitting! It was one of several close calls that I experienced.

The battle for Okinawa raged for about three months. One history book reports: "Okinawa was the costliest operation in the Central Pacific. Some half a million men were involved in the fighting and it cost the Americans 49,000 in casualties of

In Our Next Issue

- Is Money Your Passport to Happiness?
- From the Brink of Death
- Twins—How Close Are They?

whom 12,500 died. More than 110,000 Japanese were killed on the island." At least 122,000 soldiers were killed, and thousands of civilians, for a virtually unknown island of some 870 square miles!

After that campaign, we were sent to the Philippines for a period of rehabilitation and preparation for the invasion of Japan. At this time, I got a sight for sore eyes. Replacements were sent into our division and who should be among them but my younger brother, Roger. However, he was never to see action. On August 6, 1945, the first atom bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later a second bomb was released over Nagasaki. That spelled the end of the war.

A Death That Made Me Think

My brother and I were assigned to the occupation forces in Sapporo, Japan. Shortly afterward I was released from the army, but my brother stayed on in Japan for another year. I headed for home and a family welcome.

Back in Oklahoma, I picked up where I had left off and went back to college, where I took a premedical course for four years and one year of postgraduate work. During this period, I met a lovely girl, a student from Oklahoma, Nancy Wood. Within 18 months we were married. She has been my faithful companion over the last 40 years.

I still had not taken any further interest in my parents' religion, that of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was too wrapped up in my own interests. Then, in 1950, tragedy struck.

My father, who was then 66 years old and still active as a country doctor, died of a heart attack. For Mother it was a severe blow. His death took us all by surprise. We five sons had lost a father and a good

friend. Of course, we all attended the funeral talk given by one of Jehovah's Witnesses from a neighboring town. That talk had long-lasting effects on all of us.

The speaker showed from the Bible that Dad would return in the resurrection when the earth was restored to a peaceful paradise state. All of this triggered my memory of what I had known years before. Within a short while, the Witnesses were studying the Bible with Nancy and me. The more I studied, the more I realized what a mess the world is in and how futile war is—all those lives sacrificed to advance the selfish ambitions of political rulers and condoned by the clergy of every nation.

When Men Will Live in Peaceful Habitations

I also came to realize that events since 1914 were a clear fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy regarding the time of the end. Everything that he had stated was coming to pass within the span of one generation. Therefore, soon God's war of Armageddon, a just war to rid the earth of all evildoers, would take place and be the forerunner of a restored earth under the peaceful rule of God's Kingdom government.—Revelation 11:18; 21:1-4.

Nancy and I were baptized in 1950. Rather than continue our college education, we arranged our affairs and took up the full-time ministry in 1956. Over the years, we have preached in many parts of the United States in the traveling ministry where I have served as circuit and district overseer. For over eight years, I also instructed the Kingdom Ministry School for congregation elders and taught the Pioneer School for full-time ministers. For the last nine years, we have served at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

Young People Ask... .



"Honor Your Father and Your Mother"—But Why?

YOU'RE so hardheaded that I can't do anything with you," said Veda's exasperated father. "You give me no respect. You're asking for trouble." Veda was dating a boy who abused drugs and alcohol. She frequented discos till the early morning hours. Though her father strongly objected, Veda didn't care.

"I felt that he was too strict," explained Veda. "At that time I was 18 years old, and I thought I was grown and knew it all. I felt my father was mean and just didn't want me to have a good time, so I went out and did what I wanted to do."

Another youth, Gina, wrote: "My dad drank so much, and I couldn't sleep because my parents would argue and shout a lot. I would lie on the bed and just cry. I could not tell them how I felt about it because my mom would probably hit me. The Bible says 'honor thy father,' but I can't."

Perhaps, like Veda and Gina, you find it hard to honor your parents. It may be that they are making what you feel are unreasonable demands or are setting a bad example in conduct. Yet, the Bible clearly commands: "Honor your father and your mother." (Ephesians 6:2) Just what does this involve? And are there good reasons to do so, even when parents make honoring them difficult?

What Does "Honor" Mean?

"Honor" involves the recognition of duly constituted authority. For instance, Christians are commanded, "Have honor for the king." (1 Peter 2:17) While you may not always agree with a national ruler, still his position or office is to be respected. In the family circle, God vested parents with certain authority as his representatives. Therefore, godly children should honor that authority. But children should show more than just formal respect.

The original Greek verb rendered as "honor" in the Bible basically means to consider someone as of great value. A parent should thus be viewed as precious, highly esteemed, and dear to you. This involves having warm, appreciative feelings for them. 'But how can I feel that way when they give me such a hard time?' you ask.

Why Should You Honor Your Parents?

For one thing, Proverbs 23:22 says: "Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother." There are an estimated 55 million abortions worldwide each year. The mere fact that your parents allowed you to be born is one reason to honor them. Gregory, who at one time was very disrespectful, came to real-

ize this. "I began to understand all my mother did for me," he admits. "I thank Jehovah God that she didn't abort me or dump me in a garbage can as a baby. She is a single parent, and there were six of us. I know it was tough on her."

Rearing children, though, is not only "tough" but also expensive. A Canadian report revealed that the cost of rearing a child to the age of 18 by a two-parent family with only one child is at least \$66,400! Think of your parents' self-denial to provide your food and clothing. "One time all we had left to eat was a can of corn and some grits," explained Gregory. "My mom fixed it for us kids, but she didn't eat. I went to bed full, but I kept wondering why Mom didn't eat. Now that I have my own family, I realize she was sacrificing for us. I wonder if I could give up food for my child. I don't see how she did it."

No doubt, your parents also spent many sleepless nights caring for you when you got sick. There were hundreds of diapers to change and loads of your dirty clothes to wash. Over 200,000 Americans were asked

how many children they would have if they could do it again. 'We would have the same number,' stated 54 percent of the parents! Only 6 percent said, "None."

So your parents gave you life and took care of you. Certainly they deserve your respect and honor.

Problem Parents

What, though, if your parents set a bad example, perhaps being hot-tempered, drunkards, or immoral? Understandably, you may suffer as a result. How can you honor parents like that?*

As imperfect persons, your parents may have serious problems or personality flaws. (Ecclesiastes 7:20) Yet, despite their shortcomings, God has given them a certain amount of control over your life. He still requires you to honor their authority. Remember, God said that due honor should be shown even to rulers. (Romans 13:7) This

* This article does not refer to utterly intolerable situations wherein a youth is subjected to physical or sexual abuse. In such instances, a child may need to seek help from professionals outside the home. See "Incest—The Hidden Crime" in our February 8, 1981, issue.

**Reflecting on
all that your
parents have
done for you
over the years
should move
you to honor
them**



requires looking beyond their conduct and focusing on their office, or position. So rather than becoming disrespectful if you feel that a parent is misusing his authority, try to stay calm. (Compare Ecclesiastes 10:4.) Leave the matter in God's hands, for "certainly the one that is doing wrong will receive back what he wrongly did, and there is no partiality."—Colossians 3:25.

You must face up to the fact that as long as your parent is providing for you, he holds responsibility for the family. Ecclesiastes 8:3, 4 states: "For all that he [the one with authority] delights to do he will do, because the word of the king is the power of control." To rebel puts you in a no-win situation.

How, though, do you avoid developing resentment? Try to understand why your parents act the way they do. Also, remind yourself of the benefits that they furnish. For instance, Dody, who had an insensitive mom and an alcoholic stepdad, wrote: "Perhaps my mom never showed us love because, as an abused child, she was never taught how. My stepfather showed an interest in our activities when he was sober, but that wasn't very often. Yet, my sister and I always had a roof over our heads and food in the refrigerator." Dody's conscience is thus clear, knowing she did what she could to honor her parents.

Respecting someone does not necessarily mean that you agree with him. "Keep the very order of the king [or parent], and that out of regard for the oath of God," advises Ecclesiastes 8:2. As long as the order does not violate God's laws, show your love for God by honoring it. "Be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord."—Colossians 3:20.

Furthermore, even if a parent's example is bad, do not conclude that everything he or she tells you is wrong. During the days

of Jesus Christ, the religious leaders who had the authority to teach God's Word became very corrupt. Yet, Jesus told the people: "All the things they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds." (Matthew 23:1-3, 25, 26) By respecting the counsel given from God's Word, the people would be blessed by God. This can also be the case with you by honoring godly advice from your parents.

'What My Dad Said Was Right'

Eventually, Veda changed her attitude toward her parents. But she learned the hard way. While riding with her boyfriend, who was high on marijuana and beer, the car went out of control. It struck a lamp-post at 60 miles per hour, which wrecked the car and left Veda with a deep gash on her forehead. He fled the scene, never showing up at the hospital to help her.

"When my parents arrived at the hospital," confessed Veda, "I told them that everything my dad had said was right and that I should have listened a long time ago." From that point on, Veda was determined to honor her parents. "It wasn't easy," she admitted, "because I still desired to go to discos, and it would get pretty boring around the house. But I wanted to please God. I had made a big mistake, and it almost cost my life, so I prayed to Jehovah to help me change my attitude."

Veda learned a vital lesson—respect proper authority. The failure to learn this has hindered many from succeeding in school, holding a job, or having a happy marriage. "Learning to respect my father, even when it wasn't easy, definitely helped me to submit to my husband," revealed Veda, now happily married. Yes, both pleasant relationships with others and a good conscience toward God are rewards from learning to honor your parents.

Galaxy Cluster

Snoitslug

In a number of gospels, the question is asked: "What is the greatest commandment?" The answer given is: "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." But Jesus' answer is: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Both answers are good, but the desire for personal gain and/or personal power seems to be the driving force behind most people's actions. One could say that the desire to serve others is the true mark of a Christian. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule, but even so, the desire to serve others is the true mark of a Christian.

"Like the Stars of the Heavens"

I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore." (Genesis 22:17) Thus God promised the patriarch Abraham. A recent issue of the publication *Bible Review*, however, points to a seeming problem with this text.

The Bible is scientifically correct in comparing the number of stars in the heavens to the billions of grains of sand on the seashore. However, that stars number into the billions was apparently unknown in ancient times. Explains *Bible Review*: "There really aren't that many stars in heaven that can be seen with the unaided eye. Astronomers tell us that without some form of telescope, we can see only between 2,000 and 4,000 stars, even on a good night." *The World Book Encyclopedia* states that "about 6,000 stars shine bright enough to be seen without a telescope."

How, then, does one explain the Bible's remarkable accuracy in making this comparison? One explanation would be that the Bible is

"inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) The article in *Bible Review*, however, goes to great lengths to circumvent this conclusion by suggesting that perhaps Abraham was an astronomer! This rather astounding conjecture was followed by the question: "Could the ancients have had telescopes that revealed stars the naked eye could not see?" To back this theory, the article cited evidence that crystals discovered in Nineveh and other ancient sites could have served as primitive lenses.

However, evidence that the ancients used such lenses for stargazing is nonexistent. And even if ancient telescopes existed, what evidence is there that Abraham or the writer of Genesis had access to one? Actually, God's promise to Abraham is just one of many examples of the Bible's scientific accuracy. It was apparently without the aid of a telescope that the prophet Jeremiah reported a similarly accurate observation: "The army of the heavens cannot be counted, neither can the sand of the sea be measured."—Jeremiah 33:22.



NASA photos

Abortion —The Answer to Overpopulation?

WHETHER national policy or individual choice, abortion has been a common means of population control both past and present.

A Canadian newspaper account entitled "China's agony is 53 million abortions" quotes the Ministry of Public Health in China as reporting that striking figure for the period from 1979 to 1984. This five-year abortion total equals more than double the population of Canada!

Japan estimates that 30 percent of the 2.1 million conceptions yearly in that country are aborted. Some of these unborn children are memorialized by little stone, plastic, or plaster effigies placed in Buddhist temples across the country.

On the other side of the world, in Sweden, abortion on demand has been permitted since 1946 for "medical, socio-medical, humanitarian and eugenic reasons or upon injury to the fetus." Now, as in other countries, many Swedish women see abortion as a socially acceptable and popular way to limit the size of their families.

Popular Ancient Practice

In ancient Athens, abortion was used to regulate population growth. "The voluntary limitation of the family was the order of the day, whether by contraception, by abortion,

or by infanticide," according to historian Will Durant in *The Story of Civilization*.

Abortion was also popular in the Roman empire. For what reasons? Durant continues: "Women wished to be sexually rather than maternally beautiful; in general the desire for individual freedom seemed to be running counter to the needs of the race. . . . Of those who married, a majority seemed to have limited their families by abortion, infanticide, *coitus interruptus*, and contraception." Is not the increase in abortions in our time for similar reasons?

"By the time a fetus is six months old it can see, hear, experience, taste and even learn."
—Dr. T. Verny, author of the book "The Secret Life of the Unborn"



The Early Christian View

In sharp contrast, early Christians took a firm stand against abortions. Durant adds: "Abortion and infanticide, which were decimating pagan society, were forbidden to Christians as the equivalents of murder." So while family limitation became an outstanding social phenomenon of both the Greek and the Roman eras, the Christian community stood firmly on a strict moral code that built respect for the sanctity of life. As in ancient Israel, children were a mark of the Creator's blessing. The psalmist states: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward."—Psalm 127:3.

It is evident from God's Word, the Bible, that Jehovah, "the source of life," recognizes the right to life of the unborn child. How? First, the Bible shows that he deems the unborn to be more than just a glob of tissue. God's interest in his marvelous creative arrangement is described by the psalmist this way: "You [Jehovah] kept me screened off in the belly of my mother. . . . Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing."—Psalm 36:9; 139:13-16.

Further, God calls to account the individual who accidentally interferes with the natural course of events involving an unborn child. Notice that the Mosaic Law put a heavy responsibility on such ones, stating: "If men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life."—Exodus 21:22, 23, *American Standard Version*.

Now if Jehovah views an accidental interference with the unborn child to be a matter

of such serious consequence, how much greater accountability would there be with deliberate interference, as in the case of abortion! Also, since God gave no limitations as to the age of the unborn in his law expressed at Exodus chapter 21, arguments based on age become moot.

The Answer to Overpopulation

Still, some may reason that with increased food shortages, lack of adequate housing, and a dwindling supply of fresh water, selective abortion as a means of population control would relieve the pressure on generations to

**"Abortion and infanticide . . .
were forbidden to Christians as
the equivalents of murder."**

—Will Durant, historian

come. Yet, is this the only way to balance world population with earth's environment?

Some 6,000 years ago, Jehovah God articulated his purpose concerning the population of the planet Earth. Jehovah declared to the first human couple: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28) Note that God's stated purpose is to fill, not overpopulate, the earth. The Creator will achieve world population equilibrium—maintain reasonable population density, ecological balance, and adequate food production.—Isaiah 65:17-25.

It is reasonable to conclude that the Creator of human reproductive power will himself justly regulate its use to attain this perfect balance. There will be no need for abortions to limit population growth. Jehovah through the Kingdom of his Son, Christ Jesus, will ensure that the earth is comfortably filled with obedient mankind living in a global paradise.—Isaiah 55:8-11; Revelation 21:1-5.

From Our Readers

Healing Burns

Some time ago, I wanted to ignite the pilot light of the bath water heater. I turned on the gas, and after a little while, I lit the match. Suddenly, everything around me burst into flames. The back of my left hand, which I had used to turn the pilot switch, was completely burned. I remembered reading in an *Awake!* that water should be applied, so I cooled my hand. My father had recommended administering a cut aloe leaf, and I did as he said. But the pain spread to my whole hand, and I just couldn't stand it. During this time, I started looking in the *Watch Tower Publications Indexes* under "Burns" and located the article "What You Should Know About Burns." (April 22, 1980) On reading it, I saw that it did not say to 'cool with water' but to 'put in ice water.' For just under three hours I did as the article said. I did not think that with such a burn my hand would heal evenly. But the next morning, look! No scars. My hand healed perfectly.

M. K., Japan

This treatment was also discussed at length in our issue of July 22, 1966. The injured hand or lower extremity can be immersed in ice water for 15 minutes, removed, and then the process repeated until the pain completely disappears when out of the ice water. This usually occurs within a period of about three hours. Larger areas of the body can be treated with ice packs. It should be kept in mind that too much cold applied to large areas of the body can bring the body temper-

ature down too much, causing shock.

—ED.

United States Constitution

I enjoyed the article "The United States Constitution and Jehovah's Witnesses." (October 22, 1987) After I did some research on the history of the Constitution, I learned that many of the men who signed the Constitution were racist and brutal slave-owners, and at the same time they were religious church attenders and forced their dogmas on their slaves. History books generally seem to have omitted these facts.

A. N., Japan

It is true that the lofty ideals expressed in the preamble to the Constitution, 'to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, and secure the blessings of liberty,' did not benefit all inhabitants of the United States when it was adopted in 1787. Nearly 80 years passed before slavery was prohibited (1865) and more than 130 years before women were guaranteed the right to vote (1920). The full attainment of racial equality is taking even longer. This, of course, is indicative of the limitations of imperfect, selfish men and shows the real need for God's Kingdom by his Son, Christ Jesus, where full righteousness will prevail. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; 32: 1, 2; Matthew 6:9, 10) It could be said, though, that the Constitution, with all its shortcomings, contains the expression of ideals in a framework that made possible improvements in the operation of the government so that such ideals could eventually be enjoyed by more people and to a greater degree today than in 1787.

—ED.

Watching the World

"No Tobacco Day"

April 7, 1988, has been proclaimed as the world's first "No Tobacco Day" by WHO (World Health Organization). Dr. Halfdan Mahler, Director-General of WHO, claims that tobacco use brings untimely death to 2.5 million people every year—about the same death toll if 20 jumbo jets crashed every day for a year! Dr. Mahler hopes that if people stop smoking for a day it will be their first step toward cutting down or even quitting tobacco use for good. WHO practices what it preaches; it allows no smoking in any of its offices. "WHO has been a smoke-free organization since 1987," Miss Kindermann, information officer at WHO, told *Awake!*

No-Tobacco Airlines

December 1, 1987, marked the day when all domestic airlines in Australia banned smoking throughout the aircraft. Airline companies will face large fines if they fail to enforce the total ban on smoking, and violators could be slapped with a stiff fine of up to \$500 (Australian). According to *The Canberra Times*, the minister for transportation and communications said: "We're acting in defence of the non-smoking travelling public who have been undoubtedly suffering a great deal of distress and discomfort—I can

vouch for that, I'm one of them myself."

TV-Fasting

German families are discovering the advantages of so-called



TV-fasting. Reporting on the experience of 80 men, women, and children in Westphalia who decided to have "four weeks TV-free," the German newspaper *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* says: "Afternoons and evenings have been changed completely. Spare time is now used in a more productive way, with more personal initiative than before." The TV-free time has proved to be of lasting benefit. Most participants explained: "Our viewing habits are different now. We are more selective; we watch less and switch off more often."

Brain Implants

Last September was the first time doctors transplanted fetal tissue into the brains of two adults suffering from Parkinson's disease.

A recent issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* reports that tissue from both the brain and adrenal gland of a spontaneously aborted 13-week-old fetus was used. The dramatic medical procedure took place in La Raza Medical Center, Mexico City. These experiments have moved the ethical questions surrounding the use of fetal tissue as a form of medical treatment out of the arena of theoretical debate and into actual therapy.

Mammoth Iceberg

An iceberg 1,000 feet thick, 25 miles wide, and approximately 100 miles long broke off from Antarctica last October. The iceberg—about twice the size of the state of Rhode Island—is the largest iceberg spotted since 1963. Experts estimate that the iceberg will take a decade to work its way into the open sea. Scientists are studying icebergs to determine if pollution is warming up the earth's atmosphere and creating a greenhouse effect. Such warmth could cause polar ice to melt, with the danger that a mere swell of just two feet in sea levels could inundate most major ports around the world.

Adolescent Ills

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is having a substantial

influence on youths in France aged 16 to 18. So finds a survey by the French Institute of Health and Medical Research. According to the survey, "40 percent of the boys and 28 percent of the girls smoke at least ten cigarettes a day," reports the French daily *Le Monde*. "Fifty-two percent of the boys and 21 percent of the girls regularly drink alcohol. The same proportion get drunk three times a year." Also, the survey revealed that "26 percent of the boys and 16 percent of the girls had tried illicit drugs." Researchers at the institute have established a connection between alcohol dependence and the use of drugs by young people. They state that a "repeated desire to get drunk at an early age is an important sign that illicit drugs will be used later."

Doctor Shortage in Africa

According to a WHO (World Health Organization) report, the number of doctors in Africa dropped to only one doctor for 10,000 people during the period of 1980-86. In contrast, the London-based *Panoscope* magazine notes that "in the industrialised world, too many medical staff are trained, and many are either unemployed or underemployed." In Europe, for example, there are now 24 times more doctors, dentists, and pharmacists per 10,000 inhabitants than in Africa.

Forget-Me-Not

While celebrating some holiday, a Japanese may be shocked to receive a letter from a dead relative. The delivery, called Heavenly Mail Service, has nothing to do with the spirit world. For a fee, a company in Nagoya, Ja-

pan, accepts orders from old people who trust them to deliver special-day greetings, gifts, and messages after their death. The basic cost of a letter from "heaven" is 10,000 yen (\$75, U.S.). For items to be delivered more than a year later, compound interest is charged at 18 percent a year. Therefore, a letter to be delivered ten years later would cost a hefty 55,442 yen (\$414, U.S.). Is it worth it? The company's president explains: "More and more people want to make sure they pass on their memories, as well as proof that they lived, to their children and grandchildren even after they die."

"Dowry Deaths"

Of the daily reports in Indian newspapers of young women burned to death, says *The Econo-*



mist of London, "it is common knowledge that many, possibly most, are dowry deaths." They result because of dissatisfaction by the husband's family over the dowry paid. Sometimes the bride's family cannot afford the amount agreed on, or more money is demanded after the wedding. This puts a great strain on the new wife and her father. Some wives are driven to suicide when the amounts cannot be paid, or they may be killed in hopes that more money will be brought in by the next wife. "Many fathers find themselves horribly in debt,"

notes the report. "Small wonder that the man with five daughters and no sons feels he has been cursed."

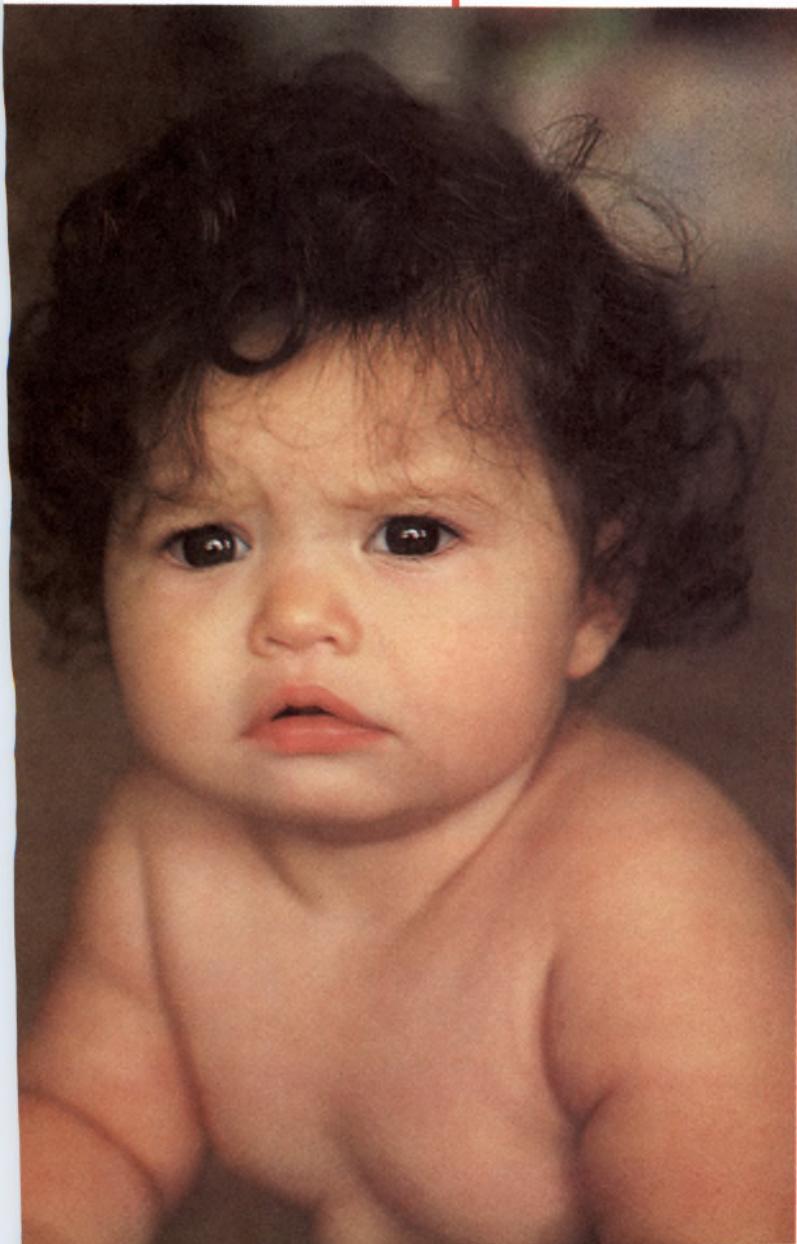
"Brown Dwarf"?

Scientists have discovered strong evidence of an apparent planetlike object orbiting a star less than 50 light-years from earth, reports the British journal *Nature*. If the finding is supported by additional research, it would be the first confirmed "brown dwarf," a half-planet, half-star about which astronomers have theorized for decades but have never seen. The scientists, from the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Hawaii, describe the gaseous body as being larger than any of the nine planets in our solar system. The brown dwarf would also be the first planetlike object identified outside our solar system.

Quality at a Price

A bottle of German wine dating back to 1735—probably "the world's oldest drinkable white wine"—was recently up for auction at the monastery in Eberbach, Germany. A few drops were sufficient to tease the taste buds of connoisseurs. "Aroma, bouquet and body are incomparable," drooled expert Robert Englert, according to the German newspaper *Schweinfurter Tagblatt*. It was said that a drained wineglass continued to tinge the air with its fragrance for hours thereafter, endorsing the excellent quality of the 18th-century wine. A Canadian businessman purchased the bottle with its mellow vintage for 53,000 German marks (\$33,-390, U.S.).

Is It Worth the Risk?



NEWSWEEK of August 10, 1987, carried a cover spread on "The Face of AIDS—One Year in the Epidemic." On 12 pages there were photos of over 300 AIDS victims in the United States. They were just a small fraction of the more than 30,000 in the United States who have died of AIDS to date. Yet, at least 17 of those pictured acquired their AIDS

through blood transfusions or blood products as have thousands of others.

Sample causes of AIDS in these cases were: "Exposed to virus-infected blood during surgery," "Infected by a 1983 transfusion," "Infected by a transfusion, she infected her husband and a son," "A blood transfusion gave him AIDS," "Contracted AIDS from blood transfusion during 1981 surgery," "Hemophiliac; his young son died of AIDS and his wife has ARC [AIDS Related Complex]," "He got AIDS from a blood transfusion, and he endured three years of pain, paralysis and encroaching blindness."

One case, a 13-month-old baby, "died, as did his mother, from a contaminated blood transfusion." A two-year-old girl "had a blood transfusion shortly after birth" and died of AIDS.

In view of these evident risks, why are some authorities still insisting on forcing blood transfusions on adult Jehovah's Witnesses and their babies? In most cases, there are alternative treatments, and Jehovah's Witnesses are only too happy to cooperate in any therapy that does not infringe on God's prohibition against the misuse of blood.—Levitcus 17:11, 12; Acts 15:28, 29.

Babies, infected by blood transfusions, have died of AIDS

The Risks That Matter

throughout the world, AIDS has become a major public health concern. In the United States alone, there are more than 1 million people living with the disease, and the number is growing rapidly. The disease is spread primarily through sexual contact, sharing needles, or from mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding. It can also be transmitted through blood transfusions or organ transplants. The most common symptom of AIDS is a persistent fever, followed by weight loss, diarrhea, and fatigue. Other symptoms include swollen lymph nodes, coughing, and difficulty breathing. As the disease progresses, it can lead to opportunistic infections and cancers, such as Kaposi's sarcoma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. There is currently no cure for AIDS, but treatments are available to manage the symptoms and extend life expectancy. These treatments include antiretroviral drugs, which target the virus that causes the disease, and other medications to treat specific complications. While there is still much work to be done in terms of prevention and treatment, progress has been made in recent years, and researchers continue to study the disease to find better ways to combat it.

Based on CDC's latest data, the following are the top 10 countries where AIDS is most prevalent: