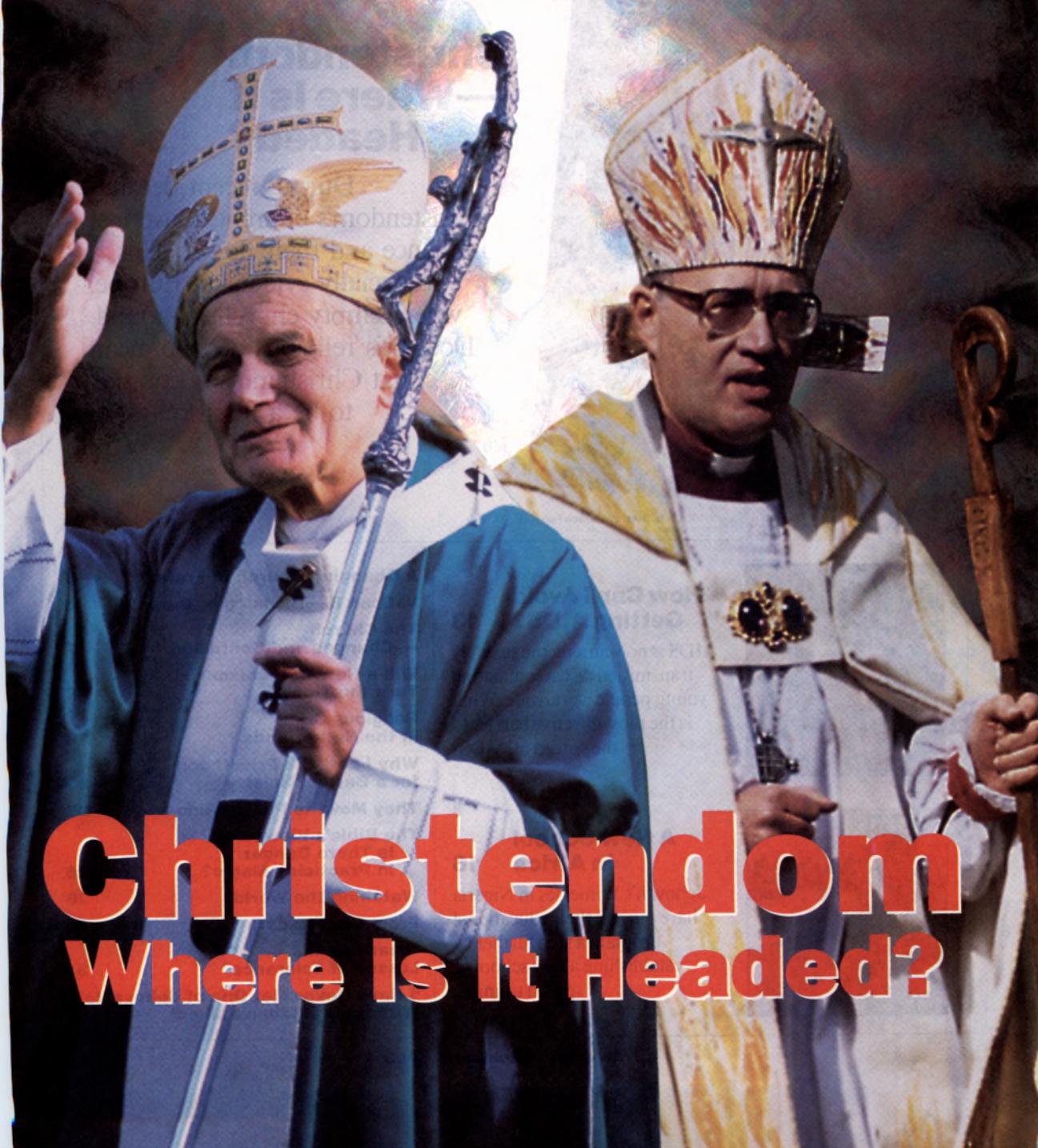


Awake!

September 8, 1993



Christendom Where Is It Headed?



Cover and above: left, T. B. G. /TSCHAEN/WITT/Sipa Press;
right, UK PRESS/Gamma Liaison



How Can I Avoid Getting AIDS? 13

AIDS is now among the sexually transmitted diseases afflicting young people worldwide. What is the most effective barrier to the spread of AIDS?



A New School in Africa 16

Jehovah's Witnesses in Nigeria have pushed their educational program a step further by establishing a new school of special training.

Christendom—Where Is It Headed? 3-12

During recent decades Christendom's churches have lost influence and their flocks. This is especially evident in Europe, where empty churches abound. Does this religious decline mean that Christianity is doomed to be a fossil religion?

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A Changing Church in France

By Awake! correspondent in France

"Church attendance is about nil. Every morning I say Mass for sparrows and spiders.

Last year I celebrated one baptism and 26 funerals. What about that? Not even one marriage.' When [this priest] first arrived at La Bastide [in the south of France], he had 85 children attending catechism. Today, there is a grand total of five in all. There is only one seminarian in the diocese, and 120 parishes have no priest."

—A priest, quoted by Paris daily *Le Figaro*.

"Who will decide to give back to Catholics the Gregorian hymns, the beautiful canticles, . . . the flowered altars, the ritual vestments, the incense, the organs, and the parish priests at the pulpit? . . . A long lost Catholic, who decides to come back to the fold, would resemble the prodigal son. However, nowadays he wouldn't find the warmth of his father's home but a parking lot fitted out with loudspeakers."

—Geneviève Dormann, writing in *Le Figaro Magazine*.

SINCE the end of the 1970's, there have been substantial changes for Catholics who marry Protestants. Until 1966 the Catholic marriage mate had to write an oath that he or she would bring up as Catholics any children born from the union. The Protestant husband or wife also had to sign this agreement. These days, the church is more lenient. The wedding ceremony may take place in either a Protestant or a Catholic church in the presence of a clergyman of either religion or both.

"Since Vatican II, not only does the Catholic Church have a new public image but it sees itself in a different light. . . . The church is now less pretentious, closer to other Christian religions, recognizing freedom of conscience, and declares itself 'at the world's service.'" —French daily *Le Monde*.

For some decades now, and especially since

Vatican II, the Catholic Church has undergone many changes. How do the faithful supporters and the clergy view these changes?

Things Are Not as They Used to Be

In the early 1960's, Cardinal Feltin, archbishop of Paris, allowed the priests in his diocese to put aside their priestly robes and wear more secular clothing, even a plain suit with a small cross on the lapel. The Roman Catholic cassock practically disappeared from the French scene, being worn only by traditionalist priests. About the same time, Catholics were granted the option to attend Mass on Saturday evenings instead of Sunday mornings.

The Liturgy, unaltered for centuries, underwent many changes. Modern songs were introduced into the Mass, though not necessarily to everyone's taste. The church altar was turned around so that the priest now faced his flock

during the ceremonies. However, one of the most noteworthy changes in the Catholic Liturgy was the celebrating of Mass in the language of the country. This resulted in the virtual disappearance of the Mass in Latin.

François, Maryse, and Gilles are examples of how some fervent Catholics reacted to this situation. François was an ardent supporter of having the Mass said in French. He stated: "You could at least understand what the priest was saying." Maryse was against the change because, as she said, Mass "was prettier before." Gilles shared Maryse's feelings. He confided: "When we changed from Latin to French, to me it seemed like a breach of faith."

Among the Catholics who favor these changes, many feel that things have not gone far enough. Some suggest that the church should have a more active role in world affairs. Others are in favor of marriage for priests and even the ordination of women.

Are the Faithful Quite So Faithful?

These changes have affected more than church ritual. In many countries, church attendance has fallen considerably. Thus, the percentage of French Catholics attending Mass at least once a month has dropped from 45 percent to 20 percent in the past 25 years. Regular confession to a priest is now out of fashion. According to a recent survey, only 14 percent of the French population go to

confession at least once a year, compared to 51 percent in 1952.

Supervision of the flock has become an acute problem too. The clergy are growing old. Priests renouncing the cloth or dying are not being replaced. As a consequence, the laity have been taking a more active part in worship.

The priesthood crisis is much more acutely felt in the rural areas. Hundreds of rural parishes in France no longer have priests, and many of the faithful either travel to nearby small towns for Sunday Mass or have to be content with what the church in France refers to as *ADAP, Les Assemblées Dominicale*s en L'Absence de Prêtres (Sunday Assemblies in the Absence of a Priest). How do people feel about these assemblies that can no longer be considered a Mass? A nun spoke out frankly on the situation in central France: "People are not really asking for anything. If nothing was held here on Sundays, they would eventually be satisfied with that."

New—generally charismatic—Catholic groups provide a sign of hope for many. However, they affect but a very small proportion of the Catholic faithful and do not offer a solution to what is called the church crisis.

But why are these changes taking place? When did they start? What triggered them? To answer these questions, we need briefly to review the history of the Catholic Church over the last 30 years.

Awake!®

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Vatican II

Blessing or Curse?

IT WAS 1962 in the Vatican. In front of an intrigued bishop, the pope opened a window in his Vatican palace. Pope John XXIII thus demonstrated what he expected of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65): to introduce fresh air into the Catholic Church, to bring about an *aggiornamento*, an updating.

What changes did the council bring into the church? This is still a relevant question, as Vatican II and its consequences are widely debated even today.

'Truth in Other Religions'

Pope John XXIII wanted changes—that became very evident. Theologians whose avant-garde ideas had been condemned a few years earlier were invited to the Vatican Council as experts. Orthodox and Protestant dignitaries were also invited as observers.

This new stance resulted in a radical change in matters of freedom of religion and conscience. For centuries the church had firmly condemned these ideas; Gregory XVI, a 19th-century pope, even described them as "foolishness." However, in 1964, by a large

majority, the council adopted a decree recognizing that every man had the right to choose his own religion. This went beyond pure and simple freedom, as the magazine *Notre Histoire* explained: "From that moment onward, it was conceded that some truth was to be found in other religions."

After Vatican II the church continued in its more liberal policy toward other religions. Demonstrating this, Pope John Paul II paid visits to King Hassan II of Morocco, a Muslim spiritual leader. He also visited a Protestant church and a synagogue in Rome. Many Catholics remember the 1986 meeting in Assisi, Italy, where Pope John Paul II invited leaders of the world's great religions to pray at his side in the interest of peace.

Vatican II—A Curse?

For some, the refreshing "breath of air" hoped for by Pope John XXIII was more like a cold blast of wind. To support their opinion, they mentioned a famous talk in which Pope Paul VI, who succeeded John XXIII, declared that "Satan's smoke" had filtered

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**The Second
Vatican Council
led to changes
and confusion**

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into the church. The book *La Réception de Vatican II* explained that, by his declaration, Paul VI "seemed to link the momentum created by the council to a process contrary to church interests."

Many churchgoers share this viewpoint. A recent survey revealed that almost half the Catholics in France think that "the church has gone too far in forcing reforms." Vatican II's critics accuse the church of not remaining faithful to its tradition but contaminating itself with modernism. They say that the church has lent its support to changes that have shaken Western society and have caused the crisis in the church.

Vatican II—A Blessing?

For others it is not the council that should be called into question. They say that the first signs of weakness in the church were already clearly visible before Vatican II. The French daily *La Croix* asserted: "The scarcity of priestly and nonpriestly vocations in Western countries should be viewed in relation to the general crisis in society and its consequences



on Christian communities: Too many Christians have allowed themselves to become steeped in contemporary mentalities and ideologies."

Still others feel that the changes recommended by Vatican II were vital. Another *La Croix* journalist stated: "One might . . . wonder what the church would have become if it had remained inward looking." Finally, various Catholic commentators explain that the church is an organization made up of imperfect humans, that it has gone through crises in the past and will come through this one too. Gilles, quoted in the previous article, made the following remark: "When we brought up church problems, we were told that the church was right in the middle of a teenage crisis and that it would blow over."

Whether Vatican II was responsible for positive or negative changes, it has had a serious effect on Catholics, as we will see in the next article.

The Church Changes and Confusion

"Many believers are disturbed by the changes imposed upon them."

—*L'Histoire*, July/August 1987.

"Let one link be broken . . . and the building loses all intelligibility. . . . Place the host ['the consecrated wafer' used in the Mass] in the hand instead of upon the lips, and you 'destroy the faith of many French people.'"—*Voyage à l'intérieur de l'Église Catholique*.

"In rejuvenating the liturgy and adopting the local language, the church evidently lost the great majority of churchgoers [who were] attached to certain traditions considered to be inflexible. . . . Suddenly, the sense of obligation snapped, and faith was shaken."

—*Nord Eclair*, April 24-25, 1983.



Camerique/H. Armstrong Roberts

THE preceding quotations clearly show the confusion that exists in many Catholic minds. A question keeps coming up: "Our parents and grandparents attended Mass said in Latin and prayed in a particular way. How could this way of doing things become invalid overnight?"

The church's new approach toward other religions is also a source of problems. Explains the French daily *Le Monde*: "Many believers feel swindled. They had been told too many times that their religion was the only true one, or at least the best." True, a great number of Catholics favor the idea of discussions with their "separated brothers," whether

Orthodox or Protestant. But this reversal of opinion is not understood by many who were formerly taught that 'outside the church there is no salvation.' This new attitude of the church is largely responsible for the schism between the Vatican and the traditionalists, whose spiritual leader, the late archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, was excommunicated by Pope John Paul II in 1988.

Authority Rejected

Catholics often express their bewilderment by questioning church authority. Even if John Paul II is appreciated for his stand in favor of world justice, many Catholics refuse to follow

Will a New Catechism Turn the Tide?

By Awake! correspondent in Italy

"A CATECHISM for the Year 2000," "The List of New Sins," "New Image for the Church"—these are some recent headlines in the Italian press on the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published so far in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In Italy the sales of the catechism rose to 110,000 copies in less than three weeks. Of course, in a Catholic country of nearly 58 million people, that figure is somewhat short of sensational. An Italian writer said that any who buy it "only seeking a catalog of new sins" will be in for a "disappointment."

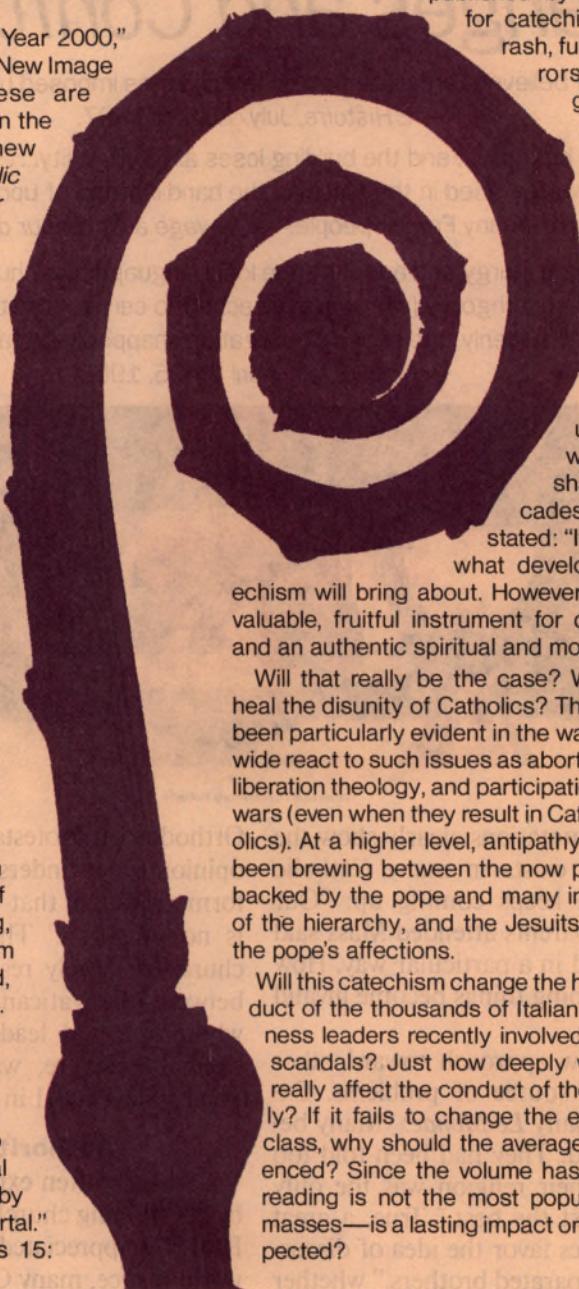
On December 7, 1992, Pope John Paul II officially presented the 450-page book that he called a "compendium of Catholic faith and morals." It had taken more than six years of drafting and redrafting, along with much criticism from the Catholic world, to produce this volume. Naturally, it perpetuates Christendom's mystery "of the Most Holy Trinity . . . , the central mystery of the faith." It also says that "every spiritual soul is created directly by God . . . , and it is immortal." (Compare 1 Corinthians 15:

28; Matthew 24:36; see also Ezekiel 18:4, 20.) But why was a new catechism deemed necessary?

One Catholic scholar wrote: "Many catechisms published by diocesan centers for catechism are extremely rash, full of dogmatical errors and extravagance." Yet these have been used for years to indoctrinate faithful Catholics. The Catholic publication *La Civiltà Cattolica* stated that the new text was to give "an important help in guaranteeing the unity of the faith," which has been shaken in recent decades. The pope himself stated: "It is not easy to see what developments this catechism will bring about. However, . . . it could be a valuable, fruitful instrument for deeper knowledge and an authentic spiritual and moral renewal."

Will that really be the case? Will this catechism heal the disunity of Catholics? These divisions have been particularly evident in the way Catholics worldwide react to such issues as abortion, contraception, liberation theology, and participation in so-called just wars (even when they result in Catholics killing Catholics). At a higher level, antipathy and division have been brewing between the now powerful Opus Dei, backed by the pope and many influential members of the hierarchy, and the Jesuits, now displaced in the pope's affections.

Will this catechism change the hearts and the conduct of the thousands of Italian political and business leaders recently involved in corruption and scandals? Just how deeply will this document really affect the conduct of the ruling elite of Italy? If it fails to change the ethics of the ruling class, why should the average Catholic be influenced? Since the volume has 450 pages—and reading is not the most popular activity of the masses—is a lasting impact on behavior to be expected?



Civil War in the Church of England?

By Awake! correspondent in Britain



AN UNLIKELY event? Not according to *The Sunday Times* of London. "The Church of England Is Rent Asunder," it proclaimed. "Divided Church Moves to Civil War." What has brought England's established church to such a sorry state? The proposed ordination of women.

In a historic decision last November, the synod of the Church of England voted by a two-thirds majority to ordain women as priests. Some 3,500 clergymen, a third of the church's total number, are said to be opposed to the measure, and some have already left the church in dismay. Others, under the leadership of the former bishop of London, wish to retain their Anglican identity

the moral precepts he advocates in his public speeches. Thus, a large proportion of Catholic couples use methods of contraception condemned by the church. Others practice abortion.

Church authority is being called into question at all levels. The fact that the pope and other high prelates have taken a particular stand on a subject has not prevented the laity, the priests, and even the bishops from contradicting them. The book *La Réception de Vatican II* explains: "From this point of view, the situation created by the council has extended into church life. The Roman Catholic Church is now the seat of permanent, heated arguments. Even the pope's recommendations are debated and very often criticized. The

while seeking "communion with the See of Peter," at Rome.

The Archbishop of Canterbury led the campaign in favor of the change. "The ordination of women to the priesthood," he said, "alters not a word in the creeds, the scriptures or the faith of our Church." He added: "It may actually help the credibility of the church in the face of the rest of the world. It is actually practising what it preaches when it talks about equality."

But not all agree. A layman, labeling the synod's judgment "apostasy," immediately left the church to become a Roman Catholic when the verdict became known. "The decision to ordain women has come as a shock. There is spiritual turmoil. Most people don't know what to do," lamented one London cleric. Meantime, the Vatican, while giving a cautious welcome to defectors, sees the ruling as "a new and grave obstacle to the entire process of reconciliation."

An estimated 1,400 women are waiting to be ordained, but the British Parliament has yet to approve the measure, which must then receive the Queen's Royal Assent. All of this could take up to two years. It will be interesting to see what condition the Church of England is in by then.

number of Roman Catholics saying that they are unable to make certain pontifical statements their own—in part or in full—is increasing."

Some Catholics have accepted the changes out of faithfulness to the church and continue to practice its rites. Others feel disturbed about the situation and are content to live as fringe members of the church. According to present statistics, there is also a substantial third group of nominal Catholics who fail to support the church any longer.

Religious confusion is not confined to the Catholic Church in France. In the Netherlands too, crises have arisen for Catholics and Protestants alike, as our next article will explain.

Religious Crisis in the Netherlands

By Awake! correspondent in the Netherlands

WILL the last father please turn out the lights?" This wry joke is circulating in monasteries in the Netherlands. It foresees a time when the last monk or priest will walk out of the last functioning monastery in that land and leave it empty. And it asks him to be sure not to leave the lights burning in the abandoned building! Could such a thing really happen? Are the clergy in danger of disappearing in the Netherlands, along with their flocks?

Leaving the Priesthood

As for the Catholic Church, each year the number of clergy decreases. From 1968 to 1978, the number of secular priests declined 27.2 percent, and this trend has continued since then. Why? One reason given is compulsory celibacy. In 1970 the National Pastoral Council decided that "the obligation of celibacy as a requirement for discharging one's duties as a minister ought to be abolished." Dutch bishops felt that the faithful would even be benefited if they could be served by married priests. Pope Paul VI, however, forcefully rejected the idea. Doubtless this was one reason why more than 2,000 priests subsequently resigned the priesthood by the beginning of 1980 and the number of those entering the priesthood declined.

Discussing the declining priesthood in the Netherlands, the late Cardinal Alfrink recalled the time that a papal nuncio, contemplating a seminary in front of the cardinal's

house, wondered out loud why the bishops would shut down such beautiful buildings. The cardinal replied: "Obviously you do not understand. The bishops did not shut down



any seminaries; they merely closed the doors after the students had left."

Not only the clergy but also their flocks are leaving the church in the Netherlands. And

this is not a new phenomenon. Back in 1879 a census indicated that less than 1 percent of the population were secular, that is, not members of a church. By 1920, almost 8 percent of the population claimed not to belong to a religion. In 1930 the figure rose to 14.4 percent. By 1982 it was an alarming 42 percent, and a more recent survey showed that over 51 percent of the Dutch do not belong to any church.

"Ice Age" for the Church

Even more dramatic than the fall in church membership has been the fall in church atten-

dance by those who do belong to a church. In 1988 the newspaper *De Telegraaf* carried the headline "Ice Age Sets In for the Church." The newspaper said: "Nobody is startled anymore when a church is demolished. Church attendance is decreasing in a frightening way. This is true not only in Catholicism but also in the Reformed and Calvinistic churches. If this secularization continues, within a few generations, nobody will attend church any-more."

The newspaper went on to note that the decline in Roman Catholicism is the worst. It

mentioned that in 1965 some 60 percent of all Dutch Catholics still attended Mass. In 1975 this figure was 28 percent. In recent years it has dropped to less than 16 percent.

Decrease in church attendance has had its effect on church buildings, which are closed when high maintenance and operating costs can no longer be met by shrinking congregations. Thus, numerous religious buildings have been demolished or sold for other uses. Few today are surprised to enter a church building and find it being used as a museum, a bicycle shop, a sports hall, a concert hall, a flower shop, a restaurant, or apartments.

It is not unexpected, then, that religious authorities are pessimistic about the future. After Pope John Paul II visited the Netherlands, a bishop said: "The pope visited a



Many churches in Europe are now used for secular purposes. Page 10: A garage in the Netherlands. Page 11: Pensioners' hall, workshop, boys' club, and abandoned church in Penygraig, Wales

corpse, or at least a mortally ill patient who thinks he is still alive."

Why They Leave the Church

The decline in church membership has been accelerated by new factors. Among these is the breakdown of respect for authority. People are no longer willing to accept things just because someone in authority tells them to. Linked to this is the emphasis laid on individual freedom. Today, people want to decide for themselves what they will believe and how they will act.

Two other contributing factors are said to be the influence of the media and the modern tendency to mistrust institutions. There is also the feeling that established institutions take away freedom and individuality. Further, even when people are still religiously inclined, circumstances may move them to leave their church. For example, tradition-minded church members feel uncomfortable in a church with a progressive minister or priest. And modern-thinking churchgoers feel out of place in conservative congregations.

On the Protestant side, the Calvinistic Church has long had the reputation of sticking to old-fashioned morality. So, many were startled when in 1979 the Netherlands Calvinistic Synod urged local churches to admit homosexuals to the eucharist and to the ministry. In 1988 the international Calvinistic Ecumenical Synod asked Calvinists in the Netherlands to reconsider, but the synod sent word that the decision was irrevocable. In 1989 the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church also voted to oppose any disciplinary measures against homosexuals. Imagine how "old-fashioned" Protestants must have felt when a Calvinistic minister, a homosexual, stated in church that "homosexuality is a gift of God; God also loves pink!"

Will Christianity Cease to Exist?

In view of the foregoing factors and many others, is it surprising that there has been a massive exodus from the churches in the Netherlands and in many other countries? Indeed, thoughtful people have even come to the conclusion that perhaps true Christianity cannot be found anywhere. Will Christianity finally die out?

The Bible foretold a drying up of support for Christendom, along with other religions, in our day. (Revelation 16:12; 17:15) But it also foresaw that some would abandon false religion not merely because of dissatisfaction or disillusionment but because of a positive purpose. The Bible prophetically urges: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins." (Revelation 18:4) The "her" referred to is the symbolic religious whore, "Babylon the Great," which embraces all the religions of the world, including those of modern Christendom. The "my people" are sincere seekers of truth who leave Babylon the Great because they want to serve God in the way Jesus taught. Christendom has strayed so far from true Christianity that sincere people must get out in order to serve God acceptably.

True Christianity is alive and flourishing in the Netherlands as well as all around the globe. Jehovah's Witnesses, in spite of their imperfections, are following Christ's teachings and practices. You are not expected simply to accept that assertion. Why not examine the Witnesses' beliefs in the light of the Bible, and see for yourself. Learn from God's Word the Christianity of Jesus' apostles, as opposed to what Christendom's churches have taught and practiced for centuries. This will, as the apostle Paul explained, bring you benefits for "the life now and that which is to come." —1 Timothy 4:8.

Young
People
Ask . . .



How Can I Avoid Getting AIDS?

"IT MAKES me angry that I allowed this to happen," says Kaye. "Choices I made have stolen away the choices that I might have had in the future." (*Newsweek* magazine, August 3, 1992) At age 18, Kaye contracted the AIDS virus.

Kaye is just one of over a million people in the United States who are infected with deadly HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)—the virus doctors say causes the dreaded disease AIDS.* No one really knows exactly how many youths are infected, but young

* See the article "Young People Ask . . . AIDS—Am I at Risk?" appearing in the August 22, 1993, issue of *Awake!*

people are clearly concerned. A survey showed that among British youths, AIDS is their biggest worry. In spite of such concern, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control says: "Many adolescents continue to report engaging in HIV-risk behaviors."

AIDS is always fatal, and it is spreading worldwide at epidemic rates. How can you protect yourself?

AIDS—Separating Myth From Fact

A booklet prepared by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control explains: "HIV infection doesn't 'just happen.' You can't 'catch' it like a cold or flu." Therefore, casual, everyday contact with AIDS victims does not appear to be risky. You don't have to be concerned about getting AIDS from an infected classmate simply because you sit near him or her. Since HIV is not an airborne virus, you don't have to worry if an AIDS victim coughs or sneezes. In fact, families of AIDS sufferers have shared towels, eating utensils, and even toothbrushes without spreading the virus.*

This is because the deadly virus dwells in a person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. In most cases, then, AIDS is transmitted by sexual intercourse—homosexual or heterosexual.* Many victims have also been infected by sharing needles or syringes, often in drug abuse, with someone infected with HIV.* And while doctors claim that the risk "has been practically eliminated" by vigorous screening, AIDS can also be transmitted through blood transfusions.

So anyone who engages in premarital sex or experiments with injected illegal drugs is at

* Former surgeon general of the United States Dr. C. Everett Koop answered skeptics by saying: "The first cases of AIDS were reported in this country in 1981. We would know by now if AIDS were passed by casual, non-sexual contact."

* This includes oral and anal intercourse.

* The U.S. Centers for Disease Control further cautions: "If you plan to have your ears pierced . . . , make sure you go to a qualified person who uses brand-new or sterile equipment. Don't be shy about asking questions."

high risk for AIDS infection. True, a potential sexual partner may not look sick. But the booklet *Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing: Facts, Issues, and Answers* reminds: "You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she has HIV infection. Someone can look and feel perfectly healthy and still be infected. For this reason, most people who have HIV infection do not know it."

"Safe Sex"?

Many health workers and educators are therefore promoting the use of condoms.* TV ads, billboards, and school lectures have spread the message that the use of this contraceptive device makes sex "safe"—or at least "safer." Some schools have even distributed condoms to students. Spurred on by such propaganda, youths in record numbers are using them.

Even so, just how safe is "safe sex"? A brochure by the American Red Cross says: "Condoms can improve your chances of avoiding infection." But would you feel safe if you merely 'improved your chances' of avoiding a disease that *always proves fatal*? The U.S. Centers for Disease Control admits: "Latex condoms have been shown to help prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases . . . But they are not foolproof." Indeed, they can break, tear, or come off during intercourse. According to *Time*, condoms "can have a failure rate of between 10% and 15%!" Would you stake your life on such odds? And to make matters worse, less than half of the sexually active youths in the United States are using condoms.

The advice of Proverbs 22:3 is thus apropos: "Shrewd is the one that has seen the ca-

* Explains the magazine *FDA Consumer*: "The condom is a sheath that covers the entire penis. It protects against STDs [sexually transmitted diseases] by acting as a barrier, or wall, to keep semen, blood, and vaginal fluids from passing from one person to another."

lamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty." *One of the best ways to avoid getting AIDS is to abstain from drug abuse and immoral sex entirely.* Easier said than done? Many feel that way, especially in view of the enormous pressures youths face.

The Pressures

During "the bloom of youth," sexual desires run strong. (1 Corinthians 7:36) Add, now, the influence of television and movies. According to some studies, teenagers watch over five hours of TV every day—much of which is sexually graphic. But in the fairy-tale world of TV land, sex has no consequences. One study revealed that on U.S. television "unmarried heterosexual couples engage in sexual intercourse from four to eight times more frequently than married men and women. Contraceptives are almost never referred to or used, but women seldom get pregnant; men and women rarely contract sexually transmitted diseases unless they are prostitutes or homosexuals."—Center for Population Options.

Can large doses of such programming really affect your behavior? Yes, according to the Bible principle at Galatians 6:7, 8: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh." One study of 400 youths discovered that "those who watched a greater amount of 'sexy' television were more likely than light viewers to have become sexually active."

Another powerful influence is peer pressure. "I was looking for a crowd to fit in with, and that's hard," confesses a teenager named David. "I put myself in a really unhealthy situation many times. . . . I was diagnosed with AIDS." Likewise, youths in Bible times were often subjected to peer pressure. The Bible's



Yielding to sexual pressure can lead to AIDS

ear) Especially will the Bible's code of sexual morality protect you. "Flee from fornication," the Bible commands. "Every other sin that a man may commit is outside his body, but he that practices fornication is sinning against his own body." (1 Corin-

advice? "My son," said the writer of Proverbs, "if sinners try to seduce you, do not consent."

—Proverbs 1:10.

Saying No

Promoters of "safe sex" argue that abstinence is unrealistic. But in the long run, does it really help to condone immorality? One teenager admits that this only confuses youths, saying: "They tell us to just say no to sex and it's okay to be wholesome and pure. At the same time, they hand out [condoms] and tell us how to get away with sex without having to pay the consequences."

Don't be a victim of such moral confusion. The Bible—old-fashioned though it may seem—urges you to avoid conduct that could put you at risk for AIDS infection. If you obey the Bible's command to 'abstain from blood,' you won't contract AIDS through a blood transfusion. (Acts 15:29) Heed the Bible's prohibition against "drug-gery" and you needn't fear infection by a contaminated hypodermic needle. (Galatians 5:20; Revelation 21:8; *The Kingdom Interlin-*

thians 6:18) The AIDS crisis underscores the wisdom of those words.

How can a youth "flee" from immorality? Over the years "Young People Ask . . ." articles have given a number of practical suggestions, such as dating in groups, avoiding compromising circumstances (such as being alone with one of the opposite sex in a room or an apartment or a parked car), setting limits as to expressions of affection, refraining from the use of alcohol (which often impedes good judgment), and firmly saying no if a situation gets romantically charged.* In any event do not let anyone pressure you into behavior that is not only risky physically but destructive spiritually. (Proverbs 5:9-14) "Do you want to put your life in that other person's hands?" asked a young woman named Amy quoted in a *Newsweek* article. She contracted HIV from a boyfriend before graduating from high school. She pointedly asks: "Is that boy or girl worth dying for? I doubt it."

* See, for example, the "Young People Ask . . ." articles in the April 22, 1986; April 22, 1989; and April 22, 1992, issues of *Awake!*

A New School in Africa

By Awake! correspondent in Nigeria

In JULY 1990 a letter was read that caused great excitement among the more than 400 volunteers, Jehovah's Witnesses, who live and work at the Watch Tower Society's branch office at Igieduma, Nigeria. The Ministerial Training School, instituted in the United States in 1987, was coming to Africa, and the first classes were to be held at Igieduma!

In the months that followed, the Bethel family prepared for the first class.* The students and instructors would require accommodations. The existing guest rooms would not be sufficient; 15 additional rooms were needed. So the Witnesses set to work converting storage rooms into attractive residence rooms. This involved tiling the floors, painting the walls, and hanging curtains. The carpenter shop built and installed beds, cabinets, and desks. Finally, chairs, reading lamps, and bookshelves were brought in. The shelves were filled with theocratic publications.

Additionally, the family room was converted into a classroom and library for the students. One of the infirmary bedrooms became a temporary office for the instructors and was furnished with desks, tables, and other office equipment. Meanwhile, as news of the upcoming school was made known throughout the country at conventions and assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses, hundreds of applications began to pour in from prospective students.

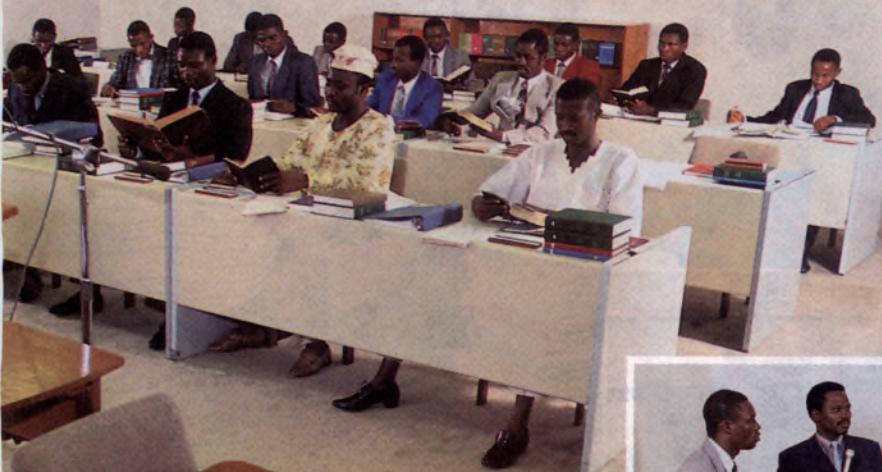
By the first week of February 1992, everything was ready. Two instructors, Michael Purbrick and Peter Nicholls, had arrived from Britain to teach the first class. In addition to the 22 students, three prospective teachers also came, Isaiah Mnwe, Isaiah Olabode, and Pius Oparaocha. These were Nigerian Witnesses who were to be trained to teach subsequent classes.

* "Bethel," from the Hebrew for "house of God," is the name given to each branch home of the Watch Tower Society.



Instructors Isaiah Mnwe and Pius Oparaocha

Classroom instruction



Classroom discussion group



**Doing research
in the library**



Purpose of the School

Throughout Bethel, there was an air of anticipation and excitement. Why? Because of the positive impact the school would have on the disciple-making work in Nigeria. Long ago Jehovah foretold that he would provide "gifts in the form of men." (Psalm 68:18) He did this in apostolic times, even as the apostle Paul wrote at Ephesians 4:8-11. Today, Jehovah is also providing gifts in men. The Ministerial Training School is a loving provision to equip some of these men to take on further organizational responsibilities.

In the country, there are over 160,000 Witnesses in more than 3,000 congregations. Some of these congregations have only one or two elders and few ministerial servants. Other congregations have vast territories where the good news is not extensively preached. Hence, there is a great need for qualified men not only to take the lead in the evangelizing work but also to shepherd the flock and teach in the congregations.

The aim of the Ministerial Training School is to train brothers to care for these responsibilities. After graduating, some of the



Working in the Laundry and in the Shipping Department

students take up special pioneer work or traveling work, areas of service in which there is a great need in Nigeria. Others return to their congregations to give help and encouragement to local brothers. What a blessing such well-qualified men are to the congregations they serve!

Unique Training

Although the Ministerial Training School is an extension of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, which trains missionaries for foreign service, its curriculum is unique. During the eight-week school, students undertake an intensive study of the Bible. They carefully consider a wide range of Bible teachings, including counsel on shepherding responsibilities and guidelines for handling problems in Christian living. They also learn what the

Scriptures teach about administrative, judicial, and organizational matters. They receive specialized training in public speaking and receive personal attention from caring instructors, who assist them in their spiritual development.

In all, the average student receives 45 classroom assignments, and he benefits from 256 hours of classroom instruction. In addition, he spends 140 hours doing homework and 14 hours taking examinations.

While the main textbook is the Bible, the students are asked to bring to school their personal copies of 16 other books, Bible study aids published by the Watch Tower Society. During the school, students also dig deeply into other publications available in the well-equipped Bethel library. Clearly, they need to be good readers.

Apart from schoolwork, students work 45 minutes each day in one of eight Bethel departments: cleaning, dining room, grounds maintenance, housekeeping, kitchen, laundry, shipping, and trucking. They rotate jobs so that by the end of the eight-week course, each one has had experience in all these departments. One student remarked: "My working in various departments made me understand that Jehovah is the supervisor of the work." Another said: "The overseers are ready to teach and correct in love." And another commented: "Bethel work is something that everybody should taste and see that it is good."

How did the brothers respond to the training they received? One said: "[It was] a school of all schools." Another enthusiastically exclaimed: "What a superlative arrangement!" With hearts filled with joy and appreciation, the students of the first class wrote in a letter: "Our resolve is . . . to build every fiber of our lives around the message of the good news."

Comments From the Field

During the first part of 1992 and of 1993, the first four classes of the Ministerial Training School in Nigeria were conducted. In a letter of appreciation written to the Governing Body, the students of the second class wrote: "Truly, we have never attended any school better than this. The course is much better than a university program. We thus find it easy to agree with William Phelps that 'a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without a Bible.' In all of this, your genuine interest in us is clear. So we are determined to make the full-time work our career."

How have the graduates been received in their new assignments? A traveling overseer wrote a letter concerning two graduates of the first class who are serving as special pioneers: "Meetings are now appealing, encouraging,

enjoyable, and meaningful. Activities in the field service are increasing . . . The congregation is bubbling with joy . . . When I interviewed some brothers as regards these special pioneers, the presiding overseer answered with tears of joy, saying: 'We thank Jehovah and his organization for sending sound and effective helpers to our congregation.'"

Who Qualifies?

Attending the Ministerial Training School in any country is a marvelous privilege of service, a wonderful blessing from Jehovah. Unquestionably, this training helps students increase their stature as spiritual men and equips them to be used more fully by Jehovah.

Understandably, the requirements are high. In order to qualify, applicants must have served as elders or ministerial servants in the Christian congregation for at least two years. Preference is given to those in regular pioneer service. All must be single and between 23 and 50 years of age. They must not have been judicially reprobated or disfellowshipped during the past five years. Applicants need to be able to read, write, and speak English fluently, and they need to be in good health, not requiring special care or diet.

Outstandingly, those who volunteer must be ready, willing, and able to serve wherever they may be needed. This calls for not only a strong desire to do God's will but also the spirit of Isaiah, who eagerly offered himself to do a special work, saying: "Here I am! Send me."—Isaiah 6:8.

Do you have a similar spirit? Are you in a position to reach out for this privilege of service? Those who have done so have no regrets. Wrote one graduate of the school who is now serving as a circuit overseer: "For me, the Ministerial Training School was a gift that has no compare. It has proved to be the pinnacle of my spiritual life. If I had the opportunity to live my life again, I would never choose a different course."

Why I Left the Priesthood for a Better Ministry

I WAS ordained as a Catholic priest on July 31, 1955, at the age of 24. It was the culmination of 12 formative years spent at the archdiocesan seminary, Rachol, Goa, India. And what had created in me a desire to be a priest?

I was born in Bombay, India, on September 3, 1930. The following year, my father retired, and the family settled down in Salvador do Mundo, Bardez, Goa, on India's southwest coast. I was the youngest of four children. From infancy I was reared in a Portuguese Catholic culture and tradition, which has existed in Goa since 1510, when it was colonized by Portugal.



My parents, faithful to their beliefs, were zealous Catholics who each year celebrated Christmas, Lent, Easter, and feasts in honor of the Virgin Mary and several "saints." The priests who participated in these celebrations were often accommodated in our home, sometimes for more than ten days at a time. Thus, we had continuous rapport with them, and as a youngster I was impressed by them.

My Service in Goa, Salamanca, and Rome

I started the priestly ministry with great enthusiasm, and I had no qualms whatsoever about the veracity of the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. During my first seven years of ministry in Goa, I performed sociopastoral duties at the St. Thomas Chapel in Panaji, the capital of Goa. Simultaneously, at the then Portuguese government Polytechnic Institute, I held a civil assignment that had a dual role—professor and also director of the institute's campus.

In 1962, I was sent to the University of Salamanca, in Spain, where I earned my PhD in Philosophy of Law and Canon Law. In the course of my juridical training, some of the subjects I studied, especially Roman Law and History of Canon Law, incited me to investigate how the constitution of the Catholic Church had evolved and emerged to the point of identifying the pope as Peter's successor with 'primacy of jurisdiction over the church.'

I was happy that plans were being made for my theological doctoral studies to be in Rome, Italy, where I would have the opportunity to learn more about the hierarchy of the church. I moved to Rome in the summer of 1965.

At this time the ecumenical council Vatican II had reached its climax. While I pursued my theological studies, I had interesting discussions with several theologians and "Fathers of the Council" who opposed the ultraconservatives in the council. The reigning pope was Paul VI, with whom I had personal contacts in

my capacity as the vice president of the Indian Priests' Association in Rome.

Early Conflicts and Doubts

Throughout the period of these contacts and my studies and research for my doctoral theses, I had opportunity to gain further insight into the history and development of the basic structure of the Catholic Church.* Contrary to the views of the conservatives in the council, who were accustomed to Pius XII's (1939-58) type of absolute monarchy, the liberals finally managed to get the council's approval of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Latin title, *Lumen Gentium*, Light of the Nations). Among other matters, in chapter 3 it dealt with the right of the bishops to participate as a body in the full and supreme authority of the pope over the church. This doctrine was deeply rooted in tradition but was considered heretical and revolutionary by the conservatives.

I found both views to be unacceptable, as they lacked the truth of the Gospel. They are a distortion of Matthew 16:18, 19 and give license to all the past and future unscriptural doctrines and dogmas of the church.[#] I noted that the Greek words used in this text, *pe'tra* (feminine), meaning "a rock-mass," and *pe'tros* (masculine), meaning "piece of rock," were not used by Jesus as synonyms. Furthermore, had Peter been given the primacy as the rock-mass, like a cornerstone, there would have been no disputes among the apostles later on as to who was the greatest among them. (Compare Mark 9:33-35; Luke 22:24-26.) Also, Paul would not have dared to rebuke Peter publicly for "not walking straight according to the truth of the good news." (Galatians 2:11-14) I

* I left Salamanca while still doing research on my Canon Law thesis, which I presented in 1968.

[#] This text states in part, according to the Catholic *New American Bible*: "I for my part declare to you, you are 'Rock,' and on this rock I will build my church . . . Whatever you declare bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." —See box, page 23.

came to the conclusion that all spirit-begotten followers of Christ are equally stonelike, with Jesus as their foundation cornerstone.—1 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 21:2, 9-14.

The higher the level of academic and pastoral status I attained and the greater the exchange of ideas I had, the more distant in mind and heart I became from various dogmas of the Catholic Church, especially those related to the priestly ordination in the context of “the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass” and “the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist”—called transubstantiation.

In Catholic parlance, “the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass” is a perpetual commemoration and bloodless renewal of Jesus’ sacrifice on the “cross.” But the Christian Greek Scriptures in general and Paul’s letter to the Hebrews in particular were sufficiently clear for me to deduce that the sacrifice of Jesus was a perfect sacrifice. His work was whole. It neither required nor was susceptible to any additions, repetitions, or improvements. The sacrifice was offered “once for all time.”—Hebrews 7:27, 28.

My Search for the Truth Continues

To test myself, I continued to work for several dioceses and archdioceses in Western Europe, for the archdiocese of New York, and for the diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska. It was a painful nine-year test in my search for the truth. I was mainly involved in administrative

matters, ecclesiastical jurisprudence, and judicial practice. I stayed aloof as much as I could from liturgical rites and ceremonies. The greatest challenge was that of saying the daily Mass. It created a serious conflict of feelings and emotions because I did not believe in the repetitive bloodless sacrifice of Christ or in transubstantiation or in the earthly sacral priesthood required to perform validly and licitly the “magic” of transubstantiation.

During the Second Vatican Council, there was an uproar about this “magic.” Liberals led by the Dutch Catholic hierarchy supported only “transignification,” that is, the bread and wine only mean or represent the body and blood of Christ. On the other hand, the ultra-conservatives, led by the Italian Catholic hierarchy, staunchly defended “transubstantiation,” that is, the changing of the substance of the bread and wine into the true and real substance of the body and blood of Christ by the “consecration words” uttered during Mass. Hence, the saying was: ‘In Holland all things change except bread and wine, while in Italy nothing changes except bread and wine.’

I Make the Break

In view of such misrepresentation of Christ and his gospel, I felt terribly disappointed and frustrated that my goal to glorify God and save souls was undermined by false doctrines. Hence, in July 1974, I finally resigned from the active ministry with the request for an indefinite leave of absence. It was illogical and unacceptable to me to ask for dispensation from a priesthood that had no Biblical basis. Consequently, from July 1974 to December 1984, I remained in seclusion. I did not associate with any other religion of Christendom because none of them shared my conclusions against the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, the concept of all righteous people gaining everlasting life in heaven, and the never-ending hellfire punishment. I viewed these doctrines as products of paganism.

In Our Next Issue

**Loneliness
—What You Can Do About It**

The Case for Mother's Milk

**"Oh, Jehovah,
Keep My Young Girl Faithful!"**

Inner Peace and Happiness

My religious seclusion ended in December 1984. In my capacity as manager of the Credit and Accounts Receivables Department for an Anchorage, Alaska, business, I had to discuss several invoices with a customer, Barbara Lerma. She was in a hurry and stated that she had to attend a "Bible study." The expression "Bible study" drew my attention, and I asked her a few Biblical questions. She promptly and efficiently gave me Scriptural answers that were rather compatible with my own doctrinal conclusions. Finding that I had more questions, Barbara put me in touch with Gerald Ronco, who was at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Alaska.

The upbuilding Bible-related discussions that followed brought me inner peace and happiness. These were the kind of people I had been searching for—God's people. I prayed to God for guidance and in due time began associating with Jehovah's Witnesses as an unbaptized preacher of the good news. I was indeed surprised to learn that this organization's headquarters was located in Brooklyn, New York, only a few miles from the Holy Family Church in Manhattan, where I had served (in 1969, 1971, and 1974) as associate pastor of the Parish Church of the United Nations.

Helping My Family to See the Truth

After six months of association with Jehovah's Witnesses in Anchorage, I moved to Pennsylvania on July 31, 1985. Here I had the privilege of sharing the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom with my niece Mylene Mendenha, who was pursuing graduate studies in biochemistry at the University of Scranton. When Mylene learned that I was looking for Jehovah's Witnesses, she was taken aback, as she had earlier been misinformed that the group was a cult. At first she did not say anything to me because she respected me as her uncle and a priest and had high regard for my academic and pastoral achievements.

The following Sunday, Mylene went to the Catholic Church for Mass, and I went to the Kingdom Hall for the Bible discourse and Watchtower Study. That very evening we sat together, she with the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* and I with the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. I showed her the name Yahweh in her Bible and the equivalent, Jehovah, in the *New World Translation*. She was thrilled to learn that God has a name and that he wants us to call on him by his name. I also told her how unscriptural the doctrines of the Trinity, transubstantiation, and the immortality of the soul were and showed her the pertinent scriptures. She was simply amazed!

Mylene's interest was further piqued when I told her about the hope of everlasting life in

Keys of the Kingdom

As to the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens," its meaning becomes obvious when considering the reprimand Jesus issued to the religious leaders: "You took away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not go in, and those going in you hindered!" (Luke 11:52) Matthew 23:13 further elucidates "go in" as indicating entrance into "the kingdom of the heavens."

The keys Jesus promised to Peter constituted a unique educational role that would open up special opportunities for individuals to enter into the heavenly Kingdom. Peter used this privilege on three occasions, helping Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.—Acts 2:1-41; 8:14-17; 10:1-48; 15:7-9.

The object of the promise was, not Peter's dictating to heaven what should or should not be bound or be loosed, but Peter's being used as heaven's instrument for the three specific assignments. That is the case because Jesus remained as true Head of the congregation.—Compare 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 5:23; Colossians 2:8-10; Hebrews 8:6-13.

Paradise on earth. Before that she was worried as to what would happen to her at death. She thought she was not holy enough to go directly to heaven, but she did not think she was so wicked that she should be condemned to everlasting hellfire punishment. Hence, the only alternative in her mind was purgatory, where she would have to wait patiently for people's prayers and for Masses to send her up to heaven. However, after I showed and explained to her several scriptures concern-

ing the hope for everlasting life in Paradise on earth, she was eager to learn more about this wonderful good news. Mylene attended the Kingdom Hall meetings with me. We started a formal Bible study with local Witnesses. Shortly after, we made our dedication to Jehovah God and were baptized on May 31, 1986.

My family, especially my eldest brother, Orlando, were upset at the news of my leaving the priesthood. He consulted my sister Myra Lobo Mendenha, who calmed him down, saying: "Let us not be troubled by this, since Alinio would not have relinquished all his 43 years of hard work without a very good reason." In September 1987, Myra and her family joined me in Wisconsin, U.S.A. I had no difficulty in making them see the unscriptural nature of many of the Catholic doctrines and practices. They were keen to learn Bible truth. Immediately, Mylene and I started a Bible study with them. Upon their moving to Orlando, Florida, they continued their study.

The peace and happiness we all enjoyed made us share the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom with my eldest sister, Jessie Lobo, who lives in Toronto, Canada. She had been



**Alinio de Santa Rita Lobo
now a Witness**

witnessed to in 1983. However, having a brother as a priest, she believed that nothing would make her change her faith. Four years after that initial conversation with Jehovah's Witnesses, when she found that I had become a Witness of Jehovah and that Myra and her family were preachers of the good news, she contacted a Witness who promptly arranged a Bible study. Jessie was baptized on April 14, 1990; Myra, my brother-in-law Oswald, and my niece Glynis were baptized on

February 2, 1991. They are very happy to serve Jehovah, the Most High.

The conservative traditionalists and the liberal progressives in the Catholic Church are certainly intelligent people. They believe they are doing God's will. However, we should not overlook the fact that "the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." (2 Corinthians 4:4) It is clear, then, that the wisdom of this system of things is foolishness with God. (1 Corinthians 3:18, 19) How grateful and happy I am that Jehovah makes "the inexperienced one wise" through an accurate knowledge of his Word.—Psalm 19:7.

My 19 years of service as a Catholic priest is history. Now I am a Witness of Jehovah. It is my desire to walk in Jehovah's ways and to follow his Son, Jesus Christ, our King and Savior. I would like to help others to know Jehovah so that they too might qualify for the prize of everlasting life on a paradise earth, to the glory of the true God, Jehovah.—*As told by Alinio de Santa Rita Lobo.*

They Move to Puerto Rico



ON MAY 9, 1993, the Spanish Translation Department, consisting of 20 members, moved from the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, to the Watch Tower Society's new branch office in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Why the move? A responsible member of the headquarters writing staff of Jehovah's Witnesses explains: "We have found that translators do better work when they live where the language into which they translate is spoken daily. Further, they naturally keep up-to-date with any new variations in that language. Puerto Rico has been selected as a convenient hub for the entire Spanish-speaking world."

The Spanish Translation Department has been located in Brooklyn, New York, since 1928 and has played an important role in spreading the Kingdom message by helping to make Bible literature available to some 350,000,000 Spanish-speaking persons worldwide. *The Watchtower* was first translated into Spanish in 1917. Today, nearly 3,500,000 copies of *The Watchtower* and

nearly 3,000,000 copies of *Awake!* are printed in Spanish each issue. In recent years the Watch Tower Society's branch in Spain has also given valuable help to this work, especially in translating *Awake!* magazine. There are over 1,100,000 Spanish-speaking Jehovah's Witnesses in the world, about 25 percent of the total number of Witnesses worldwide. This figure includes the tens of thousands of immigrants serving in non-Spanish-speaking lands, such as Australia, Germany, Sweden, and the United States.

The move to the larger and newer facilities in Puerto Rico has another benefit. It allows for translators and proofreaders from different countries, such as Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Venezuela, to be united at one central location so that the international flavor of the Society's publications in Spanish can be further enhanced. This will help to convey the Kingdom message in a clear and precise manner to Spanish-speaking people worldwide. We look forward to Jehovah's blessing on this new development.

Is There Danger in Practicing Magic?

THE air tingles with the aura of magic. Suddenly, a drumroll breaks the silence. All eyes fix intently on two uniformed men carrying muskets. Raising their firearms to the shoulder, they take aim at an elaborately robed Chinese magician. He holds a china plate in front of his chest. The muskets roar in a flash of fire. Instantly the magician falls to the floor, bleeding heavily. The bullet-catching illusion turns to tragedy.¹ A faulty mechanism in one of the muskets caused the bullet to discharge and penetrate the magician's chest. So relates the book *Henry Gordon's World of Magic*.

What a waste of the gift of life—all for the sake of the suspense, thrills, and entertainment that go with that type of magic. Is that how you react? Or do you feel that it is just part of the risk associated with staging such a performance? Whatever your response may be, when this illusion failed it was deadly dangerous. It prompts us to ask: Is there a more subtle danger associated with the practice of magic? For an answer, let us look at the roots of this ancient art.

Magic's Influence Throughout History

From the dawn of history, man has been intrigued and manipulated by the mystery of magic. The word "magic" is derived from the name "magi," an ancient Persian priestly caste that specialized in cultic activities. In its most basic sense, magic is an effort to control or coerce natural or supernatural forces to do man's bidding. Egypt of the 18th century B.C.E. employed magic-practicing priests. Magic also played a prominent part in the religion of the ancient Chaldeans of Babylonia in the eighth century B.C.E. (Genesis 41:8, 24; Isaiah 47:12-14; Daniel 2:27; 4:7) This influence prevailed among the ancient Greeks and Romans down through the Middle Ages and right into our 20th century.

The different forms of magic may be classified in several ways. Robert A. Stebbins in his book *The Magician* groups magic into three categories.

Three Forms of Magic

Mystical magic is "an expression of the occult." It claims that "events or processes that contradict common-sense knowledge or



The Bettmann Archive

scientific knowledge" are "true or valid." Stebbins further explains that "mystical magic is the handmaid of sorcery, . . . witchcraft, alchemy, and, under certain conditions, religion."

With *exploitative magic*, "practitioners manipulate or exploit the onlookers' perception of reality for their own aggrandizement." They know they are deceiving the public, but according to Stebbins, "they encourage those who witness the magic to believe otherwise—to believe that, as magicians, they have supernatural powers or special connections with beings who do."

Entertainment magic aims to inspire wonderment through intriguing deception. It falls into five basic and overlapping methods: "stage magic, close up, sleight of hand, illusion, and mentalism."

Is There Danger for Christians?

Let us first look at mystical magic. Mystical magic is invoked in various ways. For example, Satanists exist who practice both "black" and "white" magic. "Black" magic involves the casting of spells, special curses, and the evil eye to bring harm to one's enemies. "White" magic, on the other hand, is intended to produce good results by breaking spells and canceling curses. Yet, both are expressions of the occult or the mystical. On occasion mystical magic is even called upon to attempt to get a good harvest or to win an athletic contest. Nevertheless, concerning this type of spiritistic magic, the Bible speaks frankly: "You must not look for omens, and you must not practice magic."—Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Acts 19:18, 19.

Where does the danger lurk in exploitative magic? Palm readers, fortune-tellers, and faith healers, to mention a few, apply exploitative magic to advance their own interests. Are they not living a lie by their profession? God's Word says: "You must not deceive, and you

must not deal falsely anyone with his associate."—Leviticus 19:11.

The Encyclopedia Americana states: "In some instances, magical actions may serve to compel spirits." Do we want to invite trouble from the demon spirits by even indirectly dabbling in such a sphere? Given the opportunity, the demons can and will take advantage of us. They look for 'convenient times' and are relentless in their efforts.—Luke 4:13; James 1:14.

The master in the art of deception and illusion is none other than Satan the Devil. He has been practicing this art ever since his first performance before a human in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1-19) What Christian would want to be like him? Instead, Christians are counseled to "become imitators of God" and to "subject [themselves] . . . to God; but oppose the Devil."—Ephesians 5:1; James 4:7.

Most people, however, associate the word "magic" with entertainment. A person might create illusions with his hands (sleight of hand), having in mind that the hand is often quicker than the eye. There may be no Biblical objection to this. However, if there is a pretense of occult magic, would a Christian ever want to give the impression of possessing some supernatural, unexplainable power? Or if others are given the wrong impression by the "magical" performance, would a Christian not want to forgo such entertainment so as not to stumble others? (1 Corinthians 10:29, 31-33) In addition, there is the potential danger of a person's being tempted to go further, into the deeper magical arts.

Therefore, when it comes to magic that is clearly connected with spiritism, true Christians wisely avoid practicing it. Beyond that, in all aspects of a Christian's life—whether involving employment, recreation, or entertainment—he would want to "hold a good conscience," a conscience that permits no offense against God or man.—1 Peter 3:16; Acts 24:16.

Watching the World

Pacemaker Alert

The theft-detection devices now installed in many stores and shopping centers may pose a health hazard to people who wear an electronic pacemaker to control their heart rate. The French medical journal *Le Concours Médical* reports that doctors in France were alerted to the problem by a patient working in a supermarket who complained that his heart rate increased rapidly each time he approached the store's checkout counters. In testing over 30 different types of pacemakers, the team of doctors found that the electromagnetic fields created by theft-detection systems caused most pacemakers to malfunction, sometimes seriously. The doctors warn that those with pacemakers should be made aware of the danger.

A Deadly Rite

Recently a clinic in San Antonio, Texas, received an unusual number of requests from teenage girls for AIDS tests. An investigation revealed that the girls were having unprotected sex with "HIV-positive gang members" as part of an initiation ritual. According to the New York *Daily News*, officials noted that the 14- and 15-year-old girls "were doing it to be part of the gang" and to "prove that they're 'tough enough' to beat the AIDS virus." Many of the girls join the gangs in search of the love and comfort they do not receive at home. But gang life merely exposes them to violence, promiscuity, and sexually transmitted diseases. Citing the remarks of one official, the *Daily News* said that "most of the girls come from broken homes. Many

have been molested by family members."

Is AIDS Beyond Control?

Is the worldwide spread of AIDS now out of control? It may be, states a 1,000-page report compiled by the Global Aids Policy Coalition based at Harvard University in the United States. According to *The Guardian Weekly*, the report shows that no nation



has been able to stop the spread of AIDS and that those who say the disease has peaked in Europe may be wrong. The report states: "The HIV/Aids pandemic is entering a new, more dangerous phase. As the global threat increases, there are many signs of growing complacency, persistent denial, and resurgent discrimination."

Harassment of Female Workers

A recent survey at Toronto Hospital, Toronto, Canada, revealed that 70 percent of its female workers complained of having been sexually harassed while at work. According to *The Toronto Star*, 2 percent of the women report having been sexually assaulted, and 1 percent report having been blackmailed for sex. Many of the women say that they "had been addressed in a disrespectful or inappropriately informal manner" and a large percentage "com-

plained of sexual jokes." The *Star* reports that almost 60 percent of female workers "felt unsafe at times in some parts of" the hospital.

Bible Classes at Japanese University

A recent survey of students in the literature department of Japan's prestigious Waseda University revealed that "many students were eager to learn more about the classics and in particular the Bible, which was felt vital for an understanding of foreign cultures," reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. The university, which had already gained distinction in the field of literature, added the Bible classes to its courses starting with the spring semester of 1993. Since the Education Ministry gave universities more freedom to adjust their teaching programs two years ago, this is the first case in Japan in which students were allowed to participate in formulating a school's curriculum.

The Strain of Jogging

Jogging puts the body's joints under ten times as much strain as does riding a bicycle, according to a study from the Orthopedic University Clinic in Berlin, Germany. Using an artificial hip devised especially for the purpose, scientists at the university succeeded for the first time in measuring the strain placed on individual joints during various activities. "Although it had been generally assumed that joggers put their tendons and joints under more strain than persons riding a bicycle," reports *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "even the researchers themselves were surprised at such a large divergence."

Child Prostitution Booms in Asia

"At ten you are a young adult, at twenty you are an old woman, at thirty you are dead." That, according to *National Geographic Traveler* magazine, is a common saying about the child prostitutes of Bangkok, Thailand. There are about a million child prostitutes in Asia, many of them younger than ten years old. Tourism, the magazine notes, is feeding this booming illegal industry. Many pedophile organizations in Australia, Japan, the United States, and Western Europe promote 'sex tours' to Asian lands. *The Times* of London reported recently that every year some 5,000 girls are "recruited" from the mountains of Nepal to be prostitutes in the brothels of Bombay, India. Approximately 200,000 are there now, about half of them infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. A highly organized business even exports girls to Western Europe and the United States.

Fast Worship

"Why does a church service have to start at 11 a.m. and last for an hour or more?" That question, posed recently by a Baptist minister in Florida, U.S.A., according to an Associated Press report appearing in the *Times-West Virginian*, has led to a predictable solution. The clergyman offers a "Compact Mini 22-Minute Worship Service" that, he claims, will give him time to "deliver a sermon, lead hymn singing, read Scriptures, say prayers and have his congregation out the door." The sermon itself will be limited to eight minutes, allowing the minister "to do for church what [fast food restaurant] McDonald's did for food," according to the Associated Press. However, the report adds, "plenty of time will be

allotted for passing the collection plate."

Putting the Lid on Dengue Fever

A study in Thailand shows some promise for controlling dengue fever, a disease that afflicts about 100,000 people in that country each year. Dengue fever itself is rarely fatal, but in Southeast Asia it commonly triggers a fatal illness in children. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito spreads dengue fever. Yet, programs relying on insecticides to halt the illness have proved ineffective, expensive, and unpopular, according to Canada's *Medical Post*. Recently, scientists



at Bangkok's Mahidol University found that the most common and important breeding sites for the mosquito were the large water-storage jars that people keep at their homes. So they devised lids for the jars that fit snugly like shower caps yet allow for water removal and refilling. When properly used, the covers were 100 percent effective in killing the disease-bearing larvae, the scientists found. Villages using the covers saw dengue fever rates go from between 11 and 22 percent down to 0.4 percent.

Reducing Eye Strain

If you suffer eyestrain from looking at your television or computer screen, you may find relief by simply placing it lower and directing it upward. This recommendation,

from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, is based on the assumption that people blink their eyes less and open their eyes wider when looking horizontally than when looking downward. Less blinking means less lubrication of the eyes, and opening them wider increases the evaporation of the eyes' protective layer of moisture.

Churches for Sale

The Roman Catholic Church in Italy does not know exactly how many religious buildings it owns, but one thing is certain: It cannot maintain them all. The number of abandoned church buildings that are slowly decaying increases daily. Thus, Pietro Antonio Garlato, president of the Council for the Cultural Heritage of the Italian Church, said that the church is evaluating whether to sell certain buildings that are no longer used for religious purposes. How many churches will be put up for sale? "A rough preliminary estimate," explained the bishop in *Il Messaggero*, "indicates a figure of 10 percent" of the more than 95,000 churches in Italy.

Way Too Loud

A recent study of noise pollution in Berlin, Germany, found that a great many people live with dangerously high levels of noise. The newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* notes that 40 percent of the city's apartments are on main roads, "where it is almost always too noisy." In fact, during the daytime the noise level in 95 percent of the rooms facing the streets is above the maximum acceptable of 65 decibels. In a fifth of those rooms, the noise level is 75 decibels. Nighttime noises were also too loud on virtually all streets studied. High noise levels are known to disrupt communication, concentration, and intellectual performance.

From Our Readers

African Toys What a lovely article was "African Toys for Free"! (March 22, 1993) As an art teacher, I know how important it is to promote creativity in children in this age of television and computer games. When parents spend time making things with their children, they also create lasting memories!

D. B., Germany

I am seven years old. I liked the article, and I thought that it was neat that [African children] get to make their own toys! It sounds like fun, and I would like to try it.

M. S., United States

Rape Your series of articles on "Rape—A Woman's Nightmare" was fantastic. (March 8, 1993) I'm 14 years old, and I've heard of girls younger than me who have been raped. But it wasn't until I read your article that tears came to my eyes, and I realized that this is more serious than I had thought. Thanks a lot.

S. B., United States

During my freshman year in high school, I was raped by a "family friend." For the past few years, I have thought I had committed fornication. Now I can see that Jehovah knows it was *not* my fault! I only regret not having got help sooner.

A. S., United States

Many programs deal with recovering from rape, but they do not tell how to avoid it. Surely it is more important to prevent than to cure! In this respect the article helped me immensely, and certainly it will help women everywhere who are potential victims.

J. A. M., Brazil

I was attacked by a would-be rapist outside my home. I fought as I've never fought

before and screamed Jehovah's name so loud so many times that the dogs began to bark. My attacker finally got tired of my screaming and ran away. I recommend that everyone follow your suggestions. Depending on the circumstances involved, our actions may make a big difference.

S. P., United States

Almost 20 years ago, I was raped by an acquaintance. I never reported it because I felt ashamed. I never even spoke about it until three years ago in therapy. Only then did I disclose it to my husband. He now understood my aversion to sexual relations. When I finished reading your articles, I cried out of joy—not pain—for the first time in 20 years, and thanked Jehovah.

T. P., United States

Space Exploration I have finished reading the excellent articles on space exploration in the *Awake!* issue of September 8, 1992. In spite of my knowing very little about this subject, the clear explanation you have given has impressed me. I believe these articles will help us to appreciate more Jehovah's purpose for an obedient human family.

W. D. F., Costa Rica

We are writing to thank you for the effort you put into compiling the articles on space exploration. After reading the last article, we joyfully thanked Jehovah, the omniscient God, who organized the universe in such a marvelous way. We are eagerly looking forward to the new system, when he will give obedient humans with a perfect brain the opportunity to better understand the universe.

I. N. O. and J. N. O., Nigeria

"Learning the Lesson of Tolerance"



AS WE approach the end of the 20th century, has mankind in general learned any lessons from its violent history since 1914? Federico Mayor, director general of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), was not too optimistic in an article he wrote for *The Unesco Courier*. "The world whose emergence can be discerned . . . does not inspire whole-hearted enthusiasm. Religious fundamentalism, nationalism, racial and ethnic prejudice, anti-semitism: the winds of freedom have rekindled the embers of hatred. . . . The collapse of the old order has left the field open for all kinds of new initiatives, some of them extremely chaotic—and violence thrives in a vacuum."

Why does violence thrive? Why do people hate and kill others just because of differences in religion or ethnic background? Whether in former Yugoslavia, in India, in Northern Ireland, in the United States, or anywhere else in the world, one of the root causes seems to lie in misguided education. Instead of learning mutual tolerance and respect, people have learned distrust and hatred from their parents, from their schools, and from society at large.

Federico Mayor continued: "Let us abandon that dubious tolerance which allows us to tolerate the intolerable—the poverty, hunger and suffering of millions of human beings. If we do, we shall encounter the warmth of the sunshine of compassion and fraternity." These are noble sentiments. But what practical means exist that can change the bedarkened spirit underlying our so-called enlightened world?

Over 2,500 years ago, Isaiah recorded these words of Jehovah: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." (Isaiah 54:13) Since "God is love," it follows that those who truly live by his principles will learn peace, not war; love, not hatred; tolerance, not intolerance.—1 John 4:8.

Who are promoting this teaching that leads people to peace and love and tolerance? Who are the ones who live in unity regardless of their national origin? Who have received a Bible education that has changed their whole outlook from one of hatred to one of love? We recommend that you examine the teachings and practices of Jehovah's Witnesses to discover why they truly have a worldwide unity.—John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

'I have never met one of Jehovah's Witnesses I haven't liked'

HAVE you ever met one of Jehovah's Witnesses face to face? Have you ever had the opportunity to find out what they really believe? Probably you have had a brief encounter with a Witness on the street or at your door. But often that fails to allow time for a real meeting of the minds.

George Plagenz, a U.S. religion columnist, wrote about his experiences with Witnesses: "To paraphrase [American humorist] Will Rogers, who said he had never met a man he didn't like, I have never met a Jehovah's Witness I haven't liked."

Then Plagenz quoted the Irish author Alan Bestic: "The rank-and-file of this much-abused movement are gregarious, cheerful and happy people. At their international assembly in London [England], I was treated with the utmost kindness, gentle cour-

tesy and genuine friendliness by every Witness I met."

Plagenz says that former aggressive door-to-door methods of some Witnesses created a lot of ill will. "But most of that has changed." Then he quotes a Witness spokesman: "Most who are Witnesses today once slammed the door in the face of a Witness caller." Why is there a more positive response nowadays? "It is beginning to dawn on people . . . that there is no human solution to the enormous problems the world faces."

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the only complete answer to mankind's problems is indicated in Jesus' prayer: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your



kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6: 9, 10) Rulership by God's Kingdom, acknowledged by an obedient and meek human family, is the only solution to the violence and hatred presently racking the world.