

GN



The Good News

**"NOBODY EVER
LISTENS TO ME!"**

**THE BLACK
HORSE
OF FAMINE**

**WHAT IS
TRUE LIBERTY?**

**THE MIRACLES OF
JESUS-
FACT OR FICTION?**

**HOW REAL
IS GOD TO YOU?**

**CHILDREN
ARE PEOPLE TOO!**

JANUARY 1976

GN

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Are children's opinions unworthy of notice? Should their comments be ignored? In other words, are children worthy of respect? Mutual respect is a vital key to any healthy relationship — especially the one between parents and children.

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WHAT IS TRUE

LIBERTY?

Free societies are gradually disappearing! Within a few months you have seen the world's largest democracy revert to a virtual dictatorship, with mass arrests and loss of personal freedoms. In free, democratic nations, including the United States, we see the loss of many personal freedoms we have long held dear. Totalitarianism reigns; despots, dictators, absolute rulers emerge as the third-world heroes. Politically speaking, millions of human beings are experiencing more and more loss of personal freedoms — losing liberty! But, believe it or not, far more millions are already in slavery than you could possibly realize! Maybe, without realizing it, even you are not truly free.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Spying is Big Business! Everybody's getting into the act. We have the FBI, the CIA, the KGB and who knows what else prying into everybody's business. Privacy is a thing of the past. Surveillance at all levels of society generates a constant hum of clandestine activity. The sale of tape recorders, miniaturized cameras, listening devices and other implements of the surveillance art is booming as never before. Movies like *The Conversation* underscore the insatiable drive to obtain information on anyone and everyone.

Everyone, or so it seems, is suspect. The American Civil Liberties Union, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Doris Day, Billy Graham, John Wayne and yours truly, Garner Ted Armstrong have all experienced their moments in the spotlight of surveillance.

At one time even the Ku Klux Klan had been infiltrated by literally *thousands* of undercover (pardon the pun!) FBI agents.

Spying, surveillance, infiltration and undercover work are nothing new, of course. Such clandestine activities have been going on since man first learned to mistrust his fellowman. Even Jesus' own group was infiltrated, in a sense, by a disloyal fifth columnist named Judas Iscariot. Judas complained, grumbled about the way the money was spent, and finally betrayed his Lord and Master into the hands of murderers for thirty pieces of silver. Judas then went out in a horrifying spate of self-destructive remorse and killed himself. He simply could not stand to contemplate the work of his own bloody hands.

Judas had done daily obeisance to his own special brand of slavery. He wasn't satisfied with the way Christ

did things; he wanted Jesus to come around to doing things Judas' way. He wanted a Christ in Judas' image — all the while he himself was enslaved to the sin of stealing.

Every single person who has not really repented is in slavery to sin. But only a rare one-in-a-million person will come to really see himself (or herself) and admit he has been a literal slave to his own lusts and vanities. Only a tiny handful have come to the place where they have been willing to see themselves as in literal bondage to Satan — “the god of this world.”

The “Freedom” Preachers

Millions fancy themselves free — especially free from having to *obey God!* Their mouthpieces speak of “grace,” which means, to them, being in some sort of spiritual condition which releases them from any obligation to submit their wills to the Creator. But grace is *not* any such spiritual “condition” — it is a quality of the nature of God! *Grace* is God's *forgiveness* — His attitude of mercy and pardon, unearned, undeserved, which He will show anyone who repents of sin.

Millions are in slavery to this world and its customs, habits, beliefs, fables, false religions, dogmas, prejudices, politics, etc. They are and have been — though they don't realize it and would vehemently deny it — under the slavish sway of the hidden god of this present age, who is Satan the devil (II Cor. 4:4; cf. Eph. 2:2).

But the great influence who presently holds sway over mankind likes to allow man to *believe* himself “free.” He even has ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) who preach his special kind of “freedom.”

Listen: “While they [false ministers] promise them [their followers] liberty, they themselves are *the servants of corruption...*” (II Peter 2:19).

The Political Freedom Preachers

There is a striking parallel between the false ministers of Satan

preaching their brand of “freedom” and the political preachers of the same doctrines.

Would-be leaders in various movements scream about deprivation of rights, social injustices and the like. They decry the virtual slavery of the people they wish to incite. Yet they, themselves, preach a new kind of slavery — that of mindless obedience to the dictates of their own policies. Ironically, inciters to chaos and violence loudly deplore violence.

And so the human pendulum swings. For centuries, humans have kidded themselves they can find true liberty in their own governments, social orders and religions.

They have only succeeded in drifting from one kind of enslavement to another — and have never achieved true freedom. Witness revolutionary *coup d'etats* in dictator-ruled nations. I have said before that the worst thing that can happen to an anarchist, plotting to overthrow a government and thus change the “status quo,” is to succeed. Our anarchist, who loudly decried abuses of corrupt government to gain his following, emotionally polarize his lieutenants, and to sweep himself into power, now becomes the proprietor of a new “status quo” — often worse than the one replaced. He must then face the inevitable moment when another revolutionary, perhaps one of his own most trusted lieutenants, attempts to overthrow the *new* (now “old”) status quo with yet a *newer* status quo.

But we in politically free America are in other kinds of slavery — we are enslaved by our own technology (i.e., smog-producing automobiles). We are unable to control our own hugeness; we are terrified by the works of our own hands.

Today mankind as a whole sees himself facing the ultimate disaster — the suicide of the human race. And all because we wanted *liberty*. Freedom. But we didn't know where it was. And we didn't know where to look for it.

The Bible — A Book About Freedom

The Bible is a book about true freedom — and about slavery. Christians, in an allegorical sense, are called slaves in the Bible. Notice Romans 12:1-2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

And in I Corinthians 3:23 we are told that “ye are Christ's” — that is, we belong to Him. The apostle Paul further elaborates on this theme in his first letter to the Corinthian brethren. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and *ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*” (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Years ago, I ran away and joined the U.S. Navy. I wanted (can you believe this one?) to get *out from under* authority! Instead I found myself under *more* authority than ever!

So, discharged from the Navy after four years service (including nine months offshore Korea during 1951-52), I decided I would *never* “take orders” again. Deluding myself I was the classic independent, I kidded myself I was a “free” soul.

I smoked, of course. But then, I argued with myself, I smoked because *I wanted* to, and not because I had to. No one was commanding me to light up a cigarette. No one but my own self.

The truth was, I was a whipped slave to the cigarette habit. I *had* to smoke — as I finally began to see when quitting time came. I would *toy* with the idea of quitting — even trying to convince my wife a certain brand had virtually no nicotine in it

(as per the implied statements on the package) and therefore was conducive to good health.

But finally I knew I had to quit *any* habit that was degenerative, destructive to health, and, in principle, condemned in the Bible. And I did! But it was tough! I would throw away a pack of cigarettes in disgust, after, of course, having smoked "just one" to satisfy my craving. Then the next day I would try to remember where I threw the pack — and actually drive over to the ditch and search for it! Free man?

But smoking is only one example. I wasn't ever going to wait in a line again. Never say "sir" again — never, never take any orders of any kind.

That was all a childish pipe dream that went up in smoke. Again I found myself taking orders. I discovered there was no way to get out from under authority. It's all a matter of whose.

Christ said we are not "our own." We do *not* have total, utter autonomy in life. None of us do. In Christ, we must give up *all* of our human "liberty" in exchange for the greatest true freedom imaginable! More about that later.

Many Kinds of Slavery

Slavery was still extant within the Roman Empire in Paul's day. (It would be ridiculous to say that it is not still extant today — the whole Soviet Union is, in my opinion, in a state of slavery!) In communist nations they have to build walls to keep people *in*! In the last thirty years we have seen the desperate attempts of some to break out of the Iron Curtain, only to fall in a hail of bullets and glass. Today, *whole nations* exist in a virtual state of slavery to various types of totalitarian regimes.

Slavery, in the narrowest sense of the word, is not practiced, to my knowledge, in the Western world today. A person just doesn't go down to the slave block, literally buy another human being for so many dollars and bring him home

as a personal slave. Yet slavery does exist in a very real sense.

Perhaps the worst kind of slavery is to be in virtual captivity to — believe it or not — *yourself*! A person can actually worship at his own altar. Many people walk along in life with this great vision of themselves — an imaginary idea of how they want to appear to others, a secret projection of how they want that self to be. This is, to me, the worst form of idolatry. Self-imagery! Personal worship! Bowing and scraping before this image of an envisionary, imaginary better self!

This actually exists in the back of many human beings' minds as they go about their day-to-day business — their "daily Dagon" — an ego-trip of unbelievable, toadish, egotistical proportions which might even embarrass Adolf Hitler.

And this particular type of idolatry goes mostly undetected. We don't *recognize* that unless and until our egos are deflated (by repentance and real conversion) and we begin to travel in a completely opposite direction, we are all (and have been from the time we were squalling babies) on a massive ego-trip of outlandish proportions.

Our slavery to our own selves begins early in life, continues through teenage and all of our adult lives if we don't experience a miracle called *repentance* somewhere along the way.

The Beginnings of Freedom

When will we ever experience freedom of mind and spirit? When freedom from terror, from worry, from unhappiness, from pain and suffering — and most of all freedom from our own selves?

This is the kind of freedom God offers. Freedom never imagined by most of us — the lasting, secure kind that no human being can take away. It begins with *freedom from sin* — with repentance of sin!

Listen to the way Paul put it: "Let not sin therefore reign [rule over you] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof"

(Rom. 6:12). But this freedom is by choice. Human beings have a "right" to continue to be ruled, forced, driven like a cowering, whimpering slave by their own habits (smoking, cursing, overdrinking, arguing, fighting, stealing, etc.) and passions (lusts, covetousness, even drug usage) — slavishly ruled over by mere human impulses and emotions. *Or* we can decide, by and with the help of God, to repent and be truly *free*.

Paul continued in the same context: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin *shall not have dominion over you*..." (verses 13-14).

God says that we don't have to be whipped into line by some false image of ourselves. We can also be free from committing acts that will bring on all sorts of suffering. We don't have to be in abject, groveling slavery to our own prejudices, notions, thoughts, concepts, racial bigotries and religious ideas.

The apostle Paul wrote that he had been made free from his own self. He said: "... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me *free* from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

Freedom Has a Price on It

But freedom is not free! Your freedom has a price on it. The price of the blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. You have been bought with an *incredible* price! *You* didn't cost dollars, pounds, farthings, or escudos — you cost the *life of God* in the *human flesh*! The apostle Peter wrote: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [Greek, conduct] received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19).

Therefore, you are under obligation to glorify God in your mind and body. Read I Corinthians 7:23: "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (the word "servant" in the Greek is *dulos*, which really means "bondslave").

A great sacrifice was made for your freedom. "... For even *Christ our passover* is sacrificed for us," wrote Paul (I Cor. 5:7). It is only through the unconditional acceptance of this sacrifice that we may obtain total and complete spiritual freedom.

It begins with Christ's blood and continues as a lifelong commitment to God. Jesus said: "*If ye continue in my word* [living by every word of God as a true Christian, see Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4], then are ye my disciples indeed; and [by living that way of life] ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:31, 32). Gaining this total spiritual freedom is a lifelong process. It starts with your total surrender to God and your complete acceptance of and faith in the blood of Jesus Christ and grows throughout your lifetime. Realistically, there will be some lapses in this overall growth; there will be ups and downs on the graph; you will have some low points bordering on a return to spiritual slavery.

But God, in His great mercy, has already made provision for your occasional mistakes, lapses, stumblings. John explains: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

True Liberty

What is real liberty? What is true freedom? In the truest sense of those terms it is not just political.

Again notice Paul's instruction to the Corinthian Church: "Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a *freedman of the Lord*" (I Cor. 7:21-22, RSV). It is clear and

plain, from these verses, which type of freedom is of paramount importance. Spiritual freedom from sin is the ultimate liberty!

The Jews of Jesus' day misunderstood this fundamental point. Jesus had said that the truth would make them free. But "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage [in terms of personal slavery] to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin If the Son therefore shall make you free [through His sacrifice], ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:33-34, 36).

But this precious freedom was not intended as a catalyst for continued licentiousness. It was, instead, to free His followers from enslavement to sin. The angel told Joseph that Jesus was to "save his people *from* their sins" — not *in* them (Matt. 1:21). Peter underscored this point in an early sermon shortly after the day of Pentecost. "... God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in *turning away* every one of you *from his iniquities*" (Acts 3:26). Paul wrote: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? *God forbid*" (Rom. 6:1-2). And: "... Use *not* liberty for an occasion to the flesh . . ." (Gal. 5:13).

Freedom From Fear of Death

Those who think freedom includes the absolute liberty to sin whenever they get good and ready simply have not grasped the character of true freedom. Freedom is not absolute in that sense at all. It is freedom from the countless daily fears that plague humankind, such as the most agonizing fear of all: death. In some few extreme cases, people have been so afraid of death that they would not attend a funeral, even of a closest loved one; or they immediately got up to leave a movie with an unexpected burial scene.

Religion after religion has this unbelievable preoccupation with

death — running the gamut from the nothingness of the Hindu version of *Nirvana* to the literal pains of hell-fire taught by some fundamentalist Christian "faiths."

But Jesus Christ of Nazareth came to deliver us from even this terrible fear. That is one of the reasons He emptied Himself of His glorified Godship and willingly came down to this earth as a flesh-and-blood human, subject to death. Paul explains it in Hebrews. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy [counterwork, thwart, annul] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and *deliver them* who through *fear of death* were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).

But Jesus didn't stay dead. God the Father resurrected Him to everlasting, eternal glorified spirit life. Then Jesus sent to His disciples (throughout every age since that time) "the Comforter" — the Holy Spirit — which is *not* "the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

He has made available, especially through the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13), the true knowledge of life and death (I Cor. 15; John 5; Rev. 20, etc.). Make no mistake, death is an enemy of human beings, but Christ has conquered it through the resurrection — and it will be destroyed forever as the last enemy of mankind. And with that *sure knowledge*, we no longer need to contemplate death in a moribund manner. David wrote: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15). And the apostle Paul could say in absolute confidence: "For to me to live is Christ, and *to die is gain*" (Phil. 1:21).

Paul's Personal Freedom

Paul wrote more about slavery and freedom than any of the other apostles or New Testament writers.

Ironically, he was simultaneously both a free man in one sense and a slave in another. He understood deeply about bondage and freedom in an intimate personal sense.

Paul described himself as a bond-servant (slave) when he was in Roman imprisonment from about A.D. 57 to 59. In the final chapter of Acts, Luke shows him to be under some sort of house arrest where he was able to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to those who came to see him.

Paul also described himself as a "servant" (or bondslave) of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:1). He explained to the Corinthian brethren: "For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ" (I Cor. 7:22, RSV). Paul was a slave to Christ, which paradoxically gave him the ultimate spiritual freedom possible in the human flesh.

Yet in spite of all of his analogies of slavery, Paul was free in many ways. To those who wondered about his credentials and questioned the conduct of his ministry and apostolic office, Paul wrote: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? . . . Have we not power [freedom] to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? [Peter was married.] Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power [the right] to forbear working? [in other words, the right to take tithes of the churches for their living — request our free booklet entitled *Tithing* for a full explanation]" (I Cor. 9:1-6.)

It is true that Paul did not exercise some of his freedoms and rights. He would go way out of his path not to offend others. But he did have the power, the right and the freedom to exercise his apostolic office with regard to financial matters and other policies relating to New Testament Church administration.

This apostle also deeply understood Christian liberty and urged the Churches of God to continue in

these freedoms. "Stand fast therefore in *the liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," he lovingly warned the Galatians (5:1). False teachers close to that church were prating about the necessity to be *physically* circumcised in order to be saved (verses 2-3, 6, 11). Paul carefully and patiently exposed the folly of this Pharasaic, legalistic, do's-and-don'ts type of religion (read this whole chapter along with Acts 15).

Which Will It Be?

Those Galatian brethren had a choice. They could either continue to accept the gospel that Paul taught with the full backing of his apostolic authority from God the Father and Jesus Christ (see Gal. 1) or allow the precious truth of God to slip out of their grasp — retrogressing back into physical circumcision and other legalistic works of the flesh.

The apostle Paul had already been down that road. He said: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee . . . touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:4-7).

Paul had exchanged his previous self-righteousness for the righteousness of God through faith (verses 8-9). He was concerned about a resurrection to eternal life in the God family (verse 11) — not clinging onto physical circumcision (as a religious rite) and other fleshly forms of righteousness.

He had already decided that true freedom would be his. He decided his authority would be God the Father, and Jesus Christ, and the Word of God. He would no longer mindlessly, blindly cringe before the impulses of his own human mind and the traditional teachings of others.

He would *not* be a slave to "what people think." He would *not* do obeisance to lust, bow down before vanity, or obey the instant impulse of greed. He would not drift through life as fair game for the myriads of *wrong* authorities around him.

Paul would choose! He would choose his own authority. And he would not obey it out of terror. It was fear — fear of other people's opinions; fear of family, friends, and associates; fear of all sorts of real and imagined consequences — that had formerly made him part and parcel of his own Pharasaic society.

But he would never allow himself to be trapped and enslaved into a fear religion again! Now he would obey because he *decided* to. He could plainly see which results he wanted — which was the best way to live. Never again would he stoop before the Molech of fashion; the Dagon of public opinion; the Ishtar of sex; or the Mars of hatred and war.

No idolatrous power would rule him — not Paul. Because he freely gave himself to God, he found *true freedom* — real liberty! And for that, he will possess the ultimate freedom for all eternity (compare II Tim. 4:7-8 with Rev. 20:4).

God is no respecter of persons. Yes, he loved the apostle Paul. But He is your heavenly Father too. He loves you with a full, swelling, boundless, all-encompassing, limitless love that transcends any human comprehension.

If you are one of the many mixed-up, miserable, frustrated, empty people who are enslaved to themselves and this world, He wants you to be *free*: free from your own false self-image; free from the slavery of your own lusts and passions; free from the world; and free from Satan the devil.

He wants you to be your own man, not in captivity to the vanity and the ego-trips of this present society but innovative, creative, unique and different!

The choice is yours. Will you choose true liberty? □



Godfrey — MAGNUM

The Black Horse of Famine

by George Ritter

While you sleep tonight, several thousand people around the world will be dying — dying from want of enough food. Famine is almost as old as the human race, but famines usually come and go. This time worldwide famine is a fact of life we can't seem to escape. Why, in an age of science and technology, does man suddenly find himself wondering how to produce enough food? Is famine just a passing phenomenon that good weather and bountiful

crops will eventually cure? Or does worldwide famine have a significant bearing on the future of the human race?

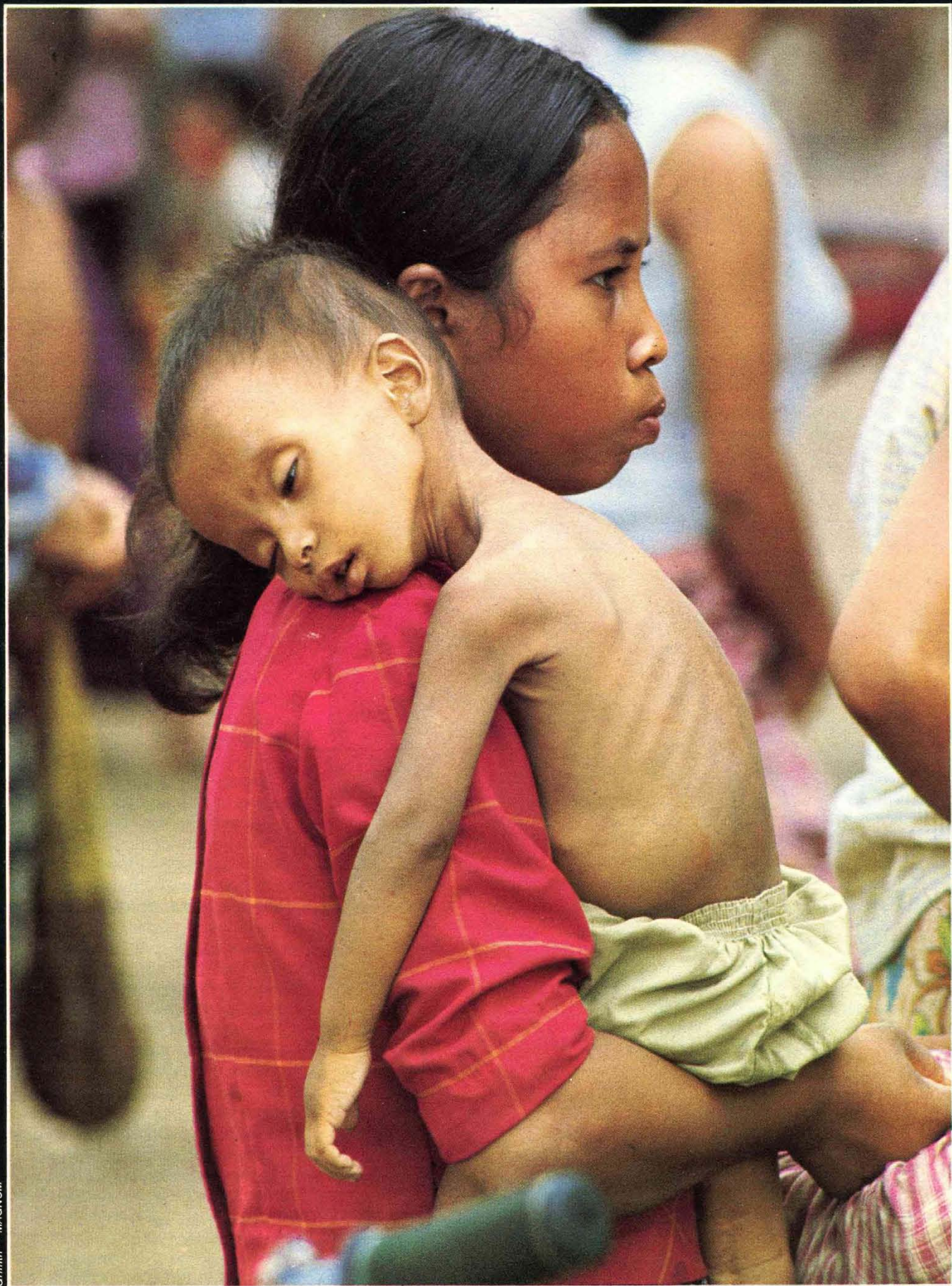
To most of us living in Western society, it is hard to imagine that the world we live in is not really the real world. We get our three meals a day, rarely go to bed hungry, and only briefly and occasionally experience the meaning of the word "hunger."

We seldom think about the fact that we are a decided minority among the millions of people that inhabit this planet. Unlike us, many of them go to bed with little or nothing in their stomachs. An estimated 500 million suffer from some form of hunger or starvation. One out of four of their children will die from lack of adequate nutrition before reach-

ing the age of five. Ten to twenty million of their numbers annually succumb to hunger or starvation-related diseases.

Less dramatic, but more insidious, are the effects of long-term malnutrition on these people. An estimated 1½ billion — or roughly one half the population of the Third World — suffer from some form of malnutrition. Three hundred million are children — most of them destined to remain virtual mental and physical cripples for the rest of their lives.

As if malnutrition and hunger weren't enough, vast segments of



Griffith - MAGNUM



Pittet - FAO

the Third World's populace also have to contend with a host of nutrition-related diseases. Typhus, dysentery, cholera and gastroenteritis are high on the list. A person fortunate enough to escape these may still end up crippled from beriberi, rickets, pellagra, or goiter. And he also stands a chance of going blind like one million of his contemporaries living in India. For people living in such a weakened state, any kind of sickness can be a life-and-death matter. A case of the measles or even the common cold can easily turn out to be a killer.

A Hand-to-Mouth Existence

Despite the Green Revolution, so-called miracle foods, intensive harvesting of the sea, vastly increased use of land, water and fertilizer, most of the human race continues to suffer from hunger. In viewing the situation, Robert MacNamara, president of the World Bank, was moved to write: "One half of humanity is starving at this very moment. There is less food per person on the planet today than there was thirty years ago in the midst of a worldwide depression. Thousands of human beings will die today, as they die every day, of sheer hunger" (*One Hundred Countries, Two Billion People*, p. 33).

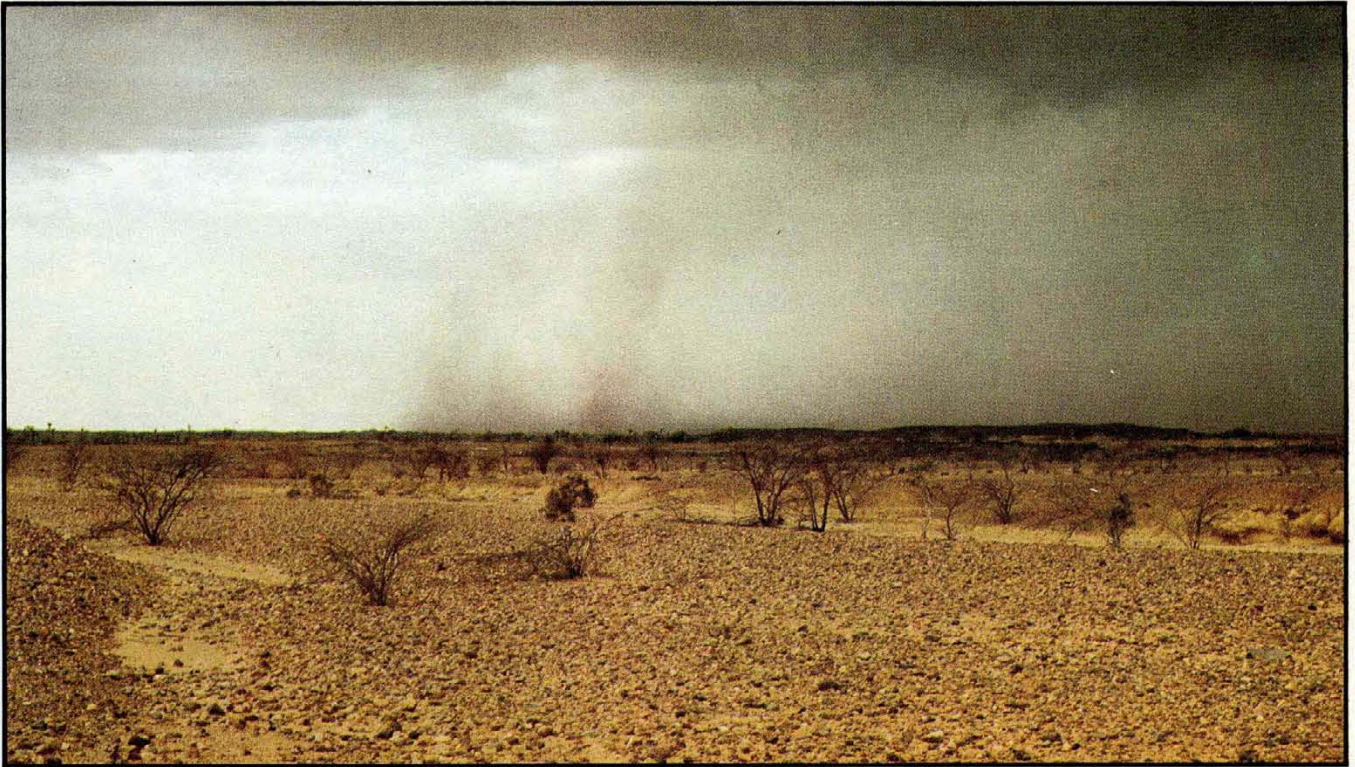
Addeke H. Boerma, director-general of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, likewise voiced his concern: "The sight of small children . . . pitifully clinging to life, surrounded by dead bodies, gives one an angry sense that we are still too far away from the frightening reality of hunger and malnutrition which millions of persons suffer day after day while diplomats . . . talk far into the night" (UPI, December 23, 1974).

Boerma's concern is certainly well-founded. World grain reserves have plummeted from a 95-day supply in 1961 to a current all-time low of 26 days. In effect, the world is staking everything on each year's grain harvest — most of which now comes from the wheat and soybean fields of the United States and Canada.

According to the second report submitted to the Club of Rome, this



Ernst Herb - GN



means: "The hungry majority of the world [now] lives under a veritable sword of Damocles, that will drop and kill millions whenever that harvest fails" (*Mankind at the Turning Point*, p. 165).

It's no wonder that Dr. Raymond Ewell, a leading fertilizer expert from the State University of New York, called the world food crisis "the biggest, most fundamental, and most nearly insoluble problem that has ever faced the human race."

Dr. James Bonner of the California Institute of Technology said, "All responsible investigators agree that the tragedy will occur. They differ only as to whether it will take place in ten years or less, or ten years and a little more."

Vannevar Bush wrote: "The world's population is increasing at a rate which renders distress, famine and disintegration inevitable unless we learn to hold our numbers within reason. Man is headed for catastrophe unless he mends his ways and takes thought for the morrow." It is all very simple: too little food for too many people.

Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman warned that if the world food problem is not solved, "The world of the year 2000

will be a grim, sullen, hate-filled planet teetering on the brink of self-destruction. . . . [with] insurrection and toppling of governments, then final desperate international aggression." Robert Heilbroner, in his book *The Human Prospect*, spoke of possible future "wars of redistribution" or "pre-emptive seizure" reminiscent of Japan's actions at the outset of World War II.

And Dr. Robert H. White-Stevens echoed these sentiments several years ago when he stated: "Famine can be expected to emerge as the paramount force by 1975 and continue to a point now totally unpredictable where human society could fragment into total chaos on a global basis."

The Prophesied Black Horse

Strangely enough, similar-sounding predictions were made centuries ago by the greatest prophet, forecaster and newscaster who ever lived. He described in vivid detail the most climactic period in all of man's existence. The prophet, Jesus Christ, was referring to events immediately preceding the end or consummation of this present era of human history.

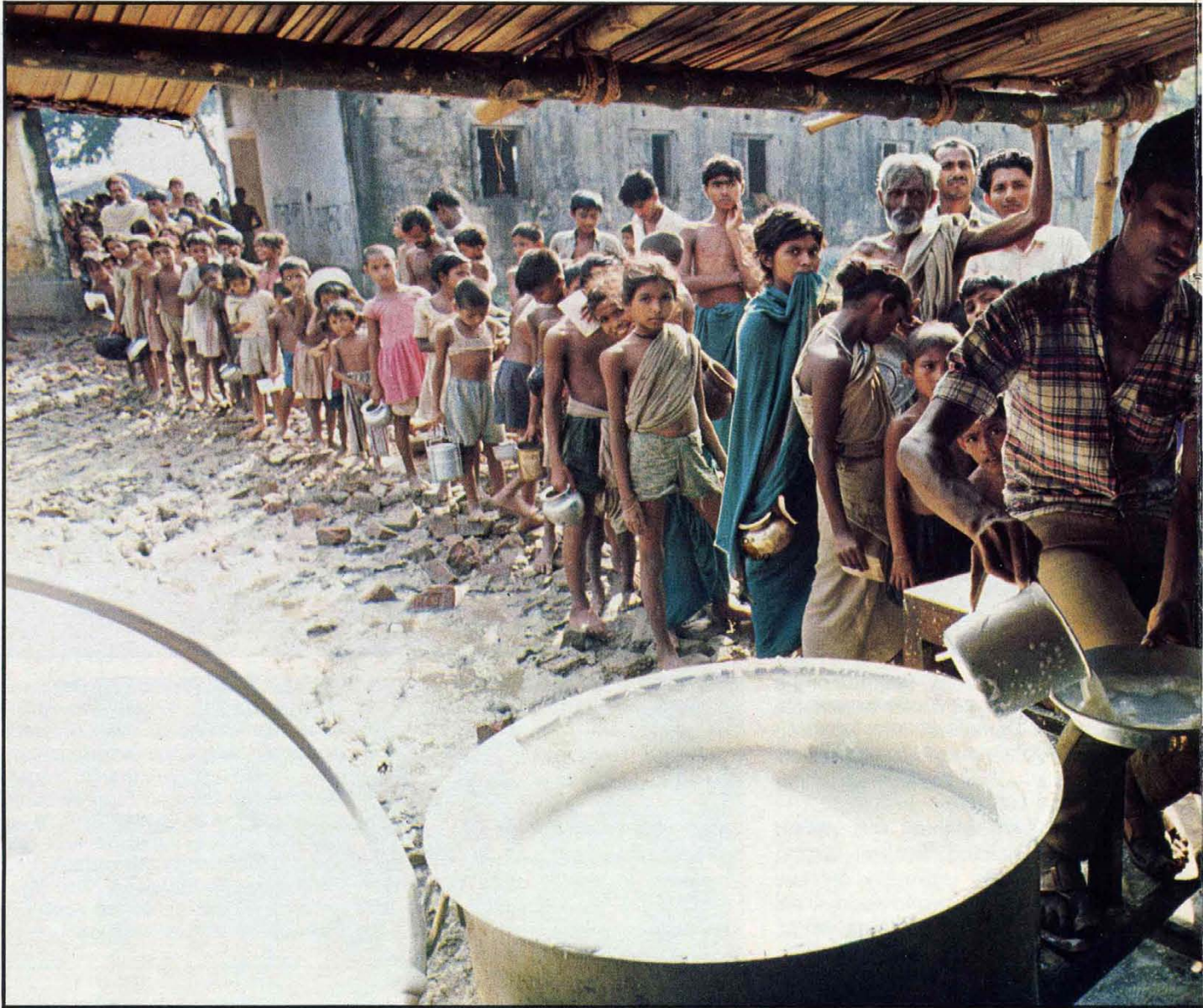
His answer came in response to His disciples' question: "Tell us,

THE ULTIMATE PESTS (top, opposite page): Rats and birds destroy millions of tons of badly needed grain. The plight of the poor (bottom, opposite page): Many in the third and fourth world go hungry because sharp increases in food prices over the last few years have more than outstripped their meager incomes. The age-old harbinger of famine (above): drought in Western Africa.

when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (Matt. 24:3.)

Jesus spoke of several major events that would signal the beginning of this troubled period. After false prophets and wars came a third significant indicator: ". . . and there shall be famines" (verse 7).

Some 60 years later, Christ further elaborated on this description when He gave the apostle John the prophecies concerning the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation. Again, the same basic sequence of events is described. Following the white horse representing false Christs and the red horse of war comes the black horse of famine: "And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him



had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:5-6, KJV).

Famine on an Unprecedented Scale

There have always been famines, but there have never been famines the likes of which the world is currently experiencing. Usually famines of the past came in conjunction with droughts, wars, and other natural or man-made disturbances. They were cyclical in nature. Today worldwide famine is built into the *structure* of world so-

ciety. Famine is now a way of life for millions of people. Weather fluctuations, wars and crop failures only serve to exacerbate existing conditions.

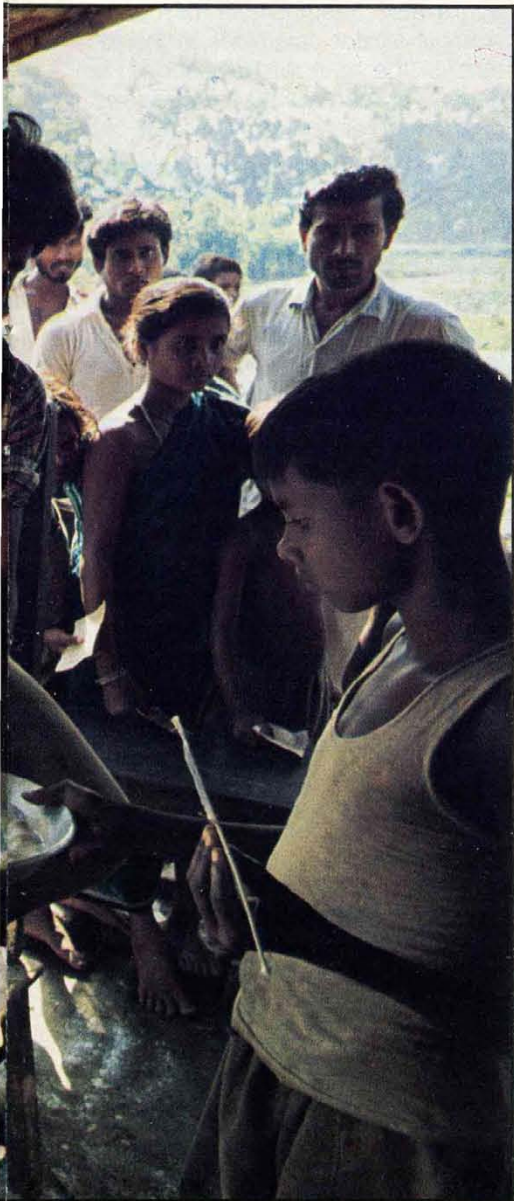
Today's famines also differ in both nature and size from those of the past. Never before did multiple hundreds of millions of people suffer from hunger and malnutrition at any given period in history as they do today. As Paul and Arthur Simon wrote in *The Politics of World Hunger*: "The population explosion has produced stress and deprivation on a scale without precedent, as well as a momentum of growth that boggles the mind" (p. 51).

So Jesus Christ was not merely guessing about future famines. He

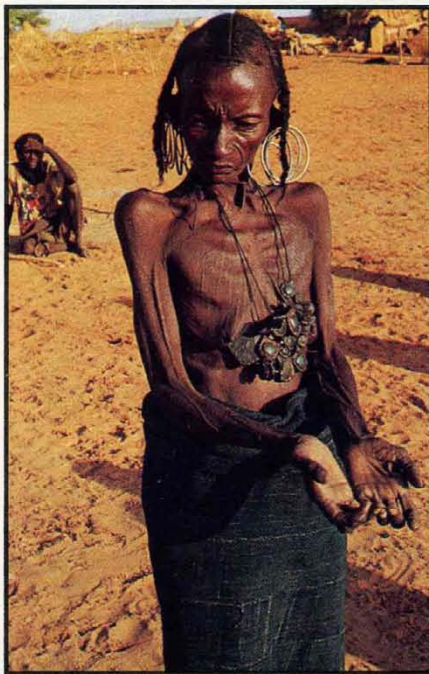
was describing an age of human existence that was unique from all others in which widespread famine was only one of many interrelated events. In the 24th chapter of Matthew, He made this clear when He said: "For then there will be great tribulation, *such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be*" (verse 21).

The prophet Jeremiah describes this tumultuous age as follows: "Alas! that day is so great *there is none like it*; it is a time of distress for Jacob . . ." (Jer. 30:7).

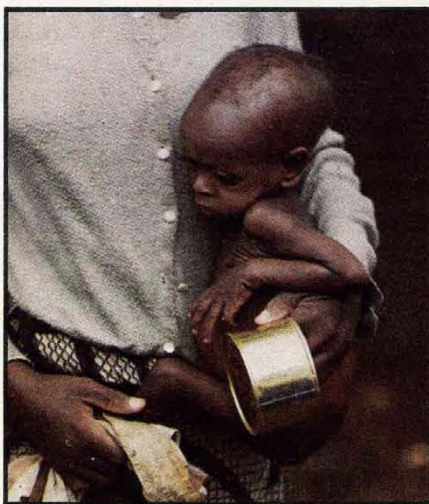
Daniel likewise wrote: "And there shall be a time of trouble, *such as never has been* since there was a nation till that time . . ." (Dan.



Ernst Herb — GN



White — BLACK STAR



GN Photo

12:1). The Moffatt translation refers to this as the "crisis at the end when trouble shall be multiplied on earth" (verse 4).

Today, modern-day prophets have caught up with the patriarchs of old. Notice what Robert MacNamera says about *this* era of world history: "We have to see the population problem as part . . . of a much wider social and political crisis that grows deeper with each decade and threatens to round off this century with years of unrest and turbulence, a 'time of troubles' [emphasis ours] during which the forces of historical change threaten our frail twentieth-century society with disintegration."

Also, Georg Borgstrom states:

WAR AND FAMINE often go hand in hand (left). Here milk is being distributed to refugee children in Bangladesh. The daily struggle for survival (top photo): Woman in Niger begging for food. Famine's tragic impact on the young (bottom photo). Often a severe bout of hunger or malnutrition at this age can have lifelong effects.

"As a human race we are heading for Supreme Disaster, and the great challenge to our generation is to avert this calamity. It has to be done in this crucial century, or mankind may well deprive itself of both its future and its history."

And worldwide famine, fueled by an exploding population and future

international conflicts, will undoubtedly be a key catalyst in this rapidly deteriorating chain of events.

Old Testament Warnings

Christ, who was the *logos* or Spokesman of the Old Testament (see I Cor. 10:4, John 1:1), also gave national warnings concerning famine through many of the prophets of old.

In these passages, famine, along with the 2nd and 4th horsemen, war and pestilence, are shown to be the ultimate result of false religion (the first horseman) and flagrant disobedience of God's commandments.

Notice some of the penalties for disobedience recorded in the 26th chapter of Leviticus: "If after all this you have not learnt discipline but still defy me, I in turn will defy you and scourge you seven times over for your sins. I will bring war in vengeance upon you. . . . You shall be herded into your cities, I will send *pestilence* among you, and you shall be given over to the enemy. *I will cut short your daily bread* until ten women can bake your bread in a single oven; they shall dole it out by weight [see Revelation 6:5-6], and though you eat, you shall not be satisfied. If in spite of this you do not listen to me and still defy me, I will defy you in anger, and I myself will punish you seven times over for your sins. Instead of meat you shall eat your sons and daughters" (Lev. 26:23-28, *The New English Bible*).

Other passages warn of famine-producing upsets in weather (Amos 4:7, Deut. 28:24); ruined harvests (Ezek. 5:16, Deut. 28:17); blighted crops (Amos 4:9); harmful insect pests (Deut. 28:39, 42); and non-productive soil (Deut. 28:23).

Israel of old didn't heed these warnings and suffered the consequences. Today many of the modern nations of the world, including the United States and Britain, are following in the footsteps of the ancient Israelites and are beginning to pay the same penalties as their predecessors.

The Bitter Harvest of Disobedience

And as men continue to flagrantly disregard the laws of their Creator, such conditions will continually be

The Future of Famine

Lester R. Brown: "We delude ourselves if we think the years ahead will be easy. At best they will be traumatic, and they could be catastrophic."

Hubert H. Humphrey: "For years we laughed at Malthus' gloomy theory, but now he is coming into his own as we have come to the realization that the world's resources are not unlimited."

Georg Borgstrom, professor of food science, Michigan State University: "Our future is at stake in this very century, and food is the key issue As a human race we are heading for Supreme Disaster, and the great challenge to our generation is to avert this calamity. We need to declare the Great War for Human Survival — but it is getting late. Time is running out on us. It is five minutes to twelve."

Gunnar Myrdal: "It is difficult to see how the world can avoid a food catastrophe within the immediate future years."

C. P. Snow: "The most dreadful of all — again, men of sober judgment have been saying it for years — is that many millions of people in the poor countries are going to starve to death before our eyes — or, to complete the domestic picture, we shall see them doing so upon our television sets."

Thomas M. Ware, head of the Freedom From Hunger Foundation: "Very few grasp the magnitude of the danger that confronts us The catastrophe is not something that may happen; on the contrary it is a mathematical certainty that it will happen."

Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences: "I have difficulty facing the future with equanimity. This is a bitter pill indeed. With my fellow scientists, I was enraptured by the beautiful panorama of understanding offered by science in our time But the planet is small, and there are too many of us."

Second Report to the Club of Rome: "The most thorough analyses of a large number of scenarios using our world system computer model lead to the inescapable conclusion that mankind's options for avoiding catastrophe are decreasing, while delays in implementing the options are, quite literally, deadly."

aggravated. Jesus Christ went on to warn of similar calamities in the future. In the book of Revelation, He depicts an earth whose entire food producing ecosystem will be in jeopardy.

Pollution of the oceans on an unprecedented scale will undoubtedly cause a dramatic decline in the world's fish harvest (Rev. 8:8; 16:3). Wanton destruction of one third of the earth's plant cover and forests (Rev. 8:7) will contribute to climatic upsets, advance of the deserts, and the loss of valuable cropland. And massive pollution of vital freshwater sources (Rev. 8:10, 11; 16:4) will most likely dry up the fruits of irrigated crop production.

Perhaps lack of food or resources resulting from these global catastrophes explains why a massive army of 200 million men decides to march on the Middle East in the 16th chapter of Revelation. In any event, Jesus Christ went on to show that unless He personally intervened in the affairs of men during this tumultuous time period, all life would be erased from off the face of the earth (Matt. 24:22).

A Global Surplus of Food

Christ's intervention will set off a chain of events that will finally bring a halt to the continuous rounds of famine and hunger the human race has experienced down through history. Satan the devil will be put away (Rev. 20:1-2), and with him will go the centuries-old system of greed and exploitation that has left many a broken, hungry, and destitute person in its wake. The "dispossessed masses" will become a thing of the past as every individual will have a chance to own agriculturally productive real estate (Micah 4:4). Farming methods will be overhauled until lush crops are considered commonplace (Isa. 32:15), and one harvest follows hard on the heels of the previous one (Amos 9:13-14).

The earth's arable land mass will be greatly expanded as mountains are lowered (Isa. 40:4) and the sands of the deserts begin an unprecedented retreat (Isa. 35:1, 7). Only then will the age-old problem of famine finally be put to rest. □

Q&A

We invite you, our readers, to send in your questions on biblically oriented prophetic, doctrinal, historical and Christian-living topics. While we cannot promise that all questions will be answered in print, we will try to cover all those that are of general interest as space permits. Send your questions to the appropriate address listed on the inside front cover, care of *The Good News*.

QUESTION: "Is suicide really the unforgivable sin? I tried to kill myself just a little over a year ago."

Glenda C.,
North Sydney, N.S., Canada

ANSWER: No, suicide is not an unforgivable sin. An unforgivable or "unpardonable" sin is *any* sin (or attitude of sin) which we adamantly refuse to repent of. For more information on this subject, write for our free booklet *What Do You Mean — "The Unpardonable Sin"?*

Q: "Concerning makeup: Is it wrong for a woman to wear it?"

Carole C.,
Mobile, Alabama

A: The Bible does not give a definite "yea or nay" regarding the use of makeup. Some cite the negative example of Jezebel painting her face to support a "no makeup" stand. But Jezebel was condemned for her wrong motivation and her evil actions rather than the use of makeup per se.

On the positive side, one of Job's beautiful daughters was named *Keren-happuch*. Translated from the Hebrew this means "horn of eye-paint" or "horn of cosmetics." The Jerusalem Bible translates her name "Mascara."

Christ's and Paul's examples were

to respect the outward physical customs of the day. Christ blended in with crowds because there was nothing striking or outlandishly different about His appearance.

I Peter 3:3, 4 tells Christian women not to rely on elaborate hairdos, jewelry, or clothing for adornment, but rather on a beautiful heart or personality. But it is certainly right to look attractive. Ezekiel 16 speaks of God symbolically adorning His "bride," Israel, with jewelry and silk.

Whether or not one wears makeup is a matter of personal preference. Some women prefer not to wear it at all. God wants us to "dress and keep" our bodies and make the most of what He has given us. And makeup worn *in moderation and good taste* can be beneficial to a woman's appearance.

Q: "I have the booklet, *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* On pages 16 and 17 the month Abib is mentioned. Does Abib mean our month of September? I am puzzled."

Edith P.,
North Windham, Connecticut

A: Abib (also called Nisan) is the first month of the Hebrew Calendar, corresponding to our March/April. For more information, request our free reprint "God's Sacred Calendar."

Q: "I get the feeling from all I've read that to become a Christian is about the most difficult thing in the world, so difficult that I have great qualms as to whether I could ever qualify or 'make it' myself!"

Margaret R.,
Hillcrest Heights, Maryland

A: Christ said that His yoke is *easy* and his burden *light* (Matt. 11:29-30). All you have to do to become a Christian is to believe, repent of sin

and be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 1:15). Repentance is the gift of God; it is not something you can work up for yourself (Rom. 2:4; II Tim. 2:25). If you truly want to change your life and live Christ's way, according to the law of love (James 2:8), then you have already been granted that gift. You should be baptized as soon as possible (Acts 8:36). (Write for our free booklet entitled *All About Water Baptism*.)

A person doesn't have to "qualify" or be perfect to be baptized — he just has to want to live God's way.

A *Christian* is one who grows *toward* perfection (Matt. 5:48). The apostle Paul, years after he was baptized, said the following: "It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong In my mind I want to be God's willing servant but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature?" Paul then went on to say, "Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free" (Rom. 7:21-25, *The Living Bible*).

God loves you and wants you to be in His Kingdom. The very fact that you are reading this magazine is pretty good evidence you are being called now, and if God is calling you, then you *can* "make it" into His Kingdom. Romans 8:30-32 reads: "Those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" □

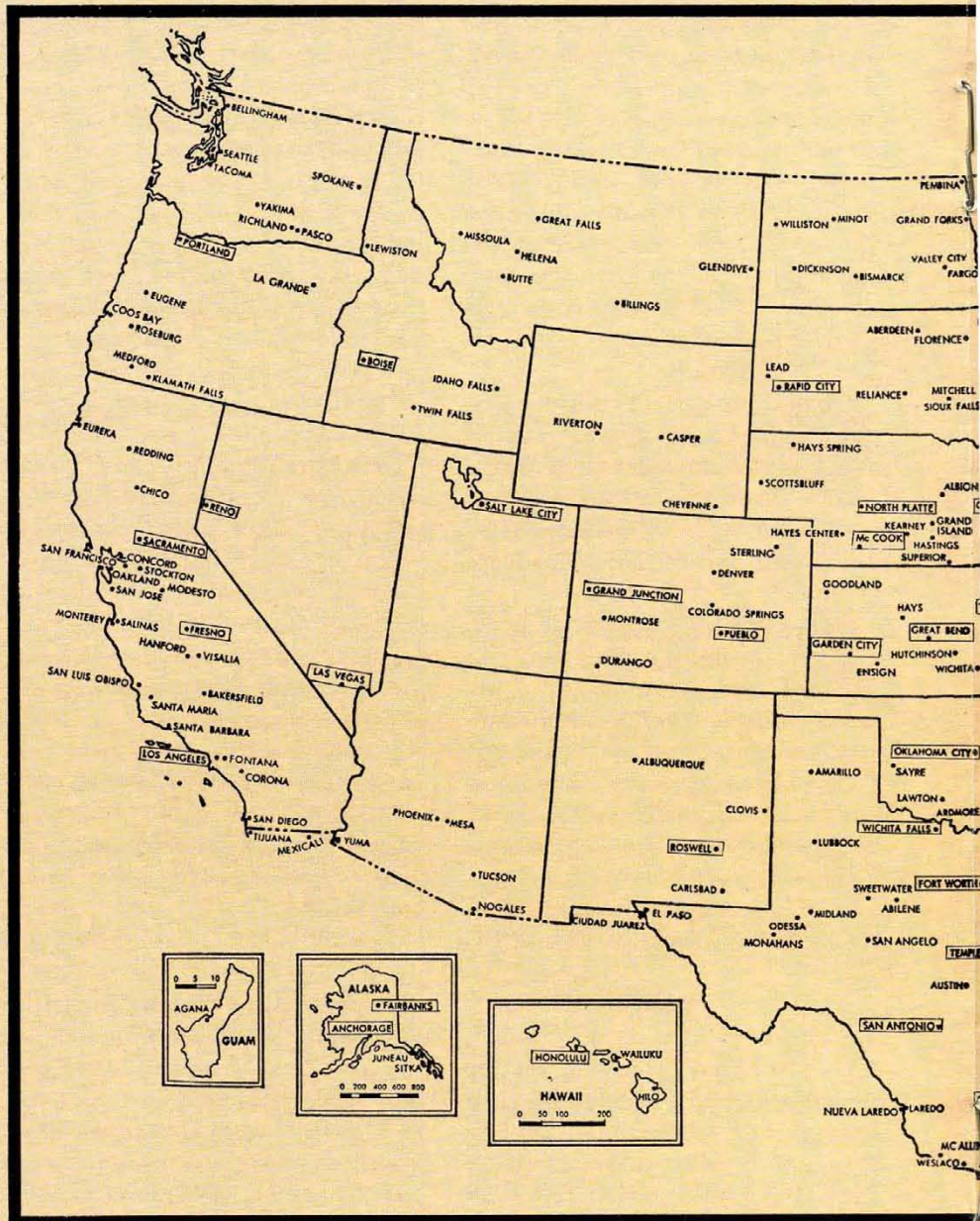
More Radio, TV Time Purchased- Another Step Forward in Faith

In early October, Garner Ted Armstrong announced that immediate steps are being taken to greatly expand radio and TV coverage in the United States. This move represents a giant step forward in proclaiming Christ's gospel — and a giant step made in *faith*.

As Mr. Armstrong put it in making the announcement: "This Work was never built by timidity, temerity or an attitude of 'drawing back.' When we saw clearly what God wanted us to do and could understand it was a need, we have always gone ahead. Whether you are talking of colleges, buildings, radio, publications, or the opening of doors to the palaces of kings, this has proved to be true."

Mr. Armstrong frankly admitted that the expansion could cost up to \$2 million in 1976 — money not originally in the budget nor anticipated to come in through tithes and offerings. But he pointed out that this has always been a work of faith. "My father has said many times he had to learn the lesson of walking through open doors on faith, and then, after doing that, depending upon God to provide the where-withal. . . . We need to learn more and more to step out *on faith* where God leads, and where He is opening doors before His Work!"

Mr. Armstrong referred particularly to the formative years of the Church when his father struggled to get the broadcast going on radio in the depths of the Great Depression.

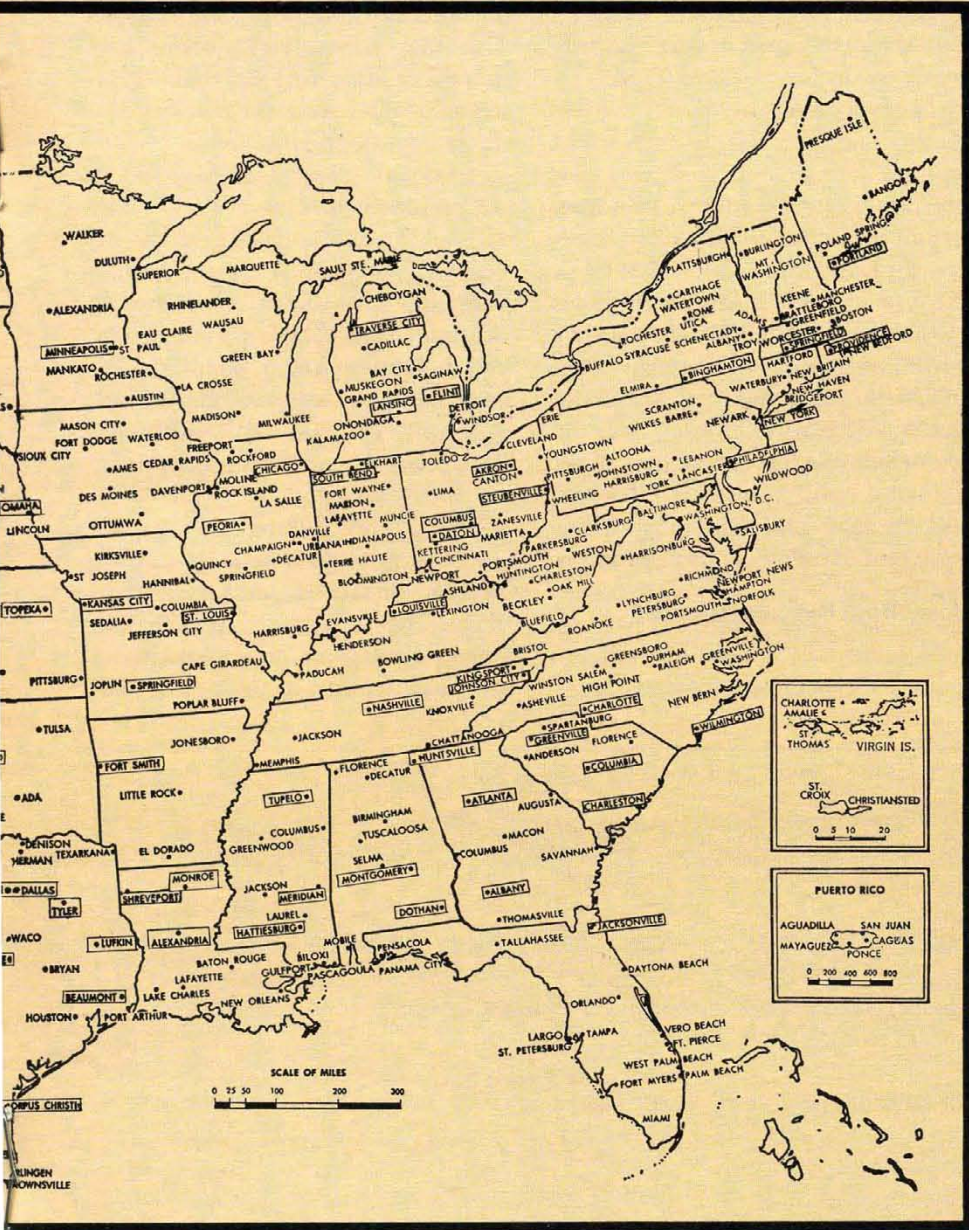


As Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong recounted many years later in his autobiography: "When the first opportunity came to go on the air regularly, the owner of station KORE, Eugene, Oregon, offered me a Sunday morning half hour [beginning in January 1934] at the astonishing low rate of \$2.50 per half hour.

"Now \$2.50 per week may seem a little ridiculous today . . . [but] it was not absurd to me in those days. We were at the very bottom of the depression. I had, only a few months earlier, given up the \$3 per week salary I had received. A single dollar was not a very plentiful item to us then.

"I asked for pledges from breth-

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radio and television stations world-wide.

Prior to the decision to increase the number of stations, the *Garner Ted Armstrong* program was carried by 84 TV stations (the map shows cities in the U.S. with TV stations — those with bordered lines carry our program) and *The World Tomorrow* broadcast by 91 radio stations in the United States. In the first nine months of 1974, these stations brought in over 178,000 letters to Pasadena and an estimated 371,000 registered phone calls through the WATS line. That adds up to a total of nearly 550,000 responses as a result of radio and television — no small number. But it shrinks in comparison with a nation of 213,000,000 who are to be reached with the warning message of the Bible.

In Canada, the radio and TV programs have boasted a more thorough coast-to-coast coverage than has been enjoyed in the United States. There the broadcast is carried on 71 radio stations, and the telecast on 31 major TV stations with hookups to 145 satellite stations covering less densely populated areas in the provinces. This blanket coverage brings in an estimated 20,000 literature requests a month and contributes heavily to a robust growth rate.

The job of proclaiming the gospel has come a long way since the depths of the depression. But as always “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matt. 9:37). But the “laborers,” whether in the form of broadcasts, magazines, manpower (or contributions from co-workers), keep growing in number to meet the challenge Christ has set before His people: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). □

ren [and co-workers] to help raise this \$2.50 per week. In due time pledges came back for just half enough.... We decided to trust God in faith for the other \$1.25 per week!

“...I felt positively assured that God had opened this door of radio, and expected me to walk on through it. And I relied implicitly on the

promise in Scripture that ‘my God shall supply *all your needs* according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.’ And although God has allowed many severe tests of faith, *that promise has always been kept!*”

Indeed, it has! From one small 100-watt radio station in Eugene, Oregon, the broadcast has grown until it is now carried by over 270

HOW REAL IS GOD TO YOU?

According to a Gallup poll taken in 1967, 97% of the people in the United States claimed belief in God. "In God We Trust" is printed on U.S. currency; "One nation under God" is part of the flag salute. Yet millions of us conduct our lives as if there were no God! Why this seeming contradiction? Could it be that to the majority of us, God is not real?

by Brian Knowles

God is not dead," states the bumper sticker, "He just doesn't want to get involved." Another sticker reads, "God is not dead — He's hiding in

Argentina." Sick humor? Perhaps. But these thoughts reflect the way many of us feel toward God.

The very idea of "God" evokes doubts and questions in millions of peoples' minds. For instance, how does a God fit into this war-torn, overpopulated, disease-ridden modern world? Is there a God that hears the prayers of the faithful? Or has He walked off into the cosmic wastes of the universe to busy Himself with some new project? Why doesn't He involve Himself with the overwhelming problems that beset mankind today? Or is He just some sort of ineffective powerless principle that lives only in our hearts?

How God Reveals Himself

Most people find little difficulty believing in the theoretical existence

of God as a philosophical principle. But they have doubts about how much, if any, impact that "Principle" should have on the world or their own personal lives.

Back in 1960, Dr. Samuel H. Miller, dean of Harvard's Divinity School, stated: "*The modern era [has] abandoned religion as a basis of real life, and put its confidence in science instead, even though the word 'God' is more popularly entrenched in America than ever*" (*Denver Post*, June 4, 1960). That statement is still true today, some sixteen years later.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that most people haven't taken time to ponder the fact of God's *literal existence*. They continue to believe in a vague concept or principle without paying attention to the tremendous

God's Challenge to Job

The patriarch Job knew of God's omnipotent greatness. He realized that "Even if God chose to argue, [I] could not answer one of his thousand questions. He is so wise, so mighty..." (Job 9:3). But Job did not grasp the full impact of his statement until God put him to an actual test.

Chapters 38 and 39 of the book of Job record how God challenged Job to answer over forty questions. Even with today's greatly increased scientific knowledge, mankind remains unable to control or even comprehend many of the powerful natural forces God spoke of in this ancient interrogation.

Below are the questions God posed (quoted from the Moffatt translation unless otherwise noted).

• When I founded the earth, where were you then?

- Who measured out the earth? — do you know that? Who stretched the builder's line?
- What were its pedestals placed on? Who laid the corner-stone?
- Who helped to shut in the sea, when it burst from the womb of chaos... when I fixed its boundaries... saying, "Thus far and no further!"
- Have you ever roused the morning, given directions to the dawn?
- Have you found out the fountains of the sea? Have you set foot upon the depths of ocean?
- Have the gates of Death been ever shown to you?
- Have you grasped earth in all its breadth? How large is it?
- What path leads to the home of Light?
- And where does Darkness dwell?
- Have you ever entered the stores of the snow?

evidence around them that an all-powerful Creator *actually does exist*.

God reveals Himself and His nature in a number of different ways, but one of the most obvious is through His physical creation. Nature, apart from man's meddling, is an incredible showplace for divine wisdom and thinking. The interdependency of nature, the instinct of lower life forms such as bees, birds, and even bats is staggering to behold. We are told in the Bible: "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:20).

How anyone can study the natural sciences and conclude that there is no God is beyond reason! As the ancient Psalmist wrote: "The *fool!*

says in his heart, 'There is no God'!" (Ps. 14:1.)

The Lesson of Job

In revealing Himself to the ancient patriarch Job, God again pointed to His material creation. Beginning in Job 38:1 and ending in Job 41:34, God asked Job some 40 embarrassing questions (see box below) about His own creation. (And even though the book of Job is probably the oldest in the Bible, modern man with all his accumulated knowledge can only answer a few of those questions.)

This line of interrogation was humbling to Job. Before hearing these questions Job had talked about God, prayed to Him, heard about Him and discussed Him at great length. But the *real* God was

not real to him! Now Job saw God in a whole new light: "Then Job answered the Lord . . . *I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know . . . I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes*" (Job 42:1-6).

Perhaps this is an experience we all need to share! We need to come face to face with God through His material creation and be humbled by His incredible greatness and omniscience!

God in the Image of Man

But even though a person is deeply convinced that a great all-powerful Creator God exists, there is still another hurdle to leap — un-

- Have you seen the arsenals of hail?
- How are the mists marshalled, that scatter fresh water on earth?
- Have the showers a human sire?
- Who was the father of the dew?
- From whose womb came the ice?
- Who gave birth to the hoarfrost?
- Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? (RSV)
- Can you control the skies?
- Can you prescribe their sway over the earth?
- Can you send orders to the clouds, for water in abundance to be yours?
- Can you send out the lightning on its mission?
- Who taught the feathery clouds, or trained the meteors?
- Who has the skill to mass the clouds, or tilt the pitchers of the sky?
- Can you hunt for the lioness, and feed her hungry cubs?

- Who provides for the raven its prey? (RSV)
- Do you know how wild goats breed, upon the hills?
- Can you control the calving of the hinds?
- Do you fix their appointed time? Do you know when they are to bear?
- Who gave the wild ass his freedom?
- Will the wild ox be content to slave for you?
- Will he stay in your stable?
- Can you rope him to your plough?
- Will he harrow the furrows for you? Will you trust to his tremendous strength, and let him do your fieldwork?
- Will you rely on him to come and carry corn home to your threshing-floor?
- Gavest thou the goodly wings to the peacocks? (KJV)
- Or wings and feathers to the ostrich? (KJV)
- Do you supply the war-horse with his strength?
- Does your wit send the hawk to soar?
- Does your word make the eagle mount to nest aloft among the hills?

derstanding the *true nature* of that God!

Most of us sense the need for God. Yet we want God's nose kept out of our business. We want God as a protecting genie to be brought forth by a rub on the lamp of bedtime prayer. We like to keep our "God" at a distance as did the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

We want a *controllable* God who is made over in our own image. We anthropomorphize our God in order to make Him palatable. We don't want a God who is truly involved in our lives in a very powerful and obvious way!

But the all-powerful God who made us will not be kept at arms' length. If you want *this* God in your life it must be *on His terms* — not your own! God is not a man (I Sam. 15:29). His thoughts do not coincide with our own (Isa. 55:8). God is GOD! He has *all* of the cards — we have only the jokers. We must "humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God" (I Pet. 5:6). Those who seek to have God involved in their lives must be prepared to accept God's terms and fulfill His demands.

The problem is that some of us do not really want the *rule and government* of God in a personal way. We have followed the pattern set by the ancient Israelites of Samuel's day. God explained to Samuel after the Israelites demanded a human king in place of God: "They have not rejected you, Samuel. They have rejected *me* that I should not *rule* over them" (I Sam. 8:7).

Reaching Out to God

But even if a person is ready and willing to submit to His Creator, how does one go about it? How does one *get in touch* with that God? How does one enter into a personal relationship with the Creator of the whole vast universe?

The book of Isaiah gives us a clue. In pre-captivity Israel, true religion had fallen on hard times. A spirit of lethargy pervaded the nation as far as God was concerned. A few

people listlessly and half-heartedly went through the motions of religious form and ceremony, but there was no personal drive to seek God. At that time the prophet Isaiah wrote: "There is no one that calls upon thy name, *that bestirs himself to take hold of thee . . .*" (Isa. 64:7).

Here it shows us that to find God, one must stir himself up to seek God. God is there — but He must be *sought!* God is not aloof and unavailable to His human creation. He is not "too busy" to hear the prayers of the faithful. He is omnipresent and very real. But we must put forth a *concerted effort* to seek Him in a personal way. Paul told the Areopagites of the first century A.D.: "And he [God] made from one [Adam] every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth . . . *that they should seek God*, in the hope that they might feel after him and *find him*. Yet *he is not far from each one of us . . .*" (Acts 17:26-27).

But man does not naturally seek his Maker. The average mind is at odds with God. Paul said: "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot" (Rom. 8:7). Elihu, one of Job's friends and possibly a servant of God, said: "But none says, 'Where is God my Maker . . .'" (Job 35:10). Paul wrote: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, *no one seeks for God*" (Rom. 3:10-11).

But God promises to bless those who truly seek Him wholeheartedly: "Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, *who seek him with their whole heart*" (Ps. 119:2). Those who seek God earnestly — with zeal and persistence — will be rewarded. God will not turn a deaf ear to His children when they seek His direct, personal involvement in their lives.

How To Seek God

God is as near as the next fervent, sincere prayer. We can seek His response on a personal level through earnest, believing communication with our Maker. But we must be *specific* and *personal* in talking to

God. He is not interested in the vain, repetitious rote prayers of organized religion, or the canned, sonorous, artificial mouthings of ecclesiastical sycophants. He wants to hear from His children in their own words (Matt. 6:7). He desires the spontaneous expression of a sincere seeker.

It takes *faith* to pray to God this way: "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6-7).

But where does faith come from? Romans 10:17 reads: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the *word of God*."

God reveals Himself through the pages of the Bible, the Word of God. It is a record of His dealings with man up until the first century A.D. By scouring the pages of this Book, we can come to see the mind of God and understand His attitudes and thoughts. Therefore, constant, diligent, searching Bible study is a must in seeking the true God.

God Is Real!

Make no mistake — God is *there!* He is real and He is omnipresent through His Spirit. His angels move throughout the universe, bringing Him constant reports of happenings here and there (Job 1:6; 2:1-2). He is aware of every hair on the head of every human being (Matt. 10:29-30). He registers the death of every tiny sparrow that flies in His air.

This great God *rewards* those who are willing to stir themselves up to seek Him out and involve Him in their lives — people who are willing to develop a personal relationship with their Creator.

If you are convinced of God's existence, why not take up the challenge and involve Him in your life personally? If you do decide to seek Him with all your heart, though, prepare yourself to be shocked, thrilled and challenged by the dramatic response of your loving Creator — because He is real! □



"Nobody ever listens to me!"

Dear, the plumber didn't come. And you know that little leak behind the water heater..."

"Umm hmm."

"Well, the pipe burst this morning and flooded the whole basement..."

"Shhh! It's third down and goal to go!"

"...and some of the wiring got wet and nearly electrocuted poor Fluffy..."

"Rats! A touchdown! ... They should've made the tackle!"

"... but the vet says he'll be good as new in a week or so..."

"Hey, get me another beer, will you?"

"Then the plumber finally came and he says he's so *happy* our basement flooded, because now he can

by Carole Ritter

Everybody needs somebody to talk to. It's one of our deepest human needs. But canned entertainment has nearly killed the art of conversation, and frustrated talkers are turning more and more to professional listeners to satisfy their needs. Psychiatrists rake in extravagant sums listening to people's hangups; housewives "tell all" on call-in radio talk shows; problem "hot lines" are doing a land-office business. Why this dire shortage of good listeners? Is there anything we personally can do about it?

afford to take his vacation a month early..."

"Aren't you listening? I said I need another beer!"

"... and Stanley, I'm leaving you. The plumber and I are flying to Acapulco in the morning."

"Will you cut out your eternal yakking and get me another beer?! The trouble around here is that nobody ever listens to me!"

Nobody ever listens to me. How many times has that sad complaint been voiced — or muttered, as the case may be? How many people go through life frustrated because there is *nobody* — not a mate, or a neighbor, or even a bartender — who will take the time to really *listen* to what they have to say?

How many people develop exciting new neuroses in order to get

someone else to pay attention to them? How many overdose or jump off bridges?

A Conversational Vacuum

The small talk that sometimes passes for conversation doesn't fulfill anybody's deep-down needs. If someone says, "How are you?" only a social incompetent would reply with a detailed list of symptoms. Yet really that is what we all want to do — uncork all the thoughts that bubble up inside and share them with a compatible human being.

Cocktail party inanities have become a tired cliché, but there is no revival of "coffee and conversation in the parlor" on the horizon, either. Perhaps it's because the parlor has been taken over by "talk" shows on the tube, endless news on the radio, or mood music on the tape deck. To escape the boredom of the parlor we go to movies, or visit friends or relatives. While we are there, we watch more TV or listen to more records or play silly games that mitigate the need for real intimate conversation.

And when we do finally get around to talking, sometimes we end up holding a contest instead of a conversation. We mercilessly interrupt, or chatter on while the other person desperately tries to get a word in edgewise. Neither of us really listens.

The book *EgoSpeak* laments this universal lack: "We hear it said that conversation is a 'lost art,' as if all we need to do to regain it is to practice it, or to try to think more before we verbalize, or to study a dozen other rules preached in innumerable volumes. Quite the reverse is called for, yet is increasingly ignored — listening. Unless we listen to what the other person is saying, we cannot reply to him effectively, nor can we take the next logical step in the conversation and permit it to flow freely and effortlessly" (Edmond G. Addeo and Robert E. Burger, *EgoSpeak*, New York: Bantam Books, 1973, p. xiv).

Caren Rubio explains part of this problem: "We think four or five

times as fast as others speak. What's more, we have a psychological need to be heard rather than to hear" (*Catholic Digest*, December 1974, p. 4).

The authors of *EgoSpeak* elaborate: "Listen to each person tip off his inner conflicts, his gnawing fears, his hidden frustrations, simply by the way he behaves conversationally. Observe how each person invariably swings the conversation around to what *he* wants to talk about. . . . Then realize how you are doing the same thing" (p. xv).

The Gift of Listening

Is there a way to escape these conversational dead ends? Can we avoid "ego-speaking" and begin to really listen to others?

Good listening is motivated by love, or an outgoing concern for the speaker. Everyone gives at least lip service to the idea that "it's better to give than receive." Sometimes, the greatest gift we could possibly give another human being is to shut up and listen to him.

The need for a listener is sometimes so great it drives people to do crazy things. One lonely old man was reported to have turned himself in to the police and confessed multiple horrendous crimes he hadn't actually committed — just to have someone to listen to him.

Everybody around us has the same needs that old man had, but they don't usually show them so dramatically. If we are really concerned about the people around us, really want to befriend them and become involved with them on a personal level, that concern will come through in our listening.

Our listening will become a form of giving. Instead of steering the conversation around to *our* interests, *our* children, *our* latest trip, we will become adept at drawing out *their* experiences. We will be playing just the opposite of the games enumerated in *EgoSpeak*. Instead of chiming in with the inevitable "That reminds me of . . ." we will begin to say, "That's an interesting way of

putting it — what exactly did you mean by that?"

We will begin to keep quiet until the person we are talking with finishes his train of thought — and we will stay quiet a few seconds longer just to make sure he is done, and to give ourselves time to assimilate what the person has said. Our conversation will be a form of cooperation instead of a contest.

Needed: A Sounding Board

When some people have troubles, they sit down and write a long letter to their favorite advice columnist. Whether or not it ever gets mailed, the mere act of putting their thoughts down on paper usually helps. Sometimes it clarifies things to such an extent that "Dear Abby" never has to bother answering; they have come up with the answer all by themselves.

Sometimes a good listener can provide the same help. He can quietly function as a sounding board so someone else can get his thoughts out in the open and examine them objectively. Once he has done that, the solution to his quandary may fall into place automatically.

But Does It Really Help?

You might honestly wonder whether or not it helps someone just to sit there and listen to him express his feelings. Aren't you merely reinforcing him in his "bad attitude"?

No, not really in many cases. The late Dr. Haim Ginott, a psychologist, did much research into this area. He found that what he called the "language of acceptance" can work virtual miracles in human relationships. By listening to someone without judging or condemning his or her feelings (see Matthew 7:1-5 for more on this), but rather *accepting* them, you help the person see his situation objectively. Then he can come up with his own solutions, and effect his own changes.

Dr. Ginott taught that it wasn't "until a [person's] angry, hurt feelings are out in the open, until they

are heard and accepted, that he is free to change" (Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, *Liberated Parents, Liberated Children*, New York: Avon Books, 1974, p. 23). He believed that all feelings are acceptable; all actions are *not*. Once a person is aware of his true feelings about something, he has the upper hand. He is able to change them or accept them as the situation demands.

Should You Always Give Advice?

One of the worst temptations any conversationalist faces is the urge to give advice.

And one of the wisest pieces of advice ever dished out by an experienced counselor is the following: "Whenever possible, I avoid telling [people] what to do and what not to do. Even when they ask for it, I postpone giving instant advice. I try to find out what they think about the situation and what alternatives they have considered. I encourage them to talk about their fears and hopes and to risk stating opinions and making decisions" (Haim Ginott, *Teacher and Child*, New York: Avon Books, 1972, p. 217).

Giving advice may be tempting, but the results are sometimes not worth it. There are many scriptures scattered throughout the book of Proverbs admonishing us to *take* good advice, but not too many telling us to give it. One of the latter states that "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear" (Prov. 25:11-12).

But there aren't too many really receptive, responsive, "listening" ears like this around. In many cases, advice creates resentment in the receiver. The "Please, I'd-rather-figure-it-out-for-myself!" reaction is common, even though the person receiving the advice may not voice it outwardly.

Secondly, even if somebody *takes* good advice, it may only alleviate a symptom of his problem instead of the problem itself. That must be

worked through — alone — by the person himself.

And advice can degenerate into a game of "Why Don't You — Yes But" as immortalized by Eric Berne in *Games People Play* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., p. 116). In this diversion the person seeks advice only for the satisfaction of proving to the giver that it is worthless. Or he may want advice so he won't have to be responsible for the decision he makes.

A person usually has his own storehouse of solutions he has gleaned from experience, from sermons he has heard in church, from reading, from his own personal Bible study. He can instantly apply them to anybody *else's* problem. The trick is to help him see his *own* problem in the same objective light. A good listener is able to stifle the urge to give advice, and let the other fellow talk until he clarifies his own needs. Christ said, "How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?" (Matt. 7:4.) And Proverbs 18:13 adds that "If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." So even if a listener can't resist giving some sort of advice, it should be well after he has thoroughly heard and mulled over what is on the speaker's mind. Finally, the apostle James adds: "Let every man be *quick to hear, slow to speak...*" (James 1:19).

Cast Your Bread on the Waters

If you begin to practice this kind of listening, the rewards will be enormous. People will enjoy your company. You may find yourself spending entire evenings in intimate conversation instead of aimless pastimes. You will be able to keep the media at bay long enough to establish meaningful relationships with your family and friends.

And eventually, hopefully, they will show their gratitude by reciprocating in kind. And you will rarely if ever find yourself muttering that nobody will ever listen to you. □

If You'd Like to Know More

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

- United States: P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply dial this toll-free number in the *continental* U.S.: 1-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)
- United Kingdom, Europe, India, and Africa: P.O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England
- Australia: G.P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233 — reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C.
- South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number: 011-216406.)

Other areas of the world should check the inside front cover (staff box) for the address of our office nearest you.

CHILDREN ARE PEOPLE TOO!

by David L. Antion

Are children's opinions unworthy of notice? Should their comments be habitually ignored? In other words, are children worthy of respect? Mutual respect is a vital key to any healthy relationship — especially the one between parents and children.

Because children start off in this world totally helpless and completely without any knowledge, parents sometimes view them as objects — and helpless objects at that. This is not to say that they are not loved, cared for, and affectionately cuddled. They may be. But since children are totally dependent upon them, many parents do not see their children as separate individuals. In other words, to a lot of adults, children are not really “people.”

The automatic supposition many make is that children have no personal worth of which to speak. They are objects to be seen, but are not actual persons worthy of being heard. After all, what can a child contribute? What good are his words?

The Fifth Commandment Expanded

The Bible has a lot to say about the status and worth of children and the treatment they should receive from adults. We are all familiar with the basic commandment, “Honor your father and your mother.” It is one of the Ten Commandments stated in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, and is repeated in the New Testament by the apostle Paul and Jesus Christ Himself.

Notice this Fifth Commandment as expounded in the book of Ephesians: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3). Here Paul applies it to children and says that they should obey their parents “in the Lord.”

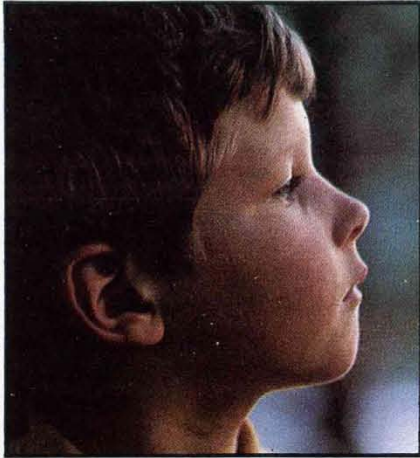
But notice something further in verse 4. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Here we have a commandment for parents — that they should not provoke their children to wrath.

The Greek word for “provoke” is defined as “make angry” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Arndt and Gingrich, p. 635). In Colossians 3:21 Paul also says: “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” Here a different Greek word is used, which is likewise translated “provoke.” This word is defined by the Arndt and Gingrich lexicon as “arouse, provoke (mostly in a bad sense), irritate, embitter” (p. 308). Some translators render Colossians 3:21 as, “Do not exasperate your children.”

Parental Provoking

As adults we often have recourse when we are provoked. If a person has truly taken away our civil rights, perhaps





we can regain them through the courts. If someone has slandered or libeled us, we may be able to obtain remuneration through lawsuits. Or if we are in the presence of someone who is constantly belittling, insulting or provoking us, we can simply leave. As adults we are generally free to pick and choose our relationships with people.

But put yourself in the place of a child being provoked by his mother or father. Basically he is helpless — he has no recourse. If a parent robs his child of self-worth, provokes him to wrath, or irritates and exasperates him, the child feels nothing but total frustration and discouragement. He may develop a desire to run away from home, but if he does, he jeopardizes his basic security. Prior to teenage, it is difficult for him to be on his own. He has no financial resources and practically no ability to provide anything for himself. He is very much dependent upon his parents; provoked or not, he must stay with them. Besides, he may love his parents and wish to have a good relationship with them.

The end result of parental provocation is a feeling of discouragement, exasperation and futility on the part of the child. It leads to harbored resentments and thoughts of revenge which the child sees no way of fulfilling.

The Principle of Reciprocity

In studying human relationships, sociologists have discovered the important principle of *reciprocity*. That

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right . . . And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1, 4).

is, we all have a tendency to treat others as they have treated us.

When someone gives something to you, it is natural to feel a desire to give a gift in return. If a neighbor treats you with kindness, it is natural to want to treat him with kindness also. If someone is extremely courteous to you, you tend to express your best manners in his presence. If someone speaks to you with sarcasm and little digs and jabs, the natural tendency is for you to sharpen up your wits too.

Jesus verified this principle of reciprocity in the Sermon on the Mount. He said: “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?” (Matt. 5:46-47.) Here Jesus is saying that the publicans naturally love the people who love them. They are acting out of the principle of reciprocity. The publicans salute the people who salute them, or greet the people who greet them.

Forces at Work

Whether parents realize it or not, the forces of reciprocity are at work in their own children. Children will tend to treat parents as parents have treated them. Or, seeing the futility of retaliation, they will treat *someone else* as their parents have treated them.

Thus parents who are sarcastic, disrespectful, insulting and over-



demanding will tend to have children who are also insulting, disrespectful and overdemanding to others. These “others” may be their playmates, teachers at school, or other “authority” figures in their lives which children substitute for their parents.

So the principle of reciprocity is working in your children right now! It was at work in you when you were growing up. It shaped your attitude toward your own parents.

It is pitiful and shameful that there are so many people who hate and despise their own parents. And it seems so hard to understand in many cases. You may meet two parents who appear to be very fine, upstanding people. On the surface it is difficult to understand why their children despise them or seek revenge or retaliation against them in attitudes and words.

But as was explained earlier, many parents have a different attitude toward their children than they do toward adults. Most people treat another adult with respect. After all, if they don't, he's likely to break off the relationship. Since we don't like to lose friends, we cultivate them through appropriate behavior. We don't insult or belittle because as adults they are capable of sharp verbal retaliation and in some few cases may even resort to physical violence or “legal revenge” in a court of law.

But with children, adults somehow seem to take a different point of view. Children don't seem to



have any rights as far as grown-ups are concerned. Children don't need respect. Children should always "do as they're told," or "be seen and not heard," or "eat last," or "respect their elders." While some of these well-worn clichés are indeed based on good principles, they denote an overall attitude of respect in only one direction. Everyone needs self-respect and a feeling of self-worth. No one enjoys being humiliated, put down, squelched. Not even children!

Many parents seem to want to belittle or take away the respect and self-worth of their children and still retain their children's respect, love and admiration. They usually find such a thing is impossible! (Of course, they don't think of it in these terms. They are not really conscious or aware of their actions when they don't treat their children with respect.)

Respect Begets Respect

There is perhaps nothing more overwhelming to a child than to have his parents treat him with honor and respect. Try it and see. Consider being hospitable to your own children. Think of their comfort and their welfare and talk to them in a tone of voice which conveys your respect for their person, their self-worth, and their God-given individual rights. If you show respect for their opinions and their knowledge, you are likely to see them reciprocate by showing respect for your opinions and knowledge.

Children will tend to treat parents as parents have treated them. Or, seeing the futility of retaliation, they will treat someone else as their parents have treated them. It is simply the principle of reciprocity.

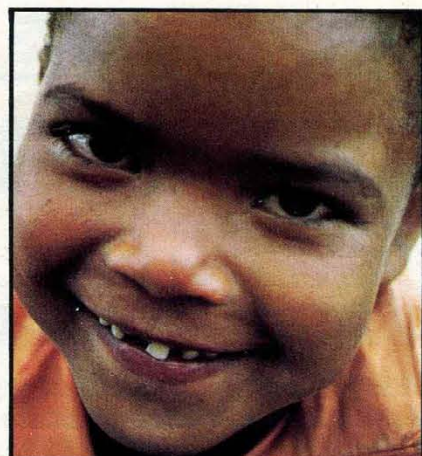
But if you carelessly dismiss every suggestion your child makes as "silly" or "stupid" and not worthy even of consideration, the principle of reciprocity will be at work. Furthermore, you will be putting a lid on your child's creativity.

Ask *yourself* whom you respect. Chances are you highly respect and admire people who treat *you* with respect. You want to please people who think well of you, honor you, hold you in high esteem. Are your children any different than you are?

Young people are often amazed at how differently they are treated once they become adults. In fact, I have heard remarks from young people saying how amazed they were at the respect and honor they received once they were married. Or how once they left home and went to college, their parents looked at them as though they were real persons. Why can't this start much earlier in a child's life? Why can't he know that his parents look at him as a real person from birth onward?

An unknown author wrote a poem entitled "Children Learn What They Live." It goes like this:

*If a child lives with criticism,
he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.
If a child lives with fear,
he learns to be apprehensive.
If a child lives with pity,
he learns to feel sorry for himself.
If a child lives with ridicule,
he learns to be shy.*



*If a child lives with jealousy,
he learns to feel guilty.*

BUT —

*If a child lives with tolerance,
he learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with encouragement,
he learns to be confident.*

*If a child lives with praise,
he learns to be appreciative.*

*If a child lives with acceptance,
he learns to love.*

*If a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.*

*If a child lives with recognition,
he learns it is good to have a goal.*

*If a child lives with honesty,
he learns what truth is.*

*If a child lives with fairness,
he learns justice.*

*If a child lives with security,
he learns to have faith in himself
and those above him.*

*If a child lives with friendliness,
he learns the world is a nice
place in which to live.*

With what is your child living? □

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books contain valuable information about the parent-child relationship. Most or all are available at local bookstores and/or libraries.

Hide or Seek, James Dobson
Children: The Challenge, Rudolph Dreikurs
Between Parent and Child, Haim G. Ginott
Between Parent and Teenager, Haim G. Ginott
The Stork is Dead, Charles Shedd
Parent Effectiveness Training, Dr. Thomas Gordon

IS THE BIBLE BELIEVABLE?

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS— FACT OR FICTION?

Here is a challenge to the rationalist and the skeptic. It is time this doubting world realized that true Christianity is based on fact.

by Roderick C. Meredith

The concept of a personal God who intervenes in human affairs seems like something off in never-never land to most people. Though millions pay lip service to Christianity, they can't quite bring themselves to believe and act as if God were *real* — that He is something far more than just “the essence of goodness,” the “First Cause” or some blind, invisible, far-off force that has very little to do with our daily lives.

Why is this?

It is because most people have been taught — or have *assumed* — that the miracles in the Bible are merely “Jewish mythology”; that the prophecies of the Bible are vague and have little meaning for us today; and that the creation story of Genesis is not true.

Miracles Proved?

Most modern, liberal Christians readily admit that they lack faith in the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. They attend church because it is “the thing to do.” But their belief in what is supposed to be the *basis* of true Christianity is hedged about with doubts and fears. Jesus said: “It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*” (Luke 4:4). Many professing Chris-

tians, however, are not really sure about large sections of the “word of God” to which Jesus referred.

“We have no prophets; we have no sacred books to guide us toward the future,” stated John Platt, associate director of the Mental Health Institute at the University of Michigan. His statement certainly reflects the state of mind of millions in our “Christian” nation.

Man has lost faith in God. Now he is beginning to lose faith in *himself*. His cynical, doubting intellectualism has left him helpless and hopeless in the face of mounting world cataclysm. He *needs* a rock-solid spiritual anchor at a time thinking man realizes he may soon *cease to exist*.

“Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind,” said President John F. Kennedy in 1961. Eight years later, U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said: “I do not wish to be overly dramatic, but I can only conclude from information that is available to me as Secretary-General that the members of the United Nations have perhaps *ten years left* in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race. If such a global partnership is not formed within the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems I have mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control.”

At such a time in human history, you would think that mankind would turn more fervently to God than ever before. But the real and

ever-present *doubts* about God and the Bible make it impossible for man to turn to his Creator in confidence. This attitude of doubt in the living God is the very thing that is robbing many people of the happiness, joy and peace of mind that could be theirs. This God of power is the same loving, active *Creator* to whom Jesus prayed. The God that healed the sick, raised the dead and performed great *miracles* — that God seems mythological to most people today. They would *like* to believe that God could supernaturally intervene and help them, as He did in Jesus' time. But how can they be sure of His reality and power?

Entire Bible Inspired

God Himself says that we should require *proof* for our beliefs. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). If a person *already* has a certain degree of faith, he can “put to the test” God's way of life in his marriage, with his children, or on his job. He will invariably find that it works to the degree that he follows it. And real Bible students have long been amazed and inspired by the exact fulfillment of Bible prophecies that have occurred or are now beginning to occur. The major prophecies about Egypt, Babylon and the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great all stand as testimony of a living God who has chosen to intervene in human affairs in many ways.

Year by year, history continues to confirm the *inspired* prophecies written by some of the same men who

tell us of the *miracles* God performed through His servants. And archaeology is becoming a major field where much information is being unearthed that verifies the biblical record in a most remarkable manner.

However, there is one miracle to which countless prophecies point, about which scores of books have been written, and which proves difficult for even atheists to deny. It has stood through many generations as a proof of God's power to supernaturally intervene in human affairs and save man even from the grave. Once you accept this miracle, you will see that by its very nature it demonstrates the validity of countless others, and of God's promise to miraculously intervene in our lives now.

A Basic Miracle

The very heart of Bible prophecy concerns a subject which too many people take for granted, without realizing it should be *proved*. This is the subject of Jesus Christ, His reality, His life, His teachings, His miracles, and His own *resurrection*. More than three hundred prophecies and references to Christ in the Old Testament are expressly cited in the New Testament as predictions fulfilled in Him. These prophecies were all written hundreds of years before Christ was born. Taken all together, they form a bond of truth which cannot be broken or disproved.

In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, a series of remarkable and seemingly paradoxical statements is made about the coming Messiah. It is stated that He would be cut off

from the land of the living, a young man without offspring, yet He shall prolong His days. He was to be put to death as a criminal, to make His grave with the wicked, and yet the sepulcher of the rich was to be His tomb. He was to pour out His soul unto death, and yet He would live to make intercession for transgressors.

Before Jesus appeared, it seemed impossible that one man could fulfill all these incongruous requirements. Yet He fulfilled them so naturally that we have ceased to observe how paradoxical these prophecies must have appeared beforehand.

Almost from the beginning of His ministry, Jesus taught His own disciples of this coming great event of the ages — His literal death, and His literal resurrection from the dead. Notice Mark 8:31: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

When the doubting Pharisees asked Jesus for a supernatural sign — a miracle — as proof of His Messiahship, Jesus pointed to the same event. He answered: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40).

Jesus staked His very Messiahship on a miracle — His *resurrection* from the dead after a definite period of

time. You either believe in this miracle — or you are without a Savior!

Historical Proof

Here are the facts: As we have just seen, Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He would be killed, and would rise again after three days. Yet, when it actually happened, they seemed to have given up hope and were slow to believe (Luke 24:11; Mark 16:13). Doubting Thomas was sure there was a mistake somewhere, and did not believe until he touched Jesus with his own hands (John 20:27).

These men had to be shown!

Thus, the men who later risked their very lives to preach the story of Jesus' resurrection were at first unable to believe it, determined not to believe it without proof, and finally came to believe it in spite of themselves. This belief so filled their lives that they henceforth went out and dedicated themselves to preaching Jesus' message, acting as "witnesses" of His resurrection.

The story of Jesus' life is basically the same in both sacred and secular history. It is acknowledged that Jesus was a real person who came to have a large following in Judea, that He was put to death in Jerusalem by authority of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. No contemporary or successor contradicts the story. Not even Jewish writers try to deny it.

Neither the Roman historian Pliny in the first century, Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, nor Julian in the fourth questioned the authenticity of the New Testament, or insinuated that Christians were mistaken in the authors to

whom they ascribed the New Testament. But all agree that in the reign of Tiberius Caesar a growing band of people risked their lives to propagate a new religion, sustaining unheard-of persecutions and sufferings with amazing faith and courage — and that one of the central tenets of their message was their belief in the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

More Evidence

And there is much more evidence!

If Jesus did not really rise from the dead, what became of His body? If enemies stole it, they would have shown it at every opportunity, for they did everything in their power to discredit the story, and killed many of those who told it. If Jesus' disciples stole it, they were then preaching a lie. But *multitudes* of men do not become martyrs for what they know is untrue.

Was Jesus really dead? His disciples certainly believed that He was. Their trouble was in believing His resurrection at first. And the Roman soldiers and Jews certainly believed He was dead. They were only concerned about the disciples stealing away His body (Matt. 27:64).

Was the resurrection, as some skeptics claim, a later addition to the story of Christ, invented years later to glorify a dead hero? As we have shown, sacred and secular history alike clearly state that the great religious movement known by Christ's name was begun by people who preached of His resurrection from the dead. This joyous belief was not an addition to the Christian faith, but one of the primary causes of it. The apostles did not rest their faith on records, but on what they had seen with their own eyes.

When questioned about this belief, the apostles chorused: "We are his witnesses of these things" (Acts 5:32).

Basis of Faith

Once you really grasp the fact that the resurrection of Christ was

quite literal and miraculous, you will in all honesty be forced to acknowledge that Jesus really was what He claimed to be — the Messiah, the Son of God — and that His many other predictions and promises and teachings must be just as true and literal as that of His death and resurrection. Would God raise from the dead and show as His Son one who had told the truth part of the time, and lied part of the time?

Let's be honest and reasonable about these things!

Were the apostles telling the truth about Jesus' resurrection — as we have proved they must have been — and lying when they told of His other miracles? And of His promises? And of His teachings?

Clearly, the factual, historical proof of the divine inspiration and present fulfillment of the prophecies in God's Word, and of the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ, demonstrate that God's Word means exactly what it says — that God is the living, active Creator-Ruler of heaven and earth *now*, and that His instructions, His prophecies, and His promises are in effect right now — today! God help you to grasp what this means!

First of all, it means that the instructions and spiritual laws contained in the Bible are — in fact — God speaking to you! You need to study and obey His Word — to "live by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

Concerning God's promises, this complete faith in His Word and in His present power will enable you to trust God as you never did before to supernaturally intervene in your life when you need Him. And don't be deceived by the modernist teaching that miracles were only for the days of Christ and the apostles. If that were true, why did God perform such great miracles through the hands of Stephen and Philip, who were never called apostles? (Acts 6:8; 8:6.) What about the "signs" that Jesus said "shall follow them that believe"? (Mark 16:17-18.) Have those that believe ceased to exist?

Rely on God's Word

The sad truth is that most so-called "Christians" deny by their words and their deeds the promises and teachings of God's Word. They have lost sight of God's present power to miraculously intervene and back up His Word — whether it be a prophecy or a promise.

In the Gospel of Luke, for instance, Jesus described startling events that are now *beginning* to occur (Luke 21:8-11). He said: "And when these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. . . . Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass away, till ALL be fulfilled*" (verses 28, 32).

Do you as an individual recognize that these words of Jesus are *already* beginning to affect your life? That the recent demise of the British Empire and the slow but steadily increasing erosion of American pride and power are in *direct fulfillment* of specific Bible prophecies?

Write today for our inspiring free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*. Get acquainted with the *real* God of which Bible prophecies, promises and miracles speak. Take time to *prove* to yourself in a sound-minded, factual manner that God is alive and that He rules over the affairs of men and nations — intervening when He chooses. And that He *binds Himself* by His Word, the Bible.

You need to fully grasp this truth and begin to act on it. Understand that God's promises as well as prophecies are a commitment by your Creator which *must* be fulfilled — IF you do your part. Learn as have thousands of others that *miracles do happen today*.

Then you will learn to trust and obey the living God as never before. And you will better prepare yourself by true spiritual growth for eternal life in His world government, which will be set up on this earth a lot sooner than most people even begin to imagine! □

The Answer to Sin

I have just finished reading part two of Mr. Charles V. Dorothy's "The Answer to Sin." This is the one I have been waiting for. I love something to come straight out and tell me what I need. This was it.

James J.,
Amstell, Georgia

I really enjoyed the articles "What Is Sin?" and "The Answer to Sin." I sure learned a few things from those articles; the biggest, to watch me more carefully.

Darrel D.,
Kingsport, Tennessee

Bravo! Just finished reading "Part Two: The Answer to Sin." Thank you for a most inspiring message. Now with this new knowledge and understanding I can change, becoming more God-minded and a more complete person.

Jean V.,
Scottsbluff, Nebraska

In Vain Do They Worship Me

We would like to comment on your article "In Vain Do They Worship Me" by George Ritter. We do not "pray in vain" when we recite our Rosary, as Mr. Ritter so slanderously suggested in his article. For your information, the Rosary is a beautiful form of prayer. Also, do you think that is the only way we lead a Christian life? We have the Mass and the Sacraments, and with the help of our prayers we perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We feel your criticism of the Rosary was most unjust and very unkind.

Mary G.,
Secretary, The Legion of Mary
Duluth, Minnesota

• This article was not written to cast aspersions on any individual Christian's life, but rather to emphasize one of the cardinal points of the Scriptures: that it is possible to worship God in vain (Matt. 15:8-9). However, in Matthew 6:7 Christ did say: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

Therapy for Ailing Marriages

I really enjoyed the article "Therapy for Ailing Marriages" and think it should be put into practice. If this article were sent to all the married couples (unhappy or not) in the world and read carefully, there would be second thoughts about divorcees.

Sue F.,
Kenly, North Carolina

I feel that the article "Therapy for Ailing Marriages" by Brian Knowles and Carole Ritter falls short of your standard by not being completely biblical! It is replete with quotes which are slanted towards the present-day, ungodly women's liberation movement.

Ervin Y.,
Decatur, Georgia

• Could it be that the Bible supports some

facets of the women's movement, such as respecting one's mate and treating all human beings according to Christian principles?

Do You Hate Yourself?

Thank you for your article "Do You Hate Yourself?" I'm afraid at one time I did. But I realized I couldn't love other people with that attitude.

Maurice F.,
Covington, Tennessee

Does God Create Evil?

Your article in the October GN ("Is This World Really Necessary?") contains a glaring error which somehow escaped proof-reading and reached publication. The statement "God Himself did not create evil" is in direct contradiction with Isaiah 45:7 and is therefore incorrect.

Dan. D.,
North Hollywood, California

• This apparent contradiction is due to use of the word "evil" which has more than one connotation in both English and Hebrew. One cannot take the translator's rendering of "evil" as having the meaning of moral evil or sin, such as was brought into the world by Satan the devil.

In the context of Isaiah 45:7, the word is perhaps better translated "woe," as in the Revised Standard Version and other modern translations. In other words, God brings punishment (which is not ultimately a moral evil, but a righteous and just thing) upon him who "strives with his Maker" (verse 9).

Sometimes it is wise to check more than one translation in order to determine the meaning of a particular verse, and also to read the context carefully. (For further information on this subject, write for our free booklet "How to Study the Bible" and the reprint "Which Translations Should You Use?")

"Woe is literally 'evil,' but this Hebrew word is too general a term to suggest that Isaiah is making God the author of wickedness" ("The New Bible Commentary: Revised," p. 614). Jamieson, Fausset and Brown state that in this instance, "create evil" refers "not [to] moral evil... but in contrast to 'peace' in the parallel clause, war, disaster" ("Commentary on the Whole Bible," one-volume edition, p. 568). Adam Clarke adds, "Evil is here evidently put for war and its attendant miseries" ("Commentary on the Entire Bible," one-volume edition, p. 598).

Of course, God created the potential or capacity for evil, in order to allow man and the angels free moral agency, or the power to choose between sin and righteousness. "Peake's Commentary on the Bible" states that God "is finally responsible for good and evil..." (p. 522).

As stated in the article, God looked at His creation and saw that "it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). If He had created evil (rather than just the potential for it), He could not have made such a statement. The book of James helps clarify this point: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God': for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each per-

son is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire" (James 1:13-14). The book of Romans further states that "Sin [moral evil; the breaking of God's law] came into the world through one man [Adam] and death through sin" (Rom. 5:12).

But it was Satan the devil who originated sin and tempted Adam. Christ said in John 8: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (verse 44).

So Isaiah 45:7 does not refer to God creating moral evil in the sense it was mentioned in the article. God created Lucifer (a perfect archangel - Ezekiel 28:15) who later sinned and became the Adversary, or Satan. He, not God, is the author of sin. But as the article pointed out, God is ultimately responsible for the overall condition of the world in the sense that He has allowed it as part of a wisely thought-out plan. After all, since God is the Creator, He is indirectly responsible for everything that goes on in His universe. For more information on this subject, be sure to write for our free booklet "Why Were You Born?" and the reprint "Why Must Men Suffer?"

Changed Life

Almost eleven years ago, your words (unknown to you) helped me to overcome a drinking problem that had lasted for nearly thirty years. Since that date, your moral support, and, of course, my faith in Jesus Christ, have kept me "dry" without any desire for alcohol at any time.

Barry O.,
Covington, Louisiana

Enlarge the GN?

I was wondering if there is any possible chance *The Good News* is going to be enlarged in the near future? I believe it to be a real help not only in Bible study but also in history and archaeology. I enjoy and devour every issue and hope to see a larger issue soon.

G. H.,
Albany, New York

• We have no plans to enlarge the magazine at this time due to budgetary considerations. We do plan to increase the circulation as much as possible in order to share this message with as many as we can.

The Tithing Booklet

We have been blessed so greatly since we began to tithe several years ago. It seems each time an unexpected expense arises, we get some type of extra income. The Lord has certainly been looking after us. We were very excited to receive your new booklet on *Tithing*. There were a few questions we ourselves were confused about that were answered completely at the end of the booklet.

Bill and Dorothy H.,
Butler, Pennsylvania

• To receive a copy of the *Tithing* booklet, simply request it from our office nearest you.

