

Awake!

AUGUST 8, 1983



Population Explosion

—What's the Remedy?—

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Feature Articles

Many authorities feel that our "jewel in space," the earth, is getting overcrowded. Pollution, famine and unemployment are just a few of its effects. These in turn lead to social unrest and violence. What is the solution? Is there a government capable of handling this problem on a world scale? The opening series of articles examines the population explosion—its causes, effects and solution

Our "Jewel in Space"—Is It in Trouble? ...	3
The Population Explosion—How Much of a Threat?	4
Population Control and World Government	9

Also in This Issue

Take Some, Leave Some	11
Cocaine—Dangerous Drug or Innocent Pastime?	12
Young People Ask ... How Can I Prevent Disappointment?	16
Crossword Puzzle	19
Is It Enough to Be a Star?	20
Africa's River of Superlatives	25
From Our Readers	28
Watching the World	29

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Our "Jewel in Space"

Is It in Trouble?

VIEWING our planet during his lunar mission, an American astronaut described it as "the most beautiful thing to see, in all the heavens." The blue sphere frosted with patches of white and brown is indeed like an exquisite "jewel in space."

Although our globe appears tranquil and elegant from the surface of the moon, on earth its beauty is marred. Its inhabitants are experiencing huge problems. One of the most difficult, insidious and complex of problems to solve is the *population explosion*.

This problem has been considered by politicians and experts time and again. But the advancing years only serve to heighten the problem—and it affects you, one way or another. For example, if you live in a big city, have you noticed how often the traffic goes at a snail's pace or even comes to a standstill? Have you experienced for yourself how crammed the buses, trains, subways and sidewalks are? Hence, the government of mainland China, with a burgeoning population of more than one billion, tries to limit families by law to one child each.

Even the most optimistic experts regard the world's rising population flood with grave concern. Why? Because the availability of food, land, jobs and natural resources is limited. In addition, many authorities in the field blame the population explosion for contributing to other problems that blemish the beauty of our planet, such as:

- **FAMINE.** In some cities of underdeveloped countries, on many mornings street sweepers have to clean dead persons out of the gutters. Yes, starvation and malnutrition lead to death for millions each year. And the demand for food worldwide is expected to double by the year 2000, less than 17 years from now!

- **WILDLIFE LOSSES.** Because of human habitat expansion thousands of plants and animals are threatened with extinction.

- **ENERGY SCARCITY.** Depletion of limited fossil fuels is feared as population growth soars and wasteful consumption increases. Babies born in the developed countries will consume far more of the world's resources than those born in the underdeveloped countries.

- **POLLUTION.** Air pollution worsens as cities become more crowded with vehicles. Water pollution grows as chemical fertilizers and pesticides used for increasing food production enter the natural water system.

- **WAR THREATS.** In the future, nuclear blackmail may be applied to extract concessions from neighboring countries for more land and resources. Over 30 countries may have nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

- **UNEMPLOYMENT.** Automation often leads to the loss of jobs. In country after country there is not enough work for people to have full employment.

As a result of all these problems, more

and more people are realizing that the earth is a *limited* spaceship and they are the temporary passengers on it. The late American diplomat Adlai Stevenson expressed it well: "We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable supplies of air and soil . . . , preserved from annihilation

only by the care, the work, and I say the love, we give our fragile craft."

Are we overcrowding our spaceship earth? Are there humane solutions to the problem of a growing list of passengers? In whom can we trust for our survival on spaceship earth—the beautiful "jewel in space"?

The Population Explosion

How Much of a Threat?

WHAT has caused a population explosion in this latter part of the 20th century? It is due in part to a worldwide decline in the death rate as a result of improved medical care and economic and social conditions. Consequently, fewer babies are dying and more people are living longer. Particularly in the less developed nations, despite the decline in deaths there has not been a similar decline in births. Therefore, apart from the obvious sexual motivation, we again ask the question: Why do people have children?

- Children satisfy the innate need for parenthood. Many couples feel that their marriage is incomplete unless they have children. Children satisfy the psychological needs to have someone to love and to be loved by.
- Some religions encourage their adherents to have big families.
- In many lands children provide economic benefits to the family. They become workers in the field. Parents often rely on them for security in old age.
- Children are regarded as an extension

of the parents. They carry the family's name and cultural heritage to future generations.

- Children, in some societies especially sons, afford a social status to the family.

Obviously, then, for most people the bearing of children is an instinctive part of life.

Why the Sudden Population Explosion?

"God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.'" Ever since this divine mandate was given, humans have been multiplying and slowly filling the earth.—Genesis 1:28.

From the earliest of times, many considered children a gift from God. Fertility and reproduction provided the basis for human welfare and security. Sons and daughters helped not only on the farm and in the house but also in legally defending the family interests. (Psalm 127: 3-5) The barrenness of a woman was often regarded as a reproach and an affliction.—Genesis 30:1; 1 Samuel 1:4-11.

Therefore, population growth served as the foundation of past human progress. But now it is one of the major problems and threats to the future of mankind. Demographers (population analysts) describe the present population growth rate as the *population explosion*. Why?

The root of the problem lies in the way the population expands. It does not increase by simple consecutive addition (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.) but by exponential growth or multiplication (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.).

This exponential growth rate for population is a potential danger. Why? Professor J. Forrester of M.I.T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) explains: "Exponential growth is treacherous and misleading. A system variable can continue through many doubling intervals without seeming to reach significant size. But then in one or two more doubling periods . . . suddenly seems to become overwhelming." But how does this affect world population?

Since humans began inhabiting the earth, population increased very slowly over a long period of time—until this century. For example, after 4,000 years of recorded human history in the Bible, the earth's population grew to an estimated 300 million people by the time of Jesus Christ.

World population did not reach a billion until the early 1800's. Now note how it escalates. By 1930, about a hundred years later, the population had doubled to 2 billion.

Then, within 30 years, another billion was added to the population, reaching 3 billion in 1960. More alarmingly, by 1975, only 15 years later, the population had grown to 4 billion. And now the estimated world population stands at more than 4.6 billion. (See chart, page 8.)

What Could Happen

A modest projection indicates that the 5-billion figure will be reached by 1987. And before the turn of the century our small planet could be accommodating over 6 billion humans.

However, the annual rate of population increase since the 1950's averages about 2 percent. At this present rate of growth, the population will double in 35 years. Thereafter, the increase in numbers would be progressively more rapid,



Earth's entire land area could become one giant city

and, if it continued, would reach perhaps 50 billion by the end of the 21st century. The entire land area of the earth could become one giant city.

If it were possible to reduce the population growth rate from 2 percent to 1 percent, would this solve the population problem? At a growth rate of 1 percent, the world's population would double in 70 years instead of 35 years. But the problem would not be solved. It would merely be postponed.

Some demographers predict that the population will stabilize at about 15 billion (others suggest 10.5 billion) by the year 2110. They hope that improved world population control can accomplish this. Such a prediction, however, is speculative. Many complex factors and variables are involved.

For example, in highly industrialized nations, such as the United States, the overall growth rate has been lower than

in nonindustrialized nations. However, recently a new baby boom began in the United States. The February 22, 1982, issue of *Time* magazine reports:

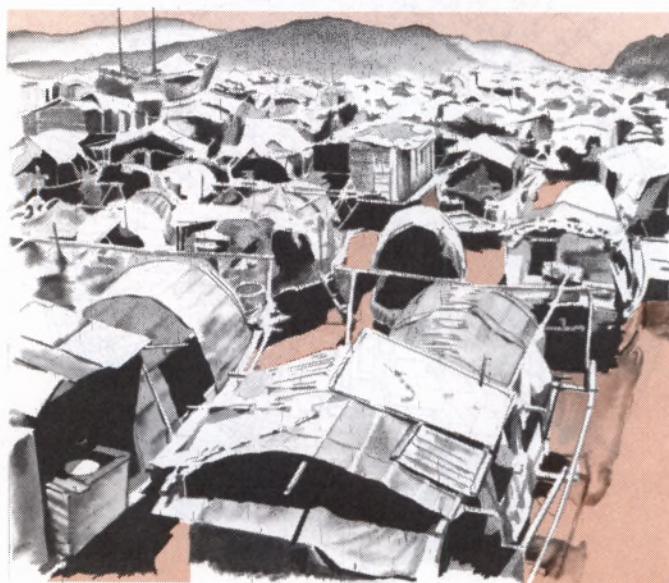
"Indeed, the U.S. birth rate is the highest it has been in more than a decade. After dropping as low as 14.5 (babies per 1,000 population), the rate climbed to 16.2 in 1980 and is expected to hit 17.1 this year. Such a rise is more than just a blip on the demography charts. It has portentous overtones."

But the overtones are not just "portentous" for the United States; the world population explosion represents a threat because of its multiple effects earth wide. What are some of these effects?

Effects of Overcrowding

Many laboratory tests on animals show that when their population density is low, their numbers increase rapidly. But as the animal density increases beyond a certain point, abnormal behavior becomes apparent. Eventually their social order breaks down.

For example, the tests performed by Dr. John B. Calhoun on Norwegian rats are informative: Even though the rats had sufficient food and medical care, as their cages became increasingly crowded, some males became more aggressive in behavior, such as engaging in sexual overactivity and even eating the young, while other males became completely passive and withdrew from the colony. In the female rats there was a sharp rise in abortion and death during pregnancy, and some failed to nurse their



Overcrowding may lead to abnormal behavior

young or to take care of them.

Such pathological behavior of animals when their population density is increased causes some to speculate on human behavior under similar circumstances. They feel that there is a higher incidence of mental disorder, alcoholism, drug addiction, crime and suicide in over-crowded areas. This pattern was also observed in certain housing areas, refugee camps, factories, classrooms and the like where conditions became over-crowded.

International Problems

Today about 75 percent of the world's population live in the underdeveloped nations. About 40 percent live in extreme poverty. In addition, the less developed countries have the highest birth rates in the world.

Can we expect a dwindling in the number of people living in poverty? No, according to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. It predicts that by the year 2110 about 90 percent of the population will live in what are now the underdeveloped countries. What does this portend?

As the population explosion continues, political and economic pressures may rise enormously in many nations. A population that multiplies to the point of famine is faced with starving to death or being forced to migrate or to invade someone else's territory. This could invite political instability and increase the chances of revolution, aggression or armed conflict.

Already there is a new wave of international migration from the poorer

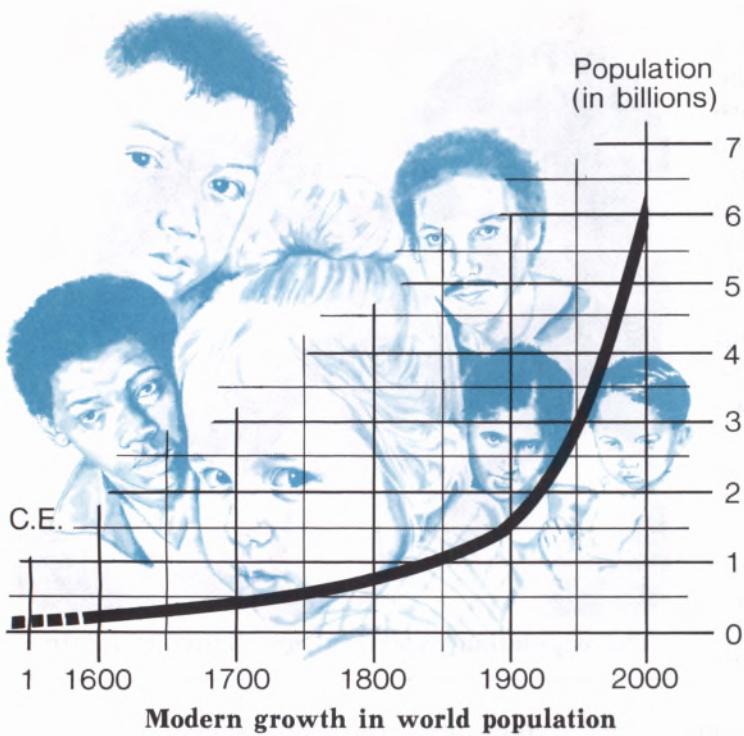


The population explosion contributes to famine

countries to the more affluent. This poses many dilemmas for the governments involved. The recent expulsion of hundreds of thousands of aliens from Nigeria illustrates this point. Yet can people be blamed for migrating when they know other countries have food or resources they themselves lack?

It is reported that a person born in the rich industrialized countries will consume during his lifetime *20 to 40 times* as much as a person born in Africa, Asia or Latin America. This not only puzzles but also irritates many deprived people. They desire a share of the wealth seen in developed countries. So it appears that the powerful migration waves are certain to continue.

Disturbing are the conclusions reached by a team of U.S. experts. Their recent explorative study of the present world situation states: "If the present growth



trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits of growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity."

No Easy Solution

Solving the thorny problem of nuclear weapons seems easier than finding the correct solution to overpopulation. Mutual fear of destruction may deter nations from starting nuclear war, but who can stop people from having children?

Would the fear of food shortages, lack of housing or economic crisis discourage them? Today, the population increase is

the highest in the nations where food is scarce, housing limited, economic activity stalled and sanitation pitifully lacking.

Some may propose that, in order to relieve the pressure, older people should not live so long. Yet what child would willingly put his parents or grandparents to death for the sake of world population equilibrium?

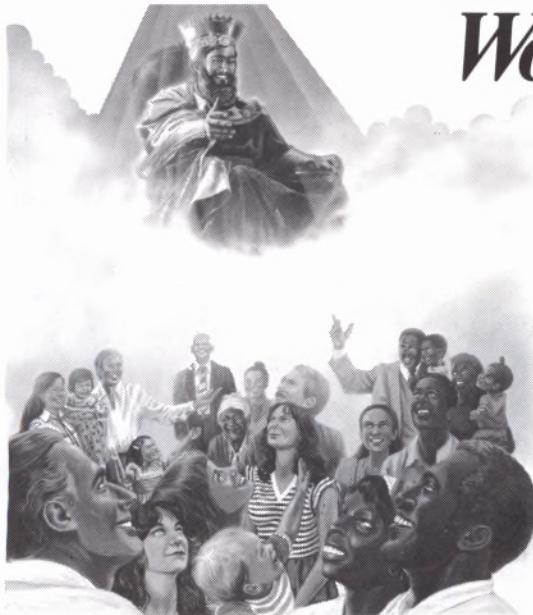
The editors of *Great Decisions 1973* raise further questions in the search for a remedy: "Is it true that growth must end sooner or later on this finite planet? . . . If it is, do we have the political will to initiate and accept the tough decisions

required to achieve equilibrium? . . . If survival is at stake, can decisions be left in private hands? If not, is *world government* the answer?"—Italics ours.

An editorial in the Belgian newspaper *La Nouvelle Gazette* on how to avoid a nuclear war also presents a clue to the solution for overpopulation. It states: "The only remedy would be a major relinquishment of sovereignty by each country . . . in favor of a *world government*."—Italics ours.

Is one world government for all the earth really possible? Who could be trusted to form such a government and to administer it successfully? How can we be sure it would provide a fair solution to the problem of population explosion? The following article answers such pressing questions.

Population Control *and* *World Government*



ONE world government, God's Kingdom! That is a major theme of the Bible. Its seat of government is in heaven. And Jehovah God will use it to resolve our present crises competently, including those aggravated by the population explosion.

Can we trust God's heavenly government to provide good rulership? Yes, for the Bible states: "The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) Humans are limited, Jehovah is not. Can you think of anyone more qualified to rule than the Sovereign Lord Jehovah and his Son, Christ Jesus?

Since the Kingdom of God is located in heaven, will it show genuine interest in earth's problems? Yes. Jesus Christ exhorts his followers to pray: "Thy king-

dom come. Thy will be done *in earth*, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10, *Authorized Version*) As a man, Jesus was known for his empathy and truthfulness. He would not fool people with imaginary hopes.—Matthew 14:14; 1 Peter 2:22.

Jesus was born into a family of little means. (Compare Luke 2:24 with Leviticus 12:8.) Joseph, his foster father, worked as a carpenter and raised his family in a city of no great importance. Jesus became part of a large family of at least nine: his mother and foster father; his four half brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas; at least two half sisters, and himself. (Matthew 13:55, 56; John 1:46) Therefore, Christ Jesus is a ruler well acquainted with family feelings and needs. The human population, rich and poor, can find with this King a sympathetic ear for their problems.

Almighty God as Creator brought into existence the first human pair. Therefore, Jehovah as supreme King displays loving interest in mankind and in solving their problems. One step he will take in this regard is ridding the earth of every government that exploits and menaces his honest-hearted children. (Daniel 2:44) In this way the natural resources of the entire earth can be used, aiding *all* of mankind, because God's Kingdom will allow no self-interest groups in His worldwide family.—Isaiah 11:3-5; compare 65:21, 22.

How long will it be before mankind



**Offspring of Adam and Eve
will comfortably fill the
earth under God's Kingdom**

sees these benefits? It will be soon. The catastrophic events beginning with World War I and the threatening phenomena of this century are convincing evidence. Sincere Bible students see in these events the nearness of their deliverance by means of the Kingdom.—Luke 21:10, 11, 25-28.

Then overpopulation will not be a problem. Why? Because God's original purpose for the earth will be fulfilled. The Bible clearly tells us: "Further, God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and *fill the earth* and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.'”—Genesis 1:28.

Note the divine mandate is to fill, not

overflow, the earth. The earth is destined to be comfortably filled with mankind in proportion to its capacity for food production, ecological balance and reasonable population density. It is reasonable to conclude that when that point is reached the Creator of the human reproductive power will regulate its use as far as the earth is concerned.

Then obedient and grateful mankind will be willing to cooperate with whatever new requirements may be expressed. (Compare Revelation 20:12.) There will be no population explosion to threaten mankind's future existence. Only by God's wisdom, as expressed through his Kingdom, can such a transformation be satisfactorily accomplished so that this earth will remain a beautiful "jewel in space."—Isaiah 55:8-11; Romans 16:27.

Birds, grasshoppers and other insects may actually be doing a good deed when they feed on crops in the field. This appears to be another one of the give-and-take relationships in the world around us.

The key to this delicate balance is a hormone in the saliva of many birds, insects and mammals, including humans. It is called EGF (epidermal growth factor) and is known to stimulate cell growth, speed protein and DNA production, and even help in the healing of wounds. So each time a bird pecks at an ear of corn it pays back a handsome bonus to the plant in the traces of EGF it leaves behind.

Dr. Melvin Dyer, a zoologist, has been experimenting with EGF for about ten years. He noticed that ripening ears of corn injected with doses of the hormone grew bigger and produced more protein than those without the injection. The problem, however, is in knowing exactly how much of the hormone to inject. "Too little EGF



has no effect whatsoever, and too much can actually stunt plant growth," he says. The right amount turns out to be one twenty-millionth of an ounce—just what a grasshopper leaves behind each time it dines on an ear of corn.

What accounts for it? Creation is the only answer that satisfies.



Cocaine

Dangerous Drug or Innocent Pastime?

Millions consider it a respectable and innocent pastime.

Expensive and Seductive

So widespread has cocaine use become that estimates of sales (over \$30 billion in the United States) place the cocaine trade among the very top of money-making businesses. At prices sometimes exceeding \$2,500 an ounce,* cocaine is several times the price of gold.

"There has been an explosive increase in the use of cocaine by Americans in the last few years," states Dr. William Pollin, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. He adds: "Even though cocaine is not physiologically addicting, I find this a very dangerous increase because we're talking about a drug that may be the *most seductive, intense and threatening drug we know.*"—Italics ours.

What are some of the arguments that cocaine users present to justify its use, even though banned by law? They contend that these laws were based on incorrect information and prejudice. They point out that the law lists cocaine as a narcotic, whereas it is in reality a stimulant. They say it is no more dangerous than alcohol or tobacco, which are used legally. Moreover, they feel that it is not physically addictive, is relatively harmless and that it is unlikely that one will die from it. They believe they have con-

IT "SATISFIES the hungry, gives new strength to the weary and exhausted and makes the unhappy forget their sorrows." The writer, Garcilaso de la Vega, a 16th-century Spanish historian, was referring to the leaves of a bush that grows on the eastern slopes of the Andes Mountains—*Erythroxylon coca*. The effects he described came from one of the alkaloids found in the coca leaves—the drug cocaine.

Many users of cocaine today—an estimated 20 million in the United States alone—regard it much the same. As 23-year-old ex-drug-addict Scott expressed it: "It puts you above what you really are. It makes you think you can do no wrong. Nothing else matters."

Considered by most users to be a safe drug, in recent years it has become the drug of choice for recreational use. Touted as the "caviar of drugs," "the ambrosia of the aristocrats" and "the rich man's high," using cocaine has become socially accepted as the fun thing to do.

* 1 ounce = 28 grams.

trol and can stop using cocaine whenever they wish.

Is It Addictive?

But can they break the habit whenever they wish? One user wrote: "I used to smoke two packs of cigarettes a day. I broke that habit the first time. I tried to get off coke 32 times." While using cocaine may not technically be considered *physically* addicting, there is rising evidence of *psychological* addiction.

Says Dr. Robert L. DuPont, Jr., former director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse: "Of all the drugs, it is the most powerful in conveying a feeling of well-being. A cocaine user wants more of it all the time, and when he stops taking it, he feels depressed and exhausted. So he tries to go on redoubling what he takes." The mental and physical let-down that occurs when the drug wears off exerts a tremendous motivation to repeat the use of it. Cocaine can become severely habit forming.

Writer Tom Henderson, once addicted to cocaine himself, explains: "Coke tickles those pleasure centers like almost nothing else, and once they've been so tickled, they take over." Dr. David Smith of San Francisco stated: "Addiction is compulsion . . . and continued used in spite of the consequences. Cocaine is very addicting." (*Time*, April 11, 1983) There are many cases of persons who just cannot give up their frequent use of cocaine, even though it may mean loss of job and financial ruin. Says Dr. Charles Schuster, head of the University of Chicago's Drug Abuse Research Center: "This is an extremely seductive drug. It's so good that you shouldn't even try it once." But is it *physically* dangerous?

Is It Dangerous?

"Don't be deceived that cocaine is a safe drug," Dr. Schuster warns. Even those who use and favor the drug will admit to certain discomforting symptoms, such as nervousness, shaking, runny nose, bleeding and vomiting. And while the use of cocaine may curb the body's desire for food and sleep temporarily, it does not offset the *need* for such. It just knocks out nature's warning system and gives a false feeling of excellence. Eventually the body has to come down or crash. Physical exhaustion and collapse are the result.

"A lot of people look at cocaine and think that the use of it has no consequences, you don't have to pay the devil his due," says Dr. Everett Ellinwood, expert on drug abuse. He continues: "You can develop paranoia, deep-seated suspicion and then go into hallucinations, delusions of grandeur and manic depression. A strong enough dose can make you psychotic and an overdose can kill you."

Don, 36-year-old paramedic and ex-cocaine user, supports this conclusion, saying: "I was suffering from hallucina-

"It makes you think you can do no wrong. Nothing else matters"

tions and saw apparitions. At the time I was also delving into the occult. Under the influence of cocaine I had contact with personages and heard voices. I can see now how easily drugs and demonism can become intertwined."

Sexual behavior can change as well. "It leads you to bizarre behavior," said one female user of cocaine. "I did three-

somes, foursomes, things I'd never do normally. You think you are fulfilling fantasies, but in the end they are unfulfilling. You have no soul."

Under the headline "Heavy Use of Cocaine Is Linked to Surge in Deaths and Illnesses," *The New York Times* report

**'I broke the cigarette habit
the first time. I tried to
get off coke 32 times'**

stated: "Cocaine . . . is sending more and more users to the emergency room or the morgue." In one study of 68 deaths associated with the use of cocaine, 24 were due directly to its toxic effects.

Reports also tell how cocaine use alters the personality and sociability of those using it and leads them into self-destructive behavior. Besides becoming distrustful and paranoid, some become so totally obsessed with the drug that they abandon everything that formerly had meaning for them in life and become totally preoccupied with it.

While it is true that the effects of using cocaine vary, depending on the dose and individual body chemistry, the dangers are real. And they increase with the amount used. Most common is "snorting," the inhalation of cocaine into the nose where it is absorbed through the mucous membranes. Besides giving the user a clogged and runny nose, this weakens and destroys the nasal tissue, resulting in bleeding and eventually a perforated septum—a hole in the membrane dividing the nasal passages.

The "snorting" method can lead to the other common forms of use, injection and smoking, in order to get a bigger, better

and faster "high." These forms are considered the most dangerous and addicting, as the drug quickly makes its way to the brain. Although a rapid "high" is produced, it is often followed by a crash, or a period of extreme discomfort. Then more has to be taken to relieve the discomfort. Or a heroin habit may be started to bring the user down and relieve the irritability. Or both cocaine and heroin will be mixed in a process called "speedballing." Death may ensue, as there is a great danger of overdose because of the uneven cutting and mixing that takes place several times before the drug reaches the user.

Cocaine Use and the Bible

The Bible warns that in "the last days" of this world's present system of things, men would become "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . without self-control, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Today we live in a pleasure-bent world. More and more are seeking an escape from reality in the pleasurable stimulation of their senses. Cocaine gives them this intense feeling of euphoria. But concerning lovers of self and pleasure, the

"This is an extremely seductive drug. . . . You shouldn't even try it once"

Bible counsels: "From these turn away." —2 Timothy 3:5.

How appropriate for those living in the last days is the Bible's advice: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves!"

(Ephesians 5:15, 16) It would be unwise, then, to be lulled into becoming an uncaring, irresponsible individual just focusing on selfish pleasure. Yet, this is a pitfall of cocaine use. Says Dr. Schuster: "One of cocaine's biggest dangers is that it diverts people from normal pursuits; it can entrap and redirect people's activities into an almost exclusive preoccupation with the drug."

While we are still in this present system of things, the Bible tells us to "repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion," at the same time being "obedient to governments and authorities as rulers." (Titus 2:12; 3:1; see also Romans 12:2, 3.) In line with this counsel, one would certainly not want to engage in doing anything that is illegal or that involves contact with the criminal world.

Cocaine use does not produce "soundness of mind." "It makes you feel that no matter what comes up, you can handle it," said young Alvin, a former cocaine user. But the feelings cocaine gives of improved intellectual and physical abilities are deceptive. Says *Newsweek*: "Like most mind drugs, cocaine deals in illusions, not reality—it is not very good at all in giving people qualities that they don't already have."

How to Stop

Clearly, cocaine is not an innocent pastime. But how does an individual stop using it? For those addicted to it, this is a very difficult problem. But it can be done.

One vital step is: Avoid like the plague those who use cocaine. Don't even talk about it, for this may trigger a desire to use it again. Joan, former drug user, put

it this way, "Just smelling drugs now is dangerous for me—it seems to trip the sensations. In drug jargon 'it gives you a buzz.'"

Most important: Recognize the dangers, the hold and effects of cocaine on you, and be determined to stop. Since the pull of cocaine is so strong, you need an overpowering reason *not* to use it. This must be strong enough to keep you away from it permanently, for it is so easy to revert. Don, previously quoted, found a powerful motivation: "I realized I was going to be dead soon if I did

You need an overpowering reason not to use it.
What can give you this motivation?

not taper off." With Bible backing he dropped the habit.

Yes, the desire to please and serve God according to the Bible can be a most powerful deterrent, for godly devotion "holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8-10) This desire to live forever in God's righteous new system of things to come can provide the needed motivation.

Even now you will reap benefits. Says former cocaine addict Tom Henderson: "I can't describe how exciting it was to sleep at night. How nice it was to wake up alert. How nice it was to get hungry and eat. How nice it was to have my nasal passages stop draining for the first time in 18 months. How nice it was to have no fear of police and busts and prisons." Yes, if you are using this dangerous, seductive drug, now is the time to stop. Cocaine is *not* an innocent pastime.

Young People Ask...

How Can I Prevent Disappointment?

‘**A**LL I do is study for tests,’ says Kenny. ‘It’s always constant pressure, and my parents are on my back every minute.’ Worse than the pressure to succeed, however, is the disappointment of failure. As 12-year-old Debbie put it: “If I fail a test, that’s enough to make me cry.”

But failing in a test is not likely to be your first—nor last—big disappointment. You may, for example, try to express an intelligent opinion and get brushed off as a “kid” by an adult. You may want that stylish outfit all the others in school are wearing and have your folks tell you they just can’t afford it.

Nothing, however, brings out the best (or worst) in you quite like a big letdown. Disappointment can thus be the crucible from which strength of Christian personality is forged. Still, when you have been ‘shot down in flames,’ it’s hard to be so philosophical about it. The Bible says that “expectation postponed is *making the heart sick*.” (Proverbs 13:12) And when expectation doesn’t get fulfilled at all, your morale and self-confidence can plunge.

Take, for example, King Ahab of ancient Israel. Near his house was a vineyard he wanted to convert into a garden. Approaching the owner, he said: “Do give me your vineyard . . . and let me give you in place of it a vineyard better than it. Or if it is good in your eyes, I

will give you money as the price of this.” The owner replied: “It is unthinkable on my part, from Jehovah’s standpoint, for me to give the hereditary possession of my forefathers to you.” Land in Israel, you see, was viewed as a sacred inheritance from God. It was not to be sold permanently.—See Leviticus 25:23-28.

But the king was apparently so used to having his whims catered to that when he couldn’t get his way, he “came into his house, sullen and dejected.” Childishly, he “lay down upon his couch and kept his face turned, and he did not eat bread.”—1 Kings 21:1-4.

While Ahab’s style of “coping” is obviously not the best, *some* disappointment is inevitable for all of us. Nevertheless, with a little foresight you can prevent some letdowns from happening in the first place! How?

Setting Your Sights Too High

Disappointment is often not so much a matter of “expectation postponed,” as expectations too high. Now at times it is good to have high goals, to “aim for the stars.” But *always* expecting to come out on top is a surefire way to beckon disappointment. “Time and unforeseen occurrence” take their toll on the best of us. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Solomon further said that “wisdom is with the *modest* ones.” (Proverbs 11:2) A modest person is often saved the pain of failure because

he knows his limitations. He sets modest, realistic goals.

For example, getting a job may be a good goal. But in today's crowded job market, it pays to be willing to take the less popular jobs. One youth, unable to find regular employment, took the initiative to cut lawns and shovel snow. True, he still says, "I wish I had a real job!" But the money he makes is quite real, and the experience, invaluable.

What about your wardrobe? Some youths insist on having only certain brand names or the very latest styles. But do you really have to be clad from head to toe with designer clothing to be neatly dressed? So why fret if your parents cannot afford to pay extravagant prices for your clothes? By shopping prudently, you can still dress reasonably well and at the same time spare yourself—and your folks—a lot of vexation.

One youth, named Paul, points to another common disappointment. "Sometimes when you start talking to an adult,"



Young teens "are very likely to equate a good performance with being a worthwhile human being. This misconception can lead to arrogance, or to frustration, or to other troublesome attitudes."

—Dr. J. P. Comer

he says, "it's like talking to a wall." You, too, may understandably feel let down when adults—especially your parents—seem not to take you seriously. True, sometimes parents fail to listen. They allow a communication gap to develop. But do you always pay attention to them? Could there be a mutual failing here?

The Bible describes a man named Timothy, probably in his early 30's, who was told, "Let no man ever look down on your youth." Even at his age it did not mean he could automatically demand the respect of older people. He had to "become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness." (1 Timothy 4:12) But he could earn it by following Paul's counsel. So recognize where you are in life and work at developing sound judgment and good conduct. The esteem of adults will naturally follow.

"... Before a Crash"

Proverbs 16:18 says: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." Youths, however, often invite bitter disappointment by fiercely striving to excel academically or athletically. The thought of being "No. 1" is a real ego boost for some.

But Dr. James P. Comer observes that

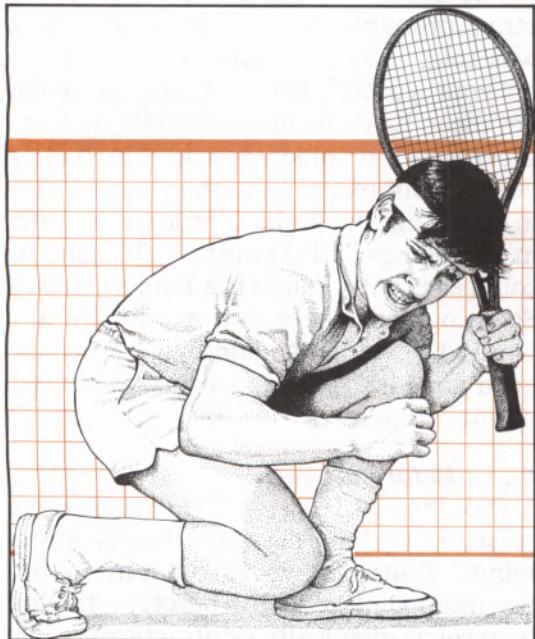
young teens "are very likely to equate a good performance with being a worthwhile human being. This misconception can lead to arrogance, or to frustration, or to other troublesome attitudes." One teenage girl, for example, was a straight-A student. Soon, however, she tired of the cutthroat competition for grades in her school. No longer motivated to learn, she began getting mediocre and even failing grades. Apparently, the fear of failing was just too much for her. But could she not have spared herself a lot of pain by striving to *learn*, rather than driving herself to outshine others?

Competition in sports can have similar consequences. Gary was an enthusiastic competitor in American football and soccer and even dreamed of a professional career in sports. Says he: "I followed the

standard set by my father and brothers. Dad was the number one salesman for his company and just could not face failure. My brothers, too, were superb athletes. Brainwashed by my coaches into thinking I could be better than them, I, too, developed an obsession to be 'No. 1.'" Full of prideful expectations, Gary crashed into reality. Even with the best of training it is difficult, if not impossible, really to be "No. 1." And how disappointed he was to learn that athletics were not all glory and adulation! Crippling injuries, violence, sexual immorality and even drugs were also a part of this way of life. Gary also observed how the competitive spirit crept into some athletes' marriages, causing marital tensions. And what a letdown to learn that only a *few hundred* out of many *thousands* of talented athletes are actually able to make a living from their work. So Gary made a tough decision: He quit competitive sports. Gary still enjoys sports but now feels they "are only a game and should be treated as such."

The Bible counsels: "Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:26) Unbridled competition only brings out the very worst in people. Granted, it feels great to be "No. 1" at something. But it also can be an accomplishment to be in the top 10 or even the top 100 for that matter. Solomon further said: "And I myself have seen all the hard work and all the proficiency in work, that it means the rivalry of one toward another; this also is vanity and a striving after the wind." —Ecclesiastes 4:4.

Of course, some disappointment is unavoidable. How to cope with it is the subject of a future article.



Fierce competition often leads to bitter disappointment

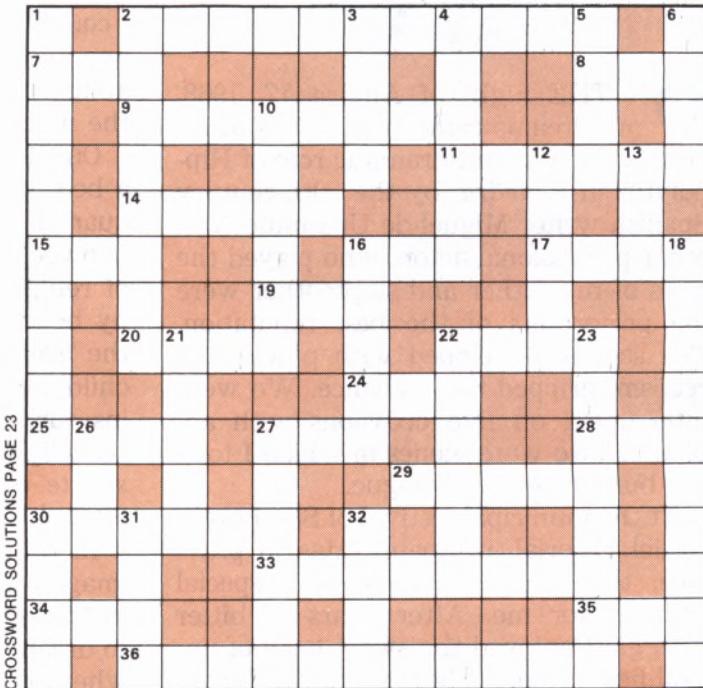
crossword puzzle

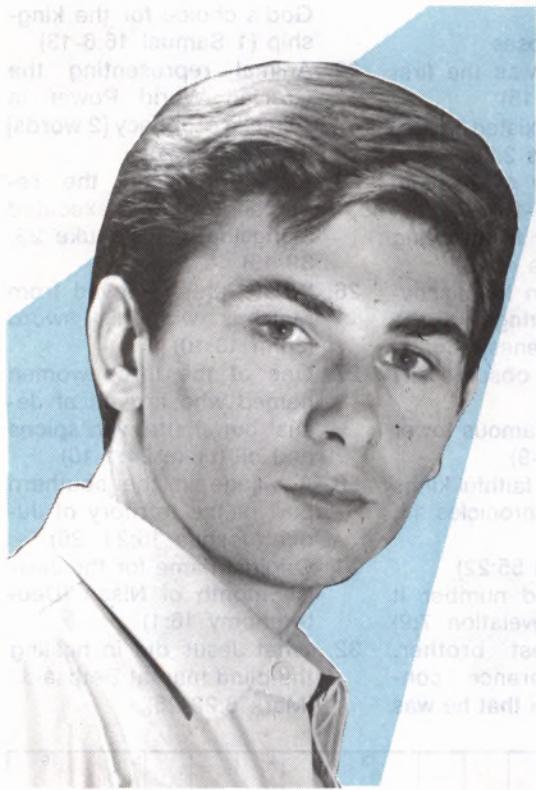
Clues Across

2. The apostle Paul wrote two inspired letters to them
7. To make a mistake
8. A rest place for travelers (Luke 10:29-37)
9. A place frequented by David (1 Samuel 30:28, 31)
11. A royal Canaanite city (Joshua 10:29, 30)
14. This figurative affliction kept Paul humble (2 Corinthians 12:7)
15. King of Hamath who sent gifts to David (2 Samuel 8: 9, 10)
16. A constellation (Job 9:9)
17. Love does not do this (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
19. One of the sons of Bani (Ezra 10:10, 11, 34, 44)
20. This could be good or bad (Psalm 96:2; 112:7)
22. A Macedonian asked for this (Acts 16:9)
24. To be indebted (Revelation 7:10)
25. The maternal grandfather of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:23)
27. Ten men would grasp his skirt (Zechariah 8:23)
28. This will happen to the very name of the wicked ones (Proverbs 10:7)
29. Site of the first reported resurrection performed by an apostle (Acts 9:36-42)
30. Location of Mount Sinai (Galatians 4:25)
33. Called a "slender hind" (Genesis 49:21)
34. A family head of "the sons of the servants of Solomon" (Ezra 2:1, 55-57)
35. Female pig (2 Peter 2:22)
36. Part of the spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:13-17)

Clues Down

1. Written by Moses
2. Jesus Christ was the first (Colossians 1:15)
3. David's still existed in Peter's day (Acts 2:29)
4. Boundary city of Zebulun (Joshua 19:14-16)
5. It kept Cain from being killed (Genesis 4:15)
6. He was known for discovering hot springs in the wilderness (Genesis 36:24)
10. It was not an obscure city (Acts 21:39)
12. Noted for its famous tower (Genesis 11:4-9)
13. One of the six faithful kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 14: 1, 2; 15:17)
16. Permit (Psalm 55:22)
18. No man could number it [2 words] (Revelation 7:9)
21. David's oldest brother, whose appearance convinced Samuel that he was
5. God's choice for the kingship (1 Samuel 16:6-13)
22. Animal representing the Grecian World Power in Daniel's prophecy [2 words] (Daniel 8:5, 21)
23. Place promised the repentant evildoer executed alongside Jesus (Luke 23: 39-43)
26. What Peter removed from Malchus with his sword (John 18:10)
27. One of the three women named who arrived at Jesus' burial site with spices and oil (Luke 24:1-10)
30. A village in the southern part of the territory of Judah (Joshua 15:21, 26)
31. Original name for the Jewish month of Nisan (Deuteronomy 16:1)
32. What Jesus did in healing the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-25)





Is It Enough to Be a Star?

to receive more and better offers to participate in films and TV.

But what had started me off on that stage career? To help you to understand my motivation I must take you back to my childhood in the 1940's, to Seville in Andalusia during the terrible era after the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39.

Troubled Childhood

I was the eldest of five children, brought up in the typical poverty, hunger and misery of the postwar period. We were so poor that I used to hang around the local grocery store waiting for the other customers to leave so that I could buy bread on credit without anyone knowing. I really believe my acting ability began there as I attempted to fool the neighbors.

Our home atmosphere was not exactly a bed of roses. My parents were always quarreling and fighting. My father was an avowed enemy of anything that smacked of religion, while my mother and granny believed in the Virgin Mary and all the "saints" of the Catholic Church. As a child, my life was dominated by fear and insecurity—fear of violence, fear caused by religious superstition, fear of *la mala suerte*, or bad luck, which seemed to be related to everything.

In spite of all of this, in my childish imagination, I sometimes pierced a hole in the roof of my nightmare and began to dream . . . to dream of a better world where people would love and trust one

ON THE night of August 17, 1968, my dreams came true. I was interpreting the difficult dramatic role of Hippolytus in *Phaedra*, by the 20th-century Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno. The other professional actors who played the roles of my father and stepmother were top performers of the best reputation. The scenes, developed with power and realism, gripped the audience. We were interrupted on five occasions with applause. Two were scenes in which I took the burden of the dialogue.

At the municipal festival of San Lorenzo del Escorial, in Spain's Madrid province, that night represented a special triumph for me. After years of bitter struggle I enjoyed the sweet taste of unqualified success! Shortly after, I began

another. Those childish daydreams were my safety valve.

Stagestruck!

When I was 16 years of age I had my first timid contact with the theater. I attended an amateur stage production presented at a local Catholic school in Seville. I sat there waiting in expectation and suppressed excitement. The curtain went up and to my surprise there unfolded before me a beautiful world of music, color and fantasy. From that moment on I fell in love with the theater. Here was a world of happiness, apparently with no fears, tears or hunger, where I could give full rein to my imagination. It was a springboard for communicating my dreams and hopes to others. I decided that I was going to be an actor.

I immediately got in touch with a group of amateur actors and asked if I could take part in their next play. It was to be *The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. They needed extras so I was accepted. I was given the minor role of Andrew, one of the 12 apostles. Although my participation was very limited, it was enough for me to know that at last I had found my setting. That first play was important for another reason —through it I was introduced to the Jesus of the Bible. His person inspired in me a deep respect and admiration.

I was determined to progress and so I enrolled in the Seville conservatory to study dramatic art. When I was 18 I got my first opportunity to appear with a professional company doing a provincial tour. My first role was that of a student. After a short rehearsal I made my modest debut in a real theater. At last I had my foot on the first rung of the ladder to success. And how differ-

ent from the amateur group were those professionals! Here there was an atmosphere of relative affluence, importance and self-sufficiency.

For several weeks I served as a general helper to the manager who was also the leading actor. I could not believe my good fortune. I was now a part of that beautiful world of make-believe.

The Ladder to Success

Sad to say, my youthful illusions were soon shattered. I began to realize that I was surrounded by immorality. The leading actor and actress were living together, even though she was married to someone else. Furthermore, she objected to her lover's showing me any kindness, and in a short while I lost my job. So back I went to Seville to complete my drama studies.

I knew I needed to gain experience and widen my repertoire, so I accepted a contract with a provincial company. After two years of touring through Andalusia and appearing in cities such as Córdoba, Málaga and Seville, I decided it was time to go to Madrid, Spain's capital city, where most of the major theaters are located. My first contract, in 1962, was in the dramatic comedy *Hombre Nuevo* (New Man) by José María Pemán, in the Eslava Theater. My role involved dancing the twist, which was then the vogue in Spain. Apparently I made my mark.

My next important step up the ladder of fame was in 1967 when I appeared in *Lower Depths* by the Russian playwright Maksim Gorki, in Madrid's María Guerrero Theater. Again I worked with good actors, which served both as a training and a stimulus for me.

In 1968 my big opportunity in television arrived at last. I had already played mi-

nor parts in that medium, but now I was offered a major role in the play called *La herida luminosa* (The luminous wound) by José María de Sagarra, a 20th-century Catalan poet and playwright. On that occasion even the weather favored me. It rained so badly that evening that many stayed at home and watched TV. Under my professional name, Manuel Toscano, I became famous overnight in Spain. A film producer offered me a leading role in his next movie.

Reality Is Different

It seemed that everything was going my way. And yet I was not satisfied. The theater had not turned out to be that sublimely happy world of fantasy that I had imagined in my youth. Instead, with very few exceptions, it was rife with vanity, envy, superstition and immorality. To illustrate my disillusion let me tell you one of my experiences.

One day I received a phone call from a stranger who wanted me to meet him in a well-known Madrid café, frequented by leading actors and actresses. At the appointed hour a well-dressed gentleman presented himself to me as a director who was looking for a leading man for a play

he was about to present. He thought I was the ideal actor for the part and he invited me to his apartment to talk over the terms of the contract. When we got inside he threw himself at me and tried to kiss me!

Yes, he was yet another homosexual in the theater world. He insisted that if I wanted the leading role I would have to be more cooperative. I shoved him away and stormed out, telling him that I was not willing to work at that price.

It is an unfortunate truth, but the entertainment world is riddled with perversion and moral corruption. And for many there is a constant atmosphere of insecurity. The stars walk in fear that their light may be extinguished on the next opening night. Their success is as durable as the run of their latest play. As a consequence, drugs and illicit sex are a regular escape route.

A Change of Circumstances

In 1965, during a visit to the Madrid conservatory for dramatic art, I met a student actress in whom I became interested. Later we got engaged and in September 1967 we were married. Since then she has become the mother of our four children, who have filled our lives with purpose and joy.

Another event that was to change our life pattern occurred in 1969. While in the "Roma" film studios in Madrid, where I was participating in the film *Los cañones de Córdoba* (The cannons of Córdoba), I met a young actress who began to talk to me about the Bible. She explained to me God's purpose for mankind and the earth, and how peace and security would soon be introduced by God's Kingdom. I was intrigued and wanted to know more. She invited me

In Our Next Issue

- *Are the Chances of Peace Looking Up?*
 - *Putting an End to 'Putting It Off'*
 - *Mixing Catholicism With Voodoo—How Do You View It?*
-

to an assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses to be held the next day. At that time the Witnesses were still not legalized in Spain. The assembly was to be in a garage, but that did not put me off.

When I got there I was immediately impressed by the genuine kindly atmosphere. One of the elders, Ricardo Reyes, made arrangements to study the Bible with me. His serenity, meekness and clarity of thought were just what I needed with my extrovert actor's personality.

As the study progressed, doubts assailed my mind. Was this really the truth or just a sham like other religions? Was there a gimmick or a trick in it? After so many years in the atmosphere of a false world of make-believe I wanted the truth, the real thing.

It became so important to me that I neglected my work in my zeal to investigate the Bible. So many questions in my mind were calling out for an answer. What purpose does life have? Does God exist? What is there beyond death?

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS



With the aid of the Bible and the textbook *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* my doubts disappeared. After nine months of study my wife and I were convinced it was the truth and we got baptized in September 1970.

A New Challenge

The change of viewpoint and personality that the Bible caused me to develop presented a challenge. Could I reconcile my new Christian way of life with the roles I was playing in the theater and on TV? A turning point for me was, I believe, the day I was in rehearsal with some other actors, a director and a theater manager. A discussion started on how to increase public support for the works being presented. The general complaint was aired that the censorship was too strict, and that if it were relaxed to allow more sexy scenes on the stage the public would flock to the box office. When I saw that group of professionals, people of prestige in the theater, all in agreement, and nobody with the courage to defend true art, good customs and culture, I realized that we were all in the same trap together—the commercial sex trap of cheap success. I decided to quit.

My friends predicted that I would soon return to acting because it was in my blood. Now it makes me remember an expression of José María Rodero, a well-known Spanish actor, who once said: "If the theater disappeared nothing would happen. On the other hand if we did not have water, that would certainly be dramatic . . . The actor is a luxury, like the theater, like culture, a necessary luxury, of course, but not indispensable."

Now, more than a decade later, I can honestly say that I do not yearn for the stage. I am still able to practice my art



Manuel García Fernández and his wife in a Bible drama

each year, as a director and an actor, in the Bible dramas that Jehovah's Witnesses present in their district conventions. As participants in such dramas my wife and I have acted in front of audiences numbering in the thousands in different auditoriums and football stadiums. The difference is that we have performed with a better motive. In the theater I wanted to be the star, to receive adulation. In these Bible dramas it is the story that matters, not the actors. Thus there is no competition, no upstaging of fellow actors. These Bible roles have given me much greater satisfaction for the simple reason that we have portrayed real events with an edifying moral from the lives of famous Biblical characters.

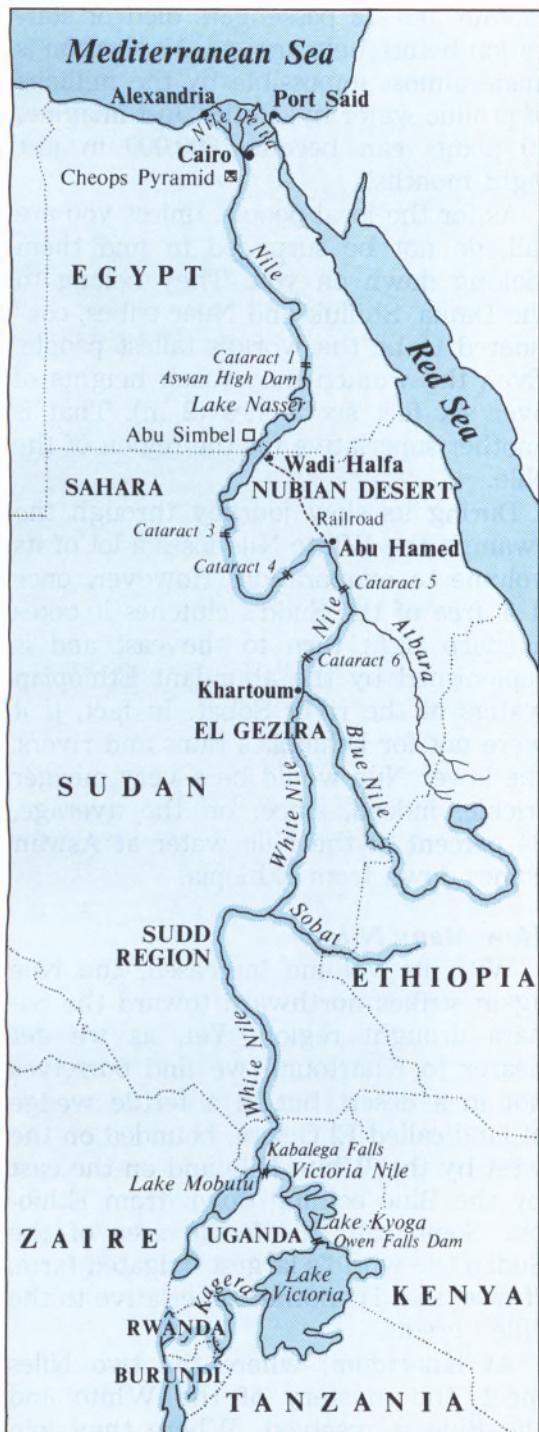
Out of Work Actor

Of course each actor's case is different, and I am not trying to say that a Christian cannot work on the stage. It is a matter for individual conscience. In my case, when I left the theater I had to get a job. I had no qualifications other

than my stage experience. After many difficulties I finally got a job, and that was the end of our economic problems.

We are certainly proof that Jehovah is true to his word and sustains those who seek first his Kingdom. As the Bible puts it: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread."—Psalm 37:25.

Shakespeare wrote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Yet I have discovered that life can have far more meaning than that, provided one gets to know Jehovah and his loving purpose toward mankind. We as a family share the hope of seeing this earth transformed into what it should be by virtue of its potential—a Paradise park for obedient mankind. This is not fiction or make-believe. It is based on the solemn promises of the Most High God, and we are assured that it is impossible for him to lie. (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2) —*As told by Manuel García Fernández.*



Africa's River of Superlatives

By "Awake!" correspondent in Kenya

IF ASKED the name of the world's longest river, would you get it right? The Amazon? The Mississippi? The Zambezi? It is, in fact, the Nile. Stretching some 4,145 miles (6,671 km) from central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea, it is a river of superlatives, that outstrips all others. It has the biggest, largest and longest of so many things—and much more.

Let's take a brief trip down the Nile and answer a few questions that have puzzled man for centuries. For example, where is the true source of the Nile? Why is it called the White Nile in some places, Blue in others and, from Khartoum down to the sea, simply the Nile? What is the dreaded Sudd region, and why is it feared by travelers?

Where Is the Source of the Nile?

Let us begin our journey at the source of the Nile, or the White Nile to be more precise. Just where this is has baffled and intrigued ancient Greek historians and geographers as well as explorers in more modern times. Why? Because some did not realize they were dealing with two main rivers, the White Nile and the Blue Nile, which eventually become simply the one Nile.

In recent times it has been established that the Nile's headwaters are in Rwanda and Burundi. Streams and rivers unite to form the mighty Kagera River. As we leave Rwanda we pass through Tanza-

nia on our way to Lake Victoria, Africa's largest freshwater lake and, in the world, second only to Lake Superior in North America. This massive Nile reservoir is the first superlative on our journey.

Africa's Largest Country

The lake's northern outlet, through the Owen Falls Dam, opens into what is called the Victoria Nile. Having made our way around the dam, we continue our trip through Uganda toward Lake Mobutu. On our way we pass through swampy Lake Kyoga, thick with water lilies and hyacinths. Once free of the lake area, we head for a sight that will get your camera clicking. Having negotiated miles of rapids, the river quickly narrows and drops in a series of cascades.

Where are we? At the famous Kabalega (Murchison) Falls in the Kabalega National Park. If you keep your wits about you and your zoom lens at the ready you might get some good close-ups of elephants, hippopotamuses and cape buffalo. However, take care along the river banks. There might be a motionless crocodile waiting for a nonvegetarian meal!

Shortly after entering Lake Mobutu from the east, we exit with the Nile toward the north and head for the border of Africa's largest country—the Sudan. Did you know that this country, three quarters the size of India, occupies nearly a tenth of the African continent? That also means it gets the biggest slice of the Nile. Two more superlatives!

As we travel northward progress is impeded. We are caught in the apparently endless labyrinth of the Sudd swamps. One report tells of a steamer that got trapped in the Sudd after following a false channel for 20 miles (32 km). The

captain and 22 passengers died of starvation before help arrived. Navigation is made almost impossible by the millions of prolific water hyacinths. Just imagine, 10 plants can become 600,000 in just eight months!

As for the local people, unless you are tall, do not be surprised to find them looking down on you. They belong to the Dinka, Shilluk and Nuer tribes, considered to be the world's tallest people. Even the women may reach heights of over six feet six inches (2 m). That is another superlative for the region of the Nile.

During its slow journey through the swamps, the White Nile loses a lot of its volume to evaporation. However, once it is free of the Sudd's clutches it takes a sharp right turn to the east and is replenished by the abundant Ethiopian waters of the river Sobat. In fact, if it were not for Ethiopia's rains and rivers, the lower Nile would be a very meager trickle, indeed, since, on the average, 84 percent of the Nile water at Aswan comes down from Ethiopia.

How Many Niles?

With its volume increased, the Nile again strikes northward toward the Sahara drought region. Yet, as we get nearer to Khartoum, we find ourselves not in a desert but in a fertile wedge of land called El Gezira, bounded on the west by the White Nile and on the east by the Blue coming down from Ethiopia. Some call this fertile area of the Sudan the world's largest irrigated farm. If true, that is another superlative to the Nile's credit.

At Khartoum, where the two Niles meet, the mystery of the White and the Blue is resolved. Where they join

to form the simple Nile they flow side by side for some distance. The left-hand current is a gray color, while the right is a brownish-green that at certain hours of the day might appear blue to some.

The World's Largest Desert

With Khartoum behind us, the Nile starts to penetrate the Sahara Desert region. Once again our river is associated with a superlative. The Sahara is the largest tropical desert in the world. In spite of that, the Nile calmly winds through as if unimpressed by the vast emptiness that surrounds it. The calmness, however, is broken by the five cataracts that are encountered on the way down to the Aswan Dam.

As we head deeper into the Sahara, at Abu Hamed the river is suddenly forced off course, to the southwest. The reason is the awesome Nubian Desert. Since navigation from here on is not really practical due to the cataracts, we will avoid the lengthy detour by taking the train that strikes across the desert to Wadi Halfa and the border of Egypt.

The Longest Man-Made Lake

When we arrive at the frontier, what an impressive sight meets us! What is it? The longest man-made lake on earth, Lake Nasser. Yet another superlative for the Nile and Africa. It is over 300 miles (nearly 500 km) long and stretches from the Aswan High Dam right into the Sudan. It is almost as long as England!

With this huge reservoir of water the Aswan High Dam has brought many blessings to Egypt and the Sudan but also a few problems. One very human problem associated with the Nile and the dam is the alarming increase of bilharzia (schistosomiasis), a tropical disease

spread by snails that proliferate in the irrigation canals. Although rarely fatal, it certainly shortens life expectancy.

Another more unusual problem involved the huge Abu Simbel statues of the god-king Ramses II. Their original site is now covered by the waters of Lake Nasser. At great expense the temples and statues were cut into 1,050 pieces, like an enormous three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, and then reassembled at a higher level away from the flood danger. That sounds like another superlative for the Nile—the world's biggest jigsaw puzzle!

Africa's Largest City

As much as we would like to, we cannot delay among the souvenirs of the past. We descend the last 700 miles (1,120 km), observing more ancient monuments that come into view. Finally, on our left, Egypt's outstanding symbol, the towering Cheops Pyramid, as high as a 40-story building. And that means we are on the outskirts of Africa's largest city, known in Arabic as *Al-Qahira*, or Victorious. In English it is Cairo, Egypt's busy capital, with about six million inhabitants. In the hustle and bustle of the metropolis the Nile serenely wends its way through, unruffled by city haste or the passing of time, a silent witness of once glorious empires and dynasties.

With Cairo left behind, the Nile flows to its last superlative, the Nile Delta. Spread across 155 miles (250 km) from Alexandria to Port Said, the delta has a thick layer of rich silt brought down from the Ethiopian Highlands, to form the most fertile soil in Africa. It is the Nile's final gift to this continent. And thus ends a journey of 4,145 miles. A long run for a river—the longest in the world!

From Our Readers

Economy

It was a joy and a pleasure to read the articles in the April 22 issue, "The World Economy—Where Is It Heading?" I am a secretary for eight senior officers of a Federal Reserve bank. I have a four-year college degree and have worked at this bank for four years without being able to figure out exactly how the Federal Reserve system works. My questions were answered in your magazine! I took the magazine to work and asked the senior vice-president to read it. I asked him if he had found any inaccuracies in the report. His answer was "No," with some small explanations. I also asked him if anyone without the slightest inkling of economics and the money system could learn anything from reading the articles, and his answer was "Yes," with some small explanations. I appreciate the effort to make it simple enough for even the "educated" to understand.

M. R. M., Virginia

Yoga

After I realized that I was getting involved in something that was clearly connected with false religion, I stopped the yoga class. (February 22, 1983) My problem then was what sort of exercise could I use instead. I went to the local library and found two books that contained exercises that were very similar to the stretching exercises of yoga, but that are based on sound medical research and have the same beneficial therapeutic effects but not with the yoga connections. So this problem has been solved.

I. H., England

When They Leave Home

I am writing to thank you for the February 8 issue, "When They Grow Up and Leave Home." It talked about the problems my husband and I face from our family and in-laws. Both sides can give us trouble at times. I hope both sides will read the issue and understand that we still love them, but we just want to live our own lives and make our own decisions.

V. E. W., Michigan

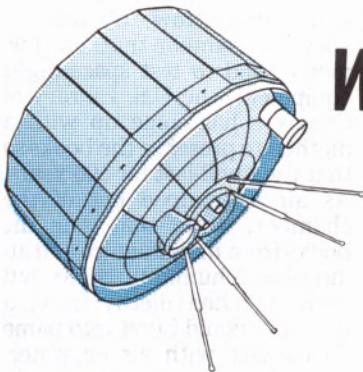
During the year our only daughter got married and left home. This is not easy to cope with. At first you think you have lived your life and are now ready for the scrap heap. But you are correct that afterward your marriage can become even better. I have also often wondered just how I should conduct myself toward our child and our new son-in-law. I would like to thank you for the fine suggestions you made.

R. S., Federal Republic of Germany

Titanic

This is the fifth time I have read "I Survived the Sinking of the *Titanic*," (October 22, 1981) and, believe me, each time I read it, the experience looks so new and real. For the first time in my life I have seen the truth about world conditions. You see, I could never have believed, before now, that our spaceship, the world, is gradually 'sinking' as the *Titanic* did. Not many people realize this and it's most unfortunate that they, like the proud passengers of the *Titanic*, may realize it only when it is too late.

K. I. T., Nigeria



Watching the World



Early Awareness

● "A child at the end of the second trimester [six months] really is a sensing, feeling, aware and remembering human," says Dr. Thomas Verny, a leading authority on the unborn child. "It can no longer be doubted that the unborn child is more highly developed than ever thought before." Recent technological developments enable scientists to peer inside the womb without harming the fetus. "At four months, when the fetus is about 2½ inches long, we can see it move its tiny hands toward its eyes to shield them from the bright light," said Verny, and at six months "all systems are go," when, as tests show, the child's hearing system is almost completely developed.

"There's no reason to believe what is said or what the mother does has no effect on the unborn child," he said. Singing and playing music particularly seem to have an important effect, and they "don't like music that's loud, or rock 'n' roll, or big, orchestrated pieces like Beethoven." To illustrate how unborn babies will "kick and move a great deal if they

don't like something," he cites the case of a pregnant woman who had to leave a rock concert when her baby kicked so hard that it broke one of her ribs. And if the abdomen is repetitively, but gently, poked or stroked, the fetus will often "play" by poking back, Dr. Verny said.

No Incompatibility

● "Many voodoo priests revere the pope as a repository of power that can be passed on to them," states the *New Jersey Herald*. So it was not surprising that they took keen interest in the pope's actions on his recent visit to Haiti. In a country where "people interchange Catholic saints with voodoo spirits and praying with church priests while paying homage to the houngans [voodoo priests]," the pope's ritual was said to coincide with voodoo practice. "It was so close to us, we were so happily surprised and delighted," said one houngan, a biochemical engineer. "I see no incompatibility in any of the dogmas or doctrines, no incompatibility at all." The pope had made a ten-hour stop in Haiti following his Central American tour.

'Most Death-Dealing Drug'

● Cigarette smoking is responsible for "more illness and death than all other drugs," says the U.S. Public Health Service. As reported in *American Medical News*, the agency "compared cigaret smoking to other forms of drug abuse and said it caused more illness and death than alcohol, marijuana, and even heroin." It also warned against relying on the tar and nicotine figures printed in advertisements, which are obtained from cigarette-smoking machines. "A heavy smoker," it said, "can take in 15 to 20 milligrams of tar from a cigaret stated as being in the 1 to 5 milligram range." Also noted was the fact that cigarette smokers spend more time "administering" to their habit than do any other drug addicts. "A two-pack-per-day smoker spends three to four hours a day smoking, taking about 400 puffs, and inhaling up to 1,000 milligrams of tar," the article stated.

Tobacco for Food

● "Tobacco could, by the end of the century, become one of the world's leading food crops," states an article in the *Roanoke Times & World-News*. According to the article, scientists have developed a method of "grinding up young tobacco leaves to squeeze out valuable proteins that are not only nutritious, free of tar and nicotine but also tasteless" and can be used to enrich foods "without anyone noticing." They envision the tobacco protein, which "whips up just like egg whites," becoming a "favorite hospital food, especially for kidney dialysis patients and others who have trouble getting enough proteins on their restricted diets," and replacing animal proteins that are added to many foods to "keep the product from fall-

ing apart." They say that even the residue, "a starchy, mealy green glop that makes a good chicken and hog feed," is useful. Why do they claim that eating tobacco is healthy, but that smoking it is not? "The key is that scientists harvest the plant when it's young, green and full of proteins," says the *Times & World-News*. "The tar and nicotine that gives cigarettes their flavor [and prompts the health warnings] don't start accumulating until after the plant blooms and its proteins have dried up."

Seat Belts Work

● That seat belts do indeed save lives has been proved in Britain, where use of seat belts while driving became compulsory by law earlier this year. Officials and doctors now report that there has been a dramatic drop in the number of passengers injured in car crashes since the law became effective at the beginning of February. Particularly noted was the decrease in facial, eye and head injuries that occur when passengers hit the windscreen, or windshield.

India's Child Labor

● "India has the largest child labour force in the world," states the magazine *India Today*. While precise figures do not exist, the "National Sample Survey [1972-73] cites a figure of 16.3 million child labourers in the age group 5-15," it says. The average child works 280 days a year and earns about half the adult wage. According to the article, the child labor laws lack uniformity, differing from "state to state and industry to industry." Children are often taken advantage of and work-induced diseases, such as asthma, tuberculosis and "serious eye diseases" are common

among the children employed in some industries.

Happy Victim

● Most persons whose stolen cars are returned find them damaged or stripped. Not so with the stolen 1976 BMW belonging to a New York attorney. When his car was returned after 12 days, he found it greatly improved. Apparently wanting it for themselves, the thieves had reupholstered the interior and added racing seats, a stereo, matching padded steering wheel and gearshift, fog lights and wire wheels—worth between \$2,000 and \$3,000. "Who knows?" said the lawyer. "Another week and I might have had a TV in the back seat."

Battery Warning

● A strong warning has been issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Capital Poison Center that miniature batteries, such as those used in watches, calculators, cameras, games and hearing aids, "can be swallowed and may result in internal burns and sometimes death." An estimated 500 to 800 such batteries are swallowed each year in the United States. The following precautions are advised: Keep batteries out of reach—don't allow children to play with them. Never put a miniature battery in your mouth for any reason. Check all medications before swallowing such. Batteries that have been mistaken for medication have been swallowed. And, if a battery is swallowed, contact your physician or a poison-control center right away.

Preserving Books

● Most books produced in the last century turn brittle and will likely crumble in use after 25 to 100 years because they are printed on acidic wood-

pulp paper. Now, by using a vacuum chamber that was formerly used to test space-flight equipment, the U.S. Library of Congress has come up with a method to preserve the books so that they will last for 500 years. As air is pumped out of the chamber, water that is in the books from manufacture and atmospheric humidity comes out with it. Then diethyl zinc, a gas that would burst into flame on contact with air or water, is pumped into the chamber to permeate the books and neutralize the acid in the paper. After the leftover gas is pumped out, air is readmitted and the books are removed.

Computer Matchmaker

● A lonely English widower now has a former Welsh widow for his mate, thanks to a computer. What is different about this successful computer match is that both parties are swans, whose protectors have taken advantage of a new computer service in which most of the rare species of animals and birds in captivity are listed. "Our computer dating is probably more successful than the human version: at least we know the facts are true—and none of the animals is listed as 'handsome,'" said a zoo expert.

Most Carnivorous

● New Zealanders now head the meat-eating list, each person consuming an average of 103.9 kilograms (229.1 lb) of meat last year. Second was the United States with 100.8 kilograms (222.2 lb) per person, followed by Canada, 96.9 kilograms (213.6 lb); Australia, 96.3 kilograms (212.3 lb) and Britain, 70 kilograms (154.3 lb). It is not that New Zealanders have greatly increased their consumption of red meat, says the report, but that there has

been a drop in the amount of red meat consumed in other countries, particularly the United States and Australia. Included in the survey were beef, veal, pork, mutton, lamb and poultry—but not fish.

Soviet Crackdown

● When the present Soviet leadership came into power, reports the *International Herald Tribune*, it mounted "a law-and-order campaign on a scale not seen here since the days of Stalin." To curb absenteeism, vigilantes ("Communist Party members deputized for limited duties and assured of police support") were sent to "virtually every major public establishment, from movie theaters to public baths, to search for those

who had improperly taken time off from work." According to the report, one midday raid on a bath netted "hundreds of persons, including some high-ranking bureaucrats, who were unable to provide a convincing explanation for absence from their desks." The names of those caught were forwarded to their superiors. "Since absenteeism has become a risky business," says the article, "long food lines have become noticeably shorter, barber shops are not crowded at midmorning, and it has even become pleasant to take a ride on a Moscow city bus."

Plants Fight Back

● Some of the world's plant life is not as defenseless as

previously thought, researchers say. They have found, for instance, that the omphalea vine in Central America has a way of fighting back against the urania moth that lays its eggs on it. The emerging caterpillars will eat only the leaves of this vine. But when the damage becomes too severe the plant generates a poison within its sap, forcing the insects to migrate to friendlier territory. When the moths return about five years later, the poison is gone.

Similarly, when grasses on the Serengeti plains in Africa are heavily grazed, they produce increased amounts of silica. This makes the grass much harder to chew, and the animals head for new pastures.

