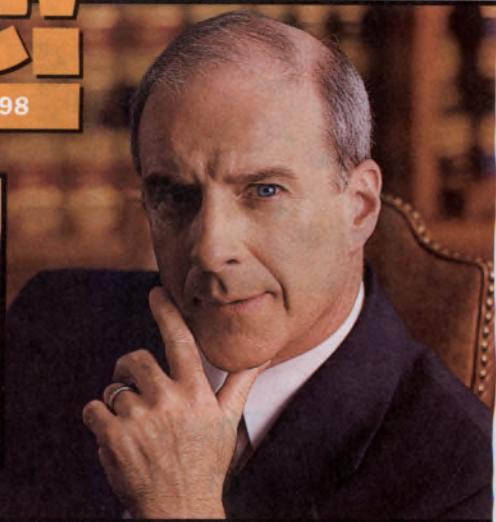
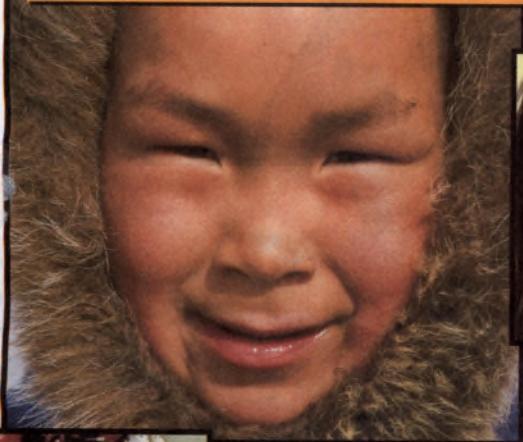
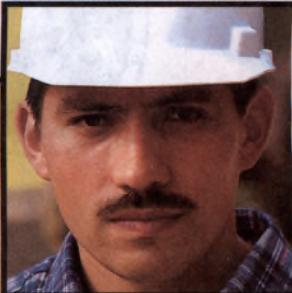
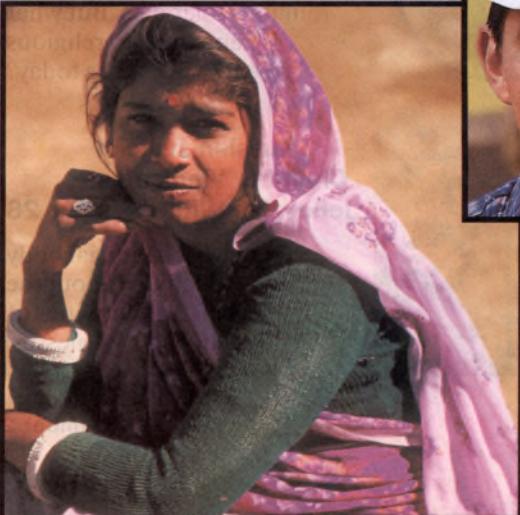


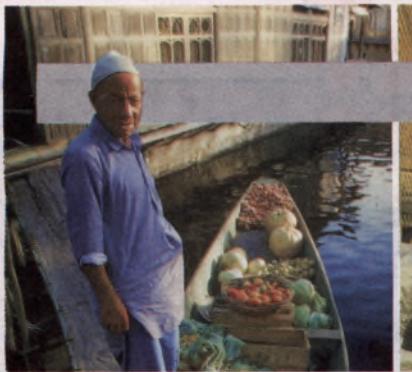
Awake!

November 22, 1998

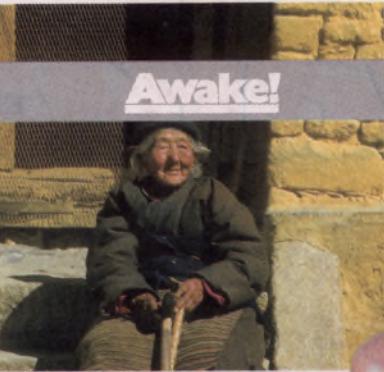


WILL THERE EVER BE HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL?





Awake!



Average Printing 19,617,000
Published in 81 Languages

Will There Ever Be Human Rights for All?

3-14

For millions of people earth wide, human rights violations, such as discrimination, child abuse, and slavery, are a daily reality. Will human rights for all ever be a worldwide reality?

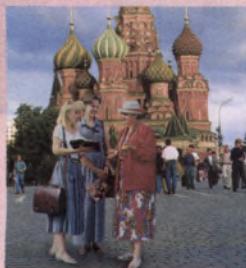


© Cliché Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris



The Edict of Nantes —A Charter for Tolerance? **19**

Four hundred years ago, the king of France signed an edict that was to guarantee religious tolerance. But what is happening to religious freedom in France today?



Russian Judicial Chamber Vindicates Jehovah's Witnesses **26**

Read what a judicial body concluded about the beliefs and activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

A "Long Job Finished"	3
A View From the 29th Floor	6
Human Rights and Wrongs Today	8
Human Rights for All —A Worldwide Reality!	11
Lake Victoria—Africa's Great Inland Sea	15
Young People Ask . . . Why Must I Live Without My Parents?	23
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
Wash and Dry Your Hands!	31
It Has Wide Appeal	32

A “LONG JOB FINISHED”



**Mrs. Roosevelt holding
the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights**

Mrs. Roosevelt and symbol on
pages 3, 5, and 7: UN photo

FIFTY years ago, a grandmotherly-looking woman spoke up, and the world listened. It happened in Paris on December 10, 1948. The United Nations General Assembly was gathered in the recently built Palais Chaillot when the chairwoman of the UN Commission on Human Rights rose to give a speech. In a firm voice, Eleanor Roosevelt, the tall widow of former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, told those assembled: “We stand today at the threshold of a great event both in the life of the United Nations and in the life of mankind, that is the approval by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

After she read the ringing phrases of the Declaration’s preamble and its 30 articles,

the General Assembly adopted the document.* Then, to honor Mrs. Roosevelt’s exceptional leadership, the UN members gave “the First Lady of the World,” as she was affectionately known, a standing ovation. At the end of that day, she jotted down: “Long job finished.”

From Many Opinions to One Declaration

Two years earlier, in January 1947, soon after the UN commission’s work had begun, it became clear that writing a human rights document agreeable to all UN members would be a formidable task.

From the start, deep disagreement mired the 18-member commission in endless disputes. The Chinese delegate felt that the document should include the philosophy of Confucius, a Catholic commission member promoted the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, the United States championed the American Bill of Rights, and the Soviets wanted to include the ideas of Karl Marx—and these were just a few of the strong opinions expressed!

The commission members’ ongoing bickering tried Mrs. Roosevelt’s patience. In 1948, during a lecture in Paris at the Sorbonne, she mentioned that she used to think that raising her large family had tested the limits of her patience. However, “presiding over the Commission on Human Rights required even more forbearance,” she reportedly said, to the delight of her audience.

* Forty-eight countries voted in favor, none against. Today, however, all 185 UN member nations, including those that abstained in 1948, have endorsed the Declaration.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

The United Nations defines human rights as "those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings." Human rights have also been described as the "common language of humanity"—and fittingly so. Just as the ability to learn to speak a language is an inborn quality that makes us human, there are other inborn needs and qualities that set us apart from other creatures on earth. For instance, humans have a need for knowledge, artistic expression, and spirituality. A human who is deprived of filling these basic needs is forced to live a sub-human existence. To protect humans against such deprivation, explains a human rights lawyer, "we use the term 'human rights' instead of 'human needs' because legally speaking the word 'need' is not as strong as the word 'right.' By calling it a 'right' we elevate the satisfying of human needs to something every human being is morally as well as legally entitled to."

Even so, her experience as a mother evidently proved useful. At the time, one reporter wrote that Mrs. Roosevelt's handling of the commission members reminded him of a mother "presiding over a large family of often noisy, sometimes unruly but basically good-hearted boys, who now and then need firmly to be put in their places." (*Eleanor Roosevelt—A Personal and Public Life*) By adding graciousness to firmness, though, she was able to win points without making enemies of her opponents.

Awake!

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Unless otherwise indicated, New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References is used.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, **WALLKILL, NY 12589.** Printed in U.S.A. Vol. 79, No. 22

As a result, after two years of meetings, hundreds of amendments, thousands of statements, and 1,400 rounds of voting on practically every word and every clause, the commission did produce a document listing the human rights to which it believed all men and women, everywhere in the world, are entitled. It was named the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus was accomplished a mission that, at times, seemed impossible.

High Expectations

Of course, it was not expected that the walls of oppression would crumble at the sound of this first horn. Yet, the adoption of the Universal Declaration did cause high expectations. The UN General Assembly's president at the time, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt of Australia, predicted that "millions of men, women, and children all over the world, many miles from Paris and New York, will turn for help, guidance, and inspiration to this document."

Fifty years have elapsed since Dr. Evatt spoke those words. During that time, many have indeed looked to the Declaration as a guide and used it as a yardstick to measure the degree of respect for human rights around the world. As they did so, what did they find? Are the UN member states measuring up to this yardstick? What is the situation of human rights in the world today?

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Writer and Nobel Prize winner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn called the Universal Declaration the "best document" ever written by the UN. A glance at its contents shows why many agree.

The Declaration's basic philosophy is laid down in Article 1: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

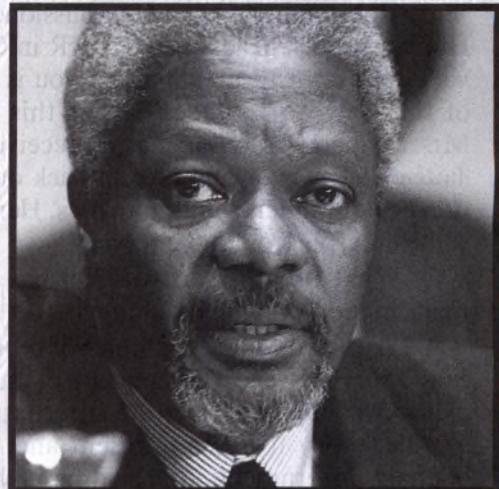
On this foundation, the framers of the Declaration secured two groups of human rights. The first group is outlined in Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." This article forms the basis for man's *civil* and *political* rights listed in Articles 4 to 21. The second group is based on Article 22, which states, in part, that everyone is entitled to the realization of the rights "indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." It supports Articles 23 to 27, which spell out man's *economic*, *social*, and *cultural* rights. The Universal Declaration was the first international document to recognize this second group of rights as being included in basic human rights. It was also the first international document to use the term "human rights" at all.

Brazilian sociologist Ruth Rocha explains in plain language what the Universal Declaration tells us: "It doesn't matter what race you are. It doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman. It doesn't matter what language you speak, what your religion is, what your political opinions are, what country you come from or who your family is. It doesn't matter

whether you're rich or poor. It doesn't matter what part of the world you come from; whether your country is a kingdom or a republic. These rights and freedoms are meant to be enjoyed by everyone."

Since its adoption, the Universal Declaration has been translated into over 200 languages and has become part of the constitutions of many countries. Today, however, some leaders feel that the Declaration needs to be rewritten. But UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan disagrees. One UN official quotes him as saying: "Just as there is no need to rewrite the Bible or the Koran, there is no need to adjust the Declaration. What needs to be adjusted is, not the text of the Universal Declaration, but the behavior of its disciples."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan



UN/DPI photo by Evan Schneider (Feb97)

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish,² Dutch, English,² Estonian, Finnish², French, German,² Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,² Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish,² Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Albanian, Amharic, Chichewa, Cibemba, Ewe, Georgian, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Papamalaki, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Tahitian, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa, Yoruba * Audiocassettes also available.

© 1998 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

*America, United States of,
Wallkill, NY 12589*

Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565

Britain, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN

*Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills
(Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4*

Ghana, P.O. Box GP 760, Accra

*Jamaica, Box 103, Old Harbour P.O.,
St. Catherine*

*New Zealand, P.O. Box 142,
Manurewa*

*Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City,
Edo State*

*South Africa, Private Bag X2067,
Krugersdorp, 1740*

Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101

Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

**Elsa Stamatopoulou**

WHEN you step off the elevator onto the 29th floor of the United Nations building in New York City, a small blue sign shows the way to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This liaison office represents the headquarters of the OHCHR in Geneva, Switzerland—the focal point for UN human rights activities. While Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, heads the OHCHR in Geneva, Greek-born Elsa Stamatopoulou is chief of the New York office. Earlier this year, Mrs. Stamatopoulou graciously received an *Awake!* staff writer and looked back on five decades of human rights activities. Here are some excerpts from the interview.

Q. What progress do you feel has been made in promoting human rights?

A. I'll give you three examples of progress: First, 50 years ago the concept of human rights was absent from the international agenda; today it is omnipresent and operational. Governments that had never heard of human rights some decades ago are now talking about it. Second, we now have an international code of law, or law book, composed of numerous conventions that tells governments in black and white what obligations they have toward their subjects. [See box "The International Bill of Human Rights," on page 7.] It took many years of hard work to put this code together. We are extremely proud of it. The third example is that today more people than ever before take part in human rights movements

A VIEW FROM THE 29TH FLOOR

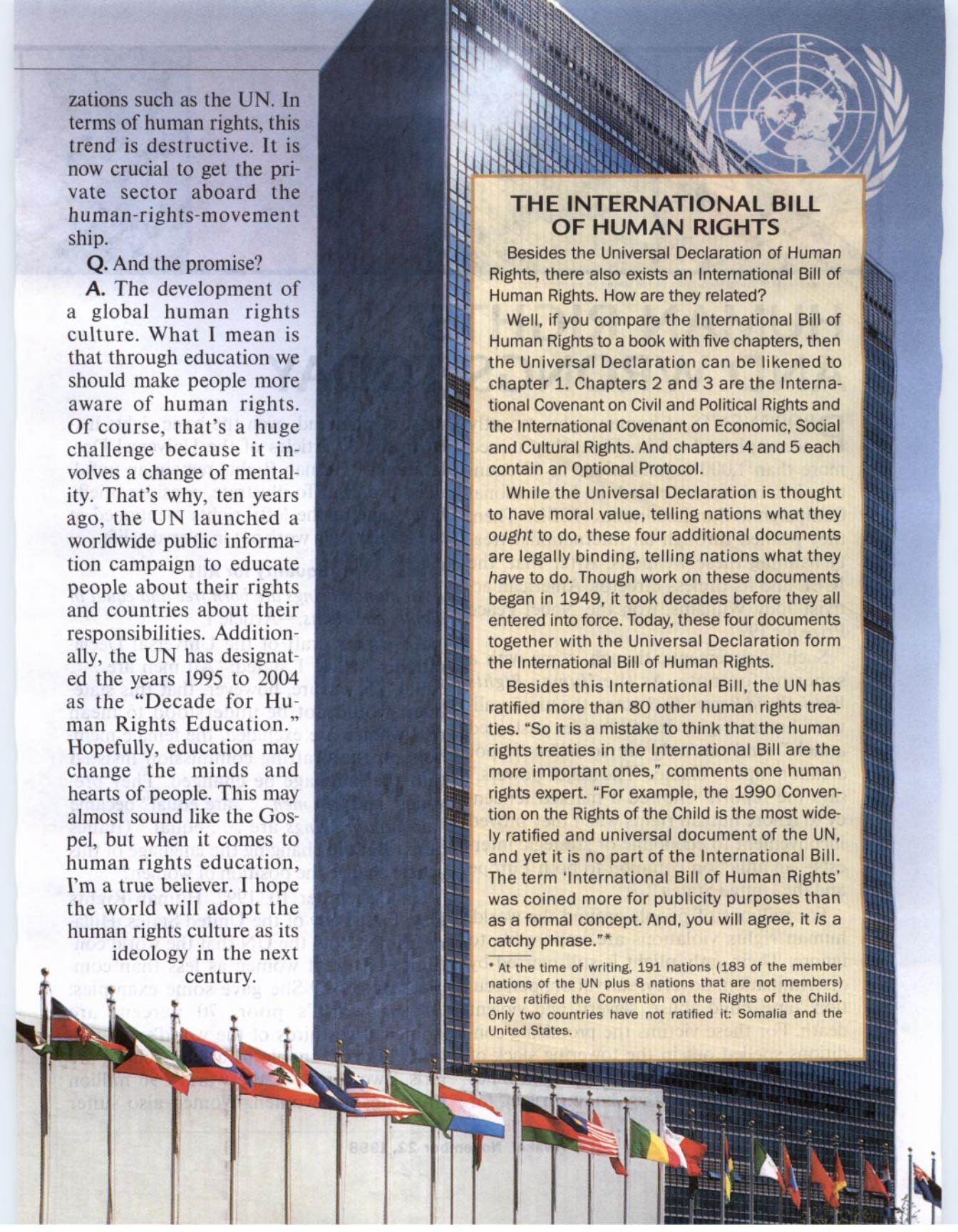
and are able to express themselves eloquently about human rights issues.

Q. What are the obstacles?

A. After working for 17 years with UN human rights programs, I realize, of course, that we face frustrating problems. The biggest is that governments often view human rights as a political issue instead of a humanitarian one. They may be unwilling to carry out human rights treaties because they feel threatened politically. In those instances, human rights treaties turn into dead letters. Another setback has been the inability of the UN to prevent gross human rights violations in such places as the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and, more recently, Algeria. The inability of the UN to prevent the massacres that occurred in these countries was a tremendous failure. The human rights mechanisms are in place, but someone has to activate them. Who will be that someone? If the interests of countries that could give protection are not at stake, the political will to go out and stop violations is often lacking.

Q. What do you see ahead?

A. I see a threat and a promise on the road leading to human rights for all. What worries me is the threat posed by the globalization of the economy, which induces large corporations to establish themselves in lands where labor is cheaper. Today, if needed, we can blame governments for human rights violations and put pressure upon them. But who can we blame for violations when multilateral trade agreements shift the power more and more from governments to the global economic forces? Since we do not control these economic forces, it weakens the position of intergovernmental organi-



zations such as the UN. In terms of human rights, this trend is destructive. It is now crucial to get the private sector aboard the human-rights-movement ship.

Q. And the promise?

A. The development of a global human rights culture. What I mean is that through education we should make people more aware of human rights. Of course, that's a huge challenge because it involves a change of mentality. That's why, ten years ago, the UN launched a worldwide public information campaign to educate people about their rights and countries about their responsibilities. Additionally, the UN has designated the years 1995 to 2004 as the "Decade for Human Rights Education." Hopefully, education may change the minds and hearts of people. This may almost sound like the Gospel, but when it comes to human rights education, I'm a true believer. I hope the world will adopt the human rights culture as its

ideology in the next century.

THE INTERNATIONAL BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Besides the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there also exists an International Bill of Human Rights. How are they related?

Well, if you compare the International Bill of Human Rights to a book with five chapters, then the Universal Declaration can be likened to chapter 1. Chapters 2 and 3 are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. And chapters 4 and 5 each contain an Optional Protocol.

While the Universal Declaration is thought to have moral value, telling nations what they *ought* to do, these four additional documents are legally binding, telling nations what they *have* to do. Though work on these documents began in 1949, it took decades before they all entered into force. Today, these four documents together with the Universal Declaration form the International Bill of Human Rights.

Besides this International Bill, the UN has ratified more than 80 other human rights treaties. "So it is a mistake to think that the human rights treaties in the International Bill are the more important ones," comments one human rights expert. "For example, the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified and universal document of the UN, and yet it is no part of the International Bill. The term 'International Bill of Human Rights' was coined more for publicity purposes than as a formal concept. And, you will agree, it is a catchy phrase."*

* At the time of writing, 191 nations (183 of the member nations of the UN plus 8 nations that are not members) have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Only two countries have not ratified it: Somalia and the United States.



Courtesy MgM Stiftung Menschen gegen Minen (www.mgm.org)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND WRONGS TODAY

PROONENTS of human rights recently accomplished a feat. First, they united more than 1,000 organizations in 60 countries in a movement called the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Then, they pushed through an international treaty banning these weapons. After that, the ICBL and its tireless director, American activist Jody Williams, won the Nobel Peace Prize for 1997.

Such achievements, though, come with a sobering footnote. As the *Human Rights Watch World Report 1998* notes, the universality of human rights is still "under sustained attack." And not only are so-called tin-pot dictatorships to blame. "The major powers," says the report, "showed a marked tendency to ignore human rights when they proved inconvenient to economic or strategic interests—an affliction common to both Europe and the United States."

For millions of people around the world, human rights violations are impossible to ignore. Their daily plight is still marred by discrimination, poverty, starvation, persecution, rape, child abuse, slavery, and violent death. For these victims the promising conditions spelled out in the towering stack of human rights treaties are a thousand miles away from the world they know. In fact, for

most of mankind, even the basic rights listed in the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remain an unfulfilled promise. To illustrate, consider briefly how some of the lofty rights mentioned in the Declaration work out in everyday life.

Equality for All?

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.—Article 1.

An earlier draft of the Universal Declaration's Article 1 stated: "All men are . . . equal." To ensure, however, that this statement would not be understood to mean that women are excluded, the female members on the drafting commission insisted that the language be changed. They prevailed, and "all men . . . are equal" became "all human beings are . . . equal." (Italics ours.) But did changing the language of this article change the position of women?

On December 10, 1997, Human Rights Day, First Lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton, told the UN that the world continues to "treat women as less than complete citizens." She gave some examples: Of the world's poor, 70 percent are women. Two thirds of the world's 130 million children unable to attend school are girls. Two thirds of the world's 96 million illiterates are women. Women also suffer



UN PHOTO 148051/J. P. Laffont—SYGMA

WHO photo/PAHO by J. Vizcarra

greatly from domestic and sexual violence, which remains, added Mrs. Clinton, "one of the most under-reported and widespread human rights violations in the world."

Some females fall prey to violence even before they are born. Particularly in some Asian countries, some mothers abort their unborn daughters because they prefer sons to daughters. In certain places the preference for sons has made genetic testing for sex selection a booming business. One gender-detection clinic advertised its services by suggesting that it was better to spend \$38 now on terminating a female fetus than to spend \$3,800 later on paying for her dowry. Such advertisements work. A study conducted in one large Asian hospital found that 95.5 percent of the fetuses identified as female were aborted. Son preference is present in other parts of the world as well. When a former U.S. boxing champion was asked how many children he had fathered, he answered: "One boy and seven mistakes." The UN publication *Women and Violence* notes that "changing people's attitude and mentality towards women will take a long time—at least a generation, many believe, and perhaps longer."

Children Without Childhoods

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.—Article 4.

On paper, slavery is dead. Governments have signed numerous treaties that make slavery illegal. However, according to Brit-

ain's Anti-Slavery Society, known as the world's oldest human rights organization, "there are more slaves today than ever before." Modern-day slavery includes a variety of human rights violations. Forced child labor is said to be one form of contemporary slavery.

Derivan, a South American boy, is one sad example. His small hands are raw from handling the coarse leaves of sisal, a plant fiber used to make mattresses. His job is to pick up the leaves in a storeroom and carry them to a processing machine some 300 feet away. By the end of each 12-hour workday, he has moved a ton of leaves. Derivan began working when he was five. Today he is 11 years old.—*World Press Review*.

The International Labour Office estimates that a quarter of a billion children between the ages of 5 and 14 are child laborers today—an army of small workers nearly as big as the combined populations of Brazil and Mexico! Many of these children without childhoods toil in mines, dragging containers filled with coal; trudge through mud to harvest crops; or crouch at looms to make rugs. Even toddlers—three-, four-, and five-year-olds—are yoked together in teams to plow, seed, and glean fields from dawn to dusk. "Children," says a landowner in an Asian country, "are cheaper to run than tractors and smarter than oxen."

Choosing and Changing One's Religion

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right

includes freedom to change his religion.—Article 18.

On October 16, 1997, the UN General Assembly received an "interim report on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance." The report, prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Abdelfattah Amor, lists continuing violations of Article 18. Speaking about a wide array of countries, the report quotes numerous cases of 'harassment, threats, mistreatment, arrests, detentions, disappearances, and murders.'

Similarly, the *1997 Human Rights Reports*, compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, points out that even countries with a long tradition of democracy "have sought to restrict freedoms for a disparate group of minority faiths, lumping them all together as 'cults.'" Such trends are cause for concern. Willy Fautré, president of the Brussels-based organization Human Rights Without Frontiers, notes: "Religious liberty is one of the best indications of the general state of human freedom in any given society."

Sore Back but Empty Purse

Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity.—Article 23.

Sugarcane cutters in the Caribbean may earn three dollars a day, but the cost of rent and tools saddles them with an immediate debt to the plantation owners. In addition, they are not paid in cash but in vouchers. And since the plantation's company store is the only store the cutters can reach, they are forced to buy their cooking oil, rice, and beans there. However, as a service charge for accepting the workers' vouchers, the store deducts 10 to 20 percent of a voucher's value. Bill O'Neill, deputy director of the

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, said in a UN radio broadcast: "At the end of the season, they have nothing to show for weeks, months of back-breaking labour. They don't have a penny saved up, and they've barely been able to get through that season."

Medical Care for All?

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care.—Article 25.

Ricardo and Justina are poor Latin American farmers living some 50 miles from the nearest city. When Gemma, their baby girl, fell ill, they took her to a nearby private health clinic, but the staff turned them away because it was obvious that Ricardo could not pay the fees. The next day, Justina borrowed money from neighbors to pay for public transportation and made the long trip to the city. When Justina and the baby finally reached the city's small government hospital, Justina was told that there were no beds available and that she should come back the next morning. As she had no relatives in the city and no money to rent a room, she spent the night on a table in the public market. Justina held the baby close to give her comfort and some protection, but to no avail. That night little Gemma died.

—*Human Rights and Social Work.*

Around the world, 1 out of 4 people scrapes by on one dollar (U.S.) a day. They face the same deadly dilemma as Ricardo and Justina: Private health care is available but not affordable, while public health care is affordable but not available. Tragically, although the world's more than one billion poor have received 'the right to medical care,' the benefits of medical care are still beyond their reach.

The dreadful catalog of human rights abuses knows no end. Situations like those reported above can be multiplied hundreds

of millions of times. Despite the mammoth efforts of human rights organizations and despite the dedication of thousands of activists who literally risk their lives to improve the lot of men, women, and children world-

wide, human rights for all remains just a dream. Will it ever be a reality? It most certainly will, but several changes have to occur first. The following article will consider two of them.

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL A WORLDWIDE REALITY!

“WHAT is the root cause of human rights violations?" an experienced human rights lawyer was asked. "Greed," answered the lawyer. "Greed for political and economic power." And since greediness springs from man's mind, human rights violations ultimately reflect a state of mind. Another cause is nationalism. The my-country-first philosophy fuels human rights violations. Human rights, therefore, will be realized only if a world government comes about that is in a position to take enforceable measures," says Dutch professor of law and economy Jan Berkouwer.

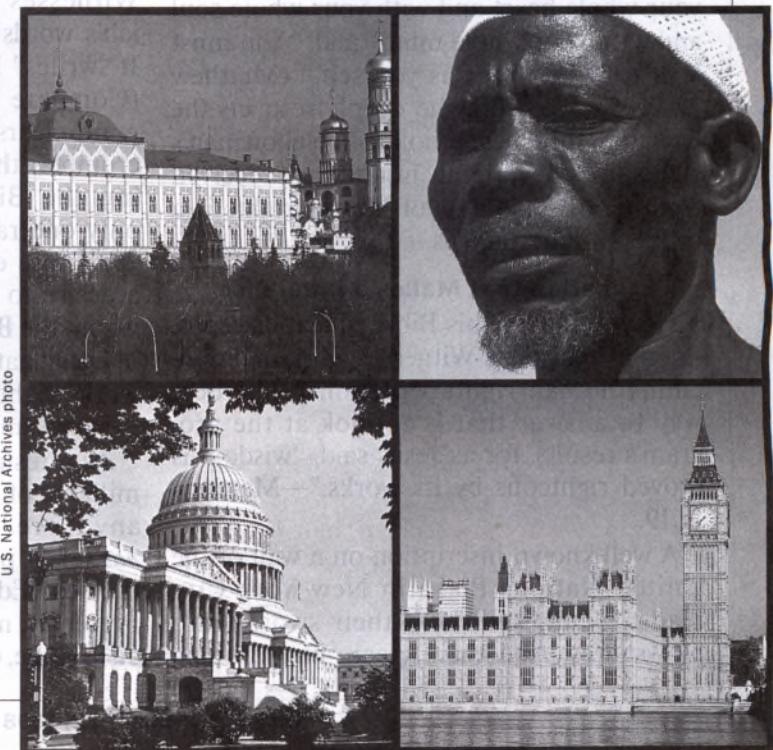
In other words, for human rights to become a global reality, at least two things have to happen first: a change of mind and a change of government. Is it realistic to expect these to occur?

A Dual Reason for Change

While the UN Decade for Human Rights Education is

A change of mind and government—will it ever happen?

about to enter its fifth year, for many decades an international, nongovernmental education program has already been succeeding in changing the minds of millions of people. As a result, these individuals now treat their fellowmen with dignity. This program, carried out by Jehovah's Witnesses, functions in more than 230 lands. Why does it work?



Bible-based education is causing a positive change of mind

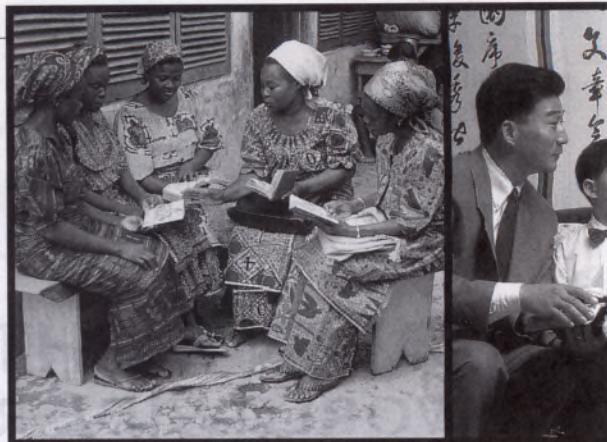
For one thing, this global Bible educational program broadens people's understanding of the origin of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that man has rights because he is a rational and moral being.

Man must have received his faculties of reason and conscience from a higher source. (See the box "The Source of Human Rights," on page 13.) Recognizing this higher, divine source provides a powerful reason for you to respect your fellowman. You then treat others with dignity not only because your conscience prompts you to do so but, more important, because your respect and love for the Creator moves you to treat his creation with dignity. This dual approach is based on Jesus Christ's words: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind" and, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) A person who deeply respects the Creator would never violate his fellowman's rights, for they are an inheritance received from God. A violator of human rights is a robber of inheritances.

Education That Makes a Difference

How well does this Bible educational program of Jehovah's Witnesses work in diminishing human rights violations? The best way to answer that is to look at the program's results, for as Jesus said, "wisdom is proved righteous by its works."—Matthew 11:19.

A well-known inscription on a wall of the United Nations Plaza in New York City reads: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares. And their spears into pruning



hooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more." With this quotation from the Bible book of Isaiah chapter 2, verse 4, *King James Version*, the UN points to a major way to decrease massive human rights violations—end warfare. After all, war is 'the antithesis of human rights,' as one UN publication expresses it.

The educational program of Jehovah's Witnesses takes the idea of writing Isaiah's words on a stone wall a step further. It "writes" Isaiah's words on human hearts. (Compare Hebrews 8:10.) How? The program clears racial and ethnic barriers and crumbles the walls of nationalism by teaching the Bible's view of race: There is only one race—the human race. (Acts 17:26) Those enrolled in the program develop a desire to "become imitators of God," of whom the Bible says: "[He] is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Ephesians 5:1; Acts 10:34, 35.

As a result of this Bible-based education, millions of people today do not "learn war any more." A change of mind and heart has taken place. And the change lasts. (See the box "Education for Peace," on page 14.) Presently, more than 1,000 people a day, on an average, complete the basic study courses



conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses and join the ranks of this worldwide force for peace.

How deep-rooted is this change of mind and subsequent decision to respect human rights by refusing to share in war? Very deep. To give an example: The depth of the Witnesses' respect for human rights was put to a grueling test during World War II, especially in Nazi Germany. Historian Brian Dunn stated: "Jehovah's Witnesses were incompatible with Nazism. Most important of the Nazi objections to them was their political neutrality. This meant that no believer would bear arms." (*The Churches' Response to the Holocaust*) In *A History of Christianity*, Paul Johnson said: "Many were sentenced to death for refusing military service . . . , or they ended in Dachau or lunatic asylums." Even so, they stood firm. Sociologist Anna Pawełczyńska described those Witnesses as "a tiny island of unflagging resistance existing in the bosom of a terrorized nation."

Just imagine what a direct and dramatic drop in human rights violations there would be around the world if all people took this stand today and 'learned war no more'!

World Government—'A Utopia'?

'Changing minds is a challenge, but forming a world government is a Utopia,' a UN worker remarked. And indeed, the fact that nations have been unwilling to give up

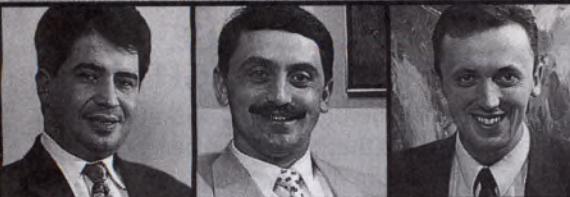
THE SOURCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Human rights are thus described as a birthright that flows from parents to children, much as a river carries water to those living along its banks. Where did this river of human rights start?

According to the Universal Declaration, human beings have rights because "they are endowed with reason and conscience." A UN publication explains: "Because man is a rational and moral being, he is different from other creatures on earth and therefore entitled to certain rights and freedoms which other creatures do not enjoy." (Italics ours.) Thus, having reason and conscience is said to be the basis for possessing human rights. That being the case, the source of man's reason and conscience is also the source of his human rights.

For human rights activists who adhere to biological evolution, the statement that human rights are linked to reason and conscience poses a puzzle. The proevolution book *Life Ascending* admits: "When we ask how a process [evolution] . . . could have generated such qualities as love of beauty and truth, compassion, freedom, and, above all, the expansiveness of the human spirit, we are perplexed." And rightly so. After all, asserting that man's faculty of reason and conscience springs from subhuman ancestors lacking reason and conscience themselves is like stating that a river springs from a well lacking water.

Since man's faculties of reason and conscience cannot spring forth from a subhuman source, these faculties must originate from a superhuman source. Only humans possess the qualities linked to human rights—reason and conscience—because unlike animals, humans were created in God's "image," explains the Bible. (Genesis 1:27) Therefore, as the book *Human Rights—Essays on Justification and Applications* notes, a valid answer to the question of why people have moral rights is that "they have intrinsic worth or dignity or are . . . children of God."



EDUCATION FOR PEACE

Some years ago, while war was tearing apart the Balkans, Branko was serving as an armed guard in a clinic in the Croatian part of Bosnia.* A doctor there was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and one night he related to Branko what he had learned from this study. What Branko heard moved him to lay down his weapons. Some time later, after moving to another European country, Branko attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses, and there he met Slobodan.

Slobodan also came from Bosnia. He had participated in the same war as Branko—but in the opposite camp. Slobodan had fought for the Serbs against the Croats. By the time the two met, Slobodan had already become a Witness of Jehovah, and he offered to study the Bible with Branko, his former enemy. As the study progressed, Branko's love for the Creator, Jehovah, grew. Before long he decided to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses.[#]

Slobodan himself had also become a Witness with the help of a former enemy. How? Well, after leaving the war zone in Bosnia, Slobodan received a visit from Mujo, who also came from Bosnia but who had been brought up in a religion much different from Slobodan's. Now Mujo was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Though they used to be enemies, Slobodan accepted the offer from Mujo to study the Bible with him, and he later took the step of becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

What caused these men to overcome deep-rooted ethnic hatred and to change from being enemies to being friends? Through their Bible study, they developed love for Jehovah. After that, they were willing to be "taught by God to love one another." (1 Thessalonians 4:9) As Professor Wojciech Modzelewski observes about Jehovah's Witnesses in general, "the key factor for their peaceful attitude is the idea to follow already now the principles revealed in the Bible."

* All names mentioned in this box have been changed.

To his delight, Branko later learned that the doctor who first talked to him became one of Jehovah's Witnesses as well.

their sovereignty to the UN, or to any other organization, underscores this conclusion. Nonetheless, those who dismiss the idea of a world government, notes Professor Berkouwer, "have the moral duty to point to other means for solving world problems. Alternative solutions are, however, not available." Human solutions, that is. But there exists a superhuman solution. What is that?

Just as the Bible shows that the Creator is the source of the faculties that underlie human rights, it also informs us that he is the source of a world government that ensures them. This heavenly government is invisible but real. In fact, millions of people, perhaps unwittingly, pray for this world government when saying in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) The God-appointed Head of that Kingdom government is the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.—Isaiah 9:6.

This world government will succeed in creating a truly global and lasting human rights culture by, among other things, eliminating war forever. The Bible prophesies: "He [the Creator] is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the wagons he burns in the fire."

—Psalm 46:9.

How soon will this happen on a global scale? The Bible study program provided by Jehovah's Witnesses includes a satisfying answer to this question. We encourage you to get acquainted with this program.* If you care about human rights, you will not be disappointed.

* If you wish to receive more information about this Bible educational program, contact the publishers of this magazine or Jehovah's Witnesses in your community. The program is provided free of charge.

Lake Victoria Africa's Great Inland Sea

By *Awake!* correspondent in Kenya

DEEP in the heart of Africa, in the year 1858, a lone Englishman trekked through a wild and unexplored land. Traveling with only a handful of African porters and burdened by sickness, exhaustion, and uncertainty, he urged his men forward. John Hanning Speke was in search of an elusive prize—the source of the Nile.

Spurred on by stories of a great inland body of water that the Arab slave traders called Ukerewe, Speke struggled across the seemingly endless bush. Finally, after 25 days of marching, the small band of travelers were rewarded with a magnificent sight. There before them, stretching as far as the eye could see, was a vast inland sea of fresh water. Speke later wrote: "I no longer felt any doubt that the lake at my feet gave birth to that interesting river, the source of which has been the subject of so much speculation, and the object of so many explorers." He named his discovery in honor of the then reigning queen of England—Victoria.

Witnessing on the shores of Lake Victoria



A Source of the Nile

Today the lake still bearing that name is famed as the second-largest freshwater lake in the world—only Lake Superior, in North America, is greater in size. Like a gigantic mirror glistening in the equatorial sun, the flat, glassy surface of Lake Victoria covers an area of 26,828 square miles. Crossed by the equator at its northern end and situated between the eastern and western arms of the Great Rift Valley, it lies mostly in Tanzania and Uganda and borders on Kenya.

The lake's main inlet is the Kagera River in Tanzania, which gathers its waters from the mountains of Rwanda. However, most of the water flowing into Victoria is from the rainfall that is collected in the huge surrounding catchment area, which amounts to over 90,000 square miles of land surface. The only outlet of the lake is at Jinja,



in Uganda. At this point the water rushes northward and gives birth to the White Nile. Although Lake Victoria is not the only source of the Nile River, it serves as a great reservoir that maintains a constant flow of fresh water and sustains life all the way to Egypt.

Life on the Lake

A sailing canoe, its billowing white sail resembling a single upright butterfly wing, glides across the lake's surface. Carried by the daily winds that come up from the surrounding land, the tiny boat is swept out into the heart of the lake. By midday the wind changes and carries it back to the place from which it came. This routine has been repeated for thousands of years by the lake fishermen.

Villages and hamlets, with their brown thatched roofs, rim Victoria's waters. For the Nilotic villagers, fish is a staple, and they look to the lake to provide their daily sustenance. A fisherman's day starts before sunrise. The men bail water from their leaky canoes and set out across the misty water. Singing in unison, they paddle to deeper water and hoist their tattered sails. Women watch from the shore as the small boats disappear over the horizon. Soon they turn away, for there is much work to do.

While children splash and play in the shallow water, women wash clothing and draw drinking water from the lake. Finally, their work at the water's edge is done. With clay pots of water balanced delicately on their heads, babies tied to their backs, and both



Weaverbird



Pelicans



hands carrying baskets of clean wash, the women slowly make their way home. There, they tend tiny gardens of corn and beans, gather firewood, and repair their earthen homes with a mixture of cow dung and ash. Farther along the shore, women skillfully weave sisal fibers together to form strong rope and beautiful baskets. The chop of the ax rings in the air as some men hollow out a huge log to form a canoe.

As the day begins to wane, the women's eyes are again drawn toward the huge freshwater sea. The tips of the white sails on the horizon will herald the return of the men. This they look for with anticipation, eager to see their husbands and the fish that they will bring.

All along the lake's shores and islands, these small communities are receiving visitors that bring a message of peace. By foot and by canoe, every village and hamlet is reached. The people are humble and eager to listen. They are especially excited



Nile crocodile



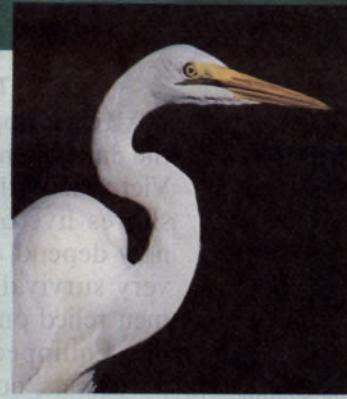
to read Bible literature printed in their own Nilotc and Bantu languages.

Water Wildlife

Lake Victoria sustains over 400 species of fish, some of which are not found anywhere else in the world. The most common is a species called cichlid. These colorful little fish have descriptive names, such as flameback, pink flush, and Kisumu frogmouth. Some cichlids have an unusual way of protecting their young. When danger looms, the parent fish opens its mouth wide and its tiny young rush into the protection of the open cavity. After the danger passes, it simply spits them out again, and they resume their normal activity.

Lake Victoria is home to magnificent and varied water birds. Grebe, cormorants, and anhingas dive under the water and skillfully spear fish with their sharp beaks. Cranes, herons, storks, and spoonbills wade in the

Egret

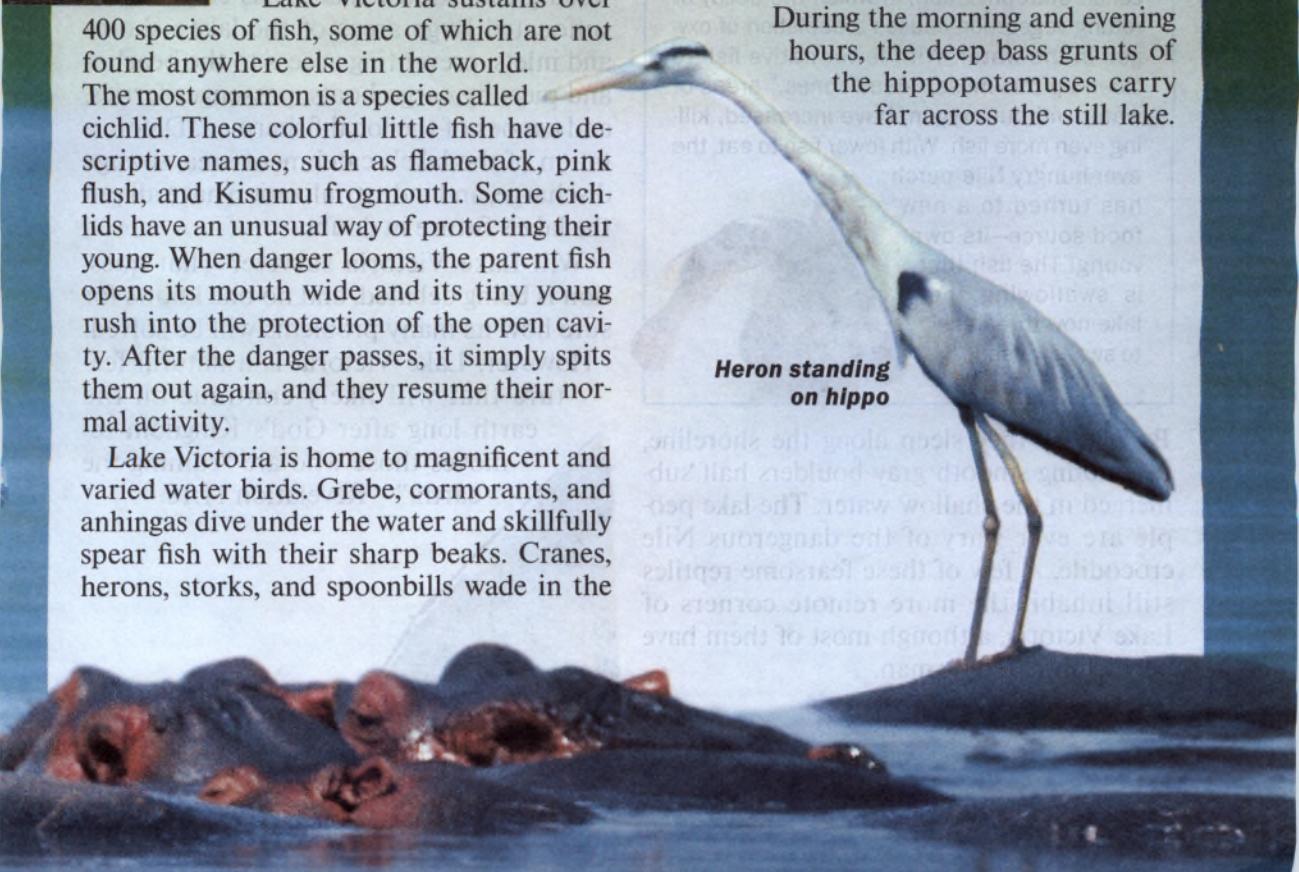


shallows, pausing motionless midstride, patiently waiting for an unsuspecting fish to swim within range. Overhead, flocks of pelicans cruise like large-bellied gliders. When swimming in groups, they encircle schools of fish and then scoop them up with their enormous basketlike bills. Supremacy of the sky belongs to the fish eagle, with its strong wings. Taking off from the limb of a tree high

above the water, it swoops down in a powerful glide, the wind hissing through its stiff wings, and effortlessly snatches a fish from the lake's surface. Brightly colored weaverbirds nest in the thick bands of papyrus reeds that fringe the lake, and the plaintive cry of the hornbill can be heard farther up on the shore in the acacia forests.

During the morning and evening hours, the deep bass grunts of the hippopotamuses carry far across the still lake.

Heron standing on hippo



The Fish That Is Swallowing the Lake

It is oily, has a voracious appetite, multiplies quickly, and grows up to six feet in length. What is it? *Lates niloticus!* Commonly known as the Nile perch, this huge, ravenous fish, introduced into Lake Victoria in the 1950's, has proved to be an ecological disaster. Within 40 years it has managed to devour nearly half of the lake's 400 indigenous fish species. This mass extinction has threatened the food source of millions of local people who depended on the smaller tilapia, cichlids, and other native fish to feed their families. These small fish are also responsible for the health of the lake. Some of them feed on the snail that causes the dreaded disease bilharzia, thus helping to keep the sickness in check. Others consume the algae and other aquatic plants that are now growing out of control. This unchecked growth has produced a condition called eutrophication, in which the decay of rotting vegetation causes a depletion of oxygen in the water. With fewer native fish to clean up this mess, "dead zones," areas of water without oxygen, have increased, killing even more fish. With fewer fish to eat, the ever-hungry Nile perch has turned to a new food source—its own young! The fish that is swallowing the lake now threatens to swallow itself!



By midday they sleep along the shoreline, resembling smooth gray boulders half submerged in the shallow water. The lake people are ever wary of the dangerous Nile crocodile. A few of these fearsome reptiles still inhabit the more remote corners of Lake Victoria, although most of them have been eliminated by man.

Troubled Waters

Africa's population has exploded since the days when John Speke first laid eyes on Victoria. Within the bounds of the lake's shores live over 30 million people who now depend on its fresh waters for their very survival. In times past local fishermen relied on traditional methods of fishing. Equipped with woven fish traps, papyrus nets, hooks, and spears, they caught what they needed. Today, with the introduction of trawlers and nylon gill nets that can stretch for great distances and scoop up tons of fish in deeper waters, overfishing threatens the ecology of the lake.

The introduction of exotic fish species has caused an ecological imbalance that has disrupted local fishing. Adding to the lake's woes is the water hyacinth, a floating weed that produces a beautiful purple flower. Introduced from South America, the weed grows so fast that it has clogged and suffocated large areas of the lake's shores and inlets, preventing access to the beaches and piers by cargo boats, passenger ferries, and canoes of the local fishermen. Deforestation of the lake's catchment area, sewage discharge, and industrialization have all put the lake's future in doubt.

Will Lake Victoria survive? That question is being debated, and no one knows for sure how its many problems will be solved.

However, Lake Victoria is a natural feature that will likely continue on the earth long after God's Kingdom removes those who are "ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:18.



The Edict of Nantes A Charter for Tolerance?

“THIS crucifies me,” protested Pope Clement VIII, in 1598, upon hearing of the signing of the Edict of Nantes by Henry IV, king of France. Four hundred years later, instead of arousing resentment and opposition, the edict is celebrated as an act of tolerance and one of the important steps toward guaranteeing religious rights for all. What was the Edict of Nantes? Was it really a charter for tolerance? And what can we learn from it today?

War-Torn Europe

Sixteenth-century Europe was characterized by intolerance and bloody religious wars. “Never before the 16th century had the teaching of Christ, ‘Have love among yourselves,’ been so ridiculed by his followers,” observes one historian. Some countries, such as Spain and England, ruthlessly hounded religious minorities. Others, like Germany, adopted the principle of “*Cuius regio, eius religio*,” meaning that the one governing a territory decided its religion. Any who disagreed with the ruler’s religious choice were forced to leave the area. War was avoided by keeping religions apart, with little or no attempt at religious coexistence.

France chose a different path. Geographically, it lay between northern Europe, which was predominantly Protestant,

and southern Europe, which was Catholic. By the mid-1500’s, Protestants had become a significant minority in this Catholic country. A series of religious wars accentuated this division.* Numerous peace treaties, or ‘Edicts to Pacify the Troubles,’ as they were called, failed to bring about peaceful religious coexistence. Why did France choose a path of tolerance rather than imitate its European neighbors?

Politics of Peace

The idea that peace and religious disunity were not necessarily incompatible developed despite widespread intolerance. Generally speaking, at that time the question of religious faith was inseparable from civil allegiance. Was it possible to be French and not belong to the Catholic Church? Evidently, some thought it was. In 1562, Michel de l’Hospital, a French statesman, wrote: “Even he who is excommunicated does not cease from being a citizen.” A Catholic group known as *Les Politiques* (The Politicians) argued along similar lines.

The unsuccessful peace treaties that were signed in France enshrined some of these new ideas. They also promoted the notion that forgetting the past was a way of building the future. For instance, the Edict of Boulogne, of 1573, said: “Let all the things that

* See *Awake!*, April 22, 1997, pages 3-9.

Henry IV, king of France



© Cliché Bibliothèque Nationale
de France, Paris

took place . . . rest dead and dulled as though they did not happen."

France had a lot to forget. Before Henry IV became king in 1589, the most durable peace treaty had lasted only eight years. France was suffering economically and socially. Internal stability was vitally needed. Henry IV was no stranger to either religion or politics. He had switched between Protestantism and Catholicism on a number of occasions. After securing peace with the Spanish in 1597 and finally quelling internal dissent in 1598, he was in a position to impose a peace settlement on both the Protestants and the Catholics. In 1598, after France had suffered over 30 years of religious war, King Henry IV signed the Edict of Nantes.

"A Bill of Rights à la Française"

The Edict of Nantes that Henry signed was made up of four basic texts, including the principal text made up of 92 or 95 articles and the 56 secret, or "particular," articles dealing with Protestant rights and obligations. Previous peace treaties formed the basic structure of the agreement, providing two thirds of the articles. Unlike previous treaties, however, this edict took a long time to prepare. Its exceptional length can be explained by the fact that it sorted out problems blow by blow, giving it the appearance of a do-it-yourself compromise. What were some of the rights it accorded?

The edict granted French Protestants total freedom of conscience. They were also given the status of a respected minority

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN FRANCE TODAY

Lessons from the past are sometimes forgotten. When arguing in favor of the Edict of Nantes, Henry IV declared: "No more should distinction be made between Catholic and Huguenot." Jean-Marc Florand, senior law lecturer at the Paris-XII University, explains in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* that in France, since 1905, "the law places all religions, beliefs, and sects on an equal footing." Discrimination and prejudice should be things of the past.

Ironically, in 1998, the year marking the fourth centennial of the Edict of Nantes, its lesson—that freedom of religion and equal treatment should be guaranteed for all citizens—has apparently been forgotten. Jehovah's Witnesses, the third-largest Christian religious community in France, have practiced their religion there for almost one hundred years. Nevertheless, a French parliamentary report denied that Jehovah's Witnesses are a legitimate religion. As a consequence, some French authorities routinely discriminate against Jehovah's Witnesses

when it comes to their liberties. For example, in child-custody disputes, French judges often question whether parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses should be allowed to retain the custody of their children. These questions are raised merely because of the parents' religious affiliation. Also, because they are Jehovah's Witnesses, some foster parents are increasingly at risk of losing the children that are in their care.

Recently, French authorities have been threatening to impose an arbitrary tax on the contributions that Jehovah's Witnesses make to their congregations. According to the non-governmental organization Human Rights Without Frontiers, this is a "dangerous precedent" that violates resolutions passed by the European Court of Human Rights. Indeed, the European Union guarantees religious freedom. Jehovah's Witnesses have been repeatedly recognized by the European Court as a "known religion," making the action by some French authorities even more difficult to understand.

with rights and privileges. One of the secret articles even assured them of protection against the Inquisition when traveling abroad. In addition, Protestants were given the same civil status as Catholics and could hold State jobs. Was the edict, though, really a charter for tolerance?

How Tolerant an Edict?

Considering the way religious minorities were treated in other countries, the Edict of Nantes was "a document of rare political wisdom," says historian Elisabeth Labrousse. Henry's ultimate desire was to see Protestants return to the Catholic fold. In the meantime, religious coexistence was a compromise—the only way "all our subjects can pray and worship God," Henry said.

In reality, the edict favored Catholicism, which was proclaimed the dominant religion and was to be restored throughout the kingdom. Protestants had to pay the Catholic tithe and respect Catholic holidays and restrictions regarding marriage. Protestant freedom of worship was limited to specified geographic areas. The edict dealt only with Protestant and Catholic coexistence. Other religious minorities were not included. Muslims, for instance, were expelled from France in 1610. Despite its limited view of tolerance, why is the edict celebrated today?

Important Consequences

Chronicles of the time made little reference to the edict. Historians call it a "nonevent." However, it is now considered



Jehovah's Witnesses have been active in France for nearly a hundred years

Top right: Many families in France have been Jehovah's Witnesses for several generations

Top left: Roubaix Congregation, 1913

Bottom left: Witnesses in northern France, 1922

a masterpiece of political diplomacy. The edict called Protestantism a religion, as opposed to a heresy. Recognizing a religion other than Catholicism opened the way for religious pluralism. According to one historian, this "had the effect of purging French passions of the fanaticism that stalked Protestants as much as Catholics." The edict recognized that religion was not the determining factor in loyalty to the State or national identity. In addition, criminal activity, not religious affiliation, became the criterion for legal action. These ideas reflected even greater changes.

In signing the edict, King Henry was mainly concerned about civil unity. To ensure this, the edict separated civil unity from religious unity. "It started a process of secularization . . . , the recognition that nation and confession were no longer synonymous," observes one historian. While the Catholic Church kept a measure of power, the power of the State was greatly strengthened. The monarch was to be arbiter in times of conflict. Political or legal solutions to religious problems meant that politics had mastery over religion. That is why one historian calls the edict "the triumph of political power over the Church's role." Another says that it "marked a decisive moment in the emergence of the modern State."

Relevance Today

Some of the paths mapped out by the Edict of Nantes were later adopted by other governments. In time, many countries redefined the relationship between religion and politics, putting the State's authority on a new footing. In France the path that was eventually chosen (in 1905) was complete separation of Church and State. According to Jean Baubérot, a noted professor of history and sociology, this arrangement is "the best protection for minorities" in a climate

of increasing intolerance. Other countries, while clinging to a State religion, have chosen to guarantee freedom of religion and ensure equal treatment for all in their constitutions.

Many today, however, think that progress can still be made in protecting religious freedom. "The Edict of Nantes is commemorated once a century and transgressed the rest of the time," laments journalist Alain Duhamel. Some informed commentators, for instance, highlight the intolerance of excluding others by arbitrarily labeling all minority religions "sects." Learning to live together in peace and without prejudice was indeed a vital lesson to be learned 400 years ago. But the lesson is still relevant today.

Issues at Stake

Freedom of worship does not exist when authorities arbitrarily favor some religions and not others. In France, some administrations grant Jehovah's Witnesses the status of religion, while others do not. Paradoxically, a lay State is defining what is a religion and what is not. This procedure starts with discrimination and leads to persecution. Furthermore, "it may also establish a precedent which can spread to various countries and various religious associations," says Raimo Ilaskivi, a member of the European Parliament. That is why law lecturer Jean-Marc Florand concludes: "It's a bad blow for France and the exercise of freedoms. As a Catholic, that really worries me." History can teach lessons, though, to those willing to learn.

At a recent United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization conference, a speaker argued that "one of the ways of celebrating the Edict of Nantes is to think about the status of religions in our time." Indeed, the Edict of Nantes can best be commemorated by making sure that real freedom of worship is protected for all!

**Young
People
Ask...**



Why Must I Live Without My Parents?

"How was life without my parents? I can say that it was quite sad for many reasons.

It is very difficult to grow up without the affection and love of your parents."

—Joaquín.

"The greatest challenge I faced was the days when parents had to come in and sign the school report card. I felt very sad and lonely. I still feel that way sometimes."

—16-year-old Abelina.

IT IS a tragedy of our times—millions of young people growing up without parents. In Eastern Europe thousands have been orphaned because of war. In Africa the AIDS epidemic has wreaked similar havoc. Some children have simply been abandoned by their parents. Families have been separated as a result of war or natural disaster.

Situations like these were common even in Bible times. For example, the plight of the orphan is repeatedly mentioned in Scripture. (Psalm 94:6; Malachi 3:5) Wars and other tragic circumstances also divided families back then. The Bible thus speaks of a young girl who was torn from her parents when she was carried off by a marauding band of Syrians.—2 Kings 5:2.

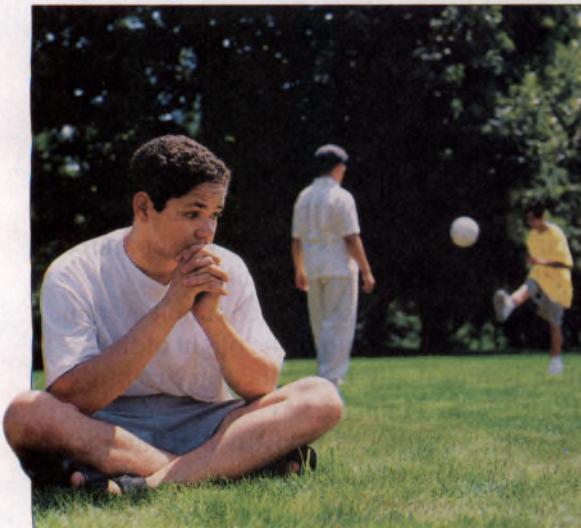
Perhaps you are one of the millions of youths who likewise find themselves without parents. If so, you know just how distressing such a situation can be. Why has this happened to you?

Not Your Fault

Do you find yourself wondering if God is somehow punishing you? Or maybe you feel bitterly angry with your parents for dying—as if they did it on purpose. First of all, be assured that God is not angry with you. Nor did your parents deliberately choose to leave you. Death is the tragic lot of imperfect mankind, and sometimes it befalls parents while their children are still young. (Romans 5:12; 6:23) Evidently, Jesus Christ himself experienced the death of his beloved foster father, Joseph.* Certainly that was not due to any sin on Jesus' part.

Realize, too, that we are living in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Violence, war, and crime have indiscriminately killed millions of people in this

* Before his death, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to his disciple John, something that would not likely have taken place had his foster father, Joseph, still been alive.—John 19:25-27.



**Sometimes you may be filled
with feelings of loneliness**

century. Others have been the victims of "time and unforeseen occurrence," which can befall anyone. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Painful as your parents' death may be, it simply was not your fault. Rather than pummeling yourself with self-blame or being swallowed up in grief, take comfort in God's promise of a resurrection.* Jesus foretold: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Abelia-na, mentioned at the outset, says: "My love for Jehovah and the hope of the resurrection have been of great help."

What, though, if your parents are still alive but have abandoned you? God requires that parents raise and provide for their children. (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8) Sadly, however, some parents have shown a shocking lack of "natural affection" for their offspring. (2 Timothy 3:3) For others, the abandonment is the end result of extreme poverty, drug addiction, imprisonment, or alcoholism. Ad-

* For information on coping with a parent's death, see the "Young People Ask . . ." articles appearing in the August 22 and September 8, 1994, issues of *Awake!*

mittedly, there are also parents who abandon their children simply because of selfishness. Whatever the reason, being separated from one's parents is devastating. But this does not mean that there is something wrong with you or that you have to torment yourself with guilt. Really, it is your parents who have to answer to God for how you have been treated. (Romans 14:12) Of course, if your parents have been forced to separate from you because of circumstances beyond their control, such as a natural disaster or sickness, then *no one* is to blame! There is always the hope of being reunited, even if that hope seems slim at times.—Compare Genesis 46:29-31.

A Traumatic Experience

In the meantime, you may face a number of serious problems. A study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund, called *Children in War*, reveals: "Unaccompanied children are the most vulnerable children—those who . . . face the harshest obstacles to survival, lack support for normal development and are abused. Separation from parents can be one of a child's most traumatic

**"My love for Jehovah
and the hope of the
resurrection have been
of great help"**

losses." Perhaps you find yourself fighting feelings of depression and frustration.

Recall Joaquin, mentioned earlier. His parents separated and then abandoned him and his siblings. He was only a year old at the time and was raised by his older sisters. He explains: "I used to ask why we didn't have parents like my friends did. And when I saw a father playing with his son, I wished that he were my father."

Getting Help

As difficult as being raised without parents may be, it does not mean that you are going to be a failure. With help and support, you can not only survive but thrive. This may seem hard for you to believe, especially if you are in the throes of sadness and grief. Realize, however, that such feelings are normal and that they will not torment you forever. At Ecclesiastes 7:2, 3, we read: "Better is it to go to the house of mourning than to go to the banquet house . . . Better is vexation than laughter, for by the crossness of the face the heart becomes better." Yes, it is normal and *healthy* to cry and grieve when a terrible tragedy has taken place. You may also find it helpful to confide in an understanding friend or a mature member of the congregation and to talk about the pain you are feeling.

True, you may be tempted to withdraw into isolation. But Proverbs 18:1 warns: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." Better it is to seek out the help of someone who is kind and understanding. Says Proverbs 12:25: "Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down, but the good word is what makes it rejoice." You can only get that "good word" if you tell someone about your "anxious care."

Who can you talk to? Seek out support within the Christian congregation. Jesus promises that there you can find "brothers and sisters and mothers" who will love you and be concerned about you. (Mark 10:30) Joaquin recalls: "Associating with Christian brothers made me see life differently. Regular meeting attendance led me to love Jehovah more and to want to serve him. Mature brothers gave spiritual help and counsel to my family. Today, some of my siblings are full-time ministers."

Remember, too, that Jehovah is "a father of fatherless boys." (Psalm 68:5, 6) Back in Bi-



In the congregation there are friends who can help and encourage you

ble times, God encouraged his people to deal mercifully and justly with orphans. (Deuteronomy 24:19; Proverbs 23:10, 11) And he has the same concern today for youths who do not have parents. So turn to God in prayer, with the assurance that he cares for you and that he will answer. King David wrote: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up. Hope in Jehovah; be courageous and let your heart be strong."—Psalm 27:10, 14.

Even so, a youth without parents faces a number of day-to-day challenges. Where will you live? How will you survive economically? A future article will discuss how some of these challenges can be met successfully.

Russian Judicial Chamber Vindicates JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES



absent from the news media
for decades now.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES welcome reports about them in the media when such reports are responsibly prepared. Furthermore, Jehovah's Witnesses are willing to present truthful information about themselves and their religious beliefs and activities. However, when inaccurate or slanderous articles about them are printed, the Witnesses sometimes appeal to governmental authorities to defend their religious and civil rights. Consider a recent example.

On August 1, 1997, in its regional insert in St. Petersburg, *Komsomolskaya pravda*, a popular Russian newspaper, published an article that grossly misrepresented Jehovah's Witnesses. In the article, entitled "Sect Petersburg. There Will

Be a City-Temple Here," the author, Oleg Zasorin, claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses cause harm by their beliefs and that their activities violate the Russian Constitution. The attacks consisted mainly of distortions of the Witnesses' Bible-based beliefs regarding, for example, blood transfusions and family relations. Furthermore, the article labeled Jehovah's Witnesses a "sect," claiming that they are, in the view of some, "the most dangerous of all sects."

The Administrative Center of the Regional Religious Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia appealed to the Russian Federation Presidential Judicial Chamber for Media Disputes with a request that they review the statements made

in the article, which Jehovah's Witnesses viewed as fraudulent. At the Judicial Chamber's session on February 12, 1998, representatives of Jehovah's Witnesses were present and answered numerous questions posed by members of the chamber, as well as by journalists and lawyers. To verify what Jehovah's Witnesses in fact believe and teach, members of the Judicial Chamber carefully examined literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*.

V. V. Borshchayov, deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, noted that the concept of "sects" has purely negative overtones. Mr. Borshchayov stated: "[The taking of such] liberties and the pinning of labels is extremely dangerous. The fact that the Judicial Chamber accepted Jehovah's Witnesses' suit for consideration is very important. The flood of such emotions and insults addressed at registered religious organizations must be stopped."

After hearing all the evidence, the Judicial Chamber concluded that the article appearing in *Komsomolskaya pravda* was unlawful and unethical; it also found that the article was error ridden and baseless. "The author does not set forth any specific facts . . . The author of the publication spread rumors as reliable reports, abusing journalists' rights," the Judicial Chamber said. Contrary to what the newspaper article reported, the Judicial Chamber found that Jehovah's Witnesses are law-abiding and that they teach members to live peaceably with family and others who do not share their religious beliefs.

One hour after the final testimony was heard, the Judicial Chamber issued its decision:

"1. To recognize the publication of the article 'Sect Petersburg. There Will Be a City-Temple Here' as a violation of the requirements of Articles 4, 49, and 51 of the Russian Federation Law 'On the Mass Media.'

"2. To recommend that the State Committee of the Russian Federation Responsible for Printed Matter review the question of issuing a warning to the editorial board of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda*.

"3. To issue a reprimand to the journalist O. Zasorin."

"4. To recommend that the editorial board of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda* issue an apology for the publication of unreliable information that groundlessly denigrates the religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses."

This decision of the Judicial Chamber agrees with the conclusions reached by religious scholar and candidate of philosophy Sergei Ivanenko. After carefully studying the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses and associating with them, Mr. Ivanenko, who is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, wrote an article that appeared in the February 20-26, 1997, issue of *Moscow News*.* Mr. Ivanenko concluded: "Jehovah's Witnesses are distinguished by their steadfast belief in living according to the Bible. . . . To Jehovah's Witnesses, the Bible is the constitution, the civil code and the highest expression of truth. . . . Jehovah's Witnesses can be regarded as an example to their fellow citizens for their devotion to Biblical truth and their willingness to stand up for their beliefs so selflessly."

The decision of the Judicial Chamber and Mr. Ivanenko's comments once again confirm that the Christian religion of Jehovah's Witnesses presents no danger to society but, rather, serves for the benefit of all people with upright hearts. Jehovah's Witnesses remain 'ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of them a reason for the hope in them, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect.'—1 Peter 3:15.

* Most of Mr. Ivanenko's article entitled "Should We Be Afraid of Jehovah's Witnesses?" was reproduced, with permission, in the August 22, 1997, issue of *Awake!*, pages 22-7.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Who Is the Real Jesus?

Doctors Take a New Look at Bloodless Surgery

The Wisdom and Benefits of Estate Planning

WATCHING THE WORLD

Water Crisis

"If nothing is done, two thirds of humanity will be suffering from thirst before the year 2025," declares the French magazine *L'Express*. The newspaper *Le Figaro* points out: "One quarter of the world's population now has no direct access to drinking water." To address the water crisis, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization held an international conference in Paris, in March 1998. More than 200 delegates from 84 countries, including the president of France, discussed ways to protect the world's water supply. One of the problems highlighted was that water is often wasted because of inefficient agricultural irrigation systems and leaky water pipes. French President Jacques Chirac stressed that water is part of man's collective heritage and therefore needs to be managed on a worldwide basis.

Office Coffee-Cup Alert

"Tiny troublemakers—including scary stuff like *E. coli*—are having population booms because people don't carefully wash out their cups or disinfect sinks and preparation areas in most offices," reports *The Toronto Star*. Researchers Charles Gerba and Ralph Meer tested coffee cups and coffee-making equipment in 12 offices. Some 40 percent of the cups and 20 percent of the sponges found at office sinks harbored coliform bacteria, occasionally potentially dangerous *E. coli*. "That's usually indicative of unsanitary conditions," says

Gerba. The report concludes: "Unless there's a dishwashing machine, mugs should be washed in hot, soapy water, then disinfected with a bleach-and-water solution or cleaning disinfectant. Rags and sponges should be cleaned regularly."

Children Prefer Simple Pleasures

How can you be a good mother in the eyes of your children? In a Whirlpool Foundation survey of 1,000 American children ages 6 through 17, most preferred doing simple, everyday things with their mothers, essentially "just being together." The children's favorite activity with Mom was to "have dinner together." Second place was shared by "go out to



eat together" and "go shopping together." Following closely in third place was to "sit and talk together." The children's first choice of ways to thank their mothers was also simple. Seventy percent said that they most often give their mother a "hug and a kiss." Their next favorite ways were to say, "I love you" and "Thank you."

Pollution Risk to Drivers

"A driver sitting in a traffic jam will breathe in up to

three times the level of pollutants as a cyclist or pedestrian and about twice as much as a bus user," reports *The Times* of London. A study by the Institute for European Environmental Policy indicates that motorists stuck in slow-moving traffic in the middle of a highway breathe in "a huge build-up of toxic gases." Environmental advocate Andrew Davis says that contrary to conventional thinking, car drivers may be in greater need of protective masks than are cyclists who stay near the curb.

Creature Comfort for Cows

Mattresses filled with shredded rubber from recycled tires are showing up in dairy barns, reports *The Globe and Mail* of Canada. It is thought that the two-inch-thick mattresses may give cows a longer and more productive milking life. According to the report, "dairy cows spend much of their lives on concrete," which causes them to "develop sore feet and damaged legs." The mattresses not only reduce foot and leg problems for the animals but also cushion the impact on their knees as they drop to the ground to rest. A manufacturer of the mattresses says that the idea is to give the cows the same feeling they would have if they were reclining in a grassy pasture.

Spanish Children and TV

The average TV-watching child in Spain can witness 10,000 murders and 100,000 acts of aggression by the time he or she reaches the age of ten, ac-

cording to Carlos María Bru, of the Spanish Committee of the United Nations Children's Fund, reports Europa Press. Additionally, Professor Luis Miguel Martínez noted that over three quarters of Spanish children from 4 to 12 years of age watch TV for at least two and a half hours a day, and almost one quarter watch for more than four hours daily. On the average, states the report, "children spend 937 hours a year in front of the TV, that is, more than the 900 hours spent in school each year." According to Ricardo Pérez-Aznar, of the Department of Information Sciences of Complutense University, TV violence is one of a combination of socio-psychological factors that may contribute to violence in society.

Earlier Start for Chinese History

The earliest recorded year in Chinese history has long been thought to be 841 B.C.E., the first year of the Gong He era of the Western Zhou dynasty. Recently, however, an earlier record was discovered that makes mention of a solar eclipse, reports *China Today*. The record links this eclipse with the first year of King Yi of the Zhou dynasty. Scientists and historians have determined that this eclipse occurred in 899 B.C.E., thus pushing back the starting point of recorded Chinese history by more than half a century. "There has been no interruption in this written record all the way up to the 20th century," states the book *Outline of the History of the Chinese People*. It calls this record "one of the greatest contributions of the

Chinese to the history of the civilization of all mankind."

Surprising Scents

Wine makers have long known the importance of aroma in distinguishing one wine from another. Now, with the goal of developing better wines, scientists are categorizing the 500 or more chemicals that can contribute to a wine's unique bouquet. The scientists have enlisted the help of people with sensitive noses, reports *New Scientist* magazine. Panels of sniffers have compared the individual scents of some wine ingredients to onions, honey, asparagus, tobacco, chocolate, and



dried figs. Some more surprising aroma associations include "mouldy socks, rotten eggs and burning rubber." A certain wine yeast produces an aroma that may be interpreted in various ways. Says researcher Jane Robichaud: "It depends on how sensitive somebody is to it as to whether it is adding complexity to the wine or giving the smell of a sweaty horse blanket."

Sunburn in the Shade

Seeking shade under a tree or a beach umbrella will, most likely, not provide complete protection from ultraviolet radiation, according to a study

by Australia's Queensland Institute of Medical Research. As reported in *The Canberra Times*, a person in open shade is still exposed to scattered ultraviolet radiation. Dr. Peter Parsons, biochemist and coauthor of the study, warns: "If the maximum recommended exposure limit to direct midday summer sun in all mainland capitals of Australia is 10-12 minutes, then people standing or lying in the shade will experience burn levels of [ultraviolet B radiation] causing sunburn in less than an hour." Even in winter and on cloudy days, there is a great deal of ultraviolet radiation present. Dr. Parsons notes that as a rule, "the more sky you can see the bigger the risk."

Blood Seminar in Bulgaria

A seminar emphasizing the conservation of blood during surgery and the use of alternatives to blood transfusions was held earlier this year in Sofia, Bulgaria. The seminar gave doctors from all over Bulgaria the opportunity to confer with a panel of experts on blood from eight countries. Professor Ivan Mladenov of Sofia commented that under the previous regime, 'little or nothing was known about blood contamination and blood-borne viruses' and that 'questions on the part of patients were viewed as bad behavior that could lead to denial of medical care.' The response of those attending the seminar reflects an increased awareness in Bulgaria of a patient's right to self-determination and informed consent, as endorsed by the European Court of Human Rights.

FROM OUR READERS

Surgery My husband and I thank Jehovah from the bottom of our hearts for the article "Surgery Without a Scalpel." (February 22, 1998) My husband was scheduled to go in for invasive brain surgery for his arteriovenous malformation. The article was like an answer to our prayers. My husband had the surgery with the procedure mentioned in the article, and all is going well.

L. J., United States

Russian Press Many thanks for the article "Russian Press Praises Jehovah's Witnesses." (February 22, 1998) I just wanted you to know that it is not the first time my eyes have filled with tears on reading one of your wonderful articles. It is good to know that the whole earth will one day be as beautiful as the new branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses at Solnechnoye.

I. C. S. A., Brazil

Unbelieving Father Changes The article "His Heart Was Touched" (February 22, 1998) reminded me of my own family. My husband is also an unbeliever. The article gave me hope that one day his heart may be touched.

S. M., United States

Family Resists Nazis Never have I read a more wonderful experience than that of Horst Henschel, in the article "Motivated by My Family's Loyalty to God." (February 22, 1998) I had to take many breaks between paragraphs to control my weeping. Horst's father was certainly someone who persevered under pressure, and his example is one I'll always hold dear.

A. K., United States

Horst Henschel's experience was very moving. His courage and love for Jehovah motivated me. I can never forget the words that

encouraged him while he was in prison: "Fear not those who kill the body."

J. V. S., Brazil

I am ten years old, and I wanted to tell you how encouraging it is to know how Jehovah's Witnesses had to live then—how if they didn't say "Heil Hitler!" they might have lost their lives. But the Witnesses kept strong and didn't say it.

R. B., United States

Racial Pride I was elated to read the article "Young People Ask . . . What About Racial Pride?" (February 22, 1998) Many times I have been asked, "What's your nationality?" Unable to trace my family line, I'd answer jokingly, "Mongrel!" A traveling minister said, "When anyone asks you what you are, just say, 'I'm one of Jehovah's Witnesses.'" I'm proud to be in an organization that recognizes all races as being equal.

D. H., United States

I am 14 years old and want to thank you for the article. My racial pride had turned into racism. The article made me understand that in Jehovah's eyes we are all equal.

I. P., Italy

When I was young, many of my schoolmates took pride in their race and color, saying they were of Spanish blood, while I belonged to a minority group. I developed an inferiority complex and a lack of self-respect. I've sometimes felt, 'I hate my color!' The counsel in this article helped me to regain my self-respect and to feel content with what Jehovah has given me.

A. G., Philippines

I really had a distorted view, thinking that people born in wealthier countries were superior. Your article helped me to see that there is really only one race—the human race.

L. G., Brazil

HOW do we catch colds and other infections? According to the U.S. Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, at least 80 percent of such ailments are transmitted by our hands, not through the air. In fact, hand washing is generally considered to be the single most important way to prevent the spread of illness. Yet, many do not always wash after using the toilet or blowing their nose or before handling food. Of course, many others always wash their hands at such times. But the potential for infection does not disappear after a quick, perfunctory job of hand washing.

Drying hands properly can be equally important. Researchers at the University of Westminster in England found that many people do not dry their hands thoroughly after washing, especially when using hot-air dryers. Many complete drying by wiping their hands on their clothes. This can spread any dangerous microorganisms left on the hands. According to the researchers, it is best to dry hands completely, preferably using disposable paper towels or a clean, unused cloth towel.

Wash and DRY Your Hands!

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the following hand-washing advice:

- Always use warm running water and mild soap. If forced to use a basin instead of running water, clean and disinfect it each time it is used. Premoistened towelettes do not effectively clean hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, and continue rubbing for at least 15 seconds. Scrub the tops and palms of the hands as well as between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse hands under warm running water.
- Dry with a clean disposable, or single-use, towel, and avoid touching the faucet or towel holder with clean hands.
- Turn the faucet off using the towel as a barrier to keep from touching the handle.
- Children should wash standing at a height where their hands can hang freely under the running water. Assist the child to perform all the above steps, and then wash your own hands.



THE brochure you publish What Does God Require of Us? was very good. I'm only ten years old, but I understand it, and it was easy to read. I followed it very well, and when I got to lesson 16, I didn't want to read it at first because I liked the brochure so much. I wanted there to be more."

The brochure, the cover of which you see reproduced here, was not published for children only. Yet the material is presented in such a clear, simple way that children can understand the basic teachings of the Bible and the kind of conduct that God requires of us. For example, the brochure answers such questions as: How should we view lying? Is gambling proper? Is it wrong to get drunk? Is it proper for unmarried people to have sex relations?

It Has Wide Appeal

