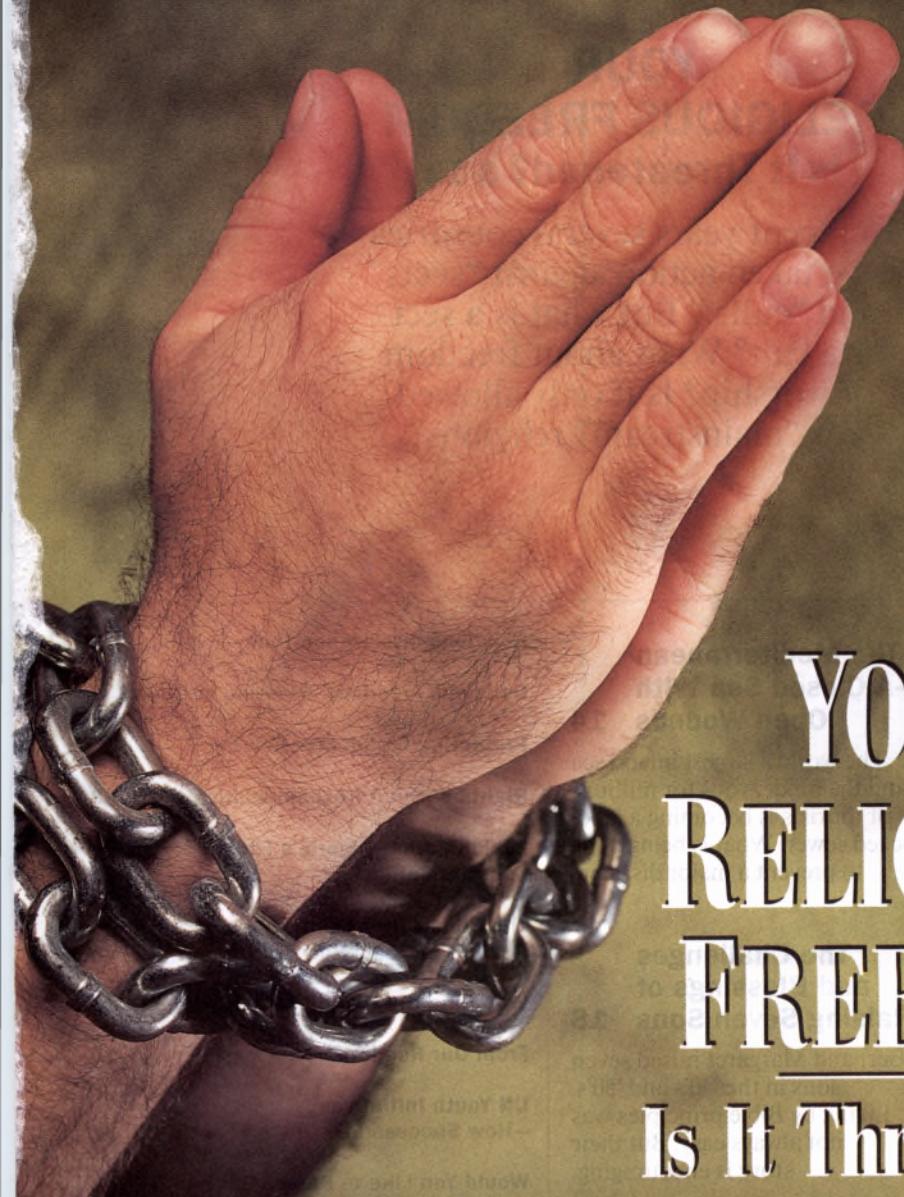


# Awake!

January 8, 1999



## YOUR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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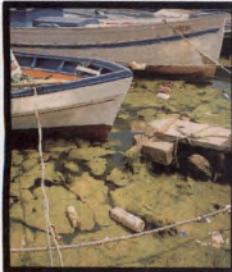
### Is It Threatened?

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## YOUR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM Is It Threatened? 3-13

In recent years several countries have taken action against "sects" and "cults." But what is a sect or a cult? What about freedom of worship? Is it only allowed for "mainstream" religions?



### The Mediterranean —A Closed Sea With Open Wounds 14

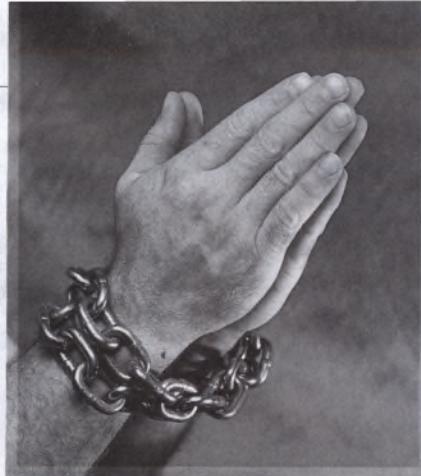
The world's largest inland sea and the rendezvous for millions of tourists is becoming a land-locked sewer. What is being done to prevent a major disaster?



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Bert and Margaret raised seven sons in the '40's and '50's. Living by Bible principles was not always easy. But their story is encouraging.

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# RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE TODAY

**"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."**

ARTICLE 18, UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 1948.

**D**O YOU enjoy religious freedom in your country? Most countries in the world ostensibly subscribe to this noble principle, which has been included many times in international declarations. It is estimated, however, that in numerous countries where intolerance and discrimination are hard realities, countless millions of people today do not enjoy religious freedom. On the other hand, many people live in multiracial, multiethnic, or multireligious societies where freedom is guaranteed by law and tolerance is seemingly enshrined in the nations' culture.

Yet, even in these places, some people are affected by threats to religious freedom. "Discrimination based upon reli-

gion or conviction exists in almost all economic, social, and ideological systems and in all parts of the world," noted Angelo d'Almeida Ribeiro, former Special Rapporteur appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights. In their book *Freedom of Religion and Belief—A World Report*, published in 1997, editors Kevin Boyle and Juliet Sheen state: "Religious persecution of minority faiths [and] the proscribing of beliefs and pervasive discrimination . . . are daily occurrences at the end of the twentieth century."

Religious discrimination, however, does not affect just religious minorities. Professor Abdelfattah Amor, Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, of the UN



***Religious intolerance has a long history***

Commission on Human Rights, considers that "no religion is safe from violation." It is quite likely, then, that intolerance and prejudice are commonly faced by some religions where you live.

#### **Varied Forms of Discrimination**

Religious discrimination can take many forms. Some countries simply exclude all but one religion, making it, in effect, the State religion. In other countries, laws are passed restricting the activity of certain religions. Some lands have enacted laws that have been interpreted in an arbitrary way. Consider the scope for abuse of a proposed law in Israel to punish the importation, printing, distribution, or possession of brochures or material "in which there

is an inducement to religious conversion." Not surprisingly, the *International Herald Tribune* newspaper reports: "In Israel, Jehovah's Witnesses have been harassed and attacked." A Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Lod was broken into three times and trashed twice by fanatic ultraorthodox zealots. The police declined to interfere.

The book *Freedom of Religion and Belief* cites other examples of intolerance: "Heresy and heretics are not only an image from the past. . . . Rejection, persecution and discrimination towards those who have taken a different path remain a major cause of intolerance. The Ahmadis in Pakistan and the [Baha'is] in Egypt, Iran, and Malaysia are some examples as are the Jehovah's

**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.

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Witnesses in several countries of Eastern Europe, in Greece and Singapore." Clearly, religious freedom is under threat in many parts of the world.

In the face of this, Federico Mayor, director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, declared that the emerging world of the near future "does not inspire whole-hearted enthusiasm. . . . The winds of freedom have rekindled the embers of hatred." Confirming these fears, the director of the Human Rights Centre of the University of Essex, United Kingdom, observed: "All evidence points to the conclusion that religious intolerance . . . is increasing rather than decreasing in the modern world." Such increasing intolerance threatens religious freedom, perhaps your religious freedom. Why, though, is religious freedom so important?

### What Is at Stake?

"Religious freedom is a fundamental requirement before any society can be described as free. . . . Without freedom of religion and the right to disseminate one's faith there can be no rights of conscience and no genuine democracy," observed sociologist Bryan Wilson in his book *Human Values in a Changing World*. And, as a French court recently recognized, "freedom of belief is one of the fundamental elements of

public freedoms." Thus, whether you are religious or not, you should be interested in the protection of religious freedom.

A country's attitude toward religious freedom also greatly affects its reputation and international credibility. A report presented in 1997 to a meeting of the 54-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe stated: "Religious Freedom is one of the highest values in the constellation of human rights, going to the very core of human dignity. No system that violates, or allows the systematic violation of, such rights can lay legitimate claim to membership in the community of just and democratic states that respect fundamental human rights."

Freedom of religion is like part of the foundation of a building. Other freedoms—civil, political, cultural, and economic—are built upon it. If the foundation is undermined, the whole edifice suffers. Professor Francesco Margiotta-Broglio succinctly puts it this way: "Whenever [religious] freedom is violated, other freedoms are the next to suffer." If other freedoms are to be protected, religious freedom needs to be safeguarded first.

In order to discern how best to protect something, it is essential to understand it. What are the roots of religious freedom? How was it established, and at what price?

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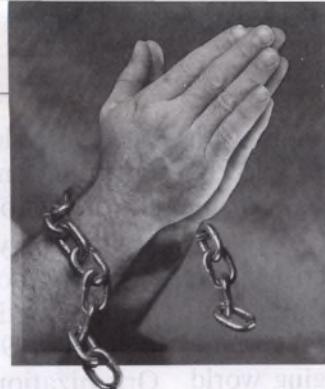
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# RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## *Blessing or Curse?*

The birth of the notion of religious freedom was accompanied by great labor pains in Christendom. It was a struggle against dogmatism, prejudice, and intolerance. It cost countless thousands of lives in bloody religious conflicts. What does this painful history teach us?

“PERSECUTION has been an enduring fact of Christian history,” writes Robin Lane Fox in the book *Pagans and Christians*. Early Christians were called a sect and were accused of threatening public order. (Acts 16:20, 21; 24:5, 14; 28:22) As a result, some endured torture and were killed by wild beasts in Roman arenas. In the face of such bitter persecution, some, such as the theologian Tertullian (see picture on page 8), pleaded for religious freedom. In 212 C.E., he wrote: “It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own convictions.”

In 313 C.E., persecution of Christians by the Roman world came to an end under Constantine, with the Edict of Milan, which granted freedom of religion to Christians and pagans alike. The legalization of “Christianity” in the Roman Empire turned the tide. However, about 340 C.E., a professed Christian writer called for the persecution of pagans. Finally, in 392 C.E., by means of the Edict of Constantinople, Emperor Theodosius I banned paganism within the empire,

and religious freedom died a premature death. With Roman “Christianity” as the State religion, Church and State embarked on a campaign of persecution that lasted for centuries, reaching its zenith in the bloody Crusades of the 11th to the 13th centuries and in the cruelty of the Inquisitions, which began in the 12th century. Those daring to question the established orthodoxy, the monopoly of dogma, were branded as heretics and tracked down in the witch-hunt climate of the time. What was behind such moves?

Religious intolerance was excused on the grounds that religious unity formed the most solid foundation for the State and that religious differences threatened public order. In England, in 1602, one of Queen Elizabeth’s ministers argued: “The State is never safe when it tolerates two religions.” In reality, it was much easier to ban religious dissidents than to find out whether they really posed a threat to the State or to the established religion. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* notes: “Neither the secular nor the ecclesiastical authorities drew the slightest distinc-

tion between dangerous and harmless heretics." However, change was soon to come.

### The Painful Birth of Tolerance

The catalyst for change in Europe was the upheaval caused by Protestantism, a sectarian movement that refused to go away. With astonishing rapidity, the Protestant Reformation split Europe along religious lines, bringing to the fore the idea of freedom of conscience. The famous Reformer Martin Luther, for example, justified his opinions in 1521, saying: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God." Division also ignited the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), a series of cruel religious wars that ravaged Europe.

In the midst of war, though, many came to realize that conflict was not the way forward. Thus, a series of edicts, such as the Edict of Nantes in France (1598), sought unsuccessfully to establish peace in war-torn Europe. It was out of these edicts that the modern-day notion of tolerance gradually evolved. At first, "tolerance" had negative connotations. "If under certain circumstances we were to tolerate the sects . . . , it would, without doubt, be an evil—indeed, a serious evil—but not as bad as war," wrote the famous humanist Erasmus in 1530. Because of this negative sense, some, like Frenchman Paul de Foix in 1561, preferred to talk about "religious freedom" rather than "tolerance."

With time, though, tolerance came to be seen, not as the lesser of two evils, but as the protector of liberties. It was no longer viewed as a concession to weakness but as a guarantee. When plurality of belief and the right to think differently began to be cherished as the basis of modern society, fanaticism was forced to retreat.

At the end of the 18th century, tolerance became linked with freedom and equality. This was expressed in the form of laws and declarations, such as the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), in France, or the Bill of Rights

(1791), in the United States. As these documents came to influence liberal thinking from the 19th century onward, tolerance and hence freedom were viewed no longer as a curse but as a blessing.

### Relative Freedom

Precious as it is, freedom is only relative. In the name of greater freedom for all, the State passes laws that limit some individual liberties. The following are some of the issues related to freedom that are currently being debated in many European countries: To what extent should governmental legislation operate in private life? How effective is it? How does it affect freedom?

The debate over public and private liberties has been thrust to the fore by the media. Allegations of brainwashing, financial extortion, child abuse, and a host of other serious crimes have been directed against some religious groups, often without any substantial proof. News stories involving minority religious groups have received widespread coverage by the press. Disparaging labels such as "cult" or "sect" have now become a part of everyday usage. Under pressure from public opinion, governments have even produced lists of so-called dangerous cults.

France is a country proud of its tradition of tolerance and separation of religion and the State. It proudly proclaims itself the land of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Yet, according to the book *Freedom of Religion and Belief—A World Report*, "an education campaign in schools to foster rejection of new religious movements" has been recommended in that country. Many people think, however, that this type of action poses a threat to religious freedom. How so?

### Threats to Religious Freedom

True religious freedom exists only when all religious groups that respect and obey the law are given equal treatment by the State. This ceases to be the case when the

State arbitrarily decides which among the religious groups is not a religion, thus denying it the advantages that the State grants to religions. "The sacred idea of religious freedom rings hollow when the state arrogates unto itself the right to certify religions the way it hands out licenses to drivers," noted *Time* magazine in 1997. One French appeal court recently declared that doing so "leads, consciously or not, to totalitarianism."

Basic freedoms are also threatened when one group has a monopoly on the media. Unfortunately, this is increasingly the case in many countries. For example, in an attempt to define what is religiously correct, anticult organizations have set themselves up as prosecutor, judge, and jury and have then tried to impose their biased view on

the public through the media. However, as the French newspaper *Le Monde* said, in so doing, these organizations sometimes show "the same sectarianism that they are supposedly fighting and risk creating a 'witch-hunt' climate." The newspaper asked: "Does not the social stigmatization of minority religious groups . . . threaten essential freedoms?" Martin Kriele, quoted in *Zeitschrift für Religionspsychologie* (Magazine for Psychology of Religion), stated: "The witch-hunt for sects gives more cause for concern than the vast majority of the 'so-called sects and psychogroups.' Simply put: Citizens who do not overstep the law should be left in peace. Religion and ideology should be free and remain free, also in Germany." Let us consider one example.

## Defenders of Religious Freedom

Eloquent cries for religious freedom arose from the bloodbath of religious conflict in Europe in the 16th century. These appeals are still relevant to the discussion of religious freedom.

**Sébastien Chateillon (1515-63):** "What is a heretic? I do not find anything else except that we consider heretics all those that do not agree with our opinion. . . . If in this city or region you are considered a true believer, in the next you will be considered a heretic." Famous French Bible translator and energetic defender of tolerance, Chateillon touched on one of the key elements in the debate on religious freedom: Who defines who is a heretic?

**Dirck Volckertszon Coornhert (1522-90):** "We read that in the past . . . even Christ himself in Jerusalem and then many martyrs in Europe . . . disturbed [society] with their words of truth. . . . The meaning of the word 'disturbed' needs to be defined accurately and clearly." Coornhert argued that religious difference should not be equated with disturbing public order. He asked: Are those who scrupulously obey and respect the law really a threat to public order?



Tertullian



Chatellion



De Belloy

**Pierre de Belloy (1540-1611):** It is "ignorant to believe that diversity of religion brings about and nurtures tumult in the State." Belloy, a French lawyer writing at the time of the Wars of Religion (1562-98), argued that the harmony of the State is not based upon religious uniformity unless, of course, the government is subservient to religious pressures.

**Thomas Helwys (c. 1550-c. 1616):** "If his [the king's] people are obedient and faithful subjects to all human laws, he has nothing more to ask from them." Helwys, one of the founders of the English Baptists, wrote in favor of the separation of Church and State, urging the king to grant religious freedom to all churches and sects and to be content with civil power over people and possessions. His writings underlined a current question: How far should the State control the spiritual?

**Anonymous writer (1564):** "In order to introduce freedom of conscience, it is not sufficient to allow an individual to abstain from practicing a religion of which he disapproves if, by the same token, the free practice of the one he approves is not allowed."

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## **"Model Citizens" —Branded as Dangerous**

Which religious group was said to be "the most dangerous of all sects" in the opinion of Catholic authorities quoted in Spain's popular *ABC* newspaper? You may be surprised to learn that *ABC* was talking about Jehovah's Witnesses. Do the accusations made against them have an impartial, objective basis? Note the following declarations from other sources:

"The Witnesses teach people to pay their taxes honestly, not to participate in wars or preparations for war, not to steal and, in general, to follow a life-style that if it were adopted by others would lead to an improvement in the standards of civil cohabitation."

—Sergio Albesano, *Talento*, November-December 1996.

"Contrary to the insinuations circulated on certain occasions, [Jehovah's Witnesses] do not appear to me to represent the slightest danger to the State's institutions. They are citizens who are peace-loving, conscientious, and respectful toward the authorities."—A Belgian parliamentary deputy.

"The Jehovah's Witnesses are recognizably the most honest people in the Federal Republic."—German newspaper *Sindelfinger Zeitung*.

"You might regard [Jehovah's Witnesses] as model citizens. They pay taxes diligently, tend the sick, battle illiteracy."—U.S. newspaper *San Francisco Examiner*.

"Jehovah's Witnesses experience greater success than members of other denominations in maintaining stable marital unions."—*American Ethnologist*.

"Jehovah's Witnesses are among the most upright and diligent of the citizenry of African countries."—Dr. Bryan Wilson, Oxford University.

"Members of that faith have contributed greatly through the decades toward ex-

panding liberty of conscience."—Nat Hentoff, *Free Speech for Me—But Not for Thee*.

"They have . . . made a definite contribution to the preservation of some of the most precious things in our democracy."—Professor C. S. Braden, *These Also Believe*.

As the above quotations indicate, Jehovah's Witnesses are recognized throughout the world as exemplary citizens. In addition, they are known for their free Bible education work and for the promotion of family values. Their literacy classes have helped hundreds of thousands, while their humanitarian works over the decades have helped thousands, especially in Africa.

### **The Importance of Objectivity**

Society is rife with unscrupulous people preying on innocent victims. Consequently, there is a definite need to be vigilant when it comes to claims about religion. But just how objective and how conducive to religious freedom is it when some journalists, instead of consulting objective experts, rely on information from churches who see their numbers dwindling or from antisect organizations whose objectivity is open to serious question? The newspaper that called Jehovah's Witnesses "the most dangerous of all sects" admitted, for instance, that its definitions came from "the experts of the [Catholic] Church." In addition, one French magazine noted that the majority of articles dealing with supposed sects originated with antisect organizations. Does this sound to you like the most impartial way of getting objective information?

International courts and organizations concerned with basic human rights, such as the UN, say that "the distinction between a religion and a sect is too contrived to be acceptable." Then why do some persist in the use of the pejorative word "sect"? It is further evidence that religious freedom is threatened. How, then, can this essential freedom be protected?



# PROTECTING FREEDOMS

## How?

**I**N THE small town of Rengasdengklok, Indonesia, ethnic groups lived together in peace for years. Apparent tolerance, however, came to an end on January 30, 1997. Violence erupted when a little before three o'clock in the morning on a religious feast day, a believer started beating his drum. Responding to the noise, a man of another religion showered insults on his neighbor. Shouts were exchanged, and stones started to fly. Day broke, and rioting increased as others joined the fray. By the end of the day, two Buddhist temples and four of Christendom's churches had been destroyed. The *International Herald Tribune* newspaper reported this

incident under the title "Spark of Intolerance Lights Fires of Ethnic Rioting."

In many countries, ethnic minorities who have their rights protected by law often find themselves the object of intolerance. Guaranteeing freedom by law clearly does not get to the roots of intolerance. The fact that intolerance is hidden below the surface does not mean that it does not exist. If at some future time circumstances change and perhaps lead to an atmosphere of prejudice, latent intolerance can easily come to the fore. Even if people are not directly persecuted, they may be the object of animosity or their ideas may be suffocated. How can this be prevented?

**Intolerance often leads to violence**



## Getting to the Roots of Intolerance

We naturally tend to reject or suspect that which is different or unusual, especially views that differ from our own. Does this mean that tolerance is impossible? The UN publication *Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* lists ignorance and lack of understanding as being "among the most important root causes of intolerance and discrimination in the matter of religion and belief." However, ignorance, the root of intolerance, can be fought. How? By balanced education. "Education may be the prime means of combatting discrimination and intolerance," states a report of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

What should be the aim of this education? The magazine *UNESCO Courier* suggests that instead of fostering rejection of religious movements, "education for tolerance should aim at countering influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others, and should help young people to develop capacities for independent judgement, critical thinking and ethical reasoning."

Obviously, the media can play an important part in promoting "critical thinking and ethical reasoning." Many international organizations recognize the power of the media to shape minds and to encourage mutual understanding. If the media, though, are to foster tolerance rather than promote intolerance as some do, responsible, objective journalism is required. On occasion, journalists must go against popular accepted opinion. They must bring to bear objective analysis and impartial observations. But is that enough?

## The Best Way to Fight Intolerance

Tolerance does not mean that everyone should have the same ideas. People might disagree with one another. Some may feel strongly that the beliefs of another person are very wrong. They may even speak publicly of their disagreements. However, as long

as they do not spread lies to try to incite prejudice, this is not intolerance. Intolerance is seen when a group is persecuted, targeted by special laws, marginalized, banned, or in some other way hindered from following their beliefs. In the most extreme form of intolerance, some kill and others have to die for their beliefs.

How can intolerance be fought? It can be exposed publicly, as the apostle Paul exposed the intolerance of religious leaders of his day. (Acts 24:10-13) When possible, though, the best way to fight intolerance is to work proactively—to promote tolerance, that is, to educate people to understand others better. The UN report on the elimination of intolerance referred to earlier says: "As all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief have their birth in the human mind, so it is at human minds that action should initially be directed." Such education may even lead individuals to examine their own beliefs.



## Religion Threatened

In recent years authorities have tried to stifle Jehovah's Witnesses in France by not granting them the same advantages as other religions. Recently, the donations received in support of the Witnesses' religious activities were heavily taxed. French authorities unjustly imposed a tax burden of \$50 million (tax and penalties), with the evident aim of crippling this group of 200,000 Christians and sympathizers in France. This is a blatant action of religious prejudice that goes against all the principles of liberty, brotherhood, and equality.



Federico Mayor, director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, wrote: "Tolerance is the virtue of the person who has conviction." Writing in the magazine *Réforme*, Dominican priest Claude Geffré said: "Real tolerance rests on strong conviction." A person who is comfortable with his own beliefs is quite likely not to feel threatened by the beliefs of others.

Jehovah's Witnesses have found that an excellent way to promote tolerance is to talk with others of different beliefs. The Witnesses take seriously Jesus' prophecy that "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations," and they are well-known for

**In spite of the religious activities of Jehovah's Witnesses, some French officials allege that they are not a religion!**

their public evangelizing ministry. (Matthew 24:14) In this work, they have the opportunity to hear people of many different religions—as well as atheists—explain their beliefs. In turn, the Witnesses are prepared to explain their own beliefs to those who wish to listen. Thus they promote growth in knowledge and understanding. Such knowledge and understanding make it easier for tolerance to flourish.

#### **Tolerance and Beyond**

Despite the best intentions of many and the concerted efforts of some, religious intolerance clearly remains a problem today. For there to be a real change, something more is necessary.

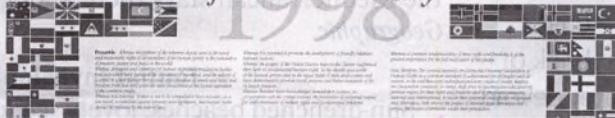
The French newspaper *Le Monde des débats* highlighted the problem: "Modern society suffers too often from an emotional and spiritual void. The law can guarantee freedom against those who threaten it. It can and should guarantee equality before the law, without arbitrary discrimination." The book *Democracy and Tolerance* admits: "We have a long way to go to reach the goal of making mutual understanding and respect a universal standard of behaviour."

The Bible promises that soon mankind will be united in pure worship of the one true God. This unity will result in a true worldwide fraternity, or brotherhood, where respect for others will prevail. Humans will no longer be plagued by ignorance, as God's

Kingdom will teach people Jehovah's ways, thus satisfying their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs. (Isaiah 11:9; 30:21; 54:13) Real equality and liberty will cover the

earth. (2 Corinthians 3:17) By acquiring an accurate understanding of God's purposes for mankind, you can counter ignorance and intolerance.

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights Fiftieth Anniversary



### Rights Without Responsibilities?

"RECOGNITION of the inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Thus states the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marked its 50th anniversary in December 1998. Recently, though, 24 former presidents and prime ministers, representing all continents, have suggested that in addition to that declaration, a universal declaration of human responsibilities should be adopted by the United Nations. Why do many feel the need for such a project?

"Rights and responsibilities are Siamese twins. Sadly, half a century later, this fact has been forgotten or become unseemly. Many demand their rights without feeling the need to keep related responsibilities," explains Professor Jean-Claude Soyer, member of the European Commission for Human Rights. This neglect of duties is felt by many. "There is a palpable yearning, especially among the young, for some kind of unifying vision, a set of acknowledged ideals with which to address and tame the mechanics of greed, of selfishness, of loss of community, which seem to be taking over the world. . . . This mounting debate about the need for a global ethic is an admission that something is missing," notes the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune*. Con-

sequently, politicians, theologians, and philosophers have been discussing a "universal ethics project," as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization calls it, to fill the gap and determine what human responsibilities are. However, they have encountered some difficulty.

While it is relatively easy to determine which human rights should be protected, it is not always easy to define which human responsibilities should be universally accepted. However, some of the values in the proposed Declaration of Responsibilities find their inspiration in the timeless and universal Golden Rule, given by Jesus some two thousand years ago: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them."—Matthew 7:12.

While the Bible has often been the inspiration behind laws protecting human rights, it stresses the notion of personal responsibility. "If one knows how to do what is right and yet does not do it, it is a sin for him," declared the disciple James. (James 4:17) Just as Jesus looked for ways to do good to others, true Christians also try to do good to their fellowman. Not content with simply exercising their rights, they appreciate that with rights come responsibilities and that each of us is responsible to God for his own actions.

# THE MEDITERRANEAN

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GREECE

Over a thousand dolphin corpses piling up on shores from Greece to Morocco, poisonous red tides in the Aegean, millions of tons of mucuslike foam in the Adriatic, turtles and seals on the brink of extinction, areas of water devoid of life altogether. What is going on in the Mediterranean? Is it doomed to a future of pollution and devastation?

**H**E oldest humanised landscape in the world." That is how zoologist David Attenborough describes the Mediterranean and its shores. Providing access to three continents, this sea played a key role in the rise and fall of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. It is the seedbed from which much of today's culture and civilization developed. However, recent decades of overdevelopment, booms in tourism, overfishing, and pollution have left the Mediterranean in crisis. Concerned scientists and afflicted nations scramble to come up with solutions, with only partial success so far.

The Mediterranean is the world's largest inland sea. Its 28,000-mile coast, a natural border shared by 20 countries, is inhabited by more than 160 million people, a figure projected to double by the year 2025. Warmer and

saltier than the Atlantic, which is the main source of its waters, the Mediterranean is practically tideless. Since its waters are renewed only about every 80 or 90 years, it is also susceptible to pollution. "Whatever gets dumped in the Mediterranean stays there a long time," says *National Geographic*.

## Tourist Invasion

Sun-drenched beaches, lovely scenery, traditional Mediterranean hospitality, and rich history make the whole area an extremely popular holiday resort. Every year, 100 million local beachgoers and foreign tourists visit there, and this figure is expected to triple in 25 years. Is this human tide partly responsible for the deterioration of their summer destination? Examine the facts.

These hordes of human invaders bring with them refuse that the Mediterranean countries are unable to cope with. About 80 percent of the sewage they produce—more than 500 million tons a year—ends up in the sea entirely untreated! Most of these tourists come in the dry season, contributing to the contamination of the area's already limited water resources. Contaminated water, in turn, is dangerous to the health. Swimming in some parts of the Mediterranean can result in infections of the ear, nose, and throat, not to mention diseases such as hepatitis and dysentery and occasional cases of cholera.

The economy of many Mediterranean lands, however, depends on tourism. Speaking of such countries, Michel Batisse, a former assistant director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, says: "Their only resource is tourism, but that depends on the coastline not being ruined by uncontrolled construction driven by the search for quick profits."

## Heavy Tanker Traffic

The Mediterranean is a major transportation route between the Middle East and Europe, which results in heavy oil-tanker traffic. Over 20 percent of the world's oil passes through it. The amount of waste oil spilled into the Mediterranean each year has been estimated at 17 times the amount spilled by the *Exxon Valdez* in Alaska in 1989. Between 1980 and 1995, 14 tanker spills occurred in

# A CLOSED SEA WITH OPEN WOUNDS

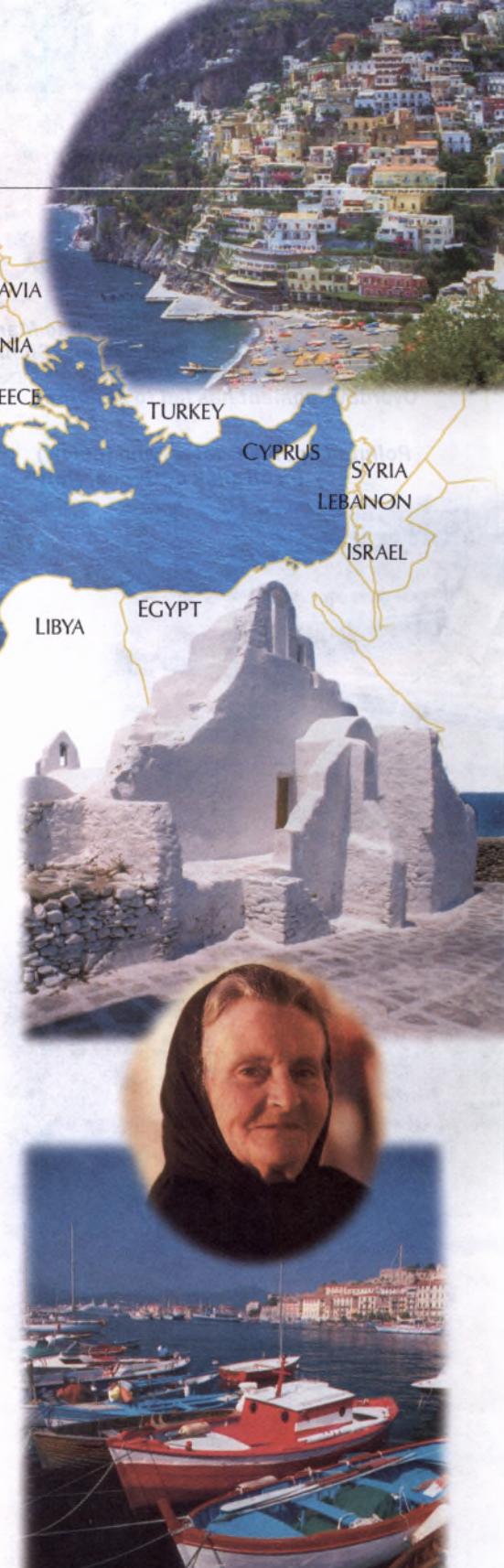


the Mediterranean, and each year, up to a million tons of crude oil are dumped from ships, often because harbors lack the facilities to collect waste oil or to clean tanks.

To make things worse, the water that flows out of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic through the Strait of Gibraltar is deep. Since oil floats, the sea loses its deeper, cleaner water but tends to retain its accumulation of oil on the surface. "The food chain of the Mediterranean is now marked by oil pollution," says Colette Serruya, former director of Israel's Institute of Oceanography. "It is part of the tissue of our fish and mollusks." In 1990 the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) reported that 93 percent of shellfish taken from the Mediterranean contained more fecal bacteria than the maximum allowed by the World Health Organization.

## Weakened Ecosystems

Added to this ruinous pollution, great damage is being done on the coast of the Mediterranean, much of which was thickly forested as late as the 15th century C.E. Deforestation, carried out to create farmland, to extend cities, or to provide shipbuilding materials for Venetian galleys, has brought irremediable erosion in its wake. In addition to the solids transported by rain, rivers carry down to the sea such pollutants as detergents, pesticides, and heavy metals. The Rhône in France, the Nile in



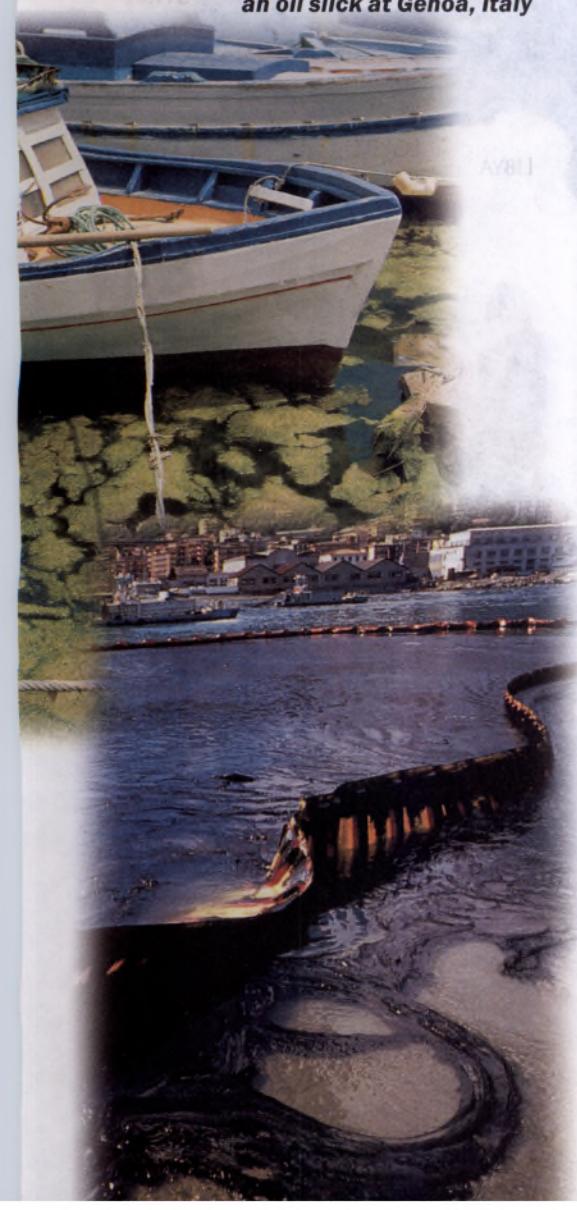


**Hotels In Benidorm, Spain**

**Lloret de Mar,  
Costa Brava, Spain**

**Overdevelopment has led to pollution**

**Polluted Spanish waters and (below)  
an oil slick at Genoa, Italy**



Egypt, the Po in Italy, the Ebro in Spain, and other rivers carry increased quantities of agricultural and industrial waste.

One direct result of this pollution is the red tides that have afflicted various areas of the Adriatic and Aegean seas, covering the beaches with a foul-smelling, glutinous sludge. This phenomenon is caused by eutrophication, a process that occurs when decomposing waste matter saps the water of its dissolved oxygen, suffocating much of the local flora and fauna. Other areas threatened by this phenomenon include the Gulf of Lions (France), the Lake of Tunis (Tunisia), the Gulf of Izmir (Turkey), and the Lagoon of Venice (Italy).

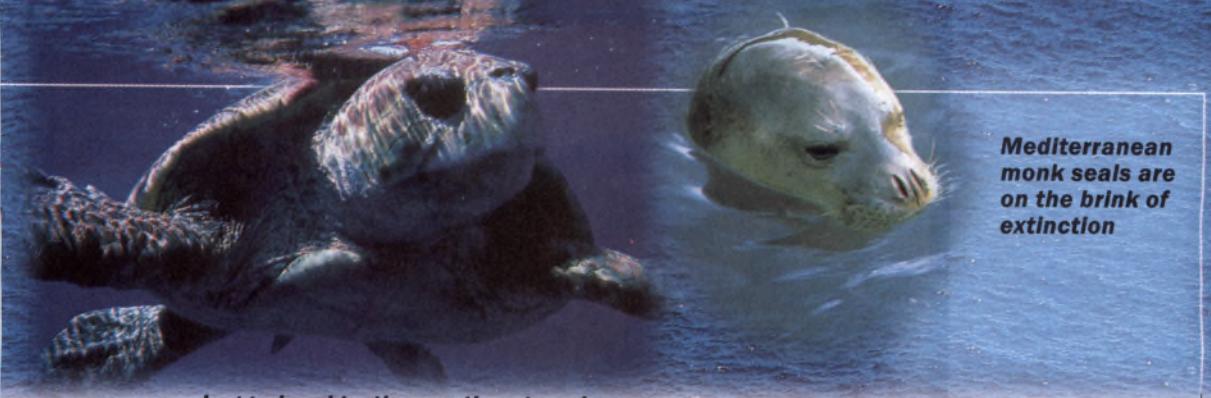
The coastal ecosystem has been weakened to the point that species alien to the Mediterranean are able to take over from native species. A typical example is a "killer" alga, *Caulerpa taxifolia*, which exterminates other marine species. Introduced accidentally off Monaco, it has now begun to spread on the seabed. It is toxic, has no known predators, and has already spread widely. "We could be seeing the beginning of an ecological catastrophe," says Alexandre Meinesz, professor of marine biology at the University of Nice, France.

There is more bad news. According to marine biologist Charles-François Boudouresque, more than 300 alien marine organisms have been introduced into the Mediterranean. Most came from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. Some researchers believe that this biological pollution is irreversible and that it might prove to be one of the major ecological problems of the next century.

#### **Death In the Water**

Mediterranean flora faces many dangers, one of them being the destruction of the *Posidonia* sea-grass meadows, which serve as the lungs, larder, and nursery of the sea

V. Sichov/Sipa Press



**Mediterranean monk seals are on the brink of extinction**

**Loggerhead turtles are threatened**

and as a shelter where hundreds of marine species reproduce. Jetties and marinas encroaching on these meadows can destroy them, as can pleasure boats, which tear the plants up with their anchors.

The sea's fauna is equally threatened. The Mediterranean monk seal, one of the world's 12 most threatened species, is being driven to extinction. There were almost 1,000 monk seals in the Mediterranean in 1980, but their ranks have been decimated by hunters and fishermen, and only between 70 and 80 are left today. The loggerhead turtles now lay their eggs only on Greek and Turkish beaches, where they are sometimes trodden underfoot by tourists. The turtles often get entangled in fishing nets and end up on the menu at local restaurants. The mantis shrimp, the rough pen shell, and the date mussel have been added to the list of endangered species.

**An Action Plan**

To deal with this alarming situation, in 1975 the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) was adopted under the auspices of UNEP. It aspires to commit the Mediterranean countries, as well as other members of the European Union, not only to protecting the sea from pollution but also to ensuring that coastal development respects the environment. In 1990 the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program (METAP) was launched, which was succeeded in 1993 by METAP II. Other efforts to create nature reserves, sanctuaries, and marine national parks have yielded some commendable results in protecting dolphins, whales, monk seals, turtles, and other endangered species.

Actions, however, have not adequately matched words. By the early 1990's, the MAP was close to collapse, as major contributor nations failed to pay their dues. According to authorities of the plan, not one of its objectives is

known to have been achieved. Reporting on the willingness of the Mediterranean nations to take improvement measures, Ljubomir Jeftic, deputy coordinator of the MAP, warned: "Don't be too optimistic." Even if these countries can agree to act, the harm already done might take decades to repair. Observes *New Scientist* magazine: "Right now, like much of the Mediterranean's wildlife, the MAP looks dead in the water."

What, then, is the future of the Mediterranean? Will it become a dead sea full of stinking, muddy algae? If its future depends only on man, perhaps. However, the Creator of this planet, Jehovah God, has concern for "the sea, which he himself made." (Psalm 95:5) He has promised that soon he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) After this necessary removal of irresponsible humans who pollute, among other things, the seas, God will restore ecological balance and appropriate biodiversity on our globe. Then "the seas and everything moving about in them" will "praise him" with their pristine, unsullied condition.—Psalm 69:34.

Turtle: Tony Arriaza/Corbis; Seal: Panos Dendrinos/HSPMS

As told by  
Bert and Margaret  
Dickman



## The Challenges and Blessings of Raising Seven Sons

I was born in 1927, in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., and grew up in South Dakota. I can recall my boyhood during the hard years of the Great Depression (1929-42). Mother used to make what she called graveyard stew. She would put a bit of fat in the frying pan and add some water, and then we would dip our bread in it. Things were hard for many families at that time.

—by Bert E. Dickman

Bert E. Dickman  
Margaret M. Dickman

MY FAMILY members were not religious—they saw too much hypocrisy in the local Protestant religions. As for me, my thinking was shaped by two years in the army during World War II. That was when I developed a taste for drink and gambling.

On a furlough from the army, I went to a local dance and met Margaret Schlaht, a girl of German-Ukrainian descent. We fell in love, and after courting for three months, we married, in 1946. Within eight years we had seven sons, and we found out the hard way what it is like to be parents.

In 1951, I had a serious accident at the sawmill and almost severed my lower left arm. For two years I had to stay in the hospital for skin and bone grafts. In the meantime, Margaret held the fort with five boys. Thanks to friends and neighbors, she made it through that tough period. While in the hospital, I had plenty of time to think about the purpose of life. I tried to read the Bible but without much success in understanding it.

Shortly after I got out of the hospital, we moved to Opportunity, a town in Washington State, and I went into the building trade with my brother-in-law. Now I'll let Margaret tell her side of the story.

### My Hands Were Full!

I was brought up on a farm where we cultivated grain, raised a small dairy herd, and canned fruit and vegetables. I had a strong work ethic that trained me for the future challenges of life, which were going to be many. We survived the Depression better than most, since we at least always had food.

My parents had no time for religion, although I attended Sunday school occasionally. Then, Bert and I married at the age of 19. We did not go to a church—we just had a simple ceremony in the front room of my parents' house, with a Congregational minister officiating. In the course of a few years, I gave birth to seven boys—Richard, Dan,

Doug, Gary, Michael, Ken and, finally, Scott, in 1954. They were quite a handful!

After we moved to Opportunity, a lady called at the house to talk about the Bible. I asked her if she believed in hellfire, a doctrine that really scared me. To my relief, she explained that hellfire is not a Bible teaching and that even the teaching of the immortality of the soul is not in the Bible! I had lived in fear and dread of dying and could not reconcile hellfire with a God of love. I determined that I would never teach falsehoods like that to my children.

In 1955, I started to study the Bible with the help of the book "*Let God Be True*."\* Wouldn't you know it, that is just when the Pentecostal preacher suddenly took an interest in me and wanted to save me from Jehovah's Witnesses! He made a big mistake—he started to preach hellfire to me! He even sent three of his Pentecostal ladies around to try to dissuade me from studying with the Witnesses.

In the meantime, Bert listened in on my Bible study from the front room. Later, he started to read the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, and things began to make some sense to him. He was working a shift that ended at midnight. Of course, I was in bed when he got home. One night I sneaked downstairs and found him secretly reading my books! I tiptoed back to bed, feeling pleased that he was checking things for himself. Eventually, he too studied the Bible, and in 1956 we became baptized Witnesses.

Having had seven sons in eight years, I found that caring for all the daily chores of feeding and clothing them and trying to keep the house clean and tidy was a challenge. The boys learned to pull their weight in the home. I have often said that I did not have an automatic dishwasher—I had seven! Each took

\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., in 1946; now out of print.

turns in this necessary routine. Of course, Bert was a great help. He maintained consistent discipline and house rules yet also kept the lines of communication open. The boys respected their dad but were not afraid of him. Bert never neglected his responsibility to teach our sons about what they fondly remember him referring to as "the birds and the bees."

Richard, our eldest son, went to serve as a volunteer at the Watch Tower Society headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, in 1966. To see the first one leave the nest was quite a test for me. That empty seat at the table each day made my heart ache. But I was happy that he was gaining good experience and training.

I'll let Bert continue the story.

### Raising Our Boys by Bible Principles

Margaret and I were baptized at a convention in Spokane, Washington. Now we had the challenge of raising our boys according to Bible principles—what you might call the old-fashioned way. I would not tolerate any lies or any double standards, and the boys knew it. We taught them that Jehovah deserves the best.

However, they knew that they could confide in me because we had a close relationship and we did so many things together. As a family, we enjoyed going to the beach, having picnics in the mountains, and playing softball. We had animals and a garden, and the boys all pitched in with whatever had to be done. Thus they learned to work and to play. We tried to keep a balance in our activities.

**With our sons and daughters-in-law (right) and grandchildren (far right) at our 50th anniversary, in 1996**

### A Theocratic Adventure

On the spiritual side, we all went to the Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall together, and we had our regular family Bible study. In 1957 we attended a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Seattle, Washington. During the program a call was made for families to move to serve where there was a greater need for Witnesses to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. Our family thought it was a good idea, and we started to plan our move. First we went to Missouri in 1958 and then to Mississippi in 1959.

In 1958 we had our first big theocratic adventure. I built a camping trailer, which we pulled with an old 1947 three-seater, six-cylinder DeSoto. That year all nine of us traveled to New York in that car to attend an international convention. We spent several weeks on the road, camping on our way from Spokane, on the West Coast, to New York—a distance of over 2,600 miles! The boys fondly remember that journey as quality time and great fun.

### Learning Discipline From a Cake

At that convention we got our copies of the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.<sup>\*</sup> That book along with the Bible became the basic text for our weekly family Bible study. All the boys learned to read at an early age. After school Marge would spend some time with the boys, listening to them read the

\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Bible. We did not allow TV to take over their minds.

We had discipline and respect in the family. On one occasion Margaret had made a big cake—one of her specialties. The meal that day included carrots. We always encouraged the boys at least to taste their vegetables. Doug did not like carrots. He was told that unless he ate the carrots, he would not get any cake. He still refused to finish his meal. Margaret said, "If you don't eat those carrots, the dog will get your cake." I don't think that Doug really believed her until he saw Blackie gulp down his delicious cake! He learned a lesson from that experience, and so did the rest of the boys. As parents, we meant what we said.

#### **Life Was Fun**

Margaret and I were guided by Jesus' expression found at Matthew 6:33: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." As a family, we tried to put Kingdom interests first. We all enjoyed going out preaching together, and the boys would take turns going from house to house with me. Each one had his own book bag, Bible, and Bible literature. We commended them for any progress they made. Margaret often gave them a big hug. Indeed, we regularly showed them affection. We always made time for the boys—life was fun!

As the boys grew up, they had such responsibilities as picking up people to take them to

the meetings, opening up the Kingdom Hall, and helping with other duties. They learned to appreciate the Kingdom Hall as their place of worship and enjoyed maintaining it.

We encouraged them to express themselves at Christian meetings. They gave their short student talks in the Theocratic Ministry School, where they gradually learned to be speakers. Michael, our fifth son, always disliked public speaking and had a hard time on the platform. Partway through his talks, he would begin to shed tears of frustration, since he was unable to finish. In time, he got over that, and now, as a married man, he serves as a traveling overseer, visiting different congregations and giving talks several times a week. What a change!

#### **How the Boys Viewed Discipline**

*Awake!* contacted Michael to get his impressions of being raised the old-fashioned way. "We viewed Dad as a benevolent disciplinarian. I recall that as a teenager, I went to work for a radio station. I wanted a car so that I could also engage in the full-time pioneer ministry. The station manager offered me his two-door Ford Mustang convertible, a sporty car popular with young people. I had my heart set on it, even though I knew it was not a very practical car for taking people with me in the ministry. I went to Dad with a certain sense of trepidation. When I told him about the offer, he said, 'Let's talk about it.' I knew what that meant! He reasoned with me and showed me the advantages of a more practical car. So I bought a four-door sedan, and after driving it over 100,000 miles in my preaching assignment, I could only say, 'Dad was right again.'

"The moving around when we were youngsters—from Washington to Missouri and then to Mississippi—was an exciting experience. We enjoyed it. Even with nine of us



living for a year in an 8-foot by 37-foot trailer, it was all great fun and taught us to be organized and get along with one another, even in cramped quarters. Of course, we tended to play outside a lot.

"Something else I remember and cherish was how Dad conducted the consideration of the daily text with us. In 1966 he attended a school for elders at Kingdom Farm, in South Lansing, New York, and he saw that the Bethel family did research in order to give comments on the text each day. He incorporated the same system into our family routine. Each of us seven boys was assigned a morning to comment on what we had researched. Though at times we grumbled, it taught us how to do research and express ourselves. Habits like that last a lifetime.

"I was impressed by the sacrifices that Mom and Dad made in our behalf. When my two older brothers Richard and Dan could have been earning money for the family, our parents encouraged them to go to Brooklyn, New York, to serve as volunteers at the world headquarters of the Watch Tower Society. Our parents also saved up money so that five of us could fly to New York to see the headquarters for ourselves. That greatly affected me. It increased our appreciation for Jehovah's organization.

"Now let me turn the story back to Dad."

#### We Had Our Setbacks

Like any other family, we have had our problems and setbacks. As the boys got to courting age, I had to counsel them about rushing into marriage with the first girl who caught their eye. We also made sure that they were suitably chaperoned. We wanted them to have some experience in life before choosing a lifelong mate. Sometimes there were tears and even temporarily broken hearts, but in the long run, they recognized the wisdom of Bible counsel—especially to marry "in the Lord." We commended them for their wisdom.—1 Corinthians 7:39.

Scott, our seventh son, caused us to shed some tears. He succumbed to bad association at his workplace. Finally, he was disfellowshipped from the congregation. That was a hard blow for all of us, but we respected the elders' judicial decision. Scott had to learn the hard way that serving Jehovah is the best way of life.

We never gave up on his coming back to the congregation. Happily, after five years he was reinstated in the congregation. Looking back, he says, "One thing that helped me while I was disfellowshipped was that although family association was very limited, I always knew that my family loved me." Scott continued to progress and has served as an elder for the past eight years.

Sad to say, two of our grandchildren were disfellowshipped in recent years. But we have the comfort that discipline from Jehovah can result in positive changes.

#### A Big Change in Our Lives

Finally, by 1978, all the boys had left home. In the course of the years, I had gained experience in heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems. In 1980, Margaret and I received an amazing invitation to serve at the Brooklyn headquarters of the Watch Tower Society for nine months. Eighteen years later, we are still here!

We have been abundantly blessed. It was not always easy to raise our sons the old-fashioned way, according to Bible principles, but it has paid off in our case. Our present family situation is that five of our boys serve as congregation elders, and one is a traveling overseer. We have 20 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren—and most are in the truth and faithful to God.

We have seen the truthfulness of the words of the psalmist: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the sons of youth." —Psalm 127:3, 4.

# Facial Marks

## *Nigeria's Fading 'Identity Card'*

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN NIGERIA

ONE morning in the late 1960's, six-year-old Danjuma approached his father and insisted that he be given the cuts that Igala citizens wore on their faces with pride. Danjuma felt that he could no longer endure the ridicule of his schoolmates who taunted him for not having the facial marks. Though the cuts were usually administered to Igala infants too young to dread the operation, the boys viewed the marks as a sign of bravery. They regarded those without them as cowards who could not face the knife.

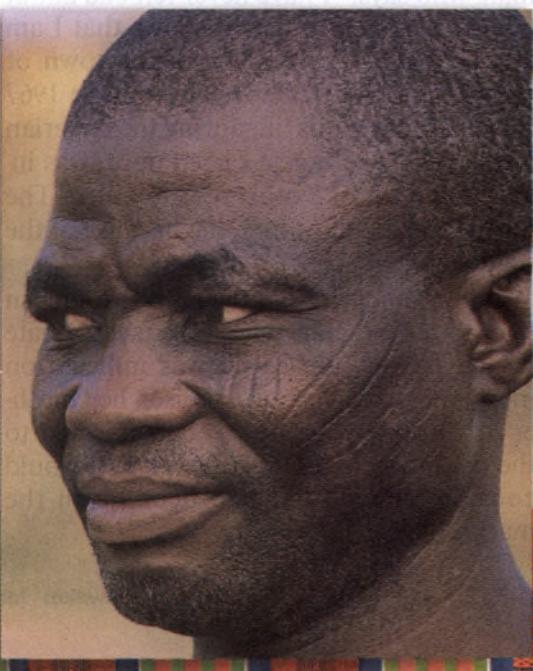
Until then, Danjuma's father had resisted giving his son the facial marks. But that morning, pressured by his son's determination to prove his bravery, he took a knife and made three deep horizontal cuts on each side of the boy's face, slightly above the corners of his mouth.

Danjuma's father knew that the real significance of the cuts had little to do with courage. Instead, the cuts would heal into scars of identification. They would be a permanent 'identity card' that could be neither lost nor forged. They would make his son instantly recognizable to his kinsmen, qualifying him for the rights and privileges of an Igala citizen. But the marks would also set him apart from the more than 250 other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

**Facial marks Indicate ethnic groups**

Scarification and cicatrization, though not limited to Africa, have a long history on the continent. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the fifth century B.C.E. about Carians living in Egypt: "[They] cut their foreheads with knives, thus proving that they are foreigners and not Egyptians." Bronze heads fashioned in Ife, Nigeria, seven hundred years ago show facial lines that are thought by many to be ethnic markings. Facial markings are also evident in the sculpture of the ancient Nigerian kingdom of Benin.

Not all facial marks are made for ethnic identification. Some marks were and still are associated with spiritistic and religious practices. Others are symbols of status in traditional societies. Still others are decorative marks.



Cut by specialists in the community, facial marks vary widely. Some are slight slits in the skin, while others are deep gashes widened by the fingers. Sometimes a native dye is added to the wound to stain the marks. Each ethnic group has its own unique pattern. For example, vertical marks, one on each cheek, identify Ondo men and women. Three horizontal marks on each cheek identify the Oyo people. To those literate in markings, a mere glance at someone's face is sufficient to read that person's ethnic group, town, or even family.

#### Mixed Attitudes

Just as the marks and reasons for them vary greatly, so do attitudes concerning them. Many wear the marks with pride. An editor with Nigeria's *Daily Times* stated: "Some consider the marks as an insignia of patriotism. It makes them feel like true sons of their ancestors."

This is the view of Jimoh, a Nigerian man, who says: "I have never felt bad about my Oyo marks because it shows that I am a real Yoruba indigene from the town of the Alafin." He further relates how in 1967 the marks saved his life during the Nigerian Civil War: "The house I lived in . . . was invaded and all [the others] were killed. The murderers did not touch me because of the marks on my face."

Others deeply resent the marks. Tajudeen says about the marking on his face: "I hate it, and I curse the day it was inflicted on me." And a teenage girl praises her mother for not allowing her to be subjected to the operation as a child. She says: "I would consider suicide if I had been given the marks."



**Facial marking Is a fading tradition**

#### Coping With Ridicule

Danjuma, mentioned in the introduction, was ridiculed because he did not have the marks. Usually the opposite is the case. Over 45 years ago, G. T. Basden wrote in his book *Niger Ibos*: "Scarifying and tattooing are going out of fashion. Many of the young men . . . would gladly be relieved of [their marks]. What is a matter of pride, when among his own clansmen, becomes a reproach, because of the ridicule and contempt which is meted out to him in other parts of the country."

Those words are certainly true today. Ajai, who earned a degree in psychology at the University of Lagos, recently studied facial marks in Nigeria. She observed: "People with facial marks, these days, at least in the cities like Lagos, are in the minority and come in contact with people who ridicule them. For instance, it is common to hear people refer to an individual as colonel, only to discover that he is not a member of the armed forces, but that the stripes on his cheeks are the same number as that of the

stripes on the uniform of a colonel in the Army. Some are called tiger, because of their striped cheeks or some are referred to as everlasting tears. . . . Imagine what effect this has on the self esteem of the individual."

Perhaps the toughest trials are endured in school. Samuel was the only one in his class with facial marks. He relates: "In school I was made fun of a lot. My mates would call me 'railway line' and 'the boy with the railway line.' They were always making fun of me and would raise three fingers. It made me feel inferior."

How did he cope? Samuel continues: "One day the jesting was so intense that I went to my biology teacher and asked him if it was possible to remove the marks. He told me that it could be done by plastic surgery but that I should not bother because thousands of people in Nigeria had marks. He said that my peers were making fun of me because they were not mature but that when we grew up, all the jesting would stop. He also said that the marks did not determine what I really was or what I would become.

"That made me feel much better, and the bad feeling I had about the marks disappeared. People seldom refer to my marks now. Even when they do refer to them, I just smile. My relationship with others is not impaired. People respect me because of what I am, not because I have marks."

#### A Fading Tradition

Because marking is usually done to youngsters, most Nigerians whose faces bear ethnic marks had little choice in the matter. When they become parents, however, they must decide whether to mark their children.

Some people decide to do so. According to the *Times International* of Lagos, there are several reasons for this decision. The magazine states: "Some still regard it as beautifying. Others believe tribal marks can be helpful in determining the bearer's origin for the purpose of favouritism. Another is the usage in determining the legitimacy of a child in the traditional setting."

Today, however, for more and more parents, these reasons are not compelling. Even among those who are proud of their marks, comparatively few risk the tribal surgeon's knife on the faces of their children. This is especially true in the cities. The pain and the risk of infection along with the scorn and discrimination the child may face later in life are all factors that make parents reject facial marking.

Clearly, the popularity and acceptance of facial marks are fading fast. It seems that in the Nigeria of the future, the 'identity card' will be something people carry in their wallets, not on their faces.



## What Is God's Holy Spirit?

"NOW WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE WERE BAPTIZED, JESUS ALSO WAS BAPTIZED AND, AS HE WAS PRAYING, THE HEAVEN WAS OPENED UP AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BODILY SHAPE LIKE A DOVE CAME DOWN UPON HIM, AND A VOICE CAME OUT OF HEAVEN: 'YOU ARE MY SON, THE BELOVED; I HAVE APPROVED YOU.'”—Luke 3:21, 22.

In a speech to a group of philosophers in ancient Greece, the apostle Paul called God the "Lord of heaven and earth." It is this God, Paul stated, who "made the world and all the things in it" and who "gives to all persons life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:24-28) How does God accomplish all of this? It is by means of his holy spirit, or active force.

The Bible also explains that God has an "abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power." (Isaiah 40:26) Yes, God created the entire universe, which manifests his dynamic energy and power.

### Power in Action

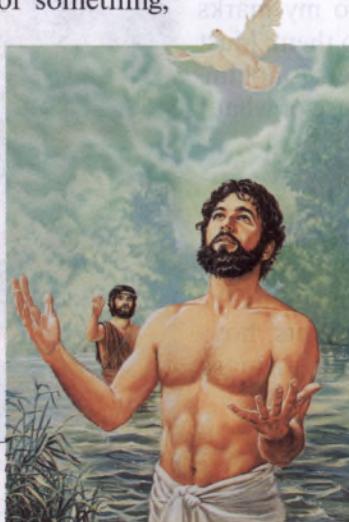
It would not be quite accurate to say that the holy spirit is God's power. This is because power can be latent, or inactively resident, in someone or something, such as power stored in a charged but unused battery. The Scriptures, however, present God's spirit in the context of being in motion, somewhat like the electric current that flows from a battery in use. (Genesis 1:2) Hence, God's holy spirit is his projected energy, his active force.

The Bible sometimes

speaks of the holy spirit as accomplishing a certain task or of its being in a different location from God. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 8:39; 13:4; 15:28, 29) Some who have read such passages assume that the holy spirit has its own identity apart from God. Why is this language used in the Scriptures? Is the holy spirit an entity separate from God?

Almighty God exists on a plane completely beyond that of his material creation. He is a spirit, invisible to our limited senses. (John 4:24) The Bible says that Jehovah God dwells in the heavens and that from there he gazes on mankind. (Psalm 33:13, 14) This is understandable. The Creator must be greater than the elements he is working with. He masters them, manipulates them, forms them, and controls them.—Genesis 1:1.

From his invisible dwelling place, God can cause things to happen anytime and anywhere. Hence, he does not need to be at the location at which his active force operates. He can send his spirit to accomplish a task. (Psalm 104:30) This may be easily under-



stood by people in modern times who operate household appliances by means of wireless remote control. Today we recognize the power of invisible forces such as electricity or infrared waves. Likewise, with his invisible holy force, or spirit, God can accomplish whatever he sets out to do, without transferring himself from one place to another.—Isaiah 55:11.

In Bible times this concept may have been difficult to grasp. Speaking of the holy spirit as a separate force undoubtedly helped readers to comprehend how God exercises his power even though he does not personally place himself at the location of its operation. When the Bible refers to the holy spirit as having done this or that, it is in effect saying that God himself has projected or exerted his power on persons or things to accomplish his will.

#### **The Various Operations of the Holy Spirit**

Jehovah made use of holy spirit in the creation of all animate and inanimate things. (Psalm 33:6) God also used it to destroy a violent and unrepentant generation of people by means of a deluge. (Genesis 6:1-22) It was this same active force that God used to transfer the precious life of his Son to the womb of the Jewish virgin Mary. —Luke 1:35.

At times, the spirit energized men to speak the truth boldly and courageously before enemies, often at the risk of their lives. (Micah 3:8) And there are many instances in the Bible, especially involving prophecy, when men and women were given special insight or understanding by means of this force. Since no human can foretell with accuracy what the future holds, this is an outstanding operation of the spirit. —2 Peter 1:20, 21.

The spirit can also give individuals miraculous powers. For example, by means

of this force, Jesus could control the forces of nature, heal sicknesses, and even raise the dead. (Luke 4:18-21; 8:22-26, 49-56; 9:11) The spirit was instrumental in organizing and energizing the early Christians to serve as God's witnesses to all the earth.—Acts 1:8; 2:1-47; Romans 15:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

#### **God's Power Exerted in Our Behalf**

Is it possible for God's human servants today to tap this unlimited source of energy? Yes! God grants a measure of holy spirit to his people to help them understand and accomplish his will. He grants his spirit to those who make a sincere, prayerful request, who have the right heart motivation, and who conform to his requirements. (1 Corinthians 2:10-16) That spirit can equip imperfect humans with "power beyond what is normal," enabling them to serve God faithfully despite obstacles. Certainly, then, it is the desire of all God-fearing people to receive and retain God's spirit.—2 Corinthians 4:7; Luke 11:13; Acts 15:8; Ephesians 4:30.

Soon God will use this dynamic force to stop the injustice and suffering in this wicked world, thereby sanctifying his great and holy name. Holy spirit will affect the whole world for good, and its fruitage will be evident for all to see, giving glory to its Originator.—Galatians 5:22, 23; Revelation 21:3, 4.

#### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

**Asteroids, Comets, and the Earth  
—On a Collision Course?**

**Eating Disorders—What Can Help?**

**How Can I Carry On  
a Long-Distance Courtship?**

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Marriage Is Healthy

Being married "lengthens life, substantially boosts physical and emotional health and raises income" for both women and men, states a researcher in *The New York Times*. A study by University of Chicago professor Linda J. Waite counters a report published in 1972 indicating that married women suffer more psychological stress. Dr. Waite found that "marriage changes people's behavior in ways that make them better off," such as drinking less alcohol. Marriage also appears to reduce depression. In fact, "single men as a group were depressed at the outset of the study and became more depressed if they stayed single." However, Dr. William J. Doherty, of the University of Minnesota, notes that the data represent averages and do not mean that everyone is better off married or that people who marry the wrong person will be happy and healthy.

### Violent Heroes

Some of the most popular role models for children are action-film heroes, according to a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization study of the effect of violence in the media. Of the five thousand 12-year-olds interviewed in 23 countries, 26 percent placed these movie heroes "way ahead of pop stars and musicians (18.5 percent), religious leaders (8 percent), or politicians (3 percent)" as their models for conduct, notes Brazil's *Jornal da Tarde*. Professor Jo Groebel, coordina-

tor of the study, says that children evidently regard violent heroes mainly as models of how to survive difficult situations. The more children become accustomed to violence, Groebel warns, the more capable they are of extreme behavior. He adds: "The media propagate the idea that violence is normal and pays off." Groebel emphasized that parents play a fundamental role in providing their children with direction that helps them to separate fiction from reality.

### Electronic Help for Lonely Hearts



In Japan the latest way for one lonely heart to meet another is with a "love beeper," reports the *Mainichi Daily News*. The beeper has settings for preferred activities: karaoke (singing along with recorded music), friends, and chat. Suppose a young man wants to find a young lady to talk to. He sets his palm-size electronic matchmaker to "chat." If he comes within a few yards of a young lady who also has a love beeper set at "chat," the devices will start beeping and flashing a green light. Already, 400,000 people have bought the beepers. Those who are concerned about what type of person they may contact can turn off the beeps and

rely on the flashing light alone. Says Takeya Takafuji, planning director for the manufacturer: "If this middle-aged man isn't your type, or there is no way you want to talk to him, you just walk away."

### No. 1 Killer of Young Women

In economically developed lands, tuberculosis often strikes men over 65, reports *Nando Times*. But on a global scale, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), tuberculosis has become "the world's No. 1 killer of young women," says the report. "Wives, mothers and wage-earners are being cut down in their prime," stated Dr. Paul Dolin, of WHO's Global Tuberculosis Program. Experts gathered at a recent medical seminar in Göteborg, Sweden, said that worldwide more than 900 million women are infected with tuberculosis. About one million of these will die each year, most between the ages of 15 and 44. One reason for this death rate, according to Brazil's newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, is that many abandon treatment before the disease is cured.

### Zero-Pollution Car

Cars are a major source of air pollution in the world's large cities. To address the problem, a French engineer has invented an urban car that is silent and odor free and "runs only on the air around us," reports *The Guardian Weekly* of London. Engine designer Guy Nègre has developed a motor that runs on compressed air. It takes less than two dollars' worth of electricity to fill its compressed

air tank, after which the car can run for ten hours in urban conditions at a top speed of about 60 miles an hour. The car draws in outside air during braking. Because of its carbon air-filtering system, its exhaust emissions are purer than the air it sucks in. After conducting dozens of tests on other nonpolluting vehicles, Mexican authorities chose this car to replace Mexico City's 87,000 taxis.

#### Contaminated Alps

Twelve years after the nuclear power plant accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, Europe's alpine crescent is still highly contaminated by nuclear fallout. A recent analysis revealed very high levels of the radioactive isotope Cesium-137, reports the French newspaper *Le Monde*. In some places radioactivity was 50 times higher than the European standard defining nuclear waste. The most contaminated samples came from the Mercantour National Park, in southeast France; the Matterhorn, on the Swiss-Italian border; Cortina, in Italy; and the Hohe Tauern Park, in Austria. Authorities are asking the affected countries to monitor the radiation level of water and of susceptible foodstuffs, such as mushrooms and milk.

#### Family Dining

In a study of 527 teens, those who ate dinner with their families at least five times a week were "less likely to do drugs or be depressed, more motivated at school and had better peer relationships," says Canada's *Toronto Star* newspaper. "Teens labelled as 'not well-adjusted' ate with their families three or fewer days a week." Psychologist Bruce Brian asserts that the

family dinner hour is "a trait of a healthy family." Dining together fosters family bonds, communication skills, and a sense of belonging, notes the report, and provides an opportunity to learn table manners and to share in conversation, humor, and prayer. One grown daughter of a family who regularly ate together says that if they had not always done so, "I don't think I'd be as close to them as I am now."

#### Deafness From Headsets



Research by Australia's National Acoustic Laboratory revealed that even normal use of personal stereo headsets can cause latent ear damage, reports *The Courier-Mail* of Brisbane. Researcher Dr. Eric LePage said that young people are reluctant to take such warnings seriously. "They can repeatedly expose themselves to very loud sounds or music for years and they judge that it has no effect," he said. One survey showed that warnings "had little impact until people actually started suffering deafness," the paper said. The new research confirms German studies indicating that about one quarter of military recruits there aged 16 to 24 have already damaged their hearing by listening to loud music and that "almost 10 percent of students aged 16 to 18 had lost so much hearing that they had problems under-

standing some normal conversation."

#### Tobacco Sponsors Sports

The tobacco industry's extensive use of sports events and other entertainment for promoting their products creates "a positive association between sports . . . and cigarette smoking," says Rhonda Galbally, of Australia's Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. As a result, the often subtle tobacco advertising in sports may induce people to smoke. The Cancer Research Campaign in Britain found that "boys who enjoy watching Formula One motor racing on television are almost twice as likely to start smoking," reports the news agency Panos. "Across Europe, tobacco companies spend several hundred million dollars every year in support of car racing alone." And the cars are mobile advertisements that often appear on television.

#### First Farmers

The French newspaper *Le Monde* reports that a team of European scientists found that the DNA of strains of wild wheat in the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East were most similar to cultivated varieties used elsewhere today. Along with wheat and other "founder crops," the first domesticated sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle were also apparently raised in that region. Scientists say that the use of domesticated crops spread out from there across Europe and Asia. Interestingly, some of the earliest agricultural villages where wheat dating back thousands of years has been discovered are to the southwest of Lake Van and the mountains of Ararat.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Street Gangs** I was moved by the articles on street gangs in the April 22, 1998, issue of *Awake!* Right now I am in a reformatory school. My mother is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but a while back I stopped going to meetings. Then I got involved with bad friends and took part in a series of violent thefts. That's why my mother sent me this *Awake!* At first I thought, 'This again!' But as I looked at it, I got engrossed and read it all. By the time I finished reading it, my thinking had changed. I never realized that *Awake!* could help me so much. I want to make a new start and attend meetings again. I have come to feel that I never want to repeat my mistakes and that I want to serve Jehovah as long as I live.

M. S., Japan

I am a single parent of an 11-year-old boy and a 9-year-old girl, and we live in an area with many different gangs. I read this magazine and immediately discussed it with my children. With the help of the article, they were able to see that being in a gang is never a substitute for love or a secure family life.

B. S., United States

My heartfelt thanks for the articles. I often feel concerned about my teenage nephews, and the information you provided has proved to be extremely helpful.

I. M. M., Brazil

The articles were just in time because some of my classmates are forming a gang. Some are not sure if they really want to be part of one, since the leader made them write rude words on the wall regarding our principal. Thanks for helping the young in these hard times.

B. C. G., Mexico

**Smothered by Friends** I just want to say how much I appreciated the article "Young

People Ask . . . How Can I Avoid Being Smothered by My Friend?" (April 22, 1998) Though I am an adult and married, I always enjoy these articles. This particular one so suited a situation my husband and I are presently experiencing that I read it five times before putting it down. It helped me to learn that even Jesus needed time for himself.

P. A., Trinidad

Because of small misunderstandings, my friend and I sometimes stop talking to each other, and this makes me feel so downhearted that I cannot concentrate. After reading the article several times, I realized that I am smothering my friend and not giving him time to do other things. I feel that this article was written just for me, as it showed me so many ways to improve in my relations with others.

R. S., India

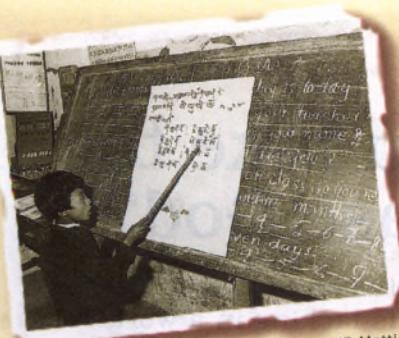
**Orthodontics** On a recent visit to my dentist, I left a copy of the April 8, 1998, *Awake!*, containing the article on orthodontics. The dentist later expressed appreciation, saying that the article was informative and concise and written in a way that was easy to understand. He also said that he had given copies of the article to some patients to help them understand their treatment program.

T. P., England

**Grace Marsh's Life Story** I want to express my gratitude for Grace Marsh's experience in the *Awake!* (April 22, 1998). It was upbuilding and encouraging to read about her courage in continuing to preach despite opposition. It made me appreciate still more the freedom we have to preach as a result of the efforts of the brothers in the past.

C. F., United States

# UN Youth Initiatives How Successful?



FAO photo/F. Mattioli

**A**BOUT 15 years ago, the UN proclaimed the year 1985 International Youth Year. In addition, some four years ago, the UN adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. These initiatives, it was hoped, would help to reduce problems and increase opportunities for the world's more than one billion young people. Did these programs make a difference?

No doubt in some areas they did. *Choices*, a magazine published by the United Nations Development Programme, gives some examples: In Thailand more than half of preschool children were malnourished in 1982. Less than ten years later, however, moderate and severe malnutrition had been almost eliminated. In the country of Oman, there were only three schools in 1970 and only 900 boys attended. But in 1994, nearly 500,000 children in that country went to school, and 49 percent of them were girls. Without a doubt, those are success stories.

However, the UN publication *United Nations Action for Youth* notes that especially in the developing world, progress is overshadowed by persistent problems related to education, employment, and poverty, and these are just a few of the areas that the World Programme aims to improve.

Many developing countries, for instance, will not meet the goal of primary education for all children by the year 2000. Parents in these countries often cannot send their children to school because schools are not available or are not affordable. As a consequence, notes *United Nations Action for Youth*, "the number of illiterate people will continue to grow." Illiteracy, in turn, contributes to unemployment, and unemployment leads to a wide range of social ills, such as "low self-esteem, marginalization," the waste of youthful talents, and extreme poverty. And although poverty strikes young and old alike,

young people are particularly vulnerable. The same UN source concludes that despite all efforts, "hunger and malnutrition remain among the most serious and intractable threats to humanity."

Though well-intended programs and hardworking professionals are making some difference, they are unable to remove the causes of society's ills. More is needed to accomplish that. As the book *Mensrechten en de noodzaak van wereldbestuur* (Human Rights and the Necessity of World Governance) states, the world's problems will be solved only 'if a world government comes about that is in a position to take enforceable measures.' It is not surprising, then, that Christians—young and old alike—look forward to God's incoming Kingdom, the world government that Jesus told his followers to pray for. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) That government will truly make a difference!

## *Education is a fundamental right and need of all children*



WHO photo by J. Mohr

# Would You Like to Please God?

Are you conscious of a spiritual need in your life? Do you feel that something is lacking in a world where only material values seem to count? Would you like to get to know God and have a close relationship with him?

You might say, 'Yes, but how do I go about it? Isn't it complicated to read and understand the Bible?' Some people, perhaps because of living under hard economic conditions, have had only a few years of schooling and may have difficulty in reading. How can they be helped to know God and his requirements for everlasting life?

In 1996 the Watch Tower Society released a publication, now available in 211 languages, called *What Does God Require of Us?* It is a 32-page, full-color brochure made up of 16 sections that give the Bible's simple answers to such questions as: Who is God? Who is Jesus Christ? What is God's purpose for the earth? How can you find the true religion? The brochure also considers how we can draw close to God in prayer and how we can enjoy family life that pleases God.

If you would like a copy of this brochure, please send in the accompanying coupon.

What  
Does God  
Require  
of Us?