

Awake!

February 8, 2000



Fatherless Families

**BREAKING
THE CYCLE**

Average Printing 20,381,000
Published in 82 Languages

Fatherless Families —Breaking the Cycle 3-11

Increasing numbers of children are being raised without fathers. What is behind this disturbing trend? How can families be helped to remain intact?



Stairway to the Sky 16

The rice terraces of the Cordillera Central have been called the eighth wonder of the world. Find out why.



Lying—Is It Ever Justified? 20

Many feel that so-called white lies are harmless. But does the Bible agree with this popular notion?

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Fatherless Families

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

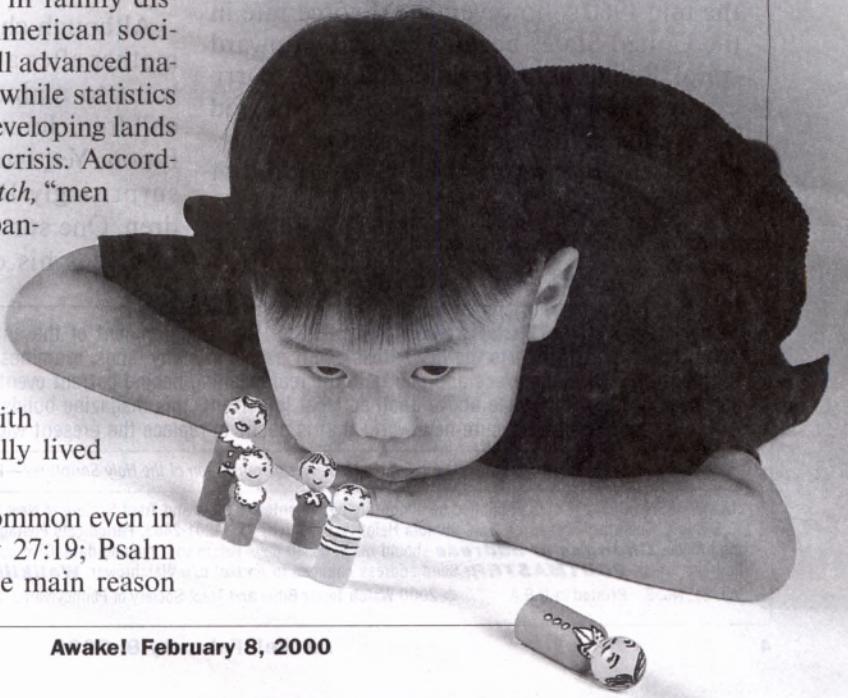
WHAT would you say is the most significant social problem of the day? Almost 80 percent of those polled in a U.S. Gallup survey believe that it is "the physical absence of the father from the home." According to Gallup, over 27 million children in the United States live apart from their biological fathers, and that number is rapidly increasing. A report by the United Nations Children's Fund states that about 50 percent of white children born in the United States since 1980 "will spend some part of their childhood in a single-parent family. For black children the proportion is about 80%." *USA Today* thus designated the United States "the world leader in families without fathers."

Nevertheless, an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* observes: "The rise in family disruption is not unique to American society. It is evident in virtually all advanced nations, including Japan." And while statistics are hard to come by, many developing lands seem to be facing a similar crisis. According to the magazine *World Watch*, "men [in poor countries] often abandon their wives and children because of increasing economic pressures." Indeed, a survey in a Caribbean country revealed that only 22 percent of fathers with eight-year-old children actually lived with their children.

Fatherless children were common even in Bible times. (Deuteronomy 27:19; Psalm 94:6) Back then, however, the main reason

young ones became fatherless was the death of a father. "Today," says writer David Blankenhorn, "the principal cause of fatherlessness is paternal choice." Indeed, as we will see, the rising number of fatherless children gives evidence that many people today are without "natural affection." According to the Bible, this is just one more proof that we are living in "the last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-3.

For young children, however, the disappearance of a father from their lives is a personal tragedy. It initiates a cycle of pain and devastation that can have long-lasting consequences. Therefore, in this series we will discuss this cycle, not to dishearten readers, but to provide information that can help families to halt this destructive trend.



Fathers

WHY THEY ARE DISAPPEARING

"I don't remember Mom and Dad fighting or arguing. All I know is that Dad was there, and then—boom!—one day he wasn't there. I don't know where my dad is to this day. I know I don't feel anything toward him."—Bruce.

"I was the only kid at school who didn't have two parents and didn't live in a house . . . I always felt like I stood out. I always felt very different from everyone else my age."—Patricia.

THE crisis of fatherless families has its roots in the industrial revolution. As factory jobs began luring men away from their homes, the father's influence in the family began to wane; mothers took on a greater share of child rearing.* Even so, most fathers remained with their families. During the mid-1960's, however, the divorce rate in the United States began a dramatic upward spiral. Religious, economic, and social barriers to divorce started to crumble. Spurred on by the advice of self-proclaimed experts who asserted that divorce not only didn't

* Interestingly, before industrialization, child-rearing manuals in the United States were generally addressed to fathers, not mothers.

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.

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

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weekly basis. Almost half the children had not seen their father for an entire year!

The Failure of Shared Custody

For divorced couples to share custody, it requires enormous cooperation and trust—qualities often in short supply. Researchers Furstenberg and Cherlin put it this way: “A major reason why fathers stop seeing their children is that they want to have nothing to do with their former wives. And many women adopt the same attitude toward their former husbands.”

True, many divorced fathers do see their children regularly. But because they are no longer involved in the day-to-day lives of their children, it is difficult for some to behave like fathers when they are with them. Many opt for the role of playmate, spending virtually all of their time together in recreation or shopping. Fourteen-year-old Ari describes his weekend visits with his father, saying: “There’s no set schedule, no ‘Be home by five-thirty’ kind of stuff. It’s open. It’s free. And my father is always buying me presents.”—*How It Feels When Parents Divorce*, by Jill Krementz.

A loving father should ‘know how to give good gifts to his children.’ (Matthew 7:11) But gifts are no substitute for needed guidance and discipline. (Proverbs 3:12; 13:1) When one trades the role of parent for that of playmate or visitor, the father-child relationship is bound to deteriorate. One study concluded: “Divorce can permanently rup-

ture the father-child relationship.”—*Journal of Marriage and the Family*, May 1994.

Hurt and angry at being cut off from their children’s lives—or perhaps just coldly indifferent—some men abandon their families, failing to give needed financial support.* (1 Timothy 5:8) “I don’t think of anything about my father that I like,” says one bitter teenage boy. “He’s really out of the picture, not supporting us or anything, and I think that stinks.”

Unwed Parents

Record numbers of illegitimate births have caused the biggest growth in the numbers of fatherless children. “About one-third of all childbirths in the [United States] now occur outside of marriage,” says the book *Fatherless America*. Out of the approximately 500,000 babies born each year to those from 15 to 19 years of age, 78 percent are to unmarried teens. Teen pregnancy is a global problem, however. And programs that teach contraception or preach abstinence have done little to change the sexual behavior of teens.

The book *Teenage Fathers*, by Bryan E. Robinson, explains: “Out-of-wedlock pregnancy no longer carries the shame and humiliation it did during the 1960s because of more liberalized social attitudes towards sex

* According to researchers Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, in the United States, “about 40 percent of children who are theoretically eligible for child support do not have a [court ordered] child support award at all, and a quarter of those with an award receive nothing. Less than a third of children receive the full amount they are owed.”

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address.
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and premarital pregnancy.... Also the youth of today are constantly bombarded with sexuality through advertising, music, motion pictures, and television. The American media tell adolescents that sex is romantic, exciting, and titillating without ever showing the real-life consequences of spontaneous and irresponsible sexual behavior."

Many youngsters seem blissfully unaware of the consequences of illicit sex. Note some of the comments that author Robinson heard: "She didn't look like the type [to get pregnant]"; 'We only had sex once a week'; or 'I didn't think you could get pregnant the first time.' Of course, some young men know all too well that sex can result in pregnancy. The book *Young Unwed Fathers* observes: "To many boys [in the inner city], sex is an important symbol of local social status; sexual conquests become so many notches on one's belt. Many of the girls offer sex as a gift in their bargaining for the attentions of a young man." In some inner-city circles, boys who have not fathered a baby may even be teased for being a "virgin"!

The picture gets even darker when you consider the results of a 1993 study of school-age mothers in California. It turns out that two thirds of the girls had become pregnant, not by teenage boyfriends, but by men over 20 years of age! In fact, some studies indicate that many unwed teen moms are victims of statutory rape—or even child abuse. Such widespread exploitation reveals how sick and depraved modern-day society has become.—2 Timothy 3:13.

Why Young Men Walk Away

Teenage boys who father children rarely take long-term responsibility for their offspring. Said one boy whose girlfriend became pregnant: "I just told her, 'See ya' 'round.'" However, as an article in *Family Life Educator* points out, "most young fathers express a strong desire to have a close

relationship with their children." According to one study of young unmarried dads, 70 percent visited their child once a week. "However," cautions the article, "as the children get older, the amount of visitation decreases."

One 17-year-old father summed up why, saying: "If I'd only known how hard it was going to be, I'd never let this happen." Few youths have either the emotional maturity or the experience to handle the demands of parenthood. Nor do many have the education or the employment skills needed to earn a living. Rather than cope with the humiliation of failure, many young men simply walk away from their children. "My life is pretty much of a mess," confesses one young father. Another laments: "I can hardly look after myself; I don't know what I would do if I had to look after [my son] too."

Sour Grapes

In Bible times the Jews had a saying: "The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste." (Ezekiel 18:2, *Today's English Version*) God told the Jews that it did not need to be that way, that past errors need not be repeated in the future. (Ezekiel 18:3) Nevertheless, millions of children today seem to be tasting the bitterness of their parents' "sour grapes"—paying the penalty for their parents' immaturity, irresponsibility, and marital failures. The research is simply overwhelming in demonstrating that children who grow up without a father are exposed to a plethora of physical and emotional risks. (See the box on page 7.) Particularly distressing is the fact that the legacy of a fatherless home is often passed on from generation to generation—a continuing cycle of pain and misery.

Are fatherless families doomed to failure? Not at all. In fact, the good news is that the cycle of fatherless families can be broken. Our next article will discuss how.

THE RISKS OF GROWING UP WITHOUT A FATHER

Growing up without a father poses serious risks for children. While the following information may be painful for some to consider, being aware of the risks is the first step in preventing or at least minimizing the damage. Realize, too, that statistical studies apply to groups and not to individuals. Many children grow up in fatherless homes without experiencing any of these problems. As our final article will show, parental intervention and the application of Bible principles can do much to mitigate these potential difficulties. Consider, then, some of the possible risks a fatherless child may face.

■ Increased Dangers of Sexual Abuse

Research clearly shows that fatherlessness increases the risk of child sexual abuse. One study revealed that out of 52,000 cases of child abuse, "72 percent involved children living in a household without one or both biological parents." The book *Fatherless America* asserts: "The escalating risk of childhood sexual abuse in our society stems primarily from the growing absence of married fathers and the growing presence of stepfathers, boyfriends, and other unrelated or transient males."

■ Increased Risk of Early Sexual Behavior

Because there is likely less parental supervision in a single-parent home, young ones often have more opportunities to engage in immoral conduct. Less parental training may also be a factor. "Girls without a father in their life are two and a half times as likely to get pregnant," says the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

■ Poverty A study of black teenage girls in South Africa concluded that poverty is a common consequence of unwed parenthood. "In about 50% of cases," say the study's authors, "the teenager is unlikely to return to school." Many

unwed mothers end up in a life of prostitution and drug trafficking. The situation may not be much better in Western lands. In the United States, "10 percent of children in two-parent families were in poverty [in 1995], compared to 50 percent in female householder families." —*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 1997*.

■ Neglect Forced to fend for themselves, some single parents are overwhelmed by their responsibilities and are unable to spend adequate time with their children. One divorcée recalls: "I was working by day and going to school at night—running myself ragged. I definitely neglected the kids."

■ Emotional Damage Contrary to the claim of some experts that children quickly bounce back after a divorce, researchers, such as Dr. Judith Wallerstein, have found that divorce inflicts long-lasting emotional wounds. "Over a third of the young men and women between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine have little or no ambition ten years after their parents' divorce. They are drifting through life with no set goals . . . and a sense of helplessness." (*Second Chances*, by Dr. Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee) Low self-esteem, depression, delinquent behavior, and persistent anger were observed among many children of divorce.

The book *The Single-Parent Family* says: "Numerous studies show that boys raised without a strong male presence in their lives show insecurity about their gender identity, low self-esteem, and, later in their lives, trouble forming intimate relationships. The problems girls may develop from living without male role models don't usually show up until adolescence or later, and include having difficulty forming successful male/female relationships in adulthood."



Fatherless Families

BREAKING THE CYCLE

IF PRESENT trends continue, fatherless families will soon be the norm. A report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services claims: "Children raised by a single parent tend to receive lower grades, have more behavior problems, and have higher rates of chronic health and psychiatric disorders. . . . Being raised in a single-mother family is associated with elevated risks of teenage childbearing, high school dropout, [and] incarceration."

Little wonder, then, that social scientists, family counselors, educators, and even politicians desperately seek ways to halt this devastating trend. Large-scale rallies for men have been held to ignite pride in fatherhood and to confirm men's commitment to family. Books on fatherhood have flooded the market. Efforts have even been made to force fathers to care for their responsibilities. In the United States, "deadbeat dads" have been castigated by judges, assailed on TV talk shows, and even subjected to public humiliation. Such efforts, though, have produced feeble results.

Quick Fixes

A quick fix may likewise produce dubious results. For example, a divorced woman may remarry in haste, hoping to give her children a new father. But while remarriage may have its advantages, there can be problems. Children are sometimes resistant to accepting someone new as their father. Sometimes they never do. One study revealed that "nearly two-thirds of women who lived with a stepparent had left home before age 19 . . . , compared to 50% of women from intact

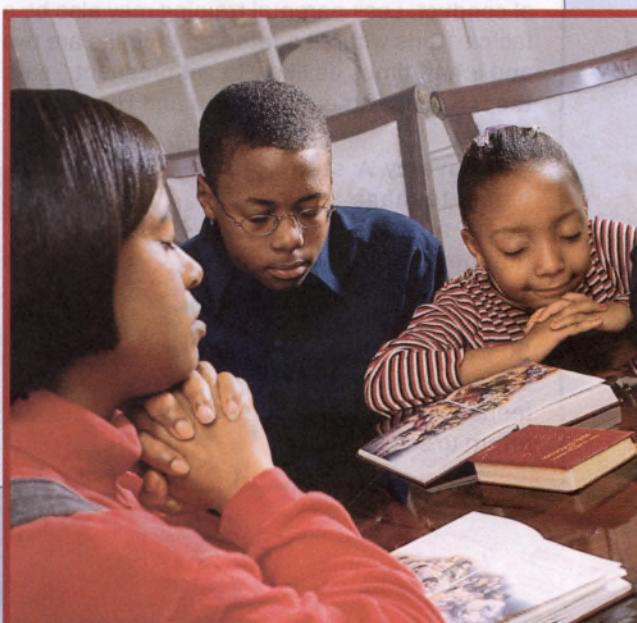
homes." Even in successful stepfamilies, it sometimes takes several years before a step-father is accepted by the children.*

Similarly, there are no quick fixes to the problem of teen pregnancy. Abortion, for example, violates God's law and requires a young woman to shut the door of her tender compassions upon the tiny life developing within her. (Exodus 20:13; 21:22, 23; Psalm 139:14-16; compare 1 John 3:17.) How could that not leave emotional scars? Giving up a child for adoption is seen by many as a more humane solution, but it too can leave emotional scars—on both mother and child.

No, quick fixes will not break the cycle of fatherless families. Current family trends will be halted only if people are willing to

* Information to help stepparents was published in the March 1, 1999, issue of our companion journal, *The Watchtower*.

By following Bible principles, a single parent can have success in raising children



make profound changes in their thinking, their attitudes, their behavior, their morals. Something more than high-sounding talk and pop psychology is needed if people are to be motivated to make such sweeping changes. That "something more" is found in God's Word, the Bible. After all, it is God himself who instituted the family arrangement. (Ephesians 3:14, 15) He knows better than anyone else what children need.

Bible Principles Help Families to Cope

But can the Bible really help children who have an absentee parent? Are they not damaged beyond repair? No, they are not. At the beginning of this article, we quoted a U.S. government report that itemized many of the risks these children face. Dire words notwithstanding, the report concluded: "Despite consistent evidence of greater risk, the research also shows that the majority of children in single parent families develop normally." Yes, the consequences of being fatherless can be eliminated or at least minimized. This is especially so if Bible principles are applied in child rearing.

This requires hard work on the part of a single parent—a prospect that may seem overwhelming at first. But if you are in this situation, you can learn to rely fully on

Jehovah God. (Proverbs 3:1, 2) Some Christian women in Bible times faced grievous situations, such as widowhood. Regarding such ones the Bible says: "The woman who is actually a widow and left destitute has put her hope in God and persists in supplications and prayers night and day." (1 Timothy 5:5) Remember that Jehovah calls himself "a father of fatherless boys." (Psalm 68:5) You can be assured that he will support a God-fearing woman in her efforts to raise her children.



Conducting a regular home Bible study with one's children is an essential way to help them grow up to be balanced, mature adults. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) Among Jehovah's Witnesses many single parents use Bible-based publications specifically developed for young ones, such as *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*.* The information therein helps young ones to develop moral standards that can help them to avoid making their parents' mistakes. As children come to know Jehovah God, they can begin to perceive that they have a heavenly Father who deeply cares for them. (Psalm 27:10) This can enable them to cope with feelings of abandonment. A British girl who experienced her parents' breakup recalls: "Through all of it, Mum instilled in me the need for prayer and complete reliance on Jehovah. That enabled us to cope."

Maintaining the Parent-Child Bond

The Bible makes it clear that a child must honor both his mother *and* his father.

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



(Exodus 20:12) And divorce does not break the father-child bond. Though the ex-husband may no longer live at home, the children can still benefit from having a warm relationship with him.* The problem is that the mother may feel angry toward him and resent his involvement with the children. How can the mother cope with these feelings?

The Bible gives good advice when it cautions: "Take care that rage does not allure you into spiteful [actions] . . . Be on your guard that you do not turn to what is hurtful." (Job 36:18-21) Granted, it's not easy to speak kindly of someone who has hurt or abandoned you. But ask yourself: 'Can a girl learn to trust a man if she is constantly told how bad her father is? Can a boy develop a stable, manly personality if he is chastised by being told, "You're just like your father"? Can children have a healthy view of authority if they are taught to despise their father or are discouraged from seeing him at all?' Clearly, undermining your children's relationship with their father is damaging.

It might surprise you to know that the Bible does not condemn righteous indignation. "Be wrathful," says the Bible, "and yet do not sin." (Ephesians 4:26) Being angry is not the sin, but being controlled by "wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech" is. (Colossians 3:8) So avoid 'father bashing' in front of your children. If you feel the need to express your frustrations, follow the Bible's suggestion to share your

"anxious care," but do so with someone other than your children—perhaps a trusted friend. (Proverbs 12:25) Try to maintain a positive attitude and avoid dwelling on the past. (Ecclesiastes 7:10) Doing so can do much to help mitigate your anger.

Finally, remember that the Bible commands a child to respect his father—even if his father's conduct has been less than admirable. (Ephesians 6:2, 3) So try to help your children to put their father's shortcomings in perspective. One young woman who grew up in a broken home says: "By viewing my father objectively—as a fallible, imperfect human—I've finally come to terms with him." By encouraging your children to respect their father, you help them to develop a healthy view of *your* parental authority!

It is also important that you not blur the boundaries between you and your children. They are still under the 'law of their mother.' (Proverbs 1:8) Sons can feel overburdened if they are expected to be 'the man of the house.' Daughters can likewise be overwhelmed by having to serve as their mother's confidante. Children need to be assured that you the parent will care for them—not vice versa. (Compare 2 Corinthians 12:14.) Such assurance can make them feel secure, even though their family situation is not ideal.

* This would not apply when a child is in danger of being physically or sexually abused by a father.

**Christian men can often
'rescue the fatherless boy'
by taking a sincere and
healthy interest in him**



Surrogate Fathers

What if the father is entirely out of the picture? Experts say that children can benefit from having male association. While the kindly interest that an uncle or a neighbor takes in a child can do some good, he will particularly benefit from the wholesome male association that exists within the Christian congregation. Jesus promised that the congregation would be like a supportive family.—Mark 10:29, 30.

In Bible times young Timothy grew up to be an outstanding man of God, without the support of a believing father. The Bible gives much of the credit for this to his loving mother and grandmother. (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:1-5) However, he also benefited from association with a Christian man—the apostle Paul. Paul called Timothy his “beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 4:17) Similarly today, Jehovah’s Witnesses are encouraged to heed the Bible’s counsel “to look after orphans and widows.” (James 1:27) They are urged to ‘rescue fatherless boys’ by taking a sincere, balanced interest in such ones. (Job 29:12) A young woman named Annette recalls the healthy interest a Christian elder took in her when she was young, saying: “He was the only real father figure I ever had.”

Breaking the Cycle

These principles can help fatherless children to succeed. In spite of their disadvantaged childhoods, they can become balanced, productive adults as well as loving, faithful, and committed parents. Even so, prevention is far better than any cure. And ultimately, the cycle of fatherless families can be broken only when men and women make a commitment to apply the Bible in their lives—for example, by adhering to the Bible’s prohibition on sex before marriage and by following the standards the Bible sets for husbands and wives.—1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:21-33.

Nowadays, many children have fathers in the house and yet can still be called fatherless. Claims one expert in family issues: “The biggest problem facing . . . children today is a lack of time with and attention from their parents.” God’s Word addresses this issue head-on. It commands fathers regarding their children: “Give them the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing.” (Ephesians 6:4, New English Bible; Proverbs 24:27) When fathers follow the Bible’s advice, children have no fear of being abandoned.

Is it realistic to believe, though, that people will turn to the Bible on a large scale? Hardly. (Matthew 7:14) But Jehovah’s Witnesses have helped millions to find happiness in their family life through a program of home Bible study.* Of course, the Bible warns that *all* married couples will suffer “tribulation in their flesh” because of imperfection. (1 Corinthians 7:28) But those who truly respect God’s Word seek to work out their problems, not to divorce at the first sign of trouble. Admittedly, there are times when a Christian may appropriately consider separation or even divorce. (Matthew 5:32) However, knowing the possible impact this could have on his or her children will move a Christian to seek ways to salvage the marriage if at all possible.

Following the Bible will do more than save your family now. It can make it possible for all of you to live forever! Jesus said: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3) Reading and applying the counsel found in God’s Word is one of the best ways to make sure that your family will remain intact forever.

* The book *The Secret of Family Happiness* (published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.) has much Bible-based advice that can help families. It can be obtained by contacting Jehovah’s Witnesses locally.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Clues Across

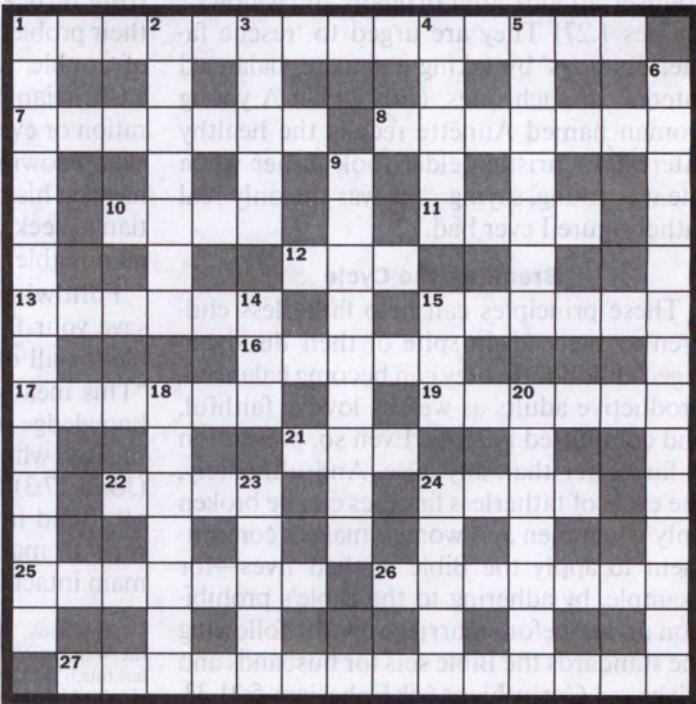
1. Expression often used by Jesus to impress on hearers the accuracy of his statements [5 words] (Matthew 5:18)
7. One of 11 swift and courageous mighty men of the tribe of Gad who joined David in the wilderness (1 Chronicles 12:12)
8. The mother of Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, valiant fighters for David (2 Samuel 2:18)
10. To place full confidence in someone (Psalm 37:5)
11. Tall (Matthew 4:8)
12. One must endure until this to be saved (Mark 13:13)
13. One of Haman's ten sons, killed by the Jews (Esther 9:9)
15. A spirit creature of this type touched Isaiah's lips with a glowing coal so that Isaiah could fulfill his prophetic assignment (See Isaiah 6:6, 7.)
16. Herod's "man in charge" (Luke 8:3)
17. A position of responsibility (1 Timothy 3:1)
19. One of four rivers branching out from the "river issuing out of Eden" (Genesis 2:10, 11)
21. A liquid measure (Exodus 29:40)
22. Paul pointed out that a little leaven will ferment all of this (Galatians 5:9)
24. One of Noah's three sons (Genesis 9:18)
25. The prophet Samuel's father (1 Samuel 1:19, 20)
26. Many decisive battles were fought around this strategic city overlooking the Jezreel Valley (Judges 5:19)
27. The Gibeonites were

assigned this lowly position [3 words] (Joshua 9:27)

Clues Down

1. Designation given the disciples whom Jesus personally selected [2 words] (Matthew 10:2-4)
2. Jesus told his disciples that they should not be called this (Matthew 23:10)
3. The land where Paul wrote the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 13:24)
4. Job said that he barely escaped death by the "skin" of these (Job 19:20)
5. Of less age (1 Timothy 5:1, 2)
6. Place in ancient times where grain was separated from the stalk and the chaff [2 words] (Ruth 3:3)
9. Name given an army officer in charge of a hundred men (Luke 7:6, King James Version)
14. Ezekiel said that the expanse over the heads of the living creatures sparkled like this (Ezekiel 1:22)
15. A fluid found in plants (Job 8:16)
18. One of the territories comprising the domain of Philip, the son of Herod the Great (Luke 3:1)
20. A son of Gilead and great-grandson of Manasseh (Joshua 17:2)
23. State of being free from disturbance (Job 21:9)
24. In Joseph's dream, his alone stood erect (Genesis 37:7)

Crossword Solutions Page 19



Try a Pair of the “Quick Ones”!

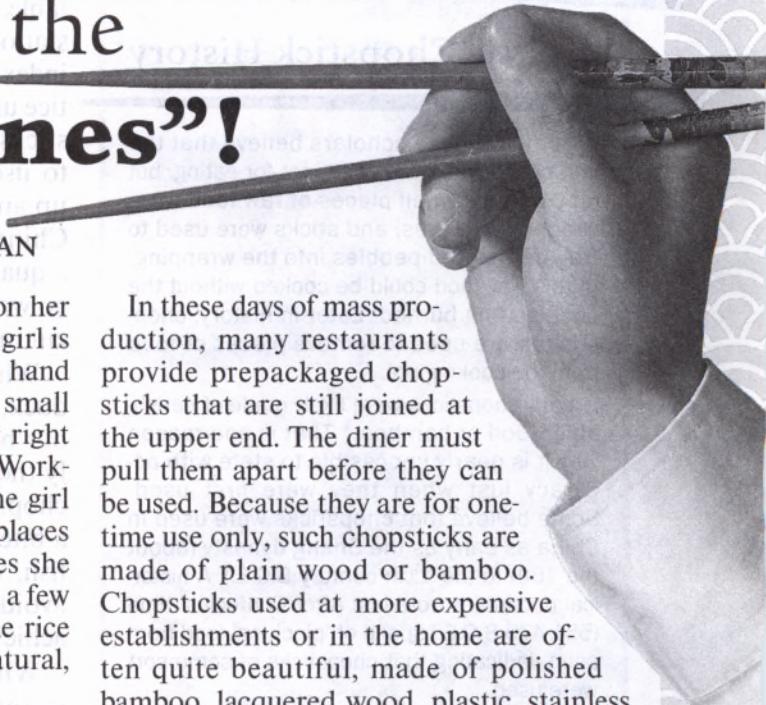
BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN TAIWAN

FROM the look of sheer delight on her face, it is obvious that the little girl is enjoying her meal. In her left hand is a bowl piled to the brim with rice, small pieces of vegetables, and fish. In her right hand is a pair of thin bamboo sticks. Working the sticks with her tiny fingers, the girl picks out her favorite morsels and places them neatly in her mouth. Sometimes she takes the bowl up to her lips and, with a few quick strokes of the sticks, scoops the rice right into her mouth. It all looks so natural, easy, and neat.

What the little girl has in her hand are, of course, the fabled chopsticks. In Chinese they are called *k'uai tzu* (Pinyin, *kuaizi*), which means “quick ones.” The English word “chopsticks” is said to have come from the pidgin term *chop*, meaning “quick.” At any rate, they are found in just about every household in Southeast Asia. Perhaps you have tried to use them while dining in a Chinese restaurant. But do you know where the idea of chopsticks came from? Or how and when they were first used? And would you like to know how to use them correctly?

The “Quick Ones”

Chopsticks are slender sticks about eight to ten inches long. The upper half of the stick is often squared. This makes it easier to grasp and prevents it from rolling around on the table. The lower half is usually rounded. Often, Japanese chopsticks are shorter and end in more of a point than Chinese ones.



In these days of mass production, many restaurants provide prepackaged chopsticks that are still joined at the upper end. The diner must pull them apart before they can be used. Because they are for one-time use only, such chopsticks are made of plain wood or bamboo. Chopsticks used at more expensive establishments or in the home are often quite beautiful, made of polished bamboo, lacquered wood, plastic, stainless steel, or perhaps even silver or ivory. They may also be inscribed with poetry or decorated with a painting.

How to Use Chopsticks

Many visitors to Oriental countries such as China and Japan are fascinated when they see a small child of perhaps just two years of age eating with a pair of seemingly oversized chopsticks. In no time at all, the contents of the bowl are transferred piece by piece to the child’s mouth. It really looks easy.

Would you like to try using a pair of the “quick ones”? At first you may find it awkward to get the chopsticks to move in the way you want them to, but with a little practice, it becomes easy and the chopsticks become like an extension of your hand.

Chopsticks are held in one hand only, usually the right hand. (See the illustrations on page 15.) First, cup your hand, with your thumb apart from your fingers. Place one

A Little Chopstick History

Some Chinese scholars believe that the first chopsticks were used, not for eating, but for cooking. Small pieces of raw food were wrapped in leaves, and sticks were used to transfer heated pebbles into the wrapping. In this way food could be cooked without the cook getting burned! Later in history, chopsticks were used to remove pieces of food from the cooking pot.

Early chopsticks were likely made of perishable wood or bamboo.* That is one reason why it is nearly impossible to state with accuracy just when they were first used. Some believe that chopsticks were used in China as early as the Shang dynasty (about the 16th to the 11th century B.C.E.). A historical document from just after Confucius' time (551-479 B.C.E.) spoke of 'pinching' food from soup, indicating that chopsticks of some sort were used.

Apparently by the early Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.), eating with chopsticks had become a common practice. A grave of that period was excavated in Changsha, Hunan Province, in which was found a set of lacquered eating utensils, including chopsticks.

The Japanese, the Koreans, the Vietnamese, and others in the Orient also use chopsticks, and this is largely because of the influence of Chinese culture.

* In ancient Chinese both characters for *k'uai tzu* (quick ones) were written with the bamboo radical, suggesting the material with which chopsticks were initially made.

table. Now, keeping the bottom chopstick stationary, move the top one by flexing your index and middle fingers up and down. Practice until you can bring the tips of the chopsticks together easily. You are now ready to use these versatile implements to pick up any of the delicious morsels served in a Chinese meal—from a single grain of rice to a quail's egg! Chopsticks and Chinese food go well together because the food is usually cut into bite-size pieces.

What about dishes in which a chicken, a duck, or a pork rump is served whole, without being cut up into small pieces? Usually the meat is cooked to such a degree that chopsticks can easily be used to separate a bite-size portion. Chopsticks are ideal for fish, which is often served whole; you can avoid bones with a facility not so easily achieved with a knife and fork.

What about eating rice? If the occasion is informal, you may pick up the rice bowl with your left hand, take it up to your mouth, and scoop the rice into your mouth with the chopsticks. At a more formal meal, however, you would pick up the rice with the chopsticks, a small amount at a time.

What about soup, which is always a component of a Chinese meal? A porcelain spoon is usually provided. But if the soup contains noodles or dumplings or pieces of vegetable, meat, or fish, try using your chopsticks in your right hand to pick up the food and the spoon in your left hand to help transport it to your mouth.

Etiquette and Chopsticks

When you are invited to a Chinese home for a meal, it is helpful to be aware of Chinese table manners, or etiquette. First, several dishes are placed in the center of the table. Wait until the host or the head of the family picks up his chopsticks and motions for all to start. That is the proper moment

chopstick in between your thumb and fingers, resting it against the base of your index finger and the tip of your ring finger. Then place the second chopstick parallel with the first, and hold it with your thumb and index and middle fingers, as you would a pencil. Get the ends even by tapping them on the

for the guests to acknowledge the invitation, pick up their chopsticks, and proceed.

Unlike some Western-style meals, the dishes are not passed around the table. Rather, all at the table help themselves. In a family meal, it is customary for each member to use his or her own pair of chopsticks to take pieces from the common dishes and put them right into the mouth. Even so, it is considered bad manners to slurp your food, lick the ends of your chopsticks, or pick through the dishes for your favorite piece. Mothers in the Orient instruct their children not to bite the ends of their chopsticks, not only because they are concerned about hygiene but also because it spoils the appearance of the chopsticks.

Out of consideration for guests, sometimes serving spoons or additional chopsticks are provided. These are used to take pieces from the center dishes to another dish or to your rice bowl. Still, do not be offended if your host uses his chopsticks to pick out a choice morsel and place it right into your bowl. After all, he wants to make sure that his honored guest gets the best piece!

It is considered bad manners to point with chopsticks, just as it is with knives and forks. It is equally bad manners to pick up something else while you still have your chopsticks in your hand. So when you need to use the serving spoon or to pick up a napkin or a teacup, first put down your chopsticks. Small, attractive chopstick stands are often provided for this purpose.

When you finish eating, put your chopsticks down neatly, sit back, and wait. It is bad manners to leave the table before everyone finishes. Once again, it is the

host or the head of the family who brings the meal to a close by rising and inviting all to leave the table.

Now that you know how to use them, all you need to do is get some chopsticks and practice with them. The next time someone invites you to a Chinese restaurant or to their home for a Chinese meal, why not try a pair of the "quick ones"? It may even make the food *taste* better!



Practice makes perfect





Stairway to the Sky

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

ITS total length is said to be ten times that of the Great Wall of China. Some say that if its sections were placed end to end, it would reach 14,000 miles—or halfway around the earth! Some even call it the eighth wonder of the world. Nevertheless, many people have never heard of this awesome sight in the Philippines. What is it? The stairway to the sky, the rice terraces of the Cordillera Central. Tucked away in the heights of Luzon, the terraces are an amazing display of beauty and ingenuity.

Why were they built? The precipitous mountains of the Cordilleras are so steep that they could normally not be used for farming. The incline of some slopes exceeds 50 percent. But ancient farmers were not deterred by this. At an elevation of 4,000 feet or more, they carved thousands of terraces into the sides of the verdant mountains. Sometimes 25, 30, or more are stacked like a stairway reaching skyward. And each terrace is a cultivated pond field, lined with earthen dikes and retained with stone walls. Most are planted with rice and follow the contour of the mountains; some slopes are concave, others convex.

Of course, agricultural terraces are hardly unique to the Philippines. Terraced fields are found in other countries too, particularly in Southeast Asia, South America, and some parts of Africa. But in many ways the rice terraces of the Philippines are unique. Mario Movillon, of the International Rice Research Institute, told *Awake!*: "The Philippine rice terraces are on a much larger scale than terraces in other countries. They cover a big part of the mountains of the Cordillera." A large proportion are in Ifugao Province. One cannot help but be impressed by the sheer number of terraces. They add a sculptured beauty to the natural flow of the mountains.

A Wonder of the World?

Is it an exaggeration to call them the eighth wonder of the world? Well, consider this fact: They may be the largest single







Saving the Terraces

Despite the present beauty of the terraces, their continued existence is threatened. Many of the younger generation of mountain inhabitants are shying away from planting rice and are looking for employment in other areas. This could create a shortage of skilled farmers to maintain the terraces.

Aurora Ammayao, a native of Ifugao associated with the International Rice Research Institute, told *Awake!* of another danger: "The terraces should always be kept wet, but now there is a water shortage as a result of deforestation." The drying up of the watershed would mean the destruction of the terraces.

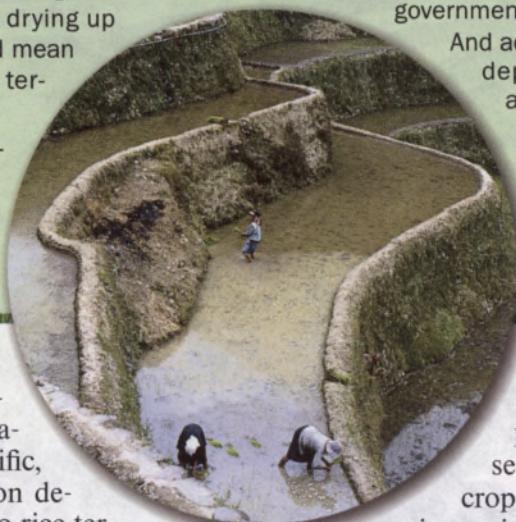
Natural disasters occasionally cause problems too. In 1990 an earthquake destroyed a number of

sections of the terraces when whole mountainsides came tumbling down.

Steps are being taken, though, to forestall the disappearance of the terraces. An executive order was issued in 1996 to create the Ifugao Terraces Commission. Its task? The maintenance of the terraces, including the supporting water system and the area's culture, as well as the restoration of any damaged areas.

The inclusion of the terraces in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) further commits the Philippine government to preserving the site.

And according to Jean Tuason, deputy executive director at UNESCO's Manila office, "UNESCO may also provide technical and financial assistance for the protection and conservation of the rice terraces."



agricultural project in human history. In December 1995, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization decided to include the Ifugao rice terraces in its World Heritage List. As a result, the terraces are now equated with other sites of great historical and cultural value, such as the Taj Mahal in India, the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador, the Great Wall of China, and Angkor Wat of Cambodia. But unlike other ancient construction projects, the terraces were evidently built by community effort—not slave labor. Also, they are not an abandoned site but are still actively cultivated by the Ifugao.

If you visit the terraces, you can personally experience their breathtaking beauty. You will see people working in the terraces, which range from a few square feet to 100,000 square feet. Some workers are poking the soil with sticks to

get water to seep in, singing as they go. Others are planting rice, transplanting seedlings, or harvesting their crop. If you visit when new rice is coming up, the terraces make a beautiful mosaic of varying hues of green.

Wet varieties of rice cannot survive without large amounts of water. So an intricate irrigation system is in place. Mountain streams are tapped, and water is sluiced to the terraces by a complex system of canals and bamboo tubes. Driven by gravity, a reliable supply of water is distributed from terrace to terrace. Far from being a dead monument, the terraces truly are a living wonder!

Who Built Them?

It goes without saying that these thousands of terraces could not have been built overnight, or even in a few years. Remember, this construc-

tion was done without any modern tools or machinery. It is therefore believed that the terrace building began, at the very least, several hundred years ago.

Some archaeologists even believe that the work began as far back as 2,000 years ago. Anthropologists suggest that the builders migrated from northern Indochina or from Indonesia and settled in Luzon, bringing with them their wet-rice terracing culture. After the terraces were built, newer levels were added gradually.

How to Enjoy Them

Let us now take an imaginary tour of the terraces. First we take an air-conditioned bus from Manila to the town of Banaue, Ifugao. The trip takes about nine hours. Now we are faced with a number of options. We might decide to walk, take a tricycle (a motorcycle with a sidecar), or ride in a jeepney to various points of interest. And if we have the will and the stamina, we might want to take one of the trails that go into mountain areas that are accessible only on foot. These offer some of the most spectacular views of the terraces and give one a better feel for the vastness of this man-made wonder.

We opt to take a jeepney to the village of Batad. It takes us more than an hour of riding on the rough mountain road to reach the seven-mile point. From here on, we hike on a footpath. It takes us through a variety of mountain vegetation as we gradually climb up to a ridge between two higher points. (There is a shorter route, but it is very steep and is not recommended for those not used to strenuous climbing.) From the ridge we slowly descend to Batad on a narrow trail.

After having walked for a couple of hours, enjoying the fresh mountain air along the way, we finally reach our destination. Here the terraces present a feast for our eyes. Since Batad is located against a concave

mountain slope, the terraces are in the shape of a huge amphitheater. They paint an interesting pattern of lines, one level on top of another, like a stairway to the sky. As we approach the village, we see the old-style Ifugao houses, which dot the village like giant grass-covered mushrooms.

The people are friendly and extend a greeting to us as we pass them working in the terraces. You may be amazed as you watch the local people walk agilely along the edge of a rock terrace wall, using it as their path to get from point to point. Others climb from level to level with the surefootedness of a mountain goat, using strategically placed rocks as their stairway. A closer look reveals that they are barefoot. And all around them is this spectacular view of mountain terraces—a rare instance where man's building work fits into and complements the environment.

Does it sound interesting? Then, by all means, if you visit the Philippines, do not pass up the opportunity to see the stairway to the sky, a living wonder that you will not easily forget.

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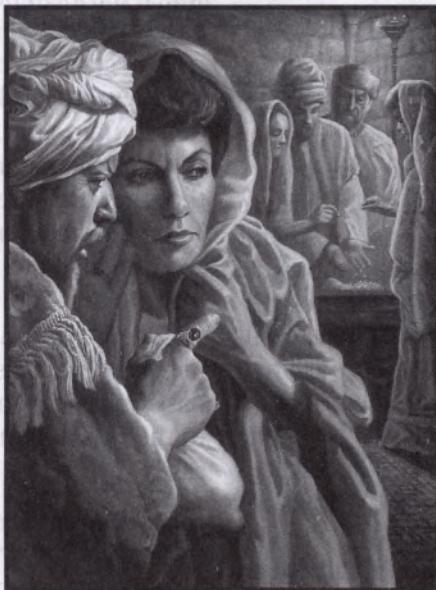
Lying

—Is It Ever Justified?

"A LITTLE INACCURACY SOMETIMES SAVES TONS OF EXPLANATION."

THIS comment illustrates how many people feel about lying. Their rationale is that lying is not wrong if it does not harm anyone. Such reasoning even has an academic name—situation ethics, which says that the only law you need to follow is the so-called law of love. In other words, explains author Diane Komp, "if your motivation is right and your heart is right (then the) fact that you lied . . . is no big deal."

Such a viewpoint is common in today's world. Scandals involving lies told by prominent politicians and other world leaders have rocked society. Influenced by this climate, many people have relaxed their commitment to telling the truth. In some domains lying has even become official policy. "I'm paid to lie. I win sales contests and get rave annual reviews if I lie. . . . This seems to be the core of retail sales training everywhere," complains one salesclerk. Many believe that there is no real harm in so-called little white lies.



Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives because of lying

Is this true? Are there occasions when Christians may be justified in telling a lie?

The Bible's Exalted Standard

The Bible roundly condemns all sorts of lying. "[God] will destroy those speaking a lie," declares the psalmist. (Psalm 5:6; see Revelation 22:15.) At Proverbs 6:16-19, the Bible lists seven things that Jehovah detests. "A false tongue" and "a false witness that launches forth lies" are prominently included in this list. Why?

Because Jehovah hates the harm falsehood causes. That is one reason why Jesus called Satan a liar and a manslayer. His lies plunged humanity into misery and death. —Genesis 3:4, 5; John 8:44; Romans 5:12

Just how seriously Jehovah views lying is highlighted by what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. These two deliberately lied to the apostles in an apparent attempt to appear more generous than they really were. Their action was deliberate and premeditated. The apostle Peter thus declared: "You

have played false, not to men, but to God.” For this, they both died at God’s hand.—Acts 5:1-10.

Years later the apostle Paul admonished Christians: “Do not be lying to one another.” (Colossians 3:9) This exhortation is particularly vital in the Christian congregation. Jesus said that principled love would be the identifying mark of his true followers. (John 13:34, 35) Such unhypocritical love can only grow and flourish in an environment of complete honesty and trust. It is difficult to love someone if we cannot be confident that he will always tell us the truth.

While all lying is reprehensible, some lies are more serious than others. For example, one person may lie out of embarrassment or fear. Another may wickedly make a practice of lying with the intent to harm or injure. Because of his malicious motivation, such a willful liar is a danger to others and would be disfellowshipped from the congregation if he does not repent. Since not all lies are inspired by maliciousness, care must be taken not to condemn unnecessarily but to be sure one knows all the factors involved when someone has told a lie. Motives and extenuating circumstances should be taken into consideration.—James 2:13.

“Cautious as Serpents”

Of course, being truthful does not mean that we are obligated to divulge all information to anyone who asks it of us. “Do not give what is holy to dogs, neither throw your pearls before swine, that they may never . . . turn around and rip you open,” warned Jesus, at Matthew 7:6. For example, individuals with wicked intent may have no right to know certain things. Christians understand that they are living in a hostile world. Thus, Jesus advised his disciples to be “cautious as serpents” while remaining “innocent as

doves.” (Matthew 10:16; John 15:19) Jesus did not always disclose the full truth, especially when revealing all the facts could have brought unnecessary harm to himself or his disciples. Still, even at such times, he did not lie. Instead, he chose either to say nothing or to divert the conversation in another direction.—Matthew 15:1-6; 21:23-27; John 7:3-10.

Faithful men and women mentioned in the Bible, such as Abraham, Isaac, Rahab, and David, were likewise shrewd and cautious when dealing with potential enemies. (Genesis 20:11-13; 26:9; Joshua 2:1-6; 1 Samuel 21:10-14) The Bible classifies such men and women as faithful worshipers whose lives were characterized by obedience. That makes them worthy of imitation.—Romans 15:4; Hebrews 11:8-10, 20, 31, 32-39.

There may be times when lying seemingly provides an easy way out. But Christians today do well to imitate Jesus’ course and follow their Bible-trained conscience when facing particularly difficult situations.—Hebrews 5:14.

The Bible encourages us to be truthful and honest. Lying is wrong, and we should follow the Bible counsel: “Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor.” (Ephesians 4:25) By doing so, we will keep a clean conscience, promote peace and love in the congregation, and continue to honor “the God of truth.”—Psalm 31:5; Hebrews 13:18.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Suicide—Who Are Most at Risk?

A Bright Outlook Despite Infirmities

Russians Treasure Freedom of Worship

The Black Death Scourge of Medieval Europe

By Awake! correspondent
in France



The year was 1347. The plague had already ravaged the Far East.

Now it had arrived at the door of Europe's eastern outskirts.

THE Mongols were besieging the fortified Genoese trading post of Kaffa, now called Feodosiya, in the Crimea. Decimated by the mysterious disease themselves, the Mongols called off their attack. But before withdrawing, they made a deadly parting shot. Using giant catapults, they hurled the still-warm bodies of plague victims over the city walls. When a few of the Genoese defenders later boarded their galleys to escape the now plague-ridden town, they spread the disease to every port they visited.

Within months the whole of Europe was riddled with death. Rapidly it spread to North Africa, Italy, Spain, England, France, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Baltics. In a little over two years, more than a fourth of the population of Europe, some 25 million souls, fell victim to what has been called "the most brutal demographic catastrophe humanity has ever known"—the Black Death.*

Setting the Stage for Disaster

The tragedy of the Black Death involved

more than the disease itself. A number of factors worked to exacerbate this disaster, one of them being religious fervor. The doctrine of purgatory is one example. "By the end of the 13th century, purgatory was everywhere," says French historian Jacques le Goff. Early in the 14th century, Dante produced his influential work *The Divine Comedy*, with its graphic descriptions of hell and purgatory. A religious climate thus developed where people were inclined to meet the plague with surprising apathy and resignation, viewing it as a punishment from God himself. As we will see, such a pessimistic mind-set actually fueled the spread of the disease. "Nothing could have provided more promising material on which a plague might feed," notes the book *The Black Death*, by Philip Ziegler.

Then, too, there was the problem of repeated crop failures in Europe. As a result, the continent's burgeoning population was malnourished—ill-equipped to resist illness.

The Plague Spreads

According to the personal physician of Pope Clement VI, Guy de Chauliac, two

* People of that time called it the great pestilence or the epidemic.

types of plague had invaded Europe: pneumonic and bubonic. He graphically described these ailments, writing: "The first lasted two months, with continuous fever and spitting of blood, and from this one died in three days. The second lasted for the rest of the period, also with continuous fever but with apostumes [abscesses] and carbuncles on the external parts, principally on the armpits and groin. From this one died in five days." Doctors were helpless to halt the plague's progress.

Many people fled in panic—leaving thousands of infected ones behind. Indeed, among the first to flee were wealthy noblemen and professionals. Although some clerics likewise fled, many religious orders hid in their abbeys, hoping to escape contamination.

In the midst of this panic, the pope declared 1350 to be a Holy Year. Pilgrims who made the trip to Rome would be granted direct access to paradise without having to pass through purgatory! Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims heeded the call—spreading the plague as they traveled.

Vain Efforts

Efforts to control the Black Death were in vain because no one really knew how it was transmitted. Most realized that contact with a sufferer—or even with his clothing—was dangerous. Some even feared an afflicted one's stare! The residents of Florence, Italy, however, blamed the plague on its cats and dogs. They slaughtered these animals, little realizing that in doing so, they were giving free rein to a creature actually involved in spreading the contamination—the rat.

As deaths mounted, some turned to God for help. Men and women gave all they had to the church, hoping that God would shield them from illness—or at least reward them with heavenly life if they died. This put enormous wealth in the hands of the church.

Lucky charms, images of Christ, and phylacteries were also popular antidotes. Others turned to superstition, magic, and pseudo medicine for cures. Perfumes, vinegar, and special potions were said to ward off the disease. Bloodletting was another favorite

Hen and women gave all they had to the church, hoping that God would shield them from illness

remedy. The learned medical faculty of the University of Paris even attributed the plague to the alignment of planets! Bogus explanations and "cures," however, did nothing to halt the progress of this killer plague.

Lasting Effects

Within five years the Black Death finally seemed to have run its course. But before the end of the century, it would recur at least four times. The aftereffects of the Black Death have thus been compared to those of World War I. "There is virtually no disagreement amongst modern historians that the advent of endemic plague had profound consequences for both the economy and for society after 1348," notes the 1996 book *The Black Death in England*. The plague wiped out a large portion of the population, and centuries passed before some areas recovered. With a diminished work force, the price of labor naturally rose. Once-wealthy landowners went broke, and the feudal system—a hallmark of the Middle Ages—collapsed in ruin.

The plague was, therefore, an impetus for political, religious, and social change. Prior to the plague, French was commonly spoken



The Flagellants sought to placate God

The Sect of the Flagellants

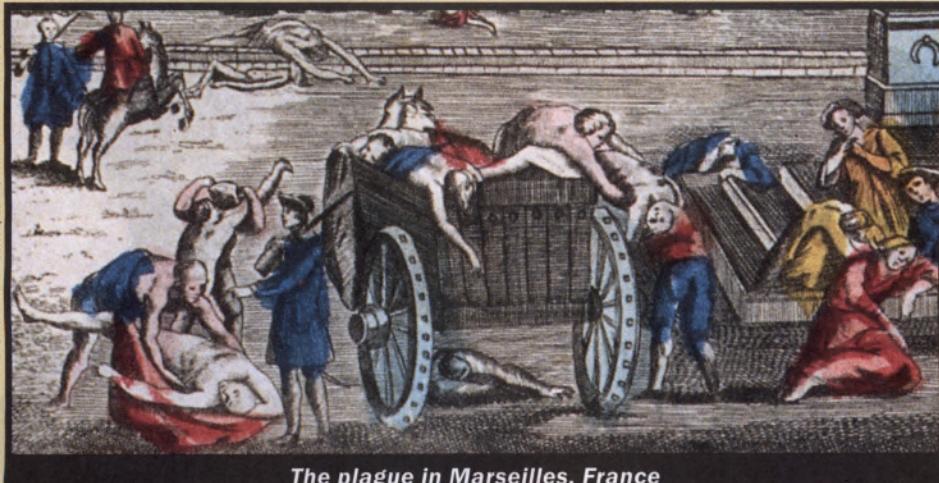
Viewing the plague as a punishment from God, some sought to abate God's anger through self-inflicted whipping, or flagellation. The Brotherhood of the Flagellants, a movement said to number up to 800,000, reached its peak of popularity during the Black Death. The sect's rules forbade speaking with women, washing, or changing clothing. Public flagellation was practiced twice a day.

"Flagellation was one of the few outlets open to a fear- ridden population," notes the book *Medieval Heresy*. Flagellants were also prominent in denouncing the hierarchy of the church and in undermining the church's lucrative practice of granting absolution. Little wonder, then, that in 1349 the pope condemned the sect. In the end, though, the movement waned on its own after the Black Death passed.

among the educated class in England. The death of numerous French teachers, however, helped the English language to gain ascendancy over French in Britain. Changes also came in the religious sphere. As French historian Jacqueline Brossollet notes, because of the shortage of candidates for the priesthood, "the Church too often recruited ignorant, apathetic individuals." Brossollet asserts that "the decadence of [church] centers of learning and faith was one of the causes of the Reformation."

The Black Death certainly left its mark

on art, death becoming a common artistic theme. The famous danse macabre genre, commonly representing skeletons and corpses, became a popular allegory of the power of death. Unsure of the future, many survivors of the plague threw all restraint to the wind. Thus morals sank to shocking depths. As for the church, because of its failure to prevent the Black Death, "medieval man felt that his Church had let him down." (*The Black Death*) Some historians also say that the social changes that followed in the wake of the Black Death fostered individualism and en-



The plague in Marseilles, France

terprise and increased social and economic mobility—the precursors of capitalism.

The Black Death also spurred governments to establish systems of sanitary control. After the plague subsided, Venice took measures to clean up its city streets. King John II of France, called the Good, likewise ordered street cleaning as a means of countering the threat of an epidemic. The king took this step after learning of an ancient Greek doctor who had saved Athens from a plague by cleaning and washing the streets. Many medieval streets, which had been open sewers, were finally cleaned up.

A Thing of the Past?

It was not until 1894, though, that French bacteriologist Alexandre Yersin isolated the bacillus responsible for the Black Death. It was named *Yersinia pestis* after him. Four

years later another Frenchman, Paul-Louis Simond, discovered the role of the flea (carried by rodents) in transmitting the disease. A vaccine was soon developed that enjoyed limited success.

Is the plague a thing of the past? Hardly. In the winter of 1910, some 50,000 people died from the plague in Manchuria. And each year the World Health Organization registers thousands of new cases—the number continues to rise. New strains of the disease have also been discovered—strains that are resistant to treatment. Yes, unless basic hygienic standards are ad-

hered to, the plague remains a threat to mankind. The book *Pourquoi la peste? Le rat, la puce et le bubon* (Why the Plague? The Rat, the Flea, and the Bubo), edited by Jacqueline Brossollet and Henri Mollaret, thus concludes that “far from being a disease of old Europe in the Middle Ages, . . . sad to say, the plague is perhaps a disease of the future.”



Alexandre Yersin
isolated the bacillus
causing the plague

Culver Pictures

QUETZAL

The Resplendent Bird

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN
COSTA RICA

COSTA RICA covers less than 0.03 percent of the earth's surface, yet it is home to 875 registered species of birds. According to one source, that is more than the number found in Canada and the United States combined. It is, therefore, not surprising that Costa Rica has become a principal destination for bird-watching enthusiasts. Let us share with you our journey to view one of these birds, the resplendent quetzal.

In the early 1500's, the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés arrived in Mexico. There, as a gift from the Aztecs, he received a headdress of quetzal feathers. Only Aztec royalty had the privilege of wearing such highly esteemed adornments. The jade-green plumes of the quetzal may have been considered more valuable than gold.

Today this extraordinarily beautiful bird claims as its habitat a vast territory from Mexico to Panama. The quetzal can be found in cloud forests at altitudes of between 4,000 and 10,000 feet. The clouds in the forests are the product of rising warm air cooling quickly.



The results are year-round lush vegetation in verdant tones and massive trees that reach one hundred feet or more into the fog.

About 100 miles north of San José is the Santa Elena Forest Reserve—a good location to observe the quetzal in its natural environment. With the help of a guide, we begin our quest to sight a resplendent quetzal. Because of its jade-like coloring, the bird is difficult to see, as it blends into the forest's foliage. Our guide begins to mimic its soft, mellow call. The sound is similar to a whimpering pup. In fact, upon hearing the quetzal's response, one woman in our group actually thinks that there is a dog lost in the forest!

Soon, some 50 feet up, a male shyly comes out on a branch to investigate. Through binoculars its radiant colors appear even more spectacular than we had imagined. Its breast is a deep crimson-red, contrasting with its jadelike feathers. Adding to its stunning splendor are its white tail feathers, which contrast with its two iridescent green ones. Known as streamers, they measure some 24 inches in length. To see the quetzal sitting high on a limb with its long streamers flowing gently in the breeze is a sight of tranquil beauty.

A quetzal sighting is a unique experience. In fact, our guide mentioned that it often takes more than one trip into the forest to see one. The best time to observe quetzals is during their nesting season, which runs from March to June. During this time they may have two broods of two eggs each.

Upon returning to the reserve office, we hear another quetzal. Gliding gracefully and trailed by its green streamers, it lands on a limb not more than 16 feet from where we are sitting! The guide informs us that a chick has disappeared from its nest. The father is going from tree to tree in search of its offspring. We learn that only about 25 percent of eggs survive to maturity. The rest are lost to such predators as squirrels, emerald toucanets, brown jays, weasels, and tayras. Another challenge to the quetzals' survival involves the location of their nests, which are woodpecker-like holes that quetzals make between 10 and 60 feet above the ground in old decaying tree trunks. When heavy rain falls, the holes can flood or collapse.

We also learn that the quetzal's favorite food is the wild avocado. It will sit on a limb eyeing an avocado that dangles from the branch of a neighboring tree. Then, with a flurry of beating wings, it will zero in on its target, grab the fruit with its mouth, and return to its roost. It swallows the fruit whole and some 20 to 30 minutes later regurgitates the avocado's large seed.

In their search for wild avocados, quetzals will migrate to different slopes of the Continental Divide. For example, from July to September, they are at home on the Pacific slope. Then in October they move to the Caribbean side to feed on a new crop of avocados.

As we cross a suspended bridge about 100 feet above the forest floor, a quetzal almost flies into us! It seems that this bird was in pursuit of its lunch when we

crossed its path. The female sits just above us, giving us a scolding look for intruding.

We are also told that another fruit they enjoy is the blackberry, which grows on thorny bushes. As the quetzals swoop down to grab the fruit, they sometimes get their streamers caught in the thorns and lose them. Eventually, though, their tail feathers grow back.

In this way the bird can live up to its name. "Quetzal" is taken from the Aztec word "quetzalli," meaning "precious" or "beautiful." Unfortunately, its beauty has posed a threat to the quetzal's survival. In fact, the quetzal is listed as an endangered species. They have been hunted for their skins, which have been sold as souvenirs. Some of the birds have been captured alive to be sold as pets. However, according to our guide, the quetzal now enjoys some legal protection from such plundering.

Yet another threat to its survival is deforestation, which results in loss of habitat. For the protection of this resplendent bird and other wildlife, about 27 percent of Costa Rica has been set aside as preserved areas.

Our journey to view the quetzal has truly been rewarding. True, you can see the headdress of quetzal feathers given to Hernán Cortés in the British Museum in London. But quetzal feathers are far more interesting when seen on a living bird in the wild! For the time being, at least, wild quetzals continue to enjoy freedom and relative safety in the cloud forests of Central America.

WATCHING THE WORLD

More Mummies Discovered

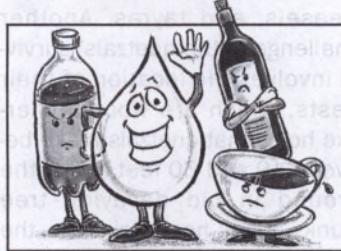
"Archaeologists in Egypt have announced the discovery of at least 200 mummies, some of them with golden masks, in a huge cemetery in the Western Desert," says a BBC News dispatch. The burial area is near a desert oasis and within the city of Bawiti, some 185 miles southwest of Cairo. According to Egypt's Middle East News Agency, the cemetery may contain over 10,000 mummies. It has been renamed Valley of the Mummies. The six-mile-long cemetery dates back 2,000 years, to the early Graeco-Roman era. Some of the mummies excavated so far were covered in linen or coated with plaster, and a number wore golden masks "with magnificent designs of ancient Egyptian divinities on their chests," says antiquities director Zahi Hawass.

Pestilences Plague Africa

Attempts by the World Health Organization to have polio completely eradicated in Africa by the end of the year have been thwarted, reports the *Cape Times*. The war in Angola has resulted in polio reaching epidemic proportions in that country. According to Neil Cameron, director of communicable disease control at South Africa's Department of Health, it could be another ten years before polio is eradicated in Angola. In addition, Angola's neighbors, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are trying to cope with outbreaks of Ebola-like hemorrhagic fever and bu-

bonic plague respectively. Leprosy is still a problem in Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger, and Nigeria. All of this, added to the fact that malaria is rampant throughout much of the continent, is causing serious concern because, as Cameron remarked, "borders are no barrier against disease."

Most Vital Substance to Life



"Water is the most vital substance to life, because the body is mostly fluid," reports the *Toronto Star* newspaper. "Even a 20-per cent drop in body water can be fatal." Water not only regulates our body temperature but also "carries nutrients and waste products to and from the organs through the bloodstream and body systems. It also lubricates the joints and colon, helping prevent constipation." An average adult requires two to three quarts of water daily. Drinking coffee, pop, or alcohol may actually increase the need for pure water because they can contribute to dehydration. According to one dietitian, thirst should not serve as a reminder to take in water because by the time you feel parched, you are likely already dehydrated. The paper states that "drinking a glass every hour during the day

will satisfy most people's water needs."

Napping on the Job

"Some Canadian businesses are waking up to the benefits of napping on the job," says the *Toronto Star* newspaper. Employers have introduced "alertness recovery rooms" for night-shift workers. "The rooms are dimly lit, cool, quiet and equipped with alarm clocks, couches or reclining chairs," says the *Star*. But "old perceptions die hard. Companies that provide napping areas don't tend to broadcast it." Mary Perugini, a sleep clinician at Royal Ottawa Hospital's Sleep Disorders Centre, states: "We're working more hours, our stress levels are higher and we keep taking on more. Being able to devote 20 minutes a day to sleep would be beneficial. It would definitely increase productivity (and) keep stress levels down."

Threat From Shrinking Glaciers

The world's largest body of ice outside the polar regions will disappear within 40 years if the current rate of melting continues, reports *The Sunday Telegraph* of London. A combination of rising global temperatures and the relatively low latitude of the Himalayas threatens the region's 15,000 glaciers. The Gangotri glacier, which is one of the sources of the Ganges River, has shrunk by almost one third of its length in the past 50 years. Syed Hasnain, a scientist who monitors the glaciers, warns that if the current rate continues, "rivers such as the Ganges, the Indus

and the Brahmaputra, which receive about 70 to 80 per cent of their water from snow and glacial melt, will dry up." The result would be "an ecological disaster," he warns. Meantime, the risk of serious flooding grows. When glaciers shrink, lakes are formed that are surrounded by fragile walls of ice, boulders, and sand. As melting continues, the walls burst, sending devastating floods to the valleys below.

Tobacco Dangers for Children

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the health of 50 percent of the world's children is at risk because of exposure to tobacco smoke, reports London's *Guardian* newspaper. Ailments associated with passive smoking include asthma and other respiratory difficulties, sudden infant death syndrome, middle-ear disease, and cancer. Research also shows that children of smokers suffer academically and have more behavioral problems. If both parents smoke, their children are 70 percent more likely to experience health problems, and even one smoker in the family will increase the likelihood by 30 percent. WHO is urging both health education for parents to help them realize the danger their tobacco habit poses to the family and a ban on smoking in schools and other places frequented by children.

Triumph of Tourism

According to forecasts by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), "international tourist arrivals will climb from the present 625 million a year to 1.6 billion in 2020," reports

The UNESCO Courier. These tourists are expected to spend over two trillion U.S. dollars, "making tourism the world's leading industry." So far, Europe has been the most popular destination. France is the most visited country, with 70 million visitors in 1998. However, by the year 2020, China is expected to take first place. International travel, though, remains the prerogative of a privileged few. In 1996, only 3.5 percent of the world's population traveled abroad. The WTO forecasts that this figure will reach 7 percent by 2020.

Minibreak Hazards?



The minibreak, a holiday weekend currently being promoted by the European travel industry as a quick and easy way to relax away from life's stresses, may actually "do more harm than good," reports the *Guardian* newspaper of London. According to cardiologist Dr. Walter Pasini, of the World Health Organization, packing, rushing to an airport, and flying, along with changes in temperature, food, and time zones, contribute to exhaustion and are potentially dangerous. The body takes a few days to relax and adjust to a different climate and life-style, and when this does not happen, the circulation and sleep patterns are adversely affected. Dr. Pasini's

study "found that those who snatched a few days away were 17% more likely to have a heart attack and 12% more likely to have a car crash than those who took a week or more off," the paper said. "My message is not that short breaks are inherently dangerous, but that people should take care and prepare properly," said Dr. Pasini, quoted in the London *Daily Telegraph*. "People now take shorter and shorter vacations and race around trying to pack everything into a few days, but that is not a good way to relax. In fact, it is very stressful."

Rattlesnake Revenge

"Rattlesnakes can strike you from beyond the grave—and this bizarre form of posthumous revenge is surprisingly common," reports *New Scientist*. Of 34 patients treated for rattlesnake bites in Arizona, U.S.A., over an 11-month period, 5 said that the snake attacked them after it had been killed, say two doctors studying the phenomenon. One victim shot a snake, cut off its body below the head, waited for it to stop moving, and then picked up the head. It lunged and bit him on both hands. Previous studies have shown that a severed rattlesnake head "will try to attack objects waved in front of it for up to an hour after death," the magazine states. Herpetologists believe that this is "a reflex action, triggered by infrared sensors in the 'pit organ', a structure between the nostril and eye that detects body heat." Dr. Jeffrey Suchard warns that a decapitated rattler should be treated as a "very short snake." "If you really have to touch it," he said, "I suggest you use a very long stick."

FROM OUR READERS

Too Short? I'm a neurosurgeon, and I noticed something wrong with a picture that appeared in the article "Your Brain—A Marvel of Intricacy." (May 8, 1999) You showed a cross section of the brain with a dotted line pointing to the pituitary gland. It appears to me that the line is too short and that this line is pointing toward the optic chiasma.

A. W., Japan

Our sharp-eyed reader is correct, and we apologize for the error.—ED.

Hurricane Mitch Thank you for the stirring article "Rescue From the Killer Storm!" (June 8, 1999) I often receive information via E-mail regarding disasters that have afflicted our brothers, but I never know how much of the information is reliable. The way the information was presented in the article was very encouraging and upbuilding. It served as a sober reminder of the critical times in which we live.

C. P., United States

I realize that many lost all their belongings in this catastrophe, but it was thrilling to read about our worldwide brotherhood going into action, even in the face of great danger. The picture of the brother in front of his destroyed home gave me food for thought. What right do I have to complain about things?

R.C.N., Brazil

Guarana Your article "Coffee, Tea, or Guarana?" (June 8, 1999) was enlightening. As a full-time minister serving along the banks of the Amazon River, I work near areas where guarana is cultivated. I often see it being prepared. The next time somebody offers me guarana, I know what my answer will be.

J.R.S.M., Brazil

Universe I want to thank you very much for the series "Our Universe—Made for a Purpose?" (June 22, 1999) As an amateur astronomer, I loved these articles. The wonderful spectacle that takes place every night invites us to reflect on the immense power, knowledge, and love of our Creator.

V. V., Spain

The articles were easy to understand, even for the nonscientific mind. Thank you for helping me to get to know Jehovah better. After 58 years of marriage, my wife recently died. So this enlightening understanding of our Creator couldn't have come at a more appropriate time in my life.

F. W., United States

Women Construction Workers Thank you so much for the article "The Women Have Had a Large Share." (June 22, 1999) About a year ago, I moved from California to Thailand. We recently had the privilege of constructing our own Kingdom Hall. Like the women in Zimbabwe, our sisters helped mix cement, tie steel rods, lay tile, and care for numerous other construction jobs. With Jehovah's help we got the work done in about three months. Thank you for acknowledging the share women have had in the worldwide construction work.

R. G., Thailand

My parents and I had the opportunity to help at a quickly built Kingdom Hall project for the first time. You can imagine how happy I was when I saw how women all over the world are contributing to the worldwide construction of branch offices and Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses. Construction projects like the one in Zimbabwe are preparation for the work we will do in the new world. If we can enjoy such projects now, imagine what it will be like when all mankind is perfect and united in serving Jehovah!

S.W.S., Brazil



The Gap Between Rich and Poor Is WIDENING

"More progress has been made in reducing global poverty in the past five decades than in the previous five centuries," states *UNDP Today*, a publication of the United Nations Development Programme. "Developing countries have halved child death rates since 1960, reduced malnutrition by one-third and raised school [enrollment] rates by one-quarter." Yet, the same source admits that despite this progress, global poverty "remains widespread."

Even worse, inequities within and between societies are growing. "Compared to one year ago," says Catherine Bertini, the UN World Food Programme's executive director, "many more people in the world are suffering from malnutrition and hunger." In fact, today some 840 million people in the developing world live with constant hunger, well over a billion have no access to water that is safe to drink, and nearly 1.5 billion people scrape along on less than a dollar a day. Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, warns that "we are in danger of reaching a point where the world is divided not between developing and developed states, but between over-developed and never to be developed [states]."

What would it cost today's world community of six billion people to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor? Less than one may think. The UN calculates that an additional \$9 billion (\$1.50 per person) a year would be required to provide sanitation and clean water worldwide and that an additional \$13 billion (about \$2.00 per person) a year would be needed to ensure basic health and nutrition for everyone on earth. Although these are considerable amounts, they seem to shrink when compared with what the world spends on other services. To illustrate, in one recent year, the world spent \$435 billion (over \$70 per person) on advertising and \$780 billion (\$130 per person) on military matters. Clearly, narrowing the gap between the world's haves and have-nots is not so much a matter of finding sufficient funds as it is a matter of setting proper priorities.



'It Helped Me to Examine My Life'

THAT is what an 18-year-old girl named Maria from the city of Cherepovets said regarding the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. She wrote the following to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses near St. Petersburg, Russia, some 250 miles from Cherepovets.

"This publication has helped me to examine myself, my goals, and people around me. I found answers to the questions that concern me most of all. While I was reading the book, tears of thankfulness rolled down my cheeks."

Maria added: "It felt as if a veil had been taken off my eyes, which were wide open with excitement. This book is the best one I have read in my entire life. No other one compares to it, since it is based on the Bible and the advice of Jehovah God is the best."

