

AWAKE!

March 22, 1991



A Higher Ideal to Be
Dowry Dependence into the
1990s
More People,
Honor the Elderly?

Do You Honor the Elderly?



Do You Honor the Elderly? 3-9

In Europe a century ago, the elderly were 1 percent of the population; today they are 17 percent. There are 90 million Chinese considered to be elderly. In the United States, the older population is increasing twice as fast as the rest of the population. Worldwide, their numbers are escalating; caring for them is becoming more critical.



WHO photo



The Asbestos Story 10 —From Lifesaver to Death Threat

It has twice revolutionized the construction industry: first, to get it in buildings; second, to get it out

A Killer Held at Bay 21

Down through the centuries, smallpox left its mark on many nations, killing millions. Is it still a threat today?

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"Honor Your Father and Your Mother"

THOSE words come down to us from antiquity, centuries before the time of Christ. They were brought down from a mountaintop, written on stone by the finger of God. Moses had been used to lead the Israelite captives out from Egyptian bondage, through the Red Sea, and to an encampment at the foot of rugged Mount Sinai. After spending 40 days and nights with Jehovah on Mount Sinai, Moses came down with the two stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments.—Exodus 34:1, 27, 28.

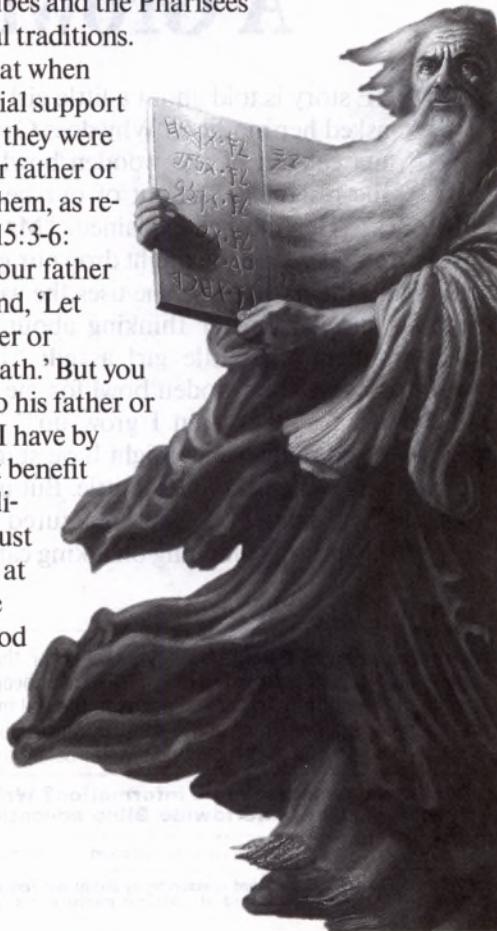
On one of these tablets was written the fifth commandment, which now appears in the Bible at Exodus chapter 20, verse 12. It reads as follows: "Honor your father and your mother in order that your days may prove long upon the ground that Jehovah your God is giving you." According to the apostle Paul, it is "the first command with a promise," which promise is: "That your days may prove long upon the ground."—Ephesians 6:1-3.

The awesome display of fire and smoke and the frightful quaking of Mount Sinai during the delivery of the Ten Commandments dramatically proclaimed their importance, including the fifth one, to render honor to father and mother. What is involved in showing this honor? Not just respect and obedience but also care and support in a material way when needed.

This was made clear centuries later when Jesus clashed with the scribes and the Pharisees concerning their oral traditions.

Jesus pointed out that when they withheld material support from needy parents, they were failing to honor their father or mother. He said to them, as recorded at Matthew 15:3-6: "God said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Let him that reviles father or mother end up in death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother: 'Whatever I have by which you might get benefit from me is a gift dedicated to God,' he must not honor his father at all.' And so you have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition."

In the case of Jesus himself, he showed obedience to his parents, being submissive to them.



(Luke 2:51) Years later, when he was dying on a torture stake, he showed honor to his mother by making loving provision for her care and support.—John 19:25-27.

The apostle Paul knew only too well that it was God's requirement for children, and even grandchildren, to care for needy parents. And, interestingly, he related such material assistance to showing honor: "Honor widows

that are actually widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God's sight." (1 Timothy 5:3, 4) Your parents cared for you when you were a helpless babe and child; in their old age, it is your turn to help them in their need.

Caring for the Aged A Growing Problem

THE story is told about a little girl who asked her mother: "Why does Grandma eat out of the wooden bowl but the rest of us eat out of our beautiful dishes?" Her mother explained: "Mama's hands are shaky, and she might drop our good dishes and break them, so she uses the wooden bowl instead." After thinking about this for a moment, the little girl asked: "Then would you save the wooden bowl for me so I will have it for you when I grow up?" This preview of coming events might have startled the mother, even shaken her a little. But upon reflection, it may also have reassured her—her little girl was planning on taking care of her!

The prospect for many of the elderly may not be so bright. They have become the fastest growing segment of the population in many parts of the world. *World Press Review* of August 1987 reported that some 600 million people, 12 percent of the planet's population at that time, were then over the age of 60.

In the United States, the elderly are outpacing the teenage population for the first time ever. The science editor of a New York City newspaper reported: "Thirty million Americans now are 65 or older—one in every eight of us, more than ever before, and: The older population is growing twice as fast as the rest of the population. . . . The average life expec-

Awake!

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tancy for Americans was 35 in 1786. For an American child born in 1989, it's 75."

In Canada the number of the very elderly, age 85 and up, is expected to more than triple by the end of the century.

In Europe a hundred years ago, the elderly made up just 1 percent of its total population. Today their numbers have soared to 17 percent.

A U.S. Census Bureau report on "Aging in the Third World" said: "Four-fifths of the increase in older people is occurring in the Third World."

Four decades ago the life expectancy of the Chinese people was about 35 years. By 1982 the figure had jumped to 68 years. Today over 90 million Chinese are counted as elderly, and it is estimated that by the end of the century, the figure will rise to 130 million, or 11 percent of the population.

Special Effort to Care for Your Own

As the number of the very elderly escalates worldwide, the perplexing question of how to care for them becomes more critical. In Bible times the problem was not as difficult. They had the extended family, where children, parents, and grandparents lived together. Children and grandparents interacted with benefit to one another, and parents could make the necessary material provisions and also see to it that any special care needed by the elderly in the household was made available. Such extended families with care for the elderly are still the rule in some countries today. (For ex-

amples, please see the box on page 8.) But that is not the case in the more affluent nations where the family circle is limited to parents and children. When the children grow up and marry and have children of their own, often they are faced with the problem of caring for their aged, frail, and often chronically ill parents.

In this present system of things, to do this can be a weighty problem indeed! As undesirable as it is, under present economic conditions, it may be necessary for both parents to work. Food is expensive, rents are high, bills come in. Even two paychecks can disappear quickly. If the woman of the house does not work outside, she may be busy with children, shopping, cleaning—a full-time job in itself. This is not to say that an elderly parent, or parents, should not be cared for in the home. What it does say is that it can be a very difficult assignment. The elderly have their aches and pains, and understandably they can at times be complaining and crotchety, not always congenial and of a sunny disposition. None of which means that a strenuous effort should not be made to care for an elderly parent in the home.

Often, the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the surviving daughters. Study after study has revealed that although men may provide financial assistance, it is primarily women who provide the personal hands-on care. They cook meals for the aged—often spoon-feeding them—they bathe and dress

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It has been said that years ago one mother could take care of 11 children; now 11 children can't take care of one mother

them, they change them, they drive them to doctors and hospitals, they see to their medical supplies. Often they are the eyes, the ears, and the mind of their elderly parents. Their job is a formidable one, and their willingness to do it despite its hardships is truly commendable and pleasing to Jehovah God.

The belief that most adult children send their elderly parents away to spend their declining years in a nursing home is just not true, according to Carl Eisdorfer, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Center on Adult Development and Aging at the University of Miami, Florida, U.S.A. "Studies have shown that the majority of care for older people is provided by their own families," he said.

Statistics give support to his claim. In the United States, for example, 75 percent of those polled said that they would want their parents, if they were no longer capable of living alone, to live with them. "This confirms that families *do* want to take care of their own," Dr. Eisdorfer said. And a report in *Ms.* magazine said: "Only 5 percent of those over 65 are in nursing homes at any one time because both the elderly and most of their relatives prefer home to institutional care."

The following case shows the effort some make to care for an elderly parent. The report is from a traveling representative of Jehovah's Witnesses who visits congregations throughout the United States. He explains how he and his wife were determined to keep her 83-year-old mother with them rather than put her in

a nursing home. "I recalled the saying," he commented, "that one mother could take care of 11 children, but 11 children could not take care of one mother. Well, the two of us were determined to take care of one elderly mother. Although she was in the early stages of Alzheimer's, she traveled with us in the trailer."

"At first she went with us when we preached the Kingdom message from door to door. Later we had to take her in a wheelchair. Householders seemed to appreciate how we looked after her. At times she would say things that were not right, but we never embarrassed her by correcting her. She still, however, had her sense of humor. I'd caution her and say, 'Watch your step, Mother,' and she'd reply, 'I don't have a stepmother.' We took care of her until she died, at the age of 90."

When Nursing Homes Are Needed

Nearly two million elderly do live in nursing homes in the United States. In most cases, however, it is not a matter of the "callous warehousing of the elderly," as some have called the putting of them in nursing homes. Rather, it is often the only alternative to adequate care for those unable to care for themselves. All too often, children of the elderly are not in a position to care for their aged parents, many of whom may be severely afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or bedridden with some other debilitating malady that requires special round-the-clock care. In such cases nursing homes may be the only places capable of meeting these special needs.

A missionary of the Watch Tower Society in Sierra Leone, Africa, told of the pain his mother experienced when she had to put her mother in a nursing home: "Recently my mother in Florida put her mother, Helen, in a nursing home. It was a very difficult decision for her. She had cared for Helen for four years, but now Helen needed full-time nursing care. Mother's friends, family, and various social workers and doctors all supported the de-

cision to put Helen in the nursing home, but still it was a very difficult decision to make. My mother felt that since her mother had cared for her as a child, now it was only right for her to care for her mother in her old age—the repayment, or the ‘due compensation,’ the apostle Paul had talked about. As it was, however, Helen was better cared for in the nursing home than she could have been at my mother’s home.”—1 Timothy 5:4.

Another Witness, working at the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses, told of his father’s bout with cancer. “My dad was a zealous Witness for over 30 years. For the last nine years of his life, he had cancer. My wife and I spent our vacations with him and took extended leaves of absence to be with him and help. Other relatives helped in various ways. But most of that time, he was cared for by his wife and a married daughter who lived next door. He also had visits from members of the congregation of Witnesses where he had attended. The last two years, he was in and out of a hospital, and the last five months, he spent in an extended-care facility where he could get the specialized care he required.

“The decision to move him from home to the facility was a family one, with him participating. He decided that his care was becoming too arduous, even impossible, for the family in the home. ‘It’s going to kill all of you!’ he exclaimed. ‘It’s time to go to this extended-care facility. Better for you; better for me.’

“So he went. For most of nine years, the family had cared for him, and only as a last resort did he go into the extended-care facility for the specialized, round-the-clock care that was required.”

When, as a last resort, a nursing home becomes needed for adequate care, the family should seek out one that is clean and staffed by kindly and competent care-givers. If it is at all possible, arrange for a visitor every day—a family member, someone from the congrega-



Visiting the elderly is time well spent

tion, at least a phone call—so that the elderly person does not feel abandoned, forgotten, totally alone, and thinking that no one cares. When others in the nursing home are having visitors, but no one comes to see your loved one—this can be very disheartening. So try to see the person regularly. Visit with him. Listen to him. Pray with him. The latter is very important. Even if he seems to be in a coma, pray anyway. You never know to what degree he may be hearing something!

When making decisions regarding parents, try to do so *with* them instead of *for* them. Let them feel they are still in control of their lives. Offer the needed assistance with all the love and patience and understanding possible. Then is the time to repay, as the apostle Paul wrote, what we owe our parents and grandparents.

“The Whole Obligation of Man”

In the hustle and bustle of this modern world, it is easy for the elderly to get pushed into the backwaters of life. Especially, young ones just entering the race and hurrying to get on with their lives tend to feel that the elderly

Showing Honor by Caring for the Elderly —Comments From Around the World

In Africa there are few or no government provisions for the elderly—no nursing homes, no Medicare or Social Security benefits, no pensions. Old people are looked after by their children.

"A fundamental reason why childbearing is so important to people in developing countries is that their children will look after them in the future. Even poor people will produce many children, reasoning that the more they have, the better the chances that some will survive and look after them.

"Though standards are changing in Africa, for the most part, families take seriously the responsibility to look after their elderly. If there are no children, other family members will look after them. Often those providing care are in a weak financial position, but they share what they have.

"Another way that children care for their parents is to lend them their own children. Often it is the grandchildren that do the work around the house.

"In developed countries, people live longer because of medical advances. In the developing world, this isn't the case. Poor people die because they can't afford even the limited medical help that is available. A proverb spoken in Sierra Leone is: 'No poor person is sick.' That is, since a poor person has no money for treatment, he is either well or dead."—Robert Landis, missionary in Africa.

In Mexico people have high respect for elderly parents. Parents live alone in their homes when their sons get married, but when the parents get older and are in need, the children take them into their home and care for them. They feel that this is an obligation.

"It is common to see grandparents living in the same home as their sons and grandchildren. Grandchildren love and respect their grandparents. The family is very close.

"In Mexico homes for elderly persons are rare because the sons and daughters take care of the

elderly. If there are several sons, sometimes the last one getting married stays at home and lives with the parents."—Isha Aleman, from Mexico.

In Korea we are taught in the home and at school to honor elderly people. In the family the eldest son is supposed to take care of his old parents. If he is unable to support them, another son or daughter will do so. Many couples live with and take care of their old parents under the same roof. Parents expect to live with their children, and they like to instruct and take care of their grandchildren. It is regarded as shameful for a young couple to send their old parents to a nursing home.

"My father was the eldest son, and we lived with our grandparents in the same house. Whenever we left home, we informed them as to where we were going and when we would be back. When we came back home, we first dropped by their room and greeted them with our head bowed down and let them know we were back because they were concerned about the whole family's welfare.

"When we handed something to them, we held the item with two hands. It is impolite to pass anything with one hand to persons held in respect, such as parents, grandparents, teachers, or higher officers in public service. When we had some special food, we served our grandparents first.

"Honoring the elderly is not limited to just family members but extends to all the elderly. From primary school through high school, there are classes in ethics. During that class, we learned through fairy tales or lectures how to respect and honor the elderly.

"When an old person enters a room, the young people are expected to stand up. If a young person is seated on a bus and an elderly man or woman has no seat, then it is customary for the younger person to yield his seat. If an old man is carrying a very heavy-looking package, you stop and ask whether he needs help or not. If he says yes, you carry the package to his destination for him.

"As the Bible prophesied, in these last days of the system of things, the moral standard would be deteriorating day by day. Korea is not exempt from this influence. Still, this kind of respectful attitude toward elderly people remains in the hearts of many Koreans." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)—Kay Kim, from Korea.

just get in the way, that they have outlived their usefulness. Maybe we should all stop and reflect: What qualifies a life as useful anyway? It's easy for the young to devalue the lives of the old and attach an inflated value to their own.

It is not, however, just the old and the feeble who may make little or no contribution to what seems to count. King Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes frequently referred to the activities of people in general as vanity. He spoke of youths and their temporary vigor and showed how the passing years will ravage their bodies just as it already has the bodies of millions of others. All end up as dust and earn this assessment: "The greatest vanity!" said Solomon. "Everything is vanity."—Ecclesiastes 12:8.

But he did extol the words of the wise ones and summed up his observations on life with these words: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) That is the formula for a useful life, not how young or how old you are or what kind of mark you make in this materialistic old world that is passing away.

To govern our human relationships, Jesus gave the guiding principle that has come to be known as the Golden Rule: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you." (Matthew 7:12, *The New English Bible*) To apply that rule, we must be able to put ourselves in the other person's place, to see how we would like to be treated if we were in his place. If we are old and feeble and in need of help, how would we like to be treated by one of our children? Will we pay back our parents for the 20 years of care and support they lavished on us when we were helpless children by now caring for them when they are helpless in their old age?

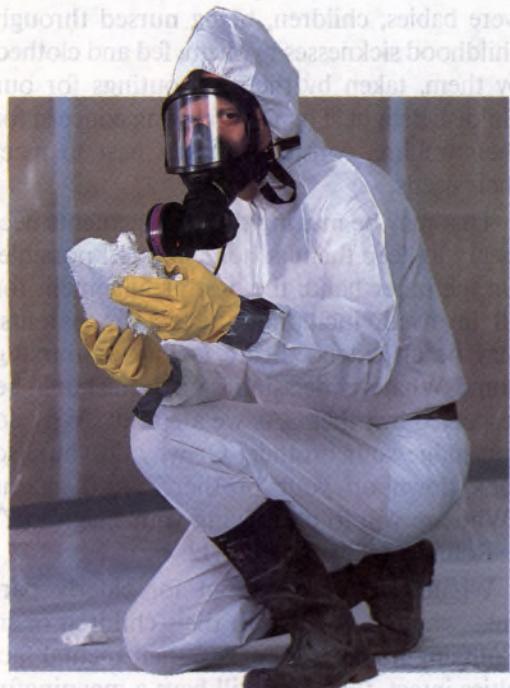
As we look at our elderly parents in their need, perhaps we will review our childhood

and recall all that they did for us when we were babies, children, being nursed through childhood sicknesses by them, fed and clothed by them, taken by them on outings for our childish delight. Then, with loving concern for their welfare, consider what is best to meet their needs.

That may be making the arrangements necessary to keep them at home if at all possible. On the other hand, the best arrangement for all involved, including the elderly parents, may be an extended-care facility or nursing home. Whatever decision is made, it should be respected by others. As we are told: "Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also look down on your brother?" And again: "Who are you to be judging your neighbor?" —Romans 14:10; James 4:12.

Whatever may work out for elderly parents, whether living with their children or in a nursing home, if they have their mental faculties intact, they may still have a meaningful life. They may learn of Jehovah's purpose for all obedient mankind to live forever in health on a paradise earth. They may find a new career, a joyful and fulfilling one of serving their Creator, Jehovah God. This then becomes the most purposeful and happy time of their life. Some in their advanced years, when others have given up on life itself, have come to know of Jehovah's promises of everlasting life in a new world of righteousness without end and have found a new joy in talking to others about that hope.

To conclude with a case in point. One California woman, at the age of 100, was introduced to these promised blessings by a nurse in the nursing home, and at the ripe age of 102, she was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She finished her life, not in a 'vanity of vanities' dead end, but by fulfilling her 'whole obligation of life,' namely, 'fearing the true God and keeping his commandments.'



The Asbestos Story

From Lifesaver to Death Threat

NO T long ago all the residents of a trailer park in Arizona, U.S.A., had to sell their homes and possessions to the government and move out. Everything in the park, from trailers to furniture to children's toys, was systematically destroyed—crushed flat and buried under layers of filter paper,

gravel, and topsoil. Why? Radiation? Toxic chemicals? Bad water? No; the trailer park was sitting on the residues of an old milling operation. It was contaminated with asbestos.

This has been a tumultuous century for asbestos—a dizzying descent from the pinnacle of popularity to the depths of vilification. Once the darling of industry and the revered savior of countless lives from fires, asbestos now stands accused of complicity in the deaths of literally hundreds of thousands of people. To asbestos goes the dubious distinction of having revolutionized the construction industry—not once, but twice: first, in the global trend to put it in buildings; second, in the sometimes mad rush to get the stuff out again.

Schools, offices, and apartment buildings have shut down, at a monumental cost to taxpayers, landlords, and residents. A tidal wave of lawsuits has swamped the legal system. And fear has altered lives—all because of asbestos.

But what is asbestos? Where does it come from? Is it really all that dangerous?

A Checked Past

Contrary to what some may think, asbestos is not just another misfire of modern technology, another laboratory brainchild gone berserk. No, asbestos is a mineral mined from the earth. Or, more accurately, asbestos is a class of minerals—there are six different types, each quite different. But all are fibrous in structure, and all are extremely resistant to heat.

People have been using asbestos for thousands of years. Many centuries before Christ, Finnish peasants mixed it in pottery and chinked cracks in their log huts with it. The ancient Greeks used it to make wicks for lamps. The ancient Romans wove asbestos fibers into fabrics to make towels, nets, and even head coverings for women. These fabrics were easy to clean: simply throw them into a blazing fire and draw them out bright and white!

In medieval times Emperor Charlemagne reportedly convinced some barbarian guests that he had supernatural powers when he threw an asbestos tablecloth into the fire and pulled it out unsinged. Some enterprising medieval merchants even sold asbestos crosses, citing their resistance to fire as evidence that they were made from the wood of "the true cross"!

Until the late 19th century, though, asbestos was little more than a curiosity. That changed because of the industrial age. In the 1800's, industry realized that asbestos is more than fire-proof; it also resists corrosion and makes a good insulator. Asbestos soon found its way into roofing felt, ceiling tiles, floor tiles, insulation, concrete mixes, cement pipes, asphalt, theater curtains, brake linings, and even filters. Eventually, some 3,000 uses were found for it.

Before long, asbestos supported a flourishing global industry. Large deposits were discovered in the Ural Mountains of the Soviet Union, in the Alps of northern Italy, in Vermont in the United States, and in South Africa. By the mid-1970's, world production of asbestos neared six million tons per year.

The Terrible Price

This meteoric rise in popularity, however, was not without its rumblings of foreboding. In fact, as far back as some 19 centuries ago, the Roman historian Pliny had noted that slaves who worked in asbestos mines seemed to have respiratory problems. His was only the first of many warning voices.

In the early 1900's, doctors in Europe began to notice that asbestos workers were dying of respiratory ailments. By 1918 some insurance companies were already refusing to cover asbestos workers, noting their unusually short life spans. By the 1930's, autopsies had established that massive exposure to asbestos could indeed be fatal. The tiny, needle-shaped crystals of many types of asbestos can work their

way far down into the lungs, or even into the abdominal cavity, and remain there, sometimes bringing on disease decades later. Following are some of the more common asbestos-related diseases:

Asbestosis. The most common affliction, particularly among those who have had a long-term exposure to asbestos. A scarring of lung tissue that gradually causes the lung to rigidify and that obstructs the air spaces within the lung. Asbestosis causes labored breathing and makes lungs more vulnerable to infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis, which in turn are much more dangerous to people with the condition. Asbestosis is incurable, and it can kill.

Lung Cancer. Also very common, it kills more people than does asbestosis. Interestingly, though, when exposure to asbestos is combined with the smoking habit, the incidence of lung cancer really soars—far higher than if the risks of smoking and of asbestos exposure were simply added together.

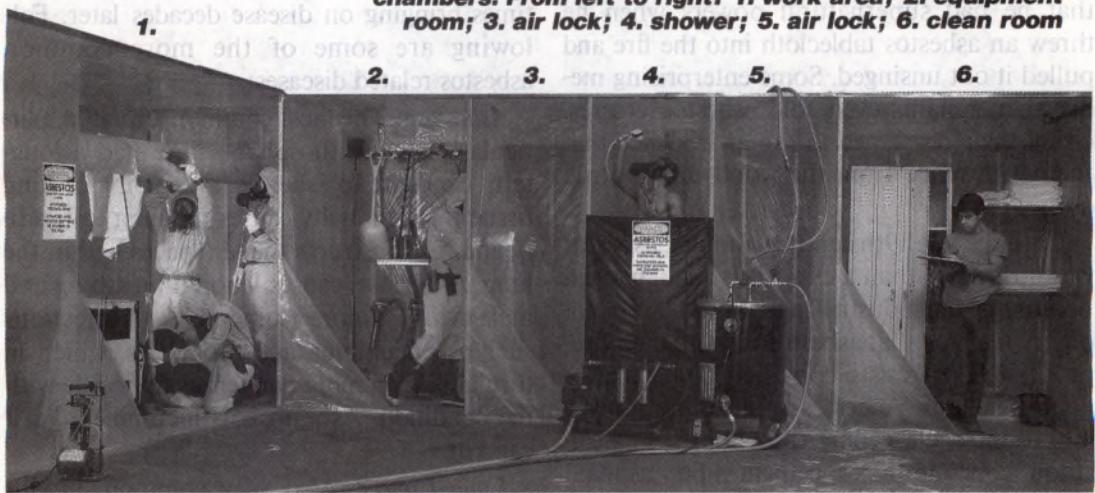
Mesothelioma. A rare but extremely lethal form of cancer. It attacks the membrane that lines the chest or abdominal cavity. It may occur even after limited exposure to the mineral, and it may show up after a delay of as long as 40 years.

According to the *International Journal of Health Services*, asbestos will cause from two to three hundred thousand premature and painful deaths between 1986 and the year 2000 in the United States alone. If that holds true, it would about equal the number of U.S. military personnel who died in combat in World War II.

An Overreaction?

However, a number of scientists charge that there has been a vast overreaction to the asbestos threat. They claim that some scientists have overplayed the dangers, leading to

Typical asbestos setup, including decontamination chambers. From left to right: 1. work area; 2. equipment room; 3. air lock; 4. shower; 5. air lock; 6. clean room



a widespread "fiber phobia," a panic that has done more harm than good.

For instance, Brooke Mossman, at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, led a team of scientists in writing a report that appeared in the journal *Science*. Mossman and her colleagues decry the huge sums of money spent on removing asbestos from office buildings and schools, often to prevent levels of exposure so low, they say, as to be virtually harmless.

In fact, they charge that in some of the buildings slated for asbestos removal, there is actually less asbestos in the air inside than outside! Statistics are cited showing that children are in vastly greater danger from riding bicycles or from stray lightning bolts than from such low levels of asbestos. Besides, many asbestos-removal projects have been hastily undertaken and sloppily done, actually increasing the levels of asbestos in buildings by stirring up all the dust. In such cases it would have been safer simply to leave the asbestos in place and seal it off.

Furthermore, as many European countries recognize in their laws on asbestos, not all va-

rieties of the mineral have the same needle-shaped fibers. Chrysotile asbestos is made up of longer, curly fibers that are more readily trapped and ejected by the lungs. Some 95 percent of the asbestos produced around the world is of this chrysotile variety. Amphibole asbestos, the type that seems to cause most cases of mesothelioma, is used only rarely.

Mossman and her colleagues also dismiss the 'one-fiber theory'—the notion that even a single asbestos fiber can be lethal. After all, asbestos occurs naturally. According to an editor of *Science* magazine, all of us breathe about a million asbestos fibers each year!

Still, these points do not placate all scientists. Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, who did a landmark study on asbestos hazards in 1964, insists that low levels of exposure to asbestos can indeed be dangerous. Many scientists side with him. They are particularly concerned about school buildings. Simply measuring the asbestos content in the air in such buildings is meaningless, they say, since it is only very specific point sources of asbestos that present the danger, such as insulated pipes and boilers.

Curious or mischievous children are likely to find and disturb such sources; custodians and janitors may be exposed regularly.

Scientists also disagree on the hazards of chrysotile asbestos. An international conference of scientists in the spring of 1990 responded to Mossman's *Science* report by asserting that chrysotile is as hazardous as other types. Further, some have charged that scientists who minimize the dangers of asbestos are simply being used by the asbestos industry, which pays some of them to testify in court.

The Greed Factor

Such accusations, if true, brand the accused as greedy. The fact is, though, that greed is a running theme in the history of asbestos in this century.

The asbestos industry has been charged with outrageous greed for keeping workers in the dark about the hazards of asbestos exposure. Many court verdicts have assessed punitive damages against asbestos manufacturers for failing to make employees aware of the risks they were facing. And despite all the controversy, asbestos companies still export their products to less developed nations that have not yet banned the material—and where factory workers are not always properly protected from it.

Charges of greed have also been leveled at the asbestos-removal industry. Critics decry the exorbitant costs, which often range from \$25 to \$50 per square foot, well over a hundred times what it cost to install asbestos to begin with. There are also reports of corruption. Many removal firms have been caught bribing government officials to get them to overlook illegal and dangerous removal and disposal methods. Corrupt landlords have been known to hire unscrupulous firms to remove asbestos improperly just to save money. The workers they hire often have no idea of the hazards of their work, wear no protection, and have been

known to dump the asbestos illegally—even in parks.

Asbestos and You

Still, there is some hope in this grim story. Awareness of the various dangers of asbestos is spreading around the world. Many governments are limiting the use of asbestos or at least ensuring that workers who deal with the mineral wear protective gear.

What if you think there is asbestos in your home or at your workplace? First of all, only a laboratory test can tell for certain whether it really is asbestos or not. Second, don't panic. Panic has led some to try to remove the asbestos themselves, which is often illegal and much more dangerous than leaving it where it is. Get expert advice before taking any action. Only a reputable, licensed firm should be allowed to remove the asbestos or seal it off, depending on what the situation calls for.

If you have little choice but to work with asbestos, wearing protective gear is crucial, as is keeping the material wet to prevent its fibers from becoming airborne—however inconvenient all this may seem. One survey of 405 workers in Egypt found that only 31.4 percent of them wore their protective devices when working with asbestos.

Finally, don't smoke! In a U.S. study, 34 percent of asbestos workers were found to be smokers, in spite of their high concern about cancer and in spite of the fact that smokers are some 50 times more likely to contract asbestos-related disorders.

Of course, the experts still disagree on just how dangerous asbestos is and on whether *any* level of exposure is safe. Perhaps they will continue to disagree, angrily hurling statistics and studies at one another, until the day when man finally stops "ruining the earth" and misusing its resources. (Revelation 11:18) But until then, perhaps the wise course is to err on the side of safety.

The Wood-Carvers of Kavango

By Awake! correspondent in Namibia



WHAT happened? Startled, I sit up. Something has awakened me. Anxiously, I look out at the African night. I see only the stars twinkling brilliantly through the branches of the camel-thorn tree.

Then I notice it—hear it! The silence!

The drums have stopped. All through the night, the throbbing tom-tom-te-

tum-tum has been a background to the other noises of the African bush, but now they are silent. It is eerie at first. Then the normal nocturnal noises become noticeable again. The crick-crick of crickets and the zoom of mosquitoes, the whir, chirp, buzz, and hum of the myriads of insects that make up the musical mosaic of the tropical night. I am now wide awake. I lie thinking about these fascinating drums and how we had watched them being carved.

My wife and I were sleeping in our trailer

on the bank of the Okavango River. We were visiting the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses at Rundu, a trading village in Kavango Province in the northeast of Namibia on the Angola border. On our way through the bush, we were intrigued by the open-air workshops, where wood-carvers were busy whittling and whistling, chipping and chopping, sawing and sanding away at tree trunks.

Among the carvings were masks used for ceremonial dances as well as for "signposts" outside kraals where there were sick people. These masks were to warn visitors and to chase away bad spirits. Although many find the masks fascinating, Christians in Kavango do not keep them in their homes because of the connection with wicked spirits. It is therefore good to see that many objects are no longer being carved with these masks as the

main feature, but all sorts of geometric designs are now used for ornamentation.

The wood used is teak. It is sad that this beautiful wood is becoming scarce in Kavango. Hopefully, more attention will be given to planting new trees, as it takes 50 years for them to mature. The wood has an attractive grain, with light and dark patterns, which is effectively featured in the carvings. A suitable tree is selected and then chopped down or burned off at the base. Then it is dragged to the workshop hut, where it is sawed into round stumps or flat planks, depending on the art object to be made.

A Sawmill in the Forest?

Watching the carvers at work in one of the huts, I noticed some of these smoothly sawed planks in a corner. I was curious about how these were cut, as there is no sawmill or electricity in the forest. I asked Joakim, who was chipping away at a drum.

"Well, you see, *Tatekulu* [Older One]," he explained, "it is really quite simple. We push the tree across the hole. Jonas climbs down into the hole, and I stand on top, on the tree. Jonas pulls the saw down into the hole, and then I pull it up. We both keep pulling. We soon finish sawing the tree, and then we have the planks."

"But surely," I said, "that must take you a long time, and then you must be very tired."

"No, *Tatekulu*, not really. The sun comes up and we work. The sun goes down and we rest. Tomorrow the sun will come up again. The next day also, and the next. There are many days, much time. Time to work and rest."

Taxis of the Okavango

Taxis in the heart of African forests? Yes, but these are not the cabs of New York City nor the rickshas of Yangon. The people of the

Okavango River also do a different type of carving. The taxis of the Okavango are the *mawato*, or *mekoro* as they are called farther downstream. These are dugout canoes, carved out of solid tree trunks.

You see, the Okavango River forms the northern border between Kavango and Angola and offers the easiest transport—up, down, or across the river. Whether upstream to Owambo, downstream to Botswana, or across to Angola, the *mawato*, or water taxis, can travel on this water highway regardless of borders or man-made boundaries.

However, there are two residents of the river that *wato* (singular) passengers have to acknowledge with deep respect. In spite of human encroachment into their natural habitat, the crocodile and the hippopotamus are still to be found—and feared! Previously, when a *wato* capsized near Rundu, one unfortunate occupant was too slow and did not reach the bank. He was killed by a crocodile!

As for "the lord of the river," the hippo, why, a warning grunt, even from afar, sends the ferryman in his water taxi scuttling for the bank until he is sure that it is safe to cross. He knows that the fearsome jaws of the hippo can easily crunch a *wato*.

But the taxis are not limited to water travel. As a *wato*, or *mokoro*, ages, and bigger and more dangerous leaks develop, it is withdrawn from river service to become a land-based sled or trailer. We have seen many an old canoe, piled high with wood or goods from a nearby trading store, hitched behind either oxen or donkeys and slowly slithering or sliding over the soft sands of Kavango.

These Okavango taxis, now equipped with reliable one-donkey-power drive, can transport goods and provisions over terrain where modern multihorsepower vehicles get bogged down in thick sand. Archaic? Maybe.

Tedious? Possibly. Slow? Yes, as some people consider slowness. But Africa is the timeless land! As Joakim the wood-carver said: 'Tomorrow the sun will come up again. There are many days.'

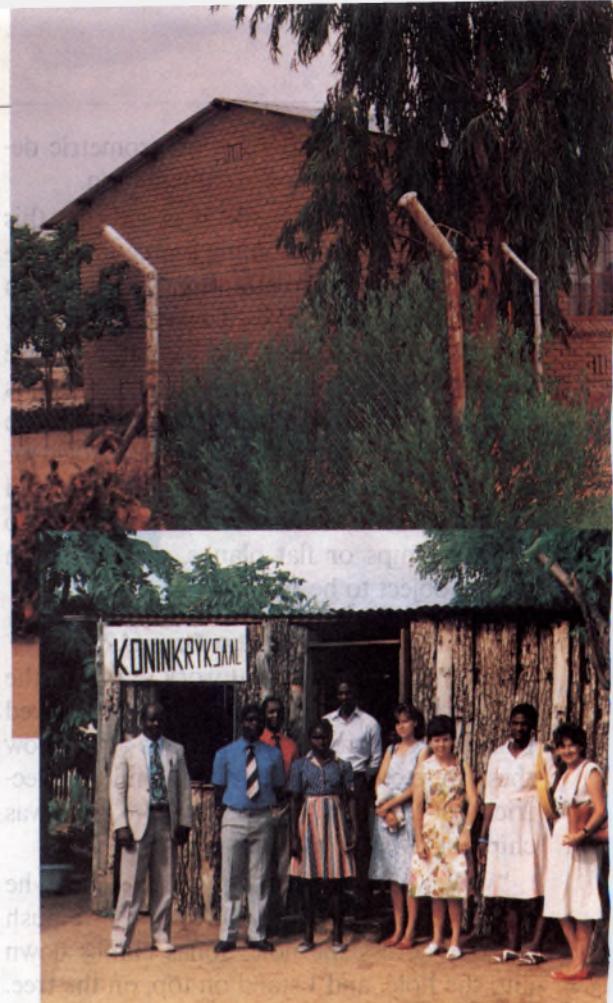
These, then, are the wood-carvers of Kavango. What a pleasure it is to share with them the message of peace that comes through God's Kingdom! (Matthew 24:14) Superstition is rife in many of the tribes, but seeds of Bible truth have taken root.

Three years ago there were 23 baptized Witnesses in the Rundu Congregation. They met in a small Kingdom Hall with wooden walls and a low roof made of corrugated iron. "With a squeeze it could take 40 people," recalls Christo, a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses, "but 56 came to listen to the public talk. This is a tropical region of Africa, and it gets very hot and humid. My shirt was wet with perspiration while I was giving the talk. In the cramped little Kingdom Hall, it was too uncomfortable to wear a jacket."

In spite of these unpleasant conditions, the number of interested people who attended meetings kept increasing. So plans to build a larger and more suitable hall became a matter of urgency. A local Witness kindly donated land for this purpose.

Witnesses from other parts of Namibia and South Africa responded to the call and came to this remote region at their own expense to help build the hall. Local people also became interested in the project. For example, young Ambiri and Willem, though not Witnesses themselves, kindly offered their assistance. Soon both began studying the Bible and attending meetings. Now they too are baptized Witnesses.

Another interested person who helped with the building work was a refugee from Angola named Pedro. As a staunch Catholic, Pedro got involved in a religious discussion



From left clockwise:

- Publishers in front of old Kingdom Hall
- New Kingdom Hall at Rundu
- Crocodile and hippo in the Okavango River
- Various masks and carvings

with Witnesses at his place of work. But afterward he reflected: 'How is it possible that Jehovah's Witnesses know the Bible so well?' He then formulated a plan of action. He would ask the Witnesses for a Bible study. Then, as soon as he had sufficient knowledge, he



would stop the study and use the Bible to prove that the Witnesses are wrong. Did his plan succeed? "After the third study," recalls Pedro, "I went home and said to my mother: 'Mom, from today onward, I am no longer a member of the Catholic Church.'" Though his family opposed him, Pedro made fast progress and soon resigned from the Catholic Church. He was baptized in December 1989 at the "Godly Devotion" Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Windhoek, Namibia.

Other interested persons also helped to build the Kingdom Hall. "I remember something that happened while we were busy pouring the foundations," says Christo, the traveling overseer. "About 40 of us were busy on the job. I noticed one person who seemed a bit aloof. So I introduced myself and asked him: 'Who studies the Bible with you?' Young Mateus answered: 'You must talk to these people because they don't want to study the Bible with me. I've asked them to help me many times, but they have done nothing.' The reason for this was that the local Witnesses were already conducting so many Bible studies that they had placed Mateus on the waiting list. However, I managed to make arrangements for a Bible study, and today Mateus is a baptized Witness."

In July 1989 the Rundu Congregation dedicated their new Kingdom Hall. Since they started using the hall, 10 new ones have been baptized, bringing the total number of baptized Witnesses to 33. Many others are progressing toward baptism, and during the last visit of the traveling overseer, 118 attended the public talk.

We hope you have enjoyed this brief trip to Kavango—with its remarkable river, fine forests, capable wood-carvers, and timber taxes—where the message of Jehovah's Kingdom is finding hearing ears and responding hearts.



How Can I Help My Single Parent?

"Being a single parent is like being a juggler. After six months of practice, you have finally been able to juggle four balls at once. But just as soon as you are able to do that, somebody throws a new ball to you!"—A single parent.

ASINGLE parent's job is tiring, often unrelenting. And if your mother is a single parent, you no doubt realize that she could use some help.* But as a teenager, you face what one writer called "the most stressful and threat-

* Since the majority of single parents are women, we will use the female gender. However, the principles discussed here apply to single parents of either sex.

ening time of life." It might seem that you have enough to do just coping with being young.

Nevertheless, like the single parent quoted at the outset, your mother may from time to time feel overwhelmed, trying to be both mother and father to you. True, Jehovah does not expect the impossible from anyone. As one Bible principle states: "The important thing is to be willing to give as much as we can—that is what God accepts." (2 Corinthians 8:12, Phillips) But still she may feel under considerable pressure. Should you simply ignore her plight, or is there good reason for you to try to help out?

"Paying a Due Compensation"

At 1 Peter 3:8, Christians are told: "Finally, all of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling." So at the very least, should not fellow feeling for your parent move you to help her? Indeed, it is "acceptable in God's sight" for Christian youths to "keep paying a due compensation to their parents."—1 Timothy 5:4.

While this text no doubt refers to rendering a bereaved parent financial aid, it does teach an important principle: We owe our parents more than we could ever possibly repay. And when they are in need, it is our duty and privilege to try to compensate them. For example, some youths will use some or all of their earnings from part-time jobs to help pay household bills. This demonstrates real gratitude and appreciation!

Financial aid, however, is just one way to pay your parent "a due compensation." Not that you should try to fill the shoes of your absent parent—that would be impossible—nor do you need to wear yourself out emotionally, feeling you are fully responsible for all the goings-on in your household. That is still your mother's job as parent. (Compare Proverbs 31:27.) But there are many practical ways in which you can prove yourself a real asset to your mother if she is a single parent.

Obedience Lightens Her Load

One way is simply to follow the command at Colossians 3:20: "You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." You may well be able to recite this text by heart. But do you sometimes fail to heed it?

One single parent with a teenage son works long hours to provide for her family. But she says with a sigh: "My son makes life harder when he disobeys me." Her son counters: "I'm the only male in the house. I'm bigger than my mother, so sometimes it's very hard for me to obey and respect her as family head."

Neither your physical dimensions nor your gender exempts you from Jehovah's command: "Do not forsake the law of your mother." (Proverbs 6:20) Your mother is authorized by God to make laws, or house rules. You owe her respect and obedience. If you are a male, Mom may affectionately call you the man of the house. But she is *head* of the house! And by obeying her—not arguing with her every time she asks you to do something—you lighten her load and make for peace in your family.

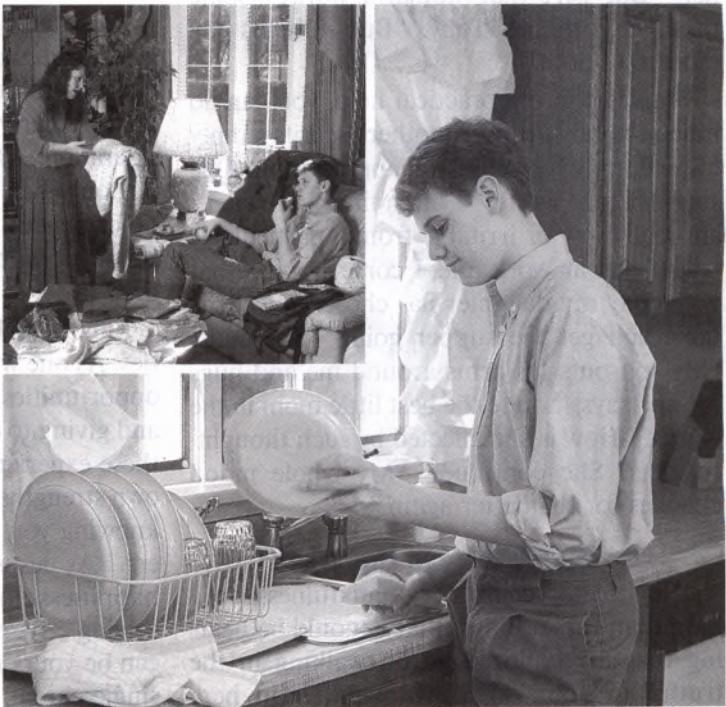
Help With Housework

Another way to lighten your parent's load is to help with household chores—not waiting till you are nagged into doing them. 'But Mom doesn't ask me to do any-

A lazy or unconcerned youth adds stress to his parent's life . . . One who helps with the housework lightens her load

thing,' you object. Surprisingly, this is often the case. As Carol V. Murdock writes: "Single Mom or Single Dad staggers through the living room with a load of laundry big enough to buckle the strongest knees—and three kids' eyes never leave the television screen."—*Single Parents Are People, Too!*

Why do many single parents require so little from their offspring? One single mother reasoned: "I don't want my daughter to have to miss out on any fun because I have to work. I'm afraid she will resent me for it." Another said: "You want to make up for the absence of the other parent by making it easy for the kids." At the core of such feelings, though, may be your parent's unwarranted sense of guilt. She may feel guilty because maintaining a job keeps her away from you. Or she may feel guilty about her failed marriage, reasoning that she is to blame for your having to live in a one-parent home.



According to Dr. Richard A. Gardner, author of *The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce*, some youths take advantage of the situation. They demand pity and refuse to share in household chores. This reminds us, though, of the callous attitude shown by religious leaders in Jesus' day. Jesus said of them: 'They fix up heavy loads, yet they aren't willing even to lift a finger to help carry those loads.'—Matthew 23:4, *Today's English Version*.

Show a different attitude. Refuse to add to your mother's load; do not exempt yourself from household chores.

Taking the Initiative

This may mean doing what needs to be done without being asked. Consider how young Tony lightens his mother's load. He says: "My mother works in a hospital, and her uniform has to be pressed. So I iron it for her." But isn't that woman's work? "Some think so," replies Tony. "But it helps my mom, so I do it."

Besides offering practical help, you can do much to buoy up your mother's spirits simply by making expressions of appreciation. One single parent wrote: "I often find that when I am really low or irritable from a particularly trying day at work and I come home—that is the day my daughter has chosen to set the table and get the supper going." She adds: "My son puts his arms around me and hugs me and says, 'You're the best little mom in the world.'" How is she affected by such thoughtful acts? She continues: "My whole mood changes for the better again."

"Go On Walking in the Truth"

"No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that I should be hearing that my children go on walking in the truth." (3 John 4) The apostle John here

spoke of his spiritual children. If your mother is a Christian, she no doubt feels the same way toward you; she wants you to walk in the truth. To that end she may arrange a regular family Bible study with you.

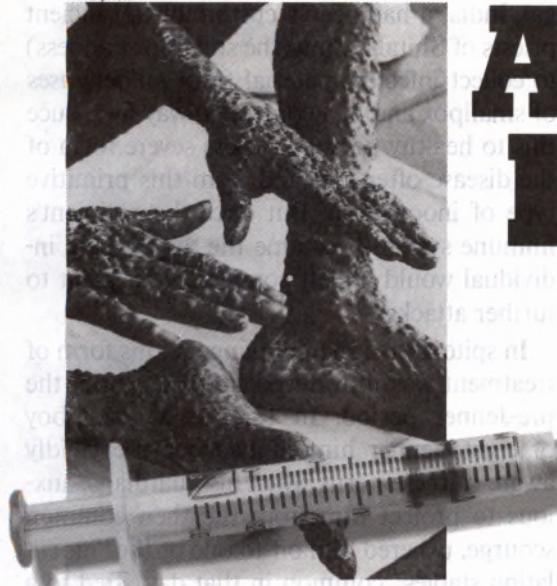
Conducting that study may not be easy for her after an exhausting day's work. And if you are uncooperative or complaining, family study can be an ordeal for everyone concerned. So cooperate! Be ready to study when the scheduled time arrives. Prepare your lessons beforehand. Your cooperation may be just the impetus your parent needs to keep that study regular. When you attend Christian meetings and share in the house-to-house preaching work without having to be prodded, you also demonstrate that you are walking in the truth. (Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 10:24, 25) In this way you assure your mother that her efforts are not in vain!

The Benefits

Proverbs 3:27 says: "Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it." Clearly, you owe your parent such consideration. And when you give it, you please not only her but Jehovah God himself. Another benefit: Your parent will be in a better frame of mind to give you help when you need it.

Finally, helping others builds good qualities. As one writer notes: "Young people need opportunities to feel that they are helping and giving to others. When they have none of these experiences, they cannot discover their own strengths and durability [that come] with knowing you are a good person helping others." As Jesus himself said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) And great happiness can be yours if you care enough to help your single parent.

WHO photo



A Killer Held at Bay

PHARAOH Ramses V of Egypt died some three thousand years ago. No one knew for sure the cause of his death, but down to this day, his mummified corpse bears telltale marks of a strange assassin. This same fiend also left its devastating mark in ancient India, China, Greece, and virtually every other nation.

This was a killer so powerful that it has changed the course of history. According to one source, in the lower Indus Valley, it even dealt the mighty army of Alexander the Great a severe blow. Accompanying explorer Cortés to Mexico, it decimated the native population to such an extent that it almost guaranteed the conquistador an easy victory. In 18th-century Europe, some years saw as many as 600,000 dead in the clutches of the killer. All of them were victims of a foe they could not see—a tiny, brick-shaped virus, the smallpox virus.¹⁸

Even in modern times, mention of smallpox has struck fear into the hearts of many. For example, in 1947, because 12 cases were report-

ed in New York City, over 6 million of its inhabitants were vaccinated. And it has been estimated that as recently as 1967, smallpox took two million lives. Why is this disease so fearsome? Is it still a threat today?

A Killer to Be Feared

For most of us, our only acquaintance with the disease is the sight of the characteristic scars on a stranger, whose pitted face tells the story of his having survived a visit from the killer. Many, however, did not survive. In some localities as many as 1 in every 2 persons infected died.

Yet, to many, as frightening as the high mortality rate were the ugly symptoms. Usually, within two weeks of a person's contracting the virus, it would have multiplied sufficiently to start causing real problems. Very high fevers, headaches, and chills would begin, followed shortly by convulsions and stabbing pains in the spine. A few days later, tiny reddish spots would become visible, first on the face, then on the arms, chest, back, and finally on the legs. These would rapidly enlarge to become

pus-filled blisters, or pustules, giving the sufferer a frightening appearance. Even more serious would be the attack on the body's vital organs. If the body's immune system was not able to muster its defenses sufficiently, one or more of these organs would break down, leading to the patient's death.

Although not considered highly contagious, the ability of smallpox to survive for a considerable period of time outside the human host meant that it could easily be spread to those in close contact with the sufferer or to others who handled contaminated bedding and clothing. The murderous virus, released from the erupted blisters of its last casualty, would ride on dust particles or water droplets and could easily enter the throat or respiratory tract of another victim and start its infectious cycle all over again.

There was no known chemical or drug—and there still is none—that could arrest the spread of smallpox. Doctors and nurses would simply try to make the patient as comfortable as possible and give medication to reduce the risk of spreading the infection. The only hope of cure was from the wonderfully designed immune system within the human body itself. And that was where one of the greatest discoveries of modern medicine was made, thus providing the weapon to curb this ruthless killer.

A Weapon to Slay the Killer

"Future nations will know by history only that the loathsome smallpox has existed," wrote Thomas Jefferson, then president of the United States, in 1806. He was writing to congratulate Edward Jenner, a British country physician and naturalist, on his discovery of a means to wipe out smallpox. Jenner's treatment, later called vaccination, is basically the same process that travelers in this century have become familiar with.

Centuries before Jenner's investigations, a somewhat similar form of treatment for small-

pox was already in use. For example, in Bengal, India, it had been a custom of the ancient priests of Shitala Mata (the smallpox goddess) to collect infected material from milder cases of smallpox and in a controlled way introduce this to healthy persons. A less severe form of the disease often resulted from this primitive type of inoculation. But once the recipient's immune system overcame the disease, the individual would be left completely resistant to further attacks.

In spite of its inherent dangers, this form of treatment was introduced into Europe in the pre-Jenner period. In 1757, as a small boy of eight, Jenner himself had become vividly aware of these perils when his guardians, anxious to protect him from the then common scourge, ushered him off to one of the "inoculation stables" common in that day. Tied to a rope leash to restrict his movement, he was bedded down, as were the other inmates, on a simple straw-covered pallet. There he suffered the distressing effects of inoculation-induced smallpox, under only the most primitive form of nursing care.

Although Jenner survived, he did not fully recover for many years. This experience to some extent explains his zeal in later life to find a better system of immunization. The opportunity for this came when he began to practice as a doctor in rural Sodbury, England. He was struck by the truth of an old country saying that milkmaids who caught a disease known as cowpox would never catch smallpox. In 1796, after years of case studies, he tested his findings by deliberately infecting a young boy, James Phipps, with the very mild cowpox virus. His theory was that James would recover with only minimal discomfort and then be immune to the deadly smallpox.

Not all shared Jenner's conviction. Local villagers protested that he would begin a terrible new plague or that children he treated



Immunization for smallpox began with the work of Dr. Edward Jenner



would develop bovine characteristics. Jenner weathered the storm, and when James recovered with no problems and, best of all, was completely immune to smallpox, local opposition died down. Research continued until 1798, when Jenner published his findings to the world. His theory had been vindicated. At last the weapon for slaying the killer was at hand.

Closing In for the Kill

Following Jenner's pioneering work, other scientists continued the research. Better methods of producing and administering the vaccine were developed, sharpening the effectiveness of this new weapon for the kill. In spite of the progress, however, the smallpox virus continued to claim its victims. Even in 1966, cases of smallpox were still reported in 44 countries, and frightening epidemics were common in developing nations.

It was later that same year, at the 19th World Health Assembly, that the nations finally decided to unite in positive action to catch and destroy the killer. Success depended on the fact that the smallpox virus would die once outside the human body. In other words, humans were its only carrier. If it was prevented from being passed from human to human, the virus would die out. Thus, a ten-year smallpox-eradication plan was launched. This consisted of *surveillance* to watch for any outbreak, including urging the public to report any cases, and *mass vaccination* to keep the villain at bay, unable to spread.

Encouraging results were achieved almost immediately even in countries with limited health-service facilities. In West and Central Africa, for example, when equipment, advisers, and vaccines were made available, 20 nations were able to eradicate the disease in just

three and a half years. Spurred on by success in Africa, Asia intensified its eradication efforts. By October 16, 1975, the last naturally occurring case was isolated in Bangladesh.

This though was not the finale, for in 1976 one of the two milder forms of the virus was still being reported in Somalia. A 13-month struggle ensued; health officials chased and blocked the rogue until finally, in October 1977, they had it cornered. Its last victim was a native named Ali Maow Maalin. When Ali recovered, the last case of naturally occurring smallpox was over. At last, nearly 200 years later, Jenner's dream was realized. "The annihilation of smallpox—the most dreadful scourge of the human race"—had been accomplished.

Could It Strike Again?

In 1980 the world was declared officially free from smallpox. Compulsory vaccination has ceased, and a new generation is growing up without the need for protection against the virus. Yet, what would happen if the killer were to return to such an unvaccinated population? Fears that it could decimate entire continents move us to ask if such a comeback is possible.

"There are two possibilities," explained a virologist at Calcutta's School of Tropical Medicine. "One is through laboratory leakage; the other is human malice."

The reality of the first of these threats was demonstrated in 1978, when in a brief resur-

rection, smallpox once again made the headlines, this time in Birmingham, England. A photographer, working on the floor above a laboratory where the virus was being kept for research, contracted the disease and later died therefrom, but not before infecting her elderly mother. Fortunately, swift action by British authorities once again trapped the virus and prevented further casualties. To reduce the likelihood of further incidents like that, smallpox has now been confined to only two high-security research institutions, one in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., and the other in Moscow, U.S.S.R.

'But,' you may ask, 'why is this killer not executed to prevent such risks?' Fear of human malice is the answer. As hideous as it may seem, there is always the possibility that smallpox could be used for biological warfare. History has shown that man is capable of such a thing. To assist their plans to settle in North America during the 17th century, certain residents deliberately spread the disease among the native Indians. Optimistically, many feel that we have progressed beyond that stage and that the chance of such 'smallpox warfare' is remote. We can only hope that this is so. We can only hope, too, that smallpox has really been eradicated and that for some now-unknown reason, it will not have a resurgence in the future.

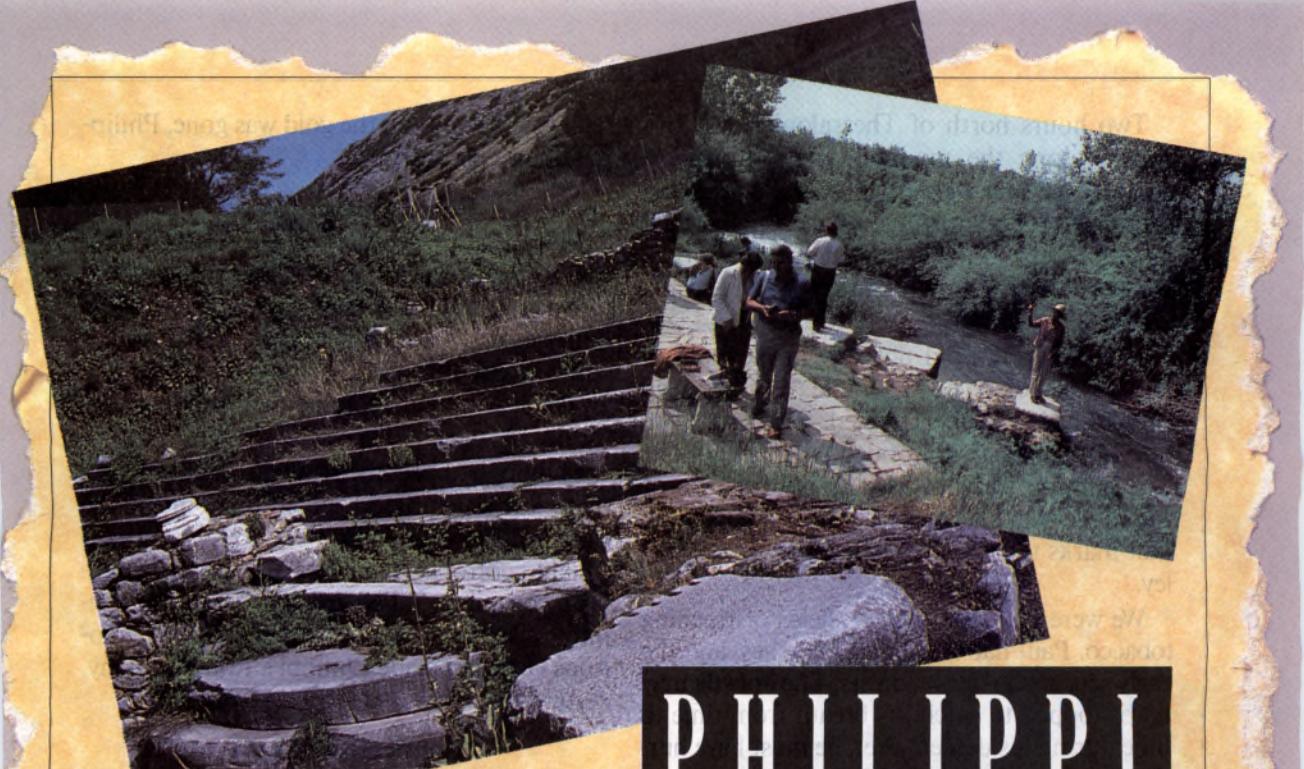
Because of Dr. Jenner's discovery, for the first time in history, man has hopefully succeeded in removing one of his deadly viral enemies. Medical science, now equipped with sophisticated tools and understanding far beyond that of Jenner, strives for victories over other infectious diseases. Will it prevail? Scientists admit that in spite of the tremendous strides forward, the overall goal seems as remote as ever. It is evident that wisdom beyond that of man will be needed to bring about a world where "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" —Isaiah 33:24.

In Our Next Issue

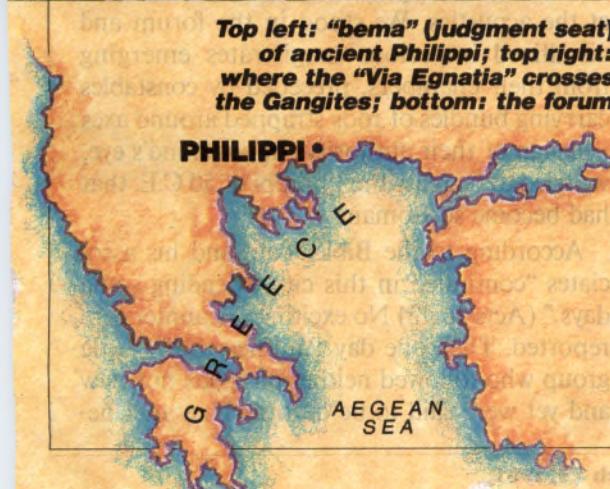
When Man and Beast Live in Peace

Preventing the Return of Bad Habits

Does the Bible Condone Snake Handling?



Top left: "bema" (judgment seat) of ancient Philippi; **top right:** where the "Via Egnatia" crosses the Gangites; **bottom:** the forum



PHILIPPI

Place of Fountains

WE HAD been skimming just above the waves of the Aegean on our approach to Thessalonica. Suddenly, the airport runway loomed up at the water's edge and rushed under us—so close to the aircraft that my wife thought we were already on the ground. "That was the smoothest landing we've ever had!" she said. Then, the wheels touched down with a bump.

Macedonia, Greece! I thought of the world of Alexander the Great and the later battle on the Plain of Philippi that decided the future of Rome. And I wondered how much influence they had had on the life and ministry of the Christian apostle Paul. As "an apostle to the nations," Paul introduced Christianity into Europe at Philippi. (Romans 11:13) Would we see anything there that would enlighten us? Or had history swept across the plain without leaving a trace?

Two hours north of Thessalonica, our bus wound along the mountain road above the port of Kaválla. Although Kaválla is noted primarily for exporting tobacco, fishermen mending nets on the wharf created the sort of scene we imagined that Paul saw when Kaválla was called Neapolis.—Acts 16:11.

Although Paul did not stay in Neapolis, a few yards below us we could see the steep cobblestone road he traveled. Then we were through the narrow, wooded pass and got our first glimpse of what used to be the town of Philippi. We could make out the massive rock that marks the site, nearly halfway up the valley.

We were looking down on fields of ripening tobacco. Paul had looked on marshes, and the early settlers on dense forests. The apostle may have stopped to catch his breath from time to time during his descent. Yet, he must have hurried on, perhaps as excited as we were.

Fountains of Water

Philippi existed before Philip II came in 356 B.C.E. to clear the forests, enlarge the town, and name it after himself. Five years earlier, settlers from Thásos had come to work the rich mines of Asyla and Mount Pangaeus. They called their village Crenides, 'place of small fountains.' Why? Because springs of water well up everywhere, making the valley largely marshland.

Only recently has the land been successfully drained. But the springs are still there, and the streams still flow. At one place, the old Roman road crosses the Gangites River. The river had been special to Paul, and we wanted to see it.

Fountains of Precious Metals

Philip fortified Crenides to save the Thásian miners threatened by Thrace. He wanted Crenides as a military outpost. But most of all, he needed gold to finance his ambitious war plans. The gold mines enriched Philip and Alexander the Great by more than a thousand

talents a year. When the gold was gone, Philip fell into obscurity.

Fountains of Blood

More than a century passed. Greece gave way to the power of Rome. The Roman Empire demanded roads, and the *Via Egnatia* was built across Macedonia. Nine miles from the coast, it cut through the middle of Philippi, awakening it with commercial and military traffic.

Philippi had become strategic. In 42 B.C.E., there was much blood spilled there in two furious battles between Rome and usurpers who sought control of the empire. But the Republican conspiracy failed and the Caesarean Empire was saved. As a memorial, the victorious Octavian made Philippi a Roman colony.—Acts 16:12.

Fountains of Life

No one lives in Philippi today. It is only an archaeological site. As we sauntered along the *Via Egnatia*, we examined wheel marks in the pavement. We roamed the marketplace and looked in on the 50-seat public latrine. At the library, there were no books, just as there were no wrestlers in the gym (actually a *palaestra*, or wrestling school). We saw the remains of Roman temples, Greek niches, and even an Egyptian sanctuary halfway up the acropolis. As we sat in the open-air theater, we marveled at the acoustics. We stood in the forum and visualized imperious magistrates emerging from their chambers, preceded by constables carrying bundles of rods strapped around axes—a sign of their authority. In our mind's eye, we tried to recreate the Philippi of 50 C.E. that had become so Roman.

According to the Bible, Paul and his associates "continued in this city, spending some days." (Acts 16:12) No exciting encounters are reported. Then one day Paul heard of a little group who followed neither old gods nor new and yet were said to be devout. They met be-

yond the colonial arch outside of town near the place where the road crossed the stream.

"On the sabbath day," Luke wrote, "we went forth outside the gate beside a river, where we were thinking there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women that had assembled." The discussion involved the hope of salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ. Especially "a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, . . . was listening, and Jehovah opened her heart wide to pay attention to the things being spoken by Paul."—Acts 16:13, 14; compare Philippians 2:12, 16; 3:14.

After some days, Paul's sojourn in Philippi came to a dramatic end. While walking the mile or so out to the place of prayer, he encountered a bothersome girl possessed by an evil spirit. When Paul expelled the demon, the girl's employers were enraged at having their soothsaying business destroyed. With what outcome?

"They laid hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the rulers." 'They are Jews,' they charged. (Everyone knew that Claudius had just banished all Jews from Rome.) 'They are disturbing our city very much by publishing customs that it is not lawful for us to take up or practice, seeing we are Romans,' they added. The crowds clamored; the magistrates passed sentence. At that the constables unbound their rods and "inflicted many blows" upon Paul and Silas. Then they threw them into prison, bleeding and faint, and fastened their feet in the stocks. That very night a great earthquake led to the freeing of Paul and Silas and the acceptance of Christianity by their jailer and his household.—Acts 16:16-34.

The next morning, the rulers were oh, so sorry for any misunderstanding, but would the strangers please leave town? Paul and Silas first went to Lydia's home to encourage fellow believers before they left for Thessaloniki.

ca. Luke stayed behind to look after the fledgling congregation.—Acts 16:35-40.

Fountains of Generosity

"She just made us come" to her home, Luke wrote of Lydia. Even Paul's jailer was very hospitable as soon as he correctly understood the situation. (Acts 16:15, 33, 34) During Paul's stay in Thessalonica, the friends in Philippi twice sent him things he needed.

Later, when he was serving God valiantly in Corinth, the Philippians again sought him out. Even years later, when Paul was in prison in Rome, an envoy from Philippi came with gifts and an offer of personal service in the apostle's behalf. Paul was touched. He knew that the Philippians did not have much in a material way. So he wrote: "Their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound."—2 Corinthians 8:1, 2; 11:8, 9; Philippians 2:25; 4:16-18.

Our Departure

We lingered by the Gangites, and I swished my hand in the water. It was surprisingly cold. We looked around. Somewhere near here was the "place of prayer" where Paul and others met for worship.

But then I asked myself, What makes Philippi so special to me? Is it this place by the river? Could it be the marketplace with its empty library, vacant gym, godless temples, and shops without goods?

Is it the fountains? Indeed, Philippi really is a "place of fountains." It still flows with water. Once it flowed with gold and, in a sad season, with blood. But there was also a good season when fountains of life, love, and generosity flowed from some very special people like Paul, Lydia, the jailer, and others. It's the people, isn't it? Those special people make Philippi special to me. They make me pensive. They make me reflective. I wish—my wife touched my arm. "Come on," she said softly. "It's time to go."—Contributed.

Watching the World

Door-to-Door Technique

According to the Madrid newspaper *El País*, Catholic priests and bishops are going through a crisis. Overwhelmed by discouragement, some are leaving the priesthood or are seeking early retirement. Among the reasons given is the loneliness of enforced celibacy. The bishops are also worried about the growth of other religious groups. *El País* noted that one cardinal proposed that seminarians be taught "the door-to-door technique so that they can go from house to house as Jehovah's Witnesses do in order to convince people to accept the Catholic faith." According to the newspaper, the cardinal added that both Christ and the apostle Paul participated in a house-to-house preaching work.

"Sick" Building Alert

Now that sick building syndrome due to indoor air pollution is well documented, how does one detect the problem before people become ill? (See *Awake!*, 11/8/88, page 30 and 12/8/88, page 29.) By using plants, say two professors at Dartmouth University. They claim that pollutants can visibly sicken plants before the chemicals sicken people, thus providing an early warning system. A number of plants display curled and dying leaves or show abnormal growth when exposed to chemicals that will give people headaches, cause dizziness, and produce other symptoms of "sick" buildings. Besides being very sensitive, they add, plants are much cheaper than instruments.

Beating Rifle Stocks Into Bats

In 1990 the South African government announced a substantial

cut in defense spending, according to *Financial Mail*. "Military analysts predict at least R1bn [thousand million (\$400,000,000, U.S.)] more will be lopped off next year's defence budget," said this South African journal. To cope with the reduced demand, the weapons industry has entered into partnerships with firms that produce commercial goods. One weapons factory "has adapted its machinery used for making wooden rifle stocks so that top-quality cricket bats can be made," reports the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star*. The cricket bats are used in South Africa's popular summer sport and have been tested and approved by a top cricket player.

Dwindling Butterflies

Europe has some 380 known species of butterflies, about a third of which are exclusive to that continent. A report in *The European* points out that "almost all . . . have declined drastically and several face extinction." The countries affected include the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and



the United Kingdom. What is the cause? An increase in agricultural production, fostered particularly by the growth of the European Community, has led to the destruction of wildlife habitats. The plowing up of grasslands, the draining of marshes, the widespread use of pesticides, destruc-

tion of hedgerows, and the poor management of meadows have exacerbated the situation.

Young Criminals

According to a study conducted by the Justice Ministry in Japan, "juveniles [account] for 57.4 percent of all suspects questioned or arrested," reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. The average age of young criminals has dropped every year for over ten years. The newspaper adds that "according to the study, more than 70 percent of delinquents committed their first crime between the ages of 13 and 15. Of those detained at least twice, most committed their first offense before the age of 10." The study revealed that the great majority of delinquent youths in Japan have parents that do not provide adequate discipline. They come from families with a "marked inability to communicate in a meaningful way."

Mongolian Bible

The Mongolian-speaking people of the world now have access to part of the Bible in their own language. It took British scholar John Gibbons 18 years to complete his translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. According to Mr. Gibbons, "Mongolian is the last official national language in the world to receive the New Testament," reports *Asia Magazine*. However, the magazine adds that the number of those who believe the Bible is "estimated to be no more than a dozen out of the 2.2 million people who live in the Mongolian People's Republic." A Bible society in England explains that there is a growing interest in the Bible as a world classic.

Catholic Disagreements

The French newspaper *Le Figaro* reports that according to a recent nationwide survey of French Catholic opinion, a majority of French Catholics (57 percent) disagree with the official teachings of the church regarding matters of morality. When asked about marital fidelity, birth control, abortion, and artificial insemination, 60 percent responded that the church should not make any rules in these areas. The survey reveals that a full 69 percent of French Catholics say that they agree, in principle, with having sexual relations before marriage. Moreover, 49 percent said they were in favor of doing away with required celibacy for Catholic priests, and 51 percent thought women should be allowed within the priesthood. Interestingly, only 8 percent thought that the Catholic Church was still loyal to the teachings of Christ Jesus.

Satanic Rituals

"Reports of satanic rituals, long dismissed as impossible, are increasingly frequent and disturbingly consistent," reports *The Globe and Mail* of Canada. Such reports include sexual abuse, cannibalism, and human sacrifices. Some claim that the victims of human sacrifice are drawn from the 50,000 drifters and homeless people who are reported missing in North America every year. There are also allegations of the breeding and concealment of babies for the purpose of using them for human sacrifice. *The Globe and Mail* adds that in "Canada, an estimated 2,000 individuals have stepped forward claiming to have been abused in satanic cults." To deal with the problem, police departments in some parts of Canada are featuring Satanism in their

teaching courses. Officials are worried about "Satanism's appeal to young people."

Healthy Fat

A recent study revealed that the incidence of heart disease among people living along the coasts of Japan is lower than among inland dwellers. The reason? *Asiaweek* reports that a diet high in seafood "has been linked to a reduction in several common coronary hazards." Salmon and trout particularly have a high content of a polyunsaturated fat known as



omega-3. It is believed that this type of fat can lower the level of triglycerides and reduce the "blood's stickiness"—its tendency to clot and possibly block coronary vessels," noted *Asiaweek*. Some suggest that omega-3 may even help prevent other diseases, such as arthritis, breast cancer, kidney disorders, and migraine headaches.

The Number One Tree Killer

According to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a Munich newspaper, German forests have taken a turn for the worse. About 56 percent of Germany's forest acreage is said to be damaged. Fir trees are especially affected, with serious consequences to the hills, where deep roots play an important role in preventing avalanches and the erosion of topsoil. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* notes that because of the high level of vehicle emissions in Germany, "conservationists have

again called on the federal government to do something about the 'No. 1 tree killer,' the automobile."

Learning at Home

Hundreds of thousands of parents in the United States are teaching their children at home rather than sending them to school. *The New York Times* reports that according to some estimates, up to 500,000 children are being taught at home. This option is gaining popularity among parents who are concerned "about drugs and crime in public schools and about a decline in the quality of teachers." According to the *Times*, educators say that these children are left "vulnerable to well-meaning but unqualified parents." A spokeswoman for the National Home-school Association admitted that "home schooling isn't for everyone." Then she added: "But neither is public school."

Cathedral-Upkeep Crisis

Although the Church of England is the second-largest land-owner in Britain, it is having a hard time maintaining its many cathedrals. According to the Manchester *Guardian Weekly*, "there are signs that the public is wearying of years of supporting these crumbling if fine monuments." Some church officials have suggested opening restaurants on church grounds or expanding the gift shops already there; in York, church officials doubled the rents of local shops. Such efforts have met with varying degrees of censure from church leaders. But Dr. Robert Runcie, former Archbishop of Canterbury, recently wrote a letter to the British government begging for financial assistance for the church. The cathedral of Ely has a simpler solution. It charges visitors admission.

From Our Readers

Estranged Parents My parents divorced when I was three years old. For 36 years I've tried to figure out where my father, who had been unfaithful to my mother, should fit into my life. Juggling my loyalties has often proved to be more than I can handle. Your article "Young People Ask . . . How Do I Deal With My Parent Who Left Home?" (November 8, 1990) has touched on every aspect of this matter. All my feelings have now fallen into place, and I feel as though Jehovah has put his loving arm around me and said, 'I understand.'

G. M., United States

Airline Tragedy I have just finished reading the article "My Agony on Flight 232" (December 22, 1990), and I could not hold back my tears thinking of what Lydia must have gone through, losing her husband. I lost my mother to cancer five months ago. I am infinitely grateful to our loving God for making it possible for us to see our loved ones by means of the resurrection.

C. G., France

Why God Permits Suffering I have read *Awake!* from cover to cover since 1985, but never have I seen such an illuminating answer to the question of why God permits suffering as that given in your October 8, 1990, issue. Any thinking person can obtain clear answers by reading these flawlessly written articles.

E. T. V., Brazil

Afterschool Jobs Your article "Young People Ask . . . Will an Afterschool Job Help Me Grow Up?" (November 22, 1990) gave me some very helpful advice at the right time. It helped me weigh the pros and cons of a job and make a far better decision than I might have made had I done it on my own. Thanks!

M. R., United States

I did indeed enjoy the article. I am 32 years old, have two children, and work two evenings a week at a fast-food restaurant. The kids I work with work hard. Some might therefore take offense at the term "fast-food joint."

C. B., United States

We can well appreciate the feelings of some readers in this regard. However, the term was quoted as it appeared in "The Wall Street Journal." In the article, we used the expression "fast-food restaurant." —ED.

Eating Disorders As I am subject to depression and anorexia myself, I really appreciated that the Society dealt with these difficult problems in simple terms, showing that women can break free from eating disorders. (December 22, 1990) Thanks for treating these rarely discussed taboo subjects.

C. L., France

Immune System I just finished reading the article "Our Immune System—A Miracle of Creation." (November 22, 1990) At first, I was a little apprehensive about reading it, but once I started, it opened my eyes as to how awe-inspiring God is!

L. Z., United States

Your article shocked me. To represent the immune system as soldiers with weapons was in bad taste. As Christians, we are against war. Or was the portrayal not to be taken seriously?

D. C., Germany

The comparison made was not at all an endorsement of human conflict. It merely served to help readers understand a very complex subject. Interestingly, the Bible itself uses war as a basis for illustrations, comparing Christians to armed soldiers. (Ephesians 6:10-17)—ED.

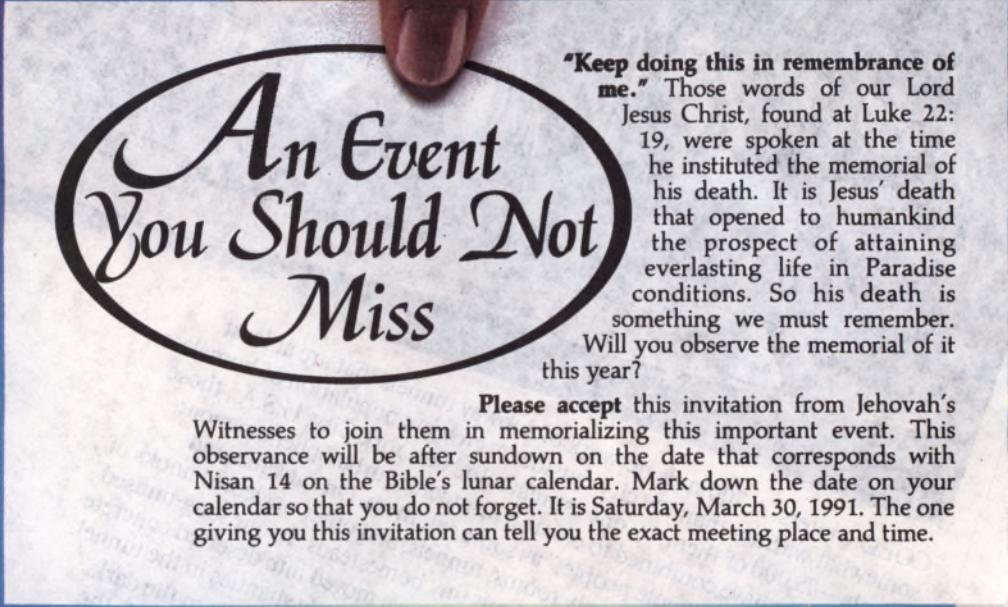
"Mole People"



COLD winters. A 700-mile network of subway tunnels that are at least somewhat warmer than the city outside. A growing population of homeless people—75,000 of them, by one estimate. In New York City, U.S.A., those three factors have combined to create a disquieting urban phenomenon: tunnel dwellers, or "mole people," as some call them. On catwalks and stairways, in abandoned supply rooms, tunnels, and other neglected nooks of this vast labyrinth, they have staked out tiny homesteads. In one long-unused Manhattan railroad tunnel, scores of them have moved into deserted concrete bunkers, alcoves, and ledges. Some have even built little shanties in the tunnel.

Tunnel life is hard, though. Rats the size of cats skitter about in the dark. Every year dozens of people are killed by the trains thundering through the tunnels and by the electrified third rail. Police scour the tracks regularly to rout the homeless. Transit workers follow, dismantling the makeshift dwellings. They drag out couches and rugs, radios and televisions, even scrape wallpaper from the walls of some tunnel hideaways.

After the police leave, the homeless return. As one police officer told *The New York Times*, all their efforts to remove the homeless may only shift them about briefly within the tunnel system. "This is a short-term solution," is how he put it. But homelessness is hardly a short-term problem. According to one estimate, as many as two million are homeless in the United States alone. In just one year, their ranks swelled by an alarming 18 percent. Clearly, a long-term solution is what we need. That is what mankind's Creator promises in the Bible—a time when every person on earth will be able to build his own house and live in it, enjoying a life free from the grim specter of poverty and homelessness.—Isaiah 65:21-23.



An Event You Should Not Miss

"Keep doing this in remembrance of me." Those words of our Lord Jesus Christ, found at Luke 22:19, were spoken at the time he instituted the memorial of his death. It is Jesus' death that opened to humankind the prospect of attaining everlasting life in Paradise conditions. So his death is something we must remember. Will you observe the memorial of it this year?

Please accept this invitation from Jehovah's Witnesses to join them in memorializing this important event. This observance will be after sundown on the date that corresponds with Nisan 14 on the Bible's lunar calendar. Mark down the date on your calendar so that you do not forget. It is Saturday, March 30, 1991. The one giving you this invitation can tell you the exact meeting place and time.

