

Awake!

August 8, 1994



PARENTS
Be Supportive!



PARENTS Be Supportive! **3-10**

Problems in the school systems have increased dramatically in recent years.

How can parents help their children to cope?



Valentin/The Cheaters,
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Is Gambling for Christians? 14

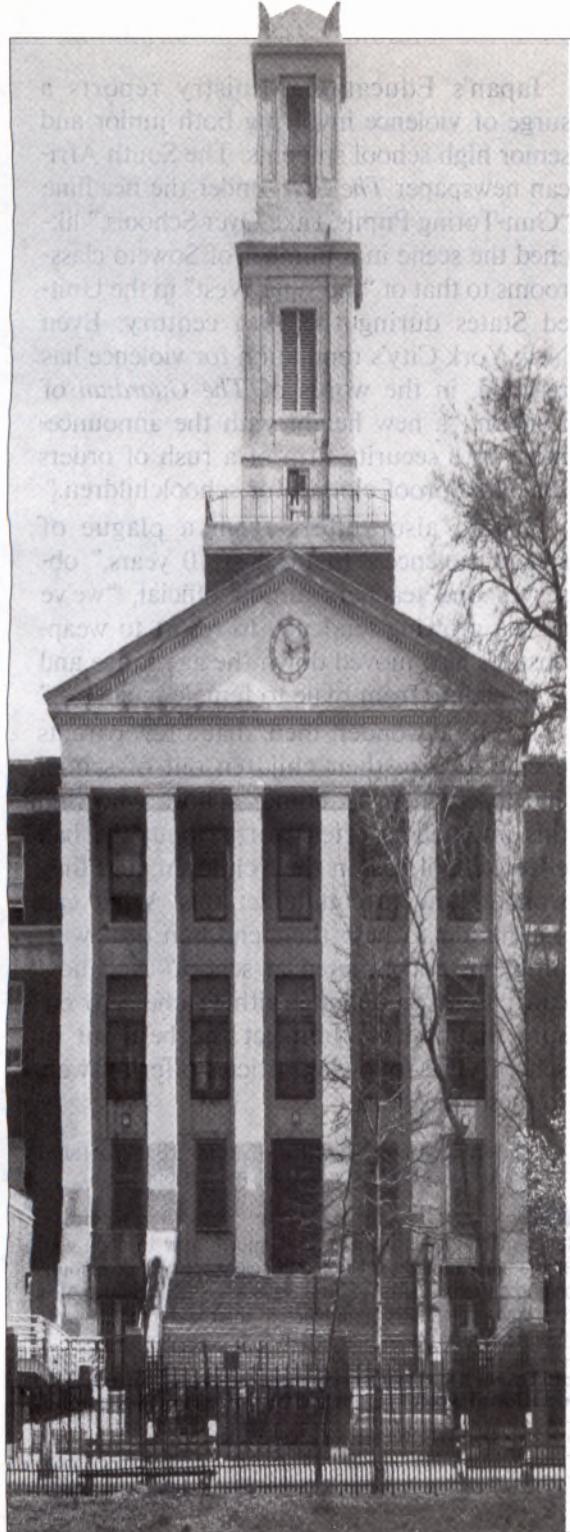
Gambling, legalized or otherwise, is widespread. What is the Christian view of it?



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Young people want to know what they can do to control their thoughts in this regard.

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SCHOOLS IN CRISIS

Parents send their children to school to learn more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. They expect schools to provide a well-rounded education, one that equips youngsters to develop into adults of whom parents can be proud. But their expectation often goes unrealized. Why?

Because schools worldwide are in crisis.

IN MANY countries a lack of both money and teachers places children's education in jeopardy. For example, across the United States, the financial recession of recent years forced some schools to rebind 'old textbooks, let ceiling plaster crumble, cut out art and sports programs, or close down for days at a time,' notes *Time* magazine.

In Africa, education resources are similarly stretched to the limit. According to the *Daily Times* of Lagos, the country of Nigeria has only 1 teacher for every 70 pupils, "with a strong probability that one out of every three teachers is unqualified." In South Africa—apart from a shortage of teachers—overcrowded classrooms and political unrest contribute to what *South African Panorama* calls "the chaos in black schools."

Of course, a well-staffed and well-equipped school does not guarantee educational success. In Austria, for example, nearly a third of 14-year-olds reportedly cannot perform simple arithmetic or read properly. In Britain, pupils' passing rates in mathematics,

science, and the national language "lag well behind those in Germany, France and Japan," notes *The Times* of London.

In the United States, teachers complain that although pupils score well in tests, many remain unable to write a good essay, solve math problems, or prepare a summary of essential points of various lessons or documents. Consequently, education authorities around the world are taking a fresh look at both the school curriculum and the methods used to assess a pupil's progress.

School Violence

Reports reveal an ominous and increasing level of violence in schools. In Germany, a teachers' conference was told that 15 percent of schoolchildren are "prepared to resort to violence—and 5 percent do not shrink back even from acts of extreme brutality, in that they would kick a defenseless person lying on the floor."—*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Individual cases of extreme brutality arouse great concern. The rape of a 15-year-old girl by four youths in a washroom of a Paris high school prompted students to take to the streets to demand tighter security at school. Parents worry about the increase in sexual offenses, blackmail, and emotional violence. Such incidents are not confined to Europe but are becoming more common worldwide.

Japan's Education Ministry reports a surge of violence involving both junior and senior high school students. The South African newspaper *The Star*, under the headline "Gun-Toting Pupils Take Over Schools," likened the scene in a number of Soweto classrooms to that of "the Wild West" in the United States during the 19th century. Even New York City's reputation for violence has reached, in the words of *The Guardian* of London, "a new height with the announcement by a security firm of a rush of orders for bullet-proof clothes for schoolchildren."

Britain also suffers from a plague of school violence. "In the last 10 years," observes one teachers' union official, "we've seen a growing tendency to resort to weapons. It's also moved down the age range and is spreading from male to female incidents."

It is little wonder, then, that a few parents decide to take their children out of school and teach them at home.* Those who find this impractical often worry about the bad effect school has on their children, and they wonder how to counteract this. What can parents do to help their children deal with problems encountered at school? And how can parents cooperate with teachers to ensure that the children get the best out of school? The following articles offer answers to these questions.

* The article "Home Schooling—Is It for You?" published in the April 8, 1993, *Awake!* reviews this option.

Awake!®

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201-2483. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, **Wallingford, N.Y. 12589.** Vol. 75, No. 15

Printed in U.S.A.

HELP YOUR CHILD COPE WITH PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL

DETERIORATING world conditions affect all of us, including our children. God's Word, the Bible, accurately foretold that in our day "critical times hard to deal with [would] be here" and that "wicked men and impostors [would] advance from bad to worse." (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) Thus, schooling today is fraught with difficulty as pupils wrestle with situations their parents rarely experienced. What can parents do to help their children cope?

Peer Pressure

Most children experience peer pressure at times. One young French student laments: "Parents and society do what they can, but it is not enough. Young delinquents drag along other youths. . . . Parents who do not control their children are not parents."

Responsible parents try to help their children develop spiritual qualities that supply them with the inner strength they need to withstand damaging peer pressure. "We put forth earnest effort to help our children build self-esteem," explains one father, "so that they will not find it necessary to have the approval of their peers. If being like other chil-

dren is not important to them, they will find it easier to say no when they are supposed to say no." To teach his children how to handle difficult situations, this parent makes time for his family to engage in role-playing, actually acting out difficult situations that could arise and demonstrating ways to cope with them. Be a supportive parent, and help your child develop self-assurance.

Bad Language

As moral standards decline worldwide, bad language becomes more commonplace. In many lands it is heard frequently on so-called prime-time TV. Thus, school playgrounds, corridors, and classrooms echo with obscenities.

Some teachers justify their own swearing and cursing, arguing that their students can then form their own attitudes toward such speech. But such a policy simply allows pupils to adopt these depraved expressions as part of acceptable everyday speech.

A wise parent explains in a kindly way why uttering such words is not allowed in the family. He can also forestall the problem of bad language in classwork by checking the school

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syllabus to learn what books his child will study. If any of the works chosen contain bad language or feature immorality, perhaps he can request the child's teacher to choose an alternative book with acceptable contents. A balanced approach demonstrates reasonableness.—*Philippians 4:5*.

Immorality and Drugs

Surveys reveal that many parents acknowledge being "too shy or embarrassed to tackle the topic [of sex education] at home." Instead, they rely on school to furnish their children with accurate information. But *The Sunday Times* of London reports that, according to one senior teacher, today's bumper crop of teenage pregnancies has "more to do with morality than the mechanics of contraception." Parents are in the best position to establish the standards of conduct they expect their children to maintain.

The same is true with drug abuse. A lack of parental direction makes the problem worse. "The more family life appears unappealing to the child," observes *Francoskopie 1993*, "the greater is the tendency to find himself a substitute. [Taking] drugs is often one of them." "It is hard to be a parent," acknowledges Micheline Chaban-Delmas, president of the foundation Toxicomanie et Prévention Jeunesse (Drug Use and the Protection of Youth). "You have to be constantly on guard; drugs are often a way to alert parents that something is wrong. If the adolescent feels that his mother or father is not paying attention to him, when he is offered drugs, they could seem like a magic solution to his problems."

One Canadian parent explains how he and his wife take a real interest in their teenage daughter's schooling: "We drive Nadine to and from school. Frequently, after picking her up, a conversation ensues that reveals what her day was like. If we discover some-

thing of a rather serious nature, we either talk to her about it then or bring the subject up again at supper time or during a family discussion." You can likewise express genuine concern and love for your child by keeping the lines of communication open.

Bullying and Violence

Bullying is "one of the most insidious of school problems," states Maureen O'Connor in *How to Help Your Child Through School*. She also notes that "however much misery it is causing to the victims, they are often unwilling to tell an adult about it for fear of being branded a 'sneak.'"

Regrettably, some teachers view bullying as normal behavior. But many others agree with educator Pete Stephenson, who believes that bullying is a "form of abuse" and maintains that "it is not in the best interests of the bullies to allow it to continue."

What, then, can you do if your child becomes the victim of a bully? "The first line of defence," writes O'Connor, "has to be the adult community in which [the victims] live." Talk matters over with a sympathetic teacher. This will reassure your child that both of you consider such aggressive behavior to be unacceptable. Many schools have adopted a clear policy against bullying, which teachers discuss openly in class.

Natalie became a victim of bullies on account of her religion. "Because I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I was insulted, and my things were sometimes torn up," she relates. To solve the problem, she talked matters over with her parents, who suggested that she speak with her teachers. This she did. "I also took the initiative to telephone the parents of two of my classmates who were bullying me," she adds. "Because I was able to explain the problem to them, things are much better now. I thus gained the confidence both of my teachers and of most of my classmates."

At times, parents discover that their child is the bully, not the bullied. They do well, then, to take a close look at what goes on at home. "Children whose aggressive behaviour is more pronounced tend to come from families where the parents don't solve conflict very adequately," reports *The Times* of London, adding: "Violent behaviour is a learnt process."

Violence in some places reaches epidemic proportions. When political unrest renders schooling well-nigh impossible, children who value neutrality have, on occasion, found it wise to stay at home. But if the trouble breaks out when they are at school, they prudently slip away and return home until calm is restored.

Poor Teaching

Good communication between your child and your child's teachers can help when poor teaching causes problems. "We always encourage our daughter to have a positive attitude toward her lessons," comment one couple. But when teachers fail to make a sub-

ject interesting, children quickly lose interest. If your child finds this to be so, why not encourage him to talk to the teacher privately?

Help your youngster prepare questions that, when answered, will make it easy both to grasp the point of the lesson and to learn how to use what is taught. This alone does not guarantee a genuine and lasting interest in the subject, though. Much depends on your own parental example. Show you care by discussing lessons with your child, and offer to help with research projects the teacher assigns.

At school, there are children who come from broken homes, or who live under abusive and neglectful situations, and who therefore often lack self-confidence and self-respect. They mingle with children who may have better circumstances. Most parents realize they need to persist in helping their children cope with problems that arise at school. But what of parents' dealings with the teachers? What kind of relationship should they cultivate, and how?

Is Your Child the Victim of a Bully?

EXPERTS advise parents to watch their child for telltale signs. Does he or she show a reluctance to go to school, avoid schoolmates, come home bruised or with torn clothes?

Encourage your child to tell you exactly what happened. This will help you know whether bullying is really the problem. If it is, then talk with a sympathetic teacher.

Help your child cope by suggesting that he stay close to reliable classmates and avoid places and occasions where bullying can recur. A child with a good sense of humor and who knows how to talk his way out of a difficult situation will often manage well.



PARENTS BE YOUR CHILD'S ADVOCATE

PARENTS want the best for their sons and daughters. Indeed, the Christian apostle Paul instructed fathers to bring up their children in God's discipline. (Ephesians 6:4) King Solomon of old advised young ones: "Pay attention to what your father and mother tell you. Their teaching will improve your character."—Proverbs 1:8, 9, *Today's English Version*.

Where, then, do schools fit into parental arrangements for education? And what should be the relationship between parents and schoolteachers?

The Roles of Parents and Teachers

"Parents are . . . the most important educators of their own children," maintains Doreen Grant, author of a study of the influence of school on the home environment. But as a parent, you may find that idea hard to accept.

Perhaps you observe that the methods of teaching have changed greatly since you went to school. Nowadays, schools feature hitherto-unknown subjects, such as media studies, health education, and microelectronics. This has led some parents to keep their contact with school to a minimum. "Talking to their child's teachers can make the most self-assured adult feel five years old and four foot tall," writes Dr. David Lewis in *Help Your Child Through School*. "Instead of discussing difficulties or worries with teachers on equal terms, some revert to childish behaviour."

Indeed, only when serious problems occur do some parents contact their children's teachers. And then, more often than not, it is to complain. Nevertheless, parents can, and

many do, make a significant contribution to their children's education by cooperating with teachers.

Parental responsibility requires you to examine and take an interest in what your child learns at school. Why is this? Because teachers, professionally, serve as your moral agents. The values they maintain affect their pupils, for children look on teachers as role models. For their part, most teachers welcome the cooperation of their pupils' parents.

One headmaster in southern Germany wrote to parents: "It has become apparent to us teachers, more than in any previous year, that a whole range of our pupils, especially those starting school [in Germany, at six years of age], are even now largely callous and unfeeling, thoroughly ill-bred. Many are completely unrestrained, not knowing where to draw the line; have no sense of guilt; are extremely self-centered, antisocial; and become aggressive without obvious reason, strangling and kicking [others]."

This educator continued: "Even though we teachers have far more difficulty as a result, we don't want to complain. But we have to recognize that, despite all effort, *school cannot educate and bring up children on its own*. We should like to encourage you dear parents to venture to take a greater hand *yourselves* in the upbringing of your children and not surrender to the television or to the street what is actually your own share of [the responsibility for] their personality development, teaching them standards of behavior."—*Italics ours.*

Even when teachers make such a plea for cooperation, many parents are still reluctant to help. "Not because they are uncaring, too busy or lack confidence," claims David Lewis, "but from their firm belief that how well, or badly, a child does in class has little to do with upbringing and everything to do with their genes." But this concept is simply not true.

Just as problems at home often affect a child's classwork, so a good home life can help a child get the best out of school. "The family accounts for educational success and failure far more than the school," concludes one educational survey. The book *How to Help Your Child Through School* agrees: "Even the busiest parent should recognize that their attitude—the interest and encouragement they show, and the support they give, even at a distance—can be crucial to children's progress."

How, then, can you achieve good cooperation with your child's teachers?

Be Your Child's Advocate

(1) *Take an active interest in what your child learns at school.* The best time to start is when your child begins to attend school. Younger children generally accept parental assistance better than adolescents do.

Read with your child. "Some 75 per cent of formal learning," according to David Lewis, "takes place via reading." You can thus play a leading role in developing your child's fluency in reading. Research suggests that the progress of children who are helped to read at home often exceeds that of youngsters who receive assistance from specialist teachers at school.

Similarly, you can help your child with writing and, yes, arithmetic. "You do not need to be a mathematical genius to help with primary mathematics," comments educator



Read with your child



Visit teachers to discuss the school curriculum



Help your child choose the options

Ted Wragg. Of course, if you need help yourself in these areas, do not let any lack of skill prevent you from taking a genuine interest in what your child is learning.

(2) *Consult your child's teacher about the curriculum.* By reading the school's prospectus, find out what your child will be taught. Doing so before the school term begins will alert you to problem areas. Then, a visit to the teacher to discuss how your parental wishes can be respected will pave the way for good cooperation. Take advantage of meetings the school organizes for teachers to get acquainted with parents. On open days, visit the school, and talk with your child's teachers. Such contacts prove invaluable, especially when problems arise.

(3) *Help your child choose his options.* Know your child's likes and dislikes. Talk about worthwhile goals. Consult the teachers to find out all possible options. They will know about any scheduling problems that restrict the choice of subjects.

Bad feelings can be avoided by clear communication. Many schools exert pressure on brighter pupils to pursue higher education. But students who choose the Christian ministry as their vocation generally avoid under-

taking a prolonged university education. Instead, if they opt for supplementary education, they prefer to study subjects that equip them to support themselves. Conscientious teachers sometimes mistakenly view this as a rejection of all they have tried to teach. Your patient explanation to teachers of the possibilities of the extra education open to your child *in your child's chosen field* will reassure teachers that Christian parents do want their children to keep on learning.*

The Proper Approach

You can avoid much worry and heartache over your child's education by remembering that successful partnerships are built on good communication.—Please see the box entitled "Steps to Good Parent-Teacher Communication."

Instead of complaining and criticizing, be your child's advocate through consultation and cooperation with the teachers. Doing so, you will help your child get the very best out of school.

* Jehovah's Witnesses who choose the Christian ministry as their career and serve as full-time ministers have the opportunity to attend a two-week course at the Pioneer Service School. Some later qualify for enrollment in a five-month course of missionary training operated by the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead to equip them as missionaries.

Steps to Good Parent-Teacher Communication

1. Get to know your child's teachers.
2. Double-check your facts before making any complaints.
3. If upset or angry, always cool down before speaking to the teacher.
4. Before meeting the teacher, write down the questions you want to ask, and list the goals you hope to achieve.
5. State your position firmly and clearly, and then work with the teacher to see what

practical steps can be taken to overcome any problems.

6. Put yourself in the teacher's position. Ask what you would do in his place. This will help you negotiate a satisfying outcome.
7. Listen as well as speak. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something. If you disagree with what's being said, then say so, and courteously explain why.

—Based on *Help Your Child Through School*, by Dr. David Lewis.

Devastating Drought in Southern Africa

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN AFRICA

MANY said it was the worst drought in this century. Some even said it was the worst in southern Africa's history. This two-year drought that struck southern Africa left a trail of disaster. "It is worse, much, much worse than we anticipated," stated the head of Operation Hunger, a private South African aid group. "Field trips are journeys of discovery into previously uncharted depths of misery, human suffering and want."

"You can't grow anything. The earth is dead," despaired one village farmer. In some places hungry villagers ate mud or roots of wild plants. Agencies supplying food aid were overwhelmed by the demand. According to *The Guardian Weekly*, "southern Africa has lost a higher proportion of its crops than did Ethiopia and Sudan in the terrible drought of 1985."

The drought brought some 18 million people to the brink of starvation. In Angola the crisis was the worst in the country's history. It has been estimated that a million head of cattle died, and in one year about 60 percent of the crops were lost. The people most affected could not be reached to be given aid. By August 1992, two thirds of Zambia's crops were lost, and an anticipated import of one million tons of maize was necessary. About 1.7 million people were starving.

In Zimbabwe, once called the breadbasket of southern Africa, four million needed food

aid—almost half the population. In one area a schoolteacher said: "There is little water and hardly any food stocks remain. There is not a blade of grass left on the land."

In some villages people climbed trees to pick leaves to cook and eat. The government had to reduce its food relief from 33 pounds to 11 pounds per person a month. The great man-made lake Kariba was at its lowest level ever, and water was restricted in Bulawayo.

Thousands of animals on game farms in Zimbabwe had to be shot, as there was not enough water for them. A newspaper reported: "Dead birds have dropped out of shriveled trees, tortoises, snakes, rodents and insects have disappeared."

Mozambique was among the worst off of the drought-affected countries. The country obtained 80 percent of its food from international aid, and one estimate was that 3.2 million people were starving. Refugees poured into Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. But with the more recent easing of the drought, many refugees have returned.

City dwellers are often unaware of the impact of drought on the lives of rural people. An official involved with food relief observed: "The devastations caused by the drought seem distant to most people in the metropolitan areas that have escaped the severity of food and water shortages."

Although rains brought a measure of relief to many areas, parts of Mozambique,

Swaziland, and South Africa still need more rain. No doubt the effects of this drought will be felt for years to come.

Obviously, then, one cause of drought is lack of rain. But its effects are intensified by other problems that deserve consideration.

Other Complications

In Africa the effect of drought is greatly increased by political instability. The countries that have faced the most severe food shortages are those that have been plagued by such instability. Examples are Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Somalia. Wars have disrupted agriculture and forced many farmers to flee, leaving their farms unattended.

A controversial factor in drought is man's pollution of the atmosphere and what is said by some to be the resultant global warming. Another factor is the increase in population. The average annual growth rate in Africa is

3 percent, one of the highest in the world. To cope with more mouths to feed, farmers cultivate land that is unsuitable for agriculture and do not leave land fallow so that it can recover.

Furthermore, forests are being destroyed, mainly to clear more ground for farming. According to the magazine *African Insight*, 20 years ago 20 percent of Ethiopia was forest; now only 2 percent is. Of all the environmental problems threatening the earth, some authorities say that deforestation is the most serious. It affects weather patterns and contributes to soil erosion, as well as the spread of desert regions.

Some African governments have kept food and livestock prices low to win the favor of urban consumers. This discourages farmers, who are unable to farm profitably. The government of Zimbabwe responded by increas-

Villagers competed with livestock for the little water that remained in mudholes



The Star, Johannesburg, S.A.

ing the price of maize by 64 percent as an incentive to farmers to produce more.

What Is the Solution?

Experts have many suggestions. But at times they have advised African countries to adopt Western farming methods, which have not proved suitable for the African environment.

Workable solutions are needed soon. A senior African official of the UN Economic Commission for Africa stated: "On the basis of all the economic projections we have seen so far, Africa in the year 2000 will not be in the ditch it is in now. It will be in the bottom of a deep black hole."

An obvious requirement is political stability and an end to violence and war. Cooperation with neighboring countries is also essential.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Africa has the potential to feed three times its present population. But its production has been declining for decades, and at the current growth rate, its population could double within 30 years.

Food aid from foreign countries has no doubt saved many from starvation. Nevertheless, such aid on a regular basis is not the solution and has a negative effect in that it discourages local farmers from producing. These may not be able to sell their produce at a reasonable price, and people often develop a taste for imported foods and no longer desire the local grains.

What Is Being Done?

The untiring efforts of many who sincerely want to help the African people are commendable. In some areas such efforts have produced results. In Zimbabwe an international research team has implemented a scheme to plant trees that grow well and relatively quickly in dry areas. The idea is to

plant these trees on a large scale to help overcome the fuel crisis, since 80 percent of the people use wood as fuel for cooking.

In the village of Charinge in the drought-stricken area of Masvingo, Zimbabwe, the farmers have been encouraged to use rocks as mulch for their vegetables and fruit trees. As a result, they need much less water, and the crops have grown very well. Farmers were even able to sell food to others in need.

In South Africa a large company modified its coal-to-oil plant so that virtually all water used is recycled after thorough treatment. Although the purification of industrial water is expensive, South Africa intends eventually to purify about 70 percent of its industrial water.

In Luanshya, Zambia, soybeans were introduced as an alternative nutritious food. An aid worker said: "Most deaths from malnutrition occur in March and June when traditional staples are in short supply. Soya, however, is harvested in April and stores better than staples such as maize and sorghum."

As worthy as such efforts to overcome the problems of drought and food shortage may be, man, with all his technology and advancement, has not been able to quench drought in Africa. Only One understands all the implications, and he long ago foretold the solution. Under the Kingdom rule of Jehovah God through his appointed King, Jesus Christ, the words of the prophet Isaiah will soon come true literally all over the globe: "In the wilderness waters will have burst out, and torrents in the desert plain. And the heat-parched ground will have become as a reedy pool, and the thirsty ground as springs of water. In the abiding place of jackals, a resting-place for them, there will be green grass with reeds and papyrus plants."—Isaiah 35:6, 7.

Is Gambling for Christians?

GAMBLING IS AN EXPENSIVE HABIT. IT OFTEN CONSUMES HALF ONE'S INCOME AND CAN LEAD TO ENORMOUS DEBTS. THIS HABIT CAN RUIN MARRIAGES AND CAREERS AND MAY EVEN CAUSE SOME TO BECOME INVOLVED IN CRIME. ITS VICTIMS ARE HOOKED AND CAN SUFFER WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS LIKE THOSE SEEN IN OTHER ADDICTS.

GAMBLING is so universal that some countries consider it a "national pastime." However, what, exactly, is gambling? Gambling is "betting on the outcome of a future event," states *The World Book Encyclopedia*. "Gamblers usually bet money or something else of value as a stake on the outcome they predict. When the outcome is settled, the winner collects the losers' stakes."

Gambling is not a new phenomenon. The ancient Maya of Central America once played a popular ball game called *poktakot*—known to the Aztecs as *tlachtli*—"in which some, having lost their wealth [by gambling on the game], staked their own lives," says *Américas* magazine. These ancients caught the betting fever, sometimes "risking a life of slavery on the fickle bounce of a rubber ball."

Why have many caught the gambling fever? Accord-

ing to Duane Burke, president of the Public Gaming Research Institute in the United States, "more and more people are treating gambling as an acceptable form of leisure activity." Even some religious organizations approve of gambling as a means of raising funds.

Although gambling is popular and has a long history, can it be just an innocent pastime for Christians? Or is there more to it than that?

Why Do People Gamble?

In short, to win. For gamblers, gambling seems to be a quick, exciting way to make money without the effort and discipline involved in working at a secular job. Much time is spent fantasizing about the "big win" and what that purse can bring them in fame and goods.

But the odds



Valentin/The Cheaters, Giraudon/Art Resource

against the gambler are phenomenal. For example, statistician Ralf Lisch says that in Germany "you are four times likelier to be struck by lightning in the course of the year than to [win] in the [German lottery] pools." If that does not sound convincing, he adds the following comparison: "If you're a man, your chances of surviving to [the age of] 100 are 7,000 times greater than [that of winning the lottery]." Ironically, the gambler may be aware of this. So, what makes him continue to gamble?

According to Dr. Robert Custer, in his book *When Luck Runs Out*, for some who gamble, "the financial gain is only one aspect of winning. . . . For them the important thing is the envy, respect, admiration, adulation that winning the money can command." He adds that for these it is the "thrill to be able to flash a roll of bills or just to be able to say, 'I won five big ones' and to bask in the glory."

On the other hand, winning—and the thrill that goes along with it—is still not enough for many gamblers. The urge to gamble may grow so strong that they become compulsive gamblers. In a study conducted by Dr. Custer with members of Gamblers Anonymous, 75 percent of those surveyed said they would brag about winning *even when they were losing!* Yes, gambling may become an addiction as severe and destructive as addiction to alcohol or any other drug. How many gamblers have slipped over that thin line from diversion to dependence? How many have and do not even know it?

God's Viewpoint

The Bible does not discuss gambling in detail. Nevertheless, it does provide us with principles that help us determine how God views gambling.

Experience has shown that gambling re-

flects greed. The Bible strongly condemns greed, warning that 'no greedy person would have any inheritance in God's kingdom.' (Ephesians 5:5) Greed is seen even when gamblers lose. According to one authority, the gambler "tries to win back what he has lost—looking for the 'big hit.' If he does win big, he bets bigger, and eventually loses his 'big hit.'" Yes, greed is certainly a part of gambling.

Gambling is used by some as a means of feeding their pride. One survey conducted with compulsive gamblers showed that 94 percent considered gambling to be an "ego building activity," and 92 percent said they felt like a "big shot" when they gambled. Yet, God says: "Self-exaltation and pride . . . I have hated." Thus, Christians are urged to cultivate modesty and humility.—Proverbs 8:13; 22:4; Micah 6:8.

Gambling may also induce laziness, since it seems like an easy way to make money without the effort involved in working. But God's Word clearly incites Christians to diligent, hard work.—Ephesians 4:28.

Moreover, what they call luck is so important to some gamblers that they become obsessed with it, making it their god. This is similar to the Bible account about men who were "setting in order a table for the god of Good Luck." Because of their idolatrous action, they were destined "to the sword."—Isaiah 65:11, 12.

What if a person is offered a free lottery ticket or free money to use for gambling? In either case, accepting such an offer would still be supporting a gambling operation—an operation out of harmony with godly principles.

No, gambling is not for Christians. As one magazine editor put it, 'not only is gambling wrong but it is also a poor bet.'

**Young
People
Ask...**



How Can I Get My Mind off the Opposite Sex?

DAY after day, the media chips away at teenagers' moral fiber with taunts and teases about sex; rock songs screech in their ears about sexual relationships; a barrage of best-selling romance novels wrap sexual reality in fantasies sweet enough to swallow like candy.' So said writer Lesley Jane Nonkin. Yes, as a teenager, you are bombarded with encouragement from the media to think about the opposite sex.

Of course, it is normal to have some inter-

est in the opposite sex.* But when romantic thoughts, daydreams, and fantasies so dominate your thoughts that they interfere with your sleep, prayers, homework, Bible reading, or household chores, then it indicates that the situation has been dangerous for some time. Indeed, such an unhealthy preoccupation could lead to wrong conduct.—James 1:14, 15.

Not that you should stop noticing that girls—or boys—exist. But as Proverbs 23:12 says, you need to "bring your heart to discipline." No, there is no easy solution, no magic pill to help you do this. With effort, though, you can bring your thinking more into balance. Let's look at a few practical ways you can do this.

Watch the Company You Keep

Take a close look at the company you keep. Admits one young man: "Everybody around you talks about sexual immorality as if it were as normal as going out to eat." Can constant exposure to such talk affect you? Undoubtedly. According to one survey of youths, three quarters admitted that "being like (or unlike) the crowd governs their attitudes toward sex."

What about your friends? Does every conversation lapse into an intense discussion about someone of the opposite sex? Does such talk tend to get out of hand and become lewd or suggestive? If so, joining in—or simply listening—will make it difficult for you to keep your mind focused on chaste things. The Bible exhorts: "Put them all away from you, wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth."—Colossians 3:8.

It will be hard to apply this counsel, however, if your companions have little appreciation for Bible principles; their attitudes are sure to rub off on you in time. (Proverbs 13:20) Consider the experience of one Christian

* See the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Is It So Hard to Keep My Mind Off The Opposite Sex?" in our July 22, 1994, issue.

girl, who said: "I didn't want to tell the kids in school that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. So they talked freely to me about sex all the time." Before long she became involved in sexual immorality and got pregnant. Proverbs 9:6 wisely exhorts: "Leave the company of ignorant people, and live. Follow the way of knowledge." (*Today's English Version*) Yes, surround yourself with friends who share your Christian morals and standards, friends who will build you up spiritually—not tear you down.

Of course, even young Christians who generally show a godly attitude may "stumble in word" from time to time. (James 3:2) When that happens and a conversation starts going in the wrong direction, what can you do? The Bible tells us that King Solomon became infatuated with a young shepherd girl. She, however, did not return the romantic interest. When some young companions tried to arouse her feelings for Solomon, she did not allow herself to be bombarded with romantic talk. She spoke up, saying: "I have put you under oath . . . that you try not to awaken or

arouse love in me until it feels inclined." (Song of Solomon 2:7) In a similar way, you may need to speak up when talk gets out of hand. No, you do not necessarily have to lecture your friends. But you might try simply changing the subject, steering the conversation in a more wholesome direction.

Entertainment —The Need to Be Selective

Another area of concern is entertainment. The latest movie, video, or disc may look appealing. However, the Bible reminds us: "Everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world." (1 John 2:16) As mentioned at the outset, much of today's entertainment is designed to arouse sexual feelings. Popular songs and films, for example, have become increasingly explicit—often pornographic.

How might it affect you to expose yourself to such entertainment? Says writer John Lan-gone: "A number of studies have shown . . .



**If talk about
the opposite sex
gets out of hand,
have the courage
to change
the subject**

that when we are exposed to erotic material, we tend to talk more about sex. Sometimes, this exposure leads us to try things we wouldn't ordinarily try." Yes, 'setting your mind on the things of the flesh' will only harm you. (Romans 8:5) It will distort your view of love and sex and fill your mind with unclean fantasies. The Bible's counsel? "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 7:1) So steer clear of films, videos, and discs that stimulate romantic desire.

A single Christian man once gave this bit of practical advice: "Don't feast on unwholesome things just before going to bed. Many late-night TV shows are quite suggestive." So are many books. Confesses a young Christian named Sherry: "I used to read romance novels. I would fantasize about sex, dreaming about the high life and bed-hopping." Her mind full of romantic fantasies, she easily fell into necking and petting with a young man. Problems like that can be avoided if you stick to wholesome reading material—like this journal and its companion, *The Watchtower*. Such reading has helped many youths to 'set their minds on the things of the spirit,' instead of on the fallen flesh.—Romans 8:5.

Get Rid of Those Fantasies!

At times thoughts about the opposite sex may just pop into your mind without warning. Confesses 17-year-old Scott: "There are times when it becomes very difficult for me to keep my mind off sex." Or perhaps you simply see a good-looking boy or girl. Before you realize it, you find yourself thinking about him or her. But it is one thing to notice that someone is attractive and a different thing entirely to do what Jesus warned against, namely, to 'keep on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her.' (Matthew 5:28; compare Proverbs 6:25.) When you are too young to marry, wallowing in tantalizing romantic fan-

tasies can only depress and discourage you. —Compare Proverbs 13:12.

Scott thus says: "What helps me is to change the subject—get my mind off the thoughts that cause me to feel excited. I remind myself that the feelings or urges will go away in time." (Compare Philippians 4:8.) The apostle Paul said: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave." (1 Corinthians 9:27) Similarly, you may have to get tough with yourself when thoughts about the opposite sex try to take root. If the thoughts persist, try some physical exercise. "Bodily training is beneficial for a little," and a brisk walk or a few minutes of calisthenics may be all you need to help you get your mind back on track. —1 Timothy 4:8.

Many youths have also found that "having plenty to do in the work of the Lord" is particularly helpful. (1 Corinthians 15:58) Young Debra put it this way: "I find that the trick is to stay busy until you drop." Getting thoroughly involved with the Christian congregation and all its activities can do much to help you keep your thinking in balance.

Try as you may, though, it may still be tough at times for you to get your mind off the opposite sex. If so, get some adult support. Perhaps you could talk matters over with one of your parents. Consider what young Carl said: "It has helped me to talk things over with someone older and experienced. The franker the conversation, the better." Above all, do not overlook the help you can get from your heavenly Father. "When I feel sexual urges coming on," says one single Christian man, "I really make myself pray." States the Bible: "Let us, therefore, approach with freedom of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." (Hebrews 4:16) No, God will not take away your interest in the opposite sex. But with his help, you can discover that there are many other things to think about.

Guam's Mystery Diseases

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GUAM

SHE had suspected it. Still, the doctor's words hit hard. "All our tests seem to confirm that your father has lytico and bodig." She knew that both are terminal.

Guam has the highest incidence of these diseases in the world, many times higher than the United States. But what are these dreaded diseases that will eventually take the life of this woman's father? What causes them? And what can she do to make his remaining time bearable?

What Are Lytico and Bodig?

Both lytico and bodig are degenerative diseases of the neuromuscular system. Lytico is known in the medical world as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease. When the famous New York Yankee baseball player Lou Gehrig died of this disease in 1941, it became known by his name. Lytico is the local name for ALS.

ALS affects the motor neurons and nerves in the spinal cord. The muscles of the hands, legs, and throat slowly and steadily become paralyzed. Yet, for a time, ability to feel, as well as reproductive ability and urinary-rectal control, function well. Indeed, a number of children have been born to ALS patients. One woman gave birth to six normal children dur-

ing the 14 years she suffered with ALS before her death at the age of 43. However, during the advanced stages of ALS, urinary tract infections, pneumonia, or respiratory insufficiency will lead to death. ALS appears most frequently in adults between 35 and 60 years of age. In Guam the youngest victim was a 19-year-old woman.

Bodig is the local term for atrophy of the brain. Medically called Parkinsonism-dementia (PD), it is described as a combination of the symptoms of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Either the Parkinson's symptoms (slow movements, muscular rigidity, tremors) or the mental changes (memory loss, disorientation, personality changes) may begin first. At times, the symptoms of both diseases appear together. In advanced stages, the patient develops bedsores, incontinence of urine and feces, osteoporosis, fractures of bones, and anemia and finally succumbs to infections.

Lytico and bodig are considered to be two diseases. However, research has led some to believe that they are one disease with different expressions of symptoms.

The Mystery Deepens

Among major questions being researched are the following: (1) Why is it that 98 percent of the victims of ALS and PD in the Mariana Islands are pure Chamorro and the remaining few are long-term Filipino residents? (2) Why are the only other areas of high incidence located at other places at the same longitude? (3) Why should a number of victims in the Mariana Islands have both ALS and PD, whereas patients elsewhere have only one or the other? (4) How does concentrated aluminum find its way into the central nervous system of these victims? (5) Why is little zinc found in the brain cells where there is a high level of aluminum? Environmental studies in the high incidence

areas of the western Pacific showed high levels of aluminum, manganese, and iron but low amounts of calcium, magnesium, and zinc in the soil and water.

Trying to Unravel the Mystery

For many years researchers in Guam, Japan, and Canada have tried to unravel the facts about these mystery diseases. In several theories advanced by these research teams, different agents are cited: a rare genetic factor, a slow virus infection, and chronic trace metal poisoning.

A pharmacologist has claimed that as little as two to three milligrams of aluminum in the brain cells can disrupt the brain's normal

function. Aside from the soil and water, aluminum compounds in large quantities have been added to baking powders, cake and pancake mixes, self-rising flour, frozen dough, some antacids, deodorants, and hemorrhoid preparations. Also contributing are aluminum wraps and cookware, for aluminum is leached out, especially when acidic or alkaline foods are cooked in them.

Dr. Kwang-Ming Chen, a neurologist and authority on these rare diseases, stated: "Extensive studies conducted by the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Diseases and Stroke (NINCDS) over [the] past 30 years have not quite unravelled the mystery of the remarkably high incidence and the cause of these most devastating and elusive diseases of the central nervous system (CNS) known to mankind." However, he indicated that chronic trace metal poisoning has far more credence than a rare genetic factor or a slow virus infection. Research is still continuing. Until an answer is found, all that one can do is try to cope with the problems and be of the greatest assistance possible to the afflicted.

What to Expect and How to Cope

Although frightened and sad when they learned the diagnosis, the families interviewed in Guam said their attitude was one of acceptance. They knew there was no cure.

Great frustration and despair are experienced by both the patient and his family. When asked what caused

Family members find it a challenge to cope with terminal illnesses such as these



him the most distress, one PD victim said: "Not being able to speak plainly and move around the house frustrates me." Personality changes and lapses of memory make it hard for the family to cope. Bedsores and incontinence of urine and feces make care more difficult. Because the ALS patient is mentally alert, his attitude is generally more cooperative, but he is entirely helpless in the advanced stages of the disease.

A suction pump is often needed to help clear the throat of the ALS or PD patient. Food must be soft, and small spoonfuls must be placed deep in the throat to prevent choking. Oxygen is needed when breathing becomes labored.

Physical therapy, control of infection, and emotional support are all provided by the Home Care Service Agency. Among other necessities, the Guam Lytico and Bodig Association provides braces, splints, surgical beds and mattresses, wheelchairs, and bedpans. Since 1970, PD patients have been treated with L-dopa, which loosens muscle rigidity and improves slow movements. Unfortunately, there is no effective medicine for the dementia or for ALS patients.

Close family cooperation has usually been outstanding when these illnesses strike. One woman who lost her father, a sister, and six other members of her family to either ALS or PD commended her family, saying: "They were all good to help." And speaking with fond remembrance of the help from her ill sister's husband, she said: "He showed such great love! Every day he put her in a wheelchair and took her for a walk."

One woman chose to remain single for many years to take care of her mother. Her family had already lost three members because of ALS, and others began to manifest symptoms. Another woman, totally paralyzed for over 24 years, had three daughters,

and two of them quit school in order to give their mother comprehensive care. She was turned from side to side at 30-minute intervals day and night. Because of the demands of constant care, some families have found it necessary to put patients in hospitals where a trained staff can supply their needs.

Families that have successfully coped with ALS and PD offer these suggestions: Be loving but firm. Do not show impatience or expect too much from the patient. Have faith in God. Pray often. Arrange some private periods for family members who spend the most time with the patient. Take the patient on outings at times and help him to attend village or social functions. Do not be ashamed of having a patient in the family. And encourage children, grandchildren, and friends to visit, for victims are often lonely.

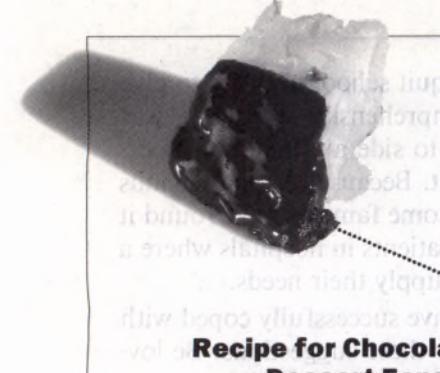
While medical science has not found a definite explanation for these diseases, there is hope for both the stricken ones and their families. The Bible shows that soon, in God's new world, all disease, pain, and death will be eliminated forever. Instead, there will be perfection of mind and body, with everlasting life in view. Even dead loved ones will be resurrected to life on earth. Please read God's Word, the Bible, to an ailing loved one so that he can learn about the marvelous hope ahead.
—Psalm 37:11, 29; Isaiah 33:24; 35:5-7; Acts 24:15; Revelation 21:3-5.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

A Balanced View of Education

When Life Is Not Easy

Why Did Daddy Have to Die?



A Conversation Piece You Can Eat

Recipe for Chocolate Dessert Fondue

6 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup light cream
1/2 cup margarine or butter
1/8 teaspoon salt
or simply:
12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips or sweet cooking chocolate
1/2 cup half-and-half (cream and whole milk)



Pastry dippers:

Angel food cake,
ladyfingers, doughnuts,
pound-cake cubes

Fruit Dippers, any or all:

Apples, bananas, cherries, dates, grapes, oranges, melons, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple chunks, strawberries



DESSERT? . . . DESSERT! . . . Have you planned a dinner for guests and then asked yourself, 'What shall I serve for dessert?' Perhaps this common dilemma has prompted you to pore over your recipes and all your cookbooks in search of the perfect dessert for your get-together.

Would you like to try a fondue? Not only is it a natural conversation piece but it's quick and easy to prepare too. What is a fondue? Quite simply, it is a mixture of certain ingredients that are melted in a pot. Then, other foods, which we will style "dippers," are dipped into the mixture and eaten. The word fondue comes from the French word *fondre* meaning "to melt." For example, in a chocolate dessert fondue, the mixture is basically melted chocolate, and the dippers are pastry and fresh fruit.

Chocolate Dessert Fondue

To the left is a chocolate dessert fondue recipe. If you have never tried it, you are in for a delightful surprise!

Melt the chocolate in a saucepan. Add the remaining ingredient(s). Stir until the mixture is thickened. Transfer the mixture to a fondue pot, and keep it warm over a low-heat source.

Before you begin dipping into the fondue, you may want to stir in two teaspoons of instant coffee or one quarter teaspoon of cinnamon. To keep fruit dippers from turning dark, sprinkle them with lemon juice mixed with water. If the chocolate mixture is too thin, add more chocolate. If it is too thick, thin it with milk.

If you are using an electric fondue pot or a stovetop-safe fondue pot, you may prepare and serve in the same pot. Place the fondue pot in the center of the table within easy reach of everyone. One pot serves six to eight persons.

If some sauce is left over, it stores well in the refrigerator and makes an excellent topping for ice cream.

Swiss Cheese Fondue

Would you like to try a cheese fondue? To the right is a recipe for either an appetizer or a main dish.

Rub the inside of a saucepan with the cut side of a garlic clove, then discard the garlic. Pour the wine and lemon juice into the pan, and warm it over medium heat. Bubbles will rise and cover the surface. Do not allow the wine to boil.

In a bowl combine cornstarch or flour with the shredded cheese, and stir.

While stirring the wine mixture constantly, add a handful of cheese. After the cheese melts, add another handful of cheese, and stir until it melts. Continue in this manner until all the cheese is melted. If desired, season with white pepper and nutmeg or paprika and ground clove.

Transfer it to the fondue pot, and set it over a low to medium heat source. Each person has his own long-handled fondue fork, dinner plate, and dinner fork. Simply spear one of the dippers and swirl it around in a circular or



Chocolate dessert fondue



Recipe for Swiss Cheese Fondue

1 clove garlic, cut in half
1 1/2 cups dry, white wine
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons cornstarch or flour
16 ounces Swiss cheese, shredded (or combination Swiss and Gruyère)
2 to 3 tablespoons kirsch (optional)
White pepper and nutmeg or paprika and clove, if desired

Dippers:

2 loaves crusty French bread (or Italian bread or hard rolls) cut into 1-inch cubes, each with a side of crust
Cooked chicken, ham, shrimp
Raw or cooked vegetables



Dipping sauces:

Horseradish Sauce

3 tablespoons prepared horseradish

1 cup dairy sour cream

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1/8 teaspoon paprika

Blend ingredients

Horseradish mayonnaise

Mayonnaise and Curry Sauce

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup dairy sour cream

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon curry powder

Blend ingredients

Salt and pepper to taste

Mustard Sauce

3 teaspoons prepared mustard

2 tablespoons chopped onion

1 cup dairy sour cream

Blend ingredients

Salt and pepper to taste

Recipe for Beef Fondue

2 pounds lean beef, tenderloin,

or boneless sirloin

vegetable oil

Note: The fondue pot must be of cast iron, copper, or steel. Ceramic pots are not safe for an oil fondue. The oil is too hot, and the pot will break.

figure-eight fashion in the fondue. Place the dipper on your dinner plate, and eat it with your dinner fork.

If the fondue is too thin, add more cheese. If it becomes too thick, stir in some heated wine. If the mixture separates, heat it at a high temperature, beat it with a whisk, and then lower the heat. The mixture should not separate if you stir it with the dipper every time you dip.

If you prefer a nonalcoholic base for your fondue, prepare a basic cheese-sauce recipe. Mix four tablespoons each of butter and flour. Cook the mixture over low heat. Add two cups of cold milk, bring slowly to boil, and cook the mixture for two minutes. Gradually add one and one half cups of sharp cheese (shredded) and stir until it is melted. Season with salt and pepper. Dip as described above.

A Sweet Ending

The next time you face the dessert dilemma, you may decide to give chocolate fondue a whirl. Or for dinner, perhaps you will serve beef fondue.

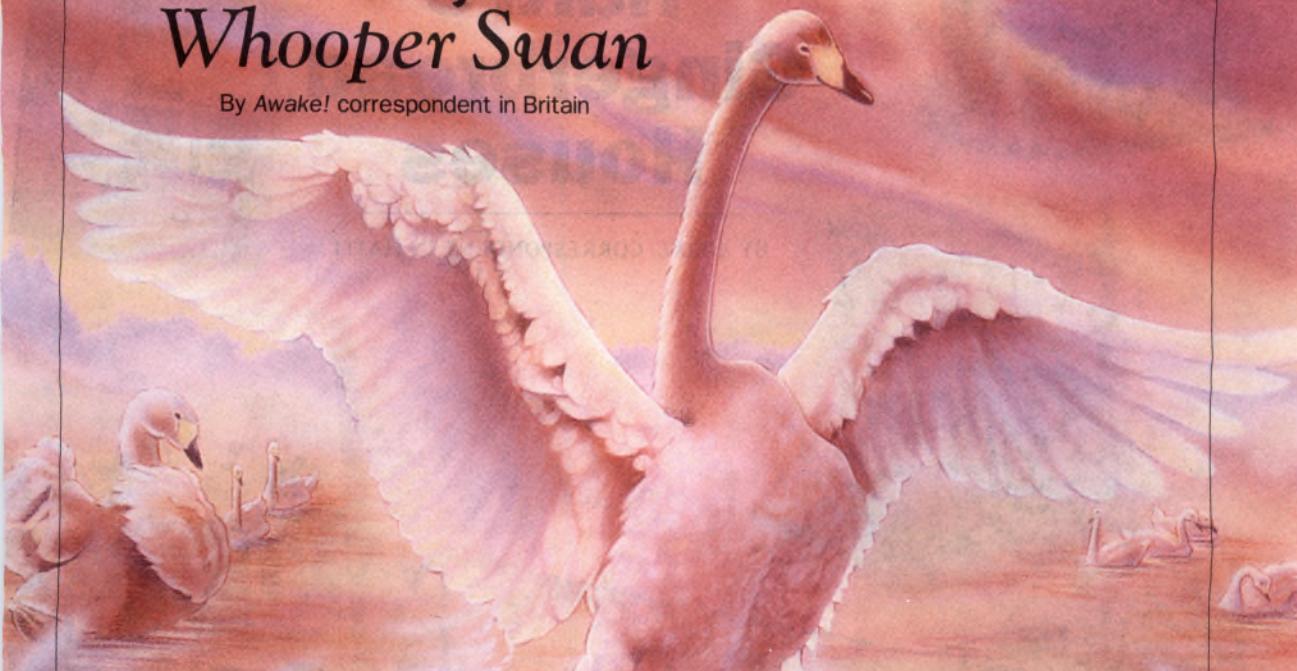
No doubt this melting pot of fine flavors will long be a favorite with you and your friends. Its appeal derives from the common pot. Everyone dips in, creating a warm atmosphere of friendship, the main ingredient of this conversation piece you can eat!—Contributed.



Swiss cheese fondue

The Majestic Whooper Swan

By Awake! correspondent in Britain



THE water of Grindon Lake—tucked in among the rolling Northumbrian hills, not far from the border between England and Scotland—reflected the russets and browns of the surrounding bracken-clad hills. As I watched, greylag geese were cropping waterweeds alongside flocks of snipes, lapwings, and golden plovers.

Suddenly, as the mist slowly began to clear, a wild calling reached my ears. It was the trumpeting song of whooper swans flying low over the hills. They looked the very epitome of beauty as they glided in to splash down on wings that span upwards of eight feet. In mid-October these swans fly south from Russia, Iceland, and northern Europe when the northern waters freeze over. Here they find food—water plants, mollusks, seeds, and insects.

The 29 swans on the lake in front of me presented a delightful picture as I focused my binoculars on the triangular yellow patches at the

base of their bills. They looked so stately with heads held high on straight necks.

At one time the whooper was a breeding bird in Britain but became extinct here in the 18th century. So far it has not reestablished itself. At nesting time whoopers are very aggressive birds, fiercely protecting their nest of five to seven eggs, and later their cygnets, against potential enemies.

Whooper parents work together to build a nest of broken sticks, either on an island or directly on water where they construct a floating island strong enough to support a man. There the yellowish eggs are incubated for from 35 to 42 days. Both parents also tend the young before their offspring fly off after about ten weeks.

As the sun set in crimson glory behind the ruined Roman fort of Vercovicium and dusted the lake and its swans in a gentle pink, I paused to reflect on the beauty of life and the marvel of such a majestic creation.



Haiti's Gingerbread Houses

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN HAITI



HAITI'S charming gingerbread houses did not spring out of a fairy tale. They are real. But painted in green, yellow, red, blue, and maroon, their other-age elegance and quaint beauty give them a storybook aura.

Their architectural style combines graceful outlines with a sturdy structure that may be of wood, brick, or a mixture of the two. Some have large windows opening onto projecting, covered balconies that sit upon wooden posts as if resting on stilts. Sometimes concrete or wood columns with iron centers adorn large galleries that lead into the gardens. Everything is adorned with fine, lacy woodwork, and bull's-eye windows, weathercocks, and domes add a touch of fantasy.

In the early 1900's, gingerbread houses were popular with the middle-class society of this West Indian land. The cost of importing such materials as yellow brick, asbestos slate, and American pitch pine put them beyond the means of the common people. Today, they are historic showpieces that attract sightseers to Port-au-Prince and other cities. Visitors admire their ornately carved wood-work known as the Carpenter Gothic. This frilly gingerbread style developed in the Americas after the invention of the wood-turning lathe made it possible.

French Influence

Pointing out another influence in the development of gingerbread houses in Haiti, architect Paul Mathon, whose father, León, was a pioneer of the gingerbread architecture, once told *Awake!*: "As strange as it may seem for buildings less than a century old, their origin is uncertain. Though we cannot deny the Carpenter Gothic influence, we must look for the source of inspiration in the schools frequented by the promoters of the

gingerbread houses. The French influence seems quite evident, though adjustment was made to Haitian life, culture, and climate."

Haitian architects who trained in France introduced this style of building into Haiti. Paul Mathon said: "They trained engineers and foremen to execute their plans. Carpentry schools produced real experts in woodworking. And there was also an artistic spirit in the air that encouraged the spread of this type of architecture. With the passing of time, all of this was lost. Imitations have been of poor quality."

The architecture is well designed for providing sufficiently cool dwellings in the tropical climate. Ceilings twice as high as in modern buildings provide greater room volume for air circulation, improving the dissipation of heat. The wide doors and windows with full-length Venetian shutters guarantee good cross ventilation in each room. The abundant use of wood in the flooring and wall paneling also offers good insulation against the outdoor heat. And yet these houses are losing ground to newer styles.

Museum Pieces

The advent of modern air-conditioning has obviously reduced some of their appeal. Concrete buildings are preferred for their durability, since wooden structures gradually become shells, eaten away by termites. Of course, some architects do incorporate gingerbread styles into these new, more durable houses, and others are restoring old gingerbread houses, using concrete to make the framework more durable.

Even then, gingerbread houses will not recapture their past glory, although some continue to be proud homes. They seem destined to survive eventually as museum pieces —quaint, elegant reminders of a unique Haitian architecture.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Coming Into Focus

After several embarrassing failures, NASA, the U.S. space agency, appears to have turned one fiasco into a triumph. The Hubble Space Telescope, which the agency launched into orbit in 1990, has a defective primary mirror, which prevented the telescope from focusing properly. In December 1993, though, spacewalking astronauts spent 30 hours installing corrective optics on the myopic scope and replacing obsolete instruments. The results? Reports *New Scientist* magazine: "In some respects Hubble is working better than originally anticipated." According to *Newsweek* magazine, "Hubble's resolution is now so fine it could spy a firefly 8,500 miles away." After seeing pictures from the now improved scope, Duccio Macchietto of the European Space Agency reportedly exclaimed: "All I can say is wow."

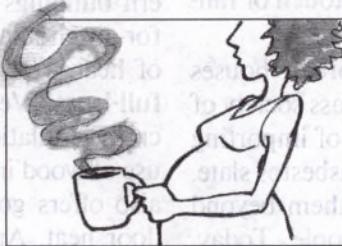
School Bullies in Australia

Children at school are behaving violently at an earlier age in Australia, reports the newspaper *The Australian*. In that country 20 percent of children say they do not feel safe at school; 1 child in 7 is regularly bullied. Researchers comment that aggressive children tend to be low achievers who lack self-esteem. The findings suggest that film, video, and media presentations of violence definitely have an influence on youngsters. Boys are the worst offenders, and girls and school staff are the most frequent victims. Even teachers are suffering at the hands of school bullies, and many are now reluctant to deal with troublesome students for fear of reprisals. One teachers' organization has requested that two-way radios be

made available to teachers who patrol school grounds during lunch hours.

Caffeine and Pregnancy

In 1980 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended that pregnant women limit their consumption of caffeine, a chemical contained in coffee, tea, cocoa, and cola drinks. The recommendation was made primarily on the basis of experiments on animals. Since then, however, studies of pregnant women have demonstrated more conclusively the need for caution in the use of caffeine.



The Journal of the American Medical Association reported recently that 75 percent of pregnant women consume caffeine, although most studies have shown that imbibing more than 300 milligrams of caffeine a day (about three cups of coffee) can damage the fetus. A newer study, though, suggests that even lower levels of caffeine—163 milligrams a day—might increase the risk of spontaneous abortion in some women. The study's authors note: "A reasonable recommendation would be to reduce consumption of caffeine beverages during pregnancy."

Polluted Bodies, Polluted Ecosystems

It may come as little surprise that some 3,020 people in the

United States die each year after using cocaine; the drug's polluting effects on the human body are well-known. But *National Geographic* reported recently that producing the drug also causes severe pollution in the rivers and streams of the Bolivian, Peruvian, and Colombian rain forests. The magazine notes: "About 308 tons of cocaine were seized worldwide by officials in 1992, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. To make that much—a mere fraction of the total—required 28 million gallons of kerosene, 1.1 million gallons of solvents, 295,000 gallons of sulfuric acid, 18,500 gallons of hydrochloric acid, and 3,700 gallons of ammonia. Much of the total amount is dumped into river systems, destroying aquatic life and polluting irrigation and drinking water."

Prevalence of Mental Disorders

The New York Times reported early in 1994: "Close to one in two Americans—48 percent—have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their lives." A sociologist-led study of over 8,000 men and women, using face-to-face diagnostic interviews, found that the most common disorder was major depression; 17 percent had suffered it at some time in life. Fourteen percent had been dependent on alcohol at some point. The *Times* noted that one of the surprises of the study was that 12 percent of the women had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, half of which cases "resulted from having been raped or sexually molested." Of all those who had suffered psychiatric disorders, only one fourth had sought profes-

sional help. Dr. Ronald C. Kessler, the sociologist who led the study, is quoted as saying: "The bad news is that there's a lot more psychiatric disorder out there than we had thought. The good news is that many more people recover—most on their own—than you would imagine."

Alcohol-Related Surgery Risk

Patients who have more than five drinks of alcohol daily are three times more likely to suffer post-surgery complications than are patients who drink less, according to Danish chief surgeon Dr. Finn Hardt. As the Journal of the Danish Medical Association reported recently, the misuse of alcohol has a toxic effect on practically all organ systems; it causes an increased tendency to bleed as well as heart and lung problems. Such conditions usually prompt doctors to call for longer hospitalization and more blood transfusions. Those who drink large amounts of alcohol daily also risk weakening their immune system, thereby raising the risk of infection. Examinations have proved, however, that after several weeks of abstinence, the immune system is much improved. Dr. Hardt recommends that before any surgery, patients abstain from alcohol for such a period.

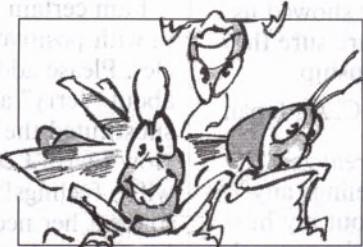
Children in War

During the past ten years, about 1.5 million children have been killed in war, according to *The State of the World's Children 1994*, a report by the United Nations Children's Fund. Another four million have been disabled, maimed, blinded, or brain damaged. The number who have become refugees is estimated to be at least five million. Children have even been recruited into armies.

In many countries children have been tortured and forced to watch or take part in atrocities. In one area the rape of girls has become a "systematic weapon of war." The report says: "It seems right to conclude that the veneer of civilization has never before been worn so thin."

A Losing Battle Against Locusts

"The UN is losing its war against locusts," reported *New Scientist* magazine early in 1994. According to a recent meeting of agricultural scientists in the Netherlands, the \$400 million battle the United Nations waged against locusts in the late 1980's accomplished little. What really ended that plague was a fortuitous wind that blew the insects into the sea. Locusts breed and then swarm



when an occasional rain sprinkles the desert, causing green patches of vegetation to appear. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization tries to kill locusts before they swarm, relying on satellite pictures of green patches in the desert. The problem is that the satellites miss many of the smaller patches. On the ground, local wars and lack of resources often prevent spray teams from reaching even the known breeding sites.

Long-Lived Stargazers

Do astronomers live longer than other people? German natural-science magazine *Natur-*

wissenschaftliche Rundschau reports on an investigation into the longevity of people born between 1715 and 1825. During these years, 67 men who became astronomers by the age of 25 attained an average life span of 71.6 years. About half of these men were German, yet 25-year-old German males during this period had an average life expectancy of only 60.7 years. Why the bonus for stargazers? "It is possible that the high life-expectancy of astronomers is connected in some way with the quiet and tranquillity associated with their work," reports the magazine. Or, it ponders, "perhaps simply being in contact with and engrossed in the miracles of the universe might have a positive effect on a person's health."

The Language of Bureaucrats

In Italy the technical and bureaucratic language of many official documents is so difficult to understand that the Italian public administration believes it must be simplified. According to the Minister of Public Functions, Sabino Cassese, "this is an administration that is no longer in contact with its citizens, that does not speak the same language." So now public functionaries will have to start speaking plain Italian instead of "bureaucratese," a language full of terms not in common use. The innovation was announced at the presentation of a "Style Code for Written Communications in the Public Administration." Supplying a vocabulary of 7,050 easily understood, basic words, the dictionary aims to eliminate numerous antiquated and difficult terms that often make laws, forms, circulars, and public notices incomprehensible to the average citizen.

FROM OUR READERS

Communication Today I received the January 22, 1994, issue containing the series "Communication in Marriage." This is, quite possibly, the best series of articles I have ever read. My husband and I have been married for a year and a half. We have a very good relationship and are quite happy, though at times miscommunication occurs. *Awake!* provided some fine insights into why this happens. As I begin to read the articles for the third time, let me say thank you to Jehovah and to you for publishing such timely information.

C. M., United States

My husband is doing well as a Christian elder and full-time evangelizer. However, we have had a communication gap ever since we were married and have experienced awkward moments. These articles frankly showed us the causes of the problem. We are sure they will help us improve our relationship.

C. A., Japan

Reading "Pam's" reactions, I realized I could not have described my feelings any better. The same can be said about my husband and "Jerry." This article helps treat the cause, rather than simply the effects. I was also struck by the appealing way in which the articles presented this important subject.

E. F., Italy

Even though I'm only 17 right now and don't want to get married for quite a few years, I still greatly appreciated this inside look at why people act the way they do. I'm planning on saving this article to read periodically throughout the next few years. I'll especially need it when I am ready to get married!

N. B., United States

My father is much like "Jerry." But now I understand that when he retreats into silence

and doesn't talk to me, that is his right. Even though the article was enlightening, I'm afraid he'll use the article to confirm that what he does is OK.

A. B., United States

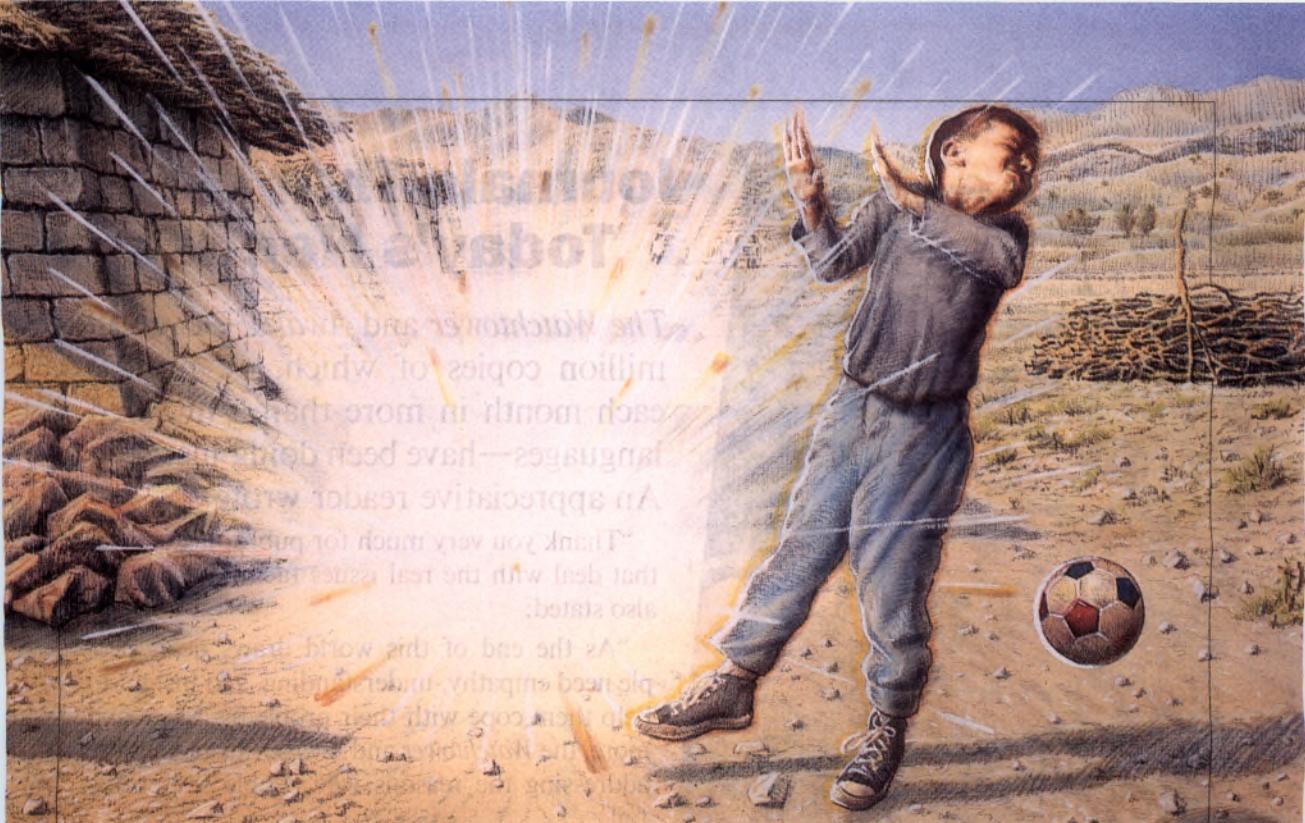
The articles endeavored to help readers understand why men and women tend to feel or act in certain ways. However, we did not mean to imply that either men or women somehow have a right to noncommunicative or inappropriate behavior. The Scriptures urge fathers to avoid 'exasperating their children.' (Colossians 3:21) This would rule out indulging in unreasonably long periods of silence when children want and need parental direction.—ED.

I am certain that letters must be pouring in with positive comments about these articles. Please add my comments. In the article about "Jerry" and "Pam," you could have substituted the names of my wife and me. How I wish I could have understood my wife's feelings! I was just like "Jerry," trying to meet her needs but doing so as I would have wanted my own needs met. Now my wife of 20 years has divorced me. Perhaps my wife's heart will be touched by these articles, and we can attempt to rebuild our marriage.

J. K., United States

Bible Quiz How I enjoyed the page "Have You Ever Wondered?" in the January 8, 1994, issue. I made copies of that page and sent it to friends, family members, and other interested persons. I encouraged them to check every Scripture and jot down any questions they might have. It is a very good vehicle for having a Bible discussion with such ones. Please keep that page coming!

M. S., United States



Land Mines—A Global Menace

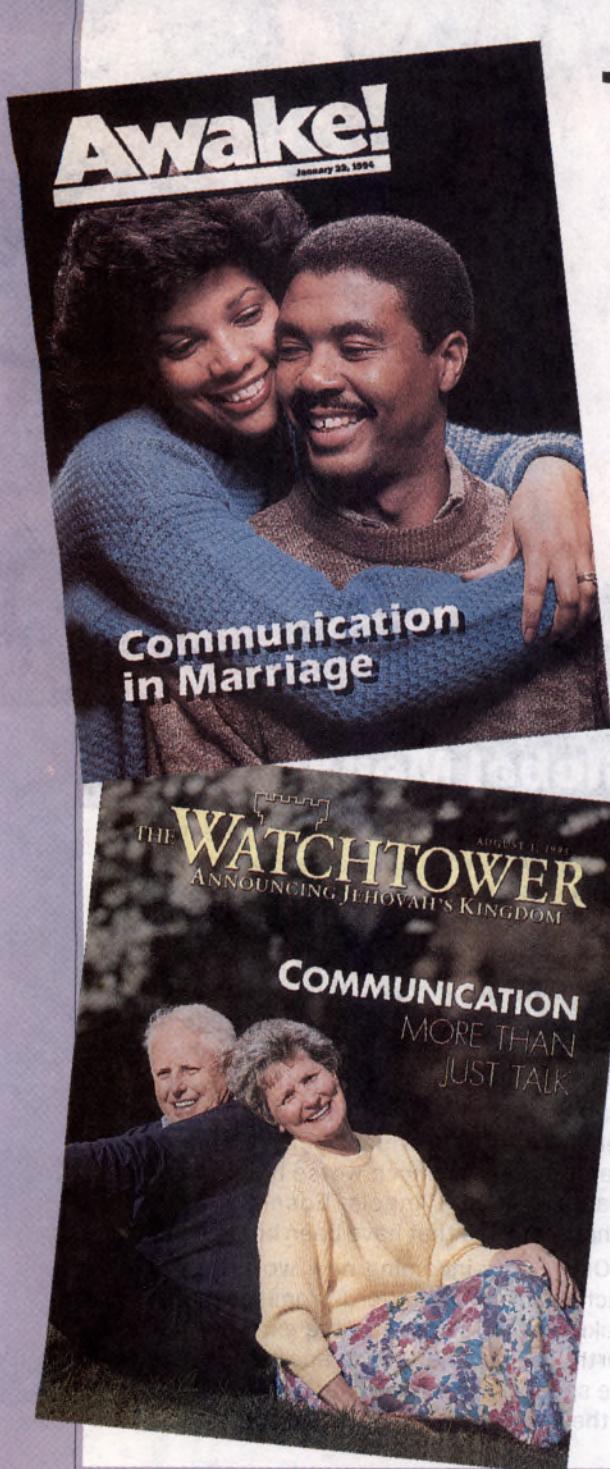
THOUSANDS of innocent men, women, and children in more than 60 countries are maimed, and some killed, every month by land mines. It is estimated that antipersonnel mines have killed or injured more people than chemical, biological, and nuclear warfare. According to the research organization Human Rights Watch, some 30,000 people have been maimed by mines in Cambodia alone.

These small explosives have been planted in the ground in various conflicts, and most of them have never been removed. It is estimated that some 100 million of them remain buried in more than 60 countries. They can be set off by a mere footprint and are popular in warfare because they are inexpensive and effective. One version costs only \$3 (U.S.). Another, which propels 700 steel balls and kills at 50 yards, costs only \$27. The demand is so great, *The New York Times* reports, that 48

nations now make and sell 340 different types of them. And more are planted each day than are deactivated by mine-clearing operations.

Clearing mines is difficult and expensive, since many armies do not map their minefields; and mines are increasingly made of wood, plastic, and other materials that evade metal detectors. U.S. senator Patrick Leahy, who called for a ban on export of these weapons, stated: "In the Netherlands, people are still being killed by German mines from World War II. Think how much worse it is in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, Bosnia and all the other countries that have been heavily mined."

Only God's incoming new world will solve such problems. His Word promises: "[God] is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the [war] wagons he burns in the fire."—Psalm 46:9.



Journals That Meet Today's Needs

The *Watchtower* and *Awake!*—over 58 million copies of which are printed each month in more than a hundred languages—have been doing just that. An appreciative reader wrote:

"Thank you very much for publishing articles that deal with the real issues facing many." He also stated:

"As the end of this world draws near, people need empathy, understanding, and insight to help them cope with their problems. More and more, the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines are addressing the reasons *why* people sometimes fail . . .

"Most want to do what is right, but they often struggle with frustrations, guilt, negative emotions, fears, low self-esteem, poor mental habits, and the feeling that they are powerless to help themselves. Your articles are helping many to regain control of their lives and emotions. . . .

"I want to thank you especially for the January 22, 1994, *Awake!* on 'Communication in Marriage.' Instead of offering platitudes on the importance of communication, you delve into the reasons why men and women fail to understand one another. By helping half the population to understand the other half, you have done a great service to humanity and to the God-given institution of marriage."