

Awake!

October 8, 1993



**Protect
Your
Children!**



Protect Your Children! 3-13

How widespread is the sexual abuse of children? What can be done to protect them? Will such hideous crimes ever be eliminated?



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A butterfly is a beautiful creature. What is its daily routine?



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What is the origin of the priesthood? Do Christians need priests today?

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Your Child Is in DANGER!

IN RECENT years a global outcry has arisen over the molestation of children. But the media attention, replete with celebrities who have publicly disclosed their own experiences of childhood abuse, has led to some popular misconceptions. Some believe that all this talk about attacks on children is simply the latest fad. In truth, though, there is little new about such sexual assault. It is nearly as old as human history itself.

An Ancient Problem

Some 4,000 years ago, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were famous for depravity. Pedophilia was apparently among the region's many vices. Genesis 19:4 describes a sex-crazed mob of Sodomites ranging "from boy to old man" seeking to rape Lot's two male guests. Consider: Why would mere boys be inflamed with the idea of raping males? Clearly they had already been introduced to homosexual perversions.

Centuries later, the nation of Israel moved into the region of Canaan. So steeped was this land in incest, sodomy, bestiality, prosti-

The molestation of children is an ugly reality in this sick world. Lear's magazine said: "It affects more of us than cancer, more of us than heart disease, more of us than AIDS." Awake! thus feels an obligation to try to alert its readers to this danger and what can be done about it.
—Compare Ezekiel 3: 17-21; Romans 13:11-13.

tution, and even the ritualized sacrifice of little children to demon gods that all these vile acts had to be expressly forbidden in the Mosaic Law. (Levitcus 18:6, 21-23; 19:29; Jeremiah 32:35) Despite divine warnings, rebellious Israelites, including some of their rulers, adopted these despicable practices.—Psalm 106: 35-38.

Ancient Greece and Rome, however, were far worse than Israel in this regard. Infanticide was common to both, and in Greece it was a widely accepted practice for older men to have relations with young boys. Boy brothels flourished in every ancient Greek city. In the Roman Empire, child prostitution was so prevalent that special taxes and holidays were set up specifically for that trade. In the arenas, girls were raped and forced into acts of bestiality. Similar atrocities were prevalent in many other ancient nations.

What about modern times? Is mankind too civilized for such horrible sex acts to flourish today? Students of the Bible cannot accept this notion. They well know that the apostle Paul characterized our era as "critical times hard to deal with." He detailed the

rampant self-love, the love of pleasure, and the disintegration of natural family love that overrun modern society and added: "Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse." (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; Revelation 12:7-12) Has child molestation, so often perpetrated by "wicked men and impostors," got worse?

An Urgent Problem

Assaults on children are often cloaked in secrecy, so much so that they have been called perhaps the most unreported of crimes. Even so, such crimes have evidently spiraled upward in recent decades. In the United States, a survey on the subject was conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*. It found that 27 percent of the women and 16 percent of the men had been sexually abused as children. Shocking as these statistics are, other careful estimates for the United States have run considerably higher.

In Malaysia, reports of child molestation have quadrupled over the past decade. In Thailand, some 75 percent of the men in one survey admitted to using child prostitutes. In Germany, officials estimate that as many as 300,000 children are sexually abused each year. According to South Africa's *Cape Times*, the number of reports of such assaults soared by 175 percent in a recent three-year period. In the Netherlands and Canada, researchers found that about one third of all women had been sexually abused as children. In Finland, 18 percent of the ninth-grade girls (15 or 16

years old) and 7 percent of the boys reported having had sexual contact with someone at least five years their senior.

In various countries disturbing reports have surfaced about religious cults that abuse children with sadistic sexual practices and torture. Often, those who report that they were victims of such crimes are treated with incredulity, not compassion.

So child molestation is neither new nor rare; it is a long-standing problem that is epidemic today. Its impact can be devastating. Many survivors suffer profound feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem. Experts in the field have listed some common aftereffects of incest on girls, such as running away, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, attempted suicide, delinquency, promiscuity, sleep disturbances, and learning problems. Long-range effects may include poor parenting skills, frigidity, distrust of men, marriage to a pedophile, lesbianism, prostitution, and child molestation itself.

These aftereffects are not inevitable for a victim; nor could anyone rightly excuse wrong conduct solely on the grounds of having been assaulted in the past. Abuse does not predestine its victims to be immoral or delinquent; nor does it dissolve all their personal responsibility for the choices they make later in life. But these common outcomes for victims are real dangers. They add urgency to the question, How can we protect children from molestation?

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.

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

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How Can We Protect OUR CHILDREN?

AFTER using children to satisfy perverted lusts, after robbing them of their security and their sense of innocence, child molesters still want something else from their victims—SILENCE. To secure that silence, they use shame, secrecy, even outright terror. Children are thus robbed of their best weapon against abuse—the will to tell, to speak up and ask an adult for protection.

Tragically, adult society often unwittingly collaborates with child abusers. How so? By refusing to be aware of this danger, by fostering a hush-hush attitude about it, by believing oft-repeated myths. Ignorance, misinformation, and silence give safe haven to abusers, not their victims.

"Don't ever tell. It will be our secret."

"No one would believe you."

"If you tell, your parents will hate you. They'll know it was your fault."

"Don't you want to be my special friend anymore?"

"You don't want me to go to jail, do you?"

"I'll kill your parents if you tell."

For example, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops concluded recently that it was a “general conspiracy of silence” that allowed gross child abuse to persist among the Catholic clergy for decades. *Time* magazine, in reporting on the widespread plague of incest, also cited a “conspiracy of silence” as a factor that “only helps perpetuate the tragedy” in families.

However, *Time* noted that this conspiracy is crumbling at last. Why? In a word, education. It is as *Asiaweek* magazine put it: “All experts agree that the best defence against child abuse is public awareness.” To defend their children, parents must understand the realities of the threat. Don’t be left in the dark by

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misconceptions that protect child abusers and not children.—See box below.

Educate Your Child!

Wise King Solomon told his son that knowledge, wisdom, and thinking ability could protect him "from the bad way, from the man speaking perverse things." (Proverbs 2:10-12) Isn't that just what children need? The FBI pamphlet *Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis* says this under the heading "The Ideal Victim": "For most children sex is a taboo subject about which they receive little accurate information,

especially from their parents." Don't let your children be "ideal victims." Educate them about sex.* For example, no child should reach puberty unaware of how the body will change during this time. Ignorance will make them confused, ashamed—and vulnerable.

A woman we'll call Janet was sexually abused as a child, and years later her own two children were sexually abused. She recalls: "The way we were brought up, we never talked

* See *Awake!* of February 22, 1992, pages 3-11, and July 8, 1992, page 30.

Common Misconceptions

Misconception: Child abusers are usually strangers, deranged misfits who abduct children and use physical force to abuse them.

In the vast majority of cases—from 85 to 90 percent by some estimates—the abuser is a person the child knows and trusts. Rather than using force, abusers often manipulate the child into sexual acts gradually, taking advantage of the child's limited experience and reasoning ability. (Compare 1 Corinthians 13:11 and Proverbs 22:15.) These abusers are not the drooling loners of the stereotype. Many are quite religious, respected, and well liked in the community. According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "to assume that someone is not a pedophile simply because he is nice, goes to church, works hard, is kind to animals, and so on, is absurd." Recent research suggests that it is also wrong to assume that all abusers are male or that all victims are female.

Misconception: Children fantasize or lie about sexual abuse.

Under normal circumstances children lack the experience or sophistication in sexual matters to invent explicit claims of abuse, although some small children may become confused about details. Even the most skeptical of researchers agree that most claims of abuse are valid. Consider the book *Sex Abuse Hysteria—Salem Witch Trials Revisited*, which focuses on false claims of abuse.* This book admits: "Genuine sex

abuse of children is widespread and the vast majority of sex abuse allegations of children . . . are likely to be justified (perhaps 95% or more)." Children find it enormously difficult to report abuse. When they do lie about abuse, it is most often to deny that it happened even though it actually did.

Misconception: Children are seductive and frequently bring the abuse on themselves by their conduct.

This notion is particularly warped, since, in effect, it blames the victim for the abuse. Children have no real concept of sexuality. They have no idea of what such activity implies or of how it will change them. They are therefore incapable of consenting to it in any meaningful way. It is the abuser, and the abuser alone, who bears the blame for the abuse.—Compare Luke 11:11, 12.

Misconception: When children disclose abuse, parents should teach them to refrain from talking about it and to 'put it behind them.'

Who is best served if the child keeps silent about the abuse? Is it not *the abuser?* In fact, studies have shown that denial with emotional suppression may be the least effective way to deal with the trauma of abuse. Of the nine coping methods used by one group of adult survivors studied in England, the ones who denied, avoided, or suppressed the issue suffered the greater emotional maladjustment and distress in adult life. If you experienced a terrifying assault, would you want to be told not to talk about it? Why tell a child such a thing? Allowing the child the normal reaction to such a terrible event, such as grief, anger, mourning, will give him the opportunity eventually to put the abuse in the past.

* In some divorce cases, contending adults have been known to use an accusation of child abuse as a weapon.

about sex. So I grew up embarrassed about it. It was shameful. And when I had kids, it was the same. I could talk to other people's kids but not to my own. I think that's unhealthy because children are vulnerable if you don't talk to them about these things."

Abuse prevention can be taught early. When you teach children to name such body parts as the vagina, the breasts, the anus, the penis, tell them that these places are good, they are special—but they are private. "Other people are not allowed to handle them—not even Mommy or Daddy—and not even a doctor unless Mommy or Daddy is there or has said it is OK."* Ideally, such statements should come from *both parents or each adult guardian*.

In *The Safe Child Book*, Sherryl Kraizer notes that while children should feel free to ignore, scream at, or run from an abuser, many children who are abused explain later that they didn't want to seem rude. Children thus need to know that some grown-ups do bad things and that not even a child has to obey *anyone* who tells him or her to do something wrong. At such times a child has a perfect right to say no, just as did Daniel and his companions to the Babylonian adults who wanted them to eat unclean food.—Daniel 1:4, 8; 3:16-18.

One widely recommended teaching tool is the "What if . . . ?" game. You might, for example, ask: "What if your teacher told you to hit another child? What would you do?" Or: "What if (Mommy, Daddy, a minister, a policeman) told you to jump off a tall building?" The child's answer may be inadequate or simply wrong, but don't correct harshly. The game need not include shock or scare tactics; in fact, experts recommend that it be played in a gentle, loving, even playful manner.

Next, teach children to fend off displays of affection that are inappropriate or that make

* Of course, parents must bathe and change very little children, and at such times parents wash the private parts. But teach your children to bathe themselves early on; some child-care experts recommend that they learn to wash their own private parts by the age of three if possible.

He Cried Out for Help

"PLEA to Jehovah Halts Molester's Attack on Youth," declared a headline in the U.S. newspaper *The Arizona Republic*, on May 5, 1993. The alleged molester abducted the 13-year-old youth at gunpoint, taking him to the perpetrator's apartment. When the youth cried out, "Jehovah, help me!" the molester was shaken and let the boy go free. The police later apprehended the man.

While calling upon Jehovah's name is certainly appropriate under such circumstances, it does not mean that God's servants will be free from attack in these critical "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) Christian parents must therefore train their children to be cautious with *all* strangers, regardless of apparent authority.

them feel uncomfortable. Ask, for example, "What if a friend of Mommy and Daddy wanted to kiss you in a way that made you feel funny?"* It is often best to encourage the child to act out what he or she would do, making it a "Let's pretend" game.

In the same way, children can learn to resist other tactics of abusers. For example, you might ask: "What if someone says, 'You know, you're my favorite. Don't you want to be my friend?'" When the child learns to resist such ploys, discuss others. You might ask: "If someone says, 'You don't want to hurt my feelings, do you?' What will you say?" Show the child how to say no through words and clear, firm body language. Remember, abusers often test how children respond to subtle advances. So a child must be taught to resist firmly and say, "I'm telling on you."

Be Thorough in Your Training

Do not limit such training to a onetime talk. Children need much repetition. Use your own

* Some experts caution that if you force your child to kiss or hug every person who asks for such displays of affection, you may undermine this training. Thus, some parents teach children to make polite excuses or substitutions when unwanted demands are made of them.

judgment in determining just how explicit the training should be. But be thorough.

Be sure, for example, to forestall any attempt by an abuser to create a secret pact. Children should know that it is *never* all right for an adult to ask them to keep a secret from either parent. Reassure them that it is *always* proper for them to tell—even if they had promised not to. (Compare Numbers 30: 12, 16.) Some abusers blackmail the child if they know that the child has disobeyed some family rule. “I won’t tell on you if you won’t tell on me” is the message. So children should know that they will never get in trouble for telling—even under these circumstances. It is safe to tell.

Your training should also be threat-resistant. Some abusers have killed small animals in front of a child and threatened to do

the same to the child’s parents. Others have warned their victim that they will abuse younger siblings. So teach children that they should *always* tell on an abuser, no matter what scary threats are made.

In this regard the Bible can be a helpful teaching tool. Because it so vividly stresses Jehovah’s almighty power, it can take the bite out of abusers’ threats. Children need to know that no matter what threats are made, Jehovah is able to help his people. (Daniel 3:8-30) Even when bad people hurt those Jehovah loves, he can always undo the damage afterward and make things better again. (Job, chapters 1, 2; 42:10-17; Isaiah 65:17) Assure them that Jehovah sees everything, including the people who do bad things and the good people who do their best to resist them.—Compare Hebrews 4:13.



Cautious as Serpents

It is the rare pedophile who uses physical force to molest a child. They generally prefer to befriend children first. Jesus’ advice to be “cautious as serpents” is thus appropriate. (Matthew 10:16) Close supervision by loving parents is one of the best safeguards against abuse. Some molesters look for a child alone in a public place and strike up a conversation to spark the child’s curiosity. (“Do you like motorcycles?” “Come see the puppies out in my truck.”) True, you cannot be with your children at all times. And child-care experts recognize that children need some freedom to move around. But wise parents are cautious about granting children too much freedom prematurely.

Make sure you get to know *well* any

Teach children to use words and clear, firm body language to resist improper advances

If Your Child Is Abused

TO STOP abuse, you must know it when you see it. In the numerous books on the subject, experts have listed dozens of telltale signs of abuse that parents can watch for. These include: complaints of pain while urinating or defecating, genital infections, abrasions or lesions in the genital area, the sudden onset of bed-wetting, appetite loss or other eating problems, precocious sexual behavior, a sudden fear of such places as school or parts of the house, periods of panic, an extreme fear of undressing, a fear of being alone with a familiar person, and self-mutilation.

However, be careful about jumping to conclusions. Most of these symptoms do not by themselves necessarily mean that a child has actually been sexually abused. Each could indicate some other problem. But if you see disturbing symptoms, gently broach the subject, perhaps with such a statement as: "If anyone ever touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, I want you to know that you can always tell me, and I'll do all I can to protect you. Has anything like that ever happened to you?"—Proverbs 20:5.

If your child discloses sexual abuse, you will no doubt feel shattered. But remember: Your reaction will play a major role in the child's recovery. Your child has been carrying an unbearable burden and needs you, with all your adult strength, to lift it from her or his shoulders. Praise the child for being so brave as to tell you what happened. Repeatedly reassure the child that you will do your best to provide protection; that the abuse was the abuser's fault, not the child's; that the child is not "bad"; that you love the child.

Some legal experts advise reporting the abuse

to the authorities as soon as possible. In some lands the legal system may require this. But in other places the legal system may offer little hope of successful prosecution.

What, though, when the abuser is one's own beloved mate? Sad to say, many women fail to take decisive action. To be sure, it is never easy to face the ugly reality of a mate who is a child abuser. Emotional ties, and even financial dependency, can be overwhelmingly strong. The wronged wife may also realize that taking action could cost her husband his family, his job, his reputation.* The hard truth is, though, that he may just be reaping what he has sown. (Galatians 6:7) Innocent children, on the other hand, stand to lose much more if they are not believed and protected. Their whole future is at stake. They do not have the resources that adults have. Trauma can scar and shape them adversely for life. They are the ones who need and deserve tender treatment.

—Compare Genesis 33:13, 14.

Parents must therefore make every reasonable effort to protect their children! Many responsible parents choose to seek out professional help for an abused child. Just as you would with a medical doctor, make sure that any such professional will respect your religious views.[#] Help your child rebuild his or her shattered self-esteem through a steady outpouring of parental love.

* In reality, the molester is already in trouble and badly needs help. Even if the perpetrator claims to be sorry, the wronged mate may consider: Why didn't he confess before being exposed by his victim?

[#] For instance, when Jehovah's Witnesses are confronted with issues involving blood transfusion, they make sure that the doctor respects their religious beliefs.

adults or older youths who are close to your children, using extra caution when deciding who should care for your children in your absence. Be wary of baby-sitters who make your children feel funny or ill at ease. Likewise, beware of teenagers who seem to have an excessive interest in younger children and have no friends their own age. Thoroughly check out day-care facilities and schools. Tour the entire premises and interview the staff, observing carefully how they interact with children.

Ask if they mind if you drop in to check on your children at unexpected times; if this is not allowed, look elsewhere.—See *Awake!* of December 8, 1987, pages 3-11.

The sad truth is, however, that not even the best of parents can control everything that happens to their children.—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

If parents work together, there is one thing they *can* control: the home environment. And since the home is where most child abuse occurs, that will be the focus of the next article.

Prevention IN THE HOME

IT IS NOT the stranger in a trench coat, the loner lurking in the bushes, who poses the greatest threat to children. It is a member of the family. The vast majority of sexual abuse occurs in the home. So how can the home be made more resistant to abuse?

In his book *Slaughter of the Innocents*, historian Dr. Sander J. Breiner examines the evidence of child abuse in five ancient societies—Egypt, China, Greece, Rome, and Israel. He concludes that while abuse did exist in Israel, it was relatively rare compared to the other four civilizations. Why? Unlike their neighbors, the people in Israel were taught to have respect for women and children—an enlightened view they owed to the Holy Scriptures. When the Israelites applied divine law to family life, they prevented child abuse. Today's families need these clean, practical standards more than ever.

Moral Laws

Does Bible law have an impact on your family? For instance, Leviticus 18:6 reads: "You people must not come near, any man of you, to

Monique was nine years old when he started abusing her. He began by spying on her as she undressed; then he started visiting her room at night and touching her private parts. When she resisted him, he was furious. Once he even attacked her with a hammer and threw her down a flight of stairs. "No one would believe me," Monique recalls—not even her mother. The abuser was Monique's stepfather.

any close fleshly relative of his to lay bare nakedness. I am Jehovah." Similarly the Christian congregation today enforces strong laws against all forms of sexual abuse. Anyone who sexually abuses a child risks being disfellowshipped, put out of the congregation.* —1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

All families should know and review such laws together. Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 urges: "And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son

and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." Inculcating these laws means more than occasionally lecturing your children. It involves a regular give-and-take discussion. From time to time,

* Sexual abuse of a child occurs when someone uses a child to gratify his or her own sexual desires. It often involves what the Bible calls fornication, or *pornē'a*, which could include fondling of genitalia, sexual intercourse, and oral or anal sex. Some abusive acts, such as the fondling of breasts, explicitly immoral proposals, showing pornography to a child, voyeurism, and indecent exposure, may amount to what the Bible condemns as "loose conduct."—Galatians 5:19-21; see *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1983, footnote on page 30.

both mother and father should reaffirm God's laws on incest and the loving reasons for these laws.

You might also use such stories as that of Tamar and Amnon, David's children, to show children that in sexual matters there are boundaries that no one—close relatives included—should ever cross.—Genesis 9:20-29; 2 Samuel 13:10-16.

Respect for these principles can be shown even in practical living arrangements. In one Oriental country, research has shown that much incest occurs in families where children sleep with parents even when there is no economic necessity for this. Similarly, it is generally unwise to have opposite-sex siblings share a bed or a room as they grow older, if this is at all avoidable. Even when cramped living conditions are a fact of life, parents should use good judgment in deciding on where each family member should sleep.

Bible law forbids drunkenness, suggesting that it can lead to perversion. (Proverbs 23: 29-33) According to one study, some 60 to 70 percent of incest victims reported that their abusing parent had been drinking when the abuse started.

A Loving Family Head

Researchers find that abuse is more common among families with domineering hus-

One survivor of years of incest said: "Abuse kills children, it kills their trust, their right to feel innocent. That's why children have to be protected. Because now I have to rebuild my whole life. Why make more children do that?"

Why indeed?

bands. The widely held view that women exist merely to fulfill male needs is Scripturally wrong. Some men use this unchristian opinion to justify turning to a daughter for anything they cannot get from a wife. This type of oppression can cause women in these circumstances to lose their emotional balance. Many lose even the natural urge to protect their own children. (Compare Ecclesiastes 7:7.) One study, on the other hand, found that when workaholic fathers were largely absent from the home setting, sometimes mother-son sexual abuse has festered.

What about your family? Do you as husband take the role of head seriously, or do you abdicate it to your wife? (1 Corinthians 11:3) Do you treat your wife with love, honor, and respect? (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7) Do her views count? (Genesis 21:12; Proverbs 31: 26, 28) And what about your children? Do you see them as precious? (Psalm 127:3) Or do you view them as mere burdens, readily

Listen to the Children!

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, Canada, a recent study examined the careers of 30 child molesters. The results were chilling. The 30 individuals had, between them, abused 2,099 children. Fully half of them held positions of trust—teachers, ministers, administrators, and child-care workers. One molester, a 50-year-old dentist, had abused nearly 500 children over a 26-year period.

However, *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto notes: "In 80 per cent of cases, one or more sectors of the community (including friends or colleagues of

the offender, families of victims, other children, some victims) denied or minimized the abuse." Not surprisingly, "the report suggests that denial and disbelief allow abuse to continue."

Some of the victims had told on the abusers. However, "parents of young victims were unwilling to accept what their children were telling them," *The Globe and Mail* quotes the report as saying. Similarly, a government official in Germany recently cited a report that child victims of sexual abuse have to approach adults with their story as many as seven times before they are believed.

exploitable? (Compare 2 Corinthians 12:14.) Eliminate warped, unscriptural views of family roles in your household, and you will make it more resistant to abuse.

An Emotionally Safe Place

One young woman whom we'll call Sandi says: "My whole family was set up for abuse. It was isolated, and each member was isolated from the other." Isolation, rigidity, and obsessive secrecy—these unhealthy, unscriptural attitudes are trademarks of the abusive household. (Compare 2 Samuel 12:12; Proverbs 18:1; Philippians 4:5.) Create a home atmosphere that is emotionally safe for children. Home should be a place where they feel built up, where they feel free to open their hearts and speak freely.

Also, children have a great need for physical expressions of love—hugging, caressing, hand-holding, romping. Do not overreact to the dangers of sexual abuse by withholding these demonstrations of love. Teach children through open, warm affection and praise that they are *valued*. Sandi remembers: "My mom's view was that to give anyone any commendation for anything was wrong. It would give you a big head." Sandi suffered at least ten years of sexual abuse in silence. Children who are not secure in the knowledge that they are beloved, worthwhile individuals may be more susceptible to an abuser's praise, his "affection," or his threats to withdraw it.

"Get Help Now"

"IF YOU are a man and you are sexually involved with children, you may be saying to yourself, 'She likes it,' or 'He asked for it,' or 'I'm teaching her about sex.' You're lying to yourself. Real men are not involved sexually with children. If there's any part of you that really cares about that child, stop it. Get help now." —A proposed public service announcement, quoted in the book *By Silence Betrayed*.

A pedophile who sexually abused hundreds of boys over a 40-year period admitted that the boys who had an *emotional need* for a friend like him made the "best" victims. Don't create such a need in your child.

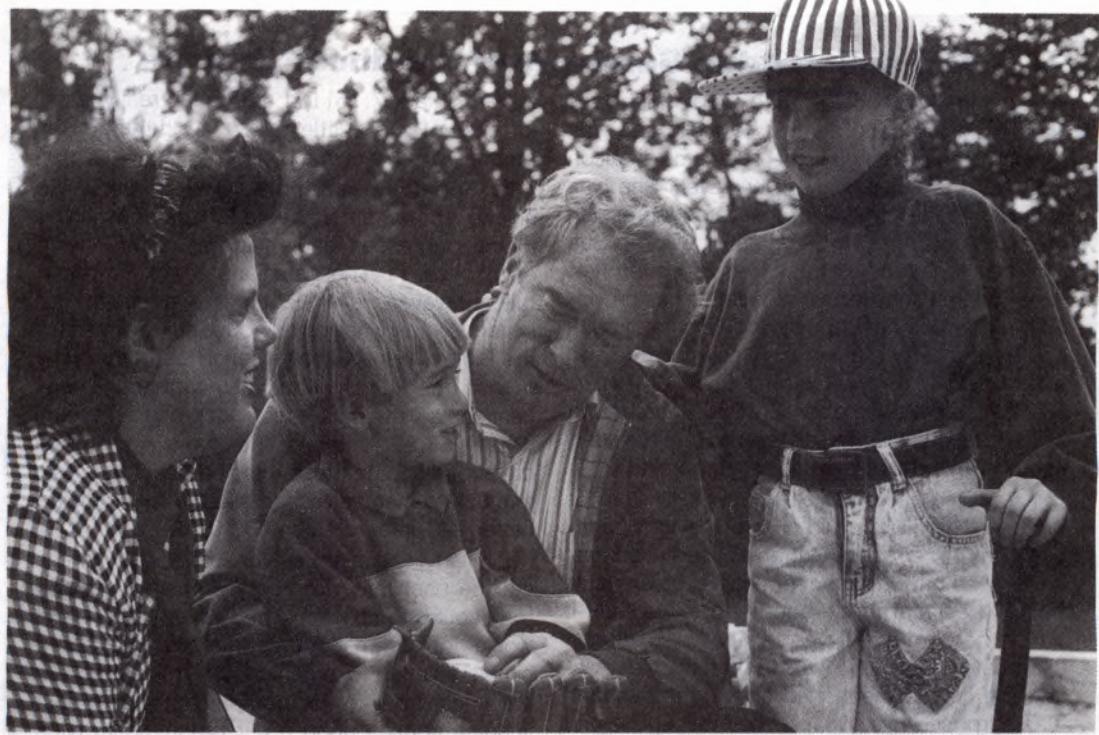
Break the Cycle of Abuse

Under severe trial Job said: "My soul certainly feels a loathing toward my life. I will give vent to my concern about myself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul!" (Job 10:1) Likewise, many parents have found that they can help their children by helping themselves. *The Harvard Mental Health Letter* noted recently: "Strong social sanctions against the expression of pain by men apparently perpetuate the cycle of abuse." It seems that men who never get to express their pain about having been sexually abused are more likely to become abusers themselves. *The Safe Child Book* reports that most child molesters were themselves sexually abused as children but never got help to recover. They express their pain and anger by abusing other children.*—See also Job 7:11; 32:20.

The risk to children may also be higher when mothers do not come to terms with past abuse. For example, researchers report that women who were sexually abused as girls often marry men who are child abusers. Furthermore, if a woman has not come to terms with past abuse, she may understandably find it difficult to discuss abuse with her children. If abuse occurs, she may be less able to discern it and take positive action. Then the children pay an awful price for the mother's inaction.

Thus, abuse may pass from one generation to the next. Of course, many individuals who choose not to discuss their painful past seem able to cope well enough in life, and that is commendable. But in many the pain is deeper, and they do need to make a concerted effort

* While most child molesters were abused as children, this does not mean that abuse *makes* children become abusers. Less than a third of abused children become child molesters.



Children need plenty of warm, loving attention

—including, if necessary, seeking competent professional help—to heal such severe childhood wounds. Their goal is not to wallow in self-pity. They want to break this sick, hurtful cycle of child abuse affecting their family.

—See *Awake!* of October 8, 1991, pages 3 to 11.

The End of Abuse

Properly applied, the foregoing information can do much to reduce the chances of child abuse in your home. Remember, though, that abusers work in secrecy, they take advantage of trust, and they use adult tactics on innocent children. Inevitably, then, some of them do seem to get away with their disgusting crimes.

However, rest assured that God sees what they do. (Job 34:22) Unless they repent and change, he will not forget their vile acts. He will bring them out into the open in his due time. (Compare Matthew 10:26.) And he will exact justice. Jehovah God promises a time

when all such treacherous people will be ‘torn away from the earth,’ and only the meek and gentle who love God and fellowman will be allowed to remain. (Proverbs 2:22; Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; 2 Peter 2:9-12) We have that marvelous hope of a new world thanks to the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:6) Then, and only then, will abuse end forever.

In the meantime we must do all we can to protect our children. They are so precious! Most parents will readily put their own safety at risk in order to protect their little children. (Compare John 15:13.) If we don’t protect our children, the consequences can be horrible. If we do, we give them a wonderful gift—a childhood that feels innocent and free from calamity. They can feel just as the psalmist did, who wrote: “I will say to Jehovah: ‘You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I will trust.’”—Psalm 91:2.

Consoling Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma

THEY were an outgoing young couple, highly respected in the congregation. But his tone was urgent when he asked if the elder would call on them, and she had tears in her eyes. She was suffering from episodes of severe depression and self-hatred, even thoughts of suicide. She had been sexually abused as a youngster. Thankful that Jehovah's organization has provided direction on how to help the victims of such crimes, the elder studied the Society's letters to elders as well as the October 8, 1991, *Awake!* articles and the October 1, 1983, *Watchtower* article that dealt with this subject. Here are a few useful points derived from these sources.

1. Listen, listen, listen. When a child skins his knee, his first impulse is to run to Mommy or Daddy for comfort. But an abused child may never even have had that option. So as an adult, he still has that same need—to tell, to talk it out, to be comforted by a sympathetic listener. (Compare Job 10:1; 32:20.) When the elder visited the couple mentioned above, the husband was surprised by how little the elder spoke and how much he listened. The husband, a very practical, helpful man, found that he had been trying to fix the problem by answering emotion with logic, trying to correct feelings that seemed irrational to him. He learned that his wife needed empathy more than answers. (Compare Romans 12:15.) She needed to hear that she had valid reasons for feeling the way she did.

2. Expose the lies. Abuse teaches children that they are dirty, unlovable, worthless. Like false religious doctrines, these ideas can make a healthy relationship with Jehovah very difficult. So expose the lies, and replace them with the truth—gently, repeatedly, patiently. Reason from the Scriptures. (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5) For example: "I understand that you feel dirty. But how does Jehovah feel about you? If he allowed his Son to die and provide a ransom for you, doesn't that mean he loves you? [John 3:16] In His eyes, did the abuse make *you* dirty, or did it make the *abuser* dirty? Remember, Jesus said: 'There is nothing from outside a man that passes into him that can defile him; but the things that issue forth out of a man are the things that defile

a man.' [Mark 7:15] Did the abuse really issue forth out of *you*, a little child? Or did the abuser purpose it in his own mind?"

3. Speak consolingly. Each individual is unique, so Paul's counsel to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls" applies differently in each case. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Simplistic talk, however, rarely seems to console. For instance, merely telling an abuse survivor to read the Bible more, preach more, or 'just throw your burden on Jehovah'—helpful though these suggestions are at times—may not produce results. (Psalm 55:22; compare Galatians 6:2.) Many are already doing these things as best they can and berate themselves mercilessly for not doing better.—Compare 1 John 3:19, 20.

Similarly, telling abuse survivors simply to forget the past may do more harm than good. If they could do so, likely they would have—and would not have needed help to arrive at such a simple solution.* Remember, theirs is a severe emotional trauma. For comparison's sake, just imagine coming upon a car crash victim lying moaning amid the wreckage. Would you just tell him not to think about the pain? Clearly, more is needed.

If you are not sure that what you are saying is consoling and helpful, why not ask the depressed one? After all, even counsel that is true and Scriptural needs to be timely and appropriate as well.—Compare Proverbs 25:11.

After a few visits, the sister began to see some improvement in her outlook, and her husband was better able to help her through the hard times. Both have since been able to speak consolingly to others who have been through similar traumas. How faith-strengthening to see Jehovah, "the God of all comfort," working through his Word and his people to "bind up the broken-hearted" in these troubled times.—2 Corinthians 1:3; Isaiah 61:1.

* True, the apostle Paul did counsel Christians to 'forget the things behind.' But Paul was here referring to his former prestige and worldly success, which were now "a lot of refuse" to him. He was not referring to his past tribulations, of which he spoke freely.—Philippians 3:4-6, 8, 13; compare 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

Jehovah's Witnesses Vindicated in Child-Custody Battle

INGRID HOFFMANN has been battling to keep custody of her two children since the middle of the last decade. An Austrian woman, she was born and raised a Roman Catholic. She married a fellow Catholic, and gave birth to a son in 1980 and a daughter in 1982. But in 1983 the couple divorced; both parents sought custody of the children. The father charged that the mother's religion—she had become one of Jehovah's Witnesses—would harm the children, deprive them of a normal, healthy upbringing. He cited such issues as the Witnesses' refusal to celebrate certain holidays common in his land and their abstention from blood transfusions.

—Acts 15:28, 29.

These specious arguments failed to convince. Both the trial court and the appeals court rejected the father's claims and awarded custody to the mother. However, in September 1986, the Supreme Court of Austria reversed the lower court's rulings. It held that these decisions had violated the Austrian Religious Education Act, a law that requires Catholic-born children to be educated as Catholics. The court also ruled that it would not be in the best interests of the children to allow them to be raised as Jehovah's Witnesses!

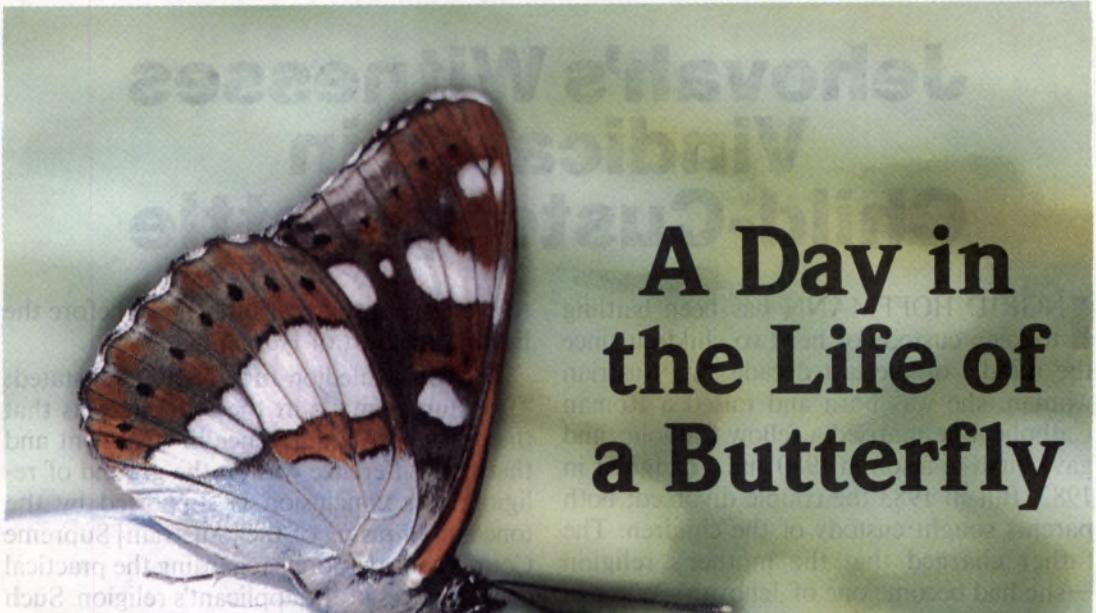
What recourse did Ingrid Hoffmann have against such blatant religious prejudice? In February 1987 her case was presented to the European Commission of Human Rights. On April 13, 1992, this commission, which is composed of jurists representing various member nations of the Council of Europe,

referred the case for a full hearing before the European Court of Human Rights.

The court ruled on June 23, 1993. It stated: "The European Court therefore accepts that there has been a difference in treatment and that that difference was on the ground of religion; this conclusion is supported by the tone and phrasing of the [Austrian] Supreme Court's considerations regarding the practical consequences of the applicant's religion. Such a difference in treatment is *discriminatory*." [Italics ours.] It further noted that the Supreme Court "weighed the facts differently from the courts below, whose reasoning was moreover supported by psychological expert opinion. Notwithstanding any possible arguments to the contrary, a distinction based essentially on a difference in religion alone is not acceptable."

By a vote of five to four, the judges ruled in favor of Ingrid Hoffmann and against Austria, stating, in effect, that Austria had discriminated against her on the basis of her religion and had violated her right to raise her family. Furthermore, by a vote of eight to one, the judges awarded her monetary damages.

This remarkable victory for religious freedom came just a month after another one in the very same court—the case of *Kokkinakis v. Greece*, which established that Greece had violated a man's right to teach God's Word from house to house. Lovers of freedom the world over rejoice when such attempts to suppress religious liberty are thwarted and personal rights to worship God and raise a family according to Bible principles are protected.



A Day in the Life of a Butterfly

IF YOUR daily routine seems stressful and difficult, spare a thought for the hardworking butterfly. At first you may think that a butterfly's work schedule looks like a dream vacation. Flitting from flower to flower, sipping a little nectar here and there, basking at will in the sunshine, the butterfly appears to be the epitome of the carefree life-style.

But in the insect world, things are not always what they seem. Butterflies are busy creatures who perform a vital service while constantly working against the clock. Let's join a butterfly on a typical workday.

A Sunshine Breakfast

Do you wake up feeling groggy? Early morning blues are endemic among butterflies. Some mornings they can't get going at all—literally. Their problem is body temperature, which fluctuates according to their surroundings. After they spend a cold night perched on



Sunning in early morning

a leaf, their blood is so cold they can hardly move, much less fly. So they must wait for the sun.

When the sun rises, the butterfly opens his wings and angles them toward its warming rays. The outstretched wings, acting like miniature solar panels, soon capture the necessary heat, and off the butterfly sails. But what if the sky is cloudy? In cool temperate regions, but-

terflies must stay put—immobilized on a convenient twig or flower—until the sun shines. This is not laziness. It's sheer necessity.

If the day is not too hot, the butterfly pauses from time to time for further sunshine therapy. Like a car refueling at a gas station, he needs his fill of solar energy. In the tropics the butterfly may need to bask only first thing in the morning or after a shower of rain. Generally speaking, the cooler the weather, the more time he spends basking. Once his energy is restored, he continues with the work at hand.

'Love at First Scent'

The most urgent task is to find a mate. With a life expectancy that rarely exceeds a few weeks, there is no time to lose. And finding a mate in the butterfly world is no easy job—it requires heroic patience and persistence.

"Love at first sight" is unknown among butterflies. They are notoriously nearsighted, and more often than not they mistake a different species for one of their own. This leads to many a fruitless chase that comes to naught when the butterfly suitor finally realizes his eyes have deceived him.

Drawing nectar from a flower



To make life even more difficult, the female usually isn't receptive. The ardent male flies persistently around her, in a type of high-speed aerial waltz, hoping that she will eventually relent. But these spectacular butterfly ballets usually come to an abrupt end when the female flies off, leaving the hapless male to continue his search.

Surprisingly enough, the female isn't that fussy about the fancy colors of her male consort. Although Darwin blithely assumed that butterflies' brilliant colors provided some 'evolutionary advantage,' the evidence has not been forthcoming. In one experiment females of the North American species *Anartia amathea* mated quite happily with males whose bright crimson and black wings had been painted black all over. What seems to matter most is the male's flight pattern, his persistence, and, above all, the unique "love-dust."

The love-dust carries a pheromone that is the male's trump card. It is a heady perfume, tailor-made to affect the females of his species. During courtship he attempts to dust her with this "superscent." Although the love-dust is no guarantee of success, it works wonders when a willing female is finally found.

A Taste of Nectar

All the energy expended in this search for a mate must be replenished. Hence the butterflies' taste for nectar. Flowers

advertise this high-energy food by means of attractive shapes and colors. Once he alights on the flower, the butterfly deftly sucks up the nectar with a long tubelike proboscis, which he pokes into the base of the flower.

While feeding on the nectar, the insect gets a dusting of pollen on his hairy body, thus taking the pollen with him to the next flower he visits. During a typical workday, hundreds of flowers are pollinated. In tropical forests, however, flowers do not abound. What do tropical butterflies usually drink?

Tropical butterflies like nothing better than gorging on rotten fruit. The overripe fruit that falls to the ground provides them a plentiful source of sugary energy.

Butterflies also like salt. They may often be found sucking up the salty moisture from a patch of wet ground or occasionally the perspiration on the hand of a human admirer. The intrepid flambeau butterfly has even been spotted drying the tears of the caiman.

While busily looking for a mate, pollinating flowers, and keeping well fed, our winged friend must also keep an eye out for enemies. He may look defenseless, but he has several tactics to avoid capture.

Keeping Danger at Bay

A gaudy butterfly fluttering over a meadow would presumably be a tempting morsel for any insect-eating bird. But the butterfly's haphazard, jerky flight makes catching him a very tricky job. Most birds give up after a few tries. Even when a bird does catch a butterfly, the insect may succeed in escaping by leaving behind a portion of his wing in the bird's beak.



Extracting moisture from the ground

Eyesight is another protection. Although butterflies are nearsighted, their compound eyes are highly efficient at detecting movement. They will dart away at any hint of danger, as anyone who has tried to photograph a butterfly knows only too well.

Some slow-flying butterflies have another safety device—their nasty taste. It is caused by their feeding on poisonous plants when they were caterpillars. Once he has bitten such a butterfly, a bird will usually shy away from a second encounter. Often these foul-tasting butter-

flies—like the monarch—are brightly colored, a visual warning that apparently reminds the bird to keep clear.

Journey's End

The World Book Encyclopedia notes that most butterflies do not live longer than a few weeks, but that some species may live up to 18 months. Some are dormant during the cold winter months or during a prolonged dry season in the tropics.

But despite their short lives, butterflies can accomplish amazing feats. Last century the monarch butterfly crossed the Atlantic in sufficient numbers to establish itself in the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa. Another great traveler, the painted lady, regularly journeys from North Africa to the north of Europe in the summer season.

During their brief life span, the tireless butterflies do a vital job pollinating flowers, shrubs, and fruit trees. And much more than that, their presence adds a touch of beauty and delight to the countryside. Summer would not be summer without them.



Helping My Family Become Spiritually Rich

As told by Josephat Busane

I will never forget a train journey to Johannesburg, South Africa, in January 1941. My boyhood friend Elias Kunene and I were returning to our place of work after spending a vacation in Zululand.

ON THE train with us was a young man who had some muti, which is medicine believed to possess supernatural power, usually obtained from a witch doctor. The man smeared the muti on his eyebrow in the belief that it would act to ensure favor from his white employer. As we were getting off the train, Elias said: "That muti is his god." Those words pierced my heart like a knife because in my bag I had my own muti that I had prepared according to a witch doctor's prescription.

Elias and I had been studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and so I realized

that he had made far greater spiritual advancement than I. Immediately I threw the muti into a rubbish bin and afterward joined Elias in regularly attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Elias and I were both married men. So why did we work in a city some 250 miles from home? How did city life compare with farm life in Zululand? And did our association with Jehovah's Witnesses bring benefits to our families back home?

Life in Zululand

I was born in Zululand, South Africa, in 1908. Our family lived in the district of Msinga, a region of grassy plains, hills, and thorn trees. Here, in autumn, the pointed flowers of the aloe tree cover the landscape with a blaze of red. Cattle and goats graze on the hillsides between the trees. Kraals (collections of huts) and corn patches are scattered about the plains, maize being the staple food of the Zulu people.

Our kraal, like the others, consisted of a hut for my parents, one for my sister, and one for me and my brother. Another hut served as the family kitchen, and there was one for storage. Each hut was in the shape of a beehive, having a mud wall about a yard high

and a dome of thatched grass on top. Between the huts chickens scratched the ground, pecking for food, and close by was an enclosure for the cattle. Our family was content with this simple farm life. We had food and shelter, and my father did not need outside employment.

Yet, the rural tranquillity of Zululand has often been shattered. These pleasant hills and rivers have been drenched with human blood. At the beginning of the 19th century, Zululand was occupied by several independent tribes. Then arose a Zulu warrior named Shaka. His army attacked all the surrounding tribes. Survivors fled or were absorbed into the Zulu nation.

Later, battles occurred between the Zulus and the Dutch settlers. One was fought at a river not far from our home. So much blood flowed that the water reddened, so it was given the name Blood River. Then came the British armies. At a hill called Isandlwana, not far from my home, thousands of people were slaughtered in one of many fierce battles between British and Zulu soldiers. Sadly, lasting peace has never come to our part of Zululand. From time to time, old tribal hatreds flare up.

A Search for Material Riches

My mother died when I was five. My father and my older sister, Bertina, cared for me and helped me get six years of school education. Then, at age 19, I started work as a shop assistant in the nearby town of Dundee.

I heard that many young men were earning more money in the city of Johannesburg, the center of South Africa's gold-mining industry. So, the following year, I moved to Johannesburg and worked for many years posting advertisement bills.

In Johannesburg, I was overwhelmed by the attractions and opportunities, but I soon

realized that city life undermined the traditional morals of my people. However, although many young men forsook their families who lived in the rurals, I never forgot mine and regularly sent money home to them.

My father died in 1938. As the eldest son, I was compelled by Zulu custom to "revive" our family kraal. So, the following year, I married a girl from Zululand, Claudina Madondo. Though married, I still continued to work 250 miles away in Johannesburg. Most of my peers were doing the same. Although it was painful to be separated from my family for long periods, I felt an obligation to help them enjoy a higher standard of living.

Material or Spiritual Riches?

Mother had been the only churchgoer in our family, and her Bible was the only book in our home. Some time after her death, I became literate and immediately began reading it. But the doctrines and practices of the churches began to bother me. For instance, members continued in good standing even though they engaged in fornication. I asked preachers about such inconsistencies, but no one gave me a satisfactory explanation.

While in Johannesburg, Elias Kunene and I decided to search for the true religion. We visited churches in our neighborhood but were not satisfied with any of them. Then Elias met Jehovah's Witnesses. When he tried to explain to me what he had learned from them, I told him that he had been misled. But after listening to his discussion with church leaders and seeing their inability to prove him wrong, I began reading publications of the Watch Tower Society that Elias gave me. It was at this time that I had the memorable train journey when Elias helped me discern the danger of trusting in muti.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Proverbs 3:5, 6.

I then joined Elias in regular association with the first black congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Johannesburg. In 1942, after dedicating my life to Jehovah, I was baptized in Orlando, Soweto. On trips home to Zululand, I would try to share my beliefs with Claudina, but she was deeply involved in church activities.

However, she began to compare our literature with her Bible, and gradually the truth of God's Word reached her heart. In 1945 she was baptized. She became a zealous Christian minister, sharing Bible truth with her neighbors and inculcating it into the hearts of our children.

Meanwhile, in Johannesburg, I had the privilege of helping some to come to a knowledge of Bible truth. By 1945 there were four black congregations in the vicinity of Johannesburg, and I served as the presiding overseer of the Small Market Congregation. In time Scriptural direction was given to married men who worked far from their homes to return to their families and give more attention to their responsibilities as family heads.—Ephesians 5:28-31; 6:4.

Elias was the first to leave Johannesburg, never to part from his family again. As a result his wife and all five of his children became active Witnesses of Jehovah. Elias also reared four orphaned nieces and nephews, who became dedicated Witnesses. In 1983 he died, having set a fine example in faithfully carrying out the directions Jehovah gives through his Word and his earthly organization.

In 1949, I left my job in Johannesburg to care for my family in Jehovah's way. Back home I obtained work with a livestock inspector as a dipping-tank assistant. It was difficult to support a family of six children on the meager salary I received. So to care for expenses, I also sold vegetables and corn that we grew at home.

Blessings of Greater Value

Although our family was not rich materially, we had spiritual treasures because of heeding Jesus' directions: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal."—Matthew 6:19, 20.

Attaining these spiritual treasures requires hard work, just as does digging for gold in the mines around Johannesburg. Every evening I would share a Bible text with my children and require each one to tell me what he had learned. On weekends I would take them, in turns, in the preaching work. As we walked from kraal to kraal, I would discuss Scriptural matters and try to impress the Bible's high moral standards on their hearts.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

For example, in order to be certain that our children did not steal, I made sure that any object they brought home was not stolen. (Ephesians 4:28) Similarly, if one of them told a lie, I did not hold back from using the rod of discipline. (Proverbs 22:15) I also required that they show proper respect for older ones.—Leviticus 19:32.

As family head, I set an example by not missing meetings, and I required the children to attend them as well. I saw to it that each

In Our Next Issue

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The Fascinating Beauty of the Opal

child had a songbook, a Bible, and any other publication being used at the meetings. We also prepared for our meetings together, and if a child did not comment, I would try to help him to do so at the next meeting.

For many years ours was the only family in a position to provide hospitality to traveling overseers. These representatives of the Watch Tower Society had a fine influence on our children and built in them a desire to become pioneers, or full-time evangelizers. My wife and I were happy when our eldest son, Africa, began pioneering after completing ten years of schooling. Eventually he served as a traveling overseer, and later he was invited to the South Africa branch office of the Watch Tower Society, where he worked as a translator. He is now married and has children of his own. He serves as an elder in a congregation in Zululand, and he also has the privilege of helping the South Africa branch with legal problems that arise from time to time because of issues involving true worship.

Altogether, we had five boys and a girl. All six children are now grown and are strong spiritually. This has filled our hearts with much happiness—a deep contentment that can never be bought with material things. Four of my sons serve as elders in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses with which they associate. One of them, Theophilus, now enjoys the privilege of Bethel service at the South Africa branch.

Spreading the Truth in Zululand

When I finally returned to live with my family in Zululand in 1949, there were only three Kingdom proclaimers in our Collessie Congregation. In time the congregation grew, and a second congregation was established 20 miles away in the village of Pomeroy.

Over the years our preaching work would sometimes be disrupted because of factional fighting in the communities. Churchgoers get

involved in this tribal fighting. It is only Jehovah's Witnesses who are known for their neutrality. Once, a fight broke out between the Mabaso and the maBomvu tribes in an area where I was dipping cattle. The people in the area were of the Mabaso tribe and might normally have killed me because they knew I came from the maBomvu tribe. However, they also knew that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and so they did not harm me.

During the 1970's, incidents of tribal fighting worsened, and the district of Msinga became very unsafe. Along with some others, I decided to move the family to a more peaceful part of Zululand. In 1978 we settled in the town of Nongoma, where we began associating with the Lindizwe Congregation. The following year, my dear wife, Claudina, died. Her loss came as a severe shock to me, and my health deteriorated badly.

Yet, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, I revived sufficiently to be able to enter the pioneer service two years later. How grateful I am to Jehovah that my health has actually improved with this increase in preaching activity! I am now 85 and am still able to average over 90 hours in the preaching work each month. In January 1992, I moved with my son Nicholas to Muden, a part of Zululand where there is a need for more Kingdom proclaimers.

How thankful I am for the direction from Jehovah's organization that encouraged ones like me to give better attention to the spiritual needs of our families! The blessings that have resulted are far greater than anything money can buy. (Proverbs 10:22) I praise Jehovah for all of this and pray for the time when his Kingdom will transform this earth into a paradise. Then life in these beautiful hills and valleys of Zululand will forever be tranquil as the inhabitants "sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree," with "no one making them tremble."—Micah 4:4.

**Young
People
Ask...**



Why Am I Developing So Quickly?

"When I was in sixth grade, I was taller than everybody. It was embarrassing for me. I had a really tiny friend and I used to envy her."—Annie.

"Since I look sixteen or seventeen, many people, including my parents, expect me to act more mature."—Tanya, age 12.

PUBERTY—most of us who have been through it would probably prefer to forget the whole experience. It is both wonderful and frightening. During puberty, your body undergoes rapid, dramatic, and, at times, embarrassing changes. New feelings, impulses, and desires assault you. Most youths find solace in the fact that their peers are going through the same thing. For some youths, however, puberty seems to come too early. They find themselves becoming bigger, taller, more developed, more grown-up-looking than their friends and classmates.

If this has happened to you, it may comfort you to know that there is nothing abnormal about blooming early. Everyone's biological clock ticks at its own rate, and yours apparently runs a little faster than those of your peers. Why, the changes of puberty in a boy can begin as early as ten years of age, and in a girl, as early as eight. It's just a matter of time before your friends will start undergoing the same changes. In the meantime you may have some problems to cope with.

The Pleasures and Pains of Being Tall

One teenage girl told *Awake!*: "I prefer being the tallest kid in class. People look up to you." Studies indicate that early-maturing boys in particular enjoy a number of distinct advantages over less-developed peers. Says the book *Adolescent Development*, by Barbara and Philip Newman: "Early-maturing boys are taller and stronger than their age-mates. . . . Tall, strong boys are more likely to be given responsibility, to be viewed as peer leaders, and to be treated as if they were more mature intellectually as well as physically."

However, being too tall too soon also has its down side. For one thing, you may become the butt of endless cruel jokes from your classmates. One young girl told *Awake!*:

"I was the tallest girl in class. They called me 'Long Legs.'" Recalls a young man named Dwayne: "The kids would call me names, like 'Stork.' Sometimes they'd ask, 'How's the weather up there?'"*

Particularly tough are the times when your lengthy limbs fail to work together harmoniously. (Compare Ephesians 4:16.) "I was gangly, thin, and clumsy," recalls Christine of her teenage years. "I was terrible at sports," adds Dwayne. "It seemed as if my brain would send out a command, and my limbs would receive it a week later! I was as graceful as a giraffe on roller skates." Be assured that this awkward period is natural. It will pass in time. You may also find that a moderate amount of "bodily training is beneficial." (1 Timothy 4:8) The more you use your body, the better coordinated you will become.

What about the name-calling and insults? It may be tempting to lash back with a few stinging retorts of your own, but the Bible says: "Do not answer anyone stupid according to his foolishness, that you yourself also may not become equal to him." (Proverbs 26:4) Besides, in the long run, 'returning evil for evil' only makes a bad situation worse. (Romans 12:17) The Bible says that there is "a time to laugh." (Ecclesiastes 3:4) A sense of humor can get you through many an embarrassing moment.[#]

'They Think I'm Older'

Sometimes the problem is, not peers, but adults who think you are older than you really are. Recalls Dwayne: "I would be singled out in the crowd as the authority, the leader. Once I was near a bunch of kids, and they started tossing things from a bridge. The po-

* Some of the names have been changed.

For further suggestions on dealing with teasing, see Chapter 19 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

lice came over and started screaming at me because I was the tallest one. But I didn't even know what was going on."

At times, you may be flattered to be treated like a grown-up. The problem is, physical growth can outpace mental and emotional growth. In spite of how you look, you may still think and reason, not like an adult, but like someone your age. (Compare 1 Corinthians 13:11.) So when people make adult demands of you, you may have a hard time delivering.

You may need to give friends and family members gentle reminders from time to time that you are not as old as you look. "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk," says Proverbs 15:22. So if you feel your parents are being overly demanding, politely speak up. One magazine for teenagers suggested that you might say: "I know that because I *look* so mature, it's easy to expect me to act older. But inside, I'm still my real age, and sometimes it's hard for me to keep up with all you expect me to do and be."

Don't make the mistake of promoting the illusion of being older by putting on a more sophisticated air, or bearing, or by dressing and grooming yourself in a way that is not appropriate to your age. Why, some early-maturing youths even abandon their younger-looking childhood friends and try to fit in with an older crowd! But one who tries to hide what he really is in this regard could well end up being humiliated. (Compare Psalm 26:4.) In time others will see through your pretense. The Bible wisely says, therefore, that "wisdom is with the modest ones." (Proverbs 11:2; Micah 6:8) A modest person knows his limitations.

Sexual Harassment

Behaving modestly can also protect you from a problem that often faces early-

**Tall youths are often
the butt of cruel jokes**



maturing girls in particular: sexual harassment. In a startlingly rapid period of time, a little girl's body can take on the appearance of an attractive woman. (Compare Song of Solomon 8:8, 10.) For some young girls, though, having a woman's breasts and hips can be—well—embarrassing.

Writer Ruth Bell observes: "Growing girls become especially vulnerable to male reactions." Explains one 12-year-old girl named Denise: "Since I've gotten more physically mature I get a lot of stares when I go out." (*Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*) Curious classmates of both sexes may even try to touch you inappropriately. Not surprisingly, the book *Adolescent Development* says: "Early-maturing females may slouch, wear baggy sweat shirts, or become shy and withdrawn in order to avoid peer recognition of their changing body image."

While you are hardly obliged to hide yourself under layers of clothing, it only makes good sense to avoid clothes and styles of grooming that are provocative or that call

undue attention to you. This harmonizes with the Bible's counsel to dress "with modesty and soundness of mind." —1 Timothy 2:9.

There may be other practical steps you can take. Back in Bible times, Ruth faced the possibility of sexual harassment when she went to work in the field of Boaz. Kindly Boaz 'commanded the young men not to touch her.' Even so, he cautioned her: "Do not go away to

glean in another field, . . . and in that way you should keep close by my young women." (Ruth 2:8, 9) In a similar way, some young girls have been able to stay close to other Christian girls who attend the same school. They avoid walking unescorted in areas known to be trouble spots.

Whatever the case, *no one* has the right to harass you—either physically or verbally. If you suffer some problems in this regard, talk things out with your parents or a trusted adult. They may have some suggestions or may offer to intervene in some way.

Even under the best of circumstances, puberty is a tough time of life. Being bigger—or smaller—than your peers can make it even tougher. Try as you may, there is not much you can do about your physical growth. But you can work hard on your *spiritual* growth. And if you do so, like young Samuel of Bible times, you will grow "bigger and more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men."—1 Samuel 2:26.

Do We Really Need Priests?

GIVE thanks for the gift of the Priesthood," said John Paul II in his annual letter to priests on "Holy Thursday," 1992. Not only Catholics but others too have become painfully aware of their errors. They have felt the need for someone acceptable to God to tell them God's will, to offer Him a sacrifice, and to intercede before God for them. Such a person is called a priest. Do we really need a priest to help us gain forgiveness from God?

The idea of priests and sacrifices did not originate with men but originated with God. If there were no sins against God, there would be no need for priests. In Eden, the perfect man Adam needed no priest. He was created sinless.—Genesis 2:7, 8; Ecclesiastes 7:29.

Who Were the First Priests?

All of us today have inherited sinfulness because Adam deliberately sinned and we are his offspring. (Romans 3:23) Abel, son of the first man, Adam, recognized this. The Bible says of him: "By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice." (Hebrews 11:4) Although Abel and other ancient men of faith—such as Noah, Abraham, and Job—were not called priests, they did offer sacrifices to God on behalf of themselves or their families. For example, the Bible says

of Job and his sons: "[Job] offered up burnt sacrifices according to the number of all of them; for, said Job, 'maybe my sons have sinned.' " (Job 1:5) How, though, did priests and sacrifices become common to so many cultures?

Consider the events surrounding the ancient patriarch Noah. Noah and his family were the only humans to survive the global Deluge. As they stepped onto an earth washed clean, Noah constructed an altar and offered up sacrifices in appreciation for Jehovah's mercy and protective hand. Since all nations are descendants of Noah, they no doubt followed his pattern and in due course developed a variety of traditions relating to intercessors and sacrifices for sins.—Genesis 10:32.

More than a century later, a rebellion against God erupted in the city of Babel. God confused people's language and they scattered. (Genesis 11:1-9) Some priests, now promoting twisted and debased beliefs, developed horrible rites in the lands to which they were dispersed. Nevertheless, God saw the need to teach his worshipers about their need for a true priesthood with a high priest, underpriests, and sacrifices acceptable to him.



Why God Appointed Priests

In time Jehovah gave the nation of Israel priests who performed two basic functions. First, they represented God before the people as judges and instructors of God's Law. (Deuteronomy 17:8, 9; Malachi 2:7) Second, they represented the people before God by offering sacrifices to him on behalf of the people. Paul's letter to the Hebrew Christians explains: "Every high priest taken from among men is appointed in behalf of men over the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. . . . A man takes this honor, not of his own accord, but only when he is called by God."—Hebrews 5:1, 4.

Paul goes on to explain that Israel's priesthood was not God's final way to reconcile people to Himself. The priests' duties were symbols pointing to better things, "heavenly things." (Hebrews 8:5) Once those heavenly things arrived, the symbols were no longer needed. To illustrate: You might hang on to an advertisement for a product you desperately need, but would you not discard it once you procured that product?

Long before the nation of Israel came into existence, God purposed a priesthood that would serve for the blessing of, not just Israel, but all mankind. At first, Israel was privileged with the opportunity to supply the members of that priesthood. When the nation was formed, Jehovah told Israel: "If you will strictly obey my voice . . . , you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6; compare Genesis 22:18.) Sadly, the nation rarely obeyed God's voice. Thus, Jesus told the priests and Pharisees: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." Who are now to serve as priests for the blessing of mankind?—Matthew 21:43.

What Priesthood Do Christians Need?

Because we have inherited sin from Adam, salvation to everlasting life is only possible by

means of the perfect sacrifice provided by Jesus. (1 John 2:2) Jesus himself intercedes for us as High Priest, just as was prefigured in Israel's priesthood. Hebrews 9:24 says: "Christ entered, not into a holy place made with hands, which is a copy of the reality, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God for us." Thus, the surpassing excellence of Christ's high priesthood makes obsolete the need for human priests as intercessors. Yet, the services of underpriests are still necessary. In what way?

Priests must "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5) As to the type of offerings these are, Paul wrote: "Let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips." (Hebrews 13:15) Therefore, those who will make up the royal priesthood, while yet *on earth*, represent God before men as his Witnesses, not as intercessors. Later, *in heaven* with Jesus Christ, they represent men before God, administering the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and bringing about the healing of all infirmities.—Compare Mark 2:9-12.

While all believers should bear witness, only a relative few will serve in the heavenly "kingdom of priests." Jesus said: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32; Revelation 14:1) These will be resurrected to heaven and "will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years."—Revelation 20:6.

God has arranged for these heavenly priests to do things in both a spiritual and a physical sense that no priesthood has yet been able to do. Soon, as they apply the benefit of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, they will be able to share in restoring all believing mankind to human perfection. Then, Isaiah 33:24 will have a wonderful fulfillment. It says: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.' The people that are dwelling in the land will be those pardoned for their error."

Watching the World

Europe Warned on Ethnic Strife

"People can be transformed into hating and killing machines without too much difficulty," warns José-María Mendiluce, special representative of the UN high commissioner for refugees. Mr. Mendiluce, who spent 19 months overseeing the UN's refugee program in the former Yugoslavia, said that it is a "very dangerous mistake" to view Balkan people as "fundamentally different from other Europeans," and he noted that similar ethnic conflicts could easily break out in other European countries. "All it takes is an economic crisis and a few cynical politicians who blame it on immigrants or poor people or people who are somehow different," he said. According to *The New York Times* report, Mr. Mendiluce noted how easily leaders can stir up hatred "by spreading lies in the media and fomenting provocations," asserting that those who signed peace agreements did not change their behavior, but kept on "hating and killing."

Australia's Alcohol Abuse

The good news in Australia is that the amount of alcohol consumed nationally is dropping. But the bad news is that alcohol abuse still costs the nation "\$6 billion and 6,000 lives a year," states *The Sydney Morning Herald*. A recent report called *Dimensions and Effects of Alcohol Abuse* revealed that 88 percent of Australian males and 75 percent of females drink alcohol, and it cited increasing drinking among women and "binge drinking" by teenagers as major causes for concern.

UN Peace Efforts Falter for Lack of Cash

UN peacekeeping costs are expected to reach \$3.7 billion this year. However, "the failure of member countries to pay their share is raising doubts about the organization's ability to finance future operations or adequately sustain peace efforts under way now," states *The New York Times*. The UN is supposed to reimburse nations that help with peacekeeping operations about \$1,000 a month



for every soldier sent. But months have gone by without reimbursement to countries that sent troops for operations in the former Yugoslavia and in Cambodia. By the end of April, unpaid peacekeeping dues had reached \$1.5 billion, with an additional \$970 million unpaid for the regular budget. Lacking reimbursement, governments of some developing countries have already withdrawn forces or have refused to participate in new operations.

Year of Hate

"A year like 1992 gives new prominence to some old questions about human nature," notes *Newsweek* magazine. "These divisions—neighbor against neighbor, race against race, nationality against nationality—are something we have always been prone to, and

this year's events raise doubts about whether we are getting any better at bridging these gaps." It noted: "Hate thy neighbor seemed the motto of the year." Why was "human nastiness" so particularly prominent in 1992? "Sheer anarchy accounts for much of the violence of the past year," says *Newsweek*, as well as the "sudden economic insecurity" that followed the collapse of Soviet Communism. Added to this were communal hatreds stirred up by government authorities. Are military peacekeepers the solution? "U.N. troops have been in Cyprus, separating the Greek and Turkish communities, for nearly 20 years. Safe behind this screen of U.N. protection, neither side has had the slightest incentive to compromise with the other," replies *Newsweek*.

Missing Women

Women outnumber men by a ratio of 105 to 100 in developed countries, such as Britain, France, Switzerland, and the United States. But UN statistics show that in Asia tens of millions of women are missing. For example, Afghanistan and Bangladesh have only 94 women for every 100 men, India has 93, and Pakistan has only 92. Official figures for China showed 114 boys between the ages of one and two for every 100 girls. Why the difference? "Experts point to the life-threatening discrimination that women must endure, making their chances of survival lower than men's: sex-selective abortion and infanticide, poor nutrition and health care, multiple pregnancies and backbreaking physical labor," says *The Washington Post*. Besides, in some cultures,

male census takers either ignore women or are not allowed to talk to females. And some fathers, ashamed that they have more daughters than sons, lie about the sex of their children.

China's Declining Birthrate

Statistics for 1992 show the lowest birthrate level ever recorded in China—18.2 births per 1,000 persons, down from 23.33 in 1987, reports *The New York Times*. Though not expected to be reached until the year 2010, the target was achieved “because party and Government officials at all levels paid greater attention to family planning and adopted more effective measures,” says Peng Peiyun, minister of the State Family Planning Commission. Under the program local officials were held personally responsible for reducing the number of births in their jurisdictions and could be punished for failure to do so. In many cases this translated into compulsory sterilization of women who already had a child and very stiff fines for those who had an unauthorized birth. When villagers cannot pay the fines, their belongings are either confiscated or smashed, and their houses are often knocked down. China's 1.17 billion inhabitants already make up about 22 percent of the world's population.

'Major Health Problem by the Year 2000'

French medical officials are predicting that “chronic type-C hepatitis will be a major health problem in France by the year 2000.” Excerpts from a medical report appearing in the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* said that the problem has two essential characteristics: the “significant part that blood transfusions play in spreading the virus” and the “especially aggressive development [of the virus] in

its chronic form.” It is estimated that between 500,000 and 2,000,000 persons in France are now infected with the virus and that 62 percent of these will likely develop chronic hepatitis, with the risk of cirrhosis of the liver or cancer within 10 to 30 years. Doctors say that although most people infected with hepatitis C have no symptoms, their prognosis is just as grim.

Space Garbage Danger

“Space refuse is becoming more and more of a problem for space flights,” reports the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The first European Conference on Space Garbage, held in April in Darmstadt, Germany, addressed the “question of what should be done with the ever-increasing belt of rubble made up of inactive satellites, burned-out rocket stages, or lost equipment



from earlier space missions.” It is estimated that over 7,000 objects the size of a tennis ball or larger are hurtling around the earth, as well as more than 100,000 smaller pieces. Russian and U.S. flights account for 95 percent of the garbage in space. “There have been several near misses in recent years between active space equipment and refuse that is flying around,” the newspaper added. “Strict prevention of garbage and international agreements on future space projects are the only solution if flights into space are not to be threatened with termination in the next millennium.”

Japan's Controversy Over Flag and Anthem

Recently released records in Yamato, Japan, show that school principals have “enforced an Education Ministry directive on the hoisting of the national flag and the singing of the national anthem . . . , despite strong opposition from rank-and-file teachers,” states *Mainichi Daily News*. “The issue of including the Hinomaru [national flag] and Kimigayo [national anthem] in school ceremonies has caused controversy nationwide due to their association with Japan's wartime ultranationalism and imperialism.” According to *Asahi Evening News*, opposers link the flag and anthem with emperor worship and say that forcing children to sing the anthem “would be imposing a specific religious creed on them.” Constitutional rights of freedom of religion and conscience are being violated, they say.

Nuclear Disasters Uncovered

New information about the site of one of the world's worst nuclear accidents has been made public after years of secrecy, says the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune*. In its race to develop nuclear weapons, the former Soviet government built a plutonium plant in the Ural Mountains. From the start of construction in 1948 to 1951, the plant's radioactive wastes were simply dumped into the local rivers, which were also used for farming and drinking water. Then, in 1957, some nuclear wastes there exploded, releasing huge amounts of radioactive material into the earth's atmosphere. Another incident took place in 1967, when a nearby lake that had been used as a nuclear dump site dried up. Winds carried the radioactive wastes over a vast territory. Scientists believe that radioactive contamination from the three incidents affected some 450,000 people.

From Our Readers

Disabilities The article "Young People Ask . . . Why Do I Have to Suffer With a Disability?" (May 22, 1993) dealt with this problem realistically. I'm disabled in both legs and very sensitive when people look at me with an air of pity. What hurts my feelings the most is when someone gives me a donation—as if I were a beggar! What consoles me is to know that Jehovah does not see the physical condition but "sees what the heart is."—1 Samuel 16:7.

A. A. A. S., Brazil

I must take exception to your reference to cerebral palsy as a disease. Cerebral palsy is a condition caused by damage to the brain, usually occurring before, during, or shortly following birth. It is neither progressive nor communicable. It is not a disease and should never be referred to as such.

L. Z., United States

We are sorry if our choice of words gave offense. We used the word "disease" in the very general sense given in "Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary," namely, "a condition . . . that impairs the performance of a vital function." —ED.

Female Mutilation Thank you for exposing what a demonic and vile practice female genital mutilation is! ("Millions Are Suffering—Can They Be Helped?" April 8, 1993) If just one child can be spared the agony of this silent, hideous crime, then publishing the article will have proved worthwhile.

J. C., United States

My eyes filled with tears at the thought that parents cause defenseless children such suffering. News like this is not published in our press, so I thank you for keeping us up-to-date.

C. C. G. M., Brazil

Homework Thank you very much for the article "Young People Ask . . . What Can I Do About So Much Homework?" (April 8, 1993) I read the article at a time when I was really under stress with much homework. I didn't have time to relax or prepare for Christian meetings. I am now applying your suggestions.

M. H., United States

Emigrating I'm pleased to express my gratefulness for the article "Young People Ask . . . Should I Move to a More Prosperous Country?" (April 22, 1993) I'm 16 years old and have thought of moving to a country where I might have a better chance in life. But after reading the article, I feel that it does not matter where we live. If we let Jehovah's Kingdom come first in our lives, we will surely be prosperous [spiritually] since Jehovah will help us.

V. L. A., Brazil

Rape I had mixed emotions when I received the March 8, 1993, issue on "Rape—A Woman's Nightmare." You see, my mother, a full-time evangelizer for many years, was the victim of a terrible assault and attempted rape in her own home. Reading the articles has helped the healing process.

P. G., United States

I am the assistant director of the local "Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services." One of your young ministers got us started reading *Awake!* when he brought in the issue on child abuse. (October 8, 1991) We now subscribe. I want to let you know how impressed I was with your issues on domestic violence and rape. They were well written and researched very thoroughly.

D. G., United States

When Fire Goes Out Of Control

By Awake! correspondent in Ghana

FIRE. When it is under control, it is a useful servant. But when it rages uncontrolled, it can be a destructive giant that consumes everything in its path—man, beast, trees, vegetation.

In 1983 a bushfire in Australia devastated the states of South Australia and Victoria. Over 70 persons were killed, along with the destruction of 36,000 cattle, 320,000 sheep, and over 2,000 homes.

In the same year, bushfires in Ghana resulted in the devastation of 72 percent of the country's 92,100 square miles. At least 29 persons died; 34 others were injured.

A small proportion of bushfires are the result of natural processes, such as lightning. Most are man-made. In Ghana the number one cause of bushfires is palm wine tapping. Workers light bundles of sticks to heat up palm trees, allowing the palm sap to flow. Often, though, the fire accidentally spreads, and a bushfire results.

In some African lands, it is common for a group of hunters to surround a thicket and set it afire to flush out game that may be in it. Those hunting for wild bee honey use fire to drive bees away from their hive. At times they make no effort to put out the fires they start.

In tropical Africa many farmers use the slash-and-burn method of farming. They cut down the bush in an area they intend to farm and

burn the debris. If not controlled, the fire can quickly spread.

In some areas, herdsmen burn the dry grass in the belief that, with the coming of the rains, the land will be rejuvenated, and there will be better pasture for their animals. When these fires are left to burn themselves out—as is often the

case—they can easily spread. Campers and field-workers are likewise guilty at times of starting conflagrations by failing to put out campfires.

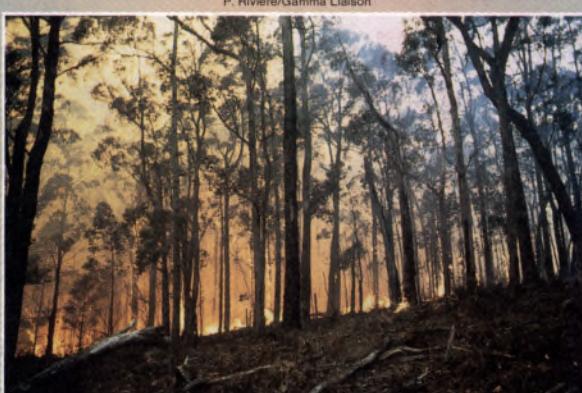
Clearly, then, negligence is the cause of most bushfires.

Is there any way, though, to prevent such fires from occurring in the first

place? Reasonable precautions can make a big difference. For example, by clearing a firebreak from 15 to 30 feet wide around any fire set in the field, you help check any spread to adjacent fields. Completely extinguishing all fires you have set is another important safeguard. Remember, preventing a bushfire is far easier than fighting one.

Some believe that tougher penalties for perpetrators would deter carelessness and acts of arson. Others argue that the best way to prevent bushfires is education and willing cooperation by all.

Treat fire with healthy respect. By exercising reasonable care, we can avoid provoking this useful servant into becoming a destructive giant.

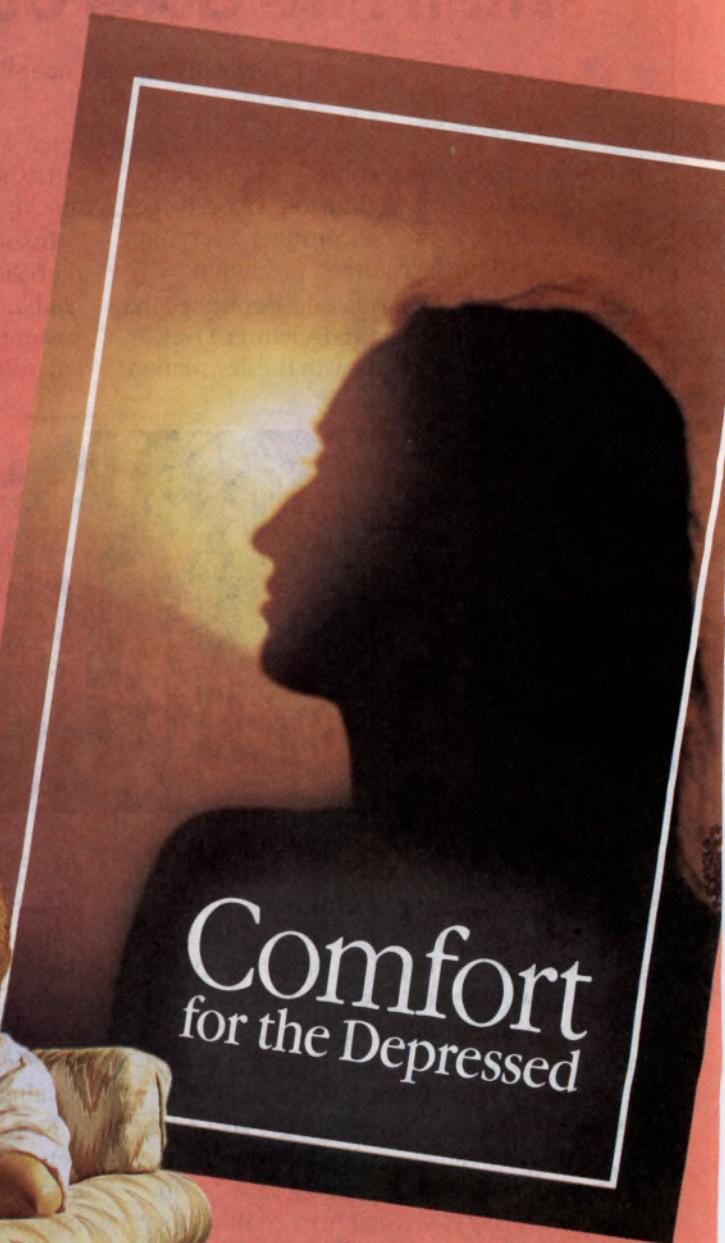
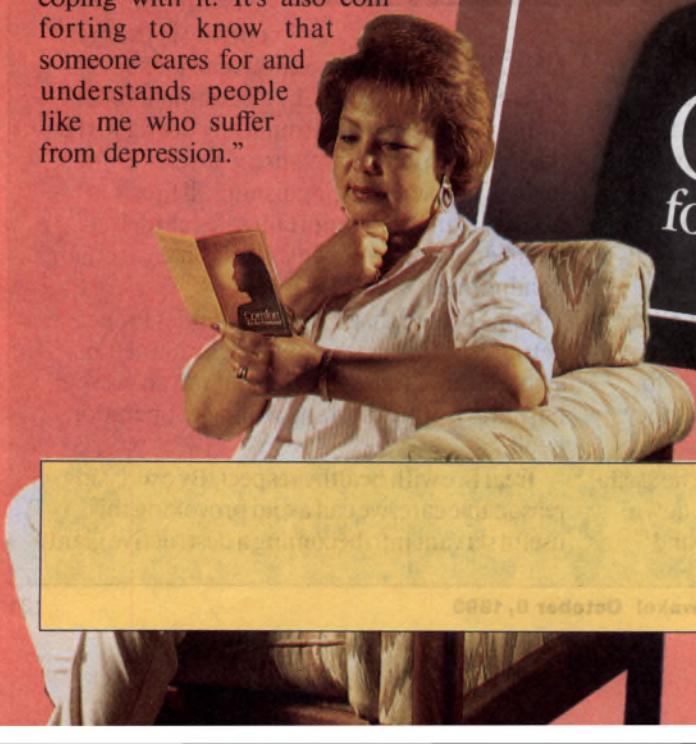


'It's Comforting to Know That Someone Cares'

Some people appear to be all right, but they feel terrible. What can help? Concern and understanding are important. Last year such a person wrote the Watch Tower Society in Brooklyn, New York:

"I just read the tract *Comfort for the Depressed*. I suffer from periodic depression caused by a chemical imbalance. The tract is very comforting.

"It's comforting to know that there is hope concerning depression and that there are ways of coping with it. It's also comforting to know that someone cares for and understands people like me who suffer from depression."



Are you too down to do anything? Do you feel like you're drowning in depression? Do you feel like you're drowning in depression? Do you feel like you're drowning in depression? Do you feel like you're drowning in depression?