

Awake!

July 8, 1996



**MUST
DIFFERENCES
DIVIDE US?**

Must Differences Divide Us?

3-8

In spite of greater knowledge of other cultures, thanks to TV and easy travel, people are still influenced by bias and prejudice. Can the still-present barriers to open communication and understanding be breached?



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Cassava Leaves —Daily Food for Millions 20

Even though toxic in some forms, this plant is a lifeline for many in Africa. How is it prepared? What makes it so delicious?



UFO's —Messengers From God? 26

Some people claim to have had contact with extraterrestrials. What could be an explanation? What does the Bible say?

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A GLOBAL VILLAGE BUT STILL DIVIDED

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN NIGERIA

Communication of ideas and beliefs over long distances has been a major factor in the development of civilization. In ancient times, the exchange of ideas was limited by the speed of travel and the means of communication available.

HAVE you ever heard stories of a race of people who had no mouth and therefore could neither eat nor drink? They were said to survive by smelling, mostly apples. A bad odor would kill them.

There were also tales of a West African people who had gold to trade. A Portuguese ship's captain of the time reported: "Two hundred leagues beyond [the] kingdom of [Mali], one finds a country the inhabitants of which have the heads and teeth of dogs and tails like dogs. These are the Blacks who refuse to enter into conversation because they do not wish to see other men." Those were some of the strange ideas that were held many years ago, before the age of travel and discovery.

Peoples Come Together

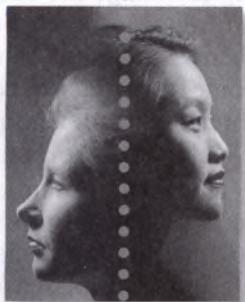
Such stories were taken seriously for centuries. But as explorers charted the planet, they found no mouthless apple smellers, no dog-headed people. Today there remains little mystery about those who live beyond our borders. The world has become a global village. Television brings foreign lands and peoples into our living rooms. Air travel makes it possible to visit those lands within hours; millions of people do so each year. Others are on the move for economic or political reasons. States a report of

the United Nations Population Fund: "On a scale unknown in history—and certain to grow—people around the world are uprooting themselves and migrating in search of a better life." About 100 million people live outside the country in which they were born.

Increasingly there is economic interdependency among nations. A global communications network, like a gigantic central nervous system, links every nation of the earth. As ideas, information, and technology are exchanged, cultures merge and adapt to one another. Throughout the world people dress more alike than ever before. Cities of the world share much in common—police, luxury hotels, traffic, stores, banks, pollution. Thus, as the peoples of the world come together, we witness what some describe as an emerging world culture.

Why People Remain Divided

But while peoples and cultures intermingle, clearly not all see one another as brothers. "Everyone's quick to blame the alien," wrote a Greek playwright over 2,000 years ago. Sadly, the same is true today. The evidence is no farther away than newspaper reports of bigotry, hatred of foreigners, "ethnic cleansing," racial strife, religious riots, massacre of civilians, killing fields, rape camps, torture, or genocide.



Of course, most of us can do little or nothing to change the course of ethnic conflicts. We may not even be directly affected by them. For many of us, however, problems come from a lack of communication with the foreigners with whom we come into contact—neighbors, workmates, or schoolmates.

Does it not seem odd that people of differing ethnic groups so often find it difficult to trust and appreciate one another? After all, ours is a planet of enormous diversity, endless variety. Most of us appreciate the rich variety of food, music, and color as well as the many kinds of plants, birds, and ani-

mals. But somehow our appreciation of variety does not always carry over to people who do not think and act in the same way that we do.

Instead of looking at the positive aspects of diversity among peoples, many tend to focus on the differences and make them a point of contention. Why is this so? What benefit is there in reaching out to people whose culture differs from our own? How might we break down walls to communication and replace them with bridges? The following articles will endeavor to answer those questions.

WALLS THAT BLOCK COMMUNICATION

ROBERT is a Watch Tower missionary who lives in Sierra Leone, West Africa. One day shortly after his arrival in the country, as he walked along the road, he noticed that the local children were chanting: "White man! White man!" Robert, who is a black American, looked around for the white man, but no one else was there. He

then realized that the children were directing their cries toward him!

There was no maliciousness in the chanting. The children were merely voicing their recognition that Robert came from a culture that differed from their own. Calling Robert a white man was the best way they could think of to give voice to that difference.

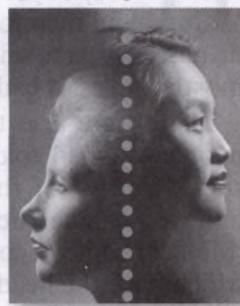
Awake!

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

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How Culture Influences Who We Are

Culture has been broadly defined as "a set of shared ideas, . . . the customs, beliefs, and knowledge that characterize a way of life." We learn many cultural values through direct teaching, but we also absorb much without even being aware of it. Said one researcher: "From the moment of [a child's] birth the customs into which he is born shape his experience and behaviour. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities."

In many ways culture makes life easier for us. As children we quickly learn how to please our parents. Knowing what is acceptable in our society and what is not guides us in making decisions about how to act, what to wear, and how to relate to others.

Of course, what we are as individuals does not depend on just our cultural background. Within every culture there are variations among people. Who we are is also determined by genetics, our experiences in life, and a host of other factors. Nevertheless, culture is a lens through which we see the world.

Our culture, for example, decides not only the language we speak but how we speak it. In parts of the Middle East, people value the ability to express themselves skillfully with many words, using repetition and metaphor.

In contrast, the people of some Far Eastern countries keep verbal communication to a minimum. A Japanese proverb reflects this view: "By your mouth you shall perish."

Our culture governs how we view time. In Switzerland if you are ten minutes late for an appointment, you are expected to apologize. In other countries you can be an hour or two late and little apology would be looked for.

Our culture also teaches us values. Think how you would feel if someone said to you: "You are putting on a lot of weight. You are really getting fat!" If you grew up in an African culture where heftiness is valued, you would likely feel happy at the remark. But if you were raised in a Western culture where slimness is highly esteemed, the frank comment would likely upset you.

'Our Way Is Best!'

What so often hinders communication between those of different cultures is that people everywhere tend to assume that their own culture is better. Most of us think that our beliefs, values, traditions, style of dress, and ideas about beauty are correct, proper, and better than any alternative. We also tend to judge other cultures according to the values of our own group. Such thinking is called ethnocentrism. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* observes: "Ethnocentrism . . . may be said to be almost universal. Members of nearly all the world's cultures regard their own way of life as superior to that of even closely related neighbours."

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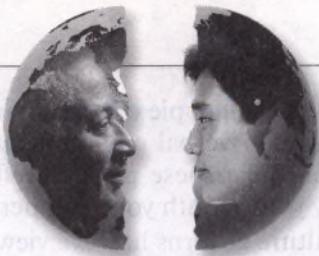
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"Members of nearly all the world's cultures regard their own way of life as superior to that of even closely related neighbours."

The New Encyclopædia Britannica

Two hundred years ago, an English squire put the matter bluntly, saying: "[From what] I see, foreigners are fools." The editor of the book of quotations in which these words appear wrote: "[This] must come as close to being a universal sentiment as has ever been uttered."

Examples of intolerance toward those of other cultures abound. Though originally penned by a German novelist in the 1930's, the following quotation is often attributed to Nazi leader Hermann Göring: "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver."

Strong ethnocentric views can lead to discrimination, which in turn may lead to hostility and conflict. Richard Goldstone is the prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal investigating war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Concerning the barbaric acts in both conflicts, he said: "This sort of thing can happen anywhere. Here you have two separate lands, with distinct cultures and histories, yet similar atrocities [are] committed by neighbor against neighbor. This kind of brutal ethnic or religious warfare is just discrimination taken to a violent phase. The victimized group

must be dehumanized or demonized. Once this is done, it frees ordinary people from the moral restraints that would normally inhibit them [from] doing such terrible things."

Broadening Our Outlook

Usually the people we choose to be our friends are those much like ourselves, people who share our attitudes and values. We trust and understand them. We feel relaxed in their company. If we view the behavior of another person as odd or abnormal, our friends will probably agree with us because our friends share our biases.

What, then, can we gain by communicating with others who differ from us because of cultural background? For one thing, good communication will help us to understand the reasons why others think and act as they do. Kunle, a West African, says: "Many children in Africa are strongly discouraged from talking while eating a meal. In some European countries, however, conversation at mealtimes is encouraged. What happens when the European shares a meal with the African? The European wonders why the African seems to brood silently over his meal. Meanwhile, the African wonders why the European is chattering away like a bird!" Clearly, in such situations, mutual understanding of each other's cultural background can do much to remove social prejudice.

As we come to know people of other cultures, not only do we improve our understanding of others but we also understand ourselves better. An anthropologist wrote: "The last thing which a dweller in the deep sea would discover would be water. He would become conscious of its existence only if some accident brought him to the surface and introduced him to air. . . . The ability to see the culture of one's own society as a whole . . . calls for a degree of objectivity which is rarely if ever achieved." Neverthe-

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**We can learn
to enjoy the
good things of
other cultures**



less, by exposing ourselves to other cultures, we are like the sea dweller who is introduced to air; we become aware of the cultural "waters" in which we live. Writer Thomas Abercrombie expressed the matter nicely: "One never seduced by a foreign culture can never appreciate the fetters of his own."

In short, an appreciation of other cultures can enrich our lives by broadening our outlook, so that we better understand both ourselves and others. While cultural heritage and ethnocentric thinking can be walls against communication, they do not have to be. Those walls can be breached.



DESTROYING WALLS TO BUILD BRIDGES

WE DID not choose the family or nation into which we were born, nor did we decide what culture would shape our thinking. Over such things we had no control. We are all subject to time and circumstance. But we can control how we view others and how we act toward them.

The Bible describes how we may do that. Consider a few principles that will help us

to build bridges of communication to those who may come from a background that differs from our own.

"The God that made the world and all the things in it . . . made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth." (Acts 17:24, 26) All of us are members of the same human family and thus have much in common. Looking for the

things we have in common makes communication easier. All of us want good friends and need to feel loved and respected. Everyone seeks to avoid physical and emotional pain. People of all cultures love music and art, tell jokes, believe in being civil to one another, and search for ways to be happy.

'Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind consider that the others are superior to you.' (Philippians 2:3) This is not to say that we should consider others superior to us in everything. Rather, we should realize that in some areas of life, others are superior. We should never think that either we or our culture has a monopoly on all that is good.

"Really, then, as long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all." (Galatians 6:10) Simply taking the initiative to be friendly and helpful toward others, regardless of their cultural background, can do much to bridge a communication gap.

"Know this, my beloved brothers. Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) Good communicators must do more than talk; they must be empathetic listeners.

"Counsel in the heart of a man is as deep waters, but the man of discernment is one that will

draw it up." (Proverbs 20:5) Be alert to discern the feelings and issues that lie beneath a person's surface behavior. Get to know people better.

"[Keep] an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Philippians 2:4) Be empathetic by viewing issues from the other person's point of view. Be unselfish.

Cultural Diversity Among Jehovah's Witnesses

That these principles really work is seen in the remarkable unity of Jehovah's Witnesses, who are active in 232 lands of the earth. They are a people who come from "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" and who are determined to conform to Jehovah's loving guidance in all things.—Revelation 7:9; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33.

Individual Witnesses do not disdain the culture of others. Neither do those who become Witnesses reject the culture in which they were reared, unless it disagrees with the principles in the Bible. In such cases they make changes in their lives. They recognize that in every culture there are praiseworthy features and that these are even enhanced in people who adopt true worship.

They strive to view our planet as God must see it—bright and blue and beautiful—spinning through space. It is a planet with a marvelous variety of peoples and cultures. Jehovah's Witnesses look forward to the time when all on earth will enjoy life as a truly united family.

Jehovah's Witnesses have learned how to break down cultural barriers



BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN OKINAWA

HABU

A Snake to Be Respected

IT WAS a clammy evening without any breeze. The rain had just lifted, and everyone was gently fanning himself, trying to keep cool. Suddenly, cries were heard: "Habu!" "There's a habu!" The shouts alarmed the villagers. Adults grabbed sticks and ran off; curious children rushed after them. Where was it? Everyone was anxious. A bite from this six-to-seven-foot-long snake can be fatal. The villagers felt relieved as the older ones hit the snake's head with long sticks until it was unconscious. It was then quickly put into a bag to be sold alive.

In the Ryukyu Islands, situated in the East China Sea, everyone from child to grandparent respects the habu—the yellow-spotted, lance head—a pit viper native to some, but not all, of these islands. Let us now take a close look at this fear-inspiring snake. But remember to respect it and always to keep it at arm's length!

Fear-Inspiring Design

There are different kinds of habus. One kind has a dark, greenish-brown mottle that gives it a superb camouflage in grass and decaying leaves. Some others have a blacker appearance that suits the habu's nighttime activities and tendency to hide in dark places.

This creature has gifts that we do not have, though it is a little nearsighted. It is gifted with what are called pit organs, one on each side of its head. These are depressions



between the nostrils and the eyes that are very sensitive to heat. The two pits help it to "see" infrared radiation that humans feel as heat. With these, a habu is able to zero in on a warm little mouse, even in complete darkness.

You may have seen a snake flicking its tongue. Its tongue serves as an extraordinary second nose. By such flicking the habu picks up chemicals in the air and then presses its tongue against a chemically sensitive organ in the roof of its mouth. With this second nose at work, the habu picks up a wealth of chemical information from the air.

"Habu maintain a high rate of tongue

flicking over successive time periods following a strike," observed researchers R. M. Waters and G. M. Burghardt of the University of Tennessee. Why look for chemical stimuli in the air *after* the attack? As there is always a risk of counterattack from the desperate prey, the habu, after striking and injecting venom, often releases its victim. Then, as the venom takes effect, the viper tracks down the prey by "smelling" with its tongue.

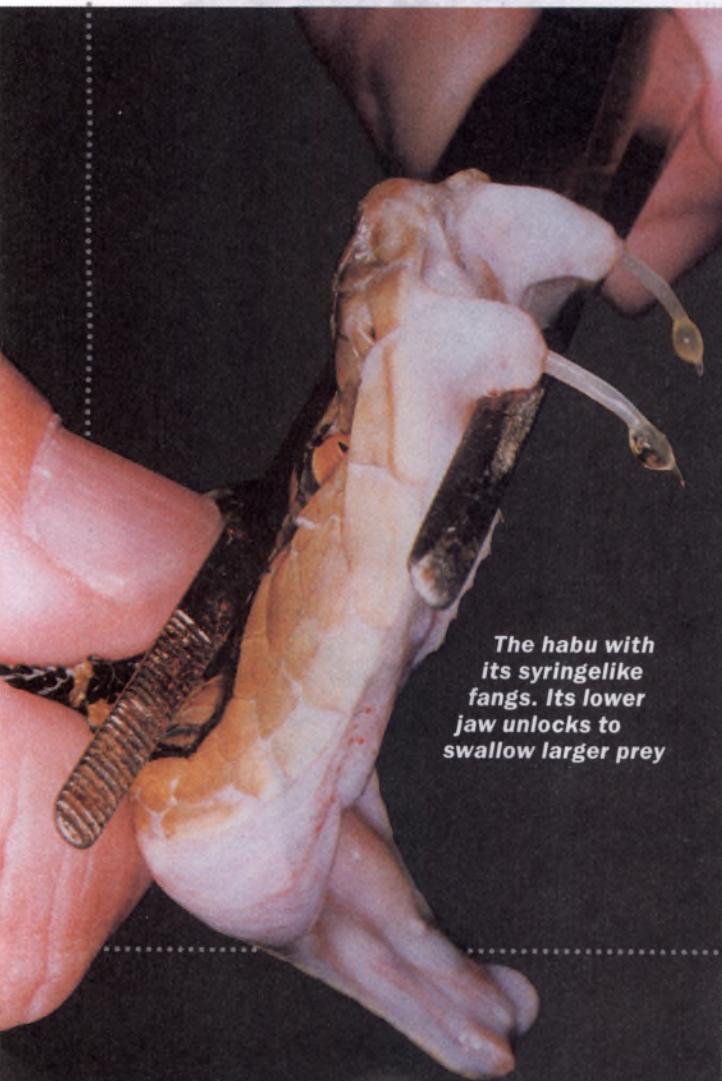
Having tracked down the now helpless prey, be it mouse, chick, or bird, the habu then proceeds to swallow it whole—head, feet, tail, fur, feathers, and all. Its lower jaw unlocks at the back, allowing the jawbone to separate so that oversized prey may be swallowed. A whole cat was found in the belly of one habu that is on display at one of the habu centers in Okinawa.

What if a habu loses its syringelike fang in an attack? A new one will replace it. Why, some have been seen with two fangs on each side of the mouth! Besides, even if a habu loses its fangs, it will not starve. One habu on record survived for three years on water alone.

Avoiding Its Attack

Whereas the cobra of Southeast Asia and the black mamba of Africa inject nerve poison, the habu injects strongly hemorrhagic venom. It is called hemorrhagic because it causes bleeding by destroying the blood vessels. The venom causes a burning pain and swelling, and it can be fatal.

Some think that the snakes jump out from hiding and chase after humans, but that is not the case. Humans are no delicacy to the habu. Only if you tread unknowingly upon a habu or intrude on its territory will it perhaps attack. Most victims have been in areas where habus were look-



The habu with its syringelike fangs. Its lower jaw unlocks to swallow larger prey

ing for prey, such as in vegetable gardens or sugarcane fields. Islanders never go into the tall grass without proper leg protection, and they carry a flashlight at night. The habu is especially active during the night. Oh, you should not forget that these snakes are deft tree climbers, which allows them to keep cool in summer as well as to be near unsuspecting birds. So watch your head, as well as your steps, when you are near their habitat!

The best way to deal with this viper is not to invite it in in the first place. Cover all holes in a building's foundation and outer walls. Keep your yard free of tall grass. In other words, do not provide a hiding place for the habu.

What if You Are Struck?

What could happen if you were to meet up with one of these poisonous snakes? Perhaps the habu will coil, with the top half of its body in an S shape. Here it comes! Two thirds of its body lunges toward you, jaws wide open, fangs first.

Do not panic. Check that it actually was a habu that attacked you. A habu bite can be identified by two reddish spots, about an inch apart, where the fangs pierced your skin. Some may have three or four fangs, which increases the number of reddish spots. Soon, a burning sensation, as if someone had put your hand in a fire, intensifies. What can you do? Call for help. Then, suck out the poison and spit it on the ground. "Suck blood out repeatedly ten times at least," says the *Handbook for the Control of Habu, or Venomous Snakes in the Ryukyu Islands*. Head for a hospital that is equipped with serum for the habu venom. Never run, though. That would quickly spread the poison through your body, increasing the damage and slowing recovery. If you cannot reach a hospital within 30 minutes, apply a tourniquet to the affected arm or leg at a place nearer the heart than the bite to delay

the spread of the venom. Do not bind too tightly, however, for the pulse must be maintained. Release the pressure every ten minutes to allow circulation.

Masatoshi Nozaki and Seiki Katsuren, of the habu research section of the Okinawa Prefectural Institute of Health and Environment, told *Awake!* that humans, even after being bitten, do not develop permanent immunity to the habu poison. A bite often led to amputation in the past, but today few people lose a limb, let alone die, from habu bites. Thanks to effective drugs and therapeutic techniques, now 95 percent of those who are bitten recover. Only the overconfident or those too far from medical treatment may suffer serious injury.

Habus for Sale

The habu has few natural enemies. Household cats and dogs have a tendency to sport with it. A nonpoisonous snake called *akamata*, some weasels, wild boars, and hawks are listed among its predators. Although the mongoose was brought into the Ryukyu Islands to help control the habu population, this has not been effective in eradicating them.

The deadliest of all its natural enemies is man. Just like the villagers who rushed out at the cry of "Habu!" the moment they heard it, there are many who are eager to catch a habu the moment it makes an appearance. In spite of the danger, the market value of between \$80 and \$100 (U.S.) for one habu is too great a temptation for many.

How is the habu used? Habu liquor and dried snake powder, both consumed for health reasons, are made from it. Many are used live in shows to attract tourists. Of course, the skin is good for wallets and belts, while the venom is used to make antitoxin serum. Regardless of such uses, the advice still is, keep away from the habu!



END OF AN ERA

Hope for the Future?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GERMANY

BETWEEN 1987 and 1990, earthquakes measuring 6.9 or higher on the Richter scale shook parts of Armenia, China, Ecuador, Iran, the Philippines, and the United States. Some 70,000 people were killed and tens of thousands more were injured, while hundreds of thousands were left homeless. Damage ran into the billions of dollars.

Still, none of these temblors jolted as many people, or did so as severely, as another earthquake that rocked the world at the same time. It was a political earthquake, one that put an end to an era. By doing so, it changed the future for millions.

What led up to such an outstanding event? What would its repercussions be?

Glasnost and Perestroika

Mikhail Gorbachev was named general secretary of the Communist Party of the So-

viet Union on March 11, 1985. Soviet citizens, as well as most world observers, expected no major political changes during his administration.

Less than a year later, Arkady Shevchenko, a former political adviser to the Soviet foreign minister, and for five years an under secretary-general of the United Nations, commented with particular insight when he wrote: "The U.S.S.R. is at a crossroads. If pressing economic and social problems are not alleviated in the near future, further erosion in its economic system is inevitable, thus endangering, in the long term, its very survival.... Gorbachev has definitely initiated a new style . . . But whether his stewardship will open a new era for the U.S.S.R. remains to be seen. . . . He faces problems that are almost insurmountable."

Gorbachev's position now gave him the

Gorbachev (left) and Reagan: Robert/Sipa Press

political influence he needed to introduce into Soviet society a policy he had talked about as early as 1971. It was glasnost, which means "public information" and represented a policy of official candor on Soviet problems. It called for a more open society, one where Soviet citizens and the press would have greater freedom of expression. Eventually, glasnost opened the way for public criticism of the government and some of its actions.

Another term Gorbachev had long used was "perestroika," a word meaning "restructuring." In an essay published in 1982, he spoke of "the need for an appropriate psychological restructuring" in the field of agriculture.

After becoming head of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev became convinced that a restructuring of economic management was also a must. He knew that it would not be easy to accomplish—perhaps even impossible unless accompanied by political change.

Gorbachev's zeal in implementing the policies of glasnost and perestroika did not mean that he was out to destroy Communism. On the contrary. *The Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: "His goal was to set in motion a revolution controlled from above. He did not wish to undermine the Soviet system, only to make it more efficient."

The easing of restrictions that came as a result of these policies was a cause for unease among some members of the Soviet Union's leadership. The same was true of leaders of some of the Eastern bloc countries. Whereas many of them recognized the need for economic restructuring, not all agreed that political changes were necessary or desirable.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev let his Eastern European allies know that they were free to experiment with perestroika programs of their own. Meanwhile, Gorbachev warned

Bulgaria—and in reality all the other Eastern bloc countries as well—that while reforms were necessary, care should be taken not to diminish the dominant role of the Communist Party.

Beginning to Falter

Criticism of Communism, both in the Soviet Union and in the Eastern bloc countries, had increased over the years. For example, since the early 1980's, the Hungarian weekly newsmagazine *HVG* (*Heti Világzáság*) had been aggressively challenging orthodox Communist views, although it had avoided directly criticizing the Communist Party itself.

Solidarity, the first independent labor union to exist in the Eastern bloc, was founded in Poland in 1980. Its origin, however, could be traced back to 1976, when a group of dissidents formed a Workers' Defense Committee. By early 1981, Solidarity had a membership of some ten million workers. It pushed for economic reforms and free elections, backing up its demands at times with strikes. Bowing to the threat of possible Soviet intervention, the Polish government finally dissolved the union, even though it continued operating underground. Strikes calling for governmental recognition led to the union's being legalized again in 1989. Free elections were held in June 1989, and many Solidarity candidates were elected. By August, for the first time in some 40 years, a non-Communist premier was serving in Poland.

Glasnost and perestroika, along with problems encountered in the Communist world, were clearly reshaping the entire Eastern bloc.

Political Perestroika Leads to Revolution

"Until July 1987," writes Martin McCauley of the University of London, "everything appeared to be going Mikhail Gorbachev's

way." Even as late as June 1988, at the 19th Communist Party Conference in Moscow, Gorbachev reportedly gained "broad if occasionally lukewarm endorsement for his programs." But it was evident that he was meeting with difficulties in restructuring the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

In 1988, constitutional changes allowed for replacing the existing Supreme Soviet with the U.S.S.R. Congress of People's Deputies, whose 2,250 members were chosen a year later in free elections. These deputies, in turn, chose from among themselves a two-chamber legislature, each part composed of 271 members. Boris Yeltsin turned out to be a prominent member of this legislature. He was soon pointing out the lack of success of perestroika and calling attention to reforms that he felt were necessary. Thus, even though Gorbachev had been elevated in 1988 to the presidency, a position he wanted to revamp and strengthen, opposition to him continued to grow.

Meanwhile, the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, were making major breakthroughs in reducing military forces and defusing the nuclear threat. Each agreement that was made kindled renewed hope that world peace could be achieved—so much so that writer John Elson noted in September 1989: "The final days of the '80s, to many commentators, represent a kind of farewell to arms. The cold war appears all but over; peace seems to be breaking out in many parts of the world."

Then came November 9, 1989. Although physically still intact, the Berlin Wall, after some 28 years, was opened and suddenly ceased to be a symbolic barrier between East and West. One after another, in quick succession, the nations of Eastern Europe abandoned socialistic rule. In his book *Death of the Dark Hero—Eastern Europe, 1987-90*, Da-

vid Selbourne called it "one of the greatest of all historic revolutions: a democratic, and essentially anti-socialist revolution, the effects of which will continue long after its actors, and their observers, have disappeared from the scene."

Once it reached its pinnacle, the peaceful revolution was quickly over. A sign seen in Prague, Czechoslovakia, summed it up this way: "Poland—10 Years; Hungary—10 Months; East Germany—10 Weeks; Czechoslovakia—10 Days. And then, after a week of horror, Rumania—10 Hours."

Ending the Cold War

Author Selbourne says: "The pattern of the collapse of the eastern European system was remarkably constant." He then adds: "The catalyst was clearly Gorbachev's assumption of power in Moscow in March 1985 and his ending of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine', which fatally deprived eastern Europe's regimes of the assurance of Soviet assistance and intervention in the event of popular uprising."

The New Encyclopædia Britannica calls Gorbachev "the single most important initiator of a series of events in late 1989 and 1990 that transformed the political fabric of Europe and marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War."

Of course, Gorbachev could not have ended the Cold War alone. Indicative of what would soon follow, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher said after first meeting him: "I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together." Furthermore, the unique personal relationship that Thatcher and American president Reagan enjoyed enabled her to convince him that it was the course of wisdom to work with Gorbachev. Gail Sheehy, author of the book *Gorbachev—The Making of the Man Who Shook the World*, concludes: "Thatcher could congratulate herself on be-



The Berlin Wall suddenly ceased to be a symbolic barrier between East and West

ing, 'in a very real sense, godmother to the Reagan-Gorbachev relationship.'

As has often happened in history, the key people had been in place at the opportune time to effect changes that otherwise might not have taken place.

Dark Clouds on the Horizon

Even as East and West rejoiced that the Cold War was coming to an end, threatening clouds were making their appearance elsewhere. The world took little notice in 1988 when it heard from Africa that several thousand people in Burundi had been killed in an outbreak of ethnic violence. Nor was more than scant attention given reports issuing from Yugoslavia in April 1989 that the worst outbreak of ethnic violence since 1945 was taking place there. Meanwhile, the greater freedom evident in the Soviet Union was resulting in widespread civil unrest.

Some of the republics were even launching attempts to achieve independence.

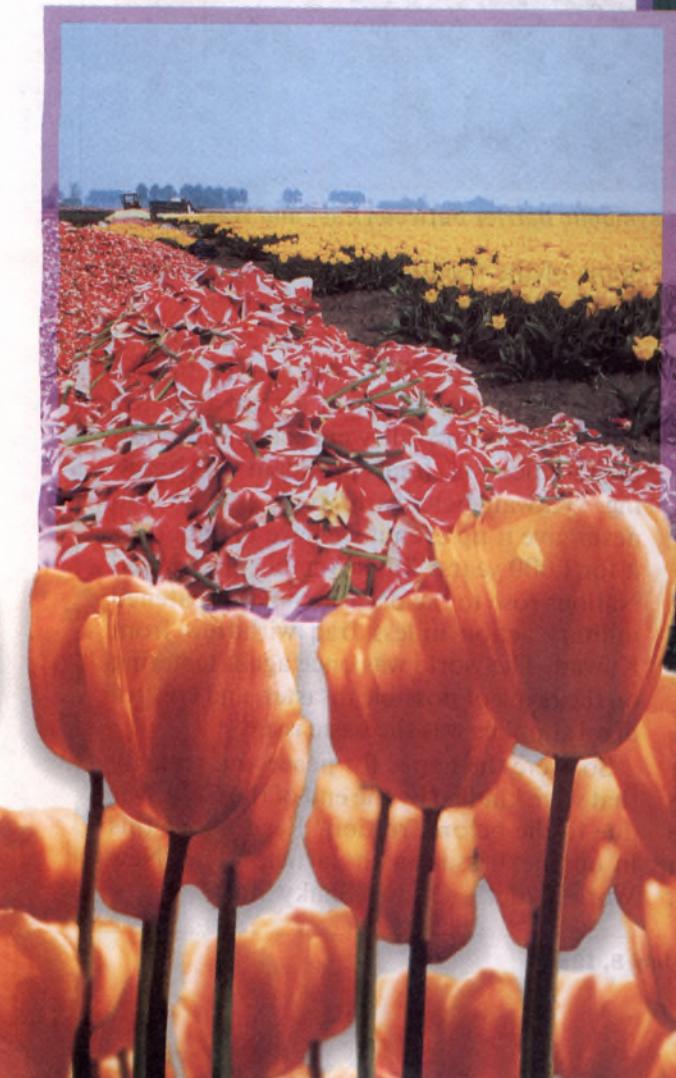
In August 1990, Iraqi troops moved into Kuwait, conquering it within 12 hours. While Germans, less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, were celebrating German unification, Iraq's president was boasting: "Kuwait belongs to Iraq, and we will never give it up even if we have to fight over it for 1,000 years." In November the United Nations rose to the occasion and threatened military action unless Iraq withdrew from Kuwait. The world was once again teetering on the brink of possible disaster, and control of oil supplies was the basic issue.

So, were the hopes for peace and security that were kindled by the end of the Cold War due to die before fruition? Read about this in our next issue in the article "The 'New World Order'—Off to a Shaky Start."

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN THE NETHERLANDS

THE TULIP

A FLOWER WITH
A STORMY PAST

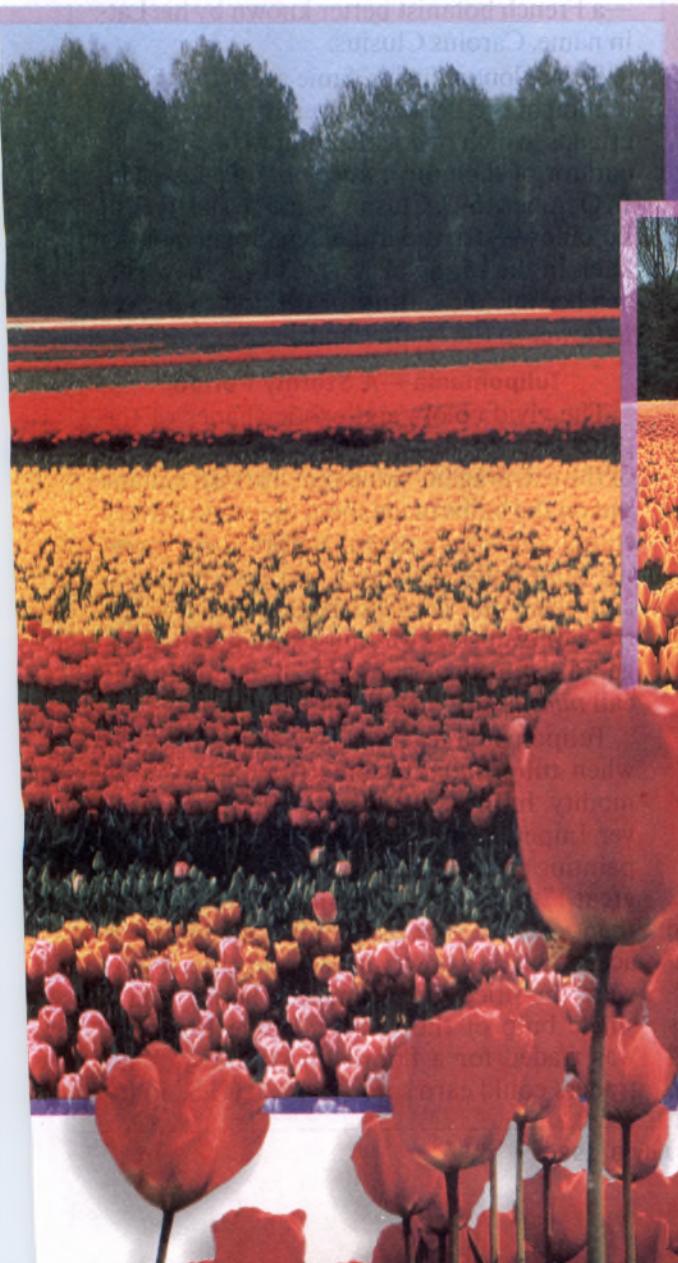


"WHEN spring comes to Holland, it is as if thousands of acres . . . come to life," says the Netherlands Bureau for Tourism. Suddenly, in an outburst of color, bright ribbons of blossoming tulips stream across the fields, creating a

floral splendor that attracts tourists from all over the world. For most visitors, these graceful and popular garden flowers are as Dutch as windmills, cheese, and wooden shoes. But did you know that tulips actually have their roots in Turkey?

Dutch Tulips With Oriental Roots

Turkish ornaments dating from the 12th century portray tulips, but European literature mentions tulips for the first time



How to Grow Your Tulips

AS LONG as there is a sufficient supply of water, almost every type of soil is suitable. However, planting can be made easier by mixing the topsoil with sand, peat, or compost.

Plant tulip bulbs in the fall. There are two ways to go about it: You can dig a hole for each individual bulb, or you can make a seedbed to plant all the bulbs at once.

A rule of thumb for planting tulip bulbs: The planting depth should be twice the height of the bulb. That means that the lower end of the bulb (flat side) should be about eight inches below the surface. Place the bulbs about five inches apart.

Cover the bulbs with the dug out soil, and water immediately so that growth can start. In heavy frost a layer of peat or mulch of leaves will protect the bulbs and will also prevent the soil from drying out. Remove the mulch in spring when the shoots first appear.

Cut off the flower heads when the petals begin to droop; otherwise, the plant will go to seed and rob the bulb of food needed for next year's growth. Allow the foliage to die naturally, and remove it when the leaves become yellow.

Instead of planting an occasional bulb here and there, plant bulbs of the same kind and color together in groups. That way you will create splashes of color and fully enjoy the floral masterpiece in your garden.—International Flower Bulb Centre, Holland/National Geographic.

in the 1550's, notes botanist Adélaïde L. Stork. In 1553 a traveler from France wrote that "amazed foreigners" were buying unfamiliar "red lilies with big onions" in the markets of Constantinople (Istanbul). Locals called the flower *dülbend*, meaning "turban" in Turkish, and that word, explains Dr. Stork,

became "the etymological source of the word 'tulip'."

One of the foreigners intrigued by these turbanlike flowers was Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, the Austrian ambassador to Turkey (1555-62). He took some bulbs from Constantinople to Vienna, where they were planted in the gardens of Ferdinand I, the Hapsburg emperor. There the tulip bulbs flourished under the skillful care of Charles de L'Écluse—a French botanist better known by his Latin name, Carolus Clusius.

Before long, Clusius' fame attracted the attention of the Leiden University in the Netherlands, which persuaded him to become the curator of the university's botanical garden. In October 1593, Clusius—and "a stash of tulip bulbs"—arrived in Leiden. Some months later, in the spring of 1594, Clusius' new garden became the setting for the first tulip ever to flower in the Netherlands.

Tulipomania—A Stormy Period

The vivid colors and exotic shapes of the tulip fascinated the Dutch. Romantic tales of the extravagant value that Turkish sultans put on the bulbs made them the envy of every status-conscious citizen. Before long, growing tulip bulbs became a lucrative business, and when the demand began to outweigh the supply, prices for bulbs shot up and triggered a stormy period that Dutch historians call *tulpenwoede*, or tulipomania.

Tulipomania reached its peak in the 1630's when tulip bulbs became the hottest commodity. In those days, says art historian Oliver Impey, it was more affordable to buy a painting of a tulip done by Jan D. de Heem (a great 17th-century Dutch painter of still life) than to buy a rare tulip bulb. One bulb was acceptable as a dowry for a bride, three bulbs were the price for a canalside house, and a single bulb of the variety *Tulipe Brasserie* was traded for a flourishing brewery. Bulb traders could earn some \$44,000 (U.S., in to-

day's currency) a month. "At inns and public houses around Holland," says one source, "the talk and transactions centered around only one item—bulbs."

"Steadily rising prices tempted many ordinary middle-class and poor families to speculate in the tulip market," adds *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*. "Homes, estates, and industries were mortgaged so that bulbs could be bought for resale at higher prices. Sales and resales were made many times over without the bulbs ever leaving the ground." Fortunes were doubled in the blink of an eye. Poor men became rich; rich men became superrich. Bulb trading had become a wild speculator's market until suddenly, in 1637, there were more sellers than buyers—and the market crashed. Almost overnight, thousands of Dutch went from riches to ruin.

The Love Affair Goes On

Nevertheless, the love affair with the tulip survived the aftermath of tulipomania, and the tulip bulb industry began to flourish again. In fact, by the 18th century, Dutch tulips had become so famous that a Turkish sultan, Ahmed III, imported thousands of tulips from Holland. So after a long jour-

ney, the Dutch offspring of Turkish tulips returned to their roots. Today, growing tulips in the Netherlands has become a major industry—or beautiful business, as some say. Of the country's 13,000 square miles, some 19,000 acres are used for tulip bulb growing. Each year, the country's 3,300 growers export nearly two billion tulip bulbs to more than 80 countries.

Though the tulip has had a stormy past, man's love affair with this garden favorite has been steady. Throughout the centuries this beautiful flower has moved artists, poets, and scientists to capture its elegant shape and striking colors on canvas and paper. After one of them, 18th-century scientist Johann Christian Benemann, had written a monograph in German about the tulip, he named the treatise *Die Tulpe zum Ruhm ihres Schöpfers, und Vergnigung edler Gemüther* (The Tulip for the Glory of Its Creator and Enjoyment of the Noble-Minded). To him and many other authors, notes Adélaïde Stork, the tulip "is not only an object in the gardener's hand, but it reflects the greatness and the glory of the Creator." Looking at this delicate flower, you will find it hard to disagree.

Which Country Could It Be?

People in the developed nations usually view bribery, corruption, and poverty as being endemic in African and Latin-American countries. So to which country does the following quote apply?

"Government ministers lie, businessmen are jailed for corruption, civil servants are caught taking bribes, politics is discredited, and [politicians] are seen as seedy, drink-sodden, and sex-obsessed. . . . Throughout the country, highway robbery is back. . . . The general crime has been accompanied by a wave of corruption in industry, in finance, and in public service. . . . Eleven million peo-

ple now lack three or more of the basic necessities of life, . . . and the number living in severe poverty—lacking seven or more of the essentials—has gone up from 2.5 million to 3.5 million."—Phillip Knightley, *The Australian Magazine*.

Did you guess correctly? The answer is Britain. But it is a sad commentary on our times that the foregoing could apply to dozens of countries. How badly we all need good, honest, upright rulership! Yes, we need God's rulership by means of that Kingdom for which Jesus taught his followers to pray, "Let your kingdom come."—Matthew 6:10.

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CASSAVA LEAVES

Daily Food for Millions



IT ALL started about the year 1600, when the Portuguese brought cassava, or manioc, from South America to Africa. Cassava is believed to be native to Brazil because the word "manioc" originated with the Tupian tribes of Brazil in the Amazon Valley.

The roots are highly appreciated by the people of Africa, but what about the dark-green leaves? Some use them as medication on open wounds or to treat chicken pox. However, for millions in the Central African Republic and several other African countries,

the leaves are daily food, as they can be turned into a lovely meal.

In fact, one of the first words that new Watch Tower missionaries learn here is *ngunza*. This is a delicious stew made from cassava leaves and is the national dish of the Central African Republic—a dish that a visitor to central Africa must by all means try.

Most Europeans living in Africa will never touch a meal made from these leaves, as they consider it to be food for the natives, not for foreigners. But what are the facts? In countries like

the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, and Zaire, these leaves are a daily staple food for many families.

When flying over or traveling through the Central African Republic, you see a beautiful green country—trees, bushes, grasslands, and, in between, small fields of cassava with their peculiar dark-green leaves. Every little village is surrounded by cassava plots. People grow it next to their homes, and even in the capital, Bangui, you will find cassava on very small pieces of land and strips of earth next to a villa or the main road. Certainly, it is an important food item in this part of the world.

Try Some *Ngunza*

On arrival, new missionaries are soon invited by their friends to come over for a little *ngunza*. This is a meal that includes the famous dish made from manioc leaves. Native women know how to prepare it in a delicious manner. Every woman seems to have her own recipe. One of the first things little girls learn from their mothers about cooking is how to prepare *ngunza*.

They are proud to explain what it is and how they prepare it. The women are happy if you show interest in this native dish. First of all, they will tell you that the cassava leaves are inexpensive and in abundant supply and that you can pick them in both the rainy season and the dry season. In times of economic crises and inflation, cassava leaves play an important role in feeding a family. And please remember that African families are often large. There are many mouths to feed and many stomachs to fill. The preparation of *ngunza* takes several hours. Leaves have to give up their bitter flavor before they are eaten. They are detoxified by traditional preparation, which involves grinding and constant boiling.

The oil the African women prefer to use

in preparing *ngunza* is palm oil. The locally made dark-red oil is a must. *Ngunza* with a little peanut butter and maybe some onion and garlic is a daily meal for a family. But what if you are expecting guests? Then the *ngunza* must be something special, something they will remember. So the host will add her favorite ingredient—smoked fish or smoked chunks of beef—plus lots of garlic and onions along with a large amount of fresh, homemade peanut butter. All of this goes into one big pot. The rest is patience and a lot of boiling.

Today our hostess will serve *ngunza* with rice. A heap of rice with one or two ladles of hot *ngunza* poured over it is a delight for Africans and many foreigners too. Add a little hot pepper, and now you know what *ngunza* is. Enjoyed with the meal, a glass of red wine will bring out the flavor fully.

How About Some *Ngukassa* or *Kanda*?

Traveling from east to west in the country, you will find that people prepare *ngunza* in a variety of ways. And what about *ngukassa*? On a cold rainy day, *ngukassa*, a broth or stew cooked with everything in the garden or field, may be the right thing for you. Palm oil, plantains, peanuts, sweet potatoes, corn (maize), and, of course, some cassava leaves are all cooked together, but no salt is added—not one single grain of salt. That's the secret! The result is delicious and nutritious. And if you go on a long trip, take some *kanda* along. This is made of cassava leaves pounded together with smoked fish or meat. *Kanda* is prepared by wrapping this mixture up in leaves and smoking it over a fire for several hours until hard and dry. It keeps for days and can be enjoyed along with a piece of bread. It is perfect for travelers.

If you visit Africa anytime, why not ask for cassava? Try it, and join the millions who enjoy it!



THE POPE'S UN VISIT WHAT DID IT ACCOMPLISH?

ON HIS flight over the Atlantic to address the UN in New York City, Pope John Paul II passed the 620,000-mile mark in his world travels. It was October 4, 1995, and this was his 68th journey abroad as pope. Without a doubt, he is the most widely traveled pontiff in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

He arrived at Newark International Airport, New Jersey, on a rainy Wednesday, surrounded by one of the most elaborate security curtains ever set up for any dignitary. It was estimated that some 8,000 federal and city officials were assigned to protect the pope. One report called it "an elaborate carapace of security," with helicopters and scuba divers involved.

Why the Visit?

In his address at the airport, the pope recalled that his predecessor, Pope Paul VI, had addressed the UN General Assembly with a call for peace: "No more war, war never again!" John Paul II said he was returning "to express [his] deep conviction that the ideals and intentions which gave origin to the UN half a century ago are more indispensable than ever in a world searching for purpose."

At evening prayers at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark, the pope again showed his support for the UN, saying: "That organization exists to serve the common good of the human family, and therefore it is fitting that the pope speak there as a witness to the hope of the Gospel." He added: "Our prayer for peace is therefore also a prayer for the United Nations Organization. Saint Francis of Assisi... shines forth as a great lover and artisan of peace. Let us invoke his intercession upon the United Nations' work for justice and peace throughout the world."

In his speech to the UN, he praised the nonviolent political changes of 1989 in Eastern Europe, where several countries had had freedom restored. He encouraged "true patriotism" as distinct from "narrow and exclusive nationalism." He spoke about the injustices of the present system, saying: "When millions of people are suffering from a poverty which means hunger, malnutrition, sickness, illiteracy, and degradation, we must... remind ourselves that no one has a right to exploit another for his own advantage."

Then he stated: "As we face these enormous challenges, how can we fail to acknowledge the role of the United Nations

Organization?" He said that the UN needs "to become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home." He stressed the need to promote "the solidarity of the entire human family."

True Peace—From What Source?

Without a doubt, he expressed many noble sentiments. Yet, in his lengthy speech, did he at any time direct the world's leaders to God's solution for mankind's problems—his Kingdom rulership through Christ Jesus? (Matthew 6:10) No. In fact, at no time did he quote the Bible in his speech to the UN. On the contrary, he said that "with the help of God's grace, we can build in the next century and the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom." To Bible students, that sentiment might seem to echo a similar one uttered by those at ancient Babel over 4,000 years ago, who thought they could keep mankind united by human means: "Come

on! Let us build ourselves a city and also a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves." (Genesis 11:4) So, from this viewpoint, it is mankind's political leaders, represented at the UN, who are going to build a new civilization based on freedom.

But what does the Bible prophesy regarding the future of man's political governments and the UN itself? The books of Daniel and Revelation give a clear vision of





the future that awaits them. Daniel prophesied that in the last days, God would install his Kingdom rulership, like a huge stone 'not cut out by human hands.' What action will it take? "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Man's governments will be replaced by one righteous rulership for all mankind.

—Daniel 2:44, 45.

What is to happen to the UN? Revelation chapter 17 depicts the UN (and its short-lived predecessor, the League of Nations) as a scarlet-colored wild beast that "is to go off into destruction." (Revelation 17:8)* Jehovah's source of true peace is not any imperfect human agency, no matter how sincere its adherents may be. True peace will come through God's promised Kingdom, in the hands of the resurrected Christ Jesus in

* For more detailed information on this prophecy in Revelation, see the book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, pages 240-51, published in 1988 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

the heavens. That is the basis for the fulfillment of God's promise at Revelation 21: 3, 4: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

The Visit—How Much Impact?

When the pope alluded to the Bible in his speeches, were the Catholic faithful encouraged to take out their Bibles and check the references? The fact is that the vast majority did not even carry a Bible. Seldom did the pope make any specific text reference to facilitate audience Bible reading.

One example was when he spoke to 83,000 at Giants Stadium, New Jersey, and said: "We wait for the return of the Lord as the judge of the living and the dead. We await his return in glory, the coming of God's kingdom in its fullness. That is the constant invitation of the psalms: 'Wait for the Lord with courage; be stout-hearted, and wait for the Lord.'" But which text was he quoting from the psalms? And which Lord was he referring to—Jesus or God? (Compare Psalm 110:1.) According to the Vatican paper, *L'Oservatore Romano*, he was quoting Psalm 27: 14, which better reads: "Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in Yahweh." (*The Jerusalem Bible*) Yes, we should put our hope in Yahweh, or Jehovah, the God of the Lord Jesus.

—John 20:17.

In the course of history, have Catholic clergy and leaders promoted peace among the nations? Has Catholic teaching served to resolve ethnic, racial, and tribal differences? The 1994 massacres in Rwanda, east-central Africa, and the internecine wars of

the last few years in what was Yugoslavia all illustrate that religious beliefs generally fail to dissolve the deepest hatred and prejudices that lurk in the human heart. Neither a cursory weekly confession nor regular attendance at Mass is going to change the way people think and act. There has to be a much deeper influence, one that comes about only when the Word of God is allowed to penetrate the heart and the mind of the believer.

The changed conduct of a true Christian is based, not on an emotional reaction induced by religious rites, but on a rational understanding of God's will for each individual. The apostle Paul stated: "Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do." (Romans 12:1, 2, JB) This new behavior is achieved by a study of God's Word that leads to accurate knowledge of his will. It creates a spiritual force that actuates the mind and results in Christian conduct.—Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 1:9, 10.

Is the Church at a "Critical Crossroads"?

The Spanish paper *El País* described Pope John Paul II as having "extraordinary charisma" for a man of 75, and a U.S. paper called him "a master of the media." He is skilled in handling the press and in connecting with the masses and their children. In his travels he ably represents the Holy See located in Vatican City. Even though the Vatican has official recognition at the UN, the pope's blessing on that organization is not going to guarantee it Jehovah God's blessing.

The reactions to the pope's visit were varied. Many of those Catholics who got tickets to the outdoor Mass felt emotionally

uplifted by the experience. However, some Catholic leaders took a more negative view of the visit and its possible effects. *The New York Times* quoted Timothy B. Ragan, president of the Catholic National Center for Pastoral Leadership, as saying that "the Pope's visit had been a missed opportunity. Although the trip 'was uplifting and sacramentally a highlight for lots of people,'" for many Catholic leaders it provided "no occasion for listening on his part and no framework for dialogue." Many Catholics feel that on issues such as celibacy, birth control, and divorce, they are forced to listen to a monologue.

Some Catholic authorities acknowledge that "the church is at a critical crossroads," and they fear that many Catholics, "especially the young, are losing a distinct sense of what being Catholic means." James Hitchcock, a Catholic traditionalist, "sees the problem as a destructive cold war between an increasingly conservative hierarchy and a residually liberal 'middle management.'"

As for how the pope's visit would affect the crisis in the ranks of the church, Hitchcock stated: "He comes here, he is adulated, he goes home—and nothing happens. The results are disappointing from my point of view." The pope certainly missed an opportunity to tell the political leaders at the UN where the source of true peace is to be found.

Although the UN Charter and human propaganda give emphasis to a goal of "peace and security," do not be deceived. The Bible warns: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:3) True peace and security will come about only by God's will and in his way—through his Kingdom rulership, not through the UN.

UFO's Messengers From God?

AS THE 20th century winds down and conditions on earth steadily deteriorate, belief in unidentified flying objects (UFO's) and their passengers, extraterrestrial beings, continues to spread. Are UFO's just fiction, a deception, a hoax perpetrated by people who like to laugh at the public's gullibility?

Those who claim to have seen UFO's or their extraterrestrial passengers include seemingly normal, trustworthy people; in fact, those who believe in these visitors from other planets include well-educated professors and scientists. They are convinced that extraterrestrials are observing humans and, at times, communicating with them. So-called extraterrestrial support groups are available to assist people who claim they have made contact with space visitors.*

Alien Survival Plan

In *Aliens Among Us*, Ruth Montgomery interviews some of a growing number of people who are convinced that they are extraterrestrial visitors residing in human bodies. Some of these who claim to be humanized extraterrestrials foretell that in the year 2000, there will

* For a discussion of UFO's and extraterrestrial life, see the April 8, 1990, and November 8, 1990, issues of *Awake!*

be "a cosmic event that the hierarchies of angels and masters have been preparing for." Some people believe that extraterrestrials are using UFO's to collect and preserve plant and animal specimens or that UFO's will be used as rescue ships to transfer millions of humans away from impending desolation of the earth. After the great destruction, humans are to be returned to begin "the New Age and the New Order" of spiritual awareness. One young man from Colorado, U.S.A., a member of a group who call themselves "Alien Youth," told *Awake!* in all seriousness: "My friends and I are waiting for our alien ancestors to beam us up."

A few of those who assert that they are extraterrestrials claim that they are led by God, and others claim that they speak freely with him for advice in assisting humanity.

Is God working through visitors from other planets to save mankind from an upcoming world catastrophe?

God's Communications With Mankind

Early in man's history, God communicated with humans. The Bible record describes divine conversations with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and oth-



ers.* (Genesis 3:8-10; 6:13; 15:1) Dreams, voices, and visions were used to communicate God's will and to produce the Bible. However, after the Bible was completed, was there a need for direct heavenly communication with mankind? No, since the Bible states that the Holy Scriptures make "the man of God . . . fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:17) According to the Bible, guidance for these troubled times is to come from the written Word of God. Nevertheless, is there any reason to believe that we would receive communication or special instructions directly from God through an extraterrestrial spokesman? No, for the apostle Paul stated: "Even if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as good news something beyond what we declared to you as good news, let him be accursed."—Galatians 1:8.

Although the assertions of supposed extraterrestrial beings seem to agree with Bible prophecies that the earth is soon to undergo major cataclysmic changes, they offer a method of survival that relies on creatures. The Bible does not urge men to flee to the supposed security of alien spacecraft or any other place. Rather, it tells us to seek protection in a dedicated relationship with God, which dedication is symbolized by water baptism. (1 Peter 3:21; compare Psalm 91:7; Matthew 28:19, 20; John 17:3.) And Jesus said that "he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."—Matthew 24:13.

Do not these scriptures emphasize a spiritual relationship with God for survival rather than a physical location of refuge? Therefore, instead of assisting mankind to survive, stories about 'nonhuman beings' divert peo-

* The Bible writer Ezekiel witnessed what some have interpreted as a UFO. (Ezekiel, chapter 1) However, this was one of many symbolic visions described by Ezekiel and other prophets, not an actual physical sighting as claimed in modern times.

ple's attention away from what God actually requires for their everlasting welfare.

Who may try to steer mankind away from God's means of survival, yet claim to represent God? Ed Conroy, in his book *Report on Communion*, states that "serious ufologists [those who study UFO's] with training in the psychological and social sciences" include comparative studies of "bedroom visitors," ghosts, poltergeists, apparitions, religious visions, and what have been regarded as demons." Many ufologists and those who claim to be extraterrestrials in human form state that using spaceships to travel is mostly unnecessary. They say that these beings can travel invisibly and materialize anywhere on earth without arriving in spacecraft.

The Bible warns that Satan and his demons are intent on misleading mankind. They take advantage of mankind's despair and hopelessness to offer attractive, but false, solutions. (2 Corinthians 11:14) Hence, the Bible warning: "In later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons."—1 Timothy 4:1.

In like manner today, any supposed visits and seemingly beneficial guidance from such beings should be rejected, whatever form they may take. Those who would rather follow the advice of "extraterrestrials" than God's Word are bound to be misled—a terrible mistake to make in these critical times.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Why He Changed His Priorities

Why Do Other Youths Have All the Fun?

100 Years of Movies

WATCHING THE WORLD

Universal Update

Recent discoveries are causing space scientists to rethink numerous theories, according to *The New York Times*. For instance, astronomers peering deep into the heavens with the Hubble Space Telescope have come to the conclusion that there are an estimated 40 to 50 billion galaxies in our universe. This contrasts with former estimates of 100 billion. One day after announcing this, scientists of the American Astronomical Society further reported that they had identified at least half the "missing matter" of the universe, the unaccounted-for mass supplying the gravitational force that holds galaxies together. The scientists say that much of this unseen matter may consist of vast numbers of burned-out stars called white dwarfs. In addition, theories about the planet Jupiter are being challenged by data from the spacecraft *Galileo*. "There's always a sense of humility when data first come in," said chief project scientist Dr. Torrence Johnson. "The results usually don't fit very well with our models."

The Rise of Kidnapping

In a recent year, criminals in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, took in \$1.2 billion (U.S.) just from the growing kidnapping industry, reports *Jornal da Tarde*, making kidnapping the main source of income for organized crime in that city. Kidnapping has also become more sophisticated. There are "lightning," or short-duration, kidnappings of middle-class vic-

tims, "who often have to pay the ransom in installments," and complex, well-planned kidnappings of wealthier people. In other countries kidnapping is also on the rise. *Asiaweek* magazine says Philippine experts recommend, among other things: Do not travel alone, especially after dark. Always tell a trusted person where you will be. Park your car in well-lit and secure areas. Never leave children unattended.

Vitamin-A Caution

According to a study of 22,000 pregnant women, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, expectant mothers should be careful not to take in too much vitamin A. Although a certain amount of



vitamin A is essential for the health and growth of the human embryo, it was found that an excess can cause damage. The recommended daily allowance of vitamin A for pregnant women is 4,000 international units, says the *Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letter*, but women who take more than 10,000 units a day "have two and a half times the risk of delivering a baby with a birth defect as women who don't overdose." Because the body stores vitamin A, even a high intake of the

vitamin before pregnancy could pose a risk for the baby. Beta-carotene, a plant product that is partially converted to vitamin A in the body, was not found to be dangerous.

Pestproof Wood

A wooden pagoda in Nara, Japan, has survived for 1,200 years without damage from rodents, termites, or microorganisms, reports *New Scientist* magazine. Representatives of Seoul National University in Korea and two Japanese scientists set out to learn what makes the pagoda so distasteful to pests. When they tested the type of cypress tree used to construct the ancient building, they discovered that it contains certain chemicals so repugnant to rodents that they will not gnaw anything coated with them. The Japanese timber industry produces about 4,000 tons of sawdust from this cypress every year, and it is hoped that compounds extracted from the sawdust could replace some poisons used for pest control.

An Appeal for Darkness

Astronomers in France are battling for more darkness. The vast amounts of stray light in urban areas make a clear view of the starry heavens nearly impossible. According to the magazine *Le Point*, astronomers are urging city authorities to equip street lights with reflectors that direct the light downward and to require that advertising and office-building lights, as well as laser-light displays, be turned off at 11 p.m. Michel Bonavita-colà, president of the Center for

the Protection of the Night Sky, argued: "Today not one child in a hundred can say that he has seen the Milky Way. Yet this spectacle, which is both magnificent and free, helps us to comprehend our true place in the universe."

Disoriented Parents

When it comes to educating their children, the great majority of parents say "success" and "independence" are the highest priority, and they feel it is up to children to choose their own moral values, according to a survey reported in the French magazine *L'Express*. Asked if the goal of education is to teach proper moral values, 70 percent of parents of children between the ages of 6 and 12 answered no. Sixty percent of parents and teachers interviewed consider children to be poorly equipped for the future yet paradoxically believe the children will prove to be an asset to society, noted the magazine. The survey confirms the fears of some, observes *L'Express*, that "parents today no longer know their role nor their responsibilities."

Low-Fat Food Warning

Consumer taste tests reveal that the fillers used to replace fat in many low-fat products do not have the same creamy texture as real fat, reports Canada's *Globe and Mail*, and may lead people to eat more or add toppings and extra ingredients to compensate. The ingredients added to replace fat, such as sugar, salt, and artificial flavorings, often are not nutritionally useful, according to Dr. David Jenkins, a professor of nutrition science and physi-

ology at the University of Toronto. Dr. Jenkins advises: "If people decide one of the ways they can reduce fat is by eating low-fat food, that's fine, as long as the foods are nutritionally healthy." He suggests that vegetables, fruits, and cereal grains, as well as low-fat nuts and soy products, are good alternative choices.

Love and Chocolate

In many lands a man may offer chocolates to a woman as an expression of his love. Interestingly, the heightened emotions produced by eating chocolate and the feeling of falling in love may have something



in common—increased production of the hormone phenylethylamine in the brain. According to *The Medical Post* of Toronto, Canada, Peter Godfrey, an Australian researcher, has determined the structure of the "love molecule," as it has been called. Armed with this new information, scientists hope to learn more about how emotions are triggered in the brain. Moreover, observed the *Post*, it "may explain the devotion of some chocolate-lovers."

A Bridge to Skye

The largest, balanced cantilever bridge of its type, one and a half miles long, was recently opened in Scotland, reports *The Times* of London. The

bridge connects the Scottish Isle of Skye and its 9,000 inhabitants with the west coast of Scotland. To celebrate the opening, a bagpipe band and a cavalcade of vintage cars led a procession of commuters—all of whom were invited to cross toll free for the day. The bridge replaces the ferry service that had shuttled cars and passengers to and from the island for the past 23 years. According to *The Times*, the Scottish secretary pointed out that it is now possible for motorists to travel from Rome to Uig, in northwestern Skye, without leaving their cars.

"Computerized" Sore Throat

Computer operators seeking to relieve their hands and arms by using voice recognition systems face what some consider a more serious problem—chronic hoarseness and even complete voice loss, reports *The Globe and Mail* newspaper of Canada. Since each word must be spoken distinctly and in exactly the same tone and pitch to be understood by the computer, users do not breathe normally, and the vocal cords tend to lose their tension. Dr. Simon McGrail of the University of Toronto told the *Globe* that polyps or ulcers can develop on the vocal cords as they repeatedly strike each other, or the cords themselves can become fatigued. To keep vocal cords healthy, voice specialists recommend that users limit the time they spend on such computers, take frequent breaks, drink lots of water, and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and medications that can dry the vocal cords.

FROM OUR READERS

Living Forever Thank you for the series "Why Is Life So Short?—Will It Ever Be Different?" (October 22, 1995) These articles not only helped me to understand better the prospect of being a perfect human on a paradise earth but also helped me out in science class. At the very time these articles came out, we were having a test on the cell—its parts and functions. How clearly you described it! Thanks for the good grade and for the spiritual food at the right time.

B. M., United States

Glass Thank you for the article "Glass—Its First Makers Lived Long, Long Ago." (November 22, 1995) My dad works with glass, so we have a lot of it in our house. I can't help but say how beautifully written this article was. I had no idea how many different cultures were involved in glassmaking. Thanks again.

M. B., United States

Hungary's Vineyards For several months I have been working in the wine section of a supermarket in Luxembourg. So it was with great interest that I read the article "Come With Us to Hungary's Vineyards!" (September 8, 1995) One of my supervisors observed, however, that while the article was accurate, you seemed to suggest that the mold that grows on grapes (*Botrytis cinerea*) is the same mold that grows in wine cellars. He says that the latter mold is actually something called *Cladosporium cellare*.

B. P., France

Your supervisor is correct, and we thank him for this clarification.—ED.

God's Friend I just want to tell you how moved I was by the article "Young People Ask . . . Will Being God's Friend Help Me?" (November 22, 1995) For much of this year, I have been walking in the valley of deep shadow, with depression destroying what remained

of my self-respect. I didn't even have the strength to pray or to study the Bible. The encouragement offered by my Christian brothers just did not get through to me. When reading the article, I sensed the first ray of sunshine for quite some time.

S. K., Germany

It is comforting to know how much interest and love Jehovah has for youths. In my short life, I've experienced rape, drug abuse, miscarriage, and emotional and verbal abuse. I even tried to commit suicide once. Finally, though, I began attending Christian meetings again. With perseverance in prayer and by approaching Jehovah once again, I was reinstated in his organization. Jehovah's Word has brought me more peace of mind than any drug.

W. B., United States

Competition The article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Is Competition in Sports Wrong?" (December 8, 1995) offered comfort to my ten-year-old son. Some older boys invited him to play ball. He was teased so badly that he became quite depressed. We read the article and found comfort, knowing that Christians should maintain a balanced view of sports and that sports should be refreshing, not depressing. I hope all our young ones will read this article because some sports have become very violent.

S. H., United States

The article really assisted me in making up my mind regarding getting involved in a sports team at school. The scriptures expressed in the article were really straightforward. Getting involved with this particular team would have been very competitive, since the coaches usually tell you to play hard and win. Thank you for the enlightening article, and I hope it will help other youths to make a good decision.

L. M., United States

PARALLEL hedges in tidy rows, villages huddled together on leeward hillsides, and trees that appear to have lost all their leaves and branches on one side. These are features common to the landscape of Provence in southeast France, and the wind called the mistral had a hand in all of them.

The mistral ranks right alongside other famous winds, such as the foehn of the Alps, the pampero of South America, the chinook of the North American Rockies, the harmattan of northwest Africa, and the Euroaquilo mentioned in the Bible.* (Acts 27:14) The name mistral comes from a Provençal word meaning "masterful." True to its designation, it can blow at speeds of up to 120 miles per hour.

The mistral was born from the never-ending "conflict" between high atmospheric pressure over central France and low pressure over the Mediterranean. Its great strength comes from what is called the mountain-gap effect. Channeled between the Alps and the Massif Central plateau, the mistral is strongest after emerging from the Donzère gorge, as if from a funnel.

In summertime the mistral drives away the clouds. During the winter, the mistral makes the cold seem unbearable, and it can cause late frosts in an otherwise temperate region. In any season the mistral is often blamed when the local inhabitants feel irritable.

But it is on the splendid cedar forest of Luberon that the mistral gives free rein to its talent, sculpturing the trees, so that they resemble flags flying in the wind. On the other hand, the mistral will often fan forest fires during the dry season, thus destroying the fruits of its labor.

"Three, six, or nine days," goes the old Provençal saying regarding how long the mistral will blow. But this masterful wind can blow for a much longer period than that. In 1965, for example, it blew for 23 days nonstop!

Man has learned to cope with the mistral. Parallel hedges protect the fields, and old village houses rarely have an opening to the north. Though its chilly winds can be quite discomforting, the mistral nevertheless can be viewed as a master landscape architect.

* For further information see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 770, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

The MISTRAL

A Master Landscape Designer

BY AWAKE!
CORRESPONDENT
IN FRANCE





WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

IN OUR modern consumer society, the safe disposal of garbage and dangerous waste products has become a nightmare. In contrast, God's creation is a marvel of economy and recycling. Take, for example, the honeycomb. Beeswax, the building material of the honeycomb, is an expensive commodity—a honeybee needs 1/2 ounce of honey and an undetermined amount of pollen to make just 1/32 ounce of beeswax. How do the bees budget their beeswax? "The wax walls of the honeycomb's cells come together in threes at

120-degree angles, forming a regular array of hexagons," explains the book *By Nature's Design*. "This pattern lets the bees minimize the amount of wax they use, while providing a rigid structure in which to store honey." So an ingenious structure combines beauty of form with economy of function, and it can be recycled!