

Awake!

August 22, 1990



CAN YOU REALLY
BELIEVE THE NEWS?



People living in the 20th century are more up-to-date on the news than their predecessors were. Yet, can we really be confident that the news we receive is always correct? Is there reason to believe that the news at times is manipulated to serve the interests of advertisers, politicians, or others? And are we missing out on important news that cannot be obtained via the usual news channels? *Awake!* will consider such questions in the following articles.

A News-Hungry Century

PEOPLE have always wanted news of things going on around them. They like to be informed immediately of anything outstanding that happens. One famous courier was a warrior who in 490 B.C.E. ran about 25 miles to Athens to announce the defeat of the Persian armies. He reportedly died on arrival after announcing the victory at Marathon.

Today, some 600 million television sets and 1.4 thousand million radios bring into homes worldwide news of happenings that occurred only hours or even minutes before. Some events are seen live, while they are happening. And many hundreds of millions of newspapers, as well as tens of millions of magazines, are printed daily in scores of languages to satisfy a news-hungry world.

Johannes Gutenberg's invention less than 550 years ago of a printing press with movable type made possible the rapid spread of printed news. Early newssheets, however, had limited circulation, and because of their high cost, the rich were often the only ones who could afford them.

Soon freedom of the press became an issue. Renaudot's *Gazette*, for example, was published in the 17th century with the approval of the king of France, and most of the news printed was at the direction of the government. Few journalists of the time dared defy the authorities of their country.

Quest for News Today

The end of the 19th century brought an explosion of news channels, mainly because of the mechanization of printing presses and the massive circulation of daily newspapers, especially in Europe and North America.

Gutenberg's invention of a printing press with movable type was a great step toward spreading news and ideas



Soon new techniques, particularly radio, were being employed to spread news abroad. In 1917, for example, during the Russian Revolution, the radio transmitter of the cruiser *Aurora* incited the inhabitants of Petrograd (now Leningrad) to insurrection.

During World War II, the radio became a powerful instrument for propaganda, especially for Nazi Germany. During that war

the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) in London also broadcast Allied news over a large portion of Europe and the world.

Although television had been experimented with before World War II, its development was slowed by the war. However, it soon blossomed as a news medium. Today, television news programs are watched by hundreds of millions.

In recent decades the press has started producing many specialized publications. After World War II, weekly magazines were published that analyzed the news. Magazines that cater to young people, women, retired persons, sportsmen, and handymen, not to mention the weekly television program reviews, are enjoying excellent sales. In France, for example, about 200 new magazines appear each year.

News in the Future

Already it is possible to access data banks on video display terminals via telecommunications links. Cable and satellite systems now offer some television channels (as in the United States) that provide news bulletins night and day, and some predict that the future will bring still more on an international level. Thus, the 20th century may rightly be called the news-hungry century. But is the news always reliable? Does the variety of information services guarantee honest, objective news?

Awake![®]

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Can You Trust the News You Get?

ON May 10, 1927, a special edition of the French newspaper *La Presse* reported that the first successful non-stop flight across the Atlantic was made by two French aviators, Nungesser and Coli. The first page featured pictures of the two fliers as well as details about their arrival in New York. But this story was a fabrication. Actually, the aircraft had been lost, and the fliers killed.

Yet, false news reports are more common than perhaps most people suspect. In 1983 intimate notes, supposedly Hitler's, were published in important weekly magazines, especially in France and Western Germany. They turned out to be fakes.

Similarly, in 1980 a story about a young drug addict was published in the *Washington Post*. The account won the author a Pulitzer prize, the highest award for a journalist in the

United States. But later the story was revealed to be fictitious, a fabrication. Under pressure from investigators, the author submitted her resignation, saying: "I apologize to my newspaper, my profession, the Pulitzer board and all seekers of the truth."

Yet, news fabrications, or false reports, are not the only obstacles to arriving at the truth regarding what is happening in the world.

News Selection and Presentation

Journalists and editors often select news that fascinates the public but that may not be of real significance. Priority is given to what is sensational or eye-catching so as to increase circulation and ratings. Stars of the entertainment and sports worlds are featured, regardless of what kind of role models they provide for the young. So if one of them takes a lover, marries, or dies, it often makes the news.

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 importantly, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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Television news generally features subjects that have visual appeal. The head of a major television broadcasting firm, as reported in *TV Guide* magazine, "declared he wanted 'moments' on the broadcasts—gut-wrenching, sensational moments to lure the viewer in every story." Indeed, attracting viewers is usually of greater concern than is educating the public.

The way events are portrayed may fail to provide the whole picture. As an example, a weekly supplement to the French daily *Le Monde* told of "three television sets exploding [in France] in just fifteen days." Although this was presented as something unusual, the number of explosions of television sets for that 15-day period was actually smaller than normal.

Also, important news may sometimes be presented in a biased way. *Parade Magazine* reports that officials and politicians often "channel their deceptions through the media, distorting the news in order to influence your thinking. They deal in selective facts instead of the whole truth."

This bothers many news commentators. French *Encyclopædia Universalis* states: "Since the end of the 1980's, the important media, and especially television, have been condemned on all sides, by professionals and laymen, by the man on the street, and by public figures, for what is said and what is left unsaid, for the way it is said and for various insinuations."

Free interchange of news on a worldwide scale is also a problem and was the subject of a heated debate at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). Developing countries complained that they were only mentioned in the news when catastrophes or serious political problems occurred. After saying that certain West-

ern press agencies carry much more news about countries in the Northern Hemisphere than about those in the Southern Hemisphere, an article in the French daily *Le Monde* added: "This has given rise to a serious imbalance affecting public opinion in industrialized countries as much as in developing countries."

Pressure Groups

The pressure that advertisers exert on news editors further affects the news the public receives. In the 1940's a U.S. magazine lost advertisements from piano manufacturers when it published an article showing the advantages of using the guitar to accompany singing. An editorial was later published in the magazine in high praise of the piano! Thus, the relative scarcity of articles exposing the dangers of smoking should not be surprising in view of the number of magazines for which cigarette ads are a major source of revenue.

Another pressure area involves the readers or viewers themselves. Raymond Castans, former director of a popular French radio station, explained that listeners were mostly conservative, so care had to be exercised not to upset them. Is it therefore surprising that in a country where a certain religion is predominant, unsavory facts about it have been hushed up or toned down?

Pressures are also brought to bear by extremist groups or individuals who feel that not enough attention is given to their opinions in the media. A few years ago, the terrorists who kidnapped Aldo Moro, ex-prime minister of Italy, insisted that their claims be given full coverage on television, by radio, and in Italian newspapers. Similarly, terrorists who hijack planes and take hostages make TV headlines and thus obtain the publicity they seek.

Newsmen are sometimes accused of being conformist, of perpetuating established sys-

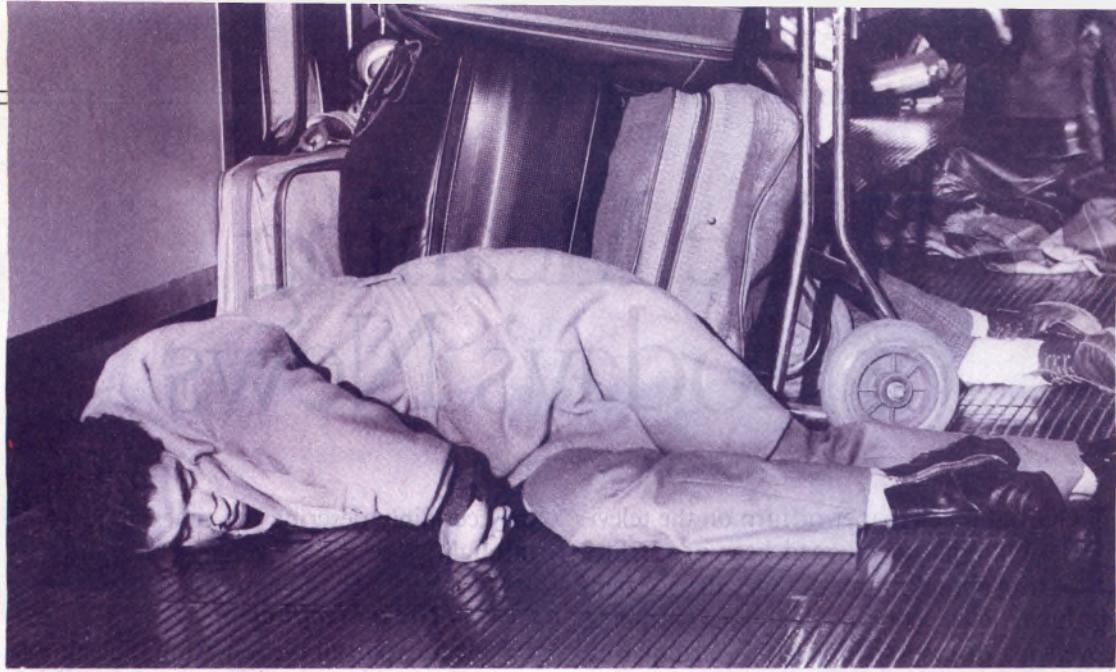


Photo ANSA

The extremist movements get the publicity they want

tems and opinions. But can we expect that an industry seeking to gain a maximum of readers or listeners would propagate ideas and views contrary to those of the majority of the people they serve?

A related problem is that in many countries rising costs have caused daily papers to merge, thus forming literal "press empires" in the hands of small groups or even one person. If the number of owners continues to decrease, this will limit the variety of published opinions.

Influence on the Public

There is no question that the news media have also contributed to the molding of social values. This is done by presenting as acceptable, moral standards and life-styles that would have been rejected only a few years ago.

For example, in the early 1980's, a middle-aged man, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, had a discussion on homosexuality with his father, who then lived not far from San Francisco, California. Earlier in his life, the father had conveyed to his son his view that homosexual

behavior was shocking. But then, decades later, influenced by the news media, the elderly father defended homosexuality as an acceptable alternative life-style.

The *Encyclopedia of Sociology* (French) asserts: "Radio and television may very well . . . inculcate new ideas, encourage innovative or troublemaking trends. Because of a taste for sensational news, such media boost them from the start and exaggerate their importance."

If we do not want our values to be molded by the media, what can we do? We should follow the wise counsel found in the Bible. This is because its standards and principles remain valid for any society at any time in history. Moreover, they help us understand how important it is to be fashioned by God's standards and not by popular ideas of the modern world.—Isaiah 48:17; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24.

In addition, the Scriptures explain an important aspect of the news that generally escapes the media. Let us examine this aspect in the next article.

The Meaning of Today's News

LOOK at a newspaper or turn on the television. What do you read, hear, or see? Stories about murder, rape, drugs, family breakdown, coups, revolutions, scandals, cover-ups, diseases such as AIDS, earthquakes, hunger, starvation. This is invariably the news of the day. Yet, a vitally important aspect of the news is generally ignored, and even if it is mentioned, it is quickly dismissed.

For example, during his first term as U.S. president, Ronald Reagan spoke of "Armageddon," saying: "I find myself wondering if—if we're the generation that is going to see that come about." Afterward, however, he downplayed the matter, insisting that he never said that "we must plan according to Armageddon."

Yet, the Bible book of Revelation tells about the coming of Armageddon, explaining that "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" will be gathered "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Continuing, the Bible says that the nations will be gathered "together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."—Revelation 16:14, 16, *King James Version*.

When will that earthshaking battle of the great day of God Almighty occur? Could it be in our time? Even Ronald Reagan was moved to comment: "I don't know if you've noted any of those prophecies lately, but, believe me,

they certainly describe the times we're going through."

News of Great Significance

Note for yourself the following Bible prophecy: "Know this, that in the last days [of this system of things] critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Would you say that this prophecy is now undergoing fulfillment?

Further, when telling about his future presence and the conclusion of the system of things, Jesus prophesied: "You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars . . . For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. . . . And because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matthew 24:3-12) Would you not also agree that this prophecy is being fulfilled?

So that his followers who would be living during the time of the fulfillment of these

prophecies would appreciate what they really mean, Jesus gave this illustration: "Note the fig tree and all the other trees: When they are already in the bud, by observing it you know for yourselves that now the summer is near. In this way you also, when you see these things occurring [really, the very events we see occurring today] know that the kingdom of God is near." —Luke 21:29-31.

Surely, the evidence abounds that we are living when the coming of God's Kingdom and his war of Armageddon are *very near!* While this vital news has been ignored almost totally by the news channels of the world, Jehovah's Witnesses are sharing in spreading it worldwide. This good news they tell is not only that God will cleanse the earth of all corruption but that, under the rule of his Kingdom government, the entire earth will be made into a delightful, gardenlike paradise.

Regarding these matters, the Bible promises: "For the upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." And further: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." —Proverbs 21, 22; Psalm 37:11, 29.

Would you like to become better informed regarding the

evidence that the fulfillment of these grand prophecies is very near? If so, make this known to Jehovah's Witnesses. They will be happy to help you discern that today's news really means that God's Kingdom is near, yes, that a new world of righteousness is at hand.

Nordhausen/slave camp: USAF
Official Photo; Starving child: WHO
photo by W. Cutting; Industrial
plant: WHO photo by P. Almasy



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK...



My Parents Are Separating —What Should I Do?

*"One night my father took the four of us kids out for ice cream. Suddenly his voice became very formal. He said to us: 'Your mother and I are seeing things differently, so I'm going to move out. I might be back this summer.' None of us said anything. He must have had his bags packed already, for when he dropped us off at home, he didn't come in. We got out of the car and stood in the driveway bawling our heads off as my father drove away." —Tom.**

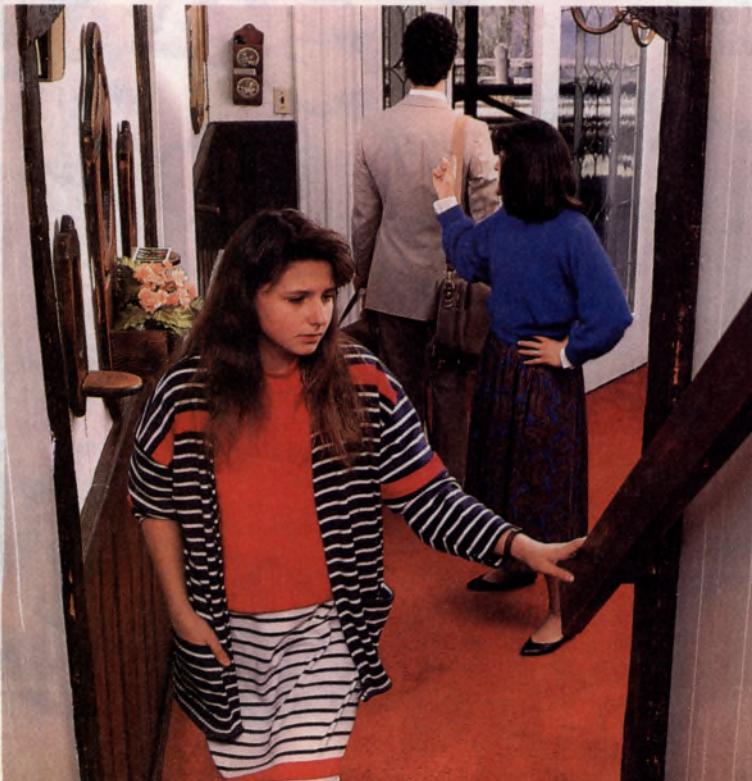
TOM'S parents never did get back together. But at the time, Tom had no way of knowing whether they would or not.

Randy's parents, on the other hand, separa-

* Some of the names have been changed.

ed more times than he can remember. "Dad would leave for maybe a month or two at a time," he recalls. "Then he'd come back, and things would be better for a while. Then, all of a sudden, he would be gone again."

Divorce has a mournful ring of finality to it. But when your parents have only separated, and you still don't know whether they will divorce or not, the uncertainty can be deeply troubling. Many parents, like Randy's, get back together but break up again later. According to the book *Divorced Families*, an estimated 50 percent of separations end in at least a temporary reconciliation. But as divorce researchers Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee note: "Divorce is often preceded by several separa-



tions, each of which may seem decisive but turn out not to be final. These can confuse children and lead them to expect reconciliation.”¹

The words, ‘I might be back,’ seem so full of promise. But questions hang agonizingly in the air. You wonder: ‘Will my parents end up divorced? How do I cope with the feelings that are tearing me up right now?’

Navigating the Storm

At first, you may find yourself feeling depressed, tired, unable to concentrate, or even explosively angry at times. Or you may just feel numb. All of these are common reactions to an extreme situation—one that occurs all too frequently these days. Though God’s Word encourages couples to remain together and work out their problems, the world’s attitude toward marriage has deteriorated a great deal. (1 Corinthians 7:10-16) Today, marriage sometimes has no better than a 50-percent survival rate. As the Bible long ago foretold, our age has seen a drastic drop in the “natural affection” once so common in families.*—2 Timothy 3:3.

How can you cope? What you are going through can be compared to a storm in your life. Thinking of it that way can help you in two ways. First, no storm lasts forever. The emotional turmoil you feel now will subside in time, as all storms do. And second, you can navigate your way through this storm. You don’t have to ‘go under.’ But just as a ship in a storm must steer clear of the rocks, there are some rocklike dangers that can mean real trouble. Let’s discuss a few.

False Expectations

One such peril would be to set your heart on getting your parents back together. Anne remembers: “After they separated, my parents

* As for the causes of marital breakup, see the article “Why Did Mom and Dad Split Up?” in the October 22, 1987, issue of *Awake!* See also the “Young People Ask . . .” articles in the issues of December 22, 1987, and May 22, 1988.

What you are going through can be compared to a storm in your life. Thinking of it that way can help you to get through it, because no storm lasts forever

would still take us out together sometimes. My sister and I would whisper to each other, ‘Let’s run ahead and leave those two together.’ But,” she sighs, “I guess it didn’t work. They never did get back together.”

As Proverbs 13:12 says: “Expectation postponed is making the heart sick.” Remember, you cannot control what your parents do. You did not cause their separation, and in all likelihood you cannot step in and patch up their marriage either.—See also Proverbs 26:17.

The Danger of Hatred

Anger and hatred may be the most lethal “rocks” you will face in this storm. Tom recalls his feelings at age 12: “I started to feel real anger toward my dad. I don’t like to use the word ‘hatred,’ but I had a terrible grudge. I couldn’t see how he could care about us if he left us. And I think I was saying inside that it’s *my* turn to let *him* know how *I* feel.”

Marital separation is rarely a mutual decision; so naturally one parent may seem more blameworthy in your eyes. It may even be that one of your parents violated God’s law about being faithful to the marriage mate. (Hebrews 13:4) But in any case, how do you deal with the parent who seems more at fault? Should you hate that parent or try to avenge the wronged parent?

Remember first that a separation is rarely as simple as one parent being all “bad” and the other being all “good.” Your parents have probably not told you everything about their marriage or its breakup; they may not even understand it themselves. So avoid judging

Anger is hard to resist; and it is quite natural for you to feel deeply upset right now. But nursing an angry and vengeful spirit can gradually poison your personality

a situation about which you do not have the whole picture. (Proverbs 18:13) Fortunately, God is the Judge of all such matters. He appoints you as neither the judge nor the punisher of your parents. And what a relief that is! Who of us could really handle that kind of responsibility?—Romans 12:19.

Granted, anger is hard to resist; and it is quite natural for you to feel deeply upset right now. But nursing an angry and vengeful spirit can gradually poison your personality. The Bible says that “a calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism.” Surely, a calm heart is not full of bitterness. No wonder the Bible tells us to “let anger alone and leave rage.” (Proverbs 14:30; Psalm 37:8) Further, the Bible’s command to honor your parents even applies to honoring parents who have let you down. —Luke 18:20.

So Tom has worked on his anger. He now says: “It’s easy to hold a grudge and think to yourself, ‘He’s the one that did wrong. It is right for me to hate him.’ But I started to ask myself, ‘Is this really right?’ And I saw that, no, it’s not. As a Christian, you can’t hold grudges.”

Of course, when the Bible says to let anger alone, it is not suggesting that you pretend your anger doesn’t exist. If your parents’ actions have hurt you, why not try talking to them about it, respectfully opening their eyes to your point of view?—See Proverbs 15:22, 23; 16:21.

Caught in the Middle

“But how do I handle this feeling of being torn between my parents?” you may ask. This

can be an especially tricky “rock” to skirt around. Randy recalls: “The thing I dreaded most about visiting my dad was that my mom would question me intensely after each visit. And she really slanted things against him. I would say, ‘Come on, Mom! Why do you do this? Leave me alone!’ And she would get mad and force me to answer her questions.”

Sometimes parents use their children to carry angry messages from one to the other or even to spy on each other! One woman wanted to find out how much money her estranged husband had. So she and her ten-year-old son jimmied a window at the father’s house, and the boy climbed inside to sneak out his father’s checkbook. “We’ll get him!” the boy said with evident glee.

It is unfair for your parents to try to use you as a tool for revenge. But remember that they are going through tremendous emotional turmoil. So be as patient with them as you can. Talk to them. You may want to say, in essence, ‘Mom and Dad, I love you both. So please don’t use me to hurt each other.’ Not that you should be uncooperative, refusing to carry any communication from one to the other. But if your parents get vindictive and vengeful, it is time to get out from between them.—Proverbs 26:17.

By the same token, it would be hypocritical to play one parent against the other for your own advantage, saying things like: “I want to go live with Mom. She always lets me do what I want.” After separation, parents may feel very guilty about the stress they have caused their children and cling to them desperately. Youths who are aware of the power they thus hold over their parents may be tempted to use it. But surely you don’t want to be manipulative.

There is more to surviving a storm, though, than just avoiding the rocks. A future article will discuss some positive actions you can take that will help you to cope.

A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES each year print and distribute tens of millions of copies of the Bible and of books that help in understanding the Bible. Recently, a Bible student from Texas, U.S.A., received from her 20-year-old nephew a letter of appreciation for copies of these publications that she had provided him. The following, in part, are his comments regarding this literature:

"Dear Aunt Irene and Family,

"... It's now 1:00 a.m., so I'm not sure how long this letter will be, but I'll try to say what I want to say, and that mainly is thank you!

"The books you sent me are really amazing! They are truly more than I expected. They add spice to everything; that one little ingredient that makes it interesting and worth the effort to read.

"*Life... by Evolution or by Creation* is a real gripper! The authors of this book need a hearty handshake! The explanations are down to earth, logical, and sensible. My favorite line in the book is 'Life being created by accident is comparable to an unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop.' Awesomely put!

"*Paradise [You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth]* is another well-written book. This one recaps many things I've read but with more style and confidence than other material. This book I've yet to finish.

"*Reasoning [From the Scriptures]* is the dictionary I've always wanted. Logical reasoning on basic concepts I've failed to grasp before; Biblical viewpoints on present topics. Absolutely astounding! Definitely a book to look into; I have to thank you again.

"*Questions [Young People Ask—Answers That Work]* is a book that happened to come in handy today. I used it to give advice to a dear friend of mine who is having a few dating problems. The logical answers really made sense to her. I've also found it to be personally helpful in understanding myself a little better. Thank you.

"And last but definitely not least, the *New World Translation*. This version is so much easier to understand than my *KJV* [*King James Version*] that I find myself referring to it more often than the other . . . God bless you for these valuable gifts! . . .

"Without the books you've sent me I would probably still be drowning in self-pity, but now I have the instruments to deal with my situation, and that's something that's hard to repay. Jesus would be proud of you. And I am too!

"I've learned so much in so little time, it's exciting! I never thought the Bible could be so interesting and stimulating. I now have solid reasons for pushing through the muck of life Satan has thrown at me, and I want to share it with the world. Thank you!

"Please give my regards to the family. . . .

"I pray for you all!"

Thankfully,
Michael"

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT HOUSE REPAIRS?

A WISE man of ancient times said: "For everything there is an appointed time." (Ecclesiastes 3:1) When it comes to house maintenance, how true this is! If not promptly cared for, the repairs to your home can become more costly and time-consuming. The solution?

Make out a schedule for preventive maintenance, and then stick to the "appointed time" to do it. You may choose to mark the days for such work on your calendar. This will alert the other members of your family to be free to help out as needed.

There are two golden rules for proper house maintenance. First, prevent as many problems as you can before they start. And second, tackle as quickly as possible problems that do occur. Inspect your house carefully in the spring or in the fall, giving attention to the roof. Not only may leakage damage the interior of your home but it may also damage the walls and outer surface of the building.

Supplement your yearly roof inspection with a further check after a severe gale. Although you may be able to do some small repairs on a flat roof, a reliable contractor is best equipped to guarantee a more lasting solution to roof problems.

If your house is surrounded by trees, then autumn may bring the problem of dead leaves collecting in the gutters, blocking the flow of rain-



water. Therefore, examine the gutters and downspouts. Seal any leaks with a waterproof caulk. Applying a coat of a good topcoat gloss paint will provide protection for metal gutters.

The walls of your home also deserve regular inspection. Watch for cracks, dampness, and missing mortar between bricks. The combined effect of wind, rain, and frost may loosen the mortar or other sealants that keep your wall watertight. If this loosening has occurred, you will have to make the necessary repairs.

On a regular basis, thoroughly examine the woodwork of your house. Prod the lower parts of the doors, their jambs, and the windowsills to find out if they are rotting. If the affected area is large, you may be able to cut it out and replace it with sound wood. It may be possible to treat a small rotted area with a wood preservative that contains a fungicide.

Dry rot develops in damp, poorly ventilated areas indoors. It has the ability to spread, even through plaster, mortar, and brick. Eradication of dry rot calls for prompt, expert attention. Better still, prevent it from ever taking root by ensuring good ventilation throughout your house.

To master home maintenance, be observant. Regularly inspect your home, both outside and inside. Carry out the necessary repairs promptly. Do what you can yourself, but when necessary, do not hesitate to call in the experts to help.

GUTTERING AND DOWNSPOUTS

To Unblock Guttering



- Before removing the silt and debris, cover the opening into the downspout with an oversized rag to prevent the debris from getting into the downspout.
- Scrape away the blockage into a bucket suspended from your ladder.
- Remove the rag, and then pour water along the gutter. If it does not flow freely, then the blockage is in the downspout.

To Unclog a Downspout

- If there are drains at the bottom of the downspout, put a container there to stop debris from clogging them up.
- From ground level, poke a stiff wire up the downspout to loosen any lower-end blockage.



- From the top of the downspout, insert a piece of stiff, hooked wire into the downspout to bring up whatever is blocking the top.

REPAIRING BRICK OR BLOCK WALLS

Repointing (Repairing Mortar Joints)



- Use a chisel and a hammer to remove the loose mortar to a depth of about 1/2 inch.
- Brush area to be repointed with a stiff wire brush to remove loose bits of mortar and dust.
- Mix the mortar but no more than can be used before it sets up.
- Dampen the bricks and underlying mortar with water.



- Force mortar into the gaps between the bricks with a pointing trowel.
- After the mortar has dried, but before it has fully hardened, with a dry stiff brush, clean off any mortar smeared on the brick.

Resurfacing

- Chip away cracked or loose plaster or concrete.
- Wet the wall.
- Spread new mortar on the wall with a trowel.
- Allow the mortar to harden somewhat.



- Score the surface to help secure the final coat of mortar.
- Apply a final coat of mortar.



- To level the surface, draw a wooden batten across this wet mortar using a sawing motion.

Kings, Like Stars, Rise and Fall

HUMAN RULE

Weighed in the Balances



PART 2

Monarchy: a government headed by a hereditary chief of state, such as a king or an emperor; **Kingdom:** a monarchical form of government headed by a king or a queen; **Empire:** an extended territory usually comprising a group of nations, states, or peoples under control of a single sovereign power, generally headed by an emperor.

“**N**Ow it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar.” Here, as Genesis chapter 14 opens, the Bible uses the word “king” for the first time. Whether Amraphel was, as some claim, another name for Babylon’s famous King Hammurabi, we do not know. What we do know is that, whatever his identity, the idea of human kingship did not originate with Amraphel. Several hundred years earlier, Nimrod, although not called a king, obviously was one. In fact, he was the first human king in history.—Genesis 10:8-12.

True, we have no artifacts referring to King Nimrod or to King Amraphel. “Enmebaragesi, king of Kish, is the oldest Mesopotamian ruler about whom there are authentic inscriptions,” says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*. From Kish, an ancient city-state in Mesopotamia, came the Sumerian word for ruler, meaning “big man.” The dating of

Enmebaragesi’s rule, although at variance with Bible chronology, nevertheless approximates the time period allowed by the Bible and, more important, places the origin of human rule in the same part of the earth as does the Bible.

Unity Through a Majority of One

The Chinese Shang, or Yin, dynasty is generally thought to have begun sometime between the 18th and 16th centuries B.C.E., although this dating is uncertain. At any rate, monarchies are the oldest form of human government. They are also widespread.

The word “monarch” comes from the Greek words *mo'nos*, meaning “alone,” and *arkhe'*, meaning “rule.” Accordingly, a monarchy vests supreme authority in a single person serving in his own right as permanent head of state. In an absolute monarchy, the king’s word

is law. He forms, as it were, a majority of one.

Monarchies have always been considered helpful in holding nations together. John H. Mundy, who teaches medieval European history, explains that in medieval times, political theory "argued that because it transcended particular parties, the institution of monarchy was suited for large areas with diverse and conflicting regional interests." These large areas of "conflicting regional interests" were often the consequence of military conquest, since kings were invariably military leaders. In fact, historian W. L. Warren says that victory in war was "commonly regarded as the first criterion of successful kingship."

Thus, the monarchical form of government was conducive to the establishment of world powers like the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire under the Caesars, and, more recently, the British Empire. The latter, at its height in the early 20th century, united under a single regent about a quarter of the world's population and a fourth of its land area.

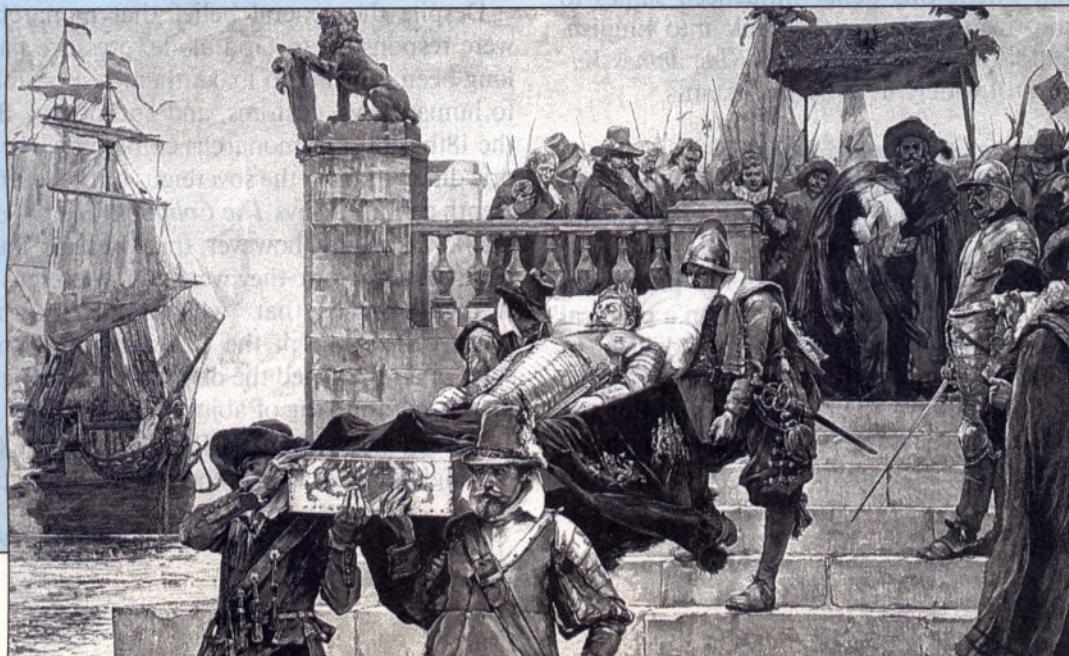
Royalty in Religious Robes

Many ancient kings laid claim to godship. As historian George Sabine noted: "Beginning with Alexander, Hellenistic kings were enrolled also among the gods of the Greek cities. The deified king became a universal institution in the East and in the end it had to be adopted by the Roman emperors." He says that this belief in royal divinity persisted in Europe "in one form or another, down to modern times."

In Central and South America, the Aztec and Inca states were considered sacred monarchies. In Asia it was not until 1946 that the late Emperor Hirohito of Japan relinquished his claim to be the 124th human descendant of the sun-goddess Amaterasu Omikami.

While not all kings claimed godship, most of them at least maintained that they had divine backing. Being singled out to represent God on earth carried with it priestly charisma. John H. Mundy explains that "the ancient idea that kings were themselves priestly spread through the West, making a prince the administrative head of his church and

At death even the best human king leaves his work in uncertain hands



director of its apostolate." It was a religious concept "derived from the Constantinian partnership of church and state [during the fourth century C.E.], and from the parallel absorption of Neoplatonic thought by the church." The religious blessing bestowed at the time of coronation dignified the king's rule with a legitimacy that would otherwise have been lacking.

In 1173, Henry II of England began using the title "King by the grace of God." This led to the idea later known as the divine right of kings, meaning that the king's power was hereditary. God supposedly manifested his choice in the fact of birth. In 1661, Louis XIV of France put an extreme version of this doctrine into operation by assuming total governmental control. He viewed opposition as a sin against the God he represented. "*L'état c'est moi!* [I am the State]," he boasted.

A similar idea appeared in Scotland at more or less the same time. While ruling Scotland as James VI but before becoming King James I of England in 1603, this monarch wrote: "Kings are called Gods . . . because they sit upon GOD his Throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give unto [H]im." We do not know to what extent this belief influenced James to authorize translating the Bible into English. We do know the result, the *King James Version*, still widely used by Protestants.

The Age of Absolute Monarchies

From the early Middle Ages onward, monarchies were the typical form of government. Kings developed a cheap and convenient way to rule by delegating authority to prominent landholders. These, in turn, set up a political and military system known as feudalism. In exchange for military and other services, the landholders gave their vassals land. But the more effective and powerful feudal landholders became, the more likely the kingdom

would be to disintegrate into feudal power blocs.

Besides, the feudal system robbed citizens of their dignity and their freedom. They were dominated by military landlords, for whose income they were chiefly responsible. Deprived of education and cultural opportunities, "the serf had few rights that were enforceable at law against his manorial lord," says *Collier's Encyclopedia*. "He could not marry, transmit his leasehold to heirs, nor leave the manor without the lord's consent."

This was not the sole method of ruling in absolute monarchies. Some kings bestowed administrative posts on individuals who could later be removed from office, should it be thought necessary. Other kings entrusted local government to popular institutions that ruled by means of custom and social pressure. But all these methods were in one way or another unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, writers of the 17th century, such as Sir Robert Filmer of England and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet of France, still advocated absolutism as the only proper form of government. Yet its days were numbered.

"Gods" Reduced to Figureheads

Despite the general belief that monarchs were responsible to God alone, pressure had long been growing to make them responsible to human laws, customs, and authorities. By the 18th century, "monarchs employed a rhetoric different from the sovereigns of the seventeenth century," says *The Columbia History of the World*, adding, however, that "beneath and behind the rhetoric they were still sovereigns." It then explains that "when Frederick the Great called himself the 'first servant of the state' and repudiated the divine right of kings, he was not thinking of abjuring power."

Nevertheless, after the Revolution of 1688 in England and the French Revolution of

1789, the day of absolutism was over for the most part. Gradually, absolute monarchies gave way to limited monarchies with legislatures or constitutions, or both. In contrast with the 12th century when "kingship was still what a king was capable of making it, and what his subjects were prepared to accept," to quote historian W. L. Warren, today the political power of most kings and queens is quite limited.

Of course, a few monarchs still wield considerable power. But most of them have long since lost their halos of "godship" and are content to serve as figureheads, central figures of power around which peoples can be encouraged to rally in a spirit of loyalty. Limited monarchies have tried to retain the unifying features of one-man rule while eradicating its negative aspects by bestowing the real power on a legislature.

The idea of limited monarchies is still popular. As recently as 1983, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, leader of the Nepali Congress Party in Nepal, spoke out for a monarchy 'as a barrier against chaos,' saying that 'the King is essential to keep the country united.' And although in 1987 the French were making final preparations for celebrating the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, 17 percent of those polled favored a return to the monarchy. A member of one monarchist group said: "The King is the only way to unite a nation so long divided by political strife."

That same year, *Time* magazine noted: "Royalty commands loyalty perhaps because monarchs are the last great icons of our secular age, the only larger-than-life figures who can still quicken belief while dwelling in mystery. If God is dead, long live the Queen!" But then viewing things more realistically, it added that "the sovereign power of the [British] Queen lies mostly in her glittering powerlessness."

Found Wanting

Absolute monarchies are unsatisfactory. By their very nature, they are unstable. Sooner or later, every ruler dies and must be replaced by a successor, who more often than not is chosen because of descent and not because of high morals or ability. Who can guarantee that a son will be as good as his father? Or if a father was bad, that his son will be any better?

Also, as Cristiano Grottanelli points out, "the choice of the royal successor" oftentimes "is only loosely prescribed, so that among the eligible members of the royal lineage a competition may break out. The period that follows the death of a king is thus usually a period of social (and cosmic) chaos, both actually and symbolically."

Being a rule of one, the effectiveness of an absolute monarchy is dependent on the effectiveness of the one who is its ruler. His talents and strong points may be mirrored in his government but so also will be his weaknesses, limitations, and lack of knowledge. Even blue bloods are imperfect. Bad kings set up bad governments, good kings possibly set up better ones, but only a perfect king can establish the kind of government humanity longs for and deserves to have.

Parliamentary or limited monarchies also fall short. In the United Kingdom, this century has seen the figurehead kings and queens of England preside over the dismemberment of the greatest and most powerful empire the world had ever known.

A Different Kind of Star

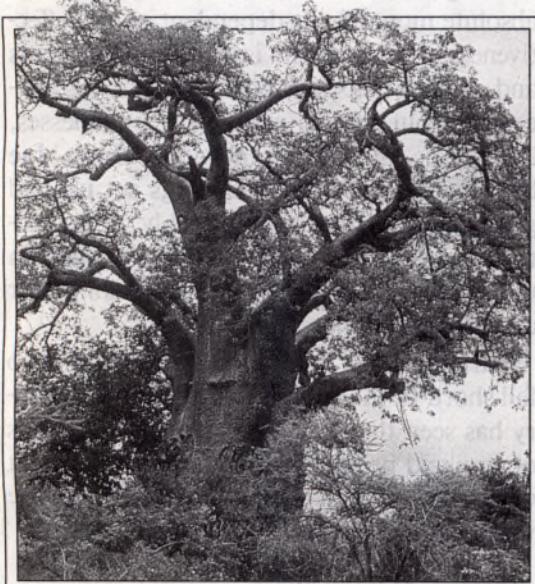
Kings, like stars, both rise and fall—with one exception. Of himself, Jesus Christ says that he is "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16) Being a direct descendant of

King David according to the flesh, Jesus qualifies to be King of God's divine government. As "the bright morning star," Jesus is also the "daystar" that Peter said would rise and cause the day to dawn.—2 Peter 1:19; Numbers 24:17; Psalm 89:34-37.

In view of these facts, just how wise is it to look to the falling stars of human monarchies for guidance? Rather, wisdom would dictate

that we attach our hopes to God's designated King, Jesus Christ, "the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords, the one alone [above all human kings] having immortality." (1 Timothy 6:15, 16) Already having risen as invisible King in the heavens, he will soon bring about the morning of a new world. He is a star—a king—who, now that he has risen, will never fall!

"The Upside-Down Tree"



THAT is a nickname for Africa's baobab. When covered with leaves and flowers, the baobab is a beautiful sight. But in winter the short bare branches protrude from the fat trunk and look like the roots of an upturned tree.

A group of baobabs in northern Botswana is called the Seven Sisters. They were painted by artist-explorer Thomas Baines in the 19th century. If one compares Baines' painting of over a century ago with the trees today, very few differences are apparent.

This shows the baobab's durability and longevity. It is estimated that the largest trees are thousands of years old. The baobab thrives in the hot, dry regions of Africa and has many life-sustaining properties. The pods contain chalky-white seeds that taste like cream of tartar. Elephants enjoy eating the bark and soft wood, which has a high moisture content. In fact, caches of rainwater are sometimes found at the hollow junction of branches and in cavities formed inside the tree.

Another impressive feature of the baobab is its enormous girth. The largest of these giants is reported to be on the southern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania; it has a circumference of 92 feet. One hollow baobab in Zimbabwe was used as a bus shelter and could hold over 30 people.

It seems paradoxical that intelligent man should live out his brief threescore and ten years while "the upside-down tree" may live for thousands of years. Fortunately, we have every assurance that the Creator of all living things will completely fulfill his promise that the days of his people will be "like the days of a tree."—Isaiah 65:22; Psalm 90:10.

"They Told Me I Would Never Walk Again!"

AT 20 years of age, Ed was in a serious car accident. When he regained consciousness, he couldn't get up. He realized that he was paralyzed but thought that it would be only temporary. Ed recalled what later happened in the hospital: "They told me I would never walk again!" He was paralyzed from the chest down.

"I was devastated when my son was injured," Ed's father recollects. "He was a healthy young man, but now he couldn't walk any longer. It just stopped his life cold." Ed was pursuing the full-time ministry, called pioneering by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Another young man in his 20's, Bill, playfully dived into the surf and hit his head on a sandbar. Instantly, he could not move or breathe. Thanks to friends who were nearby, Bill did not drown. However, he was paralyzed from the neck down. Doctors told Bill that he also would never walk again.

First Reaction

"I wanted to commit suicide," Bill confessed, "but couldn't in the hospital bed." Bill had served in the Vietnam War and was planning to be an airplane pilot. When he was in-

jured in 1969, all his dreams were shattered, and he saw no reason to live.

Ed's first reaction was different when he was told he would be permanently paralyzed. "I wasn't discouraged, and the reason was my faith in the promises of God in the Bible. I realized that my condition may be permanent now but that it will not be permanent forever." Because of the hope he has, Ed has been able to deal successfully with his disability for more than 25 years now.

Need to Face the Challenge

Bill, on the other hand, did not have knowledge of God's promises. However, something happened one day that moved him to do something about himself.

After merely existing in the hospital for eight months, Bill was wheeled into a bathroom to be shaved by a male nurse. "When I looked in a mirror," he said, "I saw a person that was not me!"

Bill had been a strong 200-pound, six-foot-one-inch man, but now he was a mere 90-pound skeleton. He refused to believe that the image of the person in the mirror was his own. The experience ignited in him a fighting spirit to accept the challenge of his disability. "The first year of your disability is the critical time," Bill says, "for that's when you decide which way you are going to go."

Coping With Difficulties

Ed is not a nervous person, but he admits to having his emotional ups and downs. "At times I can't do simple things like reaching for something," explains Ed, "and I may get depressed."

Bill finds the greatest difficulty in living with a body that is limited and a brain that is not. "It's like having a jet-propelled mind in an oxcart of a body," he says.

There are also physical complications that are associated with spinal cord injury, such as lack of bladder and bowel control, pressure sores, and respiratory problems. Ed has had kidney problems ever since his injury and has periods of from six to seven days at a time when he has a temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Not being able to control bladder and bowel is also most frustrating to Bill. As he puts it: "You never adjust to having the body of an infant."

Ed urges all disabled persons to become as independent as possible. "Try your best to do it yourself," he says, "and you will get a lot further." That is why, when leaving the hospital, the first thing he did was to equip his car with hand controls so that he could drive. Now Ed even uses a specially equipped truck in his successful janitorial business.

"Try to forget your disability," advises Bill, "and go out and live your life as best as you can. If you do not act like a disabled person, people will not treat you like one." Bill practices what he preaches. He has successfully owned and operated a business, getting around on his golf cart, in his wheelchair, and on crutches.

What Can Be Done?

One barrier for the disabled person might be said to be in the minds of those who are not disabled. The best way to remove this barrier is through understanding. Disabled persons want the same consideration and understanding that would be accorded a person with no physical disabilities.

Some people seem to feel threatened or uncomfortable when faced with someone with a disability. Bill says: "Actually all of us are impaired in some way. Some are just more impaired than others." Those who are disabled are simply *persons* who happen, for example, not to be able to walk, see, or hear as other people do. It is essential that we view any impairment as *situational* and see the total person.

"I appreciate it when people view me like anybody else," said Ed. "Look at me. Don't look at the chair." Then he related an experience that he and his wife had at a restaurant: "The waitress took my wife's order first and then asked her, instead of me, what I wanted. I am not deaf! I just can't walk."

"Most people want to show consideration to disabled persons," Ed explains, "but they don't know what to do." His advice is: "The best thing is to wait and find out what you can do before you jump in and do something."

So be sure to ask first, "May I help?" Or, "Is there anything I can do to help?" Do not presume that a disabled person wants your assistance; he may not.

"The greatest compliment to a disabled person," Bill advises, "is to treat him as normal, to relate to him as you would to anybody else." True, some may find this hard to do. There may be a personal mental or emotional barrier between them and disabled persons. However, the more we get to know these as individuals, the less we think about their disability.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

*Youth—Meeting the
Challenge of the 1990's*

Suicides—A Resurrection?

*Is 'Government by the Best'
Really the Best?*



Despite his disability, Ed has a full share in the Christian ministry

Ed, who has been with the same congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses for many years, explains: "Most of the friends don't think of me as disabled. As a matter of fact, in our public preaching activity, they'll send me on a return visit at a house that has ten flights of stairs! Then I go back and tell them to send someone else."

Is Ed upset when his friends forget about his physical limitations? On the contrary. As he relates: "It's great that they think I don't need any help. I appreciate that, for then I feel that to them I am not disabled, but I am just another normal person."

Helps Available

In recent years much progress has been made in many countries in providing help to the physically impaired. A vast array of organizations, products, and services are available

to help them enjoy independent living. In many places, all one needs to do is look in the local telephone directory for information about these organizations and services.

Many public buildings and facilities are now designed to accommodate disabled persons. Some airlines and travel agencies offer special tours for the disabled. And today quadriplegics may enjoy mobile independence in specially equipped cars and vans.

Modern technology, which in some instances has made possible bypassing the function of damaged nerves, has enabled certain paralyzed persons to walk. Dr. J. Petrofsky, a pioneer researcher in the field, admits, however, that people may entertain false hopes regarding such technology. They may come to believe that it will enable anybody who is paralyzed to walk again. "All you can do is be honest," Dr. Petrofsky says, "and try to tell them exactly the status of that research. You know, we're not curing anything."

A True Cure

Yet, a true and permanent cure of all physical disabilities will, in time, be realized. This certain hope of being able to walk again has sustained Ed and helped him cope with his disability all these years. The Bible's promise is: "The eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

The curing of all infirmities will be realized right here on earth when God's Kingdom replaces the rule of all human governments. (Daniel 2:44) Indeed, God's Kingdom, for which Christ taught his followers to pray, will usher in a new world wherein the Bible promise will also be fulfilled: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isaiah 33:24; Matthew 6:9, 10.

At the time of his accident, Bill was not aware of the meaning of these Bible promises, although he had always had deep respect for the Bible. During the first five years of his disability, he began using drugs heavily. "I had used drugs in Vietnam to escape the horrors," he says, "and later I used them to endure life in a wheelchair."

In 1974, however, with the help of Jehovah's Witnesses, Bill came to believe that the Bible really is true and that its promises are totally reliable. "From that time onward," he said, "scales, as it were, fell from my eyes!" Seven months later Bill dedicated his life to Jehovah God, and soon he and his wife began together a life in the full-time ministry as pioneers.

Reflecting on his past experiences, Bill admits that his accident and the subsequent dis-

ability were painful. "But," he emphasizes, "I have gained so much from the injury." How could he say that?

"I doubt whether I would be a true Christian today if it weren't for the disability," he explains. "Before, I was too proud, too ambitious, and I probably would not have stayed in one place long enough to accept the Christian message."

So now, like Ed, Bill has firm faith that soon in God's new world, he will again have the full use of his body. And regardless of the apparent hopelessness of the situation, any disabled person can have that same confidence in the healing power of God. The heart of such a person can be strengthened daily by the conviction: "I know I will walk again!"

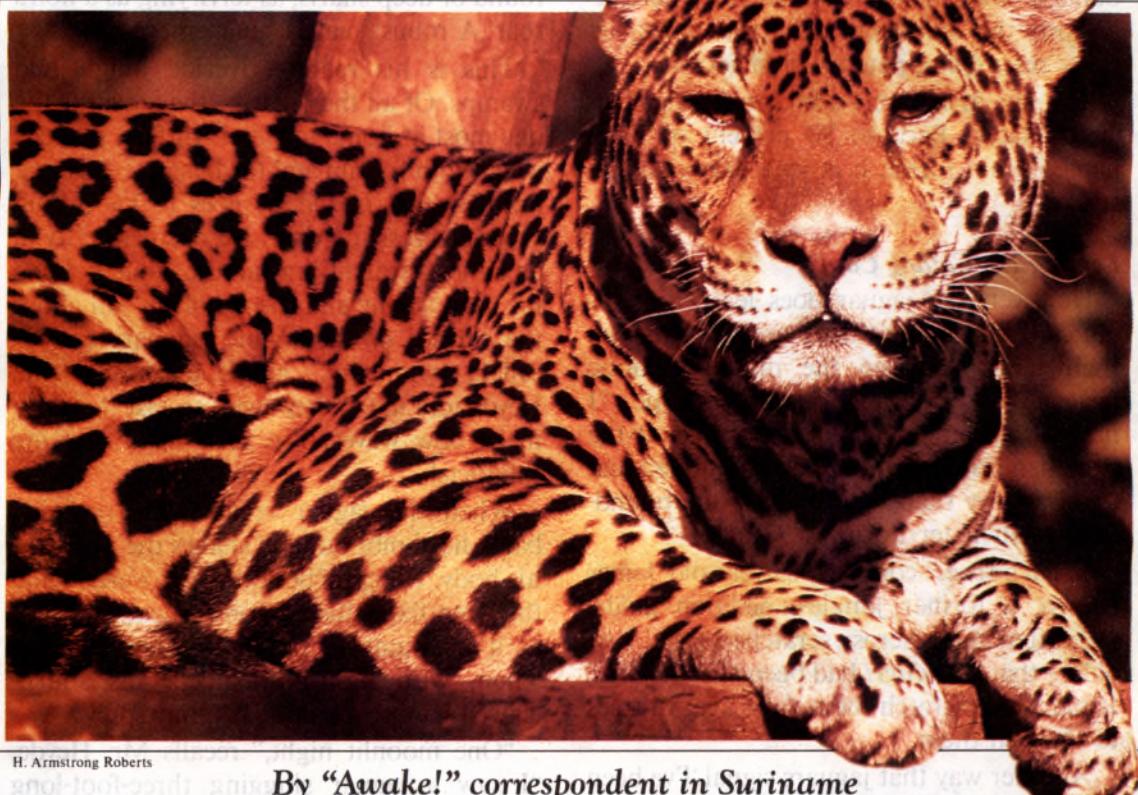
—Contributed.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

FREE newspapers in Britain generate an advertising revenue of several hundred million dollars from a circulation of tens of millions of copies per week. The results are a far cry from the scornful predictions with which they were greeted more than 20 years ago. "People pooh-poohed the idea that you could advertise in something that was free," observed Ian Locks, executive director of the Association of Free Newspapers. But, in fact, "it has opened up a whole range of free newspapers, magazines and leaflets as a new genre of marketing opportunities," he added.

Magazines too? Yes. Over 400 different magazines are given away in the United Kingdom, also with a circulation of tens of millions. Cut-rate prices have attracted advertisers from the traditional local newspapers, many of which are no more or are now themselves given away free. *The Times* of London describes the phenomenon as "a dynamic new force in Britain's publishing industry," one that is here to stay.

The Elusive JUNGLE CAT



H. Armstrong Roberts

By "Awake!" correspondent in Suriname

MY WIFE and I first saw this elusive cat while traveling down a jungle road. "Look!" I cried out as our jeep rounded a turn. We were face-to-face with a *penitigri*, or spotted tiger, as we call the jaguar in Suriname. Its tawny coat shone as if freshly painted. The setting sun deepened its colors: golden yellow to reddish brown, paling to a light buff on its cheeks, chest, and belly. Most strik-

ing, though, were the irregular black markings, or rosettes, covering almost its entire body.

Pre-Columbian Indians were so overwhelmed by the cat's striking appearance that they called it a god! Its spotted coat, they said, represented the star-studded night sky. Even today, some regard the jaguar as the unchallenged king of the South American animals. A male—often six feet long,

not counting the tail—may weigh about 250 pounds!* Its rounded head and muscular neck; its barrellike body; its short, stout legs; and big paws all ooze majestic strength.

Yet, our jaguar simply walked away at a slow pace—black-tipped tail curved up—and halted in the undergrowth. "What camouflage!" we whispered as it blended perfectly with the sun-dappled surroundings, its spots resembling patches of shadow.

The jaguar is rarely seen, preferring sheltered places. Because 80 percent of Suriname is rain forest, it is ideal jaguar country.

Leaving Its 'Calling Card'

However, the jaguar does leave its 'calling card' throughout the country. "I've seen their paw prints on the muddy Atlantic beaches," a bushranger later told me. "I have also seen scratched tree trunks at the Brazilian border." It has been suggested that this is a way that jaguars mark the boundaries of their territory.

"That's true," confirms 83-year-old James Brown, a former jungle-expedition guide. "We often came across scratched trees, heralding that a *penitigri* had been ahead of us." Jaguars also scratch their claws against trees to sharpen them.

Another way that jaguars signal 'I've been here' is by leaving scent marks and droppings. Dr. Alan Rabinowitz recently finished a two-year study of jaguars. He told me that one jaguar often stakes out an area covering from 15 to 40 square miles of dense jungle. No wonder that explorers have caught only glimpses of jaguar life! But when we put all these sightings together, a fascinating picture emerges. See how it unfolds.

* The jaguar described here is the *Panthera onca onca*.

A Look at the World of Jaguars

Evening approaches. Sounds of buzzing insects, warbling birds, and screeching monkeys surround us. But, listen! Menacing, hoarse growls filter through the trees. Then ominous silence. Scampering animals and whizzing ground birds scatter. Now another round of deep snarls, as terrifying as a lion's roar! A robust male jaguar emerges.

This is his realm—riverine jungle and swamps. Of all the big cats, the jaguar is the one most at home in water. In fact, it needs water both for fun and for business—fishing business that is. Off he goes to his fishing ground across the river. He paddles deftly in an almost straight line, all the while holding his head, spine, and the tip of his tail above the surface of the water. "Jaguars are excellent swimmers," jungle explorer Heinz Heyde told me. "They swim so fast that they make bow waves. I've seen them crossing cataracts!"

When the jaguar reaches the opposite bank, he climbs out and shakes the water off his body. He crouches on a log overhanging the river, fixing his eyes on the water surface as if he wants to pierce the depth below. Then, with lightning speed, his sharp-clawed paw scoops out his finny prey.

"One moonlit night," recalls Mr. Heyde, "I saw a jaguar slugging three-foot-long *anjoemaras* [a fish] with so much force that they flew through the air and crashed 15 feet behind the cat. Jaguars are incredibly strong!" Biologist Pieter Teunissen, who also has observed jaguars in the wild, says: "I once discovered from drag marks on a beach that a jaguar had hurled a massive *aitkantie* [leatherback turtle] 13 feet through the air."

The jaguar is not only strong but also versatile. It is a hunter in three environments, adept in water, on land, and in the

trees. When wading or when climbing trees, its claws provide sure footing, like the spiked shoes of a mountaineer. On land it retracts its claws and moves as if walking on sound-dampening socks—great feet for stalking.

But a hunter also needs patience, speed, and timing. No wonder it takes two years of motherly training before young jaguars can fend for themselves! After six weeks young cubs will follow their mother around. However, they remain hidden in thick cover while she goes after game.

Cautiously, she moves along the river's edge until she detects a group of capybaras, the world's largest rodents. With timed movements she inches forward, then pauses, eyes fixed on the quarry. Her entire body is motionless, only the tip of the tail twitching. But sensing her presence, the capybaras dive under water. Defeat, however, is rare for the jaguar. In fact, the cat scores so often that the capybara has been called "the jaguar's daily bread."

Side dishes? There are plenty. From small agoutis to bulky tapir. Even porcupines, turtles, and caimans are not safe. Occasionally, the cat even looks beyond the forest into the pastures. "The other day a cow and a calf were attacked by a jaguar," says veterinarian Ronnie Kranenburg. "That happened only a few miles out of town." But these attacks mostly involve old jaguars ousted by younger rivals or animals suffering from old shotgun injuries.

What of jaguars attacking man? "No, that must be rare," says the animal doctor. Biologist Teunissen concurs. He recalls walking along the beach one night while assisting in a sea-turtle research project. When he returned, his flashlight revealed jaguar paw prints pressed on top of his own footprints. A cat had been following him! Instead of

doing him harm, the cat vanished as soon as the biologist backtracked.

"They do attack turtles," says Mr. Teunissen, "so when I had to dig up turtle eggs during the night, I felt a bit uneasy. The sound of falling sand resembles that of a digging turtle. All I could do," he continues, "was whirl my flashlight once in a while, hoping that jaguars know that turtles don't come with flashlights."

Smuggling Trade

But what about the threat of man to the jaguars? Jaques Berney is deputy secretary-general of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the organization that tries to control wildlife trade. He told me that jaguars are dangerously threatened with extinction. Commercial trade in jaguars is thus prohibited.

According to *Focus*, the newsletter of the World Wildlife Fund (U.S.), illegal poaching is, however, still a thriving enterprise. The reason? A high demand for spotted-cat fur coats! The poachers roam the Amazonian jungle at night, blind jaguars with the glare of high-powered flashlights, and then shoot the startled animals in the head.

Within hours, reports *Focus*, the jaguar's skin is drying on a rack. Soon it is smuggled across the border, packed into a crate labeled "Coffee," and shipped to Europe. Some authorities estimate that some 6,000 jaguars are killed and processed in this way annually.

For the time being, though, Suriname enjoys a relative abundance of these magnificent animals. And let us hope that it stays that way. Otherwise, the day may come when the elusive spotted cat will not be seen anymore.

WATCHING THE WORLD

CLERGY AFFAIRS WITH PARISHIONERS

A four-year study among clergy in the United States found that 1 out of every 10 parish ministers admits "having had an affair with a member of his or her congregation," reports *Ecumenical Press Service* (the news service of the World Council of Churches). According to Professor Karen Lebacqz, a researcher in the study, the clergy explained that "the intimacy of counselling situations led to the sexual relationships." She advises, therefore, that clergy counsel during the day, in an office. That way, Professor Lebacqz says, "some temptations for sexual involvement could be lessened." Furthermore, she adds that "counselling sessions involving more than one member of the family could also help."

AIDS SPREADING EASTWARD

With the opening of borders between Eastern and Western Europe, conditions are ripe for a rapid spread of AIDS into Eastern Europe, warns the director of the World Health Organization's program on AIDS. "You cannot expect the disease to respect national borders, and the movements of people back and forth are going to blur the boundaries," he notes. He estimates that 500,000 Western Europeans today carry the virus that causes AIDS, and that between 10,000 and 30,000 Eastern Europeans may already be infected with the deadly virus. This includes hundreds of Romanian

children infected through unsanitary syringes and transfusions of contaminated blood. According to the *International Herald Tribune* of Paris, doctors now say that over 95 percent of those receiving AIDS-contaminated blood transfusions will become infected with the AIDS virus.

SMART BABIES

Scientists are becoming more adept at determining the abilities of the newly born, "leading to the recognition of the new-born baby as a 'competent infant,'" reports *The Times*, a London newspaper. "Contrary to belief, babies are born with a high degree of intelligence." Newborns



quickly begin to make sense of what they see. One of the researchers, Dr. Alan Slater, of Exeter University, says: "Babies can learn about the world from the moment they are born. The new infant recognizes its mother and others by sight, sound and smell. The evidence also points to a lot of learning in the womb." *The Times* notes that a number of international investigations are demonstrating that babies "are not just a bundle of reflexes waiting to be fed" and that at a very

early age, infants can carry out a task by planning rather than by trial and error.

GANGES POLLUTION

For Hindus, the 1,500-mile-long Ganges is the most sacred river in India. Every year thousands of bodies are cremated along the banks on pyres built of wood, and the ashes ritually cast into the river. But because of a shortage of wood and money, tens of thousands of semi-cremated bodies are now being thrown into the waters. These bodies, along with countless animal carcasses, are causing a serious health risk. As a reporter in Delhi for *The Times* of London writes: "Bloated bodies, with vultures sitting on them, float by as Hindu pilgrims splash and romp in the foul and holy water." In an effort to meet the crisis, the Uttar Pradesh government is protecting and breeding the carnivorous turtles native to the river. "The young [turtles] start by eating small carrion and fish. Gradually they will move up to bodies," claims the chief wildlife warden. But, he says, they will not threaten swimmers.

UNIVERSITY GANGS

Gangs of youths armed with guns, knives, axes, and even acid to hurl at their victims—this may sound like a nightmare from an inner-city slum, but it is not. According to the Nigerian magazine *Newswatch*, many members of these gangs are college students from upper-class families and are holding "the

university system in Nigeria under siege." The magazine notes that these gangs are associated with college fraternities and that some engage in bizarre and cult-like rituals. University officials charge that many student gang members think they are above the law because of their social standing.

VANISHING WETLANDS

Canada has nearly a quarter of the world's marshes, swamps, and bogs. Yet, "despite a growing awareness that Canada's wetlands are an important part of the environment," they are disappearing rapidly, according to a report in *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto. Agricultural policies and economics have encouraged farmers to fill in wetlands in order to increase productivity. However, the wetlands are more than a home for wildlife. They function as filters for water pollution and as buffers against soil erosion, and they may even have a positive effect on the weather. Wetlands are said to contribute to greater rainfall.

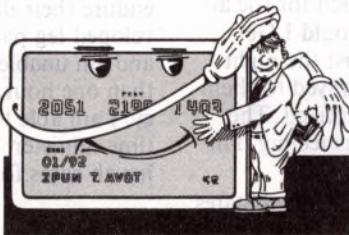
THE COCAINE PLAGUE

Those who thought that the number of weekly cocaine users in the United States was already alarmingly high at an officially estimated 860,000 were surprised in May 1990. A U.S. Senate report asserted that the actual figure is closer to 2.2 million. That would mean that nearly 1 out of every 100 Americans ranks as a 'hard-core cocaine addict,' a label the report's researchers apply to those who use cocaine at least once every week. New York State, accord-

ing to the report, tops the list with 1 out of every 40 people a frequent cocaine user. These figures include those who use the potent cocaine derivative called crack.

SMITTEN WITH PLASTIC

"Canadians are smitten with plastic," noted *The Toronto Star*, a Canadian newspaper. The *Star* referred to the steady rise of credit card transactions in Canada as a "love affair with credit." "About half of all Canadians don't clear their credit card debt in time to avoid the high



charges," which range from 20 to 29 percent. Such interest charges cost Canadians about a thousand million dollars a year. "Trouble sets in when people are unrealistic about what they can afford. . . . Some people fall into red ink because they buy compulsively to make themselves feel good," said the *Star*. The director of a credit counseling service in Toronto usually recommends that such compulsive buyers "seek help from a psychologist."

TRANSSEXUALS IN GERMANY

"There are between 30,000 and 50,000 transsexuals in the Federal Republic of Germany, but the true figure is not known and could be much higher," re-

ported the German newspaper *Bremer Nachrichten* recently. Transsexuals, those who identify with and wish to become members of the opposite sex, frequently opt for surgery to bring them closer to their goal. The waiting period for such surgery at one German hospital is over a year. *Bremer Nachrichten* also notes that a "substantial" number of these transsexuals are women who wish to become men. While women face more obvious (and insurmountable) obstacles in surgery, the men also face problems. Their beards often continue to grow in spite of surgery and hormone treatments, calling for years of painful hair removal procedures.

ROAMERS' RIGHTS

The ancient footpaths that lure people to roam over the rolling fields, stone walls, and moors of the English countryside are the focus of an escalating battle between walkers and landowners. Viewed as a common privilege for centuries, traversing private lands on footpaths became an embattled right in England back in the 1930's when farmers obstructed the pathways crossing their land. Ramblers grouped and protested en masse, and formal laws were passed to protect their right to roam. But the battle continues. Today, the government estimates that two thirds of England's 108,000 miles of footpath are obstructed by such obstacles as barbed wire and crops. The Ramblers' Association employs 'footpath secretaries' to expose such infractions. Farmers, for their part, complain that ramblers invade their privacy, upset livestock, and damage crops.

FROM OUR READERS

Asthma Heartfelt gratitude for the article on asthma. (March 22, 1990) You really succeeded in describing this complicated illness in simple, understandable terms. I am presently staying with my son in a clinic where he is undergoing tests for his asthma. His case seems to be related to allergies to food, dust, and mites. Everything that we are learning agrees with the article.

M. S., Federal Republic of Germany

Baptism Thank you very much for the article "Young People Ask . . . Should I Get Baptized?" (March 22, 1990) Just the night before I received that issue, I prayed for help to know if I was ready to be baptized. The article expressed just what I was feeling. I'm looking forward to my baptism.

A. S., United States

In your article "Young People Ask . . . Am I Ready to Get Baptized?" (April 8, 1990), you said that 'perhaps the most critical question involves your relationship with God.' Nothing could be more true! When I was baptized at age 14, I did not have a close personal relationship with Jehovah. I now know what it means to have a close relationship with God. That truly is the key.

J. R., United States

The article was a big help to me; so much so that I am going to get baptized at the next circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. It is really super how you show youth's side of things.

K. M., Federal Republic of Germany

Lupus I am not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but I must congratulate you on your

May 8, 1990, issue with its articles on pollution and the magnificent story on lupus. I have been a lupus sufferer for 14 years. Reading Robin's story was like reliving my life. She took a very positive approach, something all lupus sufferers should try to do.

Y. M. B., England

I am very encouraged reading about the many Christian brothers and sisters who, day in and day out, rely upon Jehovah to endure their illnesses. Fairly recently, I developed leg pains (osteoarthritis of the hip) and am unable to stay on my feet for more than one hour. But thanks to Jehovah's mercy, I am able to continue serving as a full-time minister. Robin's story showed how Jehovah cares for the needs of each one of us.

H. A., Japan

Fighting Parents In your article "Young People Ask . . . What Should I Do if My Parents Fight?" (December 8, 1989), you suggested that a youth simply excuse himself and go to his room when parents fight. I find this to be risky and dangerous. If I should vacate the scene of the fight, my aggressive father could kill my mother! I therefore find it invaluable always to be present to separate them when they fight.

P. M. E., Nigeria

A footnote in the article stated: "We are not referring to situations where an abusive father threatens family members with violence." Circumstances vary, and a youth might have legitimate concern for the safety of one of his parents. The footnote thus added: "In such cases, family members may be forced to obtain outside help in order to protect themselves from physical harm."
—ED.

WHY IS THE SKY BLUE?

The vast regions of outer space are shrouded in darkness. What we call sky is the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, the region of space that is visible to the human eye. Looking up into this large expanse, the sky, many have wondered, 'Why is the sky blue?' Why not violet, green, yellow, orange, or red—the other basic colors of the visible spectrum?

Sunlight consists of light of various wavelengths, which are seen as the different colors of the visible spectrum. The longest of these light waves are red, and the shortest are blue or violet. The gas molecules of our atmosphere scatter far more light of the shorter wavelengths, the blue, than of the longer wavelengths, the red. As a result, clear sky has a blue color. The air surrounding the earth, with its innumerable particles of solid materials, such as dust, scatters light to give the appearance of visibility, as though reflected from a mirror.

On the other hand, when the sun is near the horizon, sunlight travels through a greater amount of atmosphere to reach the eye, and the longer waves penetrate better than the shorter waves, causing the sky to take on a deep orange and red appearance. Solid particles in the air accentuate the reddening. Similarly, when smoke or dense clouds fill the sky, light waves of all colors are scattered. This causes the sky to appear gray.

This awesome display of God's use of light in the atmospheric heavens reminds us of the words of the psalmist: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling."—Psalm 19:1.

