

Awake!

April 22, 1991

A close-up photograph of two young children, a boy and a girl, looking directly at the viewer with serious expressions. The boy, on the left, has dark hair and is wearing a yellow ribbed turtleneck sweater. The girl, on the right, has long, wavy, light-colored hair and is wearing a light blue turtleneck sweater. They appear to be sitting close together.

**HELP FOR
CHILDREN OF
DIVORCE**



Help for Children of Divorce 3-11

Every year millions of children the world over are swept into the violent tempest of divorce. What can be done to help them?



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What causes alopecia, and can it be successfully treated? How are many victims affected, and how can they cope?



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DIVORCE

Does Have Victims

IF YOU were to believe everything that "experts" have written about divorce during the last few decades, you might conclude that in the modern divorce, nobody is at fault and nobody gets hurt.

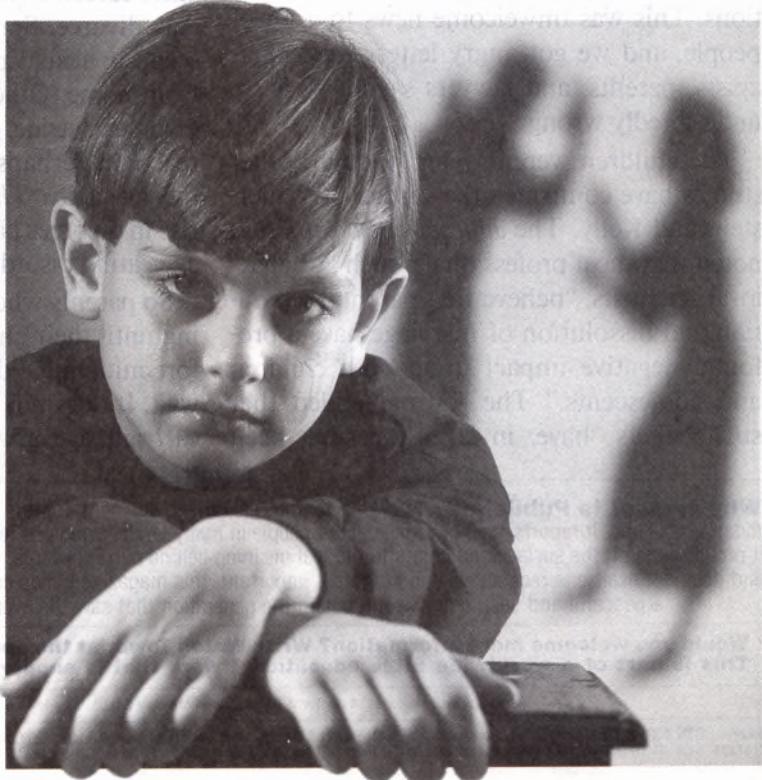
Many parents have been eased down the road to divorce by a few widely touted clichés, such as: Divorce is better for the kids than an unhappy marriage; just wait until the children are 'the right age,' to spare them any pain; kids bounce back from the trauma after only a couple of years.

Some have bolstered these optimistic notions. For example, authors Susan Gettleman and Janet Markowitz discount "the myth of the damaged child." They assert that divorce need not be traumatic for children as long as the parents 'handle it maturely.' They even argue that a parental divorce may help children to cope with their own divorces some day! They claim: "The real objects of reform ought to be the institution of marriage and the myth of domesticity itself."—*The Courage to Divorce*.

But do such bold assertions really ring true? In a world of escalating divorce rates, what are the real costs of divorce to children? Is it true that nobody gets hurt?

A Terrible Toll

In 1971, U.S. researchers Judith Wallerstein and Joan Berlin Kelly began a landmark study of the long-range effects of divorce on families. They chose 60 families that were in the throes of divorce. Altogether, these families had 131 children between



2 and 18 years of age. To the researchers' surprise, they found that divorce almost *never* came as a relief to the children. This was true even when their parents had been unhappily married. Rather, divorce left the children distraught.

Were the effects merely some short-term trauma? Sadly, no. After five years, 37 percent of the children were moderately to severely depressed. Most of them still hoped that their parents would get back together—even if they had remarried! After 10 or even 15 years, nearly half of the children in the study had “entered adulthood as worried, underachieving, self-deprecating, and sometimes angry young men and women.”

Such results ran against conventional wisdom. As Wallerstein writes: “Our findings were absolutely contradictory to our expectations. This was unwelcome news to a lot of people, and we got angry letters from therapists, parents, and lawyers saying we were undoubtedly wrong.”

The children weren’t lying, though; other studies have confirmed the verdict of Wallerstein and Kelly. The *Journal of Social Issues* noted that most professionals, such as behavioral scientists, “believe that parental separation and dissolution of marriage have a profound negative impact upon both children and adolescents.” The journal added that such beliefs “have, in large measure, been

substantiated,” citing findings such as these: Children of divorce have higher rates of delinquency and antisocial behavior than do children from intact families; the rate of admission of children of divorce to psychiatric hospitals may be twice as high as for children of intact families; divorce is perhaps the leading cause of childhood depression.

What About Older Children?

Older children handle divorce little better than younger ones. When adolescents witness their parents’ divorce, they may suffer a deep disillusionment that sours their view of marriage and other institutions, such as school. Some conclude that all relationships are unreliable, doomed to unravel someday in betrayal and infidelity.

Thrown off balance in this way, some teenagers careen to wild extremes when their parents divorce. Some turn to drugs, some descend to sexual promiscuity, some run away from home. Others seem at first to take the divorce in stride, only to go through a delayed reaction. Perhaps it is no coincidence that, as the magazine *The Washingtonian* noted, the rise in divorces has seen a parallel rise in teenage eating disorders and even suicides.

So parents who are biding their time, waiting until their children are ‘the right age’ before initiating a divorce, may be in for a long wait. It does not appear that there is a magical ‘right age’ at which children glide through

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divorce unscathed.* Sociologist Norval D. Glenn even suggested in the magazine *Psychology Today* that children may suffer from negative effects of divorce that "persist undiminished throughout the lifespan." He concluded: "One must seriously entertain the disturbing hypothesis that the increased numbers of children of divorce will lead to a slow but steady erosion of the population's overall level of well-being."

But these findings, studies, and statistics, grim though they are, do not mean that every child of divorce is destined to lead a troubled life. They do, however, demonstrate that divorce presents a very real danger to children. The question is: How can children be protected from the effects of divorce?

What Hope for the Children?

There is no protection as good as prevention. As Dr. Diane Medved put it in her book *The Case Against Divorce*: "We've got to stop allowing selfish concerns to be the only criteria for the appropriateness of divorce." There can be little doubt that the self-obsessed, me-first attitude that has permeated modern society has undermined countless marriages. How can married couples fight off this influence and make their marriages last?

* In fact, recent studies have shown that even young adults in their early 20's suffer considerably when their parents divorce. The apparent reversal of their parents' morals leaves them staggered, reports *The New York Times Magazine*. Many plunge into hedonism and promiscuity, while others withdraw from all romantic connections, some swearing they will never marry.

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The Bible claims that its Author is the Designer of marriage. In confirmation of this claim, the Bible's advice on marriage actually works. It has helped millions of men and women improve the quality of their family life. The Bible has snatched countless marriages from the jaws of divorce. It can work for you too.*

Sadly, though, divorce cannot always be avoided or prevented. It is a reality of the modern world. Some parents learn God's standards for marriage after they are already divorced. Still others live loyally by those standards, only to be betrayed by a selfish, immoral mate. The Bible itself acknowledges that some extreme circumstances make a divorce permissible. (Matthew 19:9) But as Jesus taught, it is impossible to make any wise decision without first 'counting the cost.'—Luke 14:28.

If a divorce is an accomplished fact, this is surely not the time to sink under the weight of guilt or regrets. This is the time to soften the blow for the children. It can be done! Dr. Florence Bienenfeld, a widely respected divorce counselor and mediator, assures divorced parents: "Divorce does not have to be a Greek tragedy in which everyone dies. Everyone can live, and in time recover, heal and do very well."—*Helping Your Child Succeed After Divorce*.

But how? What can parents, relatives, and friends do to help the children of divorce?

* See the book *Making Your Family Life Happy*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

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Helping the Children of D I V O R C E

"One time, when I was about three years old, my father came to pick me up for a visit. He took me out and bought me a doll with a pretty red dress, then drove me home. We sat in the car together for a little while. But as soon as my mother came out to get me, she and my father started yelling at each other and arguing through the car window—with me in the middle.

"Suddenly my father flung open the door and shoved me out of the car. He skidded the tires and drove off. I didn't know what was going on. My mother wouldn't even let me unwrap my new doll. I never saw it after that. And I didn't see my father again until I was 19 years old."

—Heidi.

TIME heals all wounds," an old saying goes. Is it really true? Or are children irreparably damaged by divorce?

According to *The Journal of Social Issues*, a lot depends on what happens after the divorce. It states: "The family relationships that emerge after divorce affect children as much or more than the divorce itself."

In Heidi's case, her parents' divorce was only the beginning of her troubles. As so often happens, her mother's second marriage did not work out much better than the first

one, nor did the one after that. Heidi's childhood was a bumpy roller-coaster ride that lurched from screaming, dish-breaking fights to lonely summer days in an empty apartment, wondering fearfully when—and if—her mother would come home.

There is much that parents can do to spare their children such a turbulent aftermath of divorce. Divorce, after all, ends marriage, not parenthood.

Parents—The Crucial Role

"The shared act of conception entitles children to both a mother and a father," wrote two psychologists in *Psychology Today*. That statement may strike you as self-evident. Yet, divorce in some ways deprives a child of both parents in one fell swoop.

For example, consider the United States, which statistically might be called the divorce capital of the world. There, over 90 percent of the children of divorce live with the mother and have a visiting relationship with the father. Over half of those children see their fathers less than once a year! And a mother's time with her children also plummets after divorce, by as much as 21 hours a week, according to one study.

If experts agree on anything, it is that children are more likely to adjust well to life after divorce if they continue to have a positive and consistent relationship with both parents. If that is not possible, a good relationship with at least one parent still helps to soften the

**Are there activities
you can share with your
child? Divorce ends
marriage, not
parenthood**

blow of divorce. But how can parents maintain such closeness with their children after divorce?

Making the Time Count

If you are a divorced mother, maintaining closeness may be your toughest challenge. All too often, you may be branded with what some societies consider a double stigma: divorce and poverty. Thrust unprepared into the job market, and struggling to compensate for unreliable or insufficient support payments from an ex-spouse, you may feel that you have little time left for your children.

The answer: determination and a schedule. Buy out whatever small chunks of time you can, and plan with your child what you will do together during that time. Even a *little* daily time with your undivided attention is vastly better than no time at all. Planning ahead for a special outing together also gives your child something to look forward to.

Then there is your child's pressing need for spiritual guidance, discipline, and training. Solid blocks of time for this purpose may be hard to come by. So the Bible advises: "You must inculcate [God's laws] in your [child] and speak of them when you sit in your house



and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up."—Deuteronomy 6:7.

Are you ever "on the road" together, perhaps driving or taking public transportation? What absorbs your attention—your child, or a newspaper or car radio? When you eat together, does the television drown out all conversation, or is the meal a time for your family to talk in peace? Are there household

chores that you could share with your child, such as fixing a meal or doing the laundry?

This, of course, does not mean that you must seize upon these occasions to lecture your child. Just by being with your child and conversing warmly and openly, you will inevitably impart some of your values. Times like these can also be the ideal opportunity for you to give your children the reassurance they need so badly just now. Some children feel secretly responsible for their parents' breakup. Others feel rejected by the parent who has left the home. If you frequently assure them of your love, praise them for their good traits and accomplishments, and make them feel secure enough to speak their mind honestly, you will have done much to soften the blow of divorce.

Some parents let discipline slide after a divorce, often out of a sense of guilt. 'My child has had it hard enough lately,' they seem to feel. But giving your children free rein to do as they please is not showing them love. The director of a program for adolescents and children at a psychiatric hospital told *The Washingtonian*: "Kids constantly say to me, 'My parents let me do anything. They don't care about me.'" As the Bible says: "If you don't punish your son, you don't love him. If you do love him, you will correct him." —Proverbs 13:24, *Today's English Version*.

The Torn Child

One little boy, when asked to draw pictures at a divorce clinic, drew himself as the object of a tug-of-war between his growling parents; he was coming apart at the seams and dripping blood. That is how some children of divorced parents feel. While the child loves both parents, neither parent may want the child to love the other.

In the bitterness and acrimony that so often accompany divorce, it is very difficult for

parents not to involve their children in the battle. Wallerstein and Kelly reported that two thirds of the parents in their study openly competed for the love and allegiance of their children. Dr. Bienenfeld warns parents that making a child feel torn between parents may produce feelings of self-hatred and guilt and "will reduce his or her chances for happiness, fulfillment and success."

The Bible wisely counsels: "You fathers [or mothers], again, must not goad your children to resentment, but give them the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing." (Ephesians 6:4, *The New English Bible*) Clearly, goading your child into resenting the other parent has no place in Christian upbringing.

Every child has two parents. Death may change that, but divorce does not. And unless the courts limit the other parent's access to the children (or the other parent willfully shirks his or her responsibility), you may need to cooperate with your former mate in raising the children.

Granted, you may have just cause for bitterness toward your ex-spouse. But if you use your children to punish that one, it is really your children who suffer. Dr. Bienenfeld suggests that honestly admitting to yourself that you also may have played a part in your marital problems can help to diffuse your bitterness. *Parents* magazine tells of one woman who tried praying in behalf of her ex-husband whenever she began to dwell on negative thoughts about him. She found that this tactic gave her a feeling of well-being and control quite new to her and freed her from being 'frozen into a permanent battle position.' —Compare Matthew 5:43-45.

Can Others Help?

Psychologists Julius and Zelda Segal write in *Parents* magazine that "kids in broken fam-

ties are strengthened if at least some threads of continuity remain undisturbed" after the storm of divorce. Sadly, according to these psychologists, "neighbors and friends tend to keep their distance, and so, too, do some grandparents because they are too busy taking sides in the parental conflict."

Yes, divorce is particularly cruel to children when other relatives also disappear from their lives. This compounds their feelings of abandonment. So if you are an aunt, an uncle, or a grandparent of any children of divorce,

focus on giving them the reassurance they so badly need right now instead of joining in their parents' marital fracas. Sometimes, no one can boost a child's sagging spirits better than a loving grandparent.

Heidi, quoted at the outset of this article, received no such support. Yet, hers is a success story. Today, at 26, she is a happily married young woman, openhearted and industrious. What accounts for her success?

In a word: friendships. As a teenager, Heidi began studying the Bible with Jehovah's

Advice for Divorced Parents

Don't fight with your ex-spouse—over the phone or in person—in front of the children.

Don't criticize your former mate in front of the children. When your children criticize an absent parent, don't encourage them or join in.

Don't force children to choose between their parents, and don't turn them against your ex-spouse.

Don't allow children to bully you with threats of moving in with the other parent. Condoning such emotional blackmail will encourage them to become manipulative and may even hinder their moral development.

Don't use children to spy on your ex-spouse, forcing information out of them upon their return from each visit.

Don't ask children to carry angry messages or humiliating pleas for money from you to your ex-spouse.

Don't put a child down with such remarks as, "You're just like your father." Not only does this strike the child as a criticism of the father but it may also make the child feel doomed to repeat the mistakes of the other parent.

Do prove yourself a good listener, letting your children express their feelings—even feelings you don't agree with.

Do communicate clearly, freely, and openly. Protect them, though, from details they do not need to know. Your son or daughter may seem the ideal confidant. But remember, a child is neither a miniature adult nor a surrogate spouse, however mature he or she may seem.

Do comfort your children and assure them that they did not cause the divorce, nor can they now jump in and save your marriage.

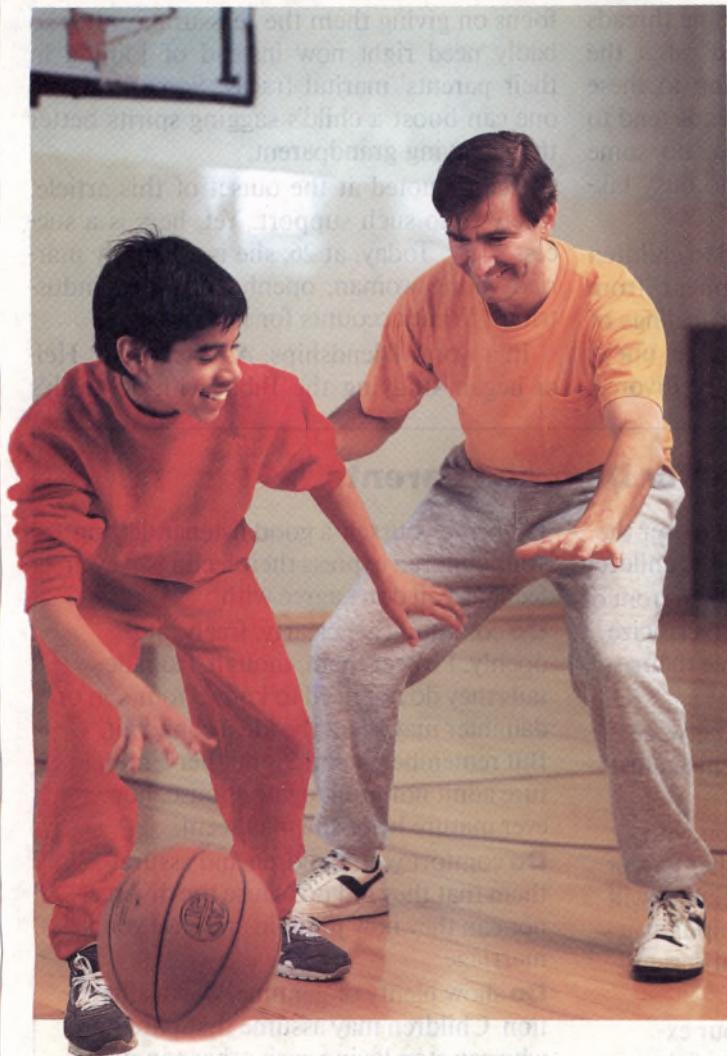
Do show plenty of genuine, warm affection. Children may assume that parents who can stop loving each other can just as easily stop loving their children.

Do cooperate with your ex-spouse in protecting the children from your disputes.

Do balance praise with discipline, setting fair limits and realistic goals.

Do set the example yourself, avoiding the immoral behavior you teach them to avoid.

Do spend as much of your leisure time with the children as possible.



Witnesses. At the Kingdom Hall where she attended meetings, she found true friends. "I used to think my situation was pretty hopeless," she recalls. "But it helps to have people that you can talk to. I had one friend I could tell everything. She always knew when something was wrong, and I'd always end up telling her. She was kind of a mother figure. But there were others I could do things with too." Heidi found the truth of Jesus' promise that the Christian congregation could provide an

Do you know of any children of divorce who could use a friend?

ample family for those who had lost their own.—Mark 10: 29, 30.

But Heidi did not take the initiative to make these friends. "They sought me out," she says. And that is a recurring theme among children of divorce in the Christian congregation. For instance, a young woman named Meg fondly remembers a couple who befriended her when her parents separated: "They just knew that I needed them, and they were there. You don't want to say, 'Look, I need you. I want you to love me now.'"

What about you? Could you be like a brother, a sister, a mother, a father, or a grandparent to a child of divorce? The young person probably won't ask you, but that doesn't mean he or she doesn't need you.

Of course, you will never be able to replace all the functions of an intact family. But you can be a friend, a good, sympathetic listener. You can also help to guide the young person to a better relationship with our Creator—the true "father of fatherless boys" and the greatest Friend anybody could ask for.—Psalm 68:5.

Is there no hope, though, for a time when divorce rates will turn around, a time when children will be sure to grow up in whole, happy families?

When the Family Will Heal

If we had to depend upon mankind for a solution, then the answer is no, there is no real hope for the children. Mankind can scarcely begin to repair the hopelessly divided global human family, let alone the countless divided families that make it up. As Linda Bird Francke wrote in *Growing Up Divorced*: "Too much has happened too fast. The courts are floundering. The schools are floundering. Families are floundering. No one knows what to expect of each other in these days of mass divorce as there are no rules, no precedents to follow."

But mankind's Creator is not floundering.

He understands our divided world, and he sees that it doesn't need to be fine-tuned by human "experts." It needs to be replaced. And he promises to do just that. He promises that those who do his will are going to survive the passing of this corrupt system and live to see the restoration of a global paradise. (Luke 23:43; 1 John 2:17) Living then under God's rule, man will be cured of the sin that infects his nature. The selfishness and imperfection that bring divisions, hatred, and disunity will at long last be washed away. The human family will heal.—Revelation 21:3, 4.

And divorce will then be a relic of a fading past.

Are You a Long-Distance Parent?

IF YOU are, you may find it all too easy to drop out of the picture. Perhaps arranging a visiting schedule feels uncomfortably like asking your ex-spouse for permission to see your own offspring. Or perhaps your children have a new stepparent, and you feel you are no longer needed.

But you are needed. The Bible urges: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children." (Ephesians 6:4, *New International Version*) If you disappear from your children's lives, not only will you exasperate them but you may well undermine their self-worth, making them feel unloved and unlovable. Even a limited relationship with your children is better than none at all.

It seems that the length of your visits is more important than the frequency. The longer the visit, the more likely your child will have memorable times with you. Miriam Galper Cohen, herself a long-distance parent, notes in her book on the subject that these visits don't have to be spectacular outings. Sometimes it is the quiet walk

together, or having a meal together, that creates the fondest memories.

Frequent telephone calls, regularly scheduled, also keep you and your child in close touch. Or you might record yourself reading a story to your child or talking about your own childhood. Besides tapes and letters, you might send your child photographs, drawings, cartoons, or magazine articles that struck you as funny or interesting. Cohen also suggests finding out what books or television programs your child enjoys, reading or watching them yourself, and then discussing them by mail or phone.

As Cohen notes, "long-distance parenting is the least preferable option to other custody arrangements, short of never seeing the children at all." Yet, there certainly are ways to make your child aware, on a regular basis, of your continued love and concern. Even your smallest act of consideration may spare your child a great deal of pain.



Alopecia

Living in Silence With Hair Loss

As told by an alopecia sufferer

ALOPECIA?" you wonder. "I don't remember ever hearing about that disease." People who are plagued with it may be too embarrassed to tell you. They keep it a secret. I have alopecia, so let me tell you something about it.

Try to imagine the shock you would feel if you saw your hair suddenly begin to fall out. "How could this be happening? It can't be true," you may say in disbelief.

Later, you learn that you are not the only one with alopecia. It strikes about 1 out of every 100 people, and it afflicts both men and women. Unfortunately, treatment of the disorder is frequently unsuccessful.

"After all, it's only hair," some people tell me. True. Yet, alopecia affects every part of my life, and adding to the burden, it is dif-

ficult to explain it to others. Why? Because the disease is shrouded in an aura of mystery.

For example, usually when someone names a disease, you immediately have a mental picture of just what that ailment is. Not so with alopecia. Its cause cannot be stated succinctly. And considering the way alopecia strikes—quickly and without warning—the victim often finds himself unprepared to discuss it. Thus, a person may lose not only hair but dignity as well.

What Is It?

Alopecia is a medical problem that we victims have no control over. It is not contagious, and therefore others cannot contract it from us. Victims will not die from it, but the emotional pain of humiliation, frustration, and embarrassment can become a challenging experience.

Alopecia should not be confused with ordinary male pattern baldness. Hence, when defining alopecia, some of us prefer the term "hair loss" to that of "baldness."

The term *alopecia areata* refers to the condition wherein patches of scalp experience hair loss. This is the type I have. If all hair on the head is lost, the disorder is referred to as *alopecia totalis*. And if the disorder includes loss of all body hair, it is called *alopecia universalis*. For some sufferers, the disease never progresses beyond *alopecia areata*. Others experience spontaneous hair regrowth without receiving any treatment. Still others, however, lose eyebrows and eyelashes. This may lead to eye infections because there is no hair to protect the eyes from dust and sweat.

What Causes It?

Medical research indicates that alopecia is probably an autoimmune disorder, that is, an allergic reaction to some part of your own body. Another autoimmune disorder that you may be familiar with is lupus. The im-

mune system of a person with alopecia mistakenly identifies the hair as a foreign substance. The immune system responds by sending killer T cells (lymphocytes) to the site. These cluster around the hair follicle and attack and destroy it. For an indefinite period of time, the hair follicle is prevented from producing normal hair growth.

Medical treatment is varied. At best, it takes a long time to get results, and often the results are not what were hoped for. The hair, for example, may regrow, but it may be very fine-textured and light in color. Frustration may come if the alopecia reoccurs and the treatment that worked one time does not work again. So the victim may end up going from doctor to doctor, trying different treatments. Alopecia may then become a financial as well as an emotional burden.

The medical community used to point to stress as the culprit. Remove the stress, they said, and the hair will return. So a victim perhaps wrongly believed that he had caused his own hair loss or, as some doctors suggested, that a marriage mate might have created the stress. Now, though, it is understood that stress is not the cause. The alopecia sufferer has no reason to feel guilty or to blame himself for his condition.

Challenges Faced

Hair loss alters appearance, and so alopecia sufferers are occasionally classed with certain groups. If a person has no hair, or what others consider to be too little hair, and wears it short as I do, observers may jump to the conclusion that one with alopecia is making a social or political statement.

Finding employment is always a challenge, but it is especially so for those with alopecia. Some potential employers are wary these days because of the fear of AIDS. Since those with alopecia have little or no hair, employers may

wonder if they have AIDS. Alopecia, of course, is not the same disorder as AIDS. Others assume that alopecia sufferers are undergoing chemotherapy.

At times thoughtless remarks may be so devastating that we with alopecia fear leaving the shelter of our home. Rash advice from well-wishers can be painful too. They may say: "If I were you, I just wouldn't worry about it. I would just laugh it off." Easier said than done. Wise King Solomon realized that "even in laughter the heart may be in pain." (Proverbs 14:13) Since alopecia can change the way we look so radically and with such suddenness, we appreciate it when we are not reminded about our appearance.

Why Not Wear a Wig?

"Why don't you wear a wig? I would," people may suggest. But most wigs are designed for women who, for fashion reasons, want a change of hairstyle. They are simply not made to be worn over a head that has no hair. Wigs designed especially for alopecia

An Alopecia Sufferer

The actor Humphrey Bogart was one. His wife, Lauren Bacall, wrote: "He'd noticed a bare spot on his cheek where his beard was not growing. The one spot increased to several—then he'd wake in the morning and find clumps of hair on the pillow. That alarmed him. It's one thing to be bald with a rim of hair, an actor could always wear a hairpiece, but without the rim it would have to be a full wig. The more hair fell out, the more nervous he got, and the more nervous he got, the more hair fell out. In the last scene in *Dark Passage* he wore a complete wig. He panicked—his livelihood hung in the balance. A visit to the doctor was in order.... The verdict was that he had a disease known as alopecia areata."

sufferers are usually more costly, and not everyone can afford to buy and properly maintain them.

Women with alopecia are more successful in finding a proper wig than are men and children. This is because women have a greater choice of hairstyles. Some women, though, prefer to wear attractive scarves instead. Most wigs designed for men, it seems, do not look natural. And then there may be the questions: 'When do you wear the wig? All the time? Do you wear it when at home alone in

What Treatment Works?

Alopecia can be treated by cortisone injections in an effort to interrupt the attack. Cortisone is a drug that shrinks the swelling in the area of the hair follicle so that it can receive blood and nutrition.

Another treatment is DNCB (dinitro-chlorobenzene). This is an acid that is applied directly to the affected area in an attempt to cause an artificial allergic reaction—not unlike a bad case of poison ivy—in hopes of distracting the lymphocytes. The resultant rash may be extremely painful for some.

The topical use of a drug called minoxidil has also been touted. Although originally developed to treat high blood pressure, as a side effect, this drug was found to cause hair to grow. Yet, as with most treatments for alopecia, the success rate has been disappointingly low. Most of the news coverage has been about its use in treating male pattern baldness, not alopecia.

Over 16 different drugs and treatments are prescribed for alopecia, and each must be used regularly for an indefinite time period. Since it often takes six months to determine whether a particular drug will be effective, treatment can be time-consuming and frustrating. Thus, at present, there is no real cure for alopecia.

case someone might unexpectedly visit?" So, for a number of reasons, alopecia victims may not wear wigs. On the other hand, the majority of victims experience hair loss in a limited area that can be covered by surrounding hair and have no reason for considering a wig.

How I Cope

Alopecia victims may occasionally turn inward and become reclusive, feeling bad because of the way others may perceive them. During difficult moments, it is important to have a clear focus on the priorities of life and to remember that it is what we are on the inside that wins the respect of others.

Therefore, I live one day at a time and try not to worry unduly about the next so that my problem will not become all-consuming. I find helpful the Biblical adage: "Never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties."—Matthew 6:34.

True, many other people have worse problems. Yet, for those who have alopecia, support and understanding from others is often missing. Until a few years ago, they had little opportunity to discuss their feelings with others who suffer from alopecia, but now there is a network of support groups throughout the United States. Through these groups those with alopecia can get the help of qualified and informed doctors, who share new medical breakthroughs and expose old myths.

Sometimes I cannot help but think how different my life might have been. And yet I enjoy the privilege of being one of Jehovah's Witnesses and can thus give of myself to help others learn about God's beautiful promises for the future. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Another help to keep me going are the strengthening words found in the Bible at Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you."

"You Just Have to Do It"

By Awake! correspondent in Colombia

A YOUNG couple from Missouri in the United States explains: "We first heard about the International Volunteer Construction Worker Program in the summer of 1988 when some friends returned from an assignment at the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Honduras, Central America. 'You just have to do it!' they said, bubbling over with enthusiasm."

The construction program mentioned is the one that has been developed by Jehovah's Witnesses for construction of their branch offices around the world. To qualify for it, prospective personnel must first work at the Watch Tower Society's Brooklyn, New York, headquarters, where their work habits and abilities can be evaluated. So the husband from Missouri contacted the Society's office in Brooklyn and volunteered to work there temporarily.

While at the Brooklyn headquarters, the husband signed up to work in another country. Then, upon returning to Missouri, he and his wife began saving for their anticipated trip. Several months later their assignment letter came. They would be going to Colombia, South America!

From 1987 through 1990, over a thousand temporary volunteer workers paid their own way to Colombia to spend from two weeks to two months helping with the construction of the large new printing branch of Jehovah's Witnesses there. In addition, some 80 other volunteers from 14 different countries have spent more than a year working on this large Colombia project. Some of these short-term and long-term workers had previously helped build new branch facilities in such countries as

Nigeria, the Philippines, Guyana, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, and Ecuador.

Volunteer workers who arrive in Colombia are helped by their hosts to proceed through immigration and customs. Then they are taken by car to the construction site at Facatativá, about 30 miles northwest of Bogotá.

Orientation

For a typical new arrival, the first day on the project includes a tour of the facilities and instructions on living as a part of the construction crew. Most of the international construction workers—in recent years there have been from 40 to 60 at any given time—live in housing facilities that have been acquired near the construction site.

The new construction workers receive instructions regarding schedules for work, for attending Christian meetings, for sharing in weekend preaching activity, and for proper care of their living quarters. Information is also given about laundry service, as well as participation in the morning program of Bible discussion and related matters.

The rooms provided are comfortable, the meals are hot and nourishing, and the laundry comes back promptly, washed and ironed. Even medical care is available if needed. Nothing is overlooked to make things as pleasant as possible for the volunteer workers.

These new arrivals are usually surprised to find that the building project is much larger than they expected. On a slope leading up to a deep evergreen forest on the mountain behind, there is a buzz of activity in the

two five-story residence buildings. These will eventually accommodate up to 250 members of the branch staff in Colombia, called the Bethel family. Over the past months, new arrivals have seen crews putting in plumbing, wiring, and steel-stud framing for the walls.

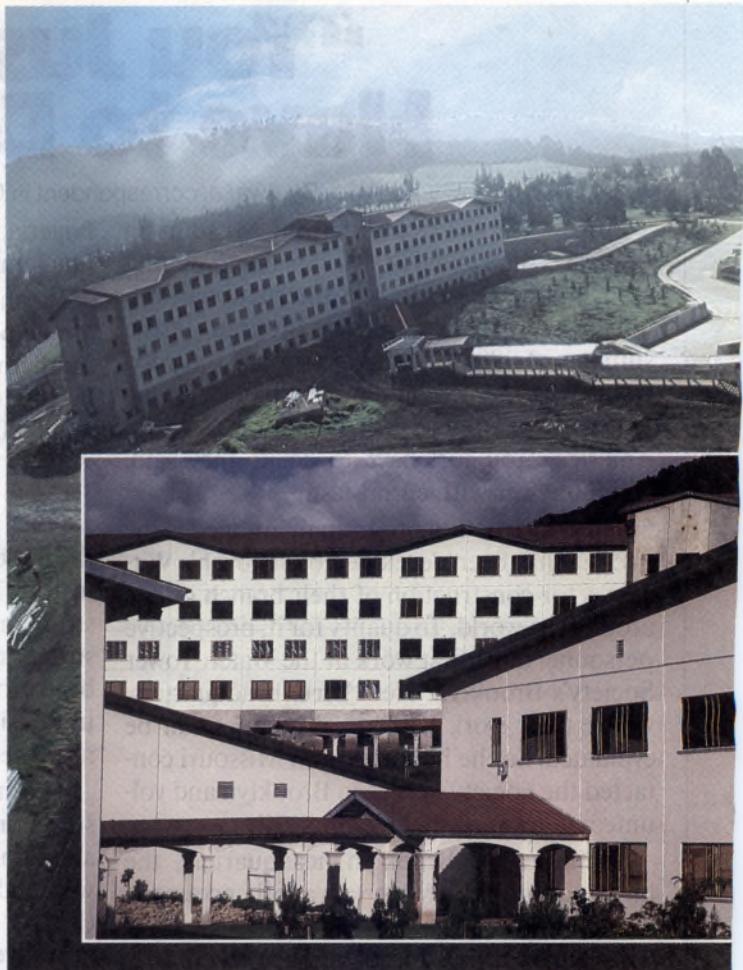
The dining room, which seats 400 comfortably, is crowded with 600 or more on weekends when an influx of local volunteer workers eat meals cafeteria style. Except for some final touches, the dining room has now been completed.

In the large two-story factory building, the Shipping Department and the Job Press Department have already moved in. As new arrivals pass through the second floor of the factory, the one conducting the tour proudly points out the huge new Hantscho rotary offset printing press. Several members of the pressroom in Brooklyn supervised its installation, ably assisted by other volunteers.

This computer-controlled printing press—65 tons and 88 feet long—is one of the finest available today. It is now producing 38,000 copies an hour of the Spanish editions of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines for distribution throughout northwestern South America. More than 155,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses in Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru have just recently begun to receive their magazines from this printing press—all in full color.

Local Support

Many Colombian volunteers are on the construction project too, both men and women. They are proud to be working on their



new branch, as they call it. Some of these live in temporary housing near the construction site, and others commute regularly from Bogotá and other nearby towns. On weekends and holidays, an additional 50 to 150 volunteer workers come, by turns, from about a hundred congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bogotá and its vicinity.

A volunteer construction worker from Canada, who has experience in steel-stud framing and drywall installation, observed: "The local brothers here are eager to learn, and the quality of their work is as good as, if



not better than, what you see on a commercial project at home."

A worker in charge of heavy equipment and earth-moving since 1987 adds: "We have a good group of men, including a number of local brothers, working with us. Some of these hardly knew how to drive a car before, but they have developed into excellent equipment operators."

A number of young Colombians who have been working regularly on the project have made application for permanent service in the Bethel family, which will soon be considerably

enlarged. Others will return to the full-time preaching in Colombia. All of these have added greatly to their spiritual stature by having served as volunteer construction workers here in this Bethel family atmosphere.

A Rewarding Work

Thousands who have participated in the International Volunteer Construction Worker Program have testified that it has been a highlight of their lives. "It is very special," said a worker from Mississippi, U.S.A., about the Colombia project. "The people make it special. I would love to do it all the time if that were possible. You can build buildings anywhere, but it's working with the brothers that makes the difference." Daily rubbing shoulders with Christians who display the fruits of Jehovah's spirit is so different from working in the secular world!

Departure time for the temporary workers usually comes all too soon. There are hugs and plenty of tears. How often the parting words are heard: "We wish we could stay longer." "We would love to stay on!" All leave with a deepened appreciation of the international brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses. They have experienced a foretaste of what it will be like to live and work together in the future, extending Paradise to the ends of the earth.

Everyone, of course, cannot participate in this international construction program. But for those whose circumstances permit, a large new and exciting door of opportunity has been opened by the International Volunteer Construction Worker Program.

Why Don't They Die From Heatstroke?



By Awake! correspondent in South Africa

Most mammals maintain a body temperature of about 99 degrees Fahrenheit. If the temperature of your body rises above 106 degrees Fahrenheit, vital brain cells may be damaged, at times resulting in death. What protects you from heatstroke? A "thermostat" in your brain detects when your temperature rises above normal, and a message is sent to millions of tiny glands in your skin. You then begin to sweat profusely. As the moisture evaporates, it cools your body. This is a marvelous mechanism, common to many mammals.

Now, look at this shot of the handsome oryx, or gemsbok, taken in the African Namib Desert. Since water is scarce, the oryx cannot afford to waste precious body fluids. What does it do instead of sweating?

"In order to shield its brain from the overheated blood," explains zoologist Richard Goss in the book *Maberly's Mammals of Southern Africa*, "it has a fine network of blood vessels close to the surface of the nose; blood passes through these veins and is cooled by the air flowing in and out of the nose as the gemsbok

pants; this cool blood is then used to lower the temperature of the warm blood on its way to the brain in much the same way as water is used to cool a hot mechanical engine."

Thanks to this cooling system, oryx thrive in the hot, dry deserts of Africa. States *The Encyclopedia of Wild Life*: "It is thought that the Oryx can exist indefinitely without water, absorbing whatever moisture it needs from desert plants. Certainly it seems quite happy in remarkably high temperatures —up to 40° C [104° F.]". And what if the oryx's temperature should reach the critical 106 degrees Fahrenheit? Would this bring on a heatstroke? No. The oryx can "tolerate a body temperature increase of some five or six degrees above the 37° C [99° F.] regarded as normal for most mammals," explains South African professor of zoology John Skinner. Indeed, man was not the first to design an efficient radiator!

Win the Battle of Living Space!

I NEED more living space? How many times have you heard—or uttered—that common complaint? Is the answer a bigger home or apartment? Probably not. Most of us simply cannot afford to move. And even those of us who can may find in a short time that the space problem has reared its head once again.

The truth is, no matter how small our living quarters, there is often enough room for the things we *need*. It is the extras that generally create the problem. And when a home is disorganized and cluttered, it can be a constant source of discomfort, frustration, and stress. Let us, therefore, focus on three ways to “discover” more living space in the very place you already live—your home!*

No. 1: Discard Unnecessary Items

In many homes spring or fall cleaning is a ritual of shifting items around, cleaning and then returning the items to their original location. But why not use this as an opportunity to discard unnecessary items?

Have you fallen into the habit of saving old newspapers and magazines? Try cutting out the articles you really wish to save (marking on them the name of the periodical, date, and page number for future reference) and then dispose of the rest of the newspaper or magazine. You will be surprised at how much new space this can create!

Take a look, too, at the furniture you own. Are there pieces that do little but add to the clutter? Perhaps a friend could put them to

* While the suggestions given herein particularly apply to those dwelling in industrialized lands, some of the principles may also prove useful to readers in developing countries.

better use. And what about your closets? Are they full of clothing that you haven’t worn in years? Why not consider discarding anything you haven’t worn in a year or more?

Granted, this sounds like a major project, and it can be. So make it a *family project*. Involve the children and your marriage mate. When your children get into the spirit of the project, they just might be willing to discard some of the unnecessary things they themselves own. The result? Perhaps the beginning of a lifelong pattern of neatness.

No. 2: Utilize All Available Space

Now let’s take a tour of your home and identify all potential storage areas. This includes walls, shelves, doors, hallways, closets, and ceilings. Inexpensive baskets or racks can be hung on hallway walls or on doors to store shoes, towels, and so forth. Boxes or crates can be used as handy storage bins for books, toys, photo albums, and other things you decide to keep. By placing these containers in your closets, you can utilize wasted floor space.

Are folding chairs taking up a lot of space? Perhaps they can be stored under a sofa or

In Our Next Issue

**Lottery Fever—Who Wins?
Who Loses?**

World Cup Soccer—Sport or War?

What’s Wrong With Polygamy?

behind your curtains. Is valuable living-room space being taken up by small bookcases? Why not, as an alternative, install a floor-to-ceiling bookcase in your hallway? If you put doors on it, it may also be used to store items other than books.

Do not ignore the space under your bed. Plastic or cardboard boxes can be placed there to store out-of-season bedding. And what about your walls? Bulky stereo speakers can be wall-mounted and save floor space. If toys are cluttering up your child's bedroom floor, try installing low shelves on the walls. These provide a handy place where your child can put his toys, rather than piling them in a bulky chest. The toys remain visible to the children, and the shelves can be moved upward on the wall as the child grows. Shelves may also prove handy in your bathroom for the storage of towels, soaps, and toiletries.

No. 3: Rearrange Your Living Space

Living space can often be created just by rearranging a few things. Many homemakers place all their furniture against the walls, leav-

ing the center of the room empty. Try placing two bookcases or tables back-to-back to serve as room dividers. Or consider installing a floor-to-ceiling bookcase that can serve as both a storage unit and a room divider. Now the same room can be used for two purposes—one area for study, the other for general household activity. Room dividers are particularly useful when siblings must share a room. They increase privacy at a low cost.

When living space is limited, however, sometimes even the best efforts at reorganization fall short of desired results. Perhaps you can create at least the illusion of spaciousness by using wall mirrors or repainting your home in lighter hues. Doing either of these things will create a more open look in your home.

If limited living space is a problem, why not give these simple suggestions a try? You may well discover that when your home is neat and organized, it adds to the well-being and peace of mind of the entire family—a fitting reward for having won the battle of living space!

They Have Opened My Father's Heart

"My parents are Italian Catholics who would never pick up the *Watchtower* or *Awake!* magazine to read," wrote a woman from Westerly, Rhode Island, U.S.A. But now, she says, *The Watchtower* has opened her father's heart. She explains how this came about:

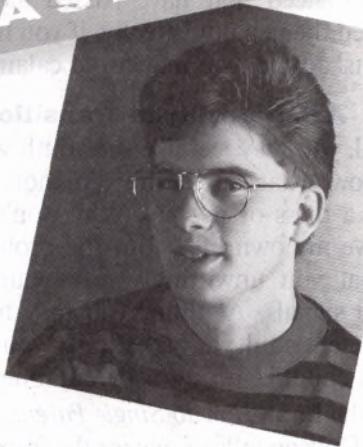
"One day I borrowed my father's truck, which had a tape deck that he never used. So I took advantage of it. I put in a cassette of the *Watchtower* magazine. When I returned the truck, I didn't take the cassette out. In the meantime, my father took the truck and began to listen to the cassette.

"My father is very comical—he thought the Witnesses were on the radio, and he kept

changing the station but kept hearing about the Witnesses. Finally, after two days, he realized it was a cassette and not the radio. But by then he was hooked by what he had listened to.

"That my father had learned things became obvious when he and my mother began telling me things he had been listening to. Every other day on my way out in the ministry, I would switch the cassette in his truck. And every morning when I would see him at breakfast, he would ask me questions such as: 'Is your husband an elder?' or, 'The Bible doesn't teach purgatory or hellfire, does it?' So he's gradually learning the Bible."

**Young
People
Ask...**



Why Do My Parents Try to Control My Life?

"I look for a chance to act, to flex my muscles, to feel my strength.... I want to learn the bitter from the sweet by tasting, not by talking. I hunger for experience; [my parents] feed me explanations."—A 16-year-old boy.

"My mother and I are in complete conflict... She tries to baby me... I want to get away; I can't stand being imprisoned.... I'm trying to grow up and she's not letting me."—A 17-year-old girl.

IT IS a common complaint among youths that their parents try to control their lives. And perhaps you have the same grievance yourself. You say you want to stay out late; they say you must be home early. You say you're ready to date; they say you're too young. It seems that every 'May I' is met with 'No, you can't.'

In all fairness to parents, though, most youths are allowed to have their way at least some of the time. And likely you're no exception. Furthermore, your parents are probably well aware that you are no longer a child; sooner or later they will have to relinquish the control they've had over you since you were born. And like most parents, they probably want you to become a balanced, independent adult.

You may wonder, then: 'If my parents feel this way, why don't they show it?' It seems to you that they have a stranglehold on your life and aren't about to let go. Really, however, there is probably little question as to whether you *will* gain control of your life. The only question is *when*. You want it now. But your parents may want you to gain that control gradually.

One teen viewed this as "a vote of no confidence" from her parents, an insulting implication that she has a "self-destructive bent that has to be curbed." But could it be that your parents have good reason to act as they do? In any event, your understanding their viewpoint may help you quell any feelings of resentment you may have over the way they treat you. As Proverbs 19:11 says: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger."

Why They Keep Control

First, realize that the world has progressively become more dangerous and corrupt since your parents navigated their own way through youth. (2 Timothy 3:1, 13) One

parent admitted: 'The world our son or daughter experiences at 14 or 15 or 16 is more dangerous than it was when we were growing up. It is less safe to go out alone. More teenagers are getting pregnant than when we were young.' No wonder your parents want to protect you!

If your parents are God-fearing, they are also deeply concerned about your spiritual health. The Bible directs that parents give children "the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing." (Ephesians 6:4, *The New English Bible*) And they know that you will not automatically embrace Christian values and beliefs simply because they do. They also realize that "a boy [or girl] let on the loose will be causing his mother shame." (Proverbs 29:15) While they may not think of you as a child, they may still feel obliged to impose curfews and set other limits for you.

You may perceive such controls as beneath your dignity, babyish. But remember, it wasn't long ago that you really were a helpless baby in your parents' arms. And now they want to keep you from moral harm, the way they once protected you from physical harm. Remember, too, your parents were once teenagers themselves, and they well know the difficulties a youth can get into. Why, even the righteous man Job confessed "the errors of [his] youth." (Job 13:26) And as youths, some parents made some serious errors that have greatly complicated their lives.

One mother confessed: "I had to get married. It was because I had a steady boyfriend at a very young age. I was pregnant at sixteen. Now I have three children, and two of them are teenagers. I feel like I'm fifty instead of thirty-seven. I lost my youth."

Perhaps your parents never had such a bitter experience. Yet, they are likely very concerned about the hazards of early dating and

may forbid you to date. Should you resent this restriction? If you do, consider the words of Proverbs 27:12: "The shrewd one that has seen the calamity has concealed himself; the inexperienced that have passed along have suffered the penalty." Really, if you heed your parents' advice, you may avoid calamity.

A Personality in Transition

Still, you may feel like the youth who said: "I know what I'm doing. I'm not going to make a mess of my life. Why won't they let me live my own life?" But the problem may be that you unwittingly give your parents mixed signals. At times you may act like a competent adult; at other times you may display a childlike need for parental help.

In the book *How to Single Parent*, Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson tells of one mother's experience in shopping with her 15-year-old daughter. Having narrowed her choice to three dresses, the daughter asked which looked best on her. Her mother thought it over a moment and then replied: "I think the blue one definitely looks the best." The reply to this asked-for advice? "Oh, Mother, you always try to dominate my life and tell me what to do!"

Months later they went shopping again. The daughter selected a few outfits and asked: "Mother, which of these suits looks best on me?" Recalling the earlier episode, the mother decided to play it safe and answered: "I'm sure you can decide for yourself," to which her daughter exclaimed: "Oh, Mother, you never help me when I need you!"

Moods that swing from defiant bravado to babyish clinging confuse parents. And to some degree, all youths are plagued by this seesawing behavior; it's a natural part of growing up. But while natural, it tells your parents that you still have some "traits of a babe" to overcome and that you are not ready for the controls to be completely relaxed.
—1 Corinthians 13:11.



How do you view curfews and other restrictions?

Gaining Greater Control

You might nevertheless feel that you could do without at least some of that support and attention. And in hopes of gaining the freedoms you crave, you may at times even be tempted to resort to devious means. "I know I shouldn't lie," wrote a teenage girl, "but I only did it to make things simple. [Mom's] too strict and would never have let me go out if I'd told her the truth." Deceiving your parents, though, never makes things simple. If the lie is uncovered (as it will likely be), it may greatly complicate matters.

The authors of the book *Options* wisely observe: "Lying to [your parents] when you want them to trust you makes as much sense as stealing to prove how honest you are. When they catch you, they're likely to crack down on you even more, just for being a sneak." More important, lying incurs the disfavor of God himself. Proverbs 3:32 says: "The devious person is a detestable thing to Jehovah."

So be honest with your folks. Give them complete and accurate details of where you

want to go and who is going with you. When they impose curfews, honor them. This will convince them that you are responsible. They will be less likely to worry when you are away. And in time they may feel more confident in granting you greater freedom. It is as the Bible says: "Much will be expected from the one who has been given much, and the more a man is trusted, the more people will expect of him."—Luke 12:48, *Phillips*.

The time for you to take charge of your life will come soon enough. In the meantime, be patient. Enjoy your youth. (Ecclesiastes 11:9) Cooperate with the stand your parents take on dating, rules, curfews, and the like. Doing so now might just spare you regrets and heartaches later. If you feel that certain restrictions are inappropriate for your age or are unreasonable, don't rebel. Calmly discuss matters with your parents. Perhaps they've simply lost track of just how old you really are or how much you've grown up. Whatever the case, you'll probably find that they are not really interested in controlling your life. They simply want to ensure your future happiness.

ARE you interested in meeting different people, learning about their customs, and seeing how they live? Then, come along with me, for we have been invited to dinner by a Japanese family. Along the way I will try to explain a little about what to expect.

But first, we will pick up a small gift. That would be expected of us. A box of *wagashi* (Japanese confectionery) or *senbei* (rice crackers) would be appropriate. However, since it is summer, let us choose a nice basket of fruit. We can get it at the fruit stand, already made up with wicker basket, wrapping paper, and ribbon, just for this purpose.

Upon Our Arrival

The whole family is at the front door to welcome us. The excitement of the little ones tells us that this is a special occasion for the family. Look! The slippers have been neatly

An Evening in a Japanese Home

By Awake! correspondent in Japan

set out at the doorstep—a typical Japanese gesture of welcome. The Japanese people do not wear their street shoes in the house. Not only does this serve to keep their houses cleaner but it also prevents the harm that shoes can do to the easily damaged heavy straw matting (tatami) used in most Japanese homes.

So we leave our shoes here in the *genkan* (porch area) before we step up into the house. See! Grandma is already turning our shoes



around and lining them up for when we leave. If your shoes need a bit of polish or dusting off, it is not unusual for that to be done, too, before you leave.

"The Dessert Comes First?"

The above is a typical response of most foreigners when they see the tea and sweets put out before dinner. Those brown jellylike edibles that look like chocolate fudge are made from sweetened beans and are called *yōkan*. They are delicious with *o-cha* (green tea).

But before you eat the *yōkan* and drink the tea, refresh yourself with the chilled, moist hand towel the hostess is offering to you. It is called an *o-shibori*, literally meaning "squeezed out." In the winter, guests are served steaming hot towels.

Notice the beautiful garden and fishpond outside the sliding glass windows. Almost every Japanese home has some type of garden, regardless of whether the people are rich or poor. Many Japanese will spend up to half



again as much on the garden as they do on a new house.

The way the rocks, dwarf pines, and other plants are arranged makes the garden look like a natural mountain scene in miniature. The waterfall and the tranquil pool filled with large, colorful carp are designed to help you relax and enhance your enjoyment of the evening. Later on, the host will usually show visitors the rest of the garden.

The room we are in is a special one. It is the *o-kyakuma*, or guest room. See that slightly elevated alcove? It is called a *tokonoma*. In years gone by, one could find the samurai's [Japanese warrior's] armor and the family Buddhist altar there. Nowadays it is a decorative place where valued vases, hanging scrolls, and other family heirlooms are displayed.

Since you are the honored guest, no doubt you will be seated closest to the *tokonoma*. Notice the expertly carved post at the side of the *tokonoma*. The post is called a *tokobashira*. It

is made of ebony or sandalwood, which is polished and lacquered in such a way as to bring out its natural grain and beauty. A single post may cost a thousand dollars or more!

Dinner Is Ready

Our hostess has just announced that dinner will shortly be ready. But she wonders if you would like to take a bath first. No, it is not that she thinks you need one, but the Japanese find a hot bath before dinner most refreshing. Usually the guest is invited to go in first. You don't feel like taking a bath before dinner? That is all right, but at least take a look at the *o-furo*, or bath.

Even though there are still public bathhouses, most Japanese homes now have their own *o-furo*. It is a deep tub made of wood, tile, or plastic and is equipped for burning wood or propane, which heats the water to about a hundred degrees Fahrenheit.

The Japanese bath differs from the Western bath in that a person washes himself with

soap and rinses this off before stepping into the tub to soak in the hot water. In this way the whole family uses the same bathwater, just heating it up a little before each use. The tub is so deep that when a person sits down in it, the hot water rises clear up to his neck. It is very relaxing and a must before going to bed on a cold winter night.

A Banquet of a Meal

Our host calls and says it is time for our meal, or I should say banquet. Look at all the food spread out on the table! It is so colorful and delicately arranged. In Japan the meal is a work of art, where the eye appeal is almost as important as the aroma and the flavor. That bouquet of colorful morsels in the black lacquered tray is the Japanese favorite, *sushi*. Each piece is a carefully shaped lump of rice with a little sugar and vinegar and topped with a red or white piece of raw tuna or other delicacies of the sea.

Another dish that has been prepared is broiled *tai*, or red snapper, artfully arranged on the plate in a half-moon shape, with the fish's head and tail intact. The soup is a piping hot broth made of a seaweed base with cubed chunks of soft tofu in it. And, of course, there is plenty of rice for everyone. A fresh green salad is also on the table, and fruits prepared Japanese style complete the menu. What a treat!

Polite Conversation

After the meal comes the green tea, to accompany our conversation. But what should you talk about? Well, the Japanese are keenly interested in you and your country. They also want to know what you think of them and their country, of the meal, and of Japanese food in general. They are delighted if you take an interest in Japanese things and learn a few words in their language.

Now the hostess may say, "*O-kuchi ni awanakute gomen nasai*," meaning, "I'm sorry the meal did not suit your taste." She is merely

asking for reassurance that you did like the meal. So, tell her, "*Oishikatta desu!*" (It was delicious!) Another of the guests might add the compliment, "*Gochiso samadeshita*," meaning literally, "Thank you for running fast [between the kitchen and the dining room] to serve us."

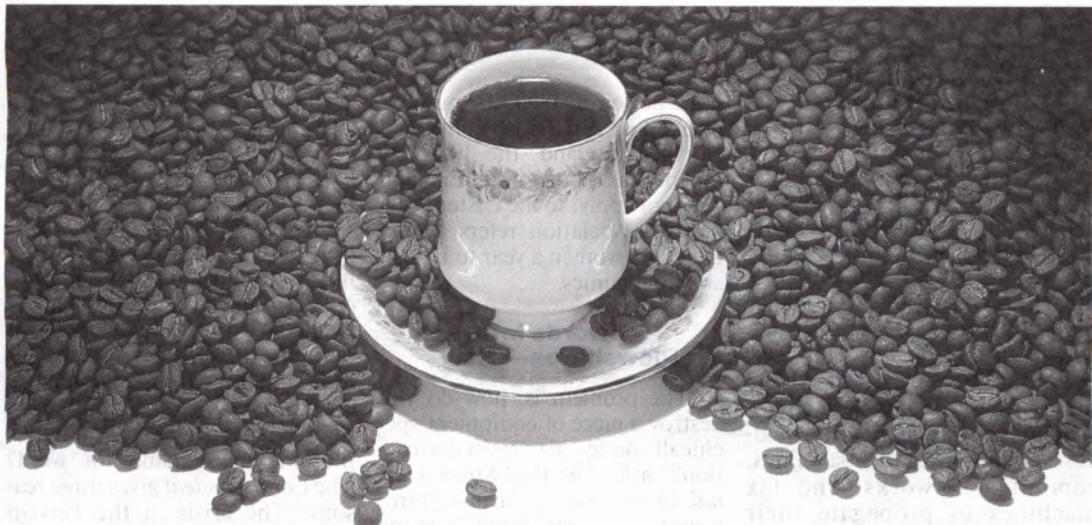
You will find that to the Westerner the Japanese may appear to be vague when they talk about themselves and reluctant to be specific on certain subjects. For example, if you asked the wife how she met her husband, she may answer by simply giving an embarrassed giggle. Or you may admire a beautiful vase and inquire about the cost. The answer will probably be, "*Chotto takakatta desu.*" (It was a little expensive.) Vague? Perhaps. But that is polite Japanese conversation. So we will have to learn not to be overly familiar or inquisitive in what we say and ask.

A Delightful Evening

All too soon it is time for us to take our leave from our gracious hosts. As we put on our shoes on the porch, the hostess and her mother bow deeply to us on their hands and knees, with their heads to the floor. They also insist that we take some of the leftover food home with us in the large, brightly colored *furoshiki*, or kerchief. They include, as well, a small present for each of us.

As the whole family comes out for a final *sayonara*, perhaps you are thinking what I am thinking, 'What a pleasant evening!' Think of the time and work involved in preparing the meal. As guests, we were made to feel truly welcome, in fact, special. How thoughtful of them! Their satisfaction no doubt comes from knowing that they have made us very happy.

Aren't you glad you came along for the visit? You may feel that you know the Japanese a little better now. Well, you will have to come again soon and learn a little bit more about this unique country and its hospitable people.



The Coffee Dilemma

OVER 1,500,000,000 cups a day! According to a recent estimate, that is how much coffee the world drinks. This vast consumption has persisted despite repeated warnings from scientists over the years that coffee drinkers face a virtual plethora of hazards, ranging from heart disease to diabetes and even various types of cancer. Why is it, then, that so few coffee drinkers have dropped their cups and run from the drink?

Over the past 40 years, scientists have published more than five hundred reports on the effects of coffee drinking. But so far their conclusions have been, well, inconclusive. Why? For one thing, coffee is more complex than it looks. A cup of coffee may contain as many as five hundred naturally occurring chemicals. Yet, most studies focus on just one ingredient, the stimulant caffeine.

In some people, caffeine can cause sleeplessness and irritability or make it difficult to concentrate. But what of cancer? The consumer magazine *Which?* reports: "For virtually every study demonstrating a possible link [between caffeine and cancer], there is another with contradictory findings." Small wonder, then, that a London coffee analyst reports that among the general public, there has been "no sort of

health move away from coffee at all." Besides, many know that tea, cocoa, and cola drinks also contain caffeine. In fact, the magazine *Which?* notes that "weight for weight, tea contains more caffeine than coffee, but less weight is used, in general, to brew a cup of tea."

Still, there are a few cautions that a coffee drinker may wish to note. *The Times* of London recently cited this finding from a Dutch report: "Coffee in which the boiling water and grounds are mixed directly can increase cholesterol levels by 10 per cent, compared with drinking filtered coffee or no coffee at all." Cholesterol is a well-known contributor to heart disease. In another issue, *The Times* quoted a leading British nutritionist as saying: 'Regular coffee drinkers should always have a fresh cup and avoid a stewed or boiled brew.'

If the experts agree on anything when it comes to coffee, it is moderation. Doctors generally recommend that people should drink no more than six cups (or four mugs) of coffee in a day. Those with such health problems as heart or kidney disease or high blood pressure should have less than that. And pregnant women or those who breastfeed their babies should have no more than one cup a day.

Watching the World

Personal Visits —Outdated?

Why did American-style television evangelism never develop in Japan? Mr. Kenji Ishii of the Agency for Cultural Affairs told *Awake!* that Japan's broadcasters don't allow programs that solicit funds or propagate unscientific teachings on the air. However, religious organizations have found ways to outwit such restrictions. Many depend on videos, communications satellites, computer networks, and fax machines to propagate their faith. For some, such a technological ministry has eclipsed the personal visits that preachers used in Bible times and that Jehovah's Witnesses use with great success in Japan today. "We have realized that making personal visits, our traditional missionary style, has become quite out of fashion," said the publicity officer of a six-million-member lay Buddhist organization. "This is commercialization of religion," said Mr. Ishii on the use of fax machines to offer prayers. "Religious groups are just cashing in on the trend of the time."

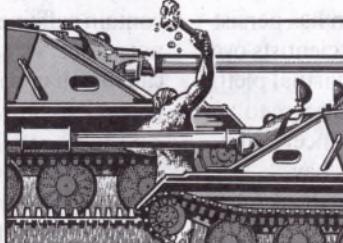
Abortion Trips

Laws are often no more successful than religion at stemming the grim tide of abortion. In 1989 a law was passed in the Republic of Ireland that restricted the publishing of information on how and where to get an abortion; magazines, for instance, had to drop advertisements for abortion clinics. Nonetheless, more and more Irish women travel to England and Wales for abortions. According to the *Irish Times* of Dublin, 981 women made such trips in the first three months of 1989. For the

same period in 1990, the number rose to 1,027. In British-controlled Northern Ireland, the 1967 law that permits abortions in England does not apply, so the Ulster Pregnancy Association refers over a thousand women a year to British abortion clinics.

Swords Into Plowshares—How?

"The problem is, how do you destroy a piece of equipment specifically designed to resist destruction?" asks *The Wall Street Journal*. In line with an arms-control treaty, the Soviet Union faces the task of getting rid of some 40,000 tanks. Suggested solutions to disable the tanks have included detonating explosives placed within them, dropping them from a



height to disable them, and dumping them—minus their oil, paint, and hydraulic fluid—in the ocean. Even considered was an idea to convert them to such civilian uses as heavy tractors and fire engines, but such a "slow-moving, gas-guzzling behemoth" was determined to be impractical. Highly favored is a plan to build furnaces that could melt down the tanks and make use of the scrap metal. Since the technology has yet to be developed, long trainloads of tanks were shipped "eastward over the Urals into depots beyond the reach of the treaty's timetables and its requirement that tanks be cut and exploded."

Wool Glut

Australia's sheep ranchers, who provide 70 percent of the wool used in the world's clothing, have suddenly found themselves with too many sheep. About 20 million too many, reports the *Sunday Correspondent* of London, England. With the price of sheep plunging to as low as five cents per head, ranchers are spending more on the bullets to slaughter sheep than the sheep are worth. Why the plummeting demand for wool? The *Correspondent* gives three reasons: The crisis in the Persian Gulf has halted trade with Arab nations; world demilitarization has reduced the need for military uniforms, which are commonly made of wool; and global warming has reduced the need for warm wool clothing.

Gay Parents

Early in 1991, *Newsweek* magazine reported that there are seven million children in the United States who live with a homosexual parent and the parent's lover of the same sex. According to some studies, most of these parents are Lesbians, many of whom choose to have a child by artificial insemination. Some experts even feel that the United States is experiencing a 'Lesbian baby boom.' One publishing house has targeted such audiences for children's books. A new book for children from two to six years of age is about a boy who sometimes lives with his father and his father's male lover. A book for those from three to eight years of age is about a girl with "two mummies." The books are designed to convince children that such families are normal and that homosexuality is "just one more kind of love."

India's Plastic Boom

Large credit-card companies are beginning to wear down the reluctance to borrow money that has long marked India's middle class. *Asiaweek* magazine reports that although only 400,000 credit cards are in use in India, more and more members of the economic middle class, which numbers some 150 million, are "yielding to the idea of living for today and letting tomorrow take care of itself." Thus, some Indian bankers are optimistic about the future. As one told *Asiaweek*: "If the expansion and growth proceeds as planned, India will become the world's No. 2 credit-card market by the end of the century—second only to the U.S."

French Youths and Suicide

Suicide is now second only to auto accidents as a cause of death among French youths. The Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* reports that within the last two decades, France has seen a 130-percent increase in suicides among young men from 15 to 25 years of age and a 35-percent increase among women in the same age group. Only 3 percent of these suicides are attributed to some kind of serious mental illness. In the great majority of youthful suicide attempts, there is no sincere desire for death but, rather, a desperate, sometimes fatal, longing for help. Experts attribute the growing despair among today's youths to family breakdown, materialism, and the daily degradation of social and spiritual values.

Early Motherhood

"One of every seven children born in the Americas is the child of an adolescent mother, a total of 2.5 million babies each year," according to a North American

study commented on in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, a Brazilian newspaper. Brazil is in first place with 601,023 babies born to teenage mothers. Mexico is second with 498,277, and the United States is third with 430,389. The high figures surprised the authors of the study, who had expected that the social and economic changes over the last 25 years would have reduced teenage pregnancies. What about solutions? The study recommended giving youths incentives to stay in school longer, improving the status of women, and promoting virginity until marriage.

Married Priests

Recently, Pope John Paul II authorized the ordination of two married Brazilian priests. "The new priests signed documents in which they promised not to maintain sexual relations with their



wives," reports the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. According to the newspaper, Aloisio Lorscheider, cardinal of Fortaleza, considers "the ordination of married men a solution to the lack of priests." The cardinal also lashed out against the church's celibacy requirement. "According to Dom Aloisio, celibacy is an 'anachronistic' institution that has no Biblical basis," says *Véja* magazine. "Celibacy was not created by the Holy Scriptures and, therefore, is not something that cannot be rejected." The Vatican, however, continues to prefer celibate priests.

Restitution?

According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, the government of Newfoundland has promised to make financial restitution to the victims of childhood sexual abuse at the Mount Cashel orphanage. In 1975 the police first investigated charges that some of the "Christian Brothers" who operated the orphanage were physically and sexually abusing the boys there. The investigation was dropped, and no arrests were made after two of those accused agreed to leave Newfoundland and three others left the orphanage. In 1989, however, the investigation was reopened; eight "Christian Brothers" now stand accused of child abuse. (See *Awake!* of November 8, 1990, page 31.) Attorney General Paul Dicks declared that the government failed in its duty to protect the abused orphans and will make restitution where appropriate. He insisted, though, that the primary responsibility to make amends lies with the "Christian Brothers" and their employers.

Spending on Children

In Latin America, of the 30 million abandoned children from 6 to 15 years of age, some 2,000 die every day from malnutrition or violence, reports Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. But according to UNICEF president James Grant, the money the world spends on fighting children's diseases and hunger worldwide is "equivalent to the amount spent each year on [advertising] by United States cigarette companies." UNICEF projects that \$2,500,000,000 must be spent this decade to educate the public about children's problems. Grant notes that the world spends more than that each day on arms and that North American consumers spend more than that each year to feed their pets.

From Our Readers

Afterschool Jobs I really enjoyed the articles on afterschool jobs. (November 22 and December 8, 1990) Although I am not ready for a job, your articles showed the importance of saving money for the future. They also helped me to see that if I get a job, I will need a schedule that includes time for spiritual activities. I will remember these articles in the future.

J. S., United States

My goal has been to be a pioneer [full-time evangelizer]. I wondered if I should first get a job and save up money. The articles helped me see that doing so could make me fall into the trap of materialism. So I have decided to work—work on building up my spiritual foundation—so that I will be good and ready for the pioneer service.

G. J., United States

Rain Forests Your article about rain forests (March 22, 1990) was on a high scientific level. Everyone knows that the environment is deteriorating and that something should be done. But as a news correspondent here in Poland, I was wondering who would have the courage to write about the fundamental reasons for environmental negligence. You are the first ones to do so by pointing to egocentrism and desire for profit as the real reasons. Well done!

W. S., Poland

Bloody Films A film I wanted to see, *Die Hard 2*, was mentioned in the "Watching the World" item "Bloody Films." (December 22, 1990) I had even talked to my friends about going to see it. But when I read this item, I decided that watching this film would be like watching a horror movie and decided not to go. Actually, I still want to go, but for the sake of my own spiritual progress, I won't.

M. T., Japan

Exercise Thank you very much for the article "What Exercise Can Do for You." (October 22, 1990) Every time we have physical education in school, we have to run one mile, and I've always hated it! Your article showed me that exercise can really benefit people.

L. B. D., United States

Thank you for your article. In September, because of having a regular exercise program, I was able to stop taking medication for high blood pressure. After nine weeks of bouncing on a minitrampoline, I told my doctor that I wanted to try coming off my medication. She instructed me on how to cut back gradually on the dosage. Now my blood pressure is normal, I feel great, and my husband is bouncing away trying to lower his!

G. Y., United States

Readers should note that if they have had significant health problems, or if they are older, they would be wise to consult a qualified health practitioner before beginning a vigorous exercise program. Consultation with such a health practitioner would also be wise when making any decision regarding prescribed medications. —ED.

Home Vacations Your article "Why Not Try a Vacation at Home?" (June 22, 1990) suggested collecting wildflowers. While I used to do so years ago, I have since learned the outdoor rule: 'Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints.' Where I live, it is against the law to pick certain wildflowers. But a well-exposed, sharply focused picture of a wildflower can be enjoyed for years!

W. K., United States

Taking photos is indeed a practical way to enjoy nature in areas where picking flowers, or similar activities, is against the law or could cause ecological damage. Thanks for the suggestion.—ED.

Does the Soul Die?

THAT question may have occurred to a person reading *Time* magazine of July 30, 1990. Discussing the increased road traffic in East Germany prior to the unification of the two Germanys on October 3, 1990, the magazine reported in its article "Speeding Over the Bumps": "Road deaths in the East rose 60% in the first six months of 1990, claiming 1,078 souls."

The article clearly meant that 1,078 humans were killed in auto accidents; they died. But did 1,078 souls die? Was *Time* magazine in error in its use of the term "souls" for people of flesh and blood? What really is the soul?

Throughout history, there have been various concepts regarding the soul. Many ancient peoples believed that an immaterial soul lived on after death, that death was, in effect, a doorway to another life. Some rulers of ancient times even had their slaves executed at the time of their own death in the belief that the

souls of these persons could continue to serve them.

Although many today also believe that the soul means an immaterial, or spirit, part of a person that survives the death of the physical body, the Bible does not teach this. In fact, at Numbers 6:6, it speaks of "any dead soul." No, the soul is not some immaterial thing in you. You are a soul. The soul can die, as *Time* magazine reported.

The Jewish Encyclopedia (1910) observes: "The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is a matter of philosophical or theological speculation rather than of simple faith, and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture."

—Volume VI, page 564.

