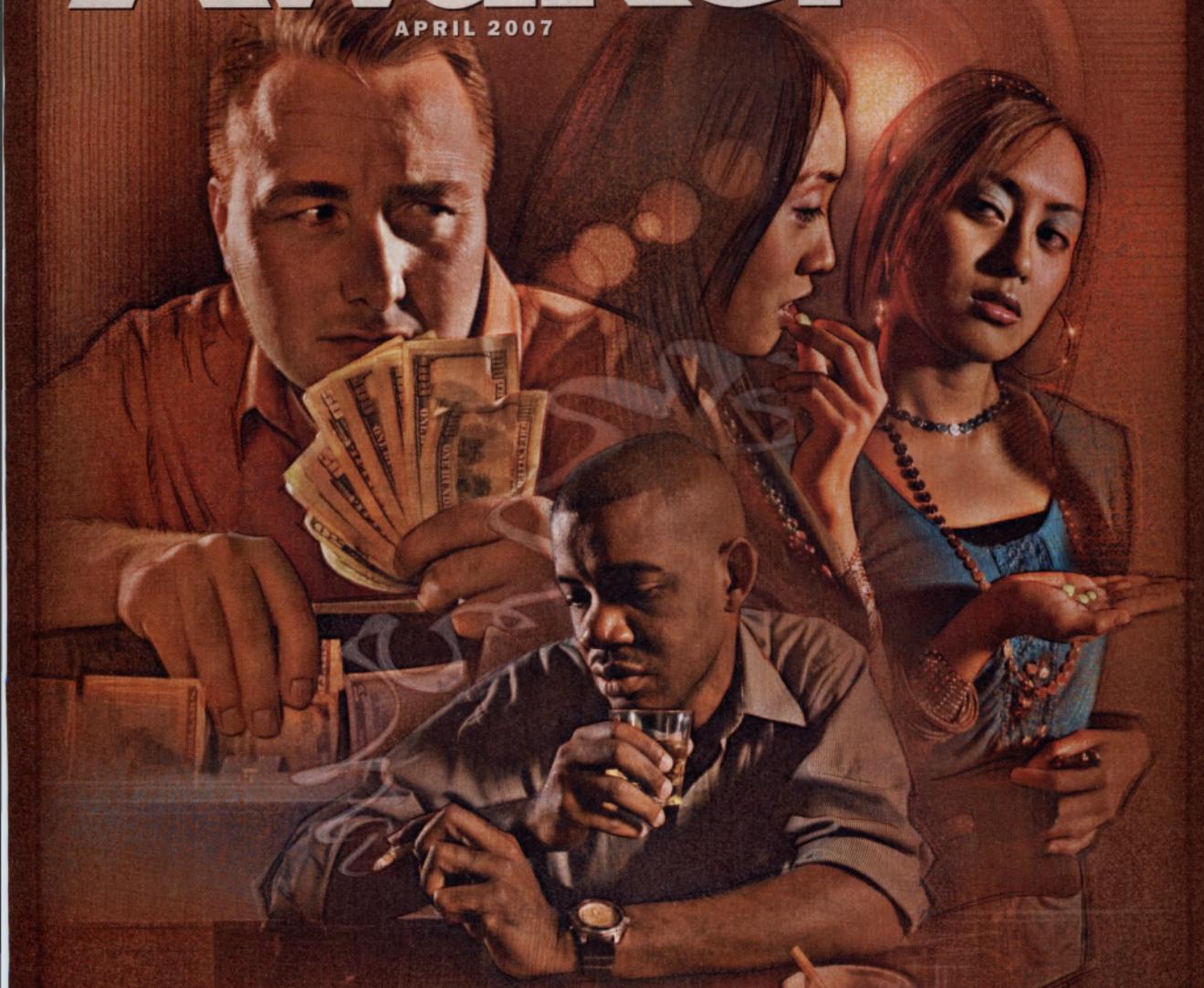


Awake!

APRIL 2007



WHAT DOES THE MORAL BREAKDOWN MEAN?

ALSO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO BE A CHRISTIAN? PAGE 26

Awake!

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What Does the MORAL BREAKDOWN Mean? 3-10

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A Worldwide MORAL BREAKDOWN

"CHEATING is everywhere," says David Callahan, who wrote the recent book *The Cheating Culture*. He points to, among other things in the United States, "cheating by high school and college students," "piracy" of music and movies, "workplace theft," "massive healthcare scams," and use of steroids in sports. He concludes: "Add up all the various forms of ethical and legal misconduct and you have a moral crisis of serious dimensions."

The New York Times said that Hurricane Katrina, which hit the United States late in 2005, "produced one of the most extraordinary displays of scams, schemes and stupefying bureaucratic bungles in modern history." A U.S. senator reported: "The blatant fraud, the audacity of the schemes, the scale of the waste—it is just breathtaking."

Granted, there are still examples of selfless human kindness. (Acts 27:3; 28:2) But too often we hear: "What is in it for me? What will I get out of it?" A me-first, look-out-for-number-one attitude seems to have become the rule.

In the past, selfish, blatant immorality has been pointed to as a contributing factor in the fall of civilizations, such as the Roman Empire. Could what is happening now be a prelude to something even more significant? Is every part of the world now being affected by "the increasing of lawlessness," which the Bible foretells would be a mark of the end of this entire system of things?—Matthew 24:3-8, 12-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

The Decline Worldwide

Africa News of June 22, 2006, reporting on a "workshop on sexual abuse and pornography" in slums in one part of Uganda, said it is the "parent's neglect that has increased prostitution and drug abuse in the area." The paper observed: "The officer in charge of Child and Family Protection Unit at Kawempe Police Station, Mr. Dhabangi Salongo, said the rate of child abuse and domestic violence had increased tremendously."

According to a doctor in India, "society is losing its cultural moorings." One film director there said that "the combination of increased drug use and greater sexual promiscuity is yet another sign that India is sinking into 'Western debauchery.'"

Hu Peicheng, secretary-general of the China Sexology Association in Beijing, noted: "Before in society, we had a sense of right and wrong. Now, we can do whatever we want." An article in the magazine *China Today* put it this way: "Society is growing ever more tolerant towards extramarital affairs."

"It seems everyone is taking their clothes off and using sex as a sales tool," observed England's *Yorkshire Post* recently. "Little more than a generation ago such actions would have caused moral outrage. Today, we are bombarded with sexual imagery from every conceivable angle and pornography has . . . planted itself firmly in the mainstream." The newspaper added: "Material that was once only considered safe for an 18-plus audience

is now often essential family viewing and, according to anti-pornography campaigners, often explicitly targeted towards children."

The New York Times Magazine said: "[Some teens] talk about [their sexual encounters] as matter-of-factly as they might discuss what's on the cafeteria lunch menu." *Tweens News*, "the parentguide for 8 to 12-year-olds," observed: "In a child-like scrawl, a young girl had written a heart-wrenching message: 'My Mom is pressuring me to go out and date boys and have sex. I'm only 12 years old . . . help!'"

How times have changed! Canada's *Toronto Star* noted that not long ago "the very idea of gays or lesbians openly cohabiting was a moral outrage." Yet, Barbara Freemen, a teacher of social history at Carleton University, Ottawa, observes: "People now say, 'Private life is private life. We don't want other people interfering.'"

Clearly, over the past few decades, morals have deteriorated rapidly in many places worldwide. What has led to these radical changes? How do you personally feel about them? And what do the changes indicate for the future?

When Morals Declined DRAMATICALLY

WHEN would you say the dramatic moral decline began? Within your lifetime or perhaps that of older relatives or friends? Some say that World War I, which erupted in 1914, ushered in our era of unparalleled moral decadence. Professor of history Robert Wohl wrote in his book *The Generation of 1914*: "Those who lived through the war could never rid themselves of the belief that one world had ended and another begun in August 1914."



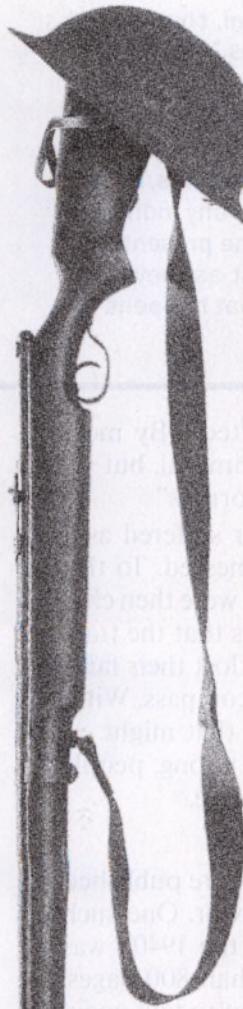
Awake!®

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

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"Everywhere, the standards of social behavior—already in decline—were devastated," says historian Norman Cantor. "If the politicians and generals had treated the millions under their care like animals dispatched to slaughter, then what canons of religion or ethics could any longer inhibit men from treating each other with the ferocity of jungle beasts? . . . The slaughter of the First World War [1914-18] thoroughly debased the value of human life."

In his comprehensive work *The Outline of History*, English historian H. G. Wells noted that it was following the acceptance of the evolution theory that "a real de-moralization ensued." Why? Some held that man is simply a higher form of animal life. Wells, who was an evolutionist, wrote in 1920: "Man, they decided, is a social animal like the Indian hunting dog . . . , so it seemed right to them that the big dogs of the human pack should bully and subdue."

Indeed, as Cantor noted, the first world war had a devastating effect

upon people's sense of morality. He explained: "The older generation was completely discredited in everything—its politics, its dress, its sexual mores." The churches, which prostituted Christian teachings by endorsing the evolution theory and egging on the warring sides, contributed greatly to the moral decline. British Brigadier General Frank Crozier wrote: "The Christian Churches are the finest blood-lust creators which we have and of them we made free use."

Codes of Morality Discarded

In the decade after World War I—the so-called Roaring Twenties—old values and moral restraints were brushed aside and were replaced by an anything-goes approach. Historian Frederick Lewis Allen comments: "The ten years which followed the war may aptly be known as the Decade of Bad Manners. . . . With the old order of things had gone a set of values which had given richness and meaning to life, and substitute values were not easily found."

"The slaughter of the First World War [1914-18] thoroughly debased the value of human life"

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VIRTUES VERSUS VALUES

Virtue used to be clear-cut. Either a person was honest, loyal, chaste, and honorable or not. Now, the term "values" has replaced "virtues." But there is a problem with this, as historian Gertrude Himmelfarb observes in her book *The De-Moralization of Society*: "One cannot say of virtues, as one can of values, . . . that everyone has a right to his own virtues."

She notes that values "can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies—whatever any individual, group, or society happens to value, at any time, for any reason." In the present liberalized society, people feel justified in choosing their own values, just as they would choose groceries in a supermarket. But when this is the case, what happens to true virtue and morality?

The world's Great Depression of the 1930's sobered many by plunging them into abject poverty. By the end of that decade, however, the world had entered another, even more devastating, war—World War II. Soon nations were making fearsome weapons of destruction, snapping the world out of the Depression but plunging it into suffering and horror beyond human imagination. By the end of the war, hundreds of cities lay in ruins; two in Japan were devastated, each by a single atomic bomb! Millions died in gruesome concentration camps. Altogether, the conflict took the lives of some 50 million men, women, and children.

During the horrid circumstances of World War II, instead of adhering to long-held traditional standards of propriety, people adopted their own codes of behavior. The book *Love, Sex and War—Changing Values, 1939-45*, observed: "It seemed that sexual restraint had been suspended for the duration, as the traditional licence of the battlefield invaded the home front. . . . The urgency and excitement of wartime soon eroded moral restraints, and life on many home fronts appeared as cheap and short as life on the battle front."

The constant threat of death intensified people's yearning for emotional relationships, even transient ones. One British housewife, in justification of the sexual permissiveness during those dramatic years, said: "We were not really immoral, there was a war on."

One American soldier admitted, "By most people's standards we were immoral, but we were young and could die tomorrow."

Many survivors of that war suffered as a result of the horrors they witnessed. To this day some, including those who were then children, suffer flashbacks, feelings that the trauma is happening again. Many lost their faith and along with it their moral compass. Without respect for any authority that might establish standards of right and wrong, people began to see everything as relative.

New Social Norms

After World War II, studies were published regarding human sexual behavior. One such study in the United States in the 1940's was the Kinsey Report, of more than 800 pages. As a result, many people began to talk openly about sexual matters, which earlier were not as commonly discussed. Although the statistics given in that report regarding those engaging in homosexual and other deviant sexual behavior were later recognized as exaggerated, the study revealed the dramatic moral decline that had followed the war.

For a time, there was an effort to preserve the appearance of propriety. For example, in radio, motion pictures, and television, immoral content was censored. But that did not last long. William Bennett, formerly a U.S. secretary of education, explained: "By the 1960's, however, America began a steep and uninter-

rupted slide toward what might be called de-civilization." And this was reflected in many other lands. Why, in the '60's, did the moral decline accelerate?

That decade saw, almost simultaneously, the women's liberation movement and the sexual revolution with its so-called new morality. Also, effective birth-control pills were developed. When sex could be enjoyed without fear of conception, "free love," or "sexual relations without any commitments by either partner," became common.

At the same time, the press, the movies, and television loosened their moral codes. Later Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former head of the U.S. National Security Council, said regarding values presented on TV: "They clearly extol self-gratification, they normalize intense violence and brutality, [and] they encourage sexual promiscuity."

Already by the 1970's, VCR's had gained popularity. In the privacy of their homes, people could now view immoral, sexually

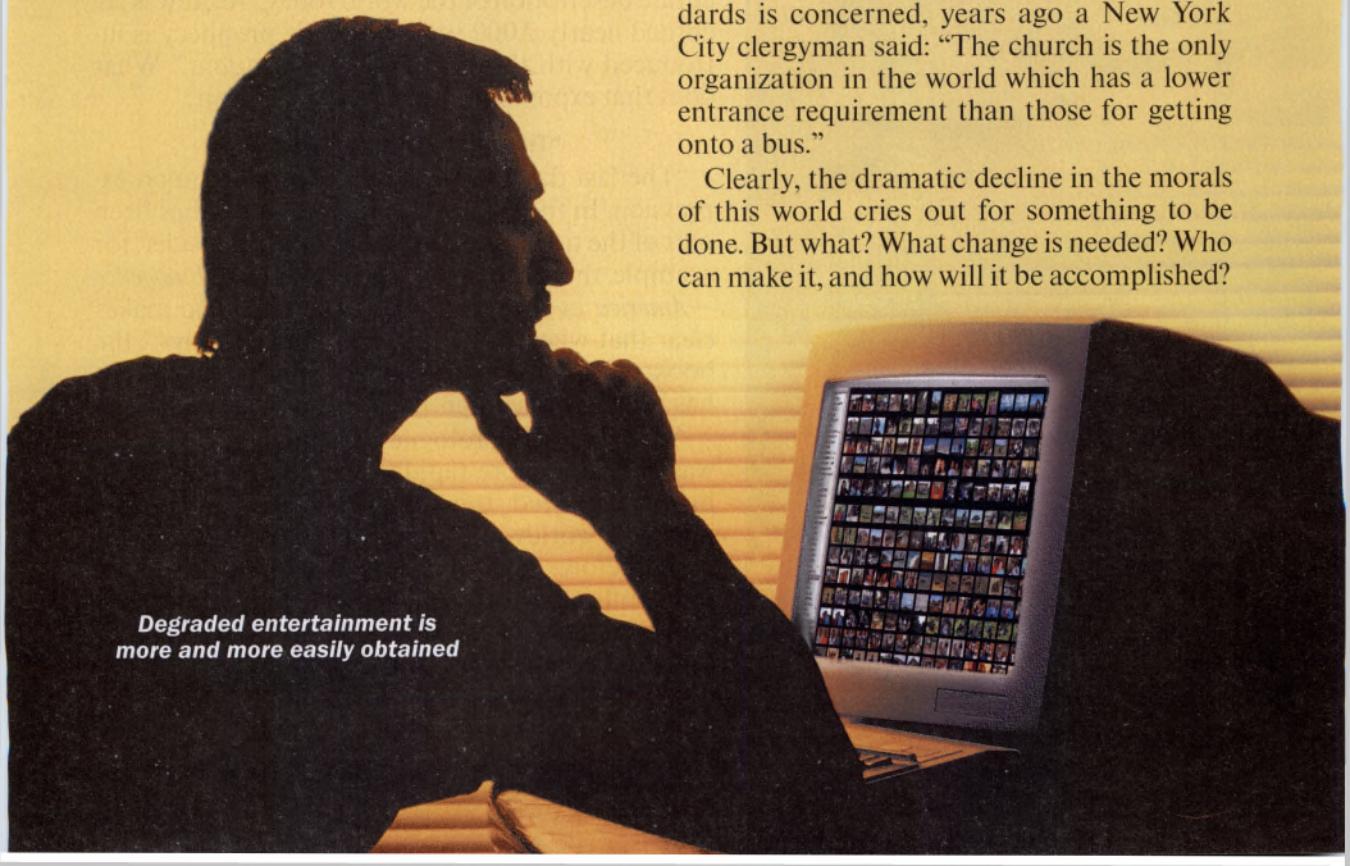
explicit material that they would never have allowed themselves to be seen viewing in a public theater. More recently, by means of the Internet, pornography of the most despicable sort has become available in lands around the globe to any who have a computer.

The consequences in many ways are frightening. "Ten years ago," said a warden at a U.S. penitentiary recently, "when kids would come in off the street, I could talk with them about right and wrong. But these kids coming in now have no idea of what I'm talking about."

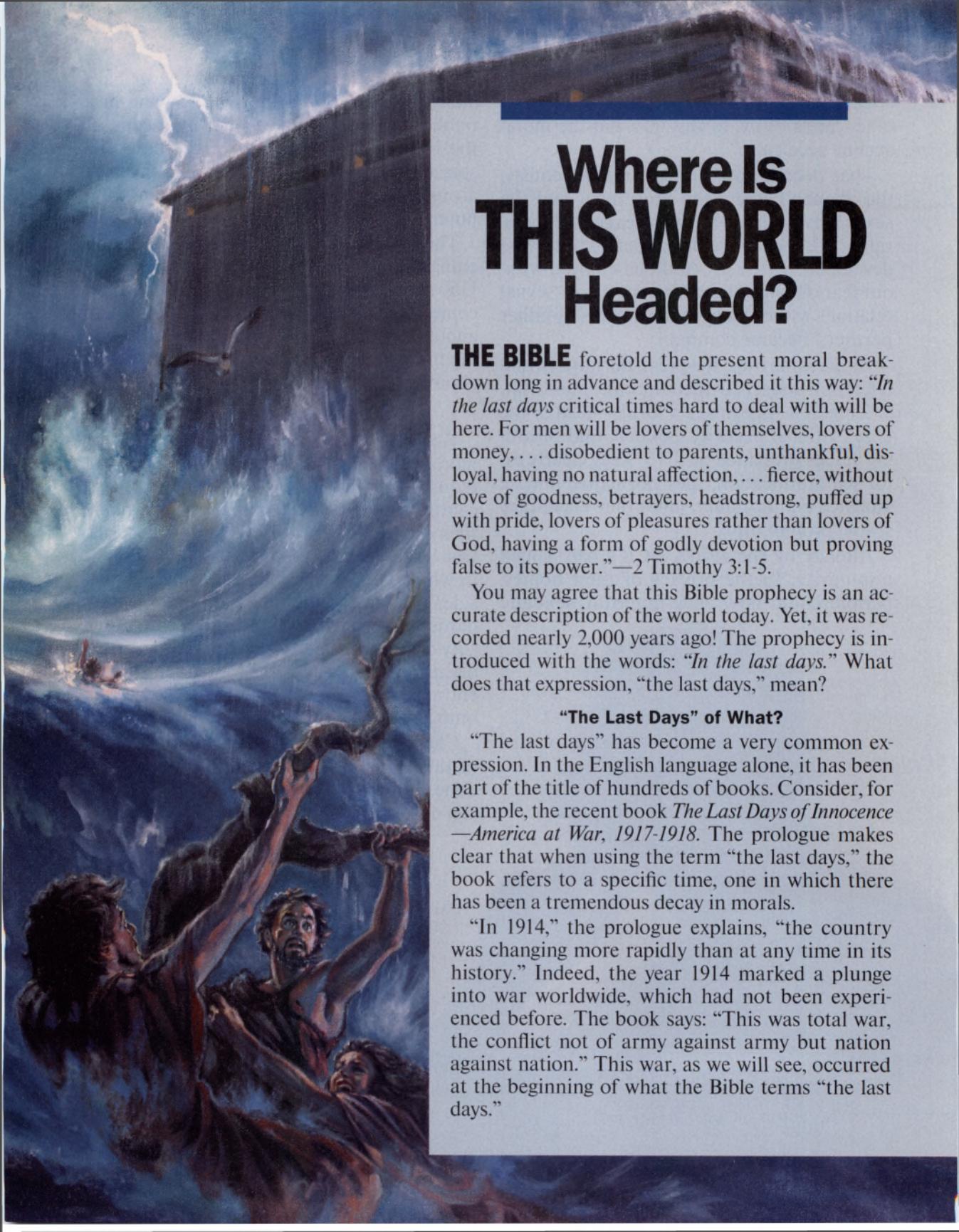
Where Can One Turn?

We cannot turn to the world's churches for moral guidance. Rather than upholding righteous principles as did Jesus and his first-century followers, the churches have made themselves part of this world and its evils. One writer asked: "What war was ever fought in which God wasn't claimed to be on each side?" As far as upholding God's moral standards is concerned, years ago a New York City clergyman said: "The church is the only organization in the world which has a lower entrance requirement than those for getting onto a bus."

Clearly, the dramatic decline in the morals of this world cries out for something to be done. But what? What change is needed? Who can make it, and how will it be accomplished?



Degraded entertainment is more and more easily obtained



Where Is **THIS WORLD** Headed?

THE BIBLE foretold the present moral breakdown long in advance and described it this way: "*In the last days* critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, . . . 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.

You may agree that this Bible prophecy is an accurate description of the world today. Yet, it was recorded nearly 2,000 years ago! The prophecy is introduced with the words: "*In the last days*." What does that expression, "the last days," mean?

"The Last Days" of What?

"The last days" has become a very common expression. In the English language alone, it has been part of the title of hundreds of books. Consider, for example, the recent book *The Last Days of Innocence—America at War, 1917-1918*. The prologue makes clear that when using the term "the last days," the book refers to a specific time, one in which there has been a tremendous decay in morals.

"In 1914," the prologue explains, "the country was changing more rapidly than at any time in its history." Indeed, the year 1914 marked a plunge into war worldwide, which had not been experienced before. The book says: "This was total war, the conflict not of army against army but nation against nation." This war, as we will see, occurred at the beginning of what the Bible terms "the last days."



That this world would experience before its actual end a specific time called “the last days” is a teaching of the Bible. The Bible, in fact, says that a world once existed that has already passed away, or ended, explaining: “The world of *that time* suffered destruction when it was deluged with water.” What time was that, and what was the world that ended? It was the ancient “world of ungodly people” that existed in the days of the man Noah. Similarly, today’s world will end. Yet, those who serve God will survive the end, as did Noah and his family.—2 Peter 2:5; 3:6; Genesis 7:21-24; 1 John 2:17.

What Jesus Said About the End

Jesus Christ also spoke of “the days of Noah,” when “the flood came and swept them all away.” He compared conditions that existed before the Flood—just prior to the end of that world—with those that would prevail during the time that he identified as “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 24:3, 37-39) Other Bible translations use the expression “the end of the world” or “the end of the age.”—*The Jerusalem Bible, The New English Bible, and the New International Version*.

Jesus foretold what life would be like on earth just before the world’s end. Regarding war, he said: “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.” Historians have noted that this occurred beginning in 1914. Thus, the prologue of the aforementioned book spoke of 1914 as marking the beginning of “total war, . . . not of army against army but nation against nation.”

In his prophecy, Jesus added: “There will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.” He

went on to say that among other things there would be an “increasing of lawlessness.” (Matthew 24:7-14) Surely we have seen this occur in our day. Today’s moral breakdown is so severe that it is fulfilling Bible prophecy!

What should our lives be like during such a decadent time? Note what the apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Rome regarding moral decay. He pointed to the “disgraceful sexual appetites” of people, observing: “Both their females changed

When a world ended, there were God-fearing survivors

the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene.”—Romans 1:26, 27.

Historians say that while human society then sank ever deeper into moral decay, “the little Christian communities were troubling the pleasure-mad pagan world with their piety and their decency.” This should cause us to pause and ask: ‘What about me and those I choose for associates? Do we stand out as different, as morally upright, unlike those who carry on immorally?’—1 Peter 4:3, 4.

The Battle We Have

The Bible teaches us that despite the immorality surrounding us, we need to be “blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation.” To do this, we need to keep “a tight grip on the word of life.” (Philippians 2:15, 16) This Bible statement provides the key to *how* Christians can

remain untainted by moral corruption—they need to hold fast to the teachings of God's Word and recognize that its moral standards represent the best way of living.

"The god of this system of things," Satan the Devil, is trying to win over people's hearts. (2 Corinthians 4:4) The Bible tells us that he "keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." His ministers, those who serve him by acting like him, do too. (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15) They promise freedom and fun, but as the Bible says, "they themselves are existing as slaves of corruption."—2 Peter 2:19.

Have no illusions about it. Those who ignore God's moral standards will suffer dire consequences. The Bible psalmist wrote: "Salvation is far away from the wicked ones, for they have not searched for [God's] own regulations." (Psalm 119:155; Proverbs 5:22, 23) Are we convinced of that? If we are, let us protect our minds and hearts against permissive propaganda.

Many, however, unwisely reason, 'If what I'm doing is not illegal, then it's all right.' But that is not so. Our heavenly Father lovingly provides moral guidance, not to make your life boring and restrictive, but to protect you. He is "teaching you to benefit yourself." He wants you to avoid calamity and enjoy a happy life. Indeed, as the Bible teaches, serving God "holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." That is "the real life," eternal life in his promised new world!—Isaiah 48:17, 18; 1 Timothy 4:8; 6:19.

So compare the benefits of following Bible teachings with the heartache that eventually comes to those who fail to do so. Winning God's favor by listening to him is truly the best way of life! "As for the one listening to me," God promises, "he will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity."

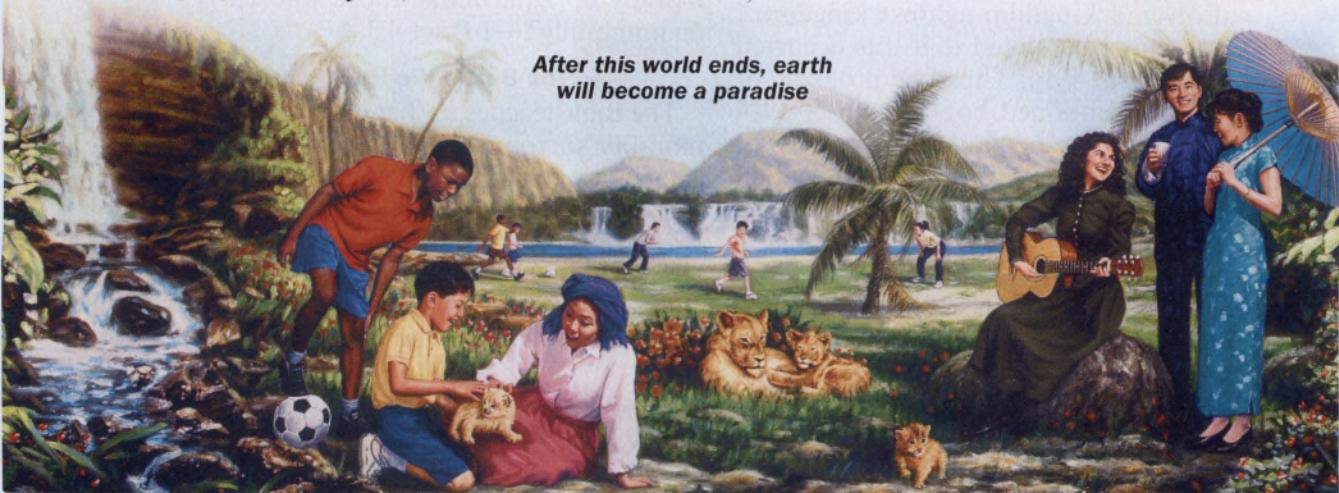
—Proverbs 1:33.

A Morally Upright Society

The Bible says that when this world passes away, "the wicked one will be no more." It also says: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it." (Psalm 37:10, 11; Proverbs 2:20-22) So the earth will be cleansed of all remnants of immorality, including all those who refuse to abide by the wholesome teachings of our Creator. An earthly paradise, similar to that in which God placed the first human pair, will then gradually be cultivated earth wide by lovers of God.—Genesis 2:7-9.

Consider the pleasure of living in such a cleansed earth of paradisaic beauty! Among those who will be privileged to see it will be the billions resurrected from the dead. Rejoice in God's promises: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

After this world ends, earth will become a paradise



Why am I always being compared with others?

*"It drives me crazy when my parents or teachers compare me with others."—Mia.**

"Comparisons make me feel inadequate because I already wish I were more like the person I'm being compared with."—April.



AT SCHOOL your teacher chides you for not being as good at math as your classmate. At home your parent scolds you for not being as neat as your sister. Someone says, "Your mother was so pretty when she was your age!" A stinging comment because it makes you wonder if the person views you as ugly. "Can't people see *me*?" you want to scream. "Why am I always being compared with *someone else*?"

Why do comparisons hurt so much? Can any good come from them? How can you cope when people compare you with others?

Why Do Comparisons Hurt?

One reason comparisons hurt is that sometimes they hit close to home. In effect, what people are saying out loud may be what you often say to yourself. For example, Becky admits, "I would look at the popular kids at school and think, 'If only I were like them, more people would like me.'"

* Names have been changed.

What provokes these feelings of insecurity? Well, consider what is happening to you physically, emotionally, and mentally. Your body may be changing rapidly. Your relationship with your parents is becoming more complex. Your attitude toward the opposite sex has probably altered radically. So you may wonder, 'Am I developing normally?'

Perhaps you feel that the only way you can find out is by comparing yourself with other youths who are experiencing the same changes. And here is the trap! If they *seem to be* coping better than you are, you feel insecure. Then when some adult asks, 'Why can't you be more like so-and-so?' you may feel that your worst fears are confirmed—that you are not normal!

April points to another reason why comparisons can hurt. "When people compare you with someone else," she says, "especially someone you're close to, it can cause feelings of jealousy and resentment." Mia knows what that is like. Her parents and teachers seem to

be constantly comparing her with her older sister. "They tell me about all the things she accomplished by the time she was my age," Mia says. With what effect? "It makes me feel as though I'm in competition with my sister. Sometimes, I even resent her."

Comparisons can indeed produce bad results. Consider what happened to Jesus' closest companions. On the last evening before Jesus' death, "a heated dispute" arose among the apostles. Why? They were, in effect, comparing themselves to each other and arguing over "which one of them seemed to be greatest." (Luke 22:24) No doubt about it, some types of comparisons can be harmful. But are *all* comparisons bad?

"I would prefer that the person giving me counsel not mention the name of another person and say, 'You should be more like so-and-so,' but, rather, highlight my good qualities first and then in a loving manner help me to see my weaknesses."—Natalie

The Good Side of Comparisons

Consider young Daniel and his three Hebrew companions, described in the Bible. These youths did not want to eat the delicacies of the Babylonian king that were prohibited by God's law. (Leviticus 11:4-8) To convince their guardian to help them, Daniel proposed a test. He suggested that after ten days of eating food acceptable under God's Law, the guardian should compare the Hebrew youths with the other youths in the court. The result?

The Bible explains: "At the end of ten days [the Hebrews'] countenances appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the children who were eating the delicacies of the king." (Daniel 1:6-16) Note that the good outcome was not because Daniel and his companions were somehow naturally superior to the oth-

er youths. Rather, it was primarily because the Hebrew youths chose to obey the laws God had given to his people.

Can you relate to the experience of these young Hebrews? If you live by the Bible's moral code, you will stand out as different from other youths. Some people who observe these differences may be puzzled and "go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:3, 4) Others, however, will see the good results of your fine conduct, and they may even be moved to learn about Jehovah. (1 Peter 2:12) In this circumstance, being compared with others can be good.

Comparisons can also be useful in another way. For example, *you* may think that you do your fair share of work around the house—at least when you compare yourself with your brother or sister. Your *parents*, though, may not share your viewpoint. To help readjust your thinking, they may use a Bible example and ask you to compare your attitude and actions with those of a Bible character.

For instance, they may remind you that although Jesus was called Lord and Teacher, he willingly washed the feet of his disciples. (John 13:12-15) They may then encourage you to imitate Jesus' humble, hardworking attitude. In fact, the Bible encourages all Christians, young and old, constantly to compare themselves with Christ and try to "follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) This type of comparison keeps us humble and helps us to develop a personality that is more pleasing to Jehovah.

Coping With Negative Comparisons

Granted, it can be irritating and disheartening when you are unfavorably compared with a sibling or one of your peers. How can you cope? "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger," said wise King Solomon. (Proverbs 19:11) How can insight help? You

You might want to explain respectfully how the comparisons make you feel

may not think so, but the one making the comparisons, such as a parent or a teacher, probably has your best interests at heart. "When someone compares me with others," says Cathy, "I ask myself, 'How are they trying to help me?'" Cathy finds that by taking a positive approach, she is less likely to become downhearted or annoyed.

What, though, if you feel that you are constantly the target of comparisons? For instance, a parent may always seem to compare you in a negative way with one of your siblings. You might want to approach that parent and respectfully explain how the comparisons make you feel. Your parent may be unaware of the negative effect that these comparisons are having on you.

Remember, though, that there is "a time to speak" but also "a time to keep quiet." (Ecclesiastes 3:7) Rather than erupting in anger the next time a comparison is made, wait until you have cooled down, and then talk to your parent or whoever made the unfavorable comparison. If you do, your words will be far more persuasive.—Proverbs 16:23.

Often, you can lessen the sting of negative comparisons by being aware of your strengths. The apostle Paul told Timothy: "Let no man ever look down on your youth." (1 Timothy 4:12) Timothy was relatively young when he was appointed to serve as a Christian overseer. So some may have been making unfavorable comparisons of Timothy with other men who were older and more experienced. But such negative comparisons would have been unjustified. Though young,



Timothy had gained much experience while traveling with Paul. Timothy knew how to handle God's Word effectively. And he genuinely cared for his spiritual brothers and sisters.—1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19, 20.

Therefore, the next time you are the brunt of a negative comparison, ask yourself, "Is the criticism justified?" If there is some truth to what was said, try to learn from it. However, if the comparison is a sweeping generalization—such as, "Why can't you be more like your brother?"—try to put the comment in perspective. Try your best to put a positive spin on the comparison.

Jehovah God does not measure your worth by comparing you with another imperfect human. (Galatians 6:4) He looks beyond the mere outward appearance and understands the person you are in your heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) Indeed, Jehovah sees not only who you are but also what you are trying to become. (Hebrews 4:12, 13) He makes allowances for your failures and looks for the good in you. (Psalm 130:3, 4) Just knowing these facts can help you to cope when you are compared with others.

TO THINK ABOUT

- What type of comparisons tend to irritate you?
- If your parents constantly compare you with others, how will you deal with the situation?

More articles from the "Young People Ask . . ." series can be found at the Web site
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FROM EGYPT TO CITIES AROUND THE WORLD

BY AWAKE!
WRITER IN
ITALY

THEY have ‘traveled’ out of the land of their origin,” says the Italian magazine *Archeo*, “becoming tangible symbols of the great civilization that had produced them.” Most left Egypt long ago and were brought to such places as Istanbul, London, Paris, Rome, and New York. Visitors to Rome may observe that many of the city’s most famous squares are adorned by their presence. What are they? Obelisks!

Each tapering four-faced stone column, known as an obelisk, is crowned by a pointed cusp in the form of a pyramid. The earliest dates back some 4,000 years. Even the most recent one is about 2,000 years old.

Obelisks, generally of red granite, were quarried by the ancient Egyptians as monolithic blocks of stone and were erected in front of tombs and temples. Some are huge. The largest still standing rises 105 feet above a Roman piazza and weighs some 455 tons. Most are embellished with hieroglyphs.

The monuments’ purpose was to honor the sun-god Ra. They were erected to thank him for his protection and for victories granted to Egyptian sovereigns as well as to request favors. Their shape is thought to have been derived from that of the pyramid. They represent beams of sunlight descending to warm and illuminate the earth.

Additionally, obelisks were used to glorify the Pharaohs. Their inscriptions proclaim various Egyptian sovereigns as “beloved of Ra” or “beautiful . . . like Atum,” who was the god of the sun at sunset. One obelisk says of a Pharaoh’s military prowess: “His power is like that of Monthu [god of war], the bull that tramples foreign lands and kills rebels.”

The first obelisks were raised in the Egyptian city of Junu (the Biblical On), thought to mean “City of the Pillar,” perhaps referring to the obelisks themselves. The Greeks called Junu Heliopolis, meaning “City of the Sun,” since it was the chief center of Egyptian sun worship. The Greek name Heliopolis corresponds to the Hebrew name Beth-shemesh, meaning “House of the Sun.”

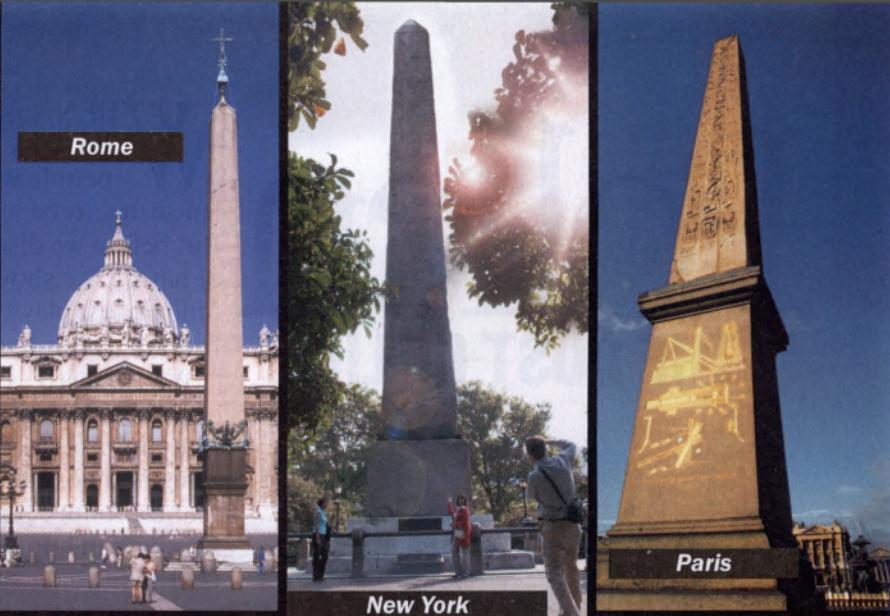
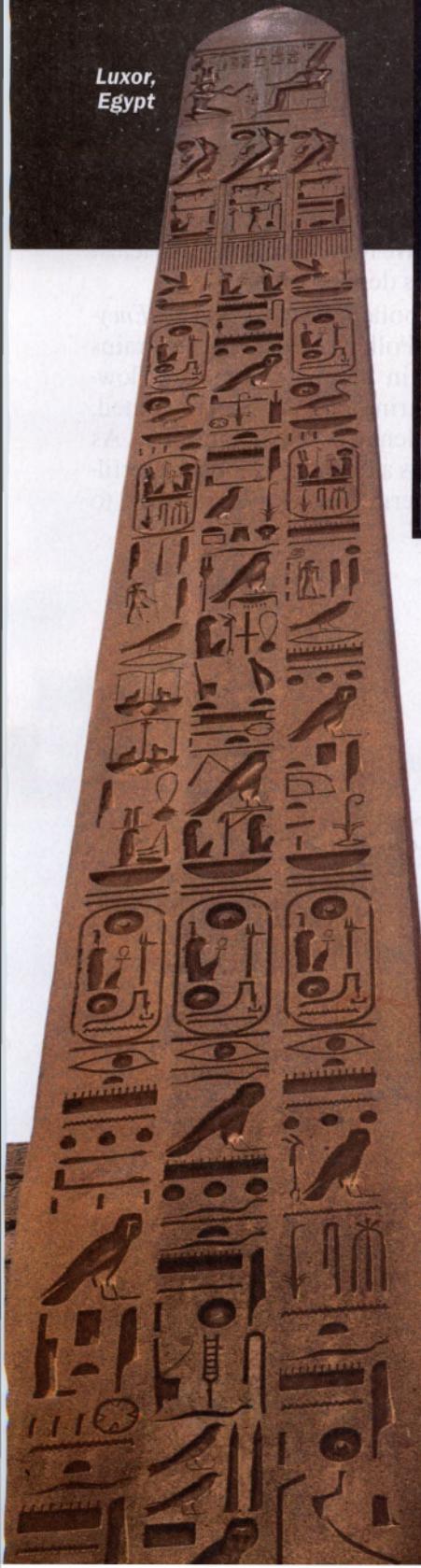
The Bible’s prophetic book of Jeremiah speaks of the breaking of “the pillars of Beth-shemesh, which is in the land of Egypt.” This may refer to the obelisks of Heliopolis. God condemned the idolatrous worship they represented.—Jeremiah 43:10-13.

Extraction and Transportation

How obelisks were made is shown by the largest of these monuments. It still lies abandoned near Aswān, Egypt, where it was being quarried. After choosing a promising bed of rock and leveling it, workers excavated trenches around what was to become the obelisk. They dug passages beneath it and filled them with beams, until the bottom face was freed. The monolith, which weighed about 1,170 tons—heavier than any other block of stone quarried by the ancient Egyptians—was then to have been hauled down to the Nile and conveyed to its destination by barge.

As things turned out, the Aswān obelisk was abandoned when workers realized that it was irreparably fractured. Had it been finished, it would have stood 137 feet high, with a base 13 feet square. How obelisks were raised upright is still not known.

**Luxor,
Egypt**



From Egypt to Rome

In 30 B.C.E., Egypt became a Roman province. Various Roman emperors desired to adorn their capital with monuments of great prestige, so as many as 50 obelisks were transferred to Rome. Moving them meant building huge ships designed especially for that purpose. Once in Rome, the obelisks continued to be closely associated with sun worship.

When the Roman Empire fell, Rome was sacked. Most of the obelisks were toppled and lay forgotten. Various popes, however, took an interest in reerecting the obelisks taken from the ruins of the ancient city. The Roman Catholic Church has acknowledged that the obelisks were “dedicated to the Sun by an Egyptian king” and that they once “brought vain magnificence to sacrilegious pagan temples.”

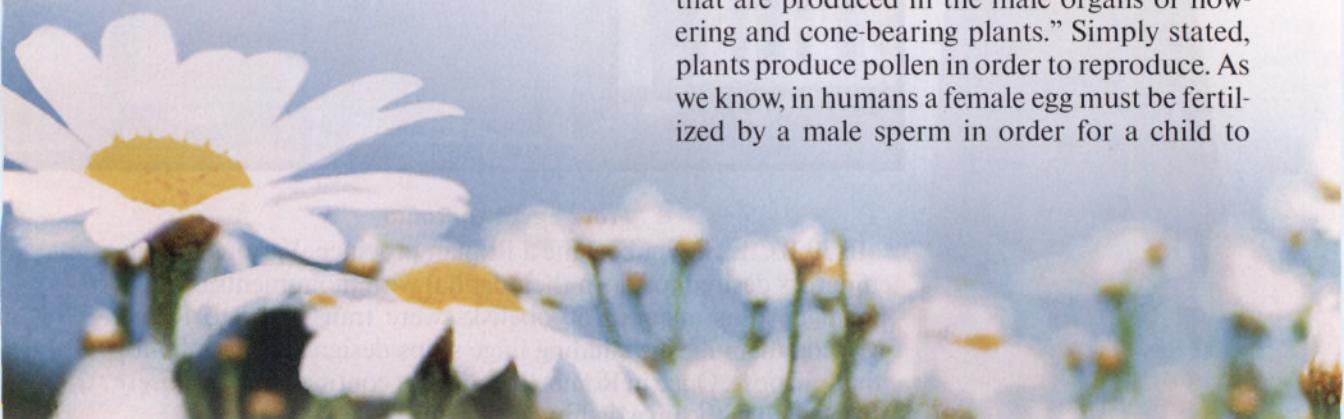


The reerection of the first obelisks during the reign of Pope Sixtus V (1585-90) was accompanied by exorcisms and blessings, as well as the sprinkling of holy water and the burning of incense. “I exorcise you,” sang a bishop before the Vatican obelisk, “to bear the holy Cross and remain devoid of all pagan impurity and all assaults of spiritual iniquity.”

So as a tourist examines the obelisks that stand in Rome today, he may well ponder the genius it took to extract, transport, and raise them. He may also marvel that monuments used in sun worship adorn the city of the popes—a strange combination indeed!

Pollen

THE DUST OF LIFE



The Pollinators

FLIES AND BEETLES

These are some of the unsung heroes of pollination. If you enjoy chocolate, you can thank a tiny fly that does the vital job of pollinating the flowers of the cacao tree.

BATS AND POSSUMS

A number of the world's most majestic trees, such as the kapok and the baobab, depend on bats for pollination. Some fruit bats not only feed on nectar but also eat the fruit and disperse the seeds, thus performing a double service. In Australia small marsupials known as possums visit flowers to feast on nectar. During the course of their visits, their furry bodies transport pollen from flower to flower.



BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

These attractive insects depend largely on nectar for food, picking up pollen as they fly from one flower to another. Some beautiful orchids depend entirely on moths for successful pollination.



be produced. Similarly, the female organ of a flower (the pistil) needs pollen from the male organ (the stamen) in order to be fertilized and produce fruit.*

Pollen grains are so tiny that we can hardly see them with the unaided eye; however, they become apparent under a microscope. In fact, a viewer can see that both the size and the shape are unique to each particular species. Since pollen is resistant to decay, it is significant that scientists often study the

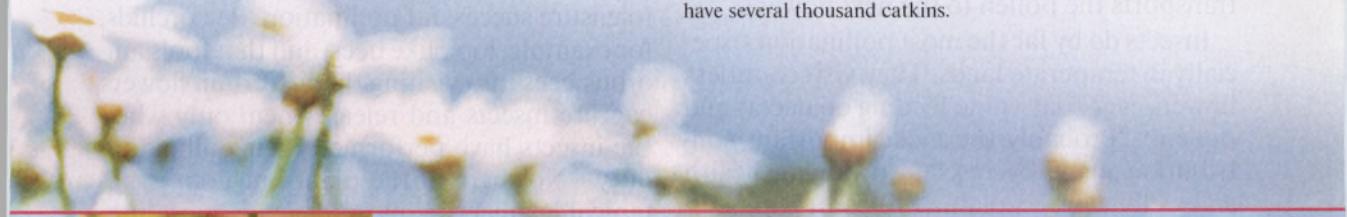
* Fertilization can be either by cross-pollination (pollen delivered from another plant) or self-pollination (pollen received from the same individual plant). Nevertheless, cross-pollination guarantees variety and thus healthier and more resilient plants.

unique "fingerprint" of the pollen grains they unearth. They can thereby identify plants that people cultivated centuries ago. Importantly, the distinct characteristics of each type of pollen enable flowers to recognize the pollen of their own species.

The Way Pollen Travels

Many plants depend on the air to transport their pollen after it is released from catkins or cones when they are jostled by the wind. Water also serves to transport the pollen of some water plants. Since wind pollination is a hit-and-miss affair, trees and plants that depend on this method of pollination produce astronomical quantities of pollen.* For people

* Just one birch catkin, for example, may release over five million grains of pollen, and a typical birch tree will likely have several thousand catkins.



SUNBIRDS AND HUMMINGBIRDS

These colorful birds constantly flit from flower to flower, sipping nectar. Pollen gets deposited on the feathers of the birds' forehead and breast.

BEES AND WASPS

The hairy bodies of bees pick up pollen as readily as a pair of spectacles picks up dust, making bees ideal pollinators. Just one bumblebee can carry as many as 15,000 grains of pollen. Thanks to the introduction of bumblebees from England in the 19th century, clover fields now flourish in New Zealand, providing vital forage for the country's livestock.

The honeybee is the world's most important pollinator. It usually concentrates on only one type of flower abundant near its hive. Entomologist Christopher O'Toole calculates that "as much as 30 per cent of all human food is directly or indirectly dependent on pollination by bees." Bees are needed to pollinate such crops as almonds, apples, plums, cherries, and kiwis. Farmers pay the beekeepers for the services each hive provides.



who suffer from hay fever, this proliferation of pollen results in great discomfort.

Although wind effectively helps to pollinate many types of trees and grasses, flowering plants that do not grow in high densities need a more efficient system. How is the pollen from such plants dispatched to other like plants that live miles away? By a very effective delivery service provided by bats, birds, and insects! But, of course, they don't transport pollen from one flower to another without a reward.

Flowers offer these pollinators nectar—a tasty product that is hard for them to refuse. While reaching to sip the nectar, the visitor invariably gets a good dusting of pollen on its body. Seeking another taste of nectar, it then transports the pollen to the next flower.

Insects do by far the most pollination, especially in temperate lands. They visit countless flowers every day while feeding on nectar and pollen.* "Probably the most important contribution made by insects to human health and well-being," explains Professor May Berenbaum, "is one for which they get little credit: pollination." Fruit trees usually have

* Two pounds of honey requires that bees make about ten million trips to individual flowers.

flowers that depend on cross-pollination to produce a good crop. Hence, you can see how important the transportation of pollen is to our well-being.

How the Workers Are Enticed

Flowers have to attract potential pollinators as well as feed them. How do flowers do this? They may provide pollinators with a warm resting place in the sun. They also advertise their wares, usually by their pleasing appearance and smell. Also, many flowers lay out some helpful guidelines in the form of colored spots or stripes. In this way visitors are informed where they can find the nectar.

Advertisements vary greatly from one flower to another. Some exude a smell of putrefaction to attract flies. Others resort to trickery to ensure successful pollination. Bee orchids, for example, look like bees, and that fools amorous bees into visiting them. Certain flowers capture insects and release them only when the insects have performed their pollination duty. "Nowhere in the plant kingdom is botanical engineering more delicate, more precise or more ingenious than in the vital matter of ensuring that flowers are pollinated," writes botanist Malcolm Wilkins.

If the Creator hadn't arranged for the pollination of plants by making them attractive, millions of plants would not reproduce. Commenting on the result of that remarkable activity, Jesus said: "Take a lesson from the lilies of the field, how they are growing; they do not toil, nor do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these."—Matthew 6:25, 28, 29.

Thanks to pollination, plants thrive and produce the food on which we depend. True, pollen may cause discomfort to some of us,

but we should all be thankful for the busy pollinators that distribute this dust of life. Successful harvests depend to a large extent on this marvelous natural process that testifies to the amazing handiwork of our Creator.

Bee orchids



Something More Lasting Than Art

AS TOLD BY RAKEL KOIVISTO

In 1950 my suggestion for a monument to honor those who had died in World War II won a national contest. A year later when my huge granite monument was unveiled at a solemn ceremony in Tuusula, Finland, I wasn't present. Let me explain why.

I WAS born in 1917, the youngest in a family of eight children who lived in a rural village in southern Finland. Though we were poor, I felt happy and secure. My parents were stable and God-fearing, and they taught us to value spiritual things. A Bible that my dad had purchased was highly esteemed in our home.

As a child, I carved small statues out of wood. Relatives thought my work was exceptional, so they encouraged me to study art. In time, my application to the University of Industrial Arts in Helsinki was accepted. This elite school, the heart of Finnish art life, was a fascinating environment for a little country girl, and I became absorbed in it. When I graduated in 1947, I thought that I could leave behind in this world something lasting.

A Turning Point

Then my goals changed dramatically. One day, my sister Aune came to me and excited-



Working on my granite monument

ly exclaimed, "I have found the truth!" She had received the book "*Let God Be True*," published by Jehovah's Witnesses. I was not impressed. Not long afterward, I noticed that a girl who had been a fellow student at the university had the same book. When I belittled it, she retorted: "You stop laughing! This book will help you to understand the Bible." I obtained the book and practically read it through in one sitting. I no longer laughed; in fact, I was convinced that the Witnesses had the truth. I also realized that Jehovah God was offering me something that art cannot give—everlasting life.

When I first became acquainted with the Witnesses, they didn't invite me to their meetings. Thus, I thought the meetings were only for members. So I took the initiative and asked if I could possibly attend. I was delighted to learn that Christian meetings are open to all. Attending the meetings strengthened my faith, and I decided to dedicate my life to

Jehovah. I made this decision known publicly on November 19, 1950, when my sister and I were both baptized. To our delight, our other four sisters and our dear parents also eventually became Witnesses.

What Career Should I Choose?

While I was studying the Bible with the Witnesses, I was moving ahead in my artistic career. After I graduated from art school, I worked as an assistant to a professor of sculpture. Then, as mentioned at the outset, my idea for the monument to those who fell in World War II won a national contest. My suggestion for its title was "The Way of No Return," reflecting my adjusted view of war. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 26:52) When the statue—which stands over 16 feet tall—was unveiled, I was not present because the ceremony was patriotic and was not in keeping with my Bible-based convictions.

As my reputation as an artist grew, I became well-known and received promising job offers. Yet, I evaluated my priorities. Although I loved my work, my desire to help others in a spiritual way was even stronger. That is why in 1953, I began serving as a pioneer, as full-time evangelizers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called.

Sometimes I was told that I was letting my talent go to waste. But I realized that any personal achievements as a sculptor would only be temporary. Even granite monuments crumble in time. However, as a pioneer, I could use most of my time helping others to get on the road to everlasting life! (John 17:3) Still, I did not forget sculpture. Every now and then, I continued to make small statues for my own satisfaction and to sell them to support myself.

My Move to a Rural Area

In 1957, after four years of pioneer service in Helsinki, I was invited by the Finland branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses to serve in Jalasjärvi, a rural municipality in the

Southern Ostrobothnia region. There I was to join Anja Keto, who was 17 years younger than I. Although I didn't know Anja, I gladly accepted the assignment and moved in with her. She and I were the only Witnesses in the area, so we almost always worked together in the ministry. We soon became inseparable friends.

Moving to Jalasjärvi meant a return to rustic conditions similar to those in which I had lived before becoming a part of the artistic circles of the capital city 20 years earlier. The winters were especially hard, and sometimes we had to wade through snow that reached up to our hips. We lived in a small cabin, which was far from luxurious. We drew our water from a nearby spring, and occasionally the water that we carried inside would freeze over at night. But we had everything we needed. (1 Timothy 6:8) Those were happy, action-packed days.

Busy in Rewarding Activity

At the beginning, however, our efforts did not seem very successful because the local inhabitants were prejudiced against us. To help them understand our work, we arranged showings of films produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, such as *The New World Society in Action* and *The Happiness of the New World Society*. These acquainted them with us and our organization, helping them see the positive effects of our activities on people worldwide. Many gathered for these showings.

On one occasion Eero Muurainen, a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses, showed the film *The New World Society in Action* at a community hall. The place got so crowded that I barely found a place for myself in the farthest corner. I had to stand on one leg with my back to a wall, as there was no room to put my other foot on the floor. After the film was finished, many approached us and asked us to visit them.

We also used a big tape recorder to play recorded Bible talks in farmhouses. On one

occasion we had agreed to play such a discourse at 7:00 p.m. in the house of one family, and we had invited the entire village for the gathering. Early that morning, we set off on our bicycles to preach in a village some 15 miles away, thinking that we would have time to do so before evening. Yet, when we left the village, the rain had turned the road to a muddy mess.

Eventually, our bicycles got so caked with mud that the wheels wouldn't turn, so we had to carry our bikes home. As a result, we weren't able to leave for our planned meeting until late in the evening. We dragged our heavy tape recorder along and arrived at 10:00 p.m. We were quite sure that everyone would be gone. But to our surprise, the house was full of villagers still waiting for us! After the discourse, a lively discussion ensued. When we finally got home in the early hours of the morning, we were bone tired but very happy!

The distances between villages were so great that the Witnesses in the region helped us to purchase a car—an old Russian-made vehicle. That made our preaching work much easier. Later, it became famous, for during his visit the bishop of the diocese told the parishioners not to welcome us into their homes. He spoke of two ladies with a blue car. Immediately the warnings had an effect on the people. They wanted to know who these two ladies were and what made them so dangerous! Their curiosity led to many fine Bible discussions. True indeed are the words of Isaiah: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success."—Isaiah 54:17.

In time, our work bore fruit. We began holding weekly meetings with a small group of interested ones. Eventually our group grew, and in 1962 a congregation of 18 Witnesses, mostly women, was formed. Two years later Anja and I were transferred to the municipality of Ylistaro, in the same region.

An Inspiring Environment

We enjoyed the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside in our new assignment, but we especially enjoyed the people. They were generally hospitable and friendly. True, many were deeply religious and patriotic, and sometimes they angrily rebuffed us; but there were others who showed a deep respect for the Bible. Many times when we took out the Bible, women stopped their housework to listen and men took off their hats—hats that otherwise seemed to be glued to their heads. Sometimes when we studied the Bible, the whole household, and even neighbors, would come and sit in on the study.

The genuine, honest people I met in the service inspired my artwork. When I had time available, I would take some clay and start to work with it. Since I have always been fascinated by charming and humorous human characteristics, almost all of the statues I made featured people. Many of them showed women doing their chores. A magazine article





With Anja (right) today

had devoted my life to art? Some extra money to make my retirement years more secure?" How little it was in comparison with the reward of everlasting life!—1 Timothy 6:12.

Back to the City

The year 1974 brought quite a change in our lives and ministry. We were assigned to Turku, a large city. At the time many new apartments were being built there, and the influx of people created a need for Kingdom publishers. At first, we weren't too happy with our new urban assignment. Preaching to city dwellers seemed harder, as many of them responded with apathy. But gradually we adjusted to that new territory, and we found many who appreciated Bible truths.

Over the years, Anja and I have had the privilege of helping more than 40 people to dedicate their lives to Jehovah. What a joy these spiritual children bring to our hearts! (3 John 4) In recent years my health has gone downhill, but I have felt Jehovah's backing, the love of the congregation, and the "strengthening aid" of my dear pioneer partner, Anja, more fully. (Colossians 4:11; Psalm 55:22) When I met Anja nearly 50 years ago, I think neither of us could have imagined that our pioneer partnership would last a lifetime.

A popular saying goes, "Life is short but art is forever." This phrase, however, has not been my motto. I agree with the apostle Paul's words at 2 Corinthians 4:18: "The things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting." All the joys I have had as an artist—"the things seen"—have been temporary. They certainly cannot compare with the joys I have had in Jehovah's service, and they do not give everlasting life. I am so grateful that I devoted my life to "the things unseen," things that are more lasting than art!

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- **Coping in a World of Unequal Opportunities**
- **Is Your Life Predestined?**
- **Is This Person Right for Me?**

A MAJESTIC Monolith

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN CANADA



FOR CENTURIES, fishermen and navigators have used it as a trusted landmark. Poets, writers, and artists have immortalized it. One source describes this monolith as "enigmatic and fascinating." At the eastern tip of the Gaspé Peninsula in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Percé Rock stands majestically in the shimmering blue water of the Atlantic Ocean. The rock is some 1,420 feet long, about 300 feet wide, and over 290 feet high.

At one time, daring locals would scale the face of the rock and gather eggs from birds' nests. However, to preserve and protect the rock as well as the birds that seek refuge on its heights, in 1985 the Quebec government declared Percé Rock and nearby Bonaventure Island bird sanctuaries. Bonaventure Island is a refuge for the second-largest northern gannet breeding colony in the world.

Some claim that long ago Percé Rock was attached to the mainland and that it may have had as many as four arches. Today, though, only one arch exists—over 90 feet wide—in the seaward end of the rock.

At low tide a sandbar connects the rock to the mainland. During an interval of about four hours, the courageous at heart can walk right up to the base of the rock and then grope and splash their way along it for about 15 minutes to reach the arch.

For those adventurers, there is a word of caution. One sightseer who clambered over fallen slabs of rock to reach the opening relates: "Every few minutes you can hear a frightening 'voosh' of rocks entering the water like miniature bombs. Some rocks fall on one another, like the crack of a gunshot."

As many visitors have noted, Percé Rock boasts a beauty that is breathtaking. Yet, it is only a sample of the many splendid sights that our fascinating earth offers. How varied and numerous they are! When seeing them, perhaps you too have been moved to "stand still and show yourself attentive to the wonderful works of God."—Job 37:14.



Cloth Dyeing

ANCIENT AND MODERN

HAVE you ever noticed the effect that color has on our emotions? It is not surprising that throughout history humans have chosen to add color to fabrics, employing the process known as dyeing.

When we buy clothes and furnishings or the materials to make them, we do not want the colors to wash out or fade. To learn what processes are used in making fabrics color-fast and how traditional dyeing techniques developed, we visited the SDC Colour Museum at Bradford, in the north of England.* There we saw examples of some of the unusual substances that have been used as dyes over the centuries.

Dyes Used in Early Centuries

Until the second half of the 19th century, the substances used for dyeing fabrics came entirely from natural sources, such as plants, insects, and shellfish. For example, the woad plant produced a blue dye (1), the weld plant a yellow dye (2), and the madder plant a red dye. A black dye came from the logwood tree, and a lichen named archil gave a violet dye. The murex shellfish produced a very costly purple dye, known as Tyrian, or imperial, purple (3).

* The SDC—Society of Dyers and Colourists—advances the science of color.

This dye colored the garments worn by Roman emperors.

Long before there were Roman emperors, the prominent and wealthy wore clothes dyed with natural substances. (Esther 8:15) Red dyes, for example, were produced from the female kermes insect (4). This was apparently the source of the coccus scarlet dye used for ancient Israel's tabernacle furnishings, as well as for the garments of Israel's high priest. —Exodus 28:5; 36:8.

The Process of Dyeing

Exhibits in the Colour Museum demonstrate that most dyeing processes are far more complex than simply dipping yarn or material into a dye solution. In many cases one stage of the dyeing process involves the use of a mordant, which is a substance that has an attraction for both the fiber and the dye. Through its use, dye bonds to the fiber and ceases to be water-soluble. Many chemicals are used as mordants, some of which are dangerous to handle.

Some dyeing processes create unpleasant smells. One of these is the lengthy and complex process that was used to produce Turkey red. This process was used on cotton and produced a bright-red color that was not af-





fected by light, washing, or bleaching. At one time the process involved 38 different stages and took as long as four months to complete! Some of the most beautiful cloths on display at the museum are those that were dyed with Turkey red (5).

The Arrival of Synthetic Dyes

The first dye that was not derived from natural sources is attributed to William Henry Perkin in 1856. An exhibit explains Perkin's discovery of mauve, or mauveine, an intense purple dye. By the end of the 19th century, many other synthetic dyes in brilliant colors had been developed. Today over 8,000 types of synthetic dyes are manufactured (6). The only natural products still in regular use are logwood and cochineal.

The Colour and Textiles Gallery of the Colour Museum explains the special processes needed today to dye synthetic materials, such as rayon. Viscose rayon, the most popular type of rayon in current use, was first produced commercially in 1905. As viscose rayon is chemically similar to cotton, most of the

dyes available at that time were suitable for use. However, several new types of dyes had to be developed for more-modern synthetic materials such as acetate rayon, polyester, nylon, and acrylic fiber.

Challenge to Color Fastness

When we buy clothes or materials, we want them to be colorfast. Nevertheless, many fade in sunlight or with repeated washing, particularly if detergents are used. Sometimes fabrics may discolor from perspiration or change color when washed with other clothes. Fastness during the washing process depends on how strongly the dye molecules adhere to the fibers. Repeated washing and the effects of detergents designed to loosen stains separate the dye from the fibers, resulting in color loss. Dye manufacturers test their products to see if the effects of light, washing, detergents, and perspiration are within acceptable limits.

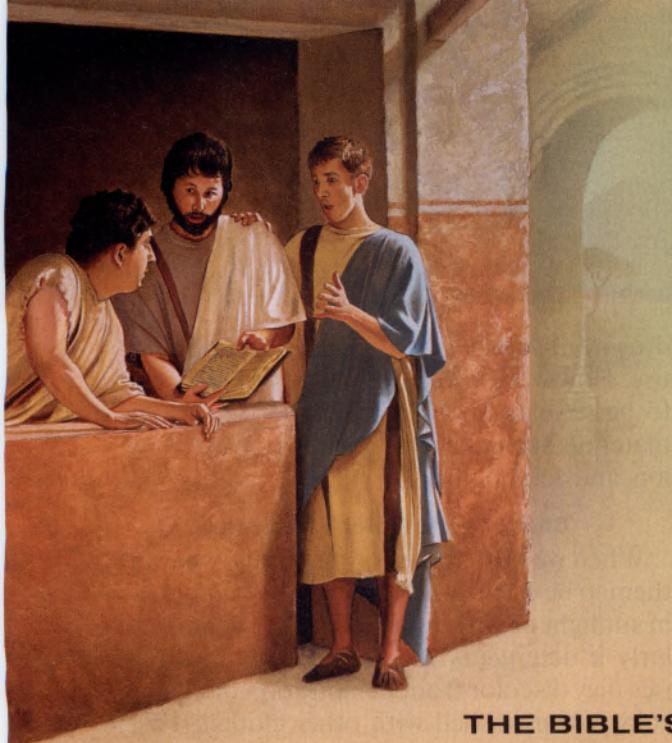
Our tour encouraged us to be more aware of what kinds of materials our clothes are made from. But more than that, we were enlightened regarding the ingenious processes that have been used to keep the colors in our clothing fixed despite frequent washing.

5



6





THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

“IN MY country to be a Christian means to go to church once a week,” says Kingsley, from one African country. Raad, from the Middle East, explains: “In our community Christians are viewed as a group who follow Western customs and traditions in their dress, celebrations, and treatment of women.”

But does being a Christian simply mean that one attends a church service once a week and follows certain social customs and traditions? Logically, should not the word “Christian” refer to a way of life that reflects the attitudes, values, and conduct that Christ preached and exemplified?* How was Christianity practiced at its inception?

* One dictionary defines a Christian as someone who professes belief in Jesus as Christ or who follows the religion based on his life and teachings.



Early Christianity—A Way of Life

Jesus said to his followers: “You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you.” (John 15:14) Since Jesus’ teachings affected all aspects of their lives, Christ’s disciples initially referred to their religion as “The Way.” (Acts 9:2) Soon thereafter, “[they] were by divine providence called Christians.” (Acts 11:26) This new name they bore meant that they believed that Jesus was the Son of God, who had transmitted to mankind the will of his heavenly Father. This belief led them to follow a way of life that differed from that of the world around them.

Christ’s teachings moved his followers to follow Bible teachings, which meant avoiding “fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct,

**True Christians are zealous evangelizers,
as they were centuries ago**

idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, . . . drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these.” (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-24) The apostle Paul reminded Corinthian Christians that some of them had once practiced these very things. Then he added: “But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

E. W. Barnes relates in his book *The Rise of Christianity*: “In its early authoritative documents the Christian movement is represented as essentially moral and law-abiding. Its members desired to be good citizens and loyal subjects. They shunned the failings and vices of paganism. In private life they sought to be peaceful neighbours and trustworthy friends. They were taught to be sober, industrious and clean-living. Amid prevailing corruption and licentiousness they were, if loyal to their principles, honest and truthful. Their sexual standards were high: the marriage tie was respected and family life was pure.” Such were aspects of being a Christian in the early days.

Another distinctive sign of early Christianity was its zealous evangelizing work. Christ commanded his followers: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) Jean Bernardi, a professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris, France, noted: “[Christians] were to go out and speak everywhere and to everyone. On the highways and in the cities, on the public squares and in the homes. Welcome or unwelcome. To the poor, and to the rich encumbered by their possessions. . . . They had to

take to the road, board ships, and go to the ends of the earth.”

True Christianity Today

True Christians today should stand out for their distinctive way of life, just as they did in the first century. Accordingly, Jehovah’s Witnesses strive to adhere strictly to the precepts established by the first Christians. Their efforts to pattern their lives after the teachings of the Bible are noticed by others.

For instance, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* acknowledges that Jehovah’s Witnesses are known as “one of the best-behaved groups in the world.” The *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City, Utah, observed that Jehovah’s Witnesses “promote strong family ties and develop productive and honest citizens.” The newspaper added: “Members believe in a strong moral code. They believe smoking, overdrinking, drug misuse, gambling, sexual promiscuity and homosexuality are spiritually damaging practices. They teach honesty and good work habits.”

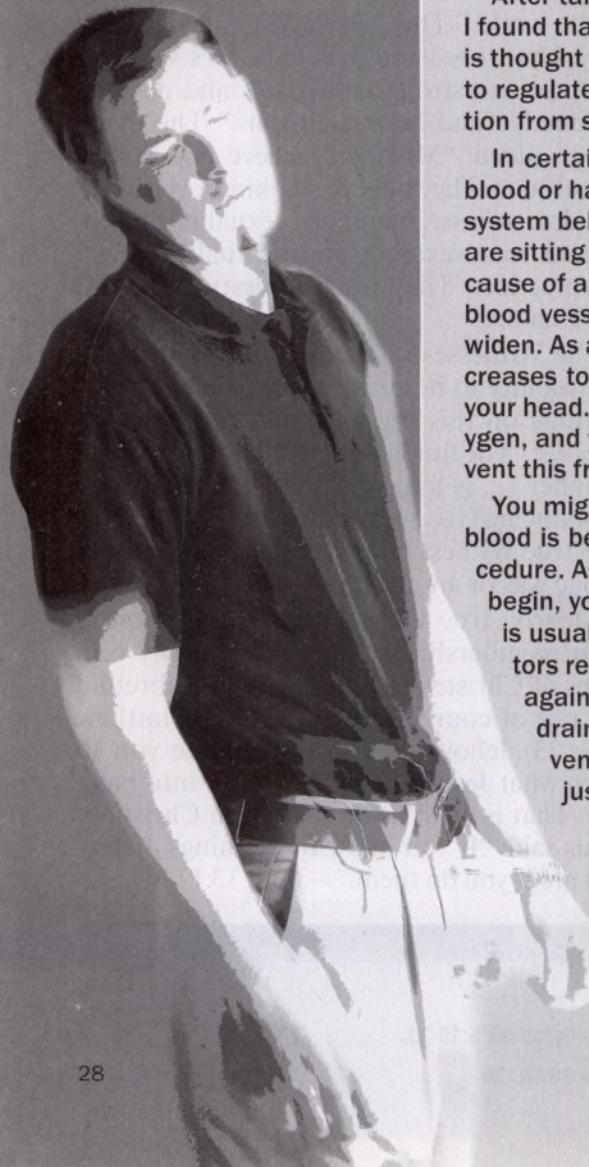
The Witnesses also take to heart their responsibility to be zealous evangelizers. Commenting on this the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “The fundamental obligation of each member . . . is to give witness to Jehovah by announcing His approaching Kingdom. . . . To be a true Witness one must preach effectively in one way or another.”

Clearly, true Christianity is much more than membership in one of the many religions of Christendom. Jesus himself foretold the rise of counterfeit Christians. (Matthew 7:22, 23) Jehovah’s Witnesses invite you to learn what Jesus taught and put it into practice. That is what it means to be a Christian. Jesus said: “If you know these things, happy you are if you do them.”—John 13:17.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Whom did Jesus call his friends?—**John 15:14**.
- What sort of conduct should true Christians shun?—**Galatians 5:19-21**.
- In what work should Christians take part?—**Matthew 28:19, 20**.

Why do I faint?



■ The doctor wanted to check the pressure in my eye, a procedure that required him to touch my eyeball with an instrument. I knew what was going to happen. It always does. It is the same when a nurse uses a needle to extract blood. Sometimes just talking about injuries has the same effect—I faint.

According to a British report, some 3 percent of us often faint when we are in one of the aforementioned specific situations. If you are a fellow sufferer, you may have tried in vain to stop yourself from fainting. You might have tried walking to the bathroom to avoid fainting in public. But that is not a good idea. You might faint suddenly on the way and injure yourself. After experiencing this reaction so many times, I decided to find out what causes it.

After talking to a helpful doctor and checking a few books, I found that such an episode is called a vasovagal reaction.* It is thought to be a malfunction of a body system that is meant to regulate blood circulation, such as when you change position from sitting to standing.

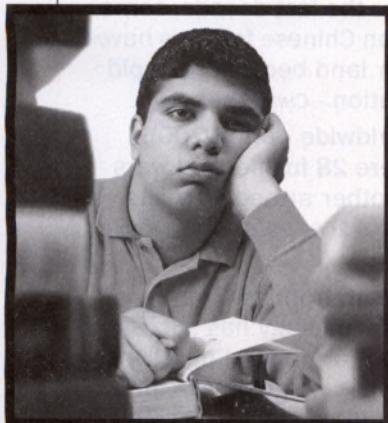
In certain circumstances, which may include seeing blood or having your eyes examined, your involuntary nervous system behaves as if you were lying down, when actually you are sitting or standing up. At first, your heart usually races because of anxiety. Then your pulse rate slows precipitously and blood vessels to your legs dilate, or widen. As a result, the blood supply increases to your legs and lessens to your head. Your brain runs short of oxygen, and you faint. How can you prevent this from happening?

You might look away when your blood is being drawn, or you could lie down during the procedure. As mentioned, when a vasovagal reaction is about to begin, you can often recognize the warning signs. So there is usually time to take action before you faint. Many doctors recommend that you lie down and prop your legs up against a chair or a wall. This prevents your blood from draining into your legs, and thus you may be able to prevent the reaction from running its full course. Within just a few minutes, you will probably feel better.

If this information helps you as it has me, you will be able to recognize the signs of an approaching vasovagal reaction. Then you can take prompt action and stop it before it happens.—Contributed.

Lying down during a medical procedure may be helpful

* "Vasovagal" refers to the action upon the blood vessels of a long nerve called the vagus nerve. The Latin word *vagus* means "wandering."

**Young People Ask . . . Why Do I Have to Read?**

(May 2006) I am 15 years old, and this article was very helpful to me. I took the magazine to school, and my teacher noticed it. During class she talked about reading habits and showed the *Awake!* to my classmates. She mentioned that she had enjoyed the article very much, and she recommended it to all in attendance.

D.A.C., Brazil

In the past I would oftentimes read only the subjects in the magazines that appealed to me. Now I make a conscious effort to read each article, even if at first it doesn't seem interesting to me. I have found that those particular articles almost always become my favorites. Thank you so much.

E. G., United States

I was happy to know that there are young people today who are like I was. I was baptized at age 14 and am now 40 years old. Beginning a short time before my baptism, I too made it a habit to read a number of pages from either *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* each day. I feel that it is due to this custom that I have never missed reading an article and that I have been able to maintain my spirituality.

S. O., Japan

Michael Servetus—A Solitary Quest for the Truth (May 2006) Thank you for this revealing article. It greatly encouraged me to continue preaching and defending Jehovah's name.

M. R., Brazil

Most know Servetus as a prominent person in the field of medicine. However, the article revealed other impressive facets of this scholar's personality, such as his sincerity and quest for truth. Thank you for publishing this article.

M. J., Spain

Heeding the Warnings Made a Difference (June 2006) It is so wonderful to be part of Jehovah's loving organization. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all the brothers and sisters who helped restore my house,

which was so badly damaged by Hurricane Katrina. It is now a home filled with their love.

I. F., United States

Silk—"The Queen of Fibers" (June 2006)

Ever since I was a child, I have wondered how silk was made. How excited I was when I saw this article in *Awake!* I really enjoyed it, and it has definitely increased my appreciation for Jehovah's creations.

A.C.L., Brazil

Key Warning Signs of Malignant Melanoma

(June 8, 2005) By using the color photos supplied in the article, I was able to examine myself and detect a suspicious black swelling that turned out to be a malignant melanoma. Thankfully, the melanoma was surgically removed while it was still in its early stages. My heartfelt thanks to Jehovah for such practical material.

K. N., Japan

- 1. Phœst
- 2. Leelite
- 3. Samariaitan
- 4. Ezra, 460 B.C.E.
- 5. Ezra, 460 B.C.E.
- 6. Paul, 50-52 C.E.
- 7. Rehobotham.
- 8. Haggar.—Galatians 4:22-25.
- 9. Chronicles 10:3-14.

Can Video Games Be Addictive?

"Brain reactions of people who play computer games excessively are similar to those of alcoholics or cannabis addicts." So says psychologist Ralf Thalemann, leader of an addiction research group at Charité University Hospital, Berlin, Germany. It is thought that stimulation from excessive playing of computer games can cause an increased release of dopamine into a player's brain, which produces a sensation of well-being that can eventually create an "addiction." One survey suggested that this may occur in over 10 percent of those who play video games.

The Rich Are Often "Insecure and Troubled"

"Millionaires feel insecure and troubled," states the Beijing newspaper *China Daily*. A survey was conducted among individuals from East China and South China who had an average wealth of 2.2 billion yuan (\$275 million). The researchers, who studied rich people's "attitudes toward faith, marriage, life, career and money," found that "a majority of the millionaires love and hate money at the same time." A number of respondents said that besides social status and a sense of accomplishment, "annoyance is the main thing money has brought them."

Farms Healthy for the Mentally Ill

Over 100 experts from 14 countries recently met in Stavanger, Norway, to learn about Green Care, a concept that combines farming, teaching, and health care. According to the broadcasting company *NRK*, some who have been mentally ill for years no longer need to be institutionalized when they start doing farm work. It is "healthy for mind and body." More than 600 traditional farms in Norway cooperate with Green Care, for which they receive extra income.

A Use for Church Steeples

"New England churches [in the United States] have found a solution to dwindling budgets: renting their picturesque steeples to wireless companies in need of cell sites," says *Newsweek* magazine. Locations for



■ Over the last decade, some 40 million Chinese farmers have lost their land because of rapid urbanization.—*CHINA DAILY, CHINA*

■ Worldwide during 2005, there were 28 full-fledged wars and 11 other armed conflicts.

—*VITAL SIGNS 2006-2007, WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE*.

■ A team from the Tokyo Institute of Technology has successfully flown a manned ultralight aircraft that weighed less than 125 pounds and was powered only by household batteries. The plane flew 1,283 feet in 59 seconds.—*MAINICHI DAILY NEWS, JAPAN*

■ Among Dutch Internet users aged 12 to 20 who visited certain so-called "profile sites" while using a webcam, "40 percent of the boys and 57 percent of the girls reported having been asked to take off clothes or perform some sexual act in front of the webcam."—*RUTGERS NISSO GROEP, NETHERLANDS*.

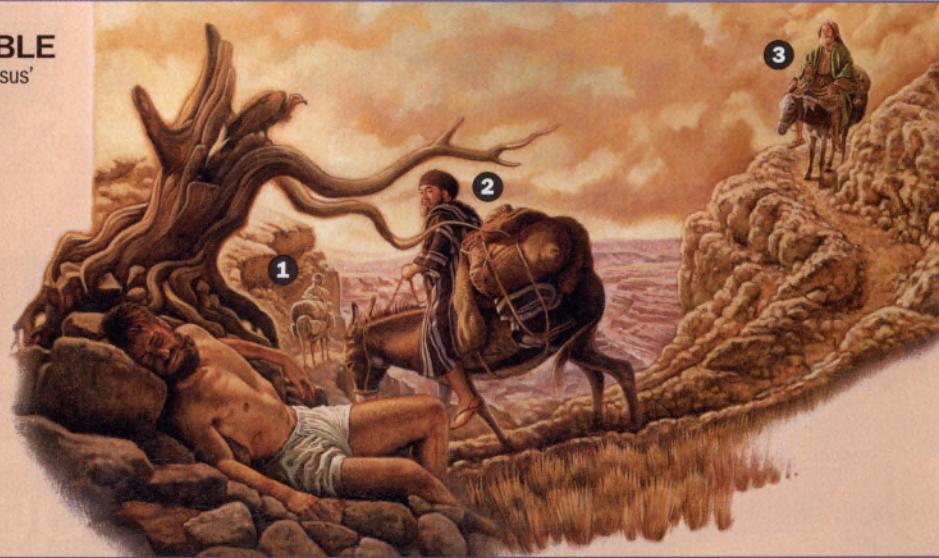
towers that transmit and receive messages from cell phones are limited by zoning restrictions in residential areas, and residents do not want ugly antennas in their neighborhoods. So cell-phone providers are hiding their equipment inside church steeples. The president of one consulting firm for churches says: "The first church we did now has three carriers in it, and they're getting \$74,000 a year for space nobody [was] using anyway."

EXPLAIN THE PARABLE

Identify three of the characters in Jesus' parable recorded at Luke 10:29-37. Write your answers below.

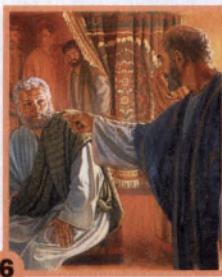
1.
2.
3.

For Discussion: What do you like about the way the Samaritan acted? How can you be a good neighbor?



WHEN IN HISTORY?

Name the writer(s) of each of the Bible books below, and draw a line connecting the book to the approximate date it was completed.



4 2 Chronicles

5 Ezra

6 Galatians

537 B.C.E.

460

455

50-52 C.E.

66-70 C.E.

(Answers on page 29)

WHO AM I?

7. I consulted both old and young but listened only to the latter.

WHO AM I?

8. Paul likened me to a covenant, to Mount Sinai, and to Jerusalem.

FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

Page 9 How will those who serve God be like Noah?
(2 Peter 2:____)

Page 10 What will the righteous possess?
(Psalm 37:____)

Page 12 What can slow down your anger if you are compared with others? (Proverbs 19:____)

Page 26 How can we be Jesus' friend? (John 15:____)

Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.





"A Tremendous Teaching Tool!"

That is what a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses in Panama wrote regarding *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*—a colorfully illustrated, 224-page book now being widely used in Bible study. "It is unbelievably concise, coherent, and convincing," he wrote. "The innovative way references and appendixes are employed instantly encourages investigation."

A Bible teacher in Missouri, U.S.A., observed: "I love the simple manner in which it is written. The progression of subjects is presented in the most logical manner I have ever seen." As soon as the *Bible Teach* book became available, the teacher took it to a woman who had previously tried to study the Bible but had become discouraged.

"She had not finished reading the first chapter," the teacher related, "when she called to tell me how much she was enjoying it." The student said that she felt as though the book were written just for her and that she wanted to resume her Bible study. The teacher noted that after they had finished studying the first ten chapters together, the student's joy over what she was learning was absolutely delightful to see.

