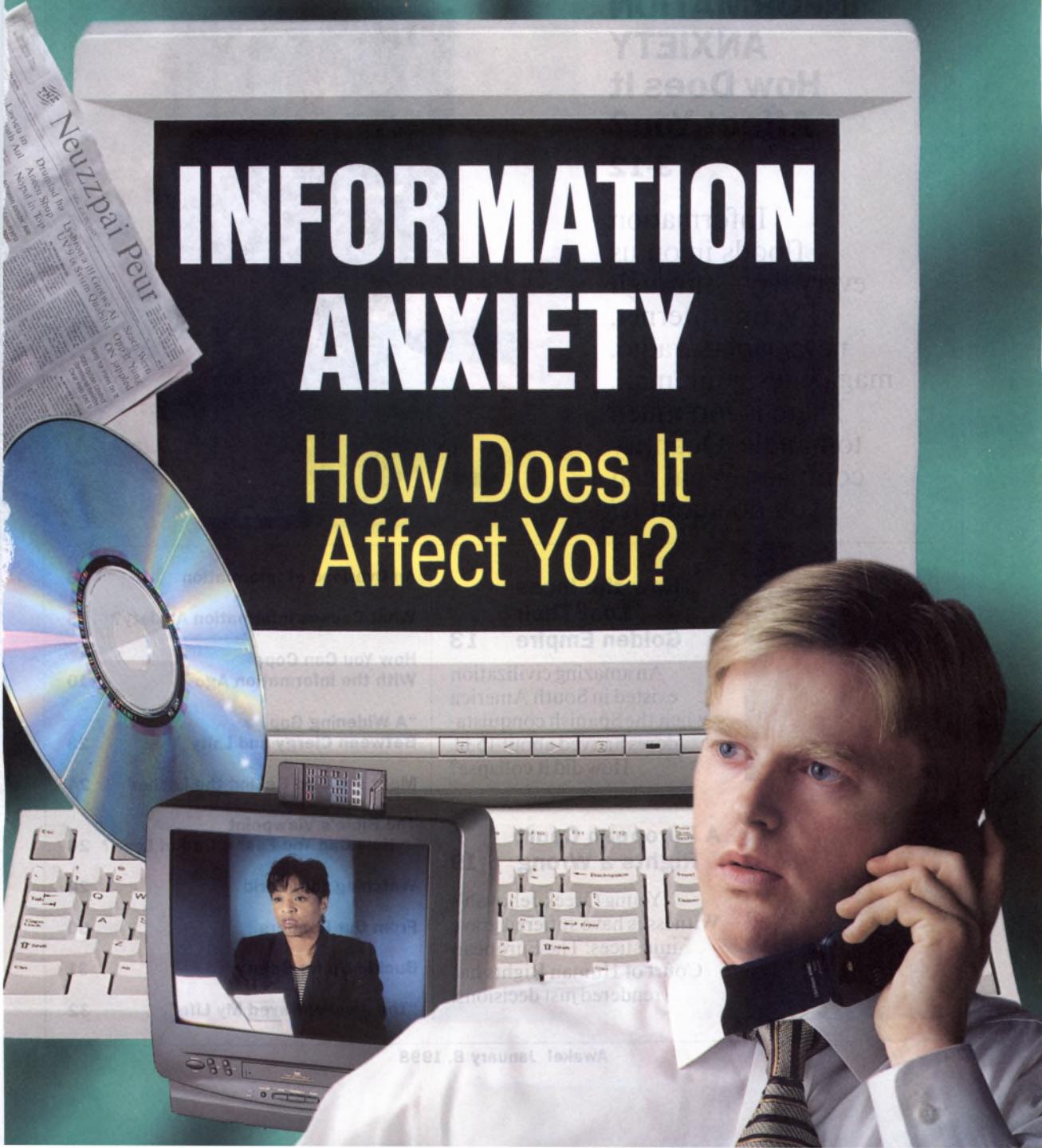


Awake!

January 8, 1998

INFORMATION ANXIETY

How Does It
Affect You?



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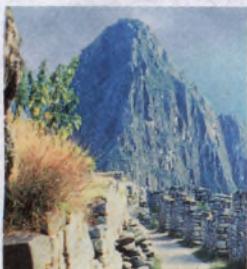
Published in 81 Languages

INFORMATION ANXIETY How Does It Affect You?

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Information floods in on us every day—through TV, the Internet, newspapers, radio, magazines, junk mail.

There is too much to handle. Quantity confuses. What can you do about it?



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with half a billion people in the world, it is not surprising that there is a vast amount of information available. In addition to printed material, radio and television coverage, the Internet, and some other means, the world is saturated with information. David Shenk writes in his book *Data Smog—Surviving the Information Glut*: “Information overload has emerged as a genuine threat.... We now face the prospect of information obesity.”

THE 20th century has witnessed an unprecedented overload of information. Whether by printed material, radio or television coverage, the Internet, or some other means, the world is saturated with information. David Shenk writes in his book *Data Smog—Surviving the Information Glut*: “Information overload has emerged as a genuine threat.... We now face the prospect of information obesity.”

Consider a well-known newspaper as just one example. It is said that a usual weekday edition of *The New York Times* contains more information than the average person would have come across in his entire lifetime back in 17th-century England. But in addition to the daily newspaper, magazines and books of every description on a multitude of subjects add to the avalanche of information being produced. Books are published by the tens of thousands each year. And since scientific information doubles every six years,

it is not surprising that worldwide, technical journals alone number over 100,000. And the Internet makes vast libraries of information available to computer users.

What of magazines? Business journals, women's magazines, teen magazines, sports and entertainment magazines—indeed, magazines on almost every subject and human interest—have inundated the world, all screaming for our attention. What about the role of the advertising man—the “trumpeter of nothingness,” as he has been well described? In his book *Information Anxiety*, author Richard S. Wurman observes: “Advertising agencies have declared war on our senses with a barrage of ads that demand to be looked at, heard, sniffed, and touched.” They insist that you need the latest product, the latest upgrade, in order to “keep up with the Joneses.”

Australian psychologist and social researcher Dr. Hugh MacKay said that ‘the



An Overload of Information

Globe on pages 3, 5, and 10: Mountain High Maps® Copyright © 1997 Digital Wisdom, Inc.

world is being overwhelmed by information and people are being invited to get into the fast lane on the information superhighway.' The problem, as Dr. MacKay sees it, is that the explosion of news and current affairs programming on radio and television, along with the current dramatic explosion of computer-based information networks, has resulted in a world where many respond to media information that is really often only a partial representation of the facts and events, not the full story.

What Is Information?

The Latin root word *informare* carries the thought of forming matter, much as a potter forms clay. Hence, some definitions of "inform" give the meaning "to mold the mind" or "to shape or instruct the mind." Most readers will clearly remember the time, not so long ago, when information was simply a list of facts or data telling us details such as who, where, what, when, or how. There was no special language or vocabulary for information. All we had to do was ask for it or look it up for ourselves.

But along came the 1990's, and the world has been given so many new information-related words that these alone can cause confusion. While some of these words or expressions are relatively simple and comprehensible, such as "infomania," "technophilia," and "information age," others can cause real problems. Today the world is be-

ing swept by infomania—the belief that the one who possesses the most information has an advantage over others less able to access it and that information is, no longer a means to an end, but an end in itself.

This mania is fed by a deluge of telecommunication systems, such as the fax machine, the mobile telephone, and the personal computer, considered by some to be the symbol and mascot of the information age. It is true that the convenience, speed, and power of computers have opened up access to information as never before—so much so that Nicholas Negroponte, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, says: "Computing is not about computers anymore. It is about living." As a result, information and the technologies that deliver it have come to be valued excessively, in some cases revered, with a huge cult-following in all parts of the earth. Television news and current affairs programs are given almost gospel status, while oceans of trivia are poured out in TV talk shows and swallowed by an often uncritical and gullible public.

It is because the information age has changed the way we live and work that many people today suffer from "information anxiety" in one form or another. What exactly is information anxiety? How can you tell if you are affected? Is there anything that you can do about it?

Awake!

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

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

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To prevent information anxiety, we must learn how to filter out what is irrelevant.



What Causes Information Anxiety?

INFORMATION ANXIETY is produced by the ever-widening gap between what we understand and what we think we should understand. It is the black hole between data and knowledge, and it happens when information doesn't tell us what we want or need to know." So wrote Richard S. Wurman in his book *Information Anxiety*. "For a long time, people didn't realize how much they didn't know—they didn't know what they didn't know. But now people know what they don't know, and that makes them anxious." The result is that most of us may feel that we should know more than we do. With the flood of information coming our way, we pick up little pieces

of data. But often we are at a loss as to what to do with them. At the same time, we might suppose that everyone else knows and understands much more than we do. That is when we become anxious!

David Shenk argues that excess information has become a pollutant that creates "data smog." He adds: "Data smog gets in the way; it crowds out quiet moments, and obstructs much-needed contemplation.... It stresses us out."

It is true that too much information or an overload of material can induce anxiety, but the same is true if we have insufficient information or, worse still, incorrect information. It is much like feeling lonely in a crowded

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Information Garbage Glut

"Society, as we all know from experience, is becoming inexorably more crass. We are witnessing the new reign of trash TV, hate radio, shock jocks, tort litigation, publicity stunts, excessively violent and sarcastic rhetoric. Films are ever more sexually explicit and violent. Advertising is noisier, more invasive, and frequently skirting the bounds of taste . . . Profanity is up, and common decency is down. . . . What others have called our 'crisis in family values' has more to do with the information revolution than it does with Hollywood's lack of respect for the traditional family model."—*Data Smog—Surviving the Information Glut*, by David Shenk.

room. As John Naisbitt puts it in his book *Megatrends*, "we are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."

How Computer Crime Can Affect You

Another cause for anxiety is the upsurge in computer crime. Dr. Frederick B. Cohen, in his book *Protection and Security on the Information Superhighway*, expresses his concerns: "The FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] estimates that each year as much as \$5 billion is lost to computer crime. And, incredibly, that's just the tip of the iceberg. Weaknesses in information systems have also been exploited to gain the upper hand in negotiations, ruin reputations, win military conflicts, and even commit murder." Added to this is ever-growing concern over the problem of access by children to computer pornography—not to mention the invasion of privacy.

Unscrupulous computer addicts deliberately insert viruses into computer systems and cause havoc. Criminal hackers illegally gain access to electronic systems and obtain confidential information, sometimes even stealing money. Such activities can have

devastating effects on thousands of users of personal computers. Computer crime is a threat to business and government.

The Need to Be Well-Informed

Of course, all of us need to be well-informed, but having vast amounts of information does not necessarily educate us in the true sense, for much of what parades as information is nothing more than bare facts or raw data, unrelated to our experience. Some even suggest that instead of the "information explosion," this phenomenon might best be termed the "data explosion" or even more cynically the "noninformation explosion." This is how economic analyst Hazel Henderson sees it: "Information itself does not enlighten. We cannot clarify what is mis-information, dis-information, or propaganda in this media-dominated environment. Focusing on mere information has led to overload of ever-less-meaningful billions of bits of fragmented raw data, rather than the search for meaningful new patterns of knowledge."

Joseph J. Esposito, president of the Encyclopædia Britannica Publishing Group, makes this frank evaluation: "Most of the information of the Information Age is simply wasted; it's just noise. The Information Explosion is aptly termed; the explosion blocks out our ability to actually hear much of anything. If we can't hear, we can't know." Orrin E. Klapp gives his analysis: "I suspect that no one knows how much of the supply of public communication is pseudo-information, which purports to tell something but in fact tells nothing."

You will no doubt recall that much of your education at school focused on learning facts so that you could pass examinations. Many times you crammed facts into your brain just prior to examination time. Do you remember learning by rote a long string of dates in history lessons? How many of these

events and dates can you recall now? Did those facts teach you to reason and reach logical conclusions?

Does More Equal Better?

If not controlled carefully, devotion to acquiring additional information can cost much in terms of time, sleep, health, and even money. For although more information does offer greater choices, it can make the searcher anxious, wondering whether he has checked or accessed all the information available. Dr. Hugh MacKay offers this caution: "In fact, information is no pathway to enlightenment. Information, of itself, sheds no light on the meaning of our lives. Information has very little to do with the getting of wisdom. Indeed, like other possessions, it can positively get in the way of wisdom. We can know too much, just as we can have too much."

Often, people are overburdened not only by the great volume of information available today but also by the frustration of trying to transform information into something that is understandable, meaningful, and truly informative. It has been suggested that we could be "like a thirsty person who has been condemned to use a thimble to drink from a fire hydrant. The sheer volume of available information and the manner in which it is often delivered render much of it useless to us." So, what is enough must be evaluated, not in terms of volume, but in terms of quality and the usefulness of the information to us personally.

What About Data Transfer?

Another common expression heard today is "data transfer." This has reference to conveying information electronically. While this has its valued place, it is not good communication in the fullest sense. Why not? Because we respond best to people, not to machines. With data transfer, there are no facial expressions seen and no eye contact

Wisdom

The Old-Fashioned Way

"My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God. For Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment. When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you."—Proverbs 2:1-6, 10, 11.

or body language, which so often shape the conversation and communicate feelings. In face-to-face conversations, these factors add to and often clarify the words used. None of these valuable helps to understanding are available by electronic transfer, not even on the increasingly popular cellular telephone. Sometimes, even face-to-face conversation does not communicate exactly what the speaker has in mind. The hearer may receive and process words in his own way and assign the wrong meaning to them. How much greater a danger there is of this happening when the speaker cannot be seen!

It is a lamentable fact of life that the excessive amount of time some spend in front of computer screens and television sets sometimes makes family members strangers to each other in their own home.

Have You Heard of Technophobia?

"Technophobia" merely means "a fear of technology," including the use of computers

and similar electronic devices. Some believe this is one of the most common anxieties produced by the information age. An article in *The Canberra Times*, based on an Associated Press release, read: "Japanese Executives Afraid of Computers." It was said of the executive director of a large Japanese company: "[He] commands power and prestige. But set him down in front of a computer, and he is a mass of nerves." According to a survey of 880 Japanese companies, only 20 percent of their executives could use computers.¹

Technophobia is fueled by such major disasters as the 1991 telephone shutdown in New York City that crippled local airports for several hours. And what about the accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant in the United States in 1979? It took the plant's operators several fateful hours before they could understand the meaning of computer-controlled alarm signals.

These are but a few examples of how the technology of the information age has dramatically affected mankind. In his book, Dr. Frederick B. Cohen asks these thought-provoking questions: "Have you been to the bank lately? If the computers weren't working, could you get any money from them? How about the supermarket? Would they be able to check you out without their checkout computers?"²

Perhaps you can relate to one or more of these imaginary situations:

- Your new videotape recorder (VCR) seems to have too many buttons on it when you want to select a program you wish to record. Either you

sheepishly call your nine-year-old nephew to set the VCR for you or you decide that you don't need to see the program after all.

- You are in urgent need of money. You drive to the nearest automatic teller machine but then suddenly remember that the last time you used it, you got confused and pressed the wrong buttons.

- The office telephone rings. The call was put through to you in error. The call was for your boss on the next floor up. There is quite a simple way to transfer the call, but, unsure, you decide to have the switchboard operator transfer the call instead.

- The dashboard on your recently purchased car looks as though it belongs in the cockpit of a modern jetliner. Suddenly, a red light flashes, and you become anxious because you don't know what the light indicates. Then you have to check a detailed instruction book.

These are just a few examples of technophobia. We can be sure that technology will continue to develop more sophisticated equipment, which people of previous generations would no doubt have termed "miraculous." Each new updated product entering the marketplace requires greater know-how if it is to be used effectively. Instruction manuals, written by the experts in their jargon,* become frightening in themselves when it is assumed that the user understands

* Examples of computer jargon: log on, meaning "connect to system"; boot up, "start or set in motion"; portrait position, "vertical"; landscape position, "horizontal."



the vocabulary and possesses certain knowledge and skills.

Information theorist Paul Kaufman sums up the situation this way: "Our society has an image of information which, although alluring, is ultimately counterproductive. . . . One reason is that too much attention has been focused on computers and hardware and too little on the people who actually use information in order to make sense of the world and do useful things for each other. . . . The problem is not that we think so highly of computers but that we've come to think rather less of humans." It does seem that preoccupation with the glory of producing stunning new technology has often left people worrying about what's next. Edward Mendelson says: "Technological visionaries can never recognize the distinction between the feasible and the desirable. If a machine can be made to perform some dazzlingly complicated task, then the visionary assumes that the task is worth performing."

It is this ignoring of the human element in technology that has added greatly to information anxiety.

Is Productivity Really Improved?

Columnist Paul Attewell, writing in *The Australian*, comments on his research into how much time and money have been saved by computers over recent years. Here are a few of his well-made points:

"Despite years of investing in computing systems designed to handle administrative tasks and to control costs, many universities and colleges find that their administrative staffs continue to grow. . . . For several decades, computer manufacturers have asserted that the technology they were selling would produce major breakthroughs in productivity, allowing a given volume of administrative work to be done by far fewer workers at much less cost. Instead, as we are coming to realise, information technology has led to a displacement of efforts: many new things are being done by a workforce of the same or larger size rather than the old work being done by fewer employees. Often, no money is saved at all. One example of this displacement is that people use technology to enhance the appearance of documents rather than simply to produce paperwork more quickly."

Now it seems that the information superhighway, potentially dangerous for Christians, is here to stay. But how can we avoid information anxiety—at least to some extent? We offer a few practical suggestions in the following short article.

Information overload has been compared to trying to fill a thimble from a hydrant





How You Can Cope With the Information Age

WE MUST face the fact that there are many aspects of the information age of the 1990's that will continue to make us anxious. Over some of these, we have little or no control. On the other hand, there are steps we can take to eliminate much, if not all, such anxiety. We might say, then, that survival in the information age is a challenging yet rewarding task.

Receivers and Givers of Information

Whether we have classified ourselves in this way or not, throughout our lives we are all receivers and givers of information to some extent. Our brain, however, receives and processes information in different ways.

One way involves the amazing capacity of the brain to process information subconsciously.

Another way involves conscious processing of information such as during conversation. We have a great deal of control over this type of information processing—both as givers and receivers. When it comes to trivial conversation, the Bible warns about those who are “not only unoccupied, but also gossips and meddlers in other people’s affairs, talking of things they ought not.” (1 Timothy 5:13) In other words, be careful not to spend inordinate amounts of time talking about trivialities or even harmful information. Do not be the sort of person who lives from one

piece of gossip to the next. Valuable time and energy can be wasted, and this can make us and others anxious. You may miss opportunities to absorb and distribute information that is truly upbuilding and crucial for surviving in this troubled world.

Information gathered by reading is processed consciously and hence takes the longest. The anxiety-laden lament, "I can't keep up with my reading!" is only too familiar. Do you feel that you have too much to read and too little time to do it? Because of the time-consuming nature of reading, the art and pleasure of it is often lost in this age of instant information. Too many allow TV to monopolize their time. Yet, the written word is still the most powerful way of stimulating the imagination and transmitting information, ideas, and concepts.

How can we cope when so much reading matter is calling for our attention and competing with TV, computer games, and other recreational activities? The answer is screening. Screening, sorting out or prioritizing, what we need to hear, see, say, or read may eliminate much information anxiety. Effective screening can be done on two levels.

Do We Need So Much Trivia?

The perception of our needs is often distorted by what others think we need or by what the advertising skills of the media lead us to believe we need. To cut through this confusing information labyrinth, apply this basic rule: *Keep it simple!* Richard S. Wurman puts it this way: "The secret to processing information is narrowing your field of information to that which is relevant to your life . . . I believe it is a myth that the more choices you have, the more appropriate actions you can take and the more freedom you will enjoy. Rather, more choices seem to produce more anxiety."

So when it comes to reading or watching TV, it is good to examine your habits. Ask

Try a Trade-Off

"Cancel your cable TV service, . . . and apply that same [money] per month to one or more good books. Books are the opposite of television: They are slow, engaging, inspiring, intellect-arousing, and creativity-spurring."

"You could also consider limiting yourself to no more than a certain number of hours on the Internet each week, or at least balancing the amount of time spent online with an equal amount of time reading books."—*Data Smog—Surviving the Information Glut.*

yourself: 'Is this necessary for my work or my life? Do I really need to know all the trivia and gossip about the famous and so-called beautiful people in the world? How would my life change if I did not watch this TV program, read this book or that magazine, or spend so much time with the newspaper?' Some have been able to take stock of their reading and TV intake and have eliminated material that cluttered their minds and also their homes. For example, they have decided to subscribe to only one daily newspaper. Most papers carry the same basic news items anyway. Some people have specifically requested that they not receive unsolicited junk mail in their mailboxes.

Keeping life simple and uncluttered was advocated by the greatest man who ever lived, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:25-34) Simplicity is recommended and celebrated in many Asian cultures and is even recognized by many in Western cultures as a superior way of living. Writer Duane Elgin stated: "To live more simply is to live more purposefully and with a minimum of needless distraction."

Be the Master, Not the Slave

"Turn the television off. There is no quicker way to regain control of the pace of your life, the peace of your home, and the content of your thinking than to turn off the appliance that supplies for all-too-many of us the ambiance of our lives. Millions of Americans have been discovering the serenity and empowerment that comes with using the OFF switch, not to mention hours and hours of newly acquired free time with which they can begin to do some of the things they've never found time for in the past."—*Data Smog*

—*Surviving the Information Glut.*

Now, having prioritized your information intake as far as your *needs* are concerned, do the same with *interests*, for interest is the motivating force for learning. The problem here, however, is to distinguish between what really interests you and what you might think should interest you in order to please others—perhaps people at your place of work. But if you can plan your reading and TV or computer intake just as you would plan any other activity, you will find that building it around genuine interest can make for a pleasant road to travel, without undue anxiety.

So, how can you cope with information anxiety? You may never be able to eliminate it altogether, but following the few simple rules we have outlined will help greatly. Keep it simple, and classify information according to your personal needs and interests. The time is coming when all complications of life, including information anxiety, will be a thing of the past, but in the meantime, keep the marvels of modern technology in their place. Treat them as a means to an end. Do not be their slave or stand in awe of them. Thus, useful information will be upbuilding, encouraging, and beneficial, without causing you anxiety.

Beware of the Internet

Immoral individuals use the Internet to pursue their sex perversions and to try to contact willing partners or innocent victims. Others use the Internet to promote their own personal agendas. Apostates also create Web sites to catch the naive.

Extreme caution is necessary when the Internet is used, and certainly parents should closely supervise any of their children who may be using it. It is true that there are many useful sources to be found, such as research libraries, bookstores, and news channels. For example, the Watchtower Society recently announced its own Web site (<http://www.watchtower.org>), which serves to give factual information about Jehovah's Witnesses. Still, one has to recognize that there are some extremely harmful influences out there, including pornography and apostasy.

A Christian should be conscious of Paul's counsel: "This, therefore, I say and bear witness to in the Lord, that you no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk in the unprofitableness of their minds . . . Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness. But you did not learn the Christ to be so." (Ephesians 4:17-20) Also, "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks." (Ephesians 5:3, 4) We have to realize that many Web sites have been created by people with immoral or dishonest intent. And many sites that may not be immoral or dishonest, such as chat groups, are a plain waste of time. From all such, stay away!

HOW THE INCAS LOST THEIR GOLDEN EMPIRE

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN PERU

Sunrise. The snowcapped Andes were painted a soft pink by rays of light shooting into the morning sky. Early risers among the Indian folk took in the warmth dispelling the chill of the cold night at altitudes of 14,000 feet. Slowly, the sun's rays reached down to take in the temple of the sun in the center of the capital of the Inca Empire, Cuzco (meaning "Navel of the World"). Golden walls reflected the sun's rays. Solid gold llamas, vicuñas, and condors sparkled in the Inca's* garden in front of the temple. Passersby blew kisses into the air in worship of their god, the sun. How grateful they were to be alive and to be blessed by the sun that gave them their livelihood, so they believed!

BETWEEN the 14th and 16th centuries, a great golden empire held sway on the west coast of South America. Ruled by brilliant architects and technicians, the Incas were a people organized to better themselves socially. The fabulous Inca Empire extended its limits for almost 3,000 miles, reaching from the southern part of present-day Colombia all the way down into Argentina. In fact, "the Inca thought they controlled almost all the world." (*National Geographic*) They believed that beyond the limits of their empire, there was nothing worth conquering. Yet, the rest of the world did not even know that this empire existed.

Who were the Incas? What was their origin?

Who Came Before the Incas?

Archaeological finds show that the Incas were not the original inhabitants of the con-

tinent. Other well-developed cultures preceded them by several hundred to several thousand years. These have been classified by archaeologists as the Lambayeque, the Chavin, the Mochica, the Chimu, and the Tiahuanaco cultures.

Those early groups worshiped various animals—jaguars, pumas, and even fish. Reverence of mountain gods was widespread among them. Their pottery showed that some tribes practiced sex worship. Near Lake Titicaca, high up on the border between Peru and Bolivia, a tribe built a temple containing phallic emblems, which were worshiped in fertility rites to ensure a good crop from the Pacha-Mama, meaning "Mother Earth."

The Myth and the Reality

It was about 1200 that the Incas made their appearance. According to chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega, son of an Inca princess and a Spanish knight and landowner, myth

* The word "Inca" can refer to the supreme ruler of the Inca Empire and can also refer to the natives.

had it that the original Inca, Manco Capac, along with his sister/bride, was sent down by his father, the sun-god, to Lake Titicaca to bring all peoples under worship of the sun. Today, this legend is still recounted to children in some schools.

Myth aside, however, the Incas probably originated from one of the Lake Titicaca tribes, the Tiahuanacos. In time, the spreading empire took over many of the well-organized works of conquered tribes, expanding and perfecting canals and terraces already built. The Incas excelled in building colossal structures. There are many ideas as to how their architects were able to put together the fortress and temple of Sacsahuaman, which dominates the city of Cuzco from a high plateau. Tremendous 100-ton monoliths were joined together. No mortar was used to bind them. Earthquakes have had little effect on the fitted rockwork found in the walls of the ancient city of Cuzco.

The Shining Temple of the Sun

In the royal city of Cuzco, the Incas organized a priesthood for worship of the sun in a polished stone temple. The interior walls were embellished with pure gold and silver. Along with the priesthood, special convents were established, such as the reconstructed one at the sun temple of Pachácamac, just outside Lima. Virgins of outstanding beauty were trained from as young as eight years of age to be 'virgins of the sun.' Archaeological evidence indicates that the Incas also offered human sacrifices. They sacrificed children to the *apus*, or mountain gods. Some bodies of children have been found frozen on Andean peaks.

While the Incas and earlier tribes had no knowledge of writing, they did develop a system of keeping records by the use of what was called the quipu. This was "a device made of a main cord with smaller varicolored cords attached and knotted and

used by the ancient Peruvians" as a memory aid for assigned keepers of inventories and records.—*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.

How Was the Empire Held Together?

Strict laws and planned strategy firmly established the one central government. An initial requisite was that all learn Quechua, the language of the Incas. "Quechua," says the book *El Quechua al Alcance de Todos* (Quechua Within the Reach of Everyone), is considered "the most comprehensive, most varied, as well as the most elegant of the dialects of South America." It is still spoken by about five million people in the mountains of Peru and by other millions in five countries that had been part of the empire. A group southeast of Lake Titicaca still speak Aymara, a tongue derived from the Quechua of pre-Inca times.

The use of Quechua had a unifying effect on the almost 100 conquered tribes and was an aid to the village curaca (lord) who governed each group. Each family was assigned land to work. After conquest, the Inca permitted local tribal dances and fiestas to continue and provided theatrical presentations and games to keep all subjugated peoples contented.

The Mita Tax

No monetary unit existed throughout the empire, which meant that gold, as such, had no value to individuals. Its appeal was that it reflected the sun. The only tax imposed, the mita (Quechua, "a turn"), was the requirement that subjects take turns doing forced labor on the Incas' many road and building projects. Thousands of Indian workers were thus recruited by law.

Utilizing the mita workers, the Inca master builders constructed a network of roads over 15,000 miles long! Starting from Cuzco, the Incas built a system of rock-

based roads to link the most distant points of the empire. Trained messenger runners, called *chasquis*, used them. They were stationed in huts at intervals of one or two miles. As a *chasqui* with a message arrived, the next *chasqui* began running alongside him, like a relay runner. Using this system, they covered distances of 150 miles a day. In short order the ruling Inca had reports from all over his empire.

Along the roads, the Inca established large storehouses. These were kept filled with food supplies and clothing for the use of armies of the Inca while on journeys of conquest. The Inca avoided war when possible. Using strategy, he sent emissaries to invite tribes to come under his reign, on condition that they accept sun worship. If they complied, they were permitted to carry on in their own tribe, directed by trained Inca instructors. If they refused, they became victims of ruthless conquest. The skulls of the enemy dead were used as goblets for drinking chicha, a potent beverage made from corn.

It was under the ninth Inca, Pachacuti (1438 onward), his son Topa Inca Yupanqui, and the conqueror-statesman Huayna Capac that the empire rapidly expanded its borders and reached its maximum extent north to south. But this was not to endure.

Invaders From the North

About the year 1530, Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro and his soldiers came down from



Panama, enticed by reports of gold in this unknown land that was by then riven with civil war. Prince Huáscar, legal heir to the throne, had been defeated and imprisoned by his half brother Atahuallpa, who was moving toward the capital.

After a difficult march into the interior city of Cajamarca, Pizarro and his men were well received by the usurper Atahuallpa. Nevertheless, through treachery the Spanish succeeded in pulling him from his litter and holding him captive while, at the same time, they slaughtered thousands of his astonished and unprepared troops.

Yet, even while being held captive, Atahuallpa continued the civil war. He sent messengers to Cuzco to kill his half brother Inca Huáscar as well as hundreds of the royal family. Unwittingly, he simplified Pizarro's plan of conquest.

Seeing the greed of the Spanish for gold and silver, Atahuallpa promised to fill a large room with gold and silver figurines as a ransom for his release. But to no avail. Once again treachery intervened! After the promised ransom was piled up, Atahuallpa, the 13th Inca, who was considered an idolater by the monks, was first baptized as a Catholic and then strangled.

The Beginning of the End

The capture and murder of Atahuallpa was a fatal blow to the Inca Empire. But the Indian population resisted the invaders, and the empire's death throes lasted another 40 years.

When reinforcements arrived, Pizarro and all his soldiers were eager to move to Cuzco to lay their hands on more Inca gold. In this quest the Spanish were not averse to cruel acts of torture to extract secrets of treasure from the Indians or to intimidate and quell any resisters.



Top: The original temple of the sun serves as the foundation for this Catholic church in Cuzco



Left: Pre-Inca phallic image in a temple at Chucuito

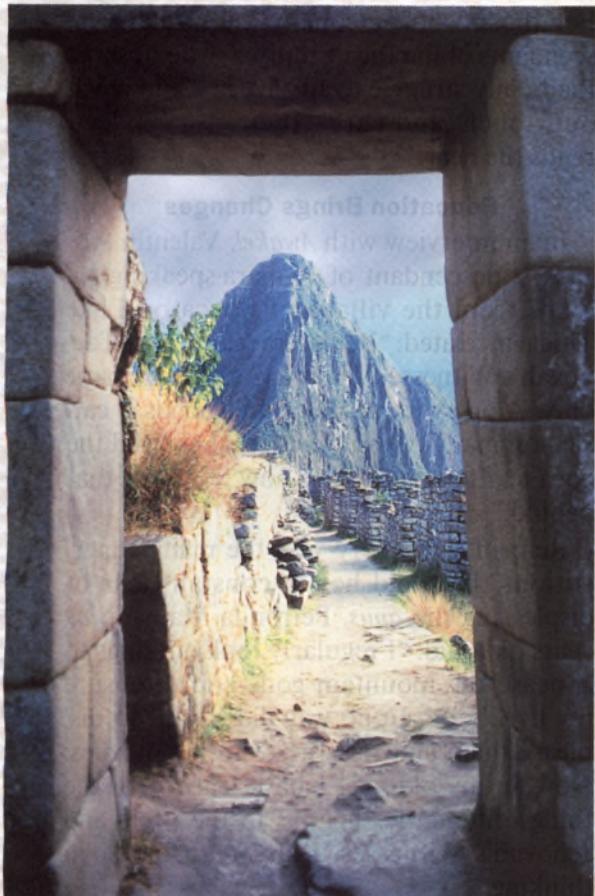


Right: The blood of Inca sacrifices ran down these stone carvings

**Right: Irrigated terraces at Machu Picchu,
near Cuzco**

**Bottom: View through an ancient doorway at
Machu Picchu**

**Bottom right: 100-ton blocks of the
fortress-temple of Sacsahuaman**



Accompanied by Huáscar's brother Prince Manco II, who was next to become Inca (Manco Inca Yupanqui), Pizarro pushed on to Cuzco and ransacked it of all its immense gold treasure. Most of the golden images were melted down into gold bullion for Spain. Small wonder that English pirates were eager to seize Spanish galleons carrying the rich treasures of Peru! Heavily laden with treasure, Pizarro left for the



coast, where in 1535 he founded the city of Lima as his center of government.

Manco Inca Yupanqui, by then fully enlightened as to the greed and treachery of the conquerors, staged a revolt. Others too rebelled against the Spanish, but finally the Indians had to retire to remote places to resist as well as they could. One of these safe ha-

vens could have included the sacred city of Machu Picchu hidden away in the mountains.

The Last Inca

In the final act, Tupac Amarú, a son of Manco Inca Yupanqui, became Inca (1572). Spanish viceroys now governed Peru. Viceroy Toledo's goal was to finish off the Incas. With a large army, he entered the

Vilcabamba area. Tupac Amarú was captured in the jungle. He and his pregnant wife were taken to Cuzco for execution. A Cañari Indian raised the executional blade over Tupac Amarú. The thousands of Indians gathered in the plaza groaned in audible sorrow as with one stroke their Inca was beheaded. His captains were tortured to death or hanged. With cruel dispatch, the rule of the Incas came to an end.

The appointed viceroys, along with many Catholic monks and priests, slowly spread their influence, good and bad, over the Indians, who for a long time were simply regarded as slaves. Many were forced to work in gold or silver mines, one of which was a mountain with rich silver ore, located in Potosí, Bolivia. To survive the inhuman conditions, the mistreated Indians resorted to using the coca leaf for its drugging effect. It was not until the early 19th century that Peru and Bolivia gained their independence from Spain.

Modern-Day Descendants of the Incas

What is the situation of the descendants of the Incas in this modern era? The Peruvian capital city of Lima, like many other modern cities, teems with millions of citizens. But out in the provinces, it sometimes seems that the clock stopped a hundred years ago. Many isolated villages are still controlled by Catholic priests. To the Indian farmer, the Catholic church in the village square is the central attraction. The many statues of splendidly dressed saints, the multicolored lights, the golden altar, the burning candles, the mystic ceremonies intoned by the priest, and especially the dances and fiestas—all of these appeal to his need for diversion. But such eye-pleasing diversions have never done away with ancient beliefs. And the use of the coca leaf, which is thought to have mystic powers, still influences the lives of many.

With their indomitable spirit, these descendants of the Incas—many now of mixed blood—have managed to preserve their colorful dances and typical *huaino* music. Even if they are initially reserved with strangers, their inherent hospitality comes through. For those who personally know these descendants of the Inca Empire—who observe their daily struggle to survive and can reach out, touch, and care—their story indeed rends the heart!

Education Brings Changes

In an interview with *Awake!*, Valentín Ariazaca, a descendant of Aymara-speaking Indians from the village of Socca on Lake Titicaca, related: "Before I became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I was a Catholic in name only. Along with some of my friends, I carried on many pagan practices. I chewed the coca leaf too, but I have now left all of that behind."

Remembering very well the many superstitions that held her in constant fear of displeasing the *apus*, Petronila Mamani, 89 years old, said: "I regularly took offerings to appease the mountain gods and to ensure my livelihood. In no way did I want to displease them and risk the resulting plagues. Now, in my old age, I have learned to see things differently. Thanks to the Bible and Jehovah's Witnesses, I am free from such thinking."

Jehovah's Witnesses are teaching many Quechua- and Aymara-speaking Indians to read. They, in turn, teach others the Bible. In this way thousands of Inca and Spanish Indians are being educated in order to better their lives. They are also learning of God's promise in the Bible of a new world of justice, peace, and righteousness, soon to be established over all the earth.—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4.

A EUROPEAN COURT RIGHTS A WRONG

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GREECE

MILITARY service is compulsory in Greece. At any given time, about 300 of Jehovah's Witnesses are in prison for refusing to perform military service. Amnesty International views them as prisoners of conscience and has frequently urged successive Greek governments to free them and to pass legislation that would allow them to carry out civilian service of a non-punitive nature.

In 1988, new legislation affecting military service was passed. Among other things, this stipulated that "the following are exempted from military service: . . . Recruits who are religious ministers, monks or trainee monks of a recognized religion, if they so desire." The religious ministers of the Greek Orthodox Church are always exempted simply and easily, without facing any problem or any sort of abuse of their basic human rights. Would the same apply to ministers of a minority religion? A test soon provided an answer.

Imprisoned Against the Law

In accordance with this law, in late 1989 and early 1990, Dimitrios Tsirlis and Timotheos Kouloumpas, appointed religious ministers by the Central Congregation of the Christian Jehovah's Witnesses of Greece, lodged applications with their respective recruitment offices to be exempted from military service. Along with their applications, they supplied documents proving that they were practicing religious ministers. As anticipated, the applications were rejected on the specious ground that Jehovah's Witnesses do not belong to a "known religion."

Brothers Tsirlis and Kouloumpas reported to their respective military training centers and were arrested, charged with insubordination, and placed in detention. In the meantime, the General Headquarters for National Defense rejected their appeals of the decisions of the recruitment offices. The military authorities used the argument that the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church had informed them that the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses is not a recognized religion! This contradicted the rulings of a number of civil courts that had stated that Jehovah's Witnesses are indeed a known religion.

The military courts in turn found Tsirlis and Kouloumpas guilty of insubordination and sentenced them to four years' imprisonment. The two brothers appealed these decisions to the Military Appeal Court, which adjourned the examination of the appeal three times for various reasons. However, it refused each time to order the appellants' provisional release from prison, although Greek law provides for that.

In the meantime, in another set of proceedings, the Supreme Administrative Court annulled the decisions of the General Headquarters for National Defense, on the ground that Jehovah's Witnesses do indeed belong to a known religion.

During the 15 months that Tsirlis and Kouloumpas had to stay in the Aylona Military Prison, they faced especially inhumane and degrading treatment along with other imprisoned Witnesses. A report of that time spoke of "the sordid prison conditions under which [Jehovah's Witnesses prisoners]

are living, mentioning the spoiled meat and the tails of mice, which are often served along with the food, the curtailing of visiting hours according to the Administration's whims, the lack of space due to the cells being overcrowded with too many prisoners and the much more severe treatment meted out to such prisoners as are conscientious objectors."

Finally, the Military Appeal Court acquitted Brothers Tsirlis and Kouloumpas but at the same time ruled that the State had no obligation to compensate them for their detention because "this detention was due to the applicants' gross negligence." This raised valid questions in legal circles: Who was responsible for the gross negligence? The Witnesses or the military courts?

The brothers were immediately released from prison and were finally discharged from the armed forces on the basis that they were religious ministers. When they were released, Amnesty International announced that it welcomed the release of Dimitrios Tsirlis and Timotheos Kouloumpas and expressed the hope that in the future, ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses would be exempt from military service in accordance with the provisions of Greek law. Soon, however, this hope would be dashed.

In and Out of Prisons

Another appointed religious minister of Jehovah's Witnesses had to undergo a slightly different ordeal for the same reason. On September 11, 1991, Anastasios Georgiadis applied for exemption from military service in the same manner. Six days later the recruiting office informed him that his application had been rejected, again



**Esther and Dimitrios
Tsirlis**

because the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church does not accept that Jehovah's Witnesses are a known religion. And this despite the express rulings of the Supreme Administrative Court on the cases of Tsirlis and Kouloumpas!

The written answer from the General Headquarters for National Defense stated: "The Administration arrived at a negative decision regarding [Georgiadis'] application, based on the *expert opinion rendered by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, which does not consider Jehovah's Witnesses to be a known religion.*"—Italics ours.

Georgiadis went to the Nafplion Training Camp on January 20 and was immediately put in the disciplinary cell of the camp. Later he was transferred to the Avlona Military Prison.

On March 16, 1992, the Military Court of Athens acquitted Georgiadis. This was the first time a military court in Greece acknowledged that Jehovah's Witnesses are indeed a known religion. The director of the Avlona Military Prison released him immediately but ordered him to report again for duty on April 4, at the Nafplion recruitment center. On that date, Georgiadis again refused to enlist and was again charged with insubordination, placed in detention for a second time, and committed to trial.

On May 8, 1992, the Military Court of Athens acquitted him of the new criminal case but decided that no compensation should be granted him for his detention. Georgiadis was immediately released from the Avlona Military Prison but was ordered to report for yet a third time for duty at the Nafplion recruitment center, on May 22, 1992! He again

refused to enlist and for a *third* time was charged with insubordination and detained.

On July 7, 1992, the Supreme Administrative Court set aside the decision of September 1991, on the grounds that Jehovah's Witnesses do indeed belong to a known religion. On July 27, 1992, Georgiadis was finally released from the Thessalonica Military Prison. On September 10, 1992, the Military Court of Thessalonica acquitted him but held that Georgiadis was not entitled to compensation because his detention was again said to be 'due to his gross negligence.'

Widespread Reaction

Commenting on the case of Georgiadis, the European Parliament declared: "This situation is a case of discrimination against Jehovah's Witnesses ministers of religion in terms of the principle of equality before the law and the enjoyment of the right to equal treatment."

In February 1992, Amnesty International stated that it "believes that [Anastasios Georgiadis] has been imprisoned solely on the basis of discriminatory treatment on the part of the military authorities against Jehovah's Witness ministers and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience."

Even the military prosecutor of one of Georgiadis' trials was forced to state: "The extent of a society's cultural development is made evident by the way it deals with certain situations involving its citizens. If we here in Greece desire our cultural development to be in harmony with European standards, if we want to progress, then we have to comply with international regulations



**Timotheos and Nafsiaka
Kouloumpas**

and rid ourselves of prejudice. A sector in which this is most evident is respect for citizens' individual rights. However, actual happenings and the administration's tactics clearly indicate the prejudice and religious intolerance prevailing against religious minorities. The case at hand is outrageous."

Ian White, a member of the European Parliament, from Bristol, England, wrote: "The idea that Jehovah's Witnesses are not 'a known religion' would bring a smile to many faces in this County. Certainly, although relatively few in number, Witnesses are very well known in this Country and frequently call from door to door." With over 26,000 Witnesses preaching in Greece, they can hardly be 'an unknown religion'!

A group of ten members of the European Parliament wrote to express their indignation over the Georgiadis case, saying that they were "extremely surprised and regretful" over such violations of human rights in Greece.

Appeal to the European Court of Human Rights

After being acquitted and then released from prison, all three of the victims of this religious discrimination felt ethically obliged to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. The basis of this appeal was their unlawful detention, which by itself proved unjust, and the mental and physical torture they were subjected to, as well as the immense moral and social consequences involved in being repeatedly deprived of their freedom for so long a period of time. For these reasons they pursued a valid and appropriate amount of compensation.

The European Commission of Human

Rights unanimously concluded that in the cases of Tsirlis and Kouloumpas, there was a violation of their right to liberty and security of person, their detention was unlawful, they had a right to compensation, and they had not enjoyed a fair hearing by a tribunal. A similar conclusion was reached by the Commission in the case of Georgiadis.

The Injustice Is Corrected

The hearing was set for January 21, 1997. There were many in the courtroom, including students from the local university, journalists, and a number of Jehovah's Witnesses from Greece, Germany, Belgium, and France.

Mr. Panos Bitsaxis, the attorney for the Witnesses, spoke of "the constant stubborn and persistent attitude of the Greek authorities not to recognise the existence of one religious minority," namely Jehovah's Witnesses. He denounced the Greek authorities' practice of basing their official opinion of the Witnesses on the viewpoint of their chief opponents—the Greek Orthodox Church! He continued: "How far can this go? . . . And until when?" He spoke of the "denial of recognition of a certain religious commu-



**Anastasios and Koula
Georgiadis**

nity, a denial which seems absurd if you see that it comes directly, openly, and without any reasoning, against legality, against dozens of decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court."

The representative of the Greek government confirmed the biased attitude of the Greek authori-

ties by claiming: "It must not be forgotten that practically the whole population of Greece has belonged to the Orthodox Church for centuries. One natural result of this is that the organisation of that Church and the status of its ministers and their role in the Church are quite clear. . . . The status of ministers from the Church of the Jehovah's Witnesses is not so clear." What a flagrant admission of the prejudiced treatment of religious minorities in Greece!

Religious Freedom Upheld

Judgment was delivered on May 29. The President of the Chamber, Mr. Rolv Ryssdal, read out the decision. The Court, composed of nine judges, held *unanimously* that Greece had violated Articles 5 and 6 of the European Convention. It also awarded the applicants the sum of about \$72,000 for compensation and expenses. Most important, the decision included many noteworthy arguments in favor of religious freedom.

The Court noted that "the military authorities blatantly ignored" the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses are recognized as a "known religion" in Greece, according to the rulings of the Supreme Administrative Court. It further commented: "The relevant authorities' persistence not to recognize Jehovah's Witnesses as a 'known religion' and the disregard of the applicants' right to liberty that fol-

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—An Ancient Heritage Preserved**

Visiting the Mountain Gorillas

lowed were of a discriminatory nature when contrasted with the way in which ministers of the Greek Orthodox Church obtain exemption.”

The case was given wide publicity by the Greek media. *Athens News* declared: ‘[European] court slams Greece over Jehovah claim.’ The decision in the case *Tsirlis & Kouloumpas and Georgiadis v. Greece* gives rise to the hope that the Greek State will bring its legislation in line with the European Court’s judgment, so that Jehovah’s Witnesses in Greece may enjoy religious freedom without administrative, military, or church intervention. Furthermore, this is yet another judgment rendered against the Greek judiciary by

the European Court on matters relating to religious freedom.*

Jehovah’s Witnesses cherish their freedom, and they endeavor to use it to serve God and to help their neighbor. The three Witness religious ministers pursued their cases to the European Court of Human Rights, not for any material gain, but purely for moral and ethical reasons. Thus, all three have decided that the compensation awarded them will be used exclusively for the furtherance of the educational work of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

* The first decision, issued in 1993, was the case of *Kokkinakis v. Greece*; the second, issued in 1996, was the case of *Manoussakis and Others v. Greece*.—See *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1993, pages 27-31; *Awake!*, March 22, 1997, pages 14-16.

“A Widening Gap Between Clergy and Laity”

“**T**HREE is in American evangelical churches a widening gap between clergy and laity,” notes Robert K. Johnston, a professor of theology and culture. In *Ministerial Formation*, a magazine of the World Council of Churches, he mentions some of the factors causing this estrangement: With family pressures mounting, pastors want work schedules that resemble “the weekend rotations of doctors.” If the pastor does work extra hours, he expects to be compensated for the effort. In addition, says the professor, “as ethical and legal pressures increase,” theological seminaries caution their graduates to prevent problems by having “close friends only among their ‘club’ of other clergy” and to treat their parishioners as “clients.” Not surprisingly, many parishioners, in turn, view their pastors as belonging to an elite class out of touch with the needs and problems of the average churchgoer.

What kind of pastor could narrow the gap? One study that analyzed why pastors fail in their

ministry found that parishioners do not view a pastor’s academic knowledge and professional skills as crucial. Church members are not looking for an intellectual giant, an eloquent speaker, or a skillful administrator. Above all, they want their pastor to be a “man of God” who practices what he preaches. If that quality is lacking, says Professor Johnston, “no amount of information conveyed or skill demonstrated” will bridge the gap.

What does the Bible say are the requirements for an elder in the congregation? “The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness . . . Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.”—1 Timothy 3:2-4, 7.

Meet the Bird Behind the Lashes

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT
IN SOUTH AFRICA

"CHANCES are you have never met us. We are birds, and most people know us as African ground hornbills.

"Apart from our striking looks, there are other interesting facts about us that we would like to share with you. For one thing, as our name suggests, we spend much of our time on the ground. In size we are somewhat similar to the turkey, and like the turkey, we really do not fly that much.

"With our distinctive, ponderous waddle, we wander the central and southeastern regions of Africa. If we should ever meet, you would not fail to recognize us because of our scarlet throat bags and eye patches and, of course, our long, stunning eyelashes!

"We ground hornbills are shy breeders—on average, raising one chick to fledgling every six years. During the breeding season, our males provide a good supply of dry leaves to line our nests, which are usually in hollow trees or rock cavities. Then the females carefully tend the eggs for a peri-



od of 40 days. Together with other members of our family group, we scurry to and fro, providing a steady supply of worms, grubs, and other delicacies to the 'mother in waiting.' We are all overjoyed when, three months after hatching, the new arrivals leave the nest to join the rest of our family unit.

"Our road to maturity is a slow one—it takes at least

six years before we reach full adulthood. And it can take even longer for one of us to succeed in establishing his own family. Of course, the fact that we are long-lived (many of us live 30 years) gives us ample time to pass our genes on to other generations.

"As you can see, we are family oriented, with groups of no more than eight

birds living and working together. Each family operates in an area of about 40 square miles of African savannas, woodlands, and grasslands. In some parts of southern Africa, we have lost up to 70 percent of our habitat to agriculture and human habitation.

"We are very protective of our ranges and regularly patrol our borders. Our food—snakes, grubs, tortoises, and insects—is not to be shared, even with hornbills from other families. In our aggressiveness to ward off intruders, we sometimes make fools of ourselves. How? When we see our own reflection on a windowpane, we often charge into the window, mistaking the reflection for an intruder. Inevitably, the impact of the long hard bill shatters the window. Because of the many broken windows, some people have placed wire mesh over their windows, and we are very thankful for that!"

"Tragically, there are deadly threats to worry about. Some people crowd us out of our habitat. Others shoot us with guns. Farmers often put out poisoned bait for jackals and other animals deemed undesirable. But how are we to know it is poisoned? Evidently for our protection, sometimes the farmers bury the poison. But since we normally dig for food with our long beaks, we dig our own graves, in a manner of speaking, when we dig up poisoned food."

"Some people are working hard to protect us from these dangers. We hope that we will not go the way of our fellow bird the dodo—into extinction. So whenever you happen to be in our area and hear our booming call, *du-du-dududu du-du-dududu*, do look us up. We will flutter our long lashes and welcome you into the realm of the ground hornbill."



How Can You Fear a God of Love?

"HAPPY IS THE MAN IN FEAR OF JEHOVAH."

—Psalm 112:1.

If "God is love," as the Bible describes him, why should it be necessary to fear him? (1 John 4:16) Love and fear are generally regarded as incompatible. So, what role should fear play in our relationship with God? Why fear a God of love? A close look at how the word "fear" is used in the Bible can provide us with a better understanding of this matter.

In most languages a single word can have various shades of meaning, depending on the context. For instance, in some languages one may say: "I love ice cream" and also, "I love my children." There is a great difference in the intensity of and types of love being expressed. Similarly, the Bible speaks of different types of fear. When it uses the word in connection with worshiping God, it is not referring to terror, fright, or a sense of impending punishment. Rather, the fear of God conveys healthful feelings—awe, reverence, and deep respect. These noble emotions are coupled with love for and attraction toward God, not an instinct to flee or hide from him.

The fear of God displaces morbid, cowring fear. Concerning the man who fears God, the psalmist wrote: "He will not be afraid even of bad news. His heart is steadfast, made reliant upon Jehovah." (Psalm 112:7) No threat from evil men or from Satan himself can overpower our deep respect and reverence for Jehovah. (Luke 12:4, 5) Neither must we be afraid to approach God in prayer. Rather, in this context, "love throws fear outside."—1 John 4:18.

The Heavens and God's Grandeur

King David of old was a God-fearing man. He was in awe when contemplating the beauty and complexity of creation. He exclaimed: "I shall laud you because

in a fear-inspiring way
I am wonderfully made.
Your works are wonderful,
as my soul is very well aware." (Psalm 139:14)
Gazing up into the night sky, he exclaimed: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God." (Psalm 19:1) Do you imagine that David was frightened by this experience? On the contrary, it moved him to sing praises to Jehovah.

Courtesy of Anglo-Australian Observatory,
photograph by David Malin



Today's increased knowledge of the heavens gives us even stronger reason to feel awe. Recently, astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope peered deeper into the heavens than any human before them. They selected a part of the sky that appeared empty to ground-based telescopes and focused the Hubble on an area only as big as a grain of sand held at arm's length. The resulting picture was crowded, not with individual stars, but with galaxies—vast systems consisting of billions of stars—never before seen by man!

The magnitude, mystery, and wonder of the universe instill awe in a keen observer. However, such wonders are a mere reflection of the Creator's glory and power. The Bible calls Jehovah God "the Father of the celestial lights" and tells us that he "is counting the number of the stars; all of them he calls by their names."—James 1:17; Psalm 147:4.

The immensity of the universe is also seen in the time spanned by celestial events. The light from the galaxies photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope had been traveling through space for billions of years! Ought not our newness and smallness in comparison with the permanence of the heavens cause us to feel awe and deep reverence for the One who made the stars? (Isaiah 40:22, 26) To realize that the God who created all of this also 'keeps mortal man in mind and cares for him' deepens our regard for our Creator and makes us want to know him and please him. (Psalm 8:3, 4) Such sublime respect and appreciation is what the Bible calls the fear of God.

A Forgiving God

We are all imperfect. Even when trying to do what is right, we sin unintentionally. When that happens, should we be in dread of losing God's favor? The psalmist wrote: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand? For there is the

true forgiveness with you, in order that you may be feared." (Psalm 130:3, 4) That the "Grand Maker" should be so kind and forgiving inspires deep appreciation and reverence in his worshipers.—Isaiah 54:5-8.

The fear of God motivates us to do good and also to refrain from doing what God says is bad. Our relationship with our heavenly Father may be compared to that of a good human father with his children. At times, children may not remember why their father forbids them to play in the street. Still, when they feel the impulse to chase a ball into the path of traffic, the thought of their father's prohibition holds them back—possibly saving them from death. Likewise, an adult's fear of Jehovah may restrain him from committing an act that could ruin lives—his own and those of others.—Proverbs 14:27.

Fearing God's Judgment

By contrast, a person whose conscience does not restrain him from displeasing God has reason to be in fear in a very different way. Just as human governments punish criminal elements, God has the right to act against willful, unrepentant wrongdoers. God's temporary permission of wickedness has allowed some to become hardened in a wrong course. But the Bible shows clearly that one day soon he will remove all evil elements from the earth. (Psalm 37:9, 10; Ecclesiastes 8:11; 1 Timothy 5:24) The unrepentant wicked have reason to fear punishment from God. Yet, this type of fear is not the kind of fear that the Bible recommends.

Rather, the Bible associates the fear of Jehovah with beautiful things in life—singing, joy, trust, wisdom, longevity, confidence, prosperity, hope, and peace, to name but a few.* If we continue to walk in the fear of Jehovah, we will enjoy such blessings forever.
—Deuteronomy 10:12-14.

* See Exodus 15:11; Psalm 34:11, 12; 40:3; 111:10; Proverbs 10:27; 14:26; 22:4; 23:17, 18; Acts 9:31.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Alcoholism in Mexico

Studies conducted by the Mexican Institute of Social Security indicated that there were more than four million alcoholics in Mexico in 1991. But by 1997, that number may have doubled, reports Mexico City's newspaper *El Universal*. It quotes Alcoholics Anonymous as saying that of the eight million alcoholics in Mexico, three million are found in Mexico City. According to *El Universal*, most crimes in Mexico are committed under the influence of alcohol. Abuse of alcohol results in work absenteeism and poor school performance. José Manuel Castrejón, representative of the National Council Against Addiction, says that "50 percent of the cases of family violence and a fifth of the work accidents are closely related to alcohol use."

Tips for Air Travelers

Long-distance air travel puts stress on mind and body, and *The Times* newspaper of London offers some suggestions for relief. These include "avoiding alcohol but taking plenty of soft drinks, eating only light meals and picturing yourself in a pleasant place." Sitting still for long periods can cause swollen feet and can make clothing feel tighter. Thus, reports *The Times*, "doctors suggest loosening clothes, removing shoes and requesting an aisle seat so you can keep strolling to the lavatory." Flexing and stretching your arms and legs during the journey helps to prevent circulation problems. To combat jet lag,

"seasoned travellers sometimes adjust their daily routine in advance of their journeys. Those heading east get up earlier for a week and those heading west go to bed late."

Tokyo's Commuting Crows

Crows in Tokyo, Japan, have taken up the habit of commuting between the suburbs and the city each day, reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. Bird experts say that this started a few years ago when the crow population of Tokyo's parks and temple grounds grew so large that crows were forced to build nests elsewhere. It was then that they discovered the comforts of suburban life. The one thing they



missed, though, was sophisticated city food—garbage and discarded leftovers. They overcame this problem by developing "commuting patterns that are similar to that of salaried workers. They fly to urban areas in the morning to search for food," says *The Daily Yomiuri*, "then return to the suburbs in the evening."

Natural Wealth Threatened

♦ The northeastern region of India, rich in plant and animal life, now lists 650 species of plants and 70 species of ani-

mals as being endangered. The fragile ecosystem in the state of Meghalaya, on the border with Bangladesh, has been identified as one of 18 'hot spots' where biodiversity is at risk. As reported in *The Asian Age*, the ecosystem has come under assault from human depredation and poaching, among other factors. The biodiversity of the seven northeastern Indian states is considered more fragile and sensitive ecologically than that of other parts of the country.

♦ In Italy the number of threatened plant species and subspecies is also on the rise. In 1992, 458 were considered endangered, but by 1997, that number had increased to 1,011. "About one seventh of the varieties that constitute the Italian flora are endangered in some way, and as many as 29 species have become extinct in the last few years," explains *Corriere della Sera*. More than 120 species are "in serious danger of extinction in the immediate future," and almost 150 may run that risk in the near future. In the view of botanist Franco Pedrotti, of the University of Camerino, "these figures reveal an alarming situation." One plant became extinct in its natural habitat when the only area in which it grew was turned into a soccer field.

♦ In Argentina 500 of the 2,500 indigenous animal species are in danger, reports the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín*. "Even though preserving biodiversity is a key to assuring the present and future well-

being of people, many animals are at risk of disappearing," according to Claudio Bertonatti, coordinator of the conservation department of the Wildlife Foundation. Among the animals threatened in Argentina are varieties of armadillo, jaguar, vicuña, whale, and land tortoise. "Despite [the fact] that the sale of them is prohibited," notes the report, in greater Buenos Aires "about 100,000 tortoises are sold each year." Bertonatti observed: "Man, who ought to be the primary one interested in protecting this source of riches, is responsible for the majority of the threats that are taking many species to the brink of extinction."

Mary First to See the Risen Christ?

Pope John Paul II has asserted that "it is legitimate to think that the Mother [of Jesus, Mary] was probably the first person to whom the risen Jesus appeared." (*L'Osservatore Romano*) None of the four Gospel accounts speak of Jesus' mother being present when his tomb was found to be empty. However, the pope also said: "How could the Blessed Virgin, present in the first community of disciples (cf. Acts 1:14), be excluded from those who met her divine Son after he had risen from the dead?" The pope used various arguments to try to explain the absence of a record in the Gospels of any meeting between Jesus and his mother. The fact remains that holy spirit did not inspire the Gospel writers to make mention of any such event. Nor, for that matter, is she mentioned in the apostolic letters.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Southern Summer Risk

In the Southern Hemisphere, January is one of the hottest months. In hot weather it is important to safeguard against heatstroke, explains *FDA Consumer* magazine. Although heatstroke causes hundreds of deaths each year, it is entirely preventable, states endocrinologist Dr. Elizabeth Koller. Heatstroke can occur as a result of exertion in the heat, but it also strikes older adults who do



not have air-conditioning and who have an underlying health problem, such as diabetes or heart disease. When the temperature soars, *FDA Consumer* advises drinking lots of water—a quart an hour if exercising. In the sun, wear sunscreen, a broad-brimmed hat, and loose clothing. If you have no air-conditioning and there is danger of heatstroke, "take cool baths, spray yourself with water frequently, and sit in front of a fan. If you feel faint, call for emergency medical attention." Dr. Koller warns: "If someone is overheating, you have only minutes to do something about it."

"Torture" at Work

"Headaches, fatigue, impaired memory, visual disturbance, dizziness, respiratory problems, catarrhal deafness, tinnitus, [and] skin conditions"

—all may result from sick building syndrome, or SBS, says John Moores University researcher Jack Rostron. SBS, officially recognized by the World Health Organization in 1986, can "transform the humdrum business of going to work into something approaching torture," he claims. Centrally controlled air-conditioned buildings with sealed windows can accumulate air pollutants, such as the toxic gases and particles given off by photocopiers and printers, reports *The Independent* of London. To avoid SBS, air-conditioning systems must be cleaned frequently and thoroughly. Rostron notes: "Work performance improves when small groups of people share small offices with windows that open."

Winter Warning

Anyone who spends time outdoors in winter cold and wind is at risk of hypothermia, a dangerous lowering of body temperature, states *The Toronto Star* newspaper. This occurs "when the body loses heat faster than it can generate it," the report notes, adding that "temperatures do not have to be sub-zero for hypothermia to occur." The metabolism of the elderly is often less able to compensate for heat loss. They, along with children, are at greatest risk. When a person is "cold, wet, tired, hungry, shivering, complaining, [and] not enjoying being outdoors," he may be at risk of hypothermia, states the *Wilderness First Aid Handbook*. Such a person should be given shelter, dry clothes, food, and fluids but not alcohol or caffeine. If he does not show signs of recovery, medical help should be sought immediately.

FROM OUR READERS

Amazon Rain Forest I was very impressed by the series of articles "The Amazon Rain Forest—Myths and Realities." (March 22, 1997) As a plant ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service, I have to study a considerable amount of literature on the environment. Yet, I consider your article to be the best that I have ever read on the subject. It was very well researched, instructive, and up-to-date, and it was a real pleasure to read. It was heartening for me to see concepts such as biodiversity, extraction, fragmentation, and ecosystem appear in a journal with such a vast international distribution. This can only help matters.

D. S., United States

I am 12 years old, and I want to say a big thank-you for the articles. I just had to read them the very evening we received the magazine! Since we are dealing with this topic in geography class at school, I gave a copy to my geography teacher the next day. Of course, that made others in the class curious, and I hope to place some more magazines with them.

T. E., Germany

The articles were truly fascinating. The species of insects mentioned are so vast in number, each with its own duty to perform under the leaves on the floor of the forest. Jehovah sees that food is supplied for all who live there. I can understand why he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:18.

D. K. H., United States

Bullying—What's the Harm? Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Bullying—What's the Harm?" (March 22, 1997) At school everybody humiliates the weakest, and I too was pushed to do the same thing. But the counsel given in this article to put oneself in the other person's position helped me a lot

to hold back from bullying. Thank you once again.

M. N., France

I am 17 years old, and I thank you so much for the article. It is an answer to my prayers, and it really encouraged me. Knowing that Jehovah hates bullying has helped me greatly to make necessary changes in my conduct. The Golden Rule and the example of Jesus also impressed me, and they help me to act correctly.

V. T., Italy

Recently, in a waiting room, I picked up an *Awake!* and discovered this well-written article. I certainly understand the lasting harm bullying can cause. My brother was verbally, emotionally, and physically abusive [to me, his sister]. If confronted, he'd shrug, laugh, and claim it was just a joke. He'd tell me that the problem was mine because I lacked a sense of humor! When I was 13 and he was 15, he began to threaten me with sexual molestation. I lived in constant fear of him because he was older, bigger, and so much stronger! My parents never protected me. Thank you, *Awake!*, for taking on the serious issues of life. I know it does take courage. I feel you've touched many hearts with this article.

B. S. M., United States

Gardening Ants After reading the article "An Expert Gardener" (March 22, 1997), I was able to visit an exhibition and witness the very activity you described. It looked as though leaves were moving along a rope that hung from the ceiling. Actually, ants were carrying those leaves, and nearby they were busy cultivating a fungus garden. To see what you mentioned was truly an awesome sight and brought me and my two little girls closer to our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah.

P. F., Scotland



Buckle Up for Safety

- In the United States, motor-vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among youths from 5 to 24 years of age.
- In Japan, road accidents are responsible for more than twice as many deaths as breast cancer and kill four times as many people as prostate cancer.
- In Europe, car accidents account for four times as many deaths as homicides do.

THESE alarming statistics highlight one of the inherent dangers of traveling by automobile—speed can kill. And speed with alcohol murders. Thankfully, the risk of accident and injury can be reduced. How is that possible?

Cultivating safe driving habits is a good place to start. Some safety experts claim that 9 out of 10 accidents could be prevented or avoided. Exceeding the posted speed limit, weaving in and out of traffic, tailgating, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and driving a poorly maintained car are just a few examples of unsafe driving habits. Respect for life and love for our fellowman should move us to adopt a cautious and responsible attitude toward operating a motor vehicle.—Matthew 7:12.

Seat belts are another simple, but often overlooked, safety measure. According to Tim Hurd,

a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Transportation, "the safety belt is the most effective way to save your life in a crash. It doubles the likelihood of survival." For the youngest passengers, the survival rate is nearly tripled if they use child safety seats.*

In spite of this, surveys indicate that nearly a third of the occupants of passenger vehicles in the United States do not use seat belts. As a parent, do you see to it that your children are safely strapped into their seats before venturing out? The time that it takes to buckle up is well worth it.

* The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends: "Children in rear-facing child seats should not be placed in the front seat of cars equipped with passenger-side air bags. The impact of a deploying air bag striking a rear-facing child seat could result in injury to the child."

"The Awake! Saved My Life"

"About 10:00 p.m. on November 11," reported Arthur, in Suva, Fiji, "I started to feel chest pains, which I passed off as heartburn. My wife, Esther, was convinced that I was having a heart attack, since she said my symptoms were similar to those described in the December 8, 1996, *Awake!*, 'Heart Attack—What Can Be Done?,' which she had just read.

"I talked to my doctor on the telephone, and he advised me to take some heartburn medication, go to sleep, and see him in the morning. Yet, the pain persisted. I then asked Esther to bring the *Awake!* and read the section 'Symptoms of a Heart Attack.' After she read it to me, I agreed to be taken to the hospital.

"Tests showed that I was having a heart attack, and I was admitted to the hospital. For the next five days, I was kept heavily sedated and given complete rest. The heart specialist said that I was fortunate to have detected my heart attack.

"On January 9, 1997, I underwent four hours of open-heart surgery in Sydney, Australia. 'The coronary artery disease was incredibly severe,' the surgeon's report stated. The condition of my coronary arteries showed that I was heading for a major heart attack that would have come within a few months had the attack on November 11 gone undetected.

"I can say without a doubt that the *Awake!* saved my life, since I would definitely have passed off my attack as severe heartburn."

