

Awake!

APRIL 22, 1984



My Child Is Missing!

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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 stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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

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Feature Articles

Each year tens of thousands of children are reported missing from their homes. Many become the victims of foul play. The dead bodies of a thousand youngsters go unclaimed every year in the United States alone. In this issue, Awake! examines the reasons why children disappear. And it shows what parents can do to keep this tragedy from happening in their home

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Frederick W. Franz, President

My Child Is Missing!

"I first found the note—it was March 31, 1981—in the morning when I went to wake him up to get him ready for school," recalls Annette. "It said: 'I am going away because I don't want to live here anymore. I don't have to listen to anybody anymore.'" "I'll never forget that," she added, "even if it happens to be 25 years from now."

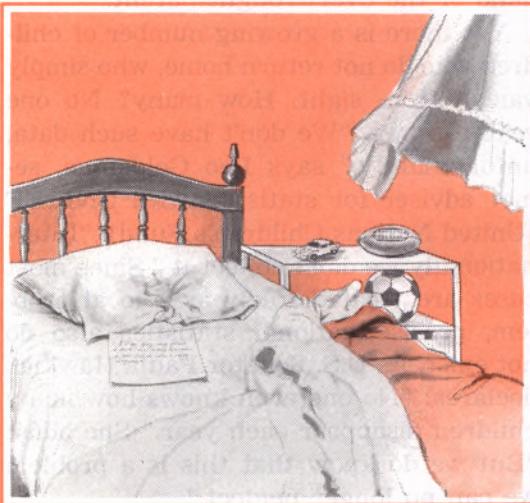
For Annette, a 27-year-old Massachusetts housewife, the nightmare of a missing child was about to begin. "I knew it was his handwriting," she said. "I just had this feeling that Taj was hiding out somewhere, someone was helping him. Someone knew the problem he was having and wanted to help him." But phone calls to relatives and friends in the neighborhood produced no information as to the whereabouts of nine-year-old Taj.

Soon a state of shock enveloped her as police and other agencies took up the search. Cycles of hopelessness, anger, frustration and sadness followed, which persist to this day. "There's just no end to it," states Annette. "It's not like a death that you can accept for what it is and look forward to something better. I can't put it in the right perspective because I don't know what I'm dealing with. It's just very, very frustrating."

Almost equally as frustrating to Annette is the fact that she cannot tell her missing son that the situation that impelled him to run away—a stepfather who suddenly became abusive and for-

bade him to talk to his mother, the fear he had of being killed—has completely changed. "Whereas most runaways who run out of desperation would come home and find things the same," explains Annette, "Taj's situation is different in that it really has changed. He wouldn't be coming home to the same place and wouldn't have to come home with that fear of his stepfather."

Although it's been three years since Taj disappeared, Annette still carries on the search for her missing son. "I'm constantly looking at little blond boys," she says, "constantly. No matter where I am



—at the airport, in other cities, my own city—I'm always looking at them and wondering whether, if he turns around, it will be Taj. I'm never going to stop searching."

Annette is not alone. There are literally tens of thousands of children *each*

year who are reported missing from their homes and are never seen again. Some, like Taj, run away from a threatening or unpleasant home situation. Others are snatched away or simply disappear. What happens to these children? Why are they missing?

Why Children Disappear

THREE has probably been a time in every mother's life when her child has appeared to be missing. The child may have delayed in coming home from school, from play or from a trip to the local store. As time ticks away, the mother may become frantic with concern over the safety of her child and may even institute a search. Usually, the errant child walks in—safe and sound—perhaps now to face some disciplinary measure at the hand of the overwrought parent.

Yet there is a growing number of children who do not return home, who simply vanish from sight. How many? No one really knows. "We don't have such data, unfortunately," says Leo Goldstone, senior adviser for statistics with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). "Internationally we don't collect it." Since most cases are treated solely as a local problem, precise national statistics also do not exist. As U.S. Senator Paula Hawkins declares: "No one even knows how many children disappear each year." She adds: "But we do know that this is a problem we can no longer neglect."

However, there are estimates. "The United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 1.8 million children disappear from home each year," reports *The New York Times*. "Most return almost immediately. Many are victims of parental kidnapping. Hundreds become victims of foul play. But 50,000 children still remain unaccounted for every year." The newspaper also states that a thousand dead bodies of youngsters "go unclaimed every year in this country."

Most Are Runaways

By far the largest number of children who turn up missing are runaways. Over 50,000 young people are reported as running away from home each year in Italy alone. In the United States there are an estimated 1,300,000 incidents annually. "But these are runaway episodes," says Charles Sutherland, director of *Search*, publishers of The National Runaway/Missing Persons Report, "and not actual missing people. They also include chronic runaways."

Up to 90 percent of the runaways re-

turn within a period of two weeks. Why do they run away? Usually it is because of a traumatic or unhappy situation at home or school. The period of adolescence is fraught with emotional situations that, although minor in nature, are very significant to the youngster involved. A disagreement with a parent, fear of ridicule from one's peers, low grades or trouble at school can easily trigger a runaway reaction.

Parental separation, divorce and remarriage, as well as fear of consequences due to minor scrapes with the law are other reasons. Problems of a more serious nature—an alcoholic parent, physical or sexual abuse—are also causes of runaway episodes. These situations generally increase during periods of economic hardship within the family.

"Throwaway" Children

Hundreds of thousands of children in the United States each year fall into the category of the "technically homeless." The majority of these are "pushouts" or "throwaways"—children who are abandoned or pushed out of their homes by their parents, or abused and made to feel

so unwanted that their only alternative, they feel, is to leave. Official records of these cases do not exist, as parents who abandon or discard their children seldom report them as missing.

Often, when authorities telephone regarding these children, the parents will say: 'Keep them. We don't want them back.' The reasons range from selfishness and a desire to be free from the responsibility of caring for a child, to an incorrigible child on drugs whose actions the parents just cannot cope with anymore. What happens to these youngsters? *The New York Times* reports: "Many homeless teen-agers simply live on the streets, becoming prostitutes or peddling drugs to survive." It adds: "And to some of these homeless young people, the difference between home and the streets is not great."

Among the poorer nations, abandoned children are even more common. Here parents simply cannot afford to feed and take care of them. Sometimes they will try to sell their children so that both child and family may survive. Desperate parents in India will often abandon a child at a railway station. A reported 5,000 abandoned children roam the streets in Bogotá, Colombia, living by their wits, preying on and becoming the prey of others.

Stolen—Even by Parents!

Thousands of others become "missing" children because they are abducted by one of their parents. Usually these abductions are related to separation or divorce proceedings, where the child is snatched away by the parent not awarded custody by the courts. These children are "missing" in the sense that the mate who has custody does not know where they are being kept. Sometimes these youngsters



are taken out of the country. Often they are told that the other parent either died or does not want them any longer. Many end up being physically abused, some even murdered.

Then there are unexplained disappearances and children who are kidnapped or abducted by strangers. These cases often make the headlines in newspapers. In some countries children are stolen for the purpose of being trained and used for prostitution and thievery, or purposely deformed to invoke pity as beggars. A documented case is that of Tulasa who at age 13 was "kidnapped from her native Nepal and sold into Bombay's teen-

ing flesh markets." As reported in *India Today*, in a scant eight months she was "sold" to three different brothels and forced to cater to the "perverted demands of up to 2,000 men." Only when she was so diseased that she was admitted to a regular hospital, "with a list of ailments as long as her age," was she finally able to break free from her captors and pour out her story. It resulted in the arrest of 28 people in the "flesh trade."

Whatever the reason for a child's disappearance, it is a very heartrending situation for parents who want and love their children. Can parents do anything to prevent it?

What Can Parents Do?

"I HAD just seen this television documentary on abducted children," said the retired Florida man, "when I began to wonder if children really knew what to do if a stranger tried to lure them away. So I posed this question to some eight-year-old children I knew: What would you do if a stranger was nice to you, offered you some candy, and then after a while asked you to go along with him —saying that he wanted to show you something?" He continued: "Do you know what they said? Each one answered: 'I don't know.'"

"But these were 'country kids,'" he said, "and since I had to travel that weekend to a nearby city and would be meeting with quite a number of families,

I decided to check out what the children who were more 'street wise' would say." Their answers astounded him. All the children six years old and under responded to his question, "Would you go with him?" with a firm "Yes, Sir!" Those who were seven or older generally said no. But the man noted: "They really had no clear idea of why not or what they should do."

Children are not the only ones who are uninformed. Many parents also do not know what to do—either to protect their child or to find their child when he is missing.

Aside from the occasionally lost child, children disappear for two basic reasons: Either they leave voluntarily, as in the

case of runaways, or they are abducted by someone. Since children lack mature judgment and experience, it is up to the parents to take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of their child.

The Dangers Are Real

Parents must realize that the dangers are real. There are people out there who want your child, but they do not have the child's best interests in mind. "Their motivation is usually for sexual gratification," says Alice Byrne, a New York-based private detective who has tracked down missing children as far away as Kenya. "It is rarely to love and nurture the child."

Concurring is Sergeant Lloyd Martin of the Los Angeles Police Department's Sexually Exploited Child Unit. "I don't know of a soul who takes runaways in off the street without getting something in return," he says, "and it's usually sex." They often get what they want from the child, without protestations, because they give the child what he feels he lacks—love, attention, affection, money and material goods. Or they may convince the child that his parents no longer want him, or abuse the child so badly that he eventually feels worthless and accepts his new role in life.*

While the press often focuses attention on these "sick" and perverted strangers who prey on young children, parents also need to exercise caution regarding people the child already knows. "We know that the threat to the children is not from the stranger," says Charles Sutherland of *Search*. "It's from the very people that the child has come to know and trust—overwhelmingly so." Danger

to the child could come from a relative, friend or neighbor—or even a teacher or other person in a position of authority. Advises Annette, whose son Taj has been missing since 1981: "Know who your child's friends are. A child molester or a kidnapper is often someone you know,

There are people out there who want your child, but they do not have the child's best interests in mind

someone who is in a socially approved situation with your child."

The warning you give your child in regard to being wary of strangers may not be adequate for another reason: Your idea of a stranger and your child's idea may be different. Your child may have friends you do not know and whom *you* may consider strangers. "A person who says hello to your child on his way to school, or who gives him some candy, can quickly become his friend and buddy," says detective Alice Byrne. "Especially in the big cities do we find this potential danger." She advises: "Take an interest in your children's friends—especially if that friend is an adult."

Home Environment and Instruction

Obviously, a crucial factor in protecting a child is the quality of life at home. "The most consistently reported factor underlying runaway behavior is poor parent-child relationships," says a study in the publication *Family Relations*. A loving and happy home atmosphere, where good communication between family members exists and where the child is made to feel secure, will most likely preclude a

* For more information, please see the June 22, 1982, issue of *Awake!*

INSTRUCT YOUR YOUNG CHILDREN:

- Always to take the same—and safest—route to and from school each day
- To use the "buddy" system—always to be with a friend when they play, go to a store or movie—and not to go off alone
- Not to let strangers touch them; not to accept money or candy from strangers
- Never to go along with or accept rides from someone they do not know
- To scream for help if a stranger tries to take them by force
- To report any unusual or scary incidents to parents or teachers
- How to use the telephone if they need help (Do they know their own number, their full name and where they live?)

child's running away—or staying away—when emotional situations occur. Caring parents will also weigh their decisions in the light of what is in the best interests of their children.

While it is necessary to instruct a child about people who might abduct or harm him, the approach or manner in which the instruction is given is also important. A parent certainly does not want the child to become neurotic and paranoid—in dread of everyone he meets or sees. On the other hand, a parent will not let fear of upsetting the child or the unlikelihood of an incident occurring prevent the giving of needed instruction.

The fact is that incidents of child abduction *do* occur, in small towns as well as in big cities. No one can predict where

or when. So a wise parent will take reasonable precautions and give needed instruction to prevent the child from being abducted. "Nobody's saying your kid is going to be kidnapped," says police sergeant Richard Ruffino, an expert in the field of missing persons. "You look at the things you do and the knowledge you give your child as preventive action plans. It's like an insurance policy. Do you buy insurance because you're *going* to have an accident, or do you buy insurance because you *may* have an accident?"

Among the precautions that authorities say parents should take are these: When in public, always keep your young child in sight. Never leave very young children unattended. Know whose care you entrust your child to. Do not send a young child out alone at night to run an errand or purchase some item you need. Do not leave young children in game areas in stores or shopping centers while you go shopping, or alone in an automobile—especially one that has the key in the ignition or the engine left running—while you attend to some business.

Some authorities advocate use of a family code word—a special, preselected word that is known only to family members. Persons intent on abducting a child will often tell the child that they were sent by the child's parents, or have come for the child because the mother is sick. The child could then ask for the family code word, and if it is not given, refuse to go along. At any rate, a child should know that, although he should be polite and respectful to adults, he has a perfect right to say, "No, thank you" and not to do anything that makes him frightened or uncomfortable, or that is contrary to his parents' instructions.

Much of the success of protecting a child hinges on open communication. A loving and communicative parent will be aware of the "signals" given by a child who is experiencing difficulties: abrupt changes in mood and disposition, increased isolation, secretiveness and diminished communication, disturbed sleep and loss of appetite. Remember, communication is a two-way street. Parents, *listen* to what your child tells you and weigh it carefully. "Taj mentioned once that he would run away," says Annette, "but I didn't take him seriously. I had never heard him mention it before, and I figured he was just saying that."

When a Child Is Missing

What can parents do when a child is missing? First, try not to panic. Make a brief, reasonable search to establish that the child is *really* missing. Check your home, his school, his close friends, the neighbors. Then immediately report the situation to your local law-enforcement

agency, giving them all the information you can. In some localities the police have special missing persons or runaway divisions, and these should be informed as well.

Spreading the word to all your child's friends and relatives may also prove beneficial. Your child may get in touch with them, or they may already know something that may be helpful. Success in finding a missing child often depends on publicity—how many people know about it and are keeping an eye open for the child. In some countries there are special agencies with telephone hot lines for missing persons. Their aid can also be enlisted, and some may be well worth the small fee they charge for registration and inclusion in their circulars of missing persons. In the United States the case can now be included in the FBI-operated NCIC (National Crime Information Center) computer with nationwide availability.

BE PREPARED

While it may be unlikely that your child will be abducted, authorities suggest these precautionary measures:

- Take a clear, sharp, full-face photo of each child at least once a year.
- On the back of the photo note the following current information for each child:
 - Age
 - Height and weight
 - Hair and eye colors
 - Clothing and shoe sizes
 - Any distinguishing body marks
 - Date picture was taken
- Know where each child's medical and dental X rays and records can be located. Obtain these before they are destroyed or you move to a distant location.
- Keep an up-to-date record of any medicines a child needs and what the effects will be if not taken.
- Take fingerprints of your child for positive identification in case of foul play or hidden identity. Fingerprinting each member of the family at the same time can allay a child's fear and such identification is useful to have. With a little practice, parents can do this themselves, using an ordinary black stamp pad.

Precise and up-to-date information will be the most helpful in locating a missing child and distinguishing him from any look-alikes. Often a search is hampered because of lack of a photograph, or positive identification cannot be made on a body because of insufficient data. The accompanying box gives common suggestions offered by authorities that will aid a search and make identification easier.

How parents treat a child that returns or is found is also important. A common reaction is to scold and punish the child severely. While some instruction and discipline may indeed be needed, parents do well to watch how it is administered. As reported in the Italian publication *Oggi*, "young people run away from home . . . because often no one in the family knows how to listen and understand." When tensions and misunderstandings persist or even increase, studies show, such negative home conditions will only increase the chances that the child will continue to run away. Professional help may be needed here.

A Hard Ordeal for Parents

The tragedy of a missing child is a hard ordeal for any caring parent to face. Besides anguish of heart and mind, the parent often has to bear up under thoughtless and unkind remarks from others, such as: "He must be dead by

now" or, "You have other children. Pull yourself together." Many times there are threatening and crank telephone calls that annoy or send the parent off on a wild-goose chase. And since parents often abduct their own children, you may even be suspect yourself and subject to interrogation.

Perhaps worst of all is really not knowing. "Families whose children have been missing for long periods would surely prefer the finality of bad news to the anxiety of an unexplained disappearance," states *The Washington Post*, "if that is the choice." Says Annette: "A missing person is just such a horror because you don't know anything about what has happened to him."

However, there are many sympathetic people who do care and will help and rally to your support. Firm inner strength, too, is needed and is promised by God to those who trust in him. (Psalm 9:9, 10) For Annette, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, it is these factors—her trust in God and the loving support of the congregation—that help her endure her sad experience. "It has taught me to trust more in Jehovah," she said, "and Jehovah has given me the strength to cope with it." Adds detective Alice Byrne: "It was Annette's strong faith that pulled her through." Both are hopeful that Taj will soon no longer be a "missing child."

150,000 Children Kidnapped Yearly

One hundred and fifty thousand children are kidnapped each year (two thirds by estranged parents) in the United States, according to the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on juvenile justice. The subcommittee is considering legislation to provide federal financial aid and other assistance in locating missing children. Although one privately financed group has located 800 children in less than three years, private organizations are being overwhelmed by the extent of the problem. Therefore the appeal for government assistance.

Young People Ask...

Isn't Dancing Just Innocent Pleasure?

DANCING can be viewed as a gift from our Creator that affords us another way to express joy. His worshipers in ancient times would sing and "rejoice in the dance." (Jeremiah 31:12, 13) Dancing can also be a means of recreation and pleasant relaxation. In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, the rejoicing that occurred over the son's return included "a music concert and dancing."—Luke 15:25.

'But what about fast dancing?' ask some youths. It has its place. For example, the Bible shows that King David felt such deep joy after returning the sacred ark of the covenant to Jerusalem that he was "dancing around . . . with all his power." (2 Samuel 6:14) David was likely dancing very vigorously and fast—but not unrestrained. Can it be said that *all* fast dancing is appropriate or innocent? No, there is a need for caution. The power of music can *carry you away*.

Avoid Getting Carried Away

Although getting together for a good time is fine, there is a need for proper restraint at such gatherings. The apostle Paul told Christians in the first century: "As in the daytime let us walk decently, not in revelries ['wild parties,' *The Bible in Living English*] and drunken bouts, not in illicit intercourse and loose conduct, not in strife and jealousy." (Romans 13:13) This was no doubt because pagan

festivals in ancient times were typically marked by drunkenness, sensual dancing and wild abandon.

Centuries earlier Socrates described one such revelry where women "abandoned themselves to demonstrations of frantic excitement, with dancing and clamorous invocation of the god. . . . The men yielded to a similar impulse by noisy revels in the streets, sounding the cymbals and tambourine." Early Christians therefore had to be careful that any of their social gatherings did not reflect a similar spirit.

Paul's caution to avoid "wild parties" is still relevant. At such gatherings today, people are often so moved by the power of music (plus drugs and alcohol) that they get carried away. They dance wildly—provocatively. Youths today should therefore be careful that they do not throw off restraint at gatherings and 'get lost in the music.' The Bible's counsel is: "Keep your senses, be watchful."

—1 Peter 5:8.

Yes, at times dance movements that can be done gracefully—or at least modestly—can also be done provocatively. There is always a need for caution when a dance involves movements of the body in a way that could arouse erotic desires in yourself and others, thus crossing the line of Christian modesty.

John, for example, loves to dance.

However, he now admits that some of the dances he used to do were sexually suggestive. Recalls John: "I can remember becoming sexually stimulated by either participating in certain dances or observing others doing them." Wisely, as a person now abiding by Christian principles, he steers clear of those dances.

The type of music you dance to is also important. True, you may be fond of music with a strong beat. But must it be played at deafening sound levels to be enjoyed? And is it wise to play such music nonstop? It appears that the constant, strong beat of music has contributed to turning some gatherings into "revelries."

When the Music Is Slow

Dancing that is done to slow and soft music can also pose danger. Bill and Ann found this out at a friend's wedding reception. Explains Ann: "Frequently the lights were turned low and soft, and slow, romantic music was played. The dance floor was filled with couples, teenagers included, dancing very, very close." Bill adds: "Some were pressing up against each other with hardly any foot movement."

As you well know, just touching a member of the opposite sex can ignite strong desires. Obviously, then, tightly hugging someone to the beat of romantic music is not wise. Really, would doing so seem innocent or wholesome if there was no music playing? Would it seem proper even for a married couple to conduct themselves in such a way in public? So if you *do* decide to dance to slow music, be aware of the potential dangers. Some have been led to commit fornication after becoming passionately aroused due to immodest dancing.

Beneath the Beat

Remember too: There is more to music than just a beat. Often, beneath the beat are suggestive—if not pornographic—lyrics. And many times the melody accompanying the filthy words is catchy and the beat compelling. But can you dance to such songs and still maintain innocent and wholesome thoughts?

Have you ever heard a song you did not particularly like, but later you found yourself humming the tune or mouthing the words? Our minds soak in information that at times we'd rather forget. Add to immoral words a nice melody and a strong beat, and endless repetition (typical of some modern music), and you can see why dancing to such a song is dangerous. The words can become almost a chant indelibly impressed on the mind—and heart.

Will You Dance?

Our loving Creator wants us to be happy, and recreational activities have long contributed to people's happiness. The Bible says: "The public squares of

Dancing too close when slow, romantic music is playing can arouse immoral desires

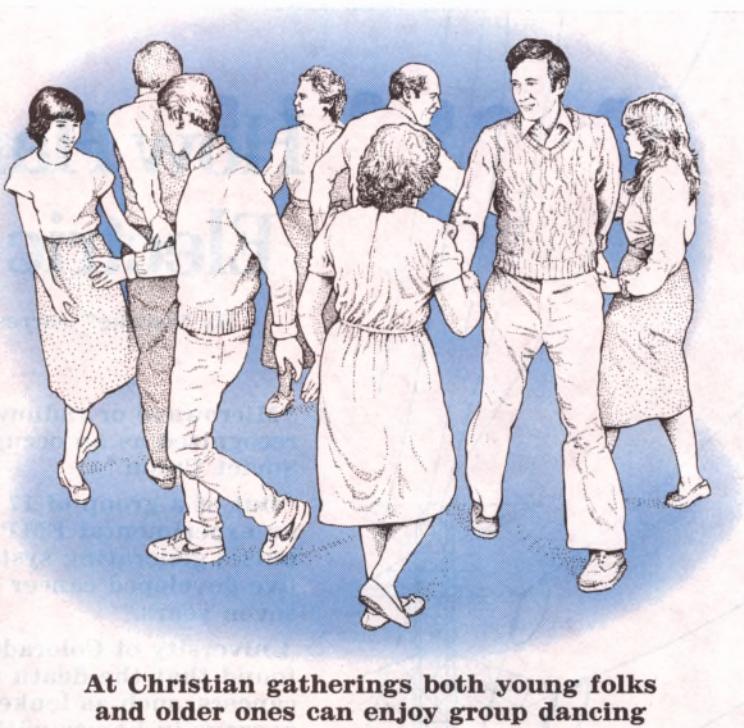
the city themselves will be filled with boys and girls playing." Also, it says that there is "a time for dancing." (Zechariah 8:5; Ecclesiastes 3:4, *The New English Bible*) Yet, as we have seen, not all dancing is just innocent pleasure. Dancing in the past, and at the present, has often been done in a way so as to arouse sexual passions and to lead people into sexual immorality. So the question, Will

I dance? is appropriate.

Some may choose not to dance, recognizing the potential danger it involves due to the world's unhealthy influence and, perhaps, their own inclination to become *carried away* in not so innocent dancing. So just as some may refrain from alcoholic beverages, not because these drinks in themselves are sinful, but because of the potential harm drinking might do to them, for similar reasons some may wisely refrain from dancing. Yet it may be that you will find that dancing can be done within a healthy atmosphere and with appropriately selected music that will contribute to your pleasure and enjoyment without the bad consequences. If you are a minor, you will want to listen closely to your Christian parents and obey their wishes.—Ephesians 6:1-3.

Years ago youths commonly learned to dance from their parents and other older ones. Such dances were often passed on for generations! Our Creator once said to the Israelites: "The virgin will rejoice in the dance, also the young men and the old men, *all together*." (Jeremiah 31:13) Likely they engaged in group dances, such as "circle dances." (Judges 21:21; Psalm 150:4) Youths and older people can *still* enjoy dancing together!

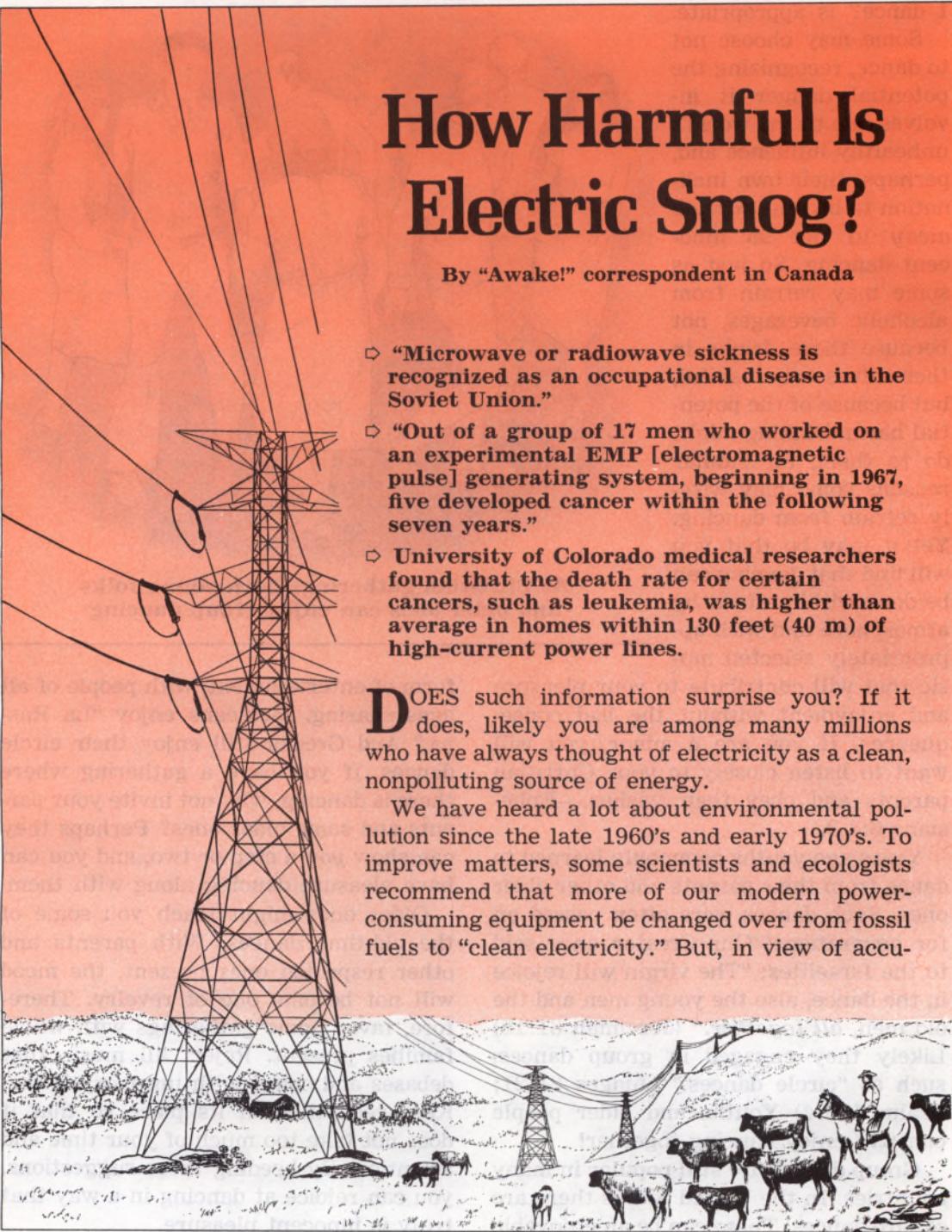
Group dances are still popular in many countries. In the United States there are square dances. These can be an enjoyable



At Christian gatherings both young folks and older ones can enjoy group dancing

form of entertainment, with people of all ages sharing. Mexicans enjoy "La Rasa." And Greeks still enjoy their circle dances. If you have a gathering where there is dancing, why not invite your parents and some older ones? Perhaps they can show *you* a step or two, and you can have pleasure dancing along with them.

Older ones might teach you some of the old-time dances. With parents and other respected ones present, the mood will not become one of revelry. Therefore, favor home gatherings with whole families present. Reject all music that debases and songs with unsavory lyrics! Keep recreation in its place so that it does not take too much of your time and attention. By heeding these suggestions, you can rejoice at dancing in a way that truly is innocent pleasure.



How Harmful Is Electric Smog?

By "Awake!" correspondent in Canada

- "Microwave or radiowave sickness is recognized as an occupational disease in the Soviet Union."
- "Out of a group of 17 men who worked on an experimental EMP [electromagnetic pulse] generating system, beginning in 1967, five developed cancer within the following seven years."
- University of Colorado medical researchers found that the death rate for certain cancers, such as leukemia, was higher than average in homes within 130 feet (40 m) of high-current power lines.

DOES such information surprise you? If it does, likely you are among many millions who have always thought of electricity as a clean, nonpolluting source of energy.

We have heard a lot about environmental pollution since the late 1960's and early 1970's. To improve matters, some scientists and ecologists recommend that more of our modern power-consuming equipment be changed over from fossil fuels to "clean electricity." But, in view of accu-

mulating evidence, many researchers are now asking: Really, how "clean" is electricity? They speak of "electric smog."

From early beginnings in the mid-1700's, with the invention of an electric generator, electricity has been harnessed for ever-increasing uses. In the past few decades it has been made available in relatively cheap and unlimited amounts. Canada and the United States are among the most electrified nations in the world. In the United States alone there are in the neighborhood of a hundred thousand miles of overhead, high-voltage transmission lines operating. And there are, of course, thousands of miles of lines operating at lower voltages that are needed for distribution purposes.

Undoubtedly, electricity makes for more comfortable living conditions in our homes. With just the flick of a switch our homes are heated, cooled and lighted, and appliances become operational. Housewives rejoice in having an electric stove or oven to cook the family meals. Their innumerable electrical gadgets make for such a clean and tidy kitchen, they feel. Now there is talk of equipping homes with computers and video display terminals so that busy cooks can do their shopping without a trip to the supermarket. Offices are also being equipped with more and more electrical gadgetry. Copying machines, computers and video display terminals are among the latest additions in laborsaving and timesaving devices.

In what way could such clean and efficient electrical devices become pollutants? What is the "electric smog" to which researchers refer?

What Is "Electric Smog"?

It has long been recognized that all electrical appliances give off radiation and create electromagnetic fields. Of course,

the most significant of these fields comes from power-generating plants and their transmission systems. But humankind is now enveloped in an extensive variety of man-made fields at diverse energy levels. In this way the environment is polluted with fields of static, alternating electricity and electromagnetism. Even a few examples illustrate how pervasive it is.

A group of people who live near high-voltage power lines in New York State brought fluorescent tubes outdoors one moonless night. As much as 200 feet (61 m) from the lines, these began to glow—just from the electricity in the air!

No doubt you have walked across a room having a synthetic carpet on the floor and then touched a metal doorknob. What happens? *Crack!* A spark—sometimes a rather painful one—jumps between your fingers and the metal. That is static electricity.

At an airport a magnetic field invisibly frisks you, and your baggage is X-rayed for possible concealed weapons. On leaving a library or department store a detection system sets off an alarm if you haven't checked out your book properly or have failed to pay for goods in your possession. What makes these detection systems effective? It is the magnetic field you must pass through as you exit the building.

Wherever we go, whatever we do, it appears that we cannot get away from these electromagnetic fields. The question that now concerns us is, Are electromagnetic fields harmful?

How Harmful?

Dr. Joseph H. Battocletti, in his book *Electromagnetism, Man and the Environment*, made the statement: "It has already been established beyond a shadow of a doubt that some sources produce

extremely deleterious effects. It is also probably true that some sources produce no effects; . . . there are many sources whose effects are as yet unknown."

Regarding certain effects that are known to be serious, Dr. Milton M. Zaret of New York University, in *Medical Research Engineering* (Volume 12, No. 3), stated: "Some general population groupings . . . appear to have been placed in jeopardy." Illustrating his point, he referred to northern Karelia in Finland. Directly across Lake Ladoga from this region, Russia has installed its high-powered microwave radar early-warning system against possible intercontinental missile attack. As a result, the population here is under a 24-hour-a-day bombardment of both ground waves and scatter radiation. The death rate from sudden heart attack in this area is among the highest in the world. Also, medical findings show a meaningful increase in the cancer rate.

The real concern felt by medical men regarding the adverse effects of radar microwaves is well summarized by Dr. Felix Gad Sulman of Hadassah University Medical Center in Jerusalem: "We must now accept the fact that radar is detrimental to the human body. The following organs seem to be specially sensitive: the central nervous system, the endocrine system including the gonads [the reproductive organs], the blood system, the eye, the ear and the genes."

What about the power-transmission lines of generating plants? A field study was conducted in the United States in the greater Denver, Colorado, area as to the effect high-current power-line configurations might have on the incidence of cancer (especially leukemia) among the population. According to their findings, homes of children who developed cancer

were frequently near high-voltage lines. On the other hand, a similar study conducted in Rhode Island said that "no relationship was found between leukemia and electric power line configurations." Yet, numerous studies have shown that growth rates of rats and mice have been

"We must now accept the fact that radar is detrimental to the human body."—Dr. Felix Gad Sulman, Hadassah University Medical Center, Jerusalem

affected by these electromagnetic fields. In one study, under high-voltage transmission lines, bees had problems in honey production, became aggressive and had a very low survival rate in winter. In some cases they even sealed off their hives.

It has been demonstrated that artificial electromagnetic fields can interfere with the way our internal clocks are synchronized. Consequently, our normal biological rhythms tend to adapt to the artificial pulse of electric smog rather than the natural magnetic field of the earth. The result is stress on the human body, bringing with it a breakdown of our general resistance to various diseases.

Some U.S. Navy technicians who underwent prolonged exposure to radiation from extremely low-frequency transmitters experienced unusually high levels of serum triglycerides, a sign associated with coronary trouble and strokes. The ability of some of these men to perform simple addition deteriorated. Even the buried antennae of some transmitters emitted enough radiation to disorient waterfowl flying overhead.

Home electrical appliances also give off radiation, though in lesser amounts. Some may have little or no adverse effect, but others do. The ultraviolet suntanning lamp is considered to be the most dangerous source of radiation in the home. Also, warnings have been issued regarding hair dryers and even electric blankets. These three items, because of their prolonged use, are considered to have possibly the most injurious effects, though some people may use them for years with no discernible negative results.

As *Awake!* has shown in the past, exposure to radiation from household accessories such as microwave ovens can also have a definite effect on a person's health.* A 1977 workshop at the University of Maryland, cosponsored by the Office of Naval Research, reported that low-intensity microwave exposure has observable adverse influence on the body's bloodmaking process and could bring changes in the immunological system of the human body.

Why the Conflicting Reports?

Why are there still reports of experiments indicating no harm resulting to humans or other creatures? It may be as one researcher stated: "Unfortunately, almost all of the research work that is currently in progress, as well as most of the surveys of existing literature, is directly or indirectly financed by the electric industry. It would be unrealistic to expect that results emerging from this industry-funded research would present an unequivocal case against the big transmission lines." She then drew a comparison with the tobacco industry's funding research to prove that cigarette smoking isn't harmful, even though scientific

medical research has produced abundant evidence to the contrary.

Interestingly, *Environment* magazine of November 1978 lists a summary of 45 scientific researches done by various universities and research institutes. All, without exception, demonstrate adverse effects of power-line radiation on animals as well as humans.

What's the Answer?

Laws are being considered for stricter controls on all forms of electrical radiation. Funds are being requested for greater research into the problem. It is suggested that utility companies put their high-voltage power lines underground, regardless of cost. At best, these things would be a mere stopgap.

All this information naturally gives food for thought, though there is no need for alarm. The possible dangers and risks of electric smog need to be established and then cautiously weighed against the many benefits all of us get through the present use of electric power. Without doubt, under the present imperfect circumstances of our earth and the activities of men upon it, there are many things that pose certain dangers. Nevertheless, we cannot leave the earth and neither can we entirely avoid undesirable side effects of our environment as mankind has made it.

What is needed is administration of mankind's affairs by rulers who thoroughly understand the effects of all the environmental influences and who safeguard the well-being of everyone impartially. Only Jehovah God, the Creator, can provide such a government, and he has promised that by means of his Kingdom he will cleanse the earth of all ruinous pollution, "making all things new."

—Revelation 11:18; 21:1-5.

* *Awake!*, April 22, 1981, pages 12-15.

THE REFORMATION

-Can They Repair the Breach?



THE Germany of Martin Luther is politically divided today. But both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany were united on at least one thing—celebrating 1983, the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth, as “the Luther Year.” Once again the question is: Can the breach between Lutherans and Catholics ever be successfully repaired?

At the very beginning of the Protestant Reformation the followers of Martin Luther had met with representatives of the Catholic Church in an effort to avoid a break between them. The meeting was not their idea. Charles V, the emperor, insisted on it. He was worried about the Turks and wanted his empire to be united religiously. So in 1530 the Protestants and the Catholics met in Augsburg, Germany.

During the negotiations at Augsburg, the Protestants presented a lengthy document that stated their beliefs in a way designed not to offend the Catholics. This statement is known as the Augsburg Confession and is important to Luther-

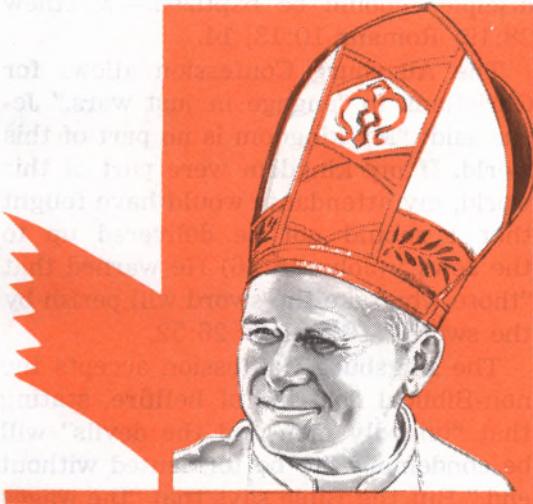
an doctrine to this day. The Confession emphasized common beliefs of Lutherans and Catholics, such as the Trinity doctrine, while leaving out most Protestant complaints about the abuses of the Catholic hierarchy. The Protestants said that they were asking only for a few reforms, such as permission for priests to marry and for the people to receive wine as well as bread at Communion.

Nevertheless, the Catholic emperor and his advisers rejected the Augsburg Confession, and the conference ended in failure.

Time for a Change?

In 1980, during celebrations of the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, another meeting between Lutherans and Catholics took place on German soil. It was between the pope, who was visiting the Federal Republic, and seven officials of the Lutheran Church. Before the meeting, both Lutheran and Catholic negotiators had issued a joint statement saying that the Augsburg Confession “in large measure . . . can be regarded as an expression of the common faith.” Would it finally be possible to mend 450 years of religious disunity?

When he met with the Lutheran officials, the pope sounded encouraging. He said: “Contemplation on the *Confessio Augustana* [the Latin term for the Augs-



burg Confession] has caused us . . . to become newly aware of the beliefs and confessions we hold in common." But the pope stopped short of embracing the Confession. Instead, a joint commission was formed to continue investigating the possibilities of reunification. For those favoring ecumenism the meeting was a disappointment.

"The 450th anniversary year did not see the recognition of the Augsburg Confession by Rome that some had hoped for," admitted a Jesuit scholar. "A trial balloon fell back to earth."

Even the unprecedented visit of Pope John Paul II to a Lutheran Church in Rome last December did not presage reconciliation in the foreseeable future. In his sermon the pope stated: "We long for unity, and we strive for this unity without letting ourselves be discouraged by the difficulties that may pile up along the way."

One of the difficulties was hinted at by the pastor of the Lutheran Church, Dr. Meyer, who is reported as saying on several occasions that the visit of the

pope did not imply any measure of recognition of papal authority.

What Price Unity?

Perhaps, like many people, you are unhappy with the divisions among people who claim to be Christians. Even if you are not a Lutheran or a Catholic, you may feel disappointed that the two churches were unable to put aside their differences. After all, doesn't the Bible encourage all Christians to "speak in agreement" and to "be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought"?—1 Corinthians 1:10.

This leads to a very important question: *Upon what basis should Christians be united?* Catholics claim that unity should come from accepting the pronouncements of the church hierarchy. Many Protestant denominations make the same claim, only they substitute their own creeds, like the Augsburg Confession, for Catholic creeds, and their own hierarchy for the Catholic one.

True, it is possible to enforce unity based on the pronouncements of men, but what if those imperfect men are wrong regarding fundamental and vital Christian beliefs? What good is that sort of unity? Is it pleasing to God? How could

In Our Next Issue

- *Can the Churches Unite the World?*
- *"Help! There's a Fire!"*
- *What's Wrong With Getting Together and Having a Drink?*

it be when, as Jesus Christ pointed out, God desires to be worshiped "with spirit and truth"? (John 4:23, 24) The first-century Pharisees were unified in their beliefs, but Jesus said that their worship was vain "because they teach commands of men as doctrines."—Matthew 15:9.

Yes, all Christians must be unified in their belief, but what they believe must also be true. Loss of the truth is far too high a price to pay for achieving unity among different churches. Where is truth to be found? Not in the creeds of religious organizations but in God's Word, as Jesus verified in prayer to his Father, saying: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) The apostle Paul put it this way: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight." (2 Timothy 3:16) The standard of religious truth for Christians can only be God's Word, the Bible.

Truth and the Augsburg Confession

When the Augsburg Confession is compared with the Bible, how does it stand up? Could it be used as a basis for Christian unity? Let us see.

Regarding the Trinity doctrine, the Augsburg Confession states that "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," are "three Persons, of the same essence and power." Yet the Bible clearly quotes Jesus, the Son, as confessing that "the Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) Jesus also said that "the Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing," indicating his submission to his heavenly Father, Jehovah God.—John 5:19.

The Augsburg Confession recommends infant baptism, while the Bible indicates that only persons old enough to become

disciples should be baptized.—Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:13, 14.

The Augsburg Confession allows for Christians to "engage in just wars." Jesus said: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews." (John 18:36) He warned that "those who take the sword will perish by the sword."—Matthew 26:52.

The Augsburg Confession accepts the non-Biblical doctrine of hellfire, stating that "ungodly men and the devils" will be condemned "to be tormented without end." But the Bible says that "the wages sin pays is death," not torment. (Romans 6:23) In fact, the Bible makes it clear that dead people *cannot* be tormented, for "they are conscious of nothing at all."—Ecclesiastes 9:5.

Actually, in most doctrinal matters the Augsburg Confession accepts the beliefs of the medieval Roman Catholic Church. Yet today many scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, will admit that such beliefs are not found in the Bible. Such a stand may have made the Confession more palatable for 16th-century Catholics but certainly makes it a shaky foundation for Christian unity today.

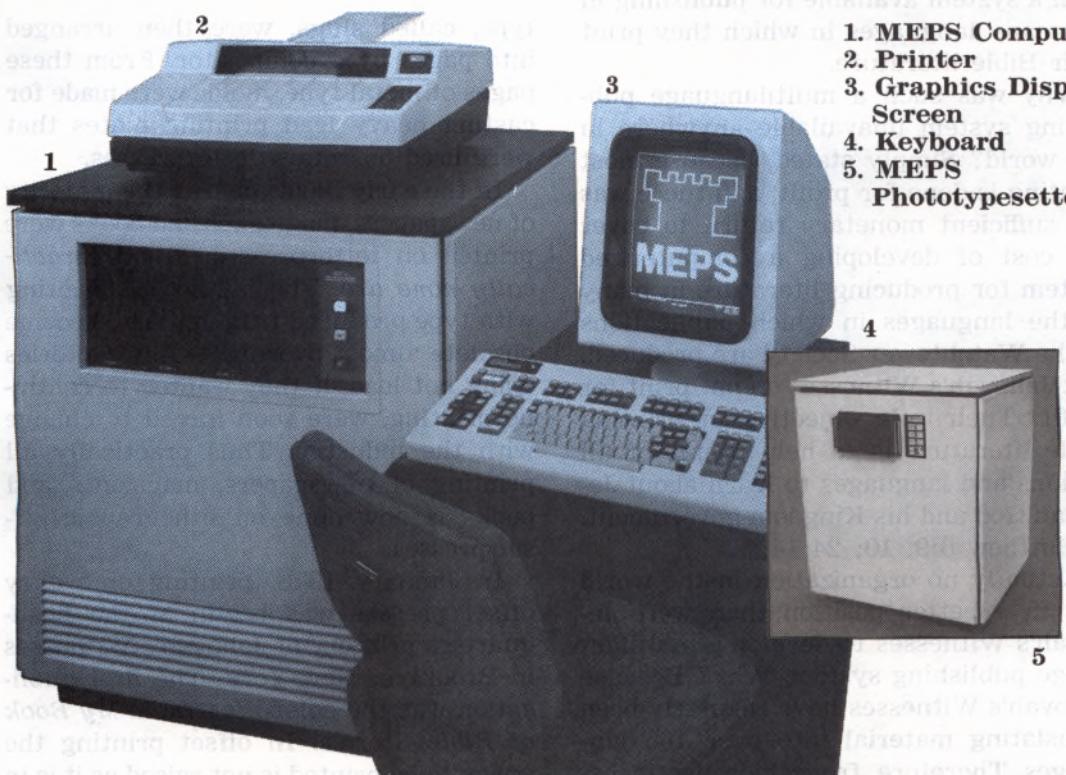
Can the Reformation's gap be bridged? More important, should it be? If both Catholics and Protestants continue to hold to unbiblical doctrines, then a papering over of differences between the two groups is not going to do anyone any good. The real gap today is between all these sectarian members of Christendom and God's Word, the Bible. It is a gap that *cannot* be bridged, for the two are in uncompromising conflict with one another. Hence, Revelation 18:4 says to all Bible readers, "Get out of her, my people."

MEPS

—An Exciting Leap Forward in Publishing

YOU MAY have noticed on page two of this magazine that *Awake!* is published in 51 languages. Its companion magazine *The Watchtower* is published in 102 languages. Altogether about 40 million copies of these magazines are printed each month of the year.

In addition, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society publishes books and booklets that explain the Bible in over 165 languages, printing tens of millions of such publications every year. Have you ever thought of what is involved in producing all this literature in these scores of lan-



1. MEPS Computer
2. Printer
3. Graphics Display Screen
4. Keyboard
5. MEPS Phototypesetter

guages? It is a large and involved task.

The magazines and books are first published in English, and then it generally takes three to six months before the same information appears in other language editions of the magazines. And when it comes to books, often it is *years* before they can be published in some of the languages in which readers are eagerly awaiting them. But MEPS is now making a difference.

What Is MEPS? Why Was It Made?

MEPS is an abbreviation that stands for *Multilanguage Electronic Phototypesetting System*. It is a system that Jehovah's Witnesses themselves have developed for getting written material published quickly in many languages. They developed MEPS because nowhere in the world was such a system available for publishing in the many languages in which they print their Bible literature.

Why was such a multilanguage publishing system unavailable anywhere in the world? Simply stated, because most printing is done for profit, and there was not sufficient monetary return to cover the cost of developing a computerized system for producing literature in many of the languages in which publications of the Watchtower Society are produced. But Jehovah's Witnesses do not print for profit. Their sole objective in printing Bible literature is to help people of all nations and languages to learn about Jehovah God and his Kingdom government.

—Matthew 6:9, 10; 24:14.

Actually no organization in the world was in a better position than were Jehovah's Witnesses to develop a multilanguage publishing system. Why? Because Jehovah's Witnesses have regularly been translating material into over 165 languages. Therefore, from their own trans-

lators they also could obtain the necessary language information to produce MEPS.

Industry Changes That Led to MEPS

As many readers know, the publishing industry has been revolutionized by new methods of production during the past 20 years or so. Ever since the last century, operators of linotype machines turned hot, molten lead into single one-piece lines of metal type. These lines of metal

There is essentially no limit to the number of languages that MEPS can be programmed to produce

type, called slugs, were then arranged into pages by a compositor. From these pages of metal type, molds were made for casting heavy lead printing plates that were used on rotary letterpresses.

In the early 1960's, by far the majority of newspapers, magazines and books were printed on letterpresses. *Today practically none are.* The method of printing with type produced from hot lead became obsolete almost overnight. Any factories using hot lead, if they wanted to continue printing, were soon forced to change with the industry. Thus practically all printing of newspapers, magazines and books is now done on lithographic offset presses.

In January 1978, printing on rotary offset presses was begun at the headquarters printery of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. The first publication was the color-illustrated *My Book of Bible Stories*. In offset printing the image to be printed is not raised as it is in

letterpress, but it is on the same plane, or level, as the surface that surrounds it.* This method of printing is accomplished by taking a photograph of the printed page and then using the film produced to make thin offset printing plates.

To make these thin offset printing plates to produce *My Book of Bible Stories* and other literature published by the Watchtower Society, photographs had to be taken of proofs of *linotype-produced* pages. The film negatives were then merged with negatives of the pictures or illustrations. It was this slow, mechanical, prepress system of producing type from hot lead that needed to be replaced by some faster method. A group of Jehovah's Witnesses investigated how to do this.

A Two-Team Effort

These Witnesses saw the urgency of developing a computerized, prepress system for the Brooklyn headquarters printery. At the same time they appreciated also the need to develop a multilanguage prepress system for use in the many printing branches of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world.

To meet these needs, one team of Witnesses began work in Brooklyn on a system that employed a large IBM mainframe computer as well as IBM text entry terminals and an Autologic corporation phototypesetter. Nearly a hundred miles away at Watchtower Farms near Wallkill, New York, the other team started work on an in-house-produced system they called MEPS.

In Brooklyn the team developed excellent programs, or software, using prin-

pally IBM equipment, or hardware. IBM later called this program the "Integrated Publishing System," or IPS. The respected *Seybold Report on Publishing Systems*, Volume 12, No. 1, September 13, 1982, commented:

"IBM is trying once again to increase its presence in the industry, and the vehicle by which it hopes to do so is an interesting package called the 'Integrated Publishing System' (IPS). IPS was not developed by IBM," the report acknowledges, but "[by] Watchtower, the publishing arm of the Jehovah's Witnesses, where it was created primarily for their internal use."

Like MEPS, IPS is a multilanguage system, expandable to handle any of the world's languages. Publications in over 90 languages have already been produced at Brooklyn headquarters using IPS. Because of its size and flexibility, some 140 terminals use the system with instant access to its data base of shared information.

In concluding its report, *Seybold* said: "We have nothing but praise for the enterprise, initiative and insightfulness of the Watchtower people. There are few today either ambitious enough or courageous enough to undertake such an application, especially virtually from scratch. . . . We don't know just how the credit should be parcelled out, but they all deserve a lot of kudos."

A Description of MEPS

In the meantime the Witness team at Watchtower Farms was involved in an even more challenging project—they were not using IBM's or any other commercial firm's computer hardware but were actually building all the principal equipment themselves. In the picture on page 21 you can see the various parts

* For more information on lithographic offset printing, see the article "Lithography—Today's Popular Printing Process," on pages 24-6 of the August 22, 1972, *Awake!*

of the equipment that make up MEPS. Most of these were built by Jehovah's Witnesses at Watchtower Farms.

The heart of the system is the MEPS computer, housed within a compact, handsome frame approximately 40 inches (1016 mm) high, 36 inches (914 mm) wide and 34 inches (864 mm) deep. Inside, hundreds of tiny silicon chips, with intricate electronic circuitry, provide the computer with the capacity to handle all the activity of four graphics terminals called work stations.

One of these work stations is also shown. It is composed of a familiar but enlarged typewriter keyboard and a graphics display screen. The display screen is approximately the size and shape of a page of the *Awake!* or the *Watchtower* magazine. The keyboard has its own 16-bit microcomputer to control the 182 keys. Each key has five shift levels that provide the equivalent of 910 keys to represent commands, characters or combination commands.

The work station is designed to perform two basic functions. The first function, or operation, is to enter written text. In other words, the terminal serves basically as a typewriter, only the entered text appears on the screen rather than on a piece of paper. If a printout of a document is needed, a nearby printer (similar to a high-speed typewriter) can be activated to type out on regular sheets of paper everything that has been entered. Such material can then be editorially read or proofread in the usual way.

After text entry
the article can
be composed into
pages at the same
work station, as
seen here



Remember now, MEPS is a *multilingual* system. Its uniqueness is in its ability to handle many different languages. By typing a simple command, this same keyboard can be electronically altered so that text can be entered in any desired language for which it has been programmed. There is essentially no limit to the number of languages that MEPS can be programmed to produce. Presently the system has been programmed for the entry of over 130 languages.

Let's look at the second basic function of the work station. After the written text in any language has been entered, by a few simple keystrokes the function of the work station can be altered so that a page of the publication can be composed right at the same work station. Any selected type face, or font, in the desired size can be assigned to any portion of the written text. Also, boxes can be drawn to identify the exact areas where text,

titles, pictures, charts and captions will appear. Then, when ready, the written text is "poured" into the text boxes and around areas reserved for illustrations. Note the sample of an *Awake!* page on the graphics display terminal as shown on the opposite page.

After a publication has been composed on the display terminal, how is it transferred from there in such a form that the printing plates for the offset presses can be produced? This is accomplished by the MEPS phototypesetter. It is housed in a 42-inch-high (1067 mm) by 33.5-inch-wide (851 mm) by 32-inch-deep (813 mm) cabinet that matches the rest of the MEPS hardware. The phototypesetter produces an image on photographic paper by using a tiny beam of light as a very small paint brush, much the same way as a television set produces an image on its screen. After the photographic paper is processed, it is photographed to produce film that, in turn, is used to make offset printing plates.

In type digitizing the visual image of the character (1) is picked up by the TV camera (2), converted into a configuration of dots on the TV screen (3), transmitted to the computer screen (4), fine tuned and then stored in the computer (5) for use

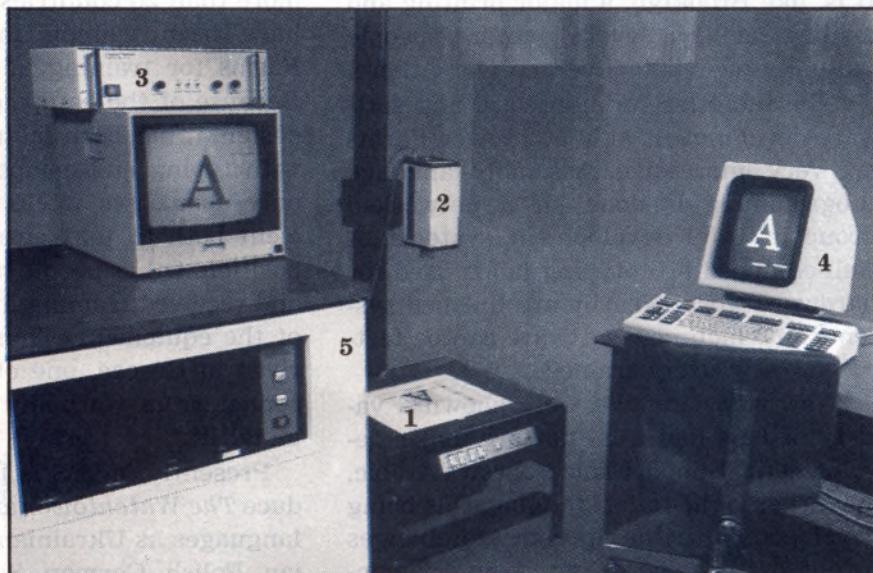
Designing Type With MEPS

To print in any given language, its alphabet must have various type faces, or fonts, such as bold or italic. On page 2 of this magazine, for instance, you will see a variety of type fonts. During the past two years, MEPS has been used to produce type fonts for over a hundred different languages. How are these type fonts made?

An artist first draws a letter, or character. Then that character is viewed by a TV camera that converts the letter into a configuration of tiny dots shown on a TV screen. The pattern of these dots is registered and then transmitted electronically to the MEPS computer. Afterward the character is edited on the MEPS screen by adding or detracting dots and the ready-to-use character is stored in the computer for use as needed.

An Impressive Accomplishment

At the time of writing, over 25 MEPS units and two phototypesetters had been



built. Already MEPS units have been installed in Germany, Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Britain, the Philippines and France. Soon units will also be shipped to many other countries throughout the world.

When MEPS arrived in Greece late last summer, the customs officials asked: "Who built this computer?"

"We did—Jehovah's Witnesses in America," they were told. But they didn't believe it. However, when a *Seybold Report* was shown to them, they were not only convinced but shook their heads in amazement. In the *Seybold* article last summer about MEPS, the writer explained:

"Visiting Watchtower Farms. We had a chance to see some of the new features that are under development when we visited Watchtower Farms. Watchtower Farms is, as the name implies, a farming center which produces food for its own consumption and for the Watchtower group in Brooklyn. But a lot of other Watchtower work goes on there as well. It is, like Brooklyn, a major printing and mailing facility. Several hundred people [actually over 800] live and work there.

"The facilities for hardware and software development at Watchtower Farms are very impressive. Assembly-language programming is done on a networked group of Intel development systems. A well-equipped prototyping lab is used for hardware work. Nearby are finished systems on which new software can be tested and new users trained.

"New software. We were shown a variety of new features that are under development. Support for Hebrew, Arabic, and other right-to-left languages is being developed, with the appropriate changes in cursor movement, etc., being demon-

strable at the time we visited. The system was explicitly designed with Watchtower's multi-lingual publishing activities in mind, and has quite a few language-related features, including a totally redefinable keyboard . . . In addition, the character repertoire is large enough potentially to cope with languages (like Japanese and Chinese) which have tens of thousands of separate characters.

"To handle the endless variations in hyphenation practice around the world, Watchtower has developed a questionnaire to elicit these rules which it sends to its offices in each country. Based on the questionnaire, it then develops the proper combination of tables, algorithms, and exception lists to cope with that language. . . .

"The typesetter project. The Watchtower Farms group has also put together a prototype typesetter."

Working With MEPS

For over a year now, Witnesses from more than 20 countries around the world have been coming in to Watchtower Farms for training in operating MEPS. Because of the equipment's simplicity of design, it has been taking people familiar with typing and composition procedures only about two weeks to become proficient both at text entry and page composition. Other people have stayed longer and received training in the maintenance of the equipment. Thus when MEPS arrived in Greece, one of the trained personnel from Germany traveled over to install it.

Presently MEPS is being used to produce *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* in such languages as Ukrainian, Arabic, Hungarian, Polish, German, Samoan, Greek and

Maltese, and, in time, will be used for publishing these journals in dozens of other languages. Bibles, books and booklets are also produced using the MEPS computer. In a large branch such as Germany, for instance, all the steps are done, from the entry of the translated German text into MEPS to the printing of the finished publication. Germany had been using a commercial phototypesetter until a MEPS typesetter became available.

Other branches that do not do their own printing send to a printing branch, such as Germany, a thin MEPS "floppy disk" onto which they have recorded their composed publication. There the disk is inserted into the MEPS equipment; the publication is phototypeset, printing plates are made, and the publication is printed and then shipped to the branch ordering it.

Today MEPS is reducing the time that it takes to get publications printed in other languages. Consider, for example, the eagerly awaited 256-page publication *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Soon after it was released in English in the summer of 1982, it was translated into Arabic. But the problem then was in getting the translated material ready for printing. How would it be done, since the hot-metal process had almost been phased out?

It would take many weeks to type the translated text on a linotype machine and then compose the thin metal slugs into pages. Opportunely the MEPS had just been programmed for the right-to-left Arabic language. So in two weeks last autumn the entire book was typed into the MEPS system. Then, on the MEPS terminal, it was composed and prepared for final proofreading and subsequent printing. The Arabic Witness who oper-

ated MEPS explained one way it made the work so much faster and easier.

"Arabic letters are written in four different ways depending upon where they appear in a word or sentence," he said. "If a letter appears at the beginning of a word, it is written one way, if in the middle of a word, it is written another way, if at the end of the word, yet another way, and if the letter stands by itself in the sentence, it is written in yet a fourth way. An Arabic linotype must have different keys for all of the scores of different variations of the 22 Arabic letters that are written in the four different ways. But MEPS was programmed so that only one keystroke is needed for each Arabic letter. The machine automatically determines, by the position of that letter in the word or sentence, the correct way to write it. As you can imagine, this makes the entering of text on MEPS much easier and faster."

MEPS is indeed making publishing in many languages easier. It is unique in that it was not developed for commercial use, even though many commercial businesses have been impressed with its capabilities. As time goes on, MEPS will no doubt be used to a much greater extent in preparing Bible literature to help people of all nations and languages to learn about Jehovah God and his Kingdom government.

As this magazine was being prepared, the Watchtower Society decided to phase in the use of MEPS for its publishing system in Brooklyn. This will lay the basis for a completely compatible publishing system between the Brooklyn headquarters and all of the publishing branches around the world. The next issue of this magazine will be composed into final pages on MEPS.

From Our Readers

Practical Jokes

Many thanks for your article "Practical Jokes—How Funny Are They?" (November 8, 1983) I once wanted to frighten my mother. As she came from the living room I scared her, causing her to fall down. For several seconds she did not move. I could only hear her heavy breathing. I knelt down beside her and helped revive her, but every part of her body was trembling. Now I was the one that was frightened!

K. P., Germany

Safeguard Your Hearing

Your article "Safeguard Your Gift of Hearing" (August 22, 1983) really touched me. I have a problem with my ears and I thank you for the proper counsel in this article. I now realize, even more so, how valuable this gift of hearing is.

V. A., Greece

Valérie

The article on Valérie (January 8, 1984) brought tears to my eyes. The love and commitment of her parents, the determination to learn and overcome on the part of Valérie, the understanding shown by her brother, Laurent, plus their togetherness in worship is what the *real* meaning of family is all about. I cried in joy for their family but in sadness for those who do not have such a loving atmosphere in which to grow.

M. B., Pennsylvania

Attending School

Your article "Young People Ask . . . Do I Have to Go to School?" (January 8, 1984) brings out that many youths do not want to go to school because of pressure. I think that Christian parents should be more sensitive to their children. These children have the added pressures of not participating in school activities such as celebrating holidays. This makes them subject to much ridicule and could be damaging to their mental health. I have seen many children very upset by ridicule, yet not able to tell their parents because the parents had no compassion or understanding for the feelings of their children.

L. L., Michigan

We agree that parents need to show understanding and empathy and to strengthen their children to cope with such problems in attending school. But it is not wise to try to shield children from all unpleasant situations. It is actually good for youths to learn to stand firm for right principles even if this means putting up with ridicule. Such will help them to face greater tests in the future. Please see the articles in "Young People Ask . . ." entitled "Why Won't the Kids Let Me Alone?" (February 8, 1984) and "How Can I Make Kids Stop Picking on Me?" (February 22, 1984)—ED.

Romance Novels

I was particularly pleased with the article "Young People Ask . . . Are Romance Novels Harmless Reading?" (November 8, 1983) because my mother is always reading them and leaving her work undone.

U. B., Germany

Watching the World



Children's Plight

● The UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) annual report, called *The State of the World's Children 1984*, was chilling—40,000 children under age five die worldwide each day! The grim report says: "For every child who has died, another has been left blind or deaf or crippled or retarded." The report recalls the 1974 World Food Conference prediction "that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition." The reality, continues the report, is "that tonight, more children will go to bed hungry, their capacities stunted, than on the night those words were spoken."

Costly El Niño

● The cost of damage caused by the massive weather system called El Niño (The Child) in 1982-83 has been calculated—a staggering \$8.65 billion! El Niño, a thick slab of warm Pacific Ocean water that shattered normal weather patterns, crippled continents from Asia and

Australia to North and South America and Africa. No one can put a price on the terrible loss of human life by floods, fires and starvation left in its savage wake. *National Geographic* labels El Niño as "one of the most destructive climatic events in modern history."

Cholesterol Findings

● Medical researchers said they have produced "the first study to demonstrate conclusively" that a reduction in blood cholesterol levels lowers the risk of heart attacks. The ten-year, \$150 million (U.S.) study of 3,806 men, aged 35 to 59 who had high levels of cholesterol in their blood but were otherwise healthy, was sponsored by the U.S. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. In the study, a drug and a diet were used to lower blood cholesterol levels, but, according to the researchers, diet is the preferred way. By this means, some people may experience a reduction of 10 to 15 percent in their cholesterol. The report recommends a diet low in animal fat.

Finally Convinced

● "The evidence that linked smoking to heart disease ap-

peared equivocal to me last month," writes Dr. Frank A. Oski in an article in *The New York Times*. "Now the same data appear overwhelmingly convincing." What changed his mind and made him give up smoking, which he had formerly promoted? At 51 years of age he had a heart attack. Giving up smoking would greatly increase his chance of living longer. But was it easy to stop? "Sure," says Dr. Oski. "Here is all you have to do. First, experience a severe crushing pain under your breastbone as you finish a cigarette. Next, have yourself admitted to a coronary-care unit and stripped of your clothing and other belongings. Finally, remain in the unit at absolute bed rest for four days while smoking is prohibited. This broke my habit. See if it works for you."

Biblically Illiterate

● President Reagan pronounced 1983 the "Year of the Bible," but recent Gallup surveys have shown that only 15 percent of the people in the United States read the Bible daily, while 24 percent never read it at all. Gallup polls have also found that 30 percent did not know Jesus' birthplace, 35 percent did not know how many apostles he had and 45 percent knew fewer than five of the ten commandments.

Rifle "Metamorphosis"

● "In the past two years or so, a substantial proportion of America's rifles and shotguns have been undergoing a metamorphosis into combat-oriented weapons," writes J. H. Williams, professor of history at Indiana State University, in *The Christian Century* magazine. Dr. Williams claims that weapons once designed specifically for hunt-

ing are being transformed into weapons "manufactured for killing human beings," and that most of these weapons and gear "are readily available to all but the obviously insane, and much of it can be purchased by mail." He sees this as an ominous trend and comments: "The potential for political or social havoc inherent in the availability of these weapons is staggering."

More Time on TV

● Television viewing occupies about one third of the year for an average American household, according to the latest survey done by A. C. Nielsen. The average family sat in front of the TV for seven hours and two minutes each day in 1983. This is a 14-minute increase over the previous year's record. Cable television and videocassette recorders are identified as main factors contributing to the increase. Back in the early 1950's the average household watched TV for four and a half hours a day.

Religion on TV

● "Religious programming has proliferated enormously in the past decade," reports *The Plain Dealer*. A two-week survey in 40 U.S. cities turned up 18,845 religious programs broadcast during that period. "These included everything from worship services to game shows, cartoons, variety shows and even soap operas with a religious theme," says the paper. "Analysis of the programs found that characters were disproportionately male, white and middle-class. Characters who worked for the church were overwhelmingly male; so were the wealthy and the powerful." Solicitations for money were also common. "During an average hour, viewers are asked to donate or buy

products valued at \$189.52," the article states. "Programs featuring a preacher or a revival meeting plead the most; they ask for an average of \$328.78 an hour."

Japanese Reading Habits

● Japanese employees spend an average of about an hour a day reading, and that time is divided almost evenly between books and magazines, reveals a Japanese labor union survey. Male workers read 3.4 magazines and 2.2 books per month, while female workers read 2.6 magazines and 2.1 books. And employees spend an average of ¥2,500 (\$10.66, U.S.) a month on reading material, reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. The Japanese are among the most avid readers in today's world.

Counting Injuries

● Player-injury reports have been appearing in the sports pages of some U.S. newspapers during the football season in the last six or seven years. For any given week, says *The New York Times*, "there may be more than 300 players, catalogued with more than 400 injuries" among the 28 teams of the National Football League. But why is such information provided? "Its primary function, it seems, is to be fair to gamblers." Evidently it is vitally important for those who engage in betting on the games to know who are playing and who are injured. "Before the reports were in the papers . . . there were guys making money by selling the information that they somehow obtained," says a regular bettor. "The N.F.L. doesn't like it if some gamblers have an advantage over others. So they give us all an equal shot," he says.

Who Works Least?

● The statistics office of the EEC (European Economic Community) studied working hours of industrial employees in its member nations and found that Belgians have the shortest workweek, averaging 35.6 hours. "Next were Italy (38.1), Luxembourg (38.9), France (39), the Netherlands (40.6), West Germany (40.8), Britain (41.3) and Ireland (41.4)," reports *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*. However, the picture changes when time off for holidays is subtracted from average hours worked per year. For example, the workers with the most holidays are the Germans, with 29.4 days off a year. The British average 22 days and the Swiss 21. American workers have only 15 days off a year, less than anybody in the EEC.

Suicide Payment

● A suicide attempt in 1977 has paid off for a New York man who threw himself in front of an incoming subway train. The man, with a long history of emotional problems, lost an arm and a leg when one of the cars ran over him before the train stopped. Sued for negligence, the New York City Transit Authority offered a \$650,000 settlement rather than go to trial. Why? Because the man's lawyer contended that the motorman had shown a degree of negligence by not stopping sooner. Under current law, juries can award damages according to the percentage of fault on each side. Fearing a large award similar to other recent cases, the Transit Authority opted for what they considered "fair" and "favorable" from their point of view. The man again managed to hurl himself in front of a moving train in 1982, but no suit resulted as he was not seriously injured.

Police Escort

● Unable to clear their city of prostitutes by arresting them, police in San Jose, California, have hit upon another tactic—escort them. "It's really hard for them to make a date while we're standing there listening," officer Denise Pereira of the Street Crimes Unit said. As reported in New York's *Daily News*, the strategy has reduced the downtown prostitute population from 30 to 5. The street-walkers have tried to evade their police escorts by jogging, climbing over fences and hopping into cabs for a ride around the block—even skipping so as not to appear to be running from the police. But the police have kept up, following prostitutes at times for up to six hours, trying to "starve" them out of town

by keeping them from making money at their "profession."

Calendar Fad

● One of the hottest selling calendars this year featured beefcake—photographic displays of muscular male bodies in skimpy clothing. Who are buying these provocative calendars? All types of women are, from teenagers to grandmothers, *Family Weekly* magazine reports. Why? Dr. Arlene Kagle, a psychologist, explains: "Seen in the best possible light, beefcake calendars are letting women show as much interest in men and their bodies as men have always shown in women and their bodies." But she adds that in the worst possible light "women are starting to see *men* purely as sex objects in some cases."

Bizarre Animal

● Called "one of God's oddest-looking creatures," the naked mole rat of North Africa amazes scientists because it has "one of the most bizarre social behavior patterns of any mammal in the animal kingdom," reports *The New York Times*. It behaves like an insect! This seldom-seen hairless rodent lives its entire life in underground burrows that are connected by extensive tunnels, and has a social life that is similar to that of bees, wasps, ants and termites. The unique creature, shaped like a three-inch-long (7.5 cm) sausage with legs, tail and protruding walruslike front teeth, has won the affection of those scientists who study its bizarre behavior.

Picture This! • Called "one of God's other people," this angelic-looking creature, "the woman clothed with the sun," is said to stand at the gates of heaven. A figure of justice, she is often shown holding scales, a sword, and a balance. She is also depicted as a woman holding a book and a balance scale.

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