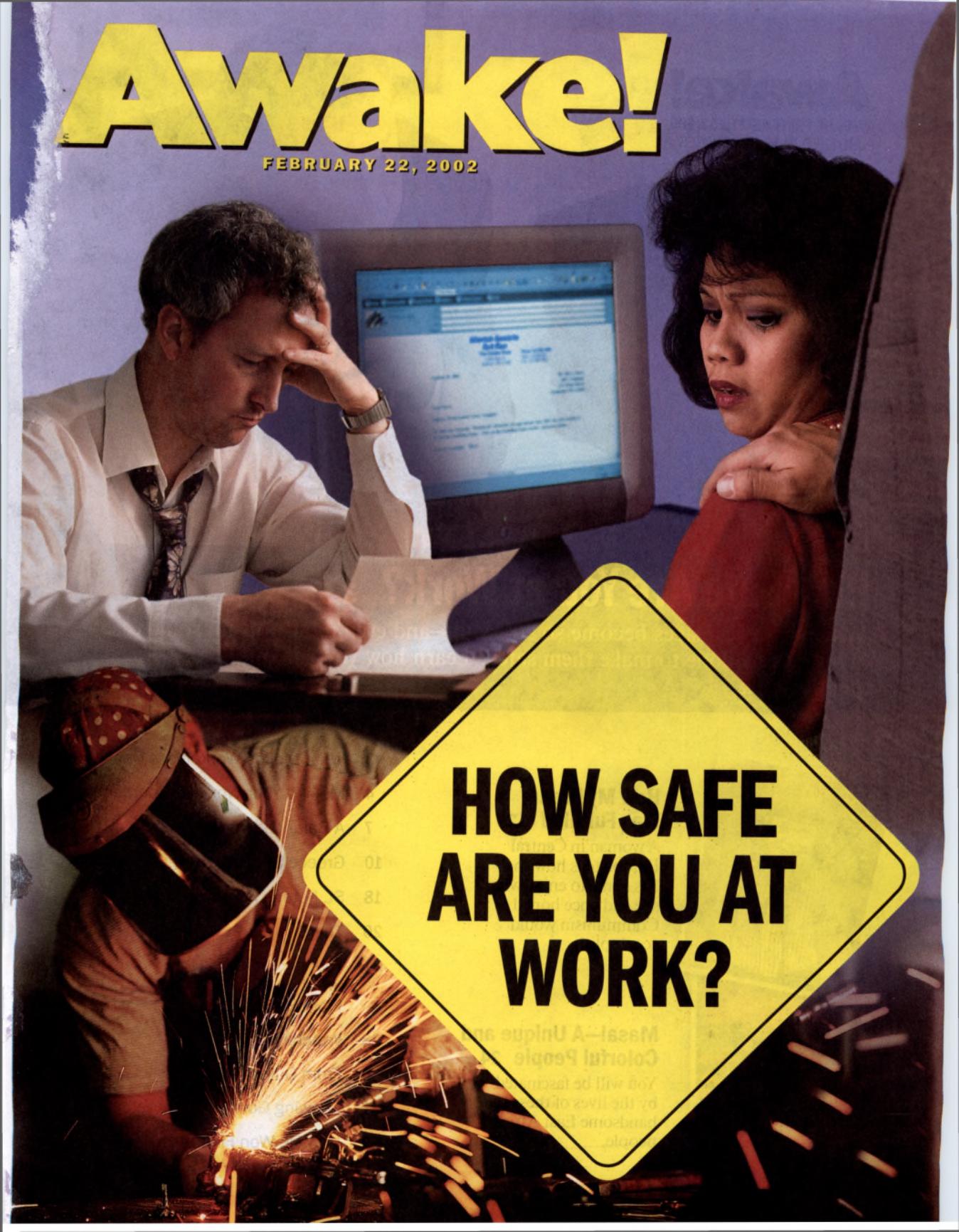


Awake!

FEBRUARY 22, 2002



A composite image featuring three scenes: a man in a white shirt and tie sitting at a desk, looking stressed with his hand to his forehead; a woman with dark hair looking concerned; and a person welding, with sparks flying. A yellow diamond-shaped sign with a black border and the text "HOW SAFE ARE YOU AT WORK?" is overlaid on the bottom right.

**HOW SAFE
ARE YOU AT
WORK?**



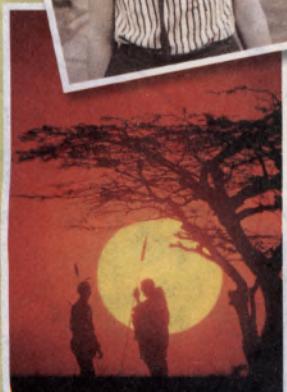
How Safe Are You at Work? 3-9

Why have workplaces become so stressful—and even dangerous in some cases? What can be done to make them safer? Learn how you can attain a balanced view of work.



How My Dream Was Fulfilled 12

A woman in Central Europe tells how she has come to enjoy what she had once hoped Communism would accomplish.



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What Makes Workplaces Dangerous

"The workplace kills more people than die on the roads."

That is the bold heading on a poster distributed by WorkCover, a safety organization in New South Wales, Australia.

DEATH-CAUSING accidents, of course, are only part of the problem. Millions annually suffer serious, even life-altering, injuries at their places of employment. Many others die prematurely because of on-the-job exposure to dangerous substances or as a result of stress at work.

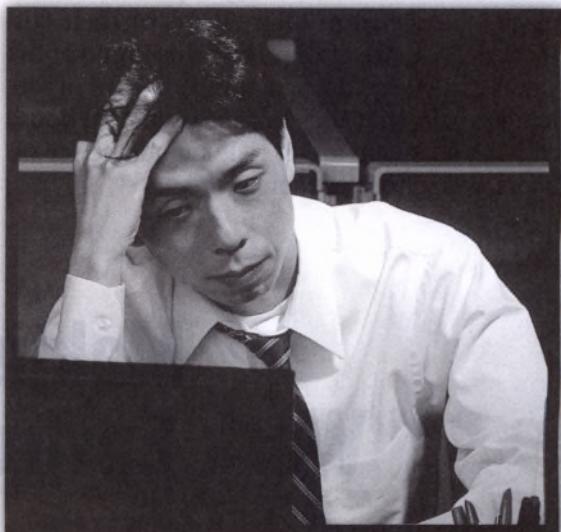
Since work-related death and serious injury occur in almost all sectors of industry and commerce, it is appropriate to ask: Just how safe are you at your place of employment? What situations there may threaten your health and life?

Pressure-Cooker Environment

Tremendous pressure is often placed on workers to be productive. In Japan the term *karoshi*—"death from overwork"—was first used in the compensation claims filed by bereaved families. According to a survey there years ago, 40 percent of Japanese office workers feared possible death from overwork. A lawyer specializing in such claims estimated that there were "at least 30,000 victims of *karoshi* in Japan every year."

The police in Japan have suggested that work-related problems are a key factor in the increase in suicide among 50- to 59-year-olds. According to the book *The Violence-Prone Workplace*, one court held an employer liable for the suicide of an employee who was beset with work-related worries.

Australia's newspaper *The Canberra Times* said that 'Americans have overtaken the Japa-



nese in putting in the longest working hours in the world.' Thus, news stories with headlines such as "Long Hours Are Working People to Death" tell about fatigued workers, such as ambulance drivers, pilots, construction and transport workers, and those working night shifts, being killed on the job.

As companies go through the process of restructuring and downsizing to remain financially profitable, greater pressure to produce is placed on employees. The *British Medical Journal* reported that downsizing has a negative effect on the health of employees.

Violence in Workplaces

Overworked and stressed employees are not just a risk to themselves. A British survey

found that many office workers spend much of their working day in a state of irritation with colleagues and that such conflict often triggers violent reactions.

"About 15 American workers are murdered on the job each week," states *Business Week* magazine. *Harvard Business Review* comments: "Workplace violence is no manager's favorite subject. But the fact remains that every year hundreds of employees assault or even kill their colleagues."

On the other hand, many experience workplace violence from their clients or their customers. An Australian criminology report states that some doctors are so fearful of violent assaults that they take an escort on house calls. Others who are at risk include police officers and schoolteachers.

Another form of workplace violence is emotional abuse, which is recognized by the International Labor Organization as psychological violence. A major form of this abuse is bullying.

Professor Robert L. Veninga of the University of Minnesota, U.S.A., reports that "stress and its resulting illnesses impact workers in almost every corner of the world." He noted that "the central problem according to the 1993 World Labor Report by the United Nations' International Labor Organization, is that stress stems from impersonal, ever-changing, and often hostile workplaces."

So the question is, What can employers and employees do to make their workplace safer? This will be considered in the next article.

Making Your Work Environment Safe

DESPITE laws on occupational health and safety, injury and death at work still constitute a major problem. Obviously, then, safety in the workplace cannot simply be legislated. Employers and employees must take a measure of responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

Therefore, all in a work force should wisely take a careful look at their work environment and their work habits. Have you, for example, noted whether your workplace is really safe? Are you working with any toxic substances? If so, are you adequately protected? Are you constantly under stress? Do you accept work

Awake!®

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

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Clean up oil spills thoroughly

schedules that breach legally established limits or hours?

Answers to questions such as these might reveal much about how safe you are at work.

Conscious of Dangers

Trying to maintain an unreasonable work schedule can be dangerous. After examining the results of a survey of 3.6 million workers and 37,200 workplaces, Professor Lawson Savery of Australia's Curtin University, along with a researcher, published a research paper entitled "*Long Hours at Work: Are They Dangerous and Do People Consent to Them?*" The answer to both parts of that question was, in effect, yes.

Indeed, tired workers are less efficient and make more mistakes. Professor Savery noted, as reported by Australia's newspaper *The Sun-Herald*: "Many companies fostered workaholism and actively sought out and rewarded workaholics." The consequences are potentially devastating. Perhaps nowhere is this problem as evident as in the transport industry, where drivers may be encouraged or even forced to drive for long hours without breaks—illegal in some lands.

Poor work habits, which may include lack of tidiness and cleanliness, pose another hazard. Leaving tools strewn on the floor or live electric wires exposed often leads to accidents, even fatalities. The same can be said of ignoring safety precautions when using power tools and machinery. Another cause of injury and death is failing to clean up spilled fluids—especially toxic ones. Many injuries have occurred when workers have slipped on oily or wet floors. So it might be said that the first law of good work is to be clean and orderly.

Yet, many are tempted to ignore safety procedures. The journal *Monthly Labor Review* noted: "Work pressure may lead to perceptions that short cuts are necessary to meet demands." So some may reason regarding a safety regulation, 'It has never caused any problem when I ignored it.' Addressing this issue, one experienced factory manager noted: "One of the worst things that you can do

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at work is ignore safety procedures and get away with it!" Why? Because this fosters overconfidence and carelessness, leading to more accidents.

The explosion of the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine in 1986 is often described as "the world's worst nuclear accident." What went wrong? A report on the disaster speaks of a "catalogue of reckless operating procedures" and "the repeated flouting of safety precautions."

Both employer and employee can cooperate in foreseeing potential safety hazards. A wise Bible proverb says: "Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself." (Proverbs 22:3) Yes, the wise one observes what could prove to be a dangerous situation and looks for ways to protect himself and others.

When employers do this, they benefit, and so do their employees. For example, a company that redesigned their office to avoid "sick building syndrome" found that before long, productivity was up and staff satisfaction levels had improved dramatically. It was also found that fewer people were out on sick leave. Such consideration for the health of others not only makes for a more pleasant atmosphere for employer and employee but, as seen in this case, can also make good sense economically.

As noted in the preceding article, violence has spilled over into the workplace. What can you do to protect yourself?

Steps That Can Be Taken

Even minor incidents of aggressive behavior at places of work have been found to develop into serious cases of harassment. *Harvard Business Review* gives this sobering advice: "To address workplace violence, be aware that people who commit small acts of aggression often go on to commit larger ones."

A woman may not intend to invite the attention of workmates, yet if her manner of dress, speech, and conduct is not modest, oth-

ers may get the impression that she has loose morals. In recent times, behavior not intended to attract improper attention has sometimes resulted in serious problems, including stalking, rape, or even murder. So be conscious of how your dress and conduct are affecting others. Heed the Bible advice: 'Adorn yourselves in well-arranged dress, *with modesty and soundness of mind.*'—1 Timothy 2:9.

The *Monthly Labor Review* identified another potentially hazardous situation, noting: "Concerns arise regarding employees who are working alone at night in desolate areas." So consider: Is it wise to accept the potential dangers that often come with working alone, especially late at night? Are monetary rewards really worth such a risk?

It is also vital to consider how we react to irritating and hostile behavior of stressed fellow workers. What can be done to defuse a potentially dangerous situation? A Bible proverb advises: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up." (Proverbs 15:1) Yes, by being kind and respectful in your approach, you may do much to relieve tension and avoid conflict.

In today's pressure-cooker work environment, irritating and hostile behavior is commonplace. While it may appear to be directed against us, the person may simply be venting his own pent-up stress and frustration. We may simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. So how we respond is important. It can either defuse or aggravate the situation.

Perhaps, though, there are genuine differences of viewpoint. The book *Resolving Conflicts at Work* makes the helpful observation: "When we are in conflict, . . . rarely do we communicate at a deep level what we really, honestly feel." What may be the reason? The book went on to note: "Our conflicts have the capacity to confuse and hypnotize us, and we come to believe there is no way out other than battle."

What is the answer? LISTEN! The book quoted above observes: "By genuinely listen-

A mild answer can defuse a tense situation

ing to people with whom we disagree . . . , we can let go of our emotional investment in the continuation of the fighting and discover solutions." This is good advice for preventing disagreements or misunderstandings from developing into major conflicts.

Wisely, therefore, use a common-sense approach to safety. This would include being diligent in following local safety regulations. Doing this can go a long way toward making the workplace safer.

It can also be said that the attitude we have toward life, work, and leisure time can have an effect on what sort of work we choose and our attitude toward safety. The following article can help us make good choices in this regard.



A Balanced View of Work

A DEDICATED military officer worked through his lunch break in order to complete work urgently needed by his high-ranking superior officer. When his colleagues returned from lunch, they found him slumped over the work on his desk—dead.

Less than two hours later, his fellow officers were stunned when their superior telephoned and said: "It is a shame about ——, but I need a replacement by tomorrow morning!" It caused onlookers to wonder, Did the work performed by the officer constitute his only value to his superior?

This true experience highlights a reality—that a person's worth is often measured exclusively by his or her usefulness to his employer. This might lead one to ask: Do I live to

work, or do I work to live? What aspects of my life am I sacrificing for my job?

Making Wise Choices

Two of what some consider the most important decisions in life are often made impulsively—the choice of a marriage mate and the selection of employment. Both employment and marriage were once regarded as something permanent. So careful consideration was given to the selection of each. Often, advice from older friends or parents was sought.

These days, however, many seem to choose marriage mates almost exclusively on the basis of physical attractiveness, with the reservation that if things don't work out, another partner can be sought. Similarly, many select employment essentially on its perceived glamour,



Under God's Kingdom, people will enjoy work that is both safe and rewarding

without consideration of possible negatives. Or at least negative possibilities are quickly dismissed with the thought, 'I'll be able to handle them.'

Sadly, women in poorer countries frequently respond to enticing advertisements for jobs that promise a glamorous life elsewhere. Upon their arrival in the other country, however, they are often sent to brothels, where their existence as prostitutes is worse than the life that they had before. This appalling kind of modern slavery is a "scourge that won't go away," according to a *World Press Review* article.

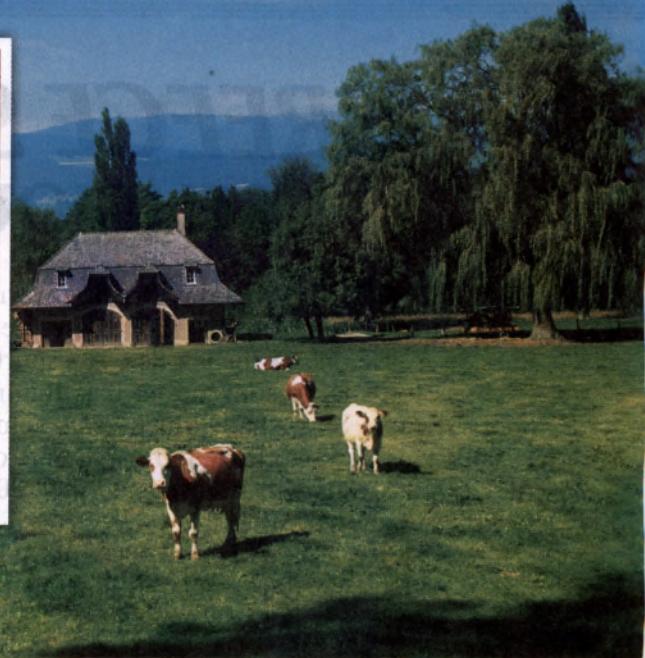
Can people also be lured into accepting a legitimate job offer and then end up in a situation in which they feel enslaved? This very thing has happened! Some companies, for example, offer remarkable luxuries for the benefit of their workers. These may include dining rooms for use by family and friends, free car service and dry cleaning, dentists on site, free use of gymnasiums, and subsidized dining at expensive restaurants.

"One company has even paid for a dating agency for its overstretched staff," reports journalist Richard Reeves. But beware! He explains: "These firms introduce schemes to make your life easier, on just one condition—that you hand it over to them; that you work 18-hour days and at weekends, eat, exercise, play, even sleep in the office in the service of their profits."

Choosing a Better Alternative

An ancient proverb reads: "A live dog is better off than a dead lion." (Ecclesiastes 9:4) Such a proverb raises the question, Is my job worth my life or my well-being? In answer, many have reappraised their situation and have found a way to provide adequately for themselves—as well as for their family if they have one—and also to live a happy, meaningful life.

True, doing this often calls for modesty and may require deciding what one's *needs* actually are, rather than what one's nonessential *wants* are. Those who are seeking position and pres-



tige may reject more moderate choices and even consider foolish those who choose them. But what really is important in life? Have you stopped lately to consider this?

Wise King Solomon, who wrote the above-quoted proverb, had achieved far more in a material way than perhaps any other human. But summing up what is truly important, he wrote under divine inspiration: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

At the same time, Solomon valued work. "There is nothing better," he wrote, "than that [a man] should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work." (Ecclesiastes 2:24) Jesus Christ, the Greater Solomon, similarly values work, as does his heavenly Father. "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working," Jesus explained.—John 5:17; Matthew 12:42.

Yet, presently the human life span is limited. (Psalm 90:10) But Christ knew that lasting life on earth will be enjoyed under Kingdom rule,

for which he taught his followers to pray. That is why he urged in his famous Sermon on the Mount: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:9, 10, 33.

Regarding life under the rule of that Kingdom, the Bible promises: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; . . . the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full."—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

What a marvelous prospect—to enjoy indefinitely lasting life that includes meaningful rewarding work! A serious evaluation of our own situation may reveal that we need to reconsider certain aspects of our work today to avoid possible dangers that can adversely affect the possibility of our enjoying "the real life"—future life under God's Kingdom. (1 Timothy 6:19) So may we show in our work, or whatever we are doing, that we have respect for the One who gave us life.—Colossians 3:23.

GREECE SUPPORTS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

FOR THE FIRST TIME, the Greek government last year gave Jehovah's Witnesses permission to use one of the jewels of its sports facilities for a large convention. It is the indoor Olympic Sportshall, which seats some 20,000. This air-conditioned arena is part of the complex that will be used for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

Significantly, in 1963 and in 1988, the Witnesses had arranged to use large sporting facilities in Athens for their conventions. Both

times, however, the authorities yielded to threats by the Greek Orthodox Church and refused to let the Witnesses use them.

A Different Outcome

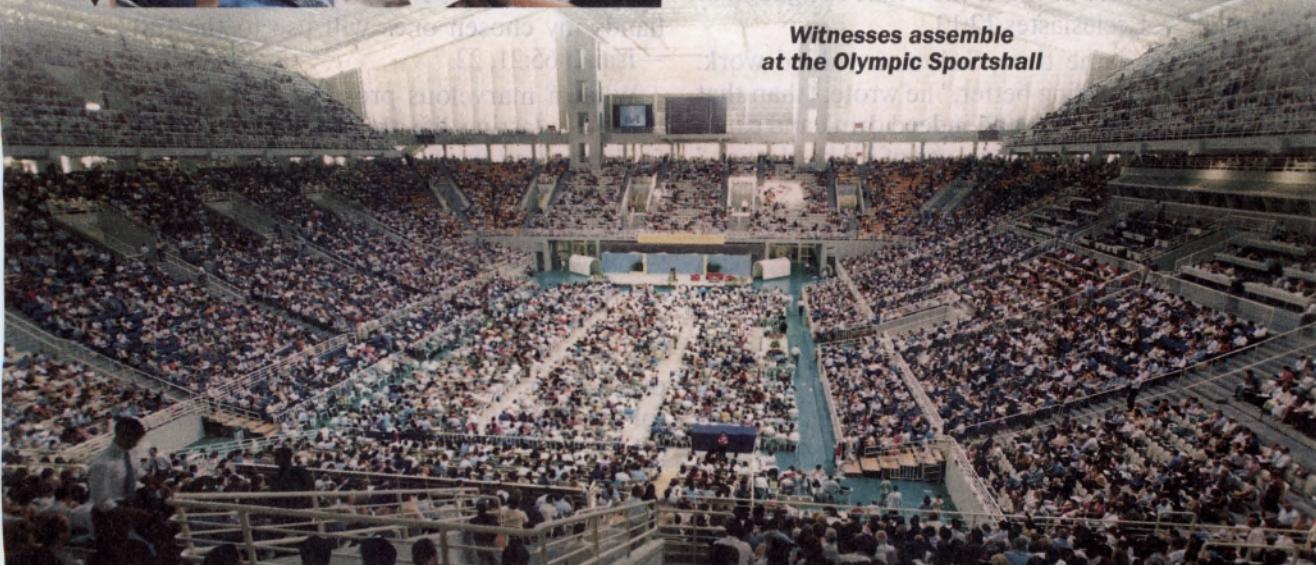
In February 2001, the Witnesses applied for use of the Olympic Sportshall—one of the few indoor facilities large enough to accommodate their numbers. But they wondered whether history would repeat itself. As feared, the initial response of the authorities was negative.

Immediately, though, high-ranking officials who have a reputation for being fair-minded and unprejudiced were approached. Would they be willing to uphold the constitutional rights of worship and peaceable assembly? Would they stand up to religious pressure? They did, and a new decision overturned the previous rejection. This opened the way for the Witnesses to schedule their convention at the Sportshall for July 27-29, 2001.

▲ Harry Bilis



**Witnesses assemble
at the Olympic Sportshall**



At the same time, authorities granted permission for the Witnesses to use another government-controlled indoor sporting facility, the Palais de Sport in Thessalonica.

Intense Pressure Fails

As the opening day of the convention in Athens approached, unsettling questions persisted: Would authorities abide by their commitment despite pressure from the Orthodox clergy? And would the Witnesses be able to enjoy their gathering without interference from lawless elements?

The Orthodox Church did not abandon its age-old tactics of trying to exercise its influence to disrupt the convention. TV stations revealed that Orthodox clergymen had demanded that no mention of the convention be made. In the end, however, the efforts of the church proved unsuccessful.

Ironically, the Orthodox Church has accused the Witnesses of being a secretive religion. But it was actually the church that tried to keep the public from learning what was happening inside the Sportshall. Happily, courageous newscasters from the media did not give in to clergy pressure. They provided extensive and fair coverage of the convention.

Moreover, thousands of delegates shared in informing the public about the convention and talking with them about their beliefs. Wherever they went, the delegates were identified by their yellow convention badges. Many people who were not Jehovah's Witnesses were invited to the convention and responded, swelling the final day's attendance in the Sportshall to 15,760. On the last two weekends of July, conventions at the Palais de Sport in Thessalonica had a combined attendance of 13,173.

Observers Were Impressed

When an army of 2,604 volunteers—all Jehovah's Witnesses—swarmed the Sportshall, cleaning, painting, and preparing for the convention, arena managers said: "We came here

to see with our own eyes something that has never happened in this place." One person remarked: "You should use this facility every year in order to give it a complete overhaul."

Andreas Vardakis, public affairs director of the Sportshall, was impressed. "You people have adorned this facility," he said. "We do have the personnel to run the place. But your participation was the catalyst that made this convention a success."

During the convention, after realizing that he didn't need to send men to control the peaceful crowd, a police director exclaimed: "I have never seen such politeness and order!"

A Convention Highlight

In the concluding talk of the convention, it was announced that the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religions had recognized Jehovah's Witnesses as "a known religion." Moreover, the Ministry had given official recognition to the national headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Athens. The government document said in part:

"[The] Christian Jehovah's Witnesses are considered by the administration as a known religion . . . with all legal consequences resulting therefrom. The said article of the Constitution protects the freedom of worship, the method and means of expression of worship, and free choice concerning the method of administration and organization of each church or religious meeting. This protection clearly extends to the organization premises and facilities of Marousi [the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses as] a sacred and consecrated place, dedicated to the worship of God. Such facilities are called Bethel, i.e., 'House of God.'"

Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as everyone else in favor of religious freedom, are grateful for these developments. Their prayers are that as a result, people will be able to carry on their Christian lives 'calmly and quietly, with full godly devotion and seriousness.'—1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

How My Dream Was Fulfilled

AS TOLD BY ALENA ŽITNÍKOVÁ

When I was growing up in Czechoslovakia, a Soviet satellite country, our family longed to see the peaceful world that Communism promised. However, Communism's dream of creating a happy, united society ended when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Let me describe how in another way my dream was fulfilled.

ON September 12, 1962, I was born into a family of devoted Communists who lived in Horní Benešov, a village about 185 miles from Prague. My father trusted Communist ideals and lived according to them. He also brought up my two brothers and my sister and me according to these ideals. He taught us that with honest labor and decent living, we could help create a better society. He considered Communism the best form of government and actively supported it.

Father often attended meetings where Communism was extolled. He despised religion because of the hypocrisy of the churches, and we were taught and came to believe that there is no God. Father believed that in time, when all people were provided with a home and enough food, they would become better people and live in peace. It was a beautiful prospect that I heard much about as I was growing up. I believed everything that Father taught us, and I too was determined to support Communism.

As a small girl, I prepared to become a pioneer, as members of the popular Communist youth organization Young Pioneers were called. Pioneers were urged to develop good qualities and to be patriotic. When I was nine, I took my solemn pioneer oath and



When I was ten, shortly after I joined the Communist Young Pioneers

was given a red scarf to wear. I was also allowed to wear a formal pioneer dress uniform on special occasions. I tried to be a good pioneer. When I heard schoolmates using vulgarity, I reproved them, reminding them that pioneer girls don't speak that way.

In time, however, I began to realize that many who claimed to be Communists did not support Communist ideals. Instead of resisting the human inclination to be greedy and envious, they stole public property. Many, although urging others to work for the good of the people, would not do so themselves. In fact, the saying became

popular: "He who does not steal, steals from his own family." I began to ask myself, 'Why is there so much hypocrisy? Why do so few work to support Communism's fine ideals? Why are efforts so unsuccessful?"

A Time of Reexamination

When I was in my mid-teens, I spent part of my summer vacations with Alena, a schoolmate. One evening an adult friend of Alena's named Tanya came to see us. "I must speak to you about something very important," she said. "I have become convinced that God exists." We were amazed that she had reached such a conclusion. After recovering from our surprise, we inundated her with questions. "What proofs do you have?" "What does he look like?" "Where does he live?" "Why doesn't he do anything?"

Tanya handled our questions one by one. She explained to us that it was God's original purpose that the earth be a paradise home for mankind, and she described how this purpose would eventually be fulfilled. When she showed us from the Bible the promises of a clean earth inhabited by wholesome, healthy people who cared for one another, it occurred to me that these were similar to the promises that I believed in. But I was sure that if Father was told that these marvelous things would be achieved by means of God's Kingdom—not by Communism—he wouldn't be pleased.

You see, once when I was perhaps six or seven, a neighbor girl took me to a church, without my parents' knowledge. The priest narrated a Bible story, and I liked it so much that I wanted to get more information. I even obtained some religious reading material. When I told my parents, they firmly forbade me to go to church again, and they destroyed everything I had brought home. To make matters perfectly clear, Father gave me a whipping.

After that, God was never mentioned in our home. I came to believe that only primitive, uneducated people believed in God and that religion was a human invention. At school

we were taught that since there are phenomena we cannot understand, people had simply invented the idea of God. But now here was Tanya, an intelligent woman—a schoolteacher, in fact—and she believed in God! 'There must be something to it!' I thought.

Tanya spoke so persuasively that we were convinced that she believed what she said. So we asked, "Tanya, what has convinced you that there really is a God?"

"The Bible," she answered. "All the questions you have asked are answered in the Bible. Would you like to understand it better?"

I knew that my parents would not be pleased if I began to study the Bible. Yet, I so much desired to learn more. So Tanya gave me the address of Ludmila, one of Jehovah's Witnesses who lived near our home in Horní Benešov. As I examined with Ludmila God's promises of an earthly paradise, I would ask myself, 'What guarantee do I have that these will come true?'

Ludmila said that I needed to learn more about God to be able to believe in him and his promises. From our study I became convinced that the earth and the many complex forms of life upon it are not the product of blind chance. I had to acknowledge that there must be a highly intelligent Creator. I realized how logical the Bible is when it says: "Every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God."—Hebrews 3:4.

I wanted my family to learn these things. Yet, I suspected that they wouldn't be interested, so I put off telling them. Then, one day, among my personal things, my mother found a page that had fallen out of an old worn Bible that I had been given. My parents were very disturbed.

Discussion With Father

When Father's suspicion that I had contact with Jehovah's Witnesses was confirmed, he invited me for a long walk. "You must immediately break all relations with these people," he urged. "If you do not, I will not be able to go on serving as our village mayor. You will

spoil my career. I will have to leave the office and return to the factory where I used to work. You will bring shame on the whole family."

"But, Father, the Bible is a reasonable book, and it has excellent advice on living," I pleaded.

"No, Alenka," Father explained, "I never needed either the Bible or God for my happiness. I made everything with my own hands. Nobody helped me. I am surprised that you can believe such nonsense! You must live a real life, get married, and have children, and then you will see that you can be happy without God."

Father's insistence made an impression on me. For a moment I started to doubt my faith, which did not yet have a strong foundation. It was true that I had known my father much longer than I had known Jehovah's Witnesses, and I had always felt safe at home. Father meant well, I was sure. I knew that he loved me, so I promised that I would stop studying the Bible. Shortly afterward, when I was 18, I finished school and went to work in Prague, our country's capital city.

My Life in Prague

I obtained employment at a bank, and I looked forward to learning about the real life that Father said was being achieved through Communism. Within a short time, however, I saw that people in the city were not any happier than those back home. In fact, immorality, hypocrisy, selfishness, and heavy drinking were the norm.

Eventually, a Witness from near my home in Horní Benešov, who was visiting Prague, saw to it that the Witnesses contacted me. In this way my Bible study was renewed in Prague with a woman named Eva. At the end of each study, Eva would ask, "Do you want me to come again next week?" She never forced her own opinions on me, although at times I asked what she would do if she were in my place.

"I cannot tell you what I would do," she said. Then she directed attention to something in

the Bible that helped me make a decision. A big concern was my relationship with my parents, so I asked whether I should stop associating with them. Eva opened to Exodus 20:12, where the Bible says that we must honor our parents. Then she asked, "Yet, should we ever place anyone before our parents?"

Since I wasn't sure, she opened the Bible to the words of Jesus Christ: "He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37) Thus I came to appreciate that although my parents deserve honor, Jesus, as well as his heavenly Father, should receive even greater affection. Eva always tried to point out a relevant Bible principle, and then she would leave the decision to me.

A Conflict of Interests

Eventually, in September 1982, I was accepted as a student at a college in Prague, where I studied agronomy. Soon, however, I found that I couldn't care for my college courses properly and at the same time give the attention I desired to Bible study. So I told one of my professors that I was thinking about quitting college. "I will send you to someone who will understand and help you," she said. She arranged for the dean of the college to speak with me.

The dean welcomed me, asking: "Why does our best student want to leave school?"

"Because I do not have time for other things that also interest me," I answered. Since Jehovah's Witnesses were then banned in Czechoslovakia, I had no intention of telling him why I was thinking about leaving. But after talking with him for a couple of hours, I assumed that he was trustworthy. So I told him that I was studying the Bible.

"Study both the Bible and Marx," he said. "Then make your choice." It seemed that he was even encouraging me to study the Bible!

A Conspiracy Thwarted

The next day, however, both he and the professor traveled all the way to my home

village to visit my parents. They warned them that I was in contact with a dangerous and banned sect and told them that I wanted to leave the college. "If your daughter decides to leave school," the dean promised Father, "we will make sure that she isn't able to get work in Prague, and then she'll have to return to you and break contact with that sect."

In January 1983, I did leave school. A friend who also studied the Bible helped me to rent a room from an elderly woman. Since I knew nothing of the dean's visit to my parents or his promise to Father, I was unaware of why all my efforts to find employment were unsuccessful. My landlady was also curious about this, so unknown to me she went to the dean of the college to ask him why I had left school.

"Take care!" he warned. "She is a member of the dangerous sect of Jehovah's Witnesses. That is why she had to leave the school. She must go back home and stop this. I will see that she does not get any employment in Prague!"

When the landlady came home that night, she called me and said: "Well, Alenka, today I went to your college." I thought I would have to pack up that very night and leave her apartment. But she said: "I do not approve of the dean's actions. You may believe whatever you wish; the important thing is how you behave. I will help you find work." In prayer that night, I thanked Jehovah for his help.

Soon afterward, Father came to Prague to take me home. But this time his arguments did not persuade me. My faith in Jehovah and his promises had firmer foundations. In the end, Father left without me, and for the first time in my life, I saw him weep. Although it was a very emotional meeting, the experience drew me closer to Jehovah. I wanted to belong to and serve Him. Thus, on November 19, 1983, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by baptism in a tub of water in an apartment in Prague.

My Decision Was Blessed

In time, I became involved in helping to produce the banned literature of the Witnesses. The work necessitated strict security measures, since the authorities had already imprisoned some who had been caught doing it. My first task was to make copies on a typewriter of *The Watchtower* translated into Czech. These copies were then handed out to Witnesses for use in Bible study.

Later, I was invited to join a group that met in a Prague apartment to prepare books. Most of the furniture was moved out of one room, and then we assembled individual printed pages on a long table that was placed in the middle of the room. Later these pages were glued or sewn together to make a book. Often, I thought how lovely it would be to do this work full-time.

As a pioneer in the Communist youth organization, I had tried to teach children to be better people. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I continue working with young people and have assisted a number of them to become baptized servants of Jehovah. Although no member of my family has yet become a Witness, I have come to have, as the Bible promised, many spiritual fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters.—Mark 10:29, 30.

In 1989 a democratic government replaced the Communist one in our country. This change has brought legal freedom to Jehovah's Witnesses, which has resulted in our being able to meet openly for Bible study, to preach from house to house without danger of arrest, and to travel abroad to attend international conventions. Moreover, we no longer have to worry about interrogations, arrests, or intimidation!

Serving With My Husband

In 1990, I married Petr, a fellow Christian. In April 1992 we were both able to realize the goal of becoming pioneers, as Witnesses call those in the full-time preaching work.

**Vladimir, a former Communist
Young Pioneer whom I met at the
Ukraine branch dedication**

With my husband, Petr



Eventually, in June 1994, we were invited to work at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Prague. Now, instead of producing Bible literature in secrecy, we can share openly in serving the spiritual interests of people throughout the Czech Republic.

A few years ago, Petr and I were overjoyed when my parents accepted our invitation to visit the facilities where we live and work along with some 60 other members of our branch family. After inspecting our home and offices, Father said: "Yes, I feel there is real love among you." These were the most beautiful words I could have heard from my father.

Enjoying What Communism Promised

Our hope of enjoying a better world through Communism really was nothing but a wishful dream. The history of mankind has revealed that even the most sincere efforts of humans have been unsuccessful in creating a righteous society. I believe that there are yet many people who will come to realize that

man cannot enjoy a happy life without God's help.—Jeremiah 10:23.

Often, I recall Father's wish for me to enjoy what he called "a real life," which he taught us Communism would make possible. Yet, I have come to realize from a study of the Bible that what it calls "the real life"—life in God's righteous new world—is the only sure promise upon which humans can rely. (1 Timothy 6:19) I say this because, although subject to sin and human imperfection, those who have sincerely endeavored to apply Bible teachings in their lives have been able to live together at peace in a remarkable way. They have successfully resisted all attempts to break up their unity or to sever their devoted attachment to Jehovah, their God.

This was especially impressed upon me when my husband and I were privileged to be among the guests attending the dedication of the new branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses near Lviv, Ukraine, on May 19, 2001. There I met other Witnesses who had been members

**More than 16,000 visited
the branch facilities**



**Over 30,000 listened
to a review of the
dedication program**



of the Communist youth organization Young Pioneers. These had hoped, as I had, that Communism would bring true peace and unity among all mankind. Vladimir Grigoriev, who now serves with his wife at the branch office in Russia, was one who had also been a Young Pioneer.

Now it seemed ironic that here at a location that had served as a summer camp for Young Pioneers, Jehovah's Witnesses had constructed their new branch. Because of limited space at the branch, only 839 persons from 35 countries could be accommodated for the dedication program. However, the following morning 30,881 assembled at a soccer stadium in Lviv to hear a review of the previous day's program.* Some of these had traveled up to six hours or more from distant places to be present.

* Another 41,143 persons met simultaneously in a stadium in Kiev—about 300 miles away—where they also listened to a review of the dedication program. The combined attendance of 72,024 constituted the largest gathering ever of Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine.

Yet, when these people learned of the provision to tour their new branch facilities, they boarded the scores of buses by which they had come to the stadium. By mid-afternoon the buses began arriving at the branch—where my husband and I were privileged to have been overnight guests—for their walking tour through the facilities. By that evening, well over 16,000 of these dear fellow believers had completed their tour, boarded their buses, and begun what for many was a long trip home!

In Ukraine, as in other Eastern European countries, millions believed that Communism was the best hope for creating a peaceful new society. Today, however, there are over 120,000 people in Ukraine alone who are engaged in telling others about God's Kingdom. Indeed, many of us former Communists have come to believe that this government by God is the only true hope for realizing genuine brotherhood and peace among all peoples!



St. Peter's Fish

WISETING a restaurant alongside the Sea of Galilee in Israel, you may become curious upon seeing "St. Peter's fish" on the menu. The waiter may tell you that it is one of the most popular dishes, especially among tourists. It is delicious when freshly fried. But why is it linked to the apostle Peter?

An event described in the Bible at Matthew 17:24-27 provides the answer. There we learn that Peter, while visiting the town of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, was asked if Jesus paid the temple tax. Later Jesus explained that he, as God's Son, had no obligation to pay such tax. But in order to avoid stumbling others, he had Peter go to the sea, cast a fishhook, take the first fish coming up, and pay the tax with the coin found in its mouth.

The appellation "St. Peter's fish" is drawn from this incident recorded in the Bible. But what sort of fish did Peter catch?



A Sea Rich in Fish

It is thought that of the nearly 20 species of fish in the Sea of Galilee, only about 10 could possibly be the sort that Peter caught. These ten are divided into three commercially important groups.

The largest group is called *musht*, which means "comb" in Arabic, because its five species display a comblike dorsal fin. One variety of *musht* reaches a length of about a foot and a half and weighs some four and a half pounds.

The second group is the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) sardine, which resembles a small herring. At the height of the sardine season, many tons are caught every night, amounting to some one thousand tons a year.

From ancient times this sardine has been preserved by pickling.

The third group is the *biny*, also known as barbel. Its three species display barbs at the corners of the mouth, hence its Semitic name *biny*, meaning "hair." It feeds on mollusks, snails, and small fish. The long-headed barbel reaches a length of some 30 inches and weighs over 15 pounds. Barbels are a well-fleshed fish, and they are a popular dish for Jewish Sabbaths and feasts.

Not included in the three commercially important groups is the catfish, the largest fish in the Sea of Galilee. It measures up to four feet and weighs some 25 pounds. But the catfish has no scales, so it was unclean according to the Mosaic Law. (Leviticus 11:9-12) Therefore, it is not eaten by Jews, and it may not be the type of fish that Peter caught.

What Fish Did Peter Catch?

Well, *musht* is the fish that is commonly accepted as "St. Peter's fish," and it is served as

such in restaurants near the Sea of Galilee. Having relatively few small bones, it is rather easy to prepare and eat. But is it really the fish that Peter caught?

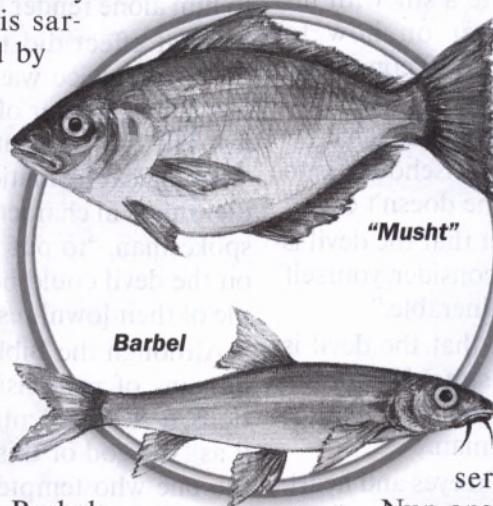
Mendel Nun, a fisherman who has lived on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for over 50 years, is a highly respected authority on local fish. He points out: "Musht feeds on plankton and is not attracted by other food. It is therefore caught with nets, and not with hook and line." So it is an unlikely candidate. An even less likely candidate is the sardine, since it is too small to qualify as St. Peter's fish.

That narrows the field down to the barbel, which some consider the better choice for the "St. Peter's fish" label. Nun noted: "Fishermen on the [Sea of Galilee] have, since time immemorial, used a hook baited with sardine to fish for barbels, which are predators and bottom feeders." He concludes that "Peter almost surely caught a barbel."

Why, then, is *musht* served as "St. Peter's fish"?

Nun answers: "There can be only one explanation for the confusing change of name. It was good for tourism! . . . As pilgrims began to come from distant regions, it no doubt seemed good for business to give the name 'St. Peter's fish' to the *musht* being served by the early lakeside eating houses. The most popular and easily prepared fish acquired the most marketable name!"

While we cannot state with absolute certainty what fish it was that Peter caught, whatever fish you are served as "St. Peter's fish" will most likely prove to be a very delicious dish.



The Devil

An Evil Reality?

IN MANY religious circles, the Devil has come to be regarded largely as a superstitious relic—an invention of humans. So Dionigi Tettamanzi, archbishop of Genoa—one of Italy's leading cardinals—caused quite a stir with his 40-page pastoral letter on how to fight the Devil. It listed “10 commandments.”

First: “Don’t forget that the devil exists,” because his “first falsehood” is to “make us believe that he doesn’t exist.”

Second: “Don’t forget that the devil is a tempter. . . . Don’t consider yourself either immune or invulnerable.”

Third: “Don’t forget that the devil is most intelligent and astute. He continues to be insidious by being fascinating, as he did with the first man.”

Fourth: “Be vigilant: in eyes and heart. And be strong: in spirit and virtue.”

Fifth: “Believe firmly in the victory of Christ over the tempter” because this “will make you secure and imperturbable before even the most violent assault that can be unleashed against you.”

Sixth: “Remember that Christ makes you a sharer in his victory.”

Seventh: “Continue to listen to the Word of God.”

Eighth: “Be humble and love mortification.”

Ninth: “Pray always, without tiring,” in order to overcome temptation.

Tenth: “Adore the Lord your God and to him alone render worship.”

What effect did this pastoral letter have? Its advice was not well received by Milan’s Center of Theological Studies. The Center contended that such a “theological formation smacked of mediævalness in character.” According to a spokesman, “to put the ultimate blame on the devil could help to deprive people of their [own] responsibility.”

Although the Bible does not absolve humans of responsibility for their actions, it clearly identifies Satan the Devil as “the god of this system of things,” the one who tempted Jesus. It also reveals the power of Satan and his intention to ‘blind the minds of unbelievers.’ —2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 4:1-11.

Indeed, as the apostle Peter wrote, Satan is “like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Peter 5:8) Little wonder that the apostle John reminded believers: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) We are wise not to ignore these Scriptural warnings.

Young People Ask . . .

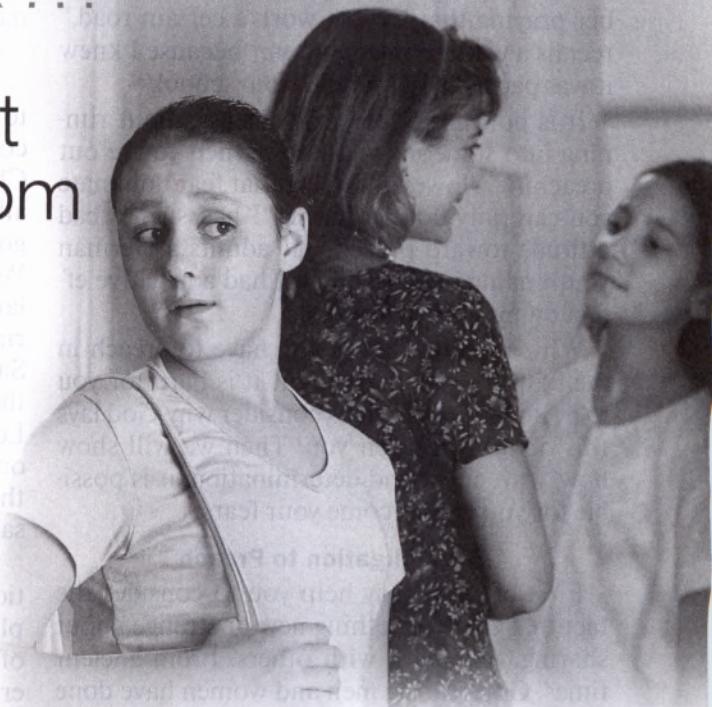
What if I Meet Someone From School?

"Going back to school on Monday was torture. If any of my friends had seen me, I'd make up these elaborate stories. For instance, I'd tell my friends that I had been out collecting money for the Labour Party."—James, England.

"At school I was ridiculed by people who had seen me. I felt a lot of pressure."—Débora, Brazil.

WHY were these youths so afraid of being seen by their friends? Were they engaged in some kind of illegal activity? On the contrary, they were engaged in the most honorable and the most important work being done on earth today. They were doing the work that Jesus commanded when he said: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

According to a U.S. Gallup survey, over 90 percent of teenagers believe in God. About half go to church every week. And while many youths are involved in church-sponsored activities, such as singing in the choir, few talk about God with their schoolmates. Jehovah's Witnesses, however, are known the world over for their door-to-door preaching activity.



Many youths fear running into a fellow student while out in the ministry

Thousands of young Witnesses participate in this work.

If you are a young Witness, no doubt you too already share in this preaching work. But this does not necessarily mean that you find it easy to do so. Like the youths quoted at the outset, you may find the thought of meeting a schoolmate at the door distressing. "One of the worst things," admits a British youth named Jennie, "was for one of my schoolmates to see me all dressed up, in a skirt, carrying a book bag —looking a lot smarter than I did in school."

Fears of encountering a schoolmate can be so intense that some young Christians have resorted to subterfuge. A youth named Leon says: "I know one young Witness who wears a hooded jacket while he's in the ministry, so he can pull it down over his face if he runs into his school friends." Yet other youths simply avoid

preaching in certain neighborhoods. "I remember praying that we not work a certain road," recalls a youth named Simon, "because I knew it was packed with people from school."

It is normal to feel a bit uneasy about running into someone you know when you're out preaching. However, letting that fear dominate you can only do you harm. "I had such a bad attitude toward preaching," admits a German youth named Alicia, "that it had a negative effect on my spirituality."

Why, though, should you have to preach in the first place—especially if it is hard for you to do so? In answer, let's consider why God lays this obligation upon you. Then we will show how, with effort and determination, it is possible for you to overcome your fears.

The Obligation to Preach

First of all, it may help you to consider the fact that there is nothing new or strange about sharing your faith with others. From ancient times, God-fearing men and women have done so. Noah, for example, is best-known as the builder of an enormous ark. (Genesis 6:14-16) But according to 2 Peter 2:5, he was also a "preacher of righteousness." Noah felt obliged to warn others about the impending destruction.—Matthew 24:37-39.

Later, although the Jews were not given specific commands to preach to non-Jews, many did share their faith with others. Thus, a foreigner named Ruth came to learn about Jehovah. Grateful to her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, Ruth told her: "Your people will be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) Later, King Solomon indicated that many

non-Jews would come to hear of the "great name" of Jehovah and worship at His temple.—1 Kings 8:41, 42.

Now if these ancient servants of God spoke to others—in spite of being under no direct command to do so—how much more should Christians today feel obliged to preach! After all, we have been commanded to preach "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) We are like the apostle Paul, in that *necessity* is laid upon us to declare this good news. (1 Corinthians 9:16) Our very salvation is at stake. Says Romans 10:9, 10: "If you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, . . . you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."

Where can you make that "public declaration"? Although preaching informally has its place, the door-to-door ministry is still one of the most effective ways of reaching others. (Acts 5:42; 20:20) Are you exempted from having to share in this work because you are young? Hardly. The Bible issues this command at Psalm 148:12, 13: "You young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys. Let them praise the name of Jehovah."

The Challenge of Preaching to Peers

Admittedly, it can be awkward and unsettling to be out in the ministry and meet up with someone who goes to your school. After all, it's only natural to want to be accepted by others. Nobody wants to be teased, taunted, or abused verbally. And as a youth named Tanya puts it, "the kids in school can be so vicious!" So you may naturally wonder how your schoolmates will react if they see you all dressed up with a Bible in your hand. Sad to say, it's entirely possible that they will ridicule you. "There was a boy in my class who lived in my building," recalls a Brazilian youth named Felipe. "He would say, 'There you go with that Bible! What do you have in that briefcase?'"

Being a victim of such teasing is no laughing matter. The Bible tells us that Isaac, the son of

In Our Next Issue

- Teachers—What Would We Do Without Them?
- Healthy Fun on Two Wheels
- Feelings of Guilt—Are They Always Bad?

Abraham, received what actually amounted to vicious teasing from his half brother, Ishmael. (Genesis 21:9) The apostle Paul did not make light of this mistreatment. At Galatians 4:29, the apostle rightly called it ‘persecution.’

Similarly, Jesus warned that some people would be hostile toward his followers. He said: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you.”—John 15:18, 19.

As a Christian, then, you have to be prepared to suffer some amount of persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12) Even if you never said a word about the Bible to your peers, some might still persecute you simply because you maintain high standards of conduct

and don’t join them in mischief. (1 Peter 4:4) However, Jesus offers these comforting words: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.” (Matthew 5:11) How can being teased or taunted possibly make you happy? Because you know that you are making Jehovah God’s heart rejoice! (Proverbs 27:11) And by pleasing God, you put yourself in line for the reward of everlasting life!—Luke 10:25-28.

Fortunately, it is not likely that all—or even most—of your schoolmates would be hostile were you to encounter them in the ministry. A British youth named Angela reminds us: “When you meet a schoolmate at the door, often they’re more scared than you!” In fact, some may be quite curious about what you have to say. In any event, many young Christians are enjoying great success in witnessing to their fellow students. Our next article in this series will discuss some ways you too can do so.

***Never let teasing make you
ashamed of your faith***



MASAI

A UNIQUE AND COLORFUL PEOPLE

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN KENYA

THE high-pitched song of a young Masai (Maasai) boy resonated over the valley, carried far by the heavy, moisture-laden air of the dawn. As the morning sun rose higher, the boy's lilting voice rose in intensity, much like that of a songbird straining its voice in the first light of sunrise.

I listened as the rising sun revealed the Masai herdboy standing among his father's cattle. Draped in a long red cloth that partially covered his body, he stood storklike on one leg, leaning upon the shaft of his spear and singing to his contented herd. Let me tell you more about the unique Masai people.

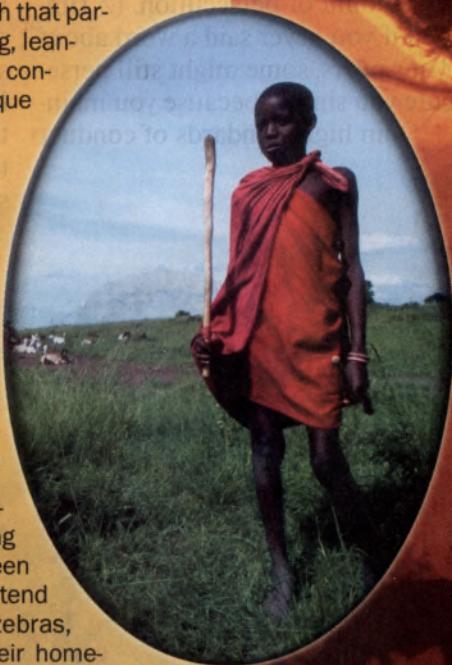
Welcome to Masai Country

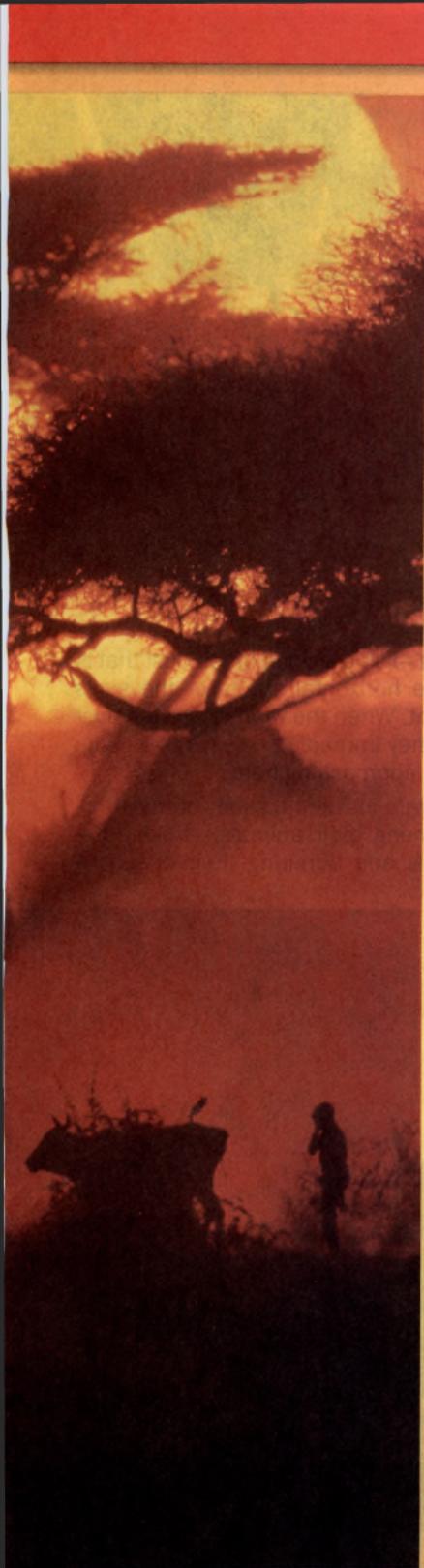
The Masai, a colorful pastoral people, live in the vast open spaces of East Africa's Great Rift Valley. Located in the countries of Kenya and Tanzania, the Masai are survivors of a past era, living much the way their ancestors did centuries ago. Unconcerned about the passing of time, their lives are governed by the rising and setting of the sun and the ever-changing seasons.

The skills of the Masai include their ability to survive in the harsh environment and rugged landscape of the Rift Valley. Walking with long loping strides, they travel great distances in search of green pastures and water sources for their cattle. They tend their cattle among the herds of wildebeests, zebras, giraffes, and other plains animals that share their homeland.

A Cattle People

The Masai believe that all the cattle on the earth belong to them. This belief stems from the legend that in the beginning God had three sons and that to each he gave one gift. The first son received an arrow for hunting, the second received a hoe for cultivating, and the third son received a stick for herding cattle. This last son, it is said, became the father of the Masai nation. Even though other tribes possess cattle, the Masai believe that these animals essentially belong to them.





In the Masai community, the size of a man's herd and the number of his children determine his status and importance. Indeed, a man with fewer than 50 head of cattle is considered poor. With the help of his many children and wives, a Masai man eventually hopes to accumulate a large herd that can number up to a thousand animals.

Masai family members bond emotionally with their cattle. Each animal has a distinctive voice and temperament that is well-known by the family. Cattle are often branded and marked with long curving lines and intricate patterns that are designed to enhance the animal's beauty. Songs are sung that describe the physical beauty of certain members of the herd and express affection for them. Bulls with large curved horns are especially prized, and a young calf is tenderly cared for and fussed over as though it were a newborn child.

Masai homes are traditionally built by the women and are constructed of branches woven together with grass and then plastered and sealed with cow dung. Rounded and oblong in shape, the homes are built in a large circle that serves to protect an inner kraal, where the cattle bed down for the night. The entire perimeter is fenced with sharp, thorny branches that protect both the Masai and their cattle from marauding hyenas, leopards, and lions.

The very survival of the Masai depends upon the health and strength of their herds. The animal's milk is consumed, and cow dung is used to cover and seal their homes. Rarely do the Masai slaughter their cattle for food; a few sheep and goats are commonly kept for eating. But when one of the cattle is killed, every part of the animal is utilized. Horns are used for containers; hooves and bones are fashioned into ornaments; and hides are cured for shoes, clothing, bed coverings, and ropes.

Colorful and Unique

Tall and slender with fine physical features, the Masai are a handsome people. Their dress is wonderfully colorful. Cloth dyed in vivid shades of red and blue is wrapped loosely over their lithe bodies. Women commonly adorn themselves with great circular platelike beaded collars and headbands of many colors. Arms and ankles may be wound tightly with thick strands of copper coils. Both men and



*Traditional
Masai home*



Masai gather together to dance

women often elongate their ear lobes by fashioning them with heavy earrings and beaded ornaments. Ocher, a red mineral ground to a fine powder, is frequently mixed with cow fat and artfully applied to the body.

One evening, by the light of the fire, I watch as a group of Masai gather together to dance. Standing in a circle, they move in rhythm. As the pace of the dance intensifies, the heavy beaded collars of the girls thump rhythmically up and down on their shoulders. Then, one by one, Masai warriors take turns stepping into the center of the circle, where they perform a series of spectacular vertical jumps, leaping high into the air. Dancing may continue far into the night until all are exhausted.

Masai Family Life

Throughout the hot day, I sit with a group of Masai women under the shade of an acacia tree, watching them sew elaborate beadwork onto cured leather skins. Laughing and talking among themselves, they take little notice of the weaverbirds chattering above their heads, sewing their nests with dried strings of grass. As the day passes, the women busy themselves with fetching water and firewood, repairing their homes, and tending their small children.

When the setting sun begins to loosen its grip on the land, the herdsmen start to return with their cattle. Slowly the herd plods home-

ward, their hooves raising a cloud of red dust that is illuminated by the horizontal shafts of the sun's waning amber light. When the women see the dust cloud from afar, they immediately leave their work to prepare for the approaching herd.

Once the cattle are inside the safety of the kraal, the men walk among their animals, stroking the horns of the bulls and admiring their beauty. A

Two Masai Witnesses



small boy squirts a thin stream of warm milk into his mouth from a cow's udder and is instantly scolded by his mother. Young girls, who move in and out of the crowded maze of horns and hooves, deftly milk the cows, filling their long gourd containers to overflowing.

In the evening we all huddle around the fire that dispels the chill in the air. There is the smell of smoke and roasted meat as well as the strong bovine scent of the nearby herd. An older man sits and tells stories of Masai history and of the past heroic deeds of Masai warriors. He pauses only when a lion roars in the distance, and then unconcerned he continues weaving his elaborate tale to the delight of his audience. Finally, one by one, all disappear into the darkness of their domed earthen homes to sleep. Except for the shallow breathing of the sleeping cattle, the night is silent, consumed by the darkness and remoteness of the open bush.

Masai Childhood

By sunrise the village is alive with activity. Small children, wearing only beaded waistbands and necklaces, play in the cool morning air. Their laughter is a comforting sound to the Masai, who dearly love their children and depend upon their offspring for their future hopes and their very survival.

Raising children is a communal affair—any older person in the community may discipline and chastise a disobedient child. Children are taught to respect their elders, and they quickly learn the ways of Masai family life. Their early years are carefree, but as they grow older, young girls are taught to care for domestic duties and boys are instructed in the care and protection of livestock. Parents pass on to their children knowledge of traditional medicines and instruct them about Masai rituals and traditions that touch every aspect of Masai life.

Entering Into Adulthood

As they grow older, youths learn the customs and ceremonies that will mark their passage from childhood to adulthood. Among the rituals learned are those that deal with sickness, bad fortune, marriage, and death. The Masai believe that failing to follow these ceremonies will result in their being cursed.

Masai parents may arrange a daughter's marriage while she is still an infant. The girl is promised to a man who possesses enough cattle to pay the

bride-price demanded by her father. Often, she will be married to a man much older than herself and will take her place among the other wives in his household.

As young boys in the Masai community grow older, they associate closely with other male youths of their own generation. The special relationship that they enjoy with these age-mates may last a lifetime. Together they will pass from being inexperienced boys to being warriors. As warriors they will accept the responsibilities of protecting the home-stead, maintaining water sources for the community, and protecting the livestock from wild animals and theft. Known for their bravery and courage, typically the Masai are never seen without their sharply honed spears.

When the warriors are 30 or so years of age, they enter into the final step in their passage to maturity. With great excitement and ceremony, they are initiated into elderhood; they will now be permitted to marry. With this respected status, they will concentrate on taking a bride and increasing their herd of cattle, and they will be expected to give advice and mediate disputes.

The Masai and Their Future?

Today the unique customs and culture of the Masai are quickly disappearing. In some areas Masai can no longer roam freely with their cattle to search for new pastures. Vast tracts of land that made up their traditional homeland are being developed for wildlife reserves or for housing and agriculture to accommodate growing populations. Drought and economic hardship are forcing many Masai to sell their beloved cattle in order to survive. As they move to large cities, they encounter the same problems that plague the rest of the modern world surrounding them.

Today Masai communities in East Africa are being reached by the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses. Over 6,000 copies of the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* have been printed in the Masai language. Thus the Masai are being helped to see the difference between baseless superstitions and Bible truth. Indeed, it is heartwarming to see that our Creator, Jehovah God, has given these unique and colorful people an opportunity to be numbered among the many "nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" that will survive the destruction of this troubled system of things.—Revelation 7:9.

Watching the World

Child Soldiers

"More than 300,000 children—some as young as 7—are fighting as soldiers in 41 countries around the world," said an Associated Press dispatch. Most are between the ages of 15 and 18. "Besides being used as front-line fighters, children are used to detect land mines and also as spies, porters and sex slaves, according to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers." Drugs are often administered to make children fearless. Those who refuse drugs are killed, said a 14-year-old rebel soldier in Sierra Leone. Regarding his fighting in 1999 when he was 15, a North African youth reported: "They put all the 15- and 16-year-olds in the front line while the army retreated. I was with 40 other kids. I was fighting for 24 hours. When I saw that only three of my friends were alive, I ran back." The Coalition's report stated that governments recruit children because of "their very qualities as children—they can be cheap, expendable and easier to condition into fearless killing and unthinking obedience."

New Record for Bible Translation

"In complete or partial form, the Bible is now available in a total of 2,261 languages, an increase of 28 since 12 months ago," reports Britain's Bible Society. "In its complete form [the Bible] is now available in 383 languages, 13 more than a year ago." Complete volumes of either the Hebrew or the Greek Scriptures, also called the Old and New Testaments, are now available in 987 languages.

Life Sentence—in the Hive

"African honeybees have devised a bizarre but highly effective tactic for dealing with unwanted guests," says the magazine *New Scientist*. "They lock them up in prison cells inside their hives. This penal policy keeps a lid on the parasites and, if necessary, buys the colony time to escape." Researchers "studied how bees in South Africa defend themselves against the small hive beetle *Aethina tumida*, which is about half the size of a bee." Peter Neumann, one of the researchers, describes the beetle as "built like a tank." Hence, the bees' only defense is beetle incarceration. "While some bees build the prison, others continuously guard the beetles to prevent escape," Neumann explains.



The raw material is tree resin, which the bees collect, and construction takes up to four days. Bees of European stock, including North American bees, do not have this behavioral strategy. So when the beetle, which was introduced accidentally into the United States about five years ago, invades one of their hives, the hive is "basically doomed."

A New Chemical Heavyweight

Chemists have "a new building block in their construction set: hassium, a heavy metal," reports the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Scientists at the Gesellschaft für Schwerionenforschung (Heavy Ion Research Center) in Darmstadt, Germany, have succeeded for the first time in fusing hassium atoms with oxygen, forming a new chemical compound. Named after the German state of Hesse, hassium does not occur naturally. It was first produced by nuclear physicists in 1984. Both hassium and its

new compound are radioactive, unstable, and short-lived and hence are of no immediate practical value.

Blood Transfusion Dangers

"One in three transfusions were being administered when, under [New South Wales] Health guidelines, they should not have been," reports Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald*. "The guidelines call for a blood transfusion if the patient's haemoglobin level is seven or below." Dr. Ross Wilson, who conducted the study on blood use, explained that "giving an unnecessary transfusion could kill



a patient by inducing heart failure." According to a study that Dr. Wilson conducted six years earlier, "about 18,000 [Australians] a year died as a result of complications they developed directly as a result of the medical treatment they received." Dr. Wilson recommends that doctors be reminded of the blood transfusion health guidelines each time they request a transfusion and also that patients be informed about the guidelines so they can question their physician directly.

Stiff Penalty for Internet Porn

"Germany's top criminal court announced . . . that distributing child pornography over the Internet is no different from circulating such material

in print and will carry a prison sentence of up to 15 years," reports the Associated Press. The article explained that "the ruling by the Federal Court of Justice set a precedent for Germany, which previously had no firm legal policy for punishing people who distribute pornographic images of children over the Internet." The high court overturned a state court ruling that distributing child pornography over the Internet is not as serious a sexual offense as distributing such material in print.

Marijuana and the Heart

"Middle-aged pot [marijuana] users face a fivefold increase in the risk of a heart attack in the hour after they smoke the drug," says Canada's *Globe and Mail* in a report on a new study.

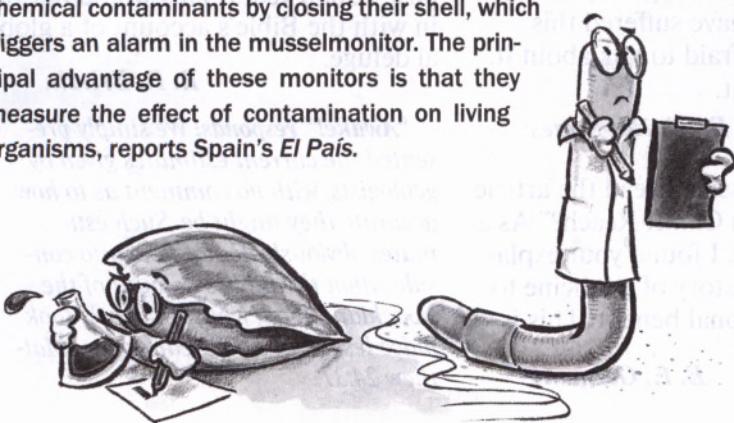
"Smoking marijuana causes the heart rate to increase—often doubling it—while altering blood pressure . . . It may also trigger a heart attack by causing the formation of a clot, blocking the flow of blood to the heart muscle." Dr. Harold Kalant of the University of Toronto said: "For older people, the increased workload on the heart will be a risk factor for a heart attack." Cocaine is even more dangerous, says the report, because it increases the risk of a heart attack about 25-fold during the first hour after use.

A Rose by What Name?

Because of the sheer number of different plants being bred, naming new varieties has become a major challenge. "Already there are about 100,000 day lilies with names," says *The Wall Street Journal*, "at least that many roses and more than 14,000 dahlias. All the obvious poetic nouns and adjectives, such as beauty, blush, delight, dream, glory, queen, sunrise, sunset, velvet, fragrant, delight and magic, have been appropriated—and registered—in virtually every possible combination. Today, plant namers are being driven to new heights—and depths—of commercial nomenclature." For example, "at gardening stores these days," says the *Journal*, "you can buy a Taco Supreme iris, a Macho Man rose, an Abba Dabba Do hosta, a Primal Scream day lily or a Kung Fu dahlia." You can even have a flower named after yourself—for a price. A company in California allows you to name a rose for \$10,000, providing the name is in good taste. Another charges \$75,000 but throws in a few extras, including a weekend in Los Angeles.

Animals Monitor Pollution

Earthworms are ideal organisms for measuring air and ground pollution, claims zoologist Steve Hopkin. Abundant and cheap, these humble animals do a better job than sophisticated artificial devices. The common mussel is used to measure water quality. The musselmonitor—a device that is the size of a bucket and contains eight live mussels—has already proved effective in measuring pollution in the Rhine and Danube rivers. "If there is a sudden increase in the concentration of a pollutant, the mussels detect it," said the designer of the device, Kees Kramer. The mussels react to thousands of different chemical contaminants by closing their shell, which triggers an alarm in the musselmonitor. The principal advantage of these monitors is that they measure the effect of contamination on living organisms, reports Spain's *El País*.



From Our Readers

Prayer The article "Young People Ask . . . Will God Hear My Prayers?" (June 22, 2001) really strengthened me. I received this magazine while lying in bed in the hospital. I was unable to go to the Kingdom Hall or to our convention. I was really sad and couldn't seem to get my feelings under control. Praying to Jehovah settled me down, and to a surprising degree, my heart was refreshed. I am comforted to know that Jehovah will never forget me.



A. O., Japan

I am 18 years old and a regular pioneer, a full-time evangelizer. For the past few months, I have felt depressed. I felt like Steve, the youth mentioned in the article who said that sometimes he felt that he shouldn't bother God with his problems. But I took to heart the counsel at Luke 12:6, 7. I started to feel calmer and was moved to pour out my heart to Jehovah.

M. D., Nicaragua

Raised in Nunnery The article "Abandoned by Parents—Loved by God" (June 22, 2001) brought back a lot of memories. I remember my mother telling us about her life in the convent and how the nuns treated her. When she left the convent at age 16, she had no place to stay. Many people have suffered this kind of mistreatment and are afraid to talk about it. So I'm glad this article came out.

G. E., United States

Health In your June 8, 2001, issue, I read the article "Modern Medicine—How High Can It Reach?" As a layman in medicine and science, I found your explanations and references to the history of medicine to be most interesting and of personal benefit. This issue is one I'm going to keep.

E. F., Germany

Drug Abuse I regularly receive your magazines from a workmate, and I read them. But I have a big problem with the strong implication in the series "Drug Abuse—There Is a Solution" that all rock musicians are drug addicts. (July 8, 2001) There are countless rock musicians who have nothing to do with drugs and who take their work seriously.

M. M., Japan

"Awake!" responds: We did not mean to imply that all rock musicians abuse drugs. Nevertheless, the popularity of drug use among many rock musicians and among fans at rock concerts is well established.

Niagara Falls I just finished reading the article "Niagara Falls—An Awesome Experience." (July 8, 2001) I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. Recently, my husband took me there for our anniversary. I thought it would be boring. How wrong I was! Seeing the falls was only matched by hearing the sound of the falls.

C. K., United States

You said that the erosion of the river gorge has taken place over the past 12,000 years. This would not tie in with the Bible's account of a global deluge.

R. P., Britain

"Awake!" responds: We simply presented the current estimates given by geologists, with no comment as to how accurate they might be. Such estimates obviously do not take into consideration the Bible's account of the Noachian Flood, which evidently took place less than 5,000 years ago.—Matthew 24:37.

Chewing Gum

Modern yet Ancient

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN MEXICO

FROM EARLY TIMES people have found enjoyment in chewing gum. The ancient Greeks chewed the resin of the mastic tree. The Aztecs chewed tzictli, or chicle, from the sapodilla tree. And the Native Americans of New England taught colonists to chew the resin of the spruce tree. In fact, in the early 1800's, lumps of spruce resin came to be the first commercial chewing gum marketed in the United States. Later, chewing sweetened paraffin wax became popular.

It is said that modern chewing gum had its beginning in the latter half of the 19th century. During Mexican ex-president Santa Anna's exile in the United States, he was noticed chewing pieces of chicle that he had brought with him from Mexico. An American inventor realized its potential if sweetened and flavored, and he imported chicle to the United States to make chewing gum.

Chicle is the milky latex of the sapodilla, an evergreen called the chewing gum tree. It is native to the *Gran Petén*, the tropical rain forest of northern Guatemala, Belize, and the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. There, in some areas, over seventy-five sapodilla trees can be found in a single acre. During the rainy season, gatherers of chicle, known as *chicleros*, make zigzag cuts in the trunk of the wild sapodilla, allowing the latex to run slowly into a receptacle at the base. It is then collected, boiled to the desired consistency, and molded into blocks to be sold. While chicle is still used to some extent in the chewing gum industry—particularly in gum advertised as natural—it was largely replaced by synthetic products in the 1940's in the United States.

Why is chewing gum so popular? Many chew gum to freshen their breath and clean their teeth when brushing is not possible after meals and snacks.*

* Chewing gum increases salivation, which helps to neutralize acid in plaque on teeth, contributing to oral health. Dentists recommend that as further protection against tooth decay, sugar-free gum be used for this purpose.



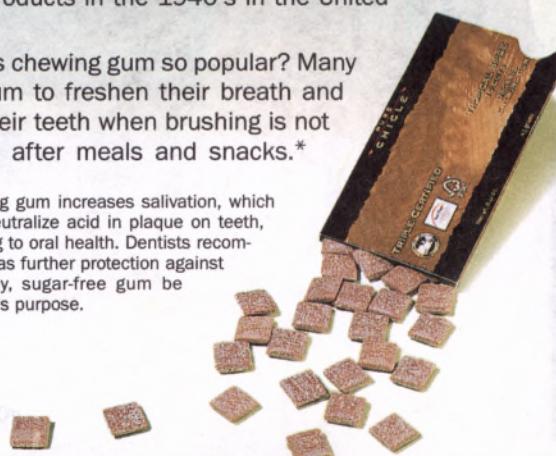
Chicleros make zigzag cuts in the trunk of the sapodilla tree

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Others find that chewing gum is relaxing and an aid to concentration. In fact, because chewing gum has been recognized to reduce tension and contribute to alertness, the U.S. armed forces supplied chewing gum to the troops in the first and second world wars and still include it in field and combat rations. Some drivers find chewing gum more effective than drinking coffee to keep them awake. People who are trying to quit smoking may find that chewing gum helps. It is also popular for satisfying the desire for a snack—at an average of less than ten calories a stick.

However, many people find the practice objectionable. And there may be times when it is not considered good manners to chew gum. So if you have this ancient yet modern custom of chewing gum, you will want to use discretion.*

* Caution: Gum should not be swallowed, as it can cause intestinal tract and esophageal obstruction. Also, excessive gum chewing causes higher levels of mercury to be released from dental amalgam.



HOW HE WON FIRST PRIZE

A youth wrote the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Lusaka, Zambia, to express appreciation for Awake! Because of this magazine, he explained, he had been awarded first prize in a writing competition for secondary school students. The students were given the title "The Space Race—The World's Biggest Money Waster" and were told to do research on the subject. The youth explained:

"Before long I found the September 8, 1992, issue of Awake! The magazine contained what I was looking for. I also used extracts from other issues of Awake!" The first-place prize that the

youth received included a check for \$75. He observed appreciatively: "For many people, Awake! has proved itself to be an award-winning journal."

When people earth wide consider the space program—including plans of governments to defend their territories against attack—many wonder whether there will ever be a world without war. This very question is the title of a 32-page brochure that provides powerful evidence that such a world will be realized. But how? and when?

