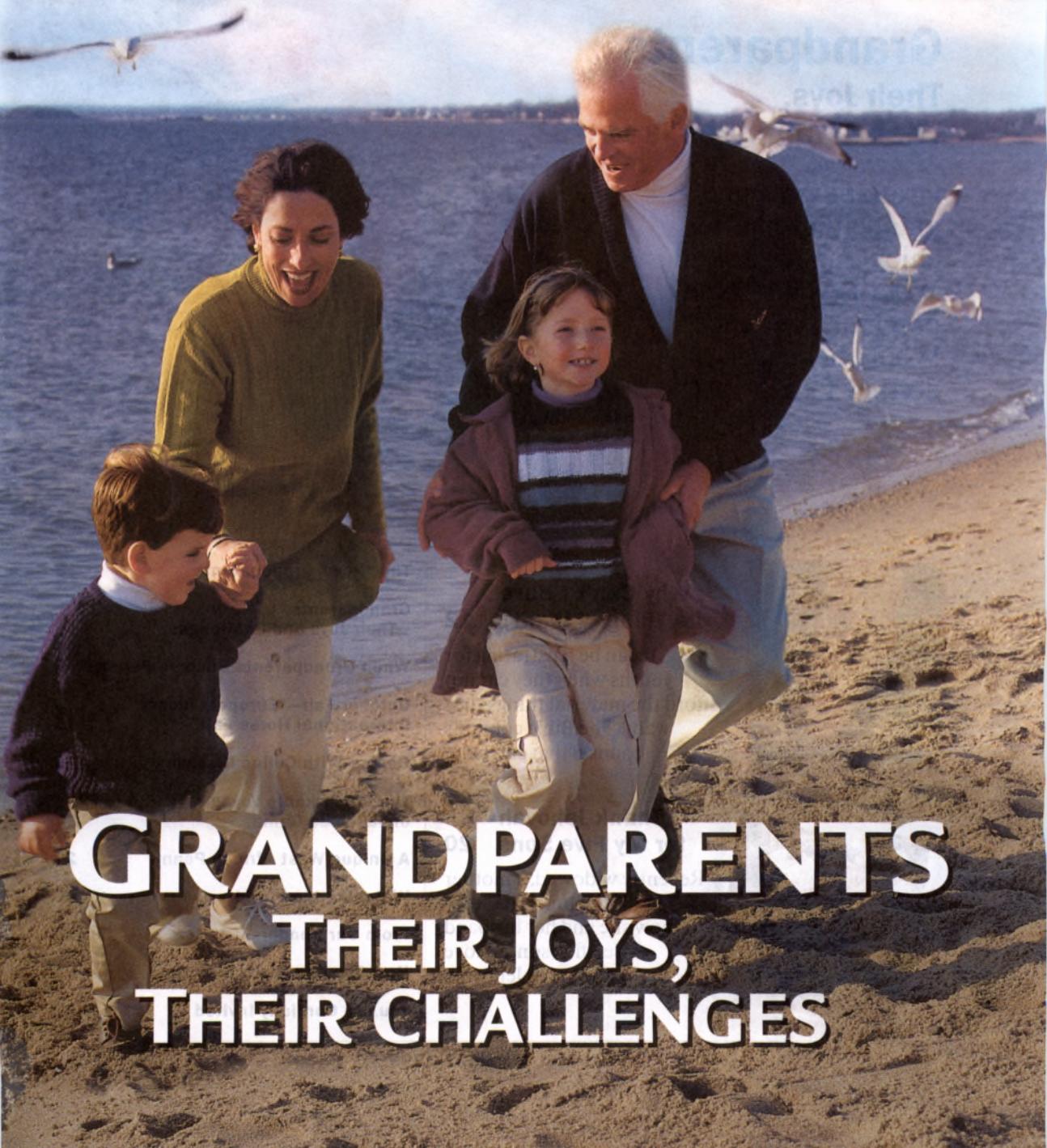


Awake!

March 22, 1999



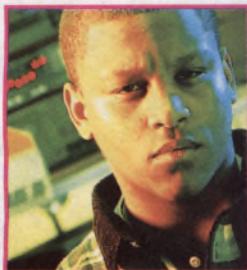
**GRANDPARENTS
THEIR JOYS,
THEIR CHALLENGES**

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Grandparents

Their Joys, Their Challenges 3-11

Grandparents and grandchildren often enjoy a special bond. What joys do grandparents experience? What challenges do they face?



Why Can't I Have the Things I Want? 12

It can be frustrating for youths when they cannot afford the material things they want. The Bible contains counsel that can help.

I Thank Jehovah for My Five Sons 20

Recently widowed, a mother tells the touching story of how she and her husband raised five sons to love and serve Jehovah.



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THE "NEW" GRANDPARENTS

"Welcome to Grandma and Grandpa's—Children Spoiled While You Wait." So reads the sign on the entrance to Gene and Jane's home.

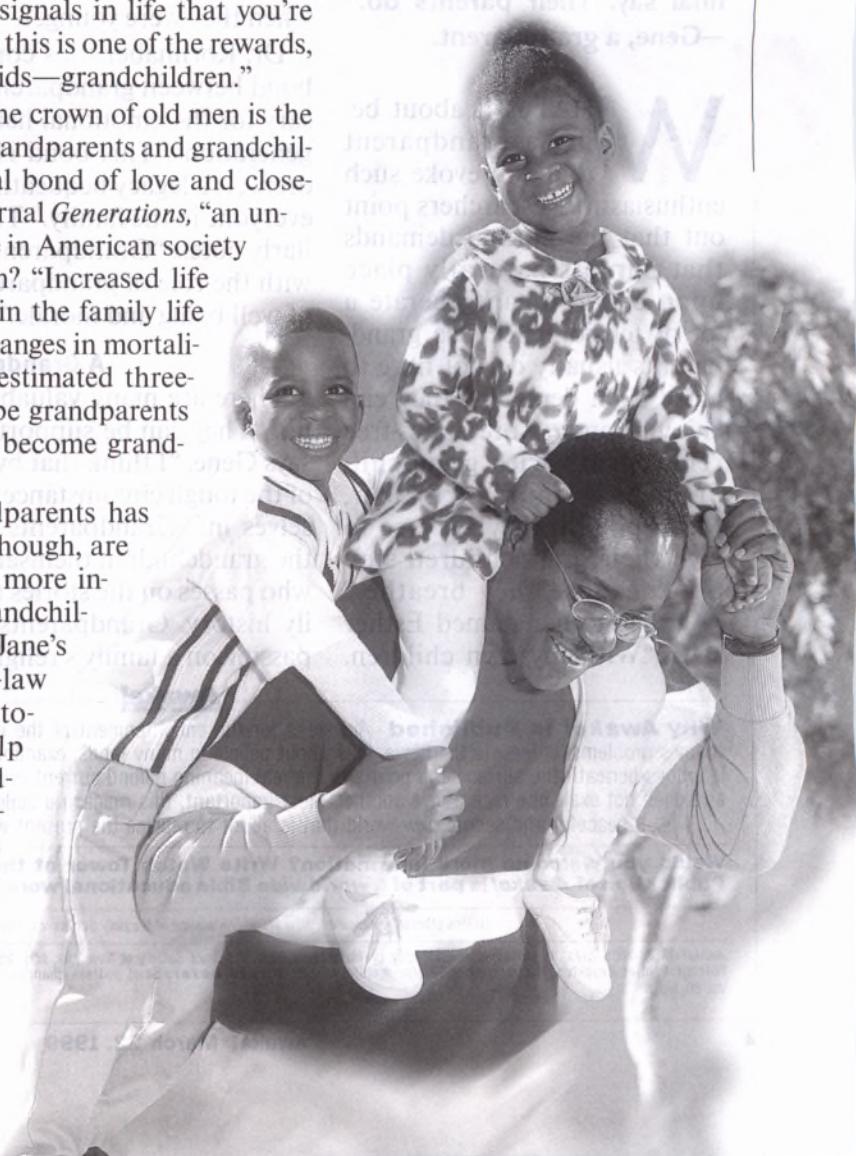
STEP inside, however, and you will not see an elderly couple in rocking chairs. Rather, you will find a youthful, energetic couple in their 40's. Far from shunning their roles as 'elder statesmen,' Gene and Jane have enthusiastically embraced grandparenthood. "True, it's one of those little signals in life that you're getting older," says Gene, "but this is one of the rewards, the payback for raising your kids—grandchildren."

An ancient proverb says: "The crown of old men is the grandsons." (Proverbs 17:6) Grandparents and grandchildren often enjoy a very special bond of love and closeness. And according to the journal *Generations*, "an unprecedented number of people in American society are grandparents." The reason? "Increased life expectancy and new rhythms in the family life cycle," explains the article. "Changes in mortality and fertility mean that an estimated three-quarters of adults will live to be grandparents . . . Most middle-aged people become grandparents around age 45."

A new generation of grandparents has arisen in some lands. Many, though, are finding themselves more and more involved in caring for their grandchildren. For example, Gene and Jane's son and former daughter-in-law have divorced and share custody. "We are trying to help out by caring for our grandson while our son works," explains Jane. According to one survey, grandparents in the United States who look after their grandchildren average about 14 hours a week doing

so. This amounts to as much as 29 billion dollars worth of labor a year!

What joys do today's grandparents experience? What are their challenges? The following articles explore these questions.



GRANDPARENTS THEIR JOYS AND CHALLENGES

"I love being a grandparent! You enjoy your grandchildren without feeling accountable or responsible for them. You realize that you have an influence on their lives but that ultimately you don't have the final say. Their parents do."

—Gene, a grandparent.

WHAT is it about being a grandparent that can evoke such enthusiasm? Researchers point out that the normal demands that parents naturally place upon children can generate a lot of tension. Because grandparents usually do not have to make such demands, they can enjoy a much more stress-free relationship with grandchildren. As Arthur Kornhaber, M.D., puts it, they are free to love their grandchildren simply "because they breathe." A grandmother named Esther says: "With my own children,

my daily emotions were so involved with everything they did. As a grandparent, I feel free to just enjoy and love my grandchildren."

Then there is the increased wisdom and competence that come with age. (Job 12:12) No longer young and inexperienced, grandparents have years of parenting under their belts. Having learned from their mistakes, they may be more competent in handling children than they were when they were younger.

Dr. Kornhaber thus concludes: "A healthy and loving bond between grandparents and grandchildren is necessary for the emotional health and happiness of all three generations. This bond is a natural birthright for children, . . . a legacy bequeathed by their elders that benefits everyone in the family." The journal *Family Relations* similarly notes: "Grandparents who participate and identify with the role of grandparent develop an increased sense of well-being and morale."

A Grandparent's Role

There are many valuable roles that grandparents can fill. "They can be supportive of their married children," says Gene. "I think that by doing so, they can offset some of the tough circumstances that young parents find themselves in." Grandparents can also do much to support the grandchildren themselves. It is often the grandparent who passes on the stories that give a child a sense of family history. Grandparents frequently play a key role in passing on a family's religious heritage.

Awake!®

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

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

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Many grandparents help care for their grandchildren

a bitter dispute with her mother over the proper method of burping a baby. "It caused a breach between us at a very vulnerable moment for me." Understandably, young parents want their parents to approve of the way they raise their children. Suggestions from their well-meaning parents can thus feel like devastating criticism.

In his book *Between Parents and Grandparents*, Dr. Kornhaber tells of two parents with another common problem. Says one parent: "I get invaded every day by my parents, and they are upset if I am not at home when they come. . . . They don't think about me—my feelings and my privacy." Complains another: "My parents want to possess my little girl. They eat, sleep, and think Susie twenty-four hours a day. . . . We are thinking of moving away."

Sometimes grandparents are also accused of spoiling their grandchildren by showering

In many families, grandparents serve as trusted mentors. "Maybe there are things that children will share with you that they are not comfortable talking about with their parents," says Jane, mentioned in the first article. Parents generally welcome such added support. According to one study, "over 80 percent of the teenagers viewed their grandparents as confidantes. . . . A large proportion of adult grandchildren maintain contact with their closest grandparents on a regular basis."

A loving grandparent can be especially important to a child who lacks proper nurturing at home. "My grandmother was the most important person in my early childhood," writes Selma Wassermann. "It was my grandmother who stepped in and filled my world with nurturing. She had a lap bigger than Miami Beach, and when she took me into it, I knew I was safe. . . . It was from my grandmother that I learned the most important things about myself—that I was loved and therefore lovable."—*The Long Distance Grandmother*.

Family Tensions

Grandparenthood is not without potential tensions and problems, though. One parent, for example, recalls

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Tips for Long-Distance Grandparents

- Ask the parents to send you videotapes or pictures of the grandchildren.
- Send audiotape "letters" to your grandchildren. For small children, record yourself reading Bible stories or singing lullabies.
- Send the grandchildren postcards and letters. If possible, establish a regular correspondence with them.
- If you can afford it, keep in touch with your grandchildren by long-distance telephone. When talking to small children, start conversations by asking simple questions, such as, "What did you have for breakfast?"
- If possible, make regular, brief visits.
- Arrange with the parents for your grandchildren to visit your home. Plan fun activities, such as going to zoos, museums, and parks.

"It was from my grandmother that I learned the most important things about myself—that I was loved and therefore lovable"

them with gifts. Of course, generosity is as natural to a grandparent as breathing, but some do seem to go overboard in this regard. At times, though, parental complaints may spring from jealousy. (Proverbs 14:30) "My parents were strict and harsh with me," confesses Mildred. "With my kids they are generous and [permissive]. I am jealous because they haven't changed the way that they act towards me at all." Whatever the motives or reason, it can cause problems if a grandparent does not respect the parents' wishes when it comes to gift giving.

Grandparents are thus wise to show discretion in their displays of generosity. The Bible shows that too much of even a good thing can be bad. (Proverbs 25:27) If you are not sure what kinds of gifts are appropriate, consult with the parents. In this way you will "know how to give good gifts."—Luke 11:13.

Love and Respect—The Keys!

Sad to say, some grandparents complain that their work as caretakers and babysitters is taken for granted. Others feel that they are not given enough access to their grandchildren. Yet others say that their adult children have shunned them without even explaining why. Such painful problems can often be averted if family members show one another love and respect. The Bible says: "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, . . . does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. . . . It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."—1 Corinthians 13:4, 5, 7.

Perhaps you are a young parent and Grandma makes a well-meaning but irritating suggestion or observation. Do you really have grounds to "become provoked"? After all, the Bible shows that it is the role of older Christian women to teach "young women . . . to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sound in mind, chaste, workers at home." (Titus 2:3-5) And do not you and the grandparents want the same thing—the very best for your children? Since love "does not look for its own interests," perhaps it is best to focus on the needs of the child—not on your own feelings. Doing so might help you to avoid "forcing one another to a showdown" over every trivial irritation.—Galatians 5:26, footnote.

Granted, you may fear that too much generosity will spoil your child. But usually a grandparent does not have evil motives when he or she is generous. Most child-



care professionals agree that how *you* train and discipline your child will have a far greater impact than the occasional intervention of a grandparent. One doctor advises: "Maintaining a good sense of humor helps."

If you have legitimate cause for concern over some child-care issue, do not cut your parent or in-law off from contact with your children. Says the Bible: "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk." (Proverbs 15:22) At the "right time," have a serious discussion and reveal your concerns. (Proverbs 15:23) Often times, solutions can be worked out.



Tensions can arise over child-rearing methods

Are you a grandparent? Then showing respect for your grandchild's parents is essential. Of course, you would feel obliged to speak up if you felt that your grandchild was in danger. But while it is natural for you to love and cherish your grandchildren, *parents*—not grandparents—have the responsibility of raising their children. (Ephesians 6:4) The Bible commands your grandchildren to respect and obey their parents. (Ephesians 6:1, 2; Hebrews 12:9) So try to avoid barraging their parents with unrequested advice or undermining parental authority.—Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

True, stepping back, holding your tongue—and perhaps your breath—and letting your children do their job as parents is not always easy. But as Gene puts it, "unless they ask for advice, you have to go with what *they* feel is best for their children." Says Jane: "I am careful not to say, 'This is the way it should be done!' There are a lot of different ways to do things, and if you're opinionated, it can cause problems."

Grandparents often play a role in passing on the family history

What Grandparents Can Give

The Bible portrays having grandchildren as a blessing from God. (Psalm 128:3-6) By taking an interest in your grandchildren, you can be a powerful influence in their lives, helping them to develop godly values. (Compare Deuteronomy 32:7.) In Bible times a woman named Lois played a significant role in helping her grandson, Timothy, to grow up to be an outstanding man of

God. (2 Timothy 1:5) Similarly, you can experience joy as your grandchildren respond to godly training.

You can also be a source of needed love and affection. True, you may not be the gushy, affectionate type. However, godly love can also be shown by taking a sincere, unselfish interest in your grandchildren. Writer Selma Wassermann says: "Showing interest in what the child is telling you . . . will certainly indicate your caring. Being a good listener, not interrupting, being uncritical—all communicate regard, affection, prizing." For a grandchild, such loving attention can be one of the finest gifts a grandparent can give.

Our discussion has thus far focused on the traditional grandparenting roles. Many of today's grandparents, however, carry a much heavier load.

WHEN GRANDPARENTS BECOME PARENTS

"I had just come home from a meeting at the Kingdom Hall. There was a loud knock on the door, and standing outside were two policemen with two filthy children whose hair was matted and who looked like they hadn't been washed in months. You could hardly tell that they were children! They were my grandchildren, and their mother—a drug addict—had neglected them. I was a widow, and I already had six children of my own. But I just couldn't say no."

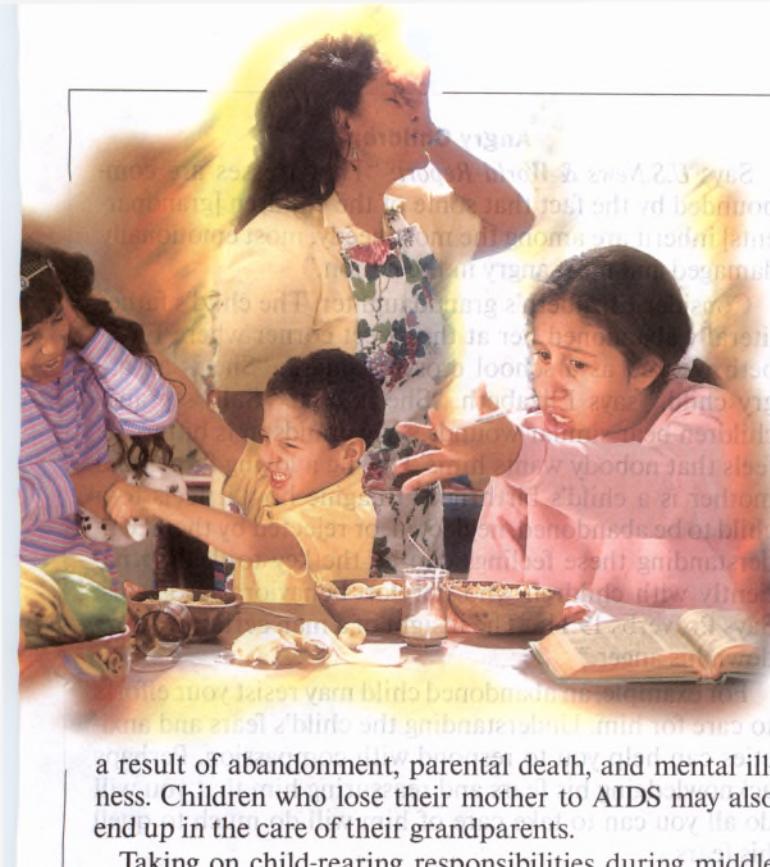
—Sally.*

"My daughter asked if I could take her children until she got straightened out. I didn't know that she was on drugs. I ended up raising her two children. Years later, my daughter had another baby. I didn't want to take her, but my grandson begged me, saying, 'Grandma, can't we make room for just one more?'" —Willie Mae.

* Some of the names have been changed.

GRANDPARENTING used to be described as "pleasure without responsibility." But not anymore. Some estimate that in the United States alone, over three million children live with their grandparents. And the number is rapidly growing.

What is behind this disturbing trend? Children whose parents divorce may end up living with their grandparents. So may children who are neglected or abused by their parents. The journal *Child Welfare* says that because of its immobilizing effects on addicted parents, 'crack cocaine is creating a lost generation.' There are also millions of children who are "parentless" as



Many grandparents find it difficult to meet the demands of raising small children

suffering from heart trouble and high blood pressure, says: "My doctor believes it's related to the stress of raising children."

Many are unprepared for the change in life-style that raising grandchildren demands. "There will be times I can't go places," says one grandparent. "I would feel guilty . . . about leaving them with someone else, so rather than going somewhere or doing something, I don't go or don't do it." Another described her personal time as "nonexistent." Social isolation and loneliness are common. One grandmother said: "In our age bracket most of our friends don't have [young] children and as a result a lot of times we don't accept invitations to go because our children [the grandchildren] are not invited."

Also painful are the emotional pressures. Says an article in *U.S. News & World Report*: "Many of them [grandparents] are racked by shame and guilt at the fact that their own children have failed as parents—and many blame themselves, wondering where they went wrong as parents. In order to provide safe and loving homes to their grandchildren, some must emotionally abandon their own abusive or drug-addicted children."

One survey reports: "More than one-fourth . . . said that

a result of abandonment, parental death, and mental illness. Children who lose their mother to AIDS may also end up in the care of their grandparents.

Taking on child-rearing responsibilities during middle age or during "the calamitous days" of old age may be overwhelming. (*Ecclesiastes 12:1-7*) Many people simply do not have the energy to keep a constant eye on small children. Some grandparents are also taking care of their own aging parents. Yet others are widowed or divorced and must manage without the support of a mate. And many find that they are not prepared financially to take on such a load. In one survey, 4 out of 10 custodial grandparents had incomes near poverty level. "The children were sick," recalls Sally. "I was forced to pay a lot of money for medicine. I got little financial help from the state." One elderly woman recalls: "I had to use my retirement money to care for my grandkids."

The Stresses and Strains

Not surprisingly, one study found that "caring for grandchildren generated considerable stress for grandparents, with 86 percent of the 60 grandparents in the study reporting feeling 'depressed or anxious most of the time.'" Indeed, many report health problems. "It affected me physically, mentally, and spiritually," says Elizabeth, a woman who cared for her teenage granddaughter. Willie Mae,

their satisfaction with their marital relationship had declined as a result of providing care." Husbands, in particular, often feel neglected as their wives shoulder the lion's share of the child care. Some husbands feel that they simply cannot handle the pressure. Says one woman of her husband: "He walked out on us. . . I think he just felt trapped."

Legal Issues

Whether or not to obtain legal custody of grandchildren is a ticklish and complex question. Explains Mary Fron, an expert on the subject: "On one hand, you have few legal rights without custody. In most cases, the biological parents can return and remove the child or children at any time. On the other hand, many grandparents are reluctant to seek custody, because that means standing up in court to say your child is an unfit parent."—*Good Housekeeping*.

Without legal custody grandparents often have difficulty enrolling their grandchildren in school or even obtaining medical care for them. Gaining custody, however, can be an expensive, time-consuming, and emotionally draining ordeal. And even if it is obtained, grandparents may find themselves cut off from state financial support. The journal *Child Welfare* thus advises grandparents to "seek legal advice from a local attorney who is experienced in the state's family law, custody cases, and child welfare."

Angry Children

Says *U.S. News & World Report*: "The stresses are compounded by the fact that some of the children [grandparents] inherit are among the most needy, most emotionally damaged and most angry in the nation."

Consider Elizabeth's granddaughter. The child's father literally abandoned her at the street corner where Elizabeth worked as a school crossing guard. "She is an angry child," says Elizabeth. "She is hurt." Sally's grandchildren bear similar wounds. "My grandson is bitter. He feels that nobody wants him." Having a loving father and mother is a child's birthright. Imagine how it feels to a child to be abandoned, neglected, or rejected by them! Understanding these feelings can be the key to dealing patiently with children who develop behavioral problems. Says Proverbs 19:11: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger."

For example, an abandoned child may resist your efforts to care for him. Understanding the child's fears and anxieties can help you to respond with compassion. Perhaps acknowledging his fears and reassuring him that you will do all you can to take care of him will do much to quell his fears.

Coping With the Pressures

"I've been feeling very hurt and sorry for myself. It's just not fair for this to happen to us." So said one custodial

**God-fearing grandparents can
be confident that Jehovah will
support them in their efforts**



grandparent. If you are in that situation, you may have similar feelings. But the matter is far from hopeless. For one thing, age may limit your physical energy, but age is an asset when it comes to wisdom, patience, and skill. Not surprisingly, a study found that "children reared solely by their grandparents fared quite well relative to children in families with one biological parent present."

The Bible urges us to 'throw all our anxiety upon Jehovah, because he cares for us.' (1 Peter 5:7) So constantly pray to him for strength and guidance, as did the psalmist. (Compare Psalm 71:18.) Give attention to your own spiritual needs. (Matthew 5:3) "Christian meetings and preaching to others helped me survive," says one Christian woman. Where possible, try to teach your grandchildren God's ways. (Deuteronomy 4:9) God will surely support your efforts to raise grandchildren "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.*

Do not be afraid to seek help. Often friends can be of assistance, particularly within the Christian congregation. Recalls Sally: "The brothers and sisters in the congregation were very supportive. When I fell down, they were there to pick me up. Some even helped me financially."

Don't overlook assistance that may be obtainable from the government. (Romans 13:6) Interestingly, according to one survey of grandparents, "most do not know what is available or where to look for help." (*Child Welfare*) Social workers and local agencies that assist the elderly may be able to direct you to helpful services.

In many cases, custodial grandparents are a product of these "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Fortunately, these difficult times are a sign that God will soon intervene and create "a new earth" in which the tragic situations that afflict so many families today will be things of the past. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) In the meantime, custodial grandparents must do what they can to make the most of their situation. Many are having great success in their efforts! Always remember that in spite of the frustration, there can be joys. Why, you may even have the joy of seeing your grandchildren become upright lovers of God! Would that not make all your hard work worthwhile?

* The book *The Secret of Family Happiness* (published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.) contains many helpful Bible principles that custodial grandparents can use in rearing their grandchildren.

Counting the Cost

The sight of a child in need—especially one's own flesh and blood—is heartrending. And the Bible commands Christians to care for 'their own.' (1 Timothy 5:8) Nevertheless, in many situations a grandparent is wise to give serious thought before taking on such a responsibility. (Proverbs 14:15; 21:5) One must count the cost.—Compare Luke 14:28.

Prayerfully consider: Are you really in a position physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially to meet the needs of this child? How does your mate feel about the situation? Is there any way to encourage or assist the child's parents so that they can care for their child themselves? Sad to say, some delinquent parents simply continue pursuing an immoral life-style. One grandmother recalls bitterly: "I took in several of her children. But she kept taking drugs and having more babies. I reached a point where I had to say no!"

On the other hand, if you do not care for your grandchildren, what will happen to them? Could you handle the pressure of knowing that they are being cared for by others, perhaps even strangers? What of the children's spiritual needs? Will others be able to raise them according to God's standards? Some may conclude that in spite of the difficulties involved, they have little choice but to take on the responsibility.

These are agonizing concerns, and each individual must make his or her own decision.

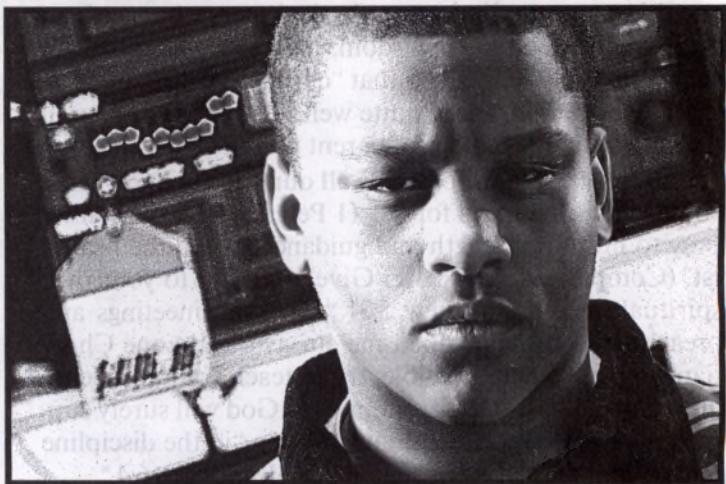
YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

"There are some things that are really nice, and I would love to have them; but my parents can't afford them."—Mike.

ARE there things that you really want but cannot have? Perhaps you've set your heart on owning that new stereo, those shoes all the other kids are wearing, or just a new pair of jeans with a designer logo. Some of your peers own—and proudly display—such things. So if you've been told that your parents can't afford them, you may be disappointed.

But while it's normal enough to want certain material things, for many youths the desire to possess them borders on an obsession. Much of this appears to be the result of media propaganda. Slick TV, magazine, and radio ads convey the message that unless you wear certain clothes or use products with certain brand names, you are a miserable failure. Why, teenagers spend over 100 billion dollars a year in the United States alone!

Then there is pressure from peers. "In the brutally simple world of adolescents," says an article in *Marketing Tools* magazine, "being thought of as uncool by the social group to which you aspire is not simply a matter of not making the grade, or even being rejected: it is the mark of The Loser." The key to being "cool"? In many circles it is to own the best and the latest in material things. And if you can't afford them? "It's really, really hard," admits one Christian youth. "You're going to



Why Can't I Have the Things I Want?

school with non-brand-name stuff, and everybody's teasing you." Admits another youth, "I feel left out sometimes."

Similar pressures may be felt by youths who live in developing lands, where people toil long hours just to eke out the bare necessities of life. If this is true of your family, you may naturally yearn for a better way of life. Having seen TV shows and movies from wealthier lands, you may also have begun to develop a yearning for the expensive clothing, homes, and cars promoted in those shows and films. Because such things may seem hopelessly out of reach, you may find yourself bitter or even depressed.

Whether you live in a poor land or an affluent one, being angry or frustrated because you cannot have certain things can only harm you. It can also lead to constant bickering with your parents. The question is, How can you cope?

A Balanced View of Material Things

First, realize that it is not Jehovah God's desire that his people live in poverty or go without things that they really need. After all, God put Adam and Eve in, not a garbage dump, but a beautiful garden full of trees desirable to the eyes. (Genesis 2:9) Later on, some servants of God, such as Abraham, Job, and Solomon, owned many material possessions. (Genesis 13:2; Job 1:3) Why, Solomon owned so much gold that silver was considered as "nothing at all" during his reign!—1 Kings 10:21, 23.

By and large, though, most of God's people have been of modest means. Jesus Christ himself was poor; he did not even have 'a place to lay down his head.' (Matthew 8:20) Even so, you have never read of Jesus complaining that he couldn't afford the things he wanted. Rather, he taught: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' ... For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." —Matthew 6:31-33.

This does not mean that God is obliged to fulfill someone's yearning for designer clothes or electronic gadgets. God provides our needs—not necessarily our wants. That is why the Bible urges us to be content with mere "sustenance and covering." (1 Timothy 6:8) But let's face it, staying content is not easy. "You have a constant battle between your wants and needs," admits a youth named Mike. Besides our own selfish inclinations, we must battle the influence of God's archenemy, Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) And one of his oldest tricks is to make people feel that they are missing out on something. Eve was thus seduced into thinking that she was being deprived—even though she lived in a perfect paradise!—Genesis 3:2-6.

How can you avoid falling into a pit of discontent? It may sound like a cliché, but there is much to be said for counting your blessings. Don't get mired in negative thoughts about what you do not have. Think positively, and remind yourself of what you *do* possess. (Compare Philippians 4:8.) Mike puts it this way: "There are a lot of things I really want, but I don't dwell on them."

It also helps to be skeptical of crafty advertisements that play on your emotions.* (Proverbs 14:15) Before jumping to the conclusion that you will "die" without that new pair of sneakers or that compact disc player, try being coolly analytic. Ask yourself: 'Do I really need this? Does it serve a practical

"You're going to school with non-brand-name stuff, and everybody's teasing you"

purpose? Is what I already own sufficient? Be particularly leery of advertisements that promote prestige of ownership. The apostle John's words found at 1 John 2:16 are sobering: "Everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world."

When You Really Need Something

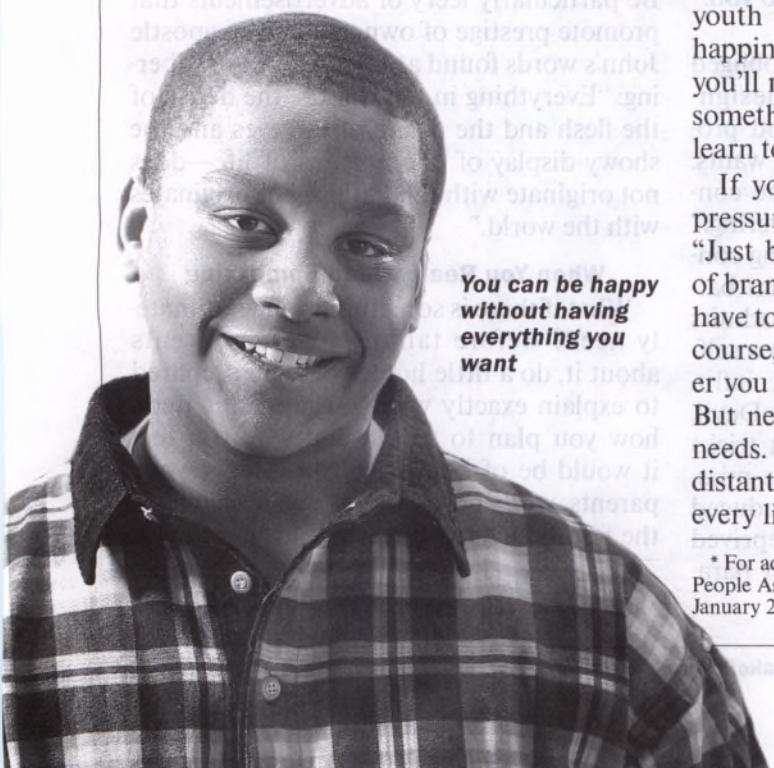
What if there is something you legitimately need? Before talking to your parents about it, do a little homework. Be prepared to explain exactly why you need this item, how you plan to use it, and why you feel it would be of benefit to you. Maybe your parents will find a way to squeeze it into the family budget. But what if they cannot,

* See the series "Advertising—How Are You Affected?", which appeared in the August 22, 1998, issue of *Awake!*

at least for the time being? You may have little choice but to be patient. (Ecclesiastes 7:8) These are “critical times hard to deal with,” and many parents simply cannot afford all the things their children might request. (2 Timothy 3:1) If you avoid placing unreasonable demands on your parents, you can actually make their difficult job a bit easier.

However, it may be that you can take the initiative. For example, do you receive an allowance? Then try to learn how to budget your money carefully so that you can save a portion of it each month. It may even be possible for you to open a savings account at a nearby bank. (Compare Luke 19:23.) That is what a young girl named Abigail did. She says: “I put my money in two different piles—one is for my bank account and the other is for spending.” If you are old enough, you might even try to take on some odd jobs or part-time work.* In any event, if

* See the article “Young People Ask . . . How Can I Earn Some Money?,” in our August 22, 1998, issue.



**You can be happy
without having
everything you
want**

your parents see that you really want to buy something and that you are conscientious about saving, they may be moved to share part of the cost with you, if that is at all possible.

Making some changes in the way you shop may also work to your advantage. For example, if an item is priced out of reach, it may be possible to negotiate for a lower price. If that fails, wait and see if the item goes on sale. Shop around to see if you can find the same item at a lower price. Learn to examine items carefully for quality; sometimes generic products are excellent buys.*

Learn Contentment

Proverbs 27:20 warns: “Sheol and the place of destruction themselves do not get satisfied; neither do the eyes of a man get satisfied.” Yes, just as the grave has an insatiable appetite, some people always want more and more—no matter how much they already have. Avoid that selfish pattern of thinking. In the long run, greed brings nothing but frustration and unhappiness. A youth named Jonathan observes: “If your happiness is always based on owning things, you’ll never be happy. There will always be something new that you want. You need to learn to be happy with what you have.”

If you are content, you can deal with pressure from peers. Young Vincent says: “Just because I see somebody with a pair of brand-name sneakers doesn’t mean that I have to go out and get a pair for myself.” Of course, from time to time, it still may bother you when you can’t have what you want. But never forget that Jehovah knows your needs. (Matthew 6:32) And in the not-too-distant future, he will ‘satisfy the desire of every living thing.’—Psalm 145:16.

* For additional helpful suggestions, see the article “Young People Ask . . . How Can I Improve My Wardrobe?,” in our January 22, 1995, issue.



OCTOBER FAIR

"Europe's Oldest International Horse Fair"

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN IRELAND

LAST week this was a peaceful, sleepy little town where people quietly went about their business. But this week it is bedlam. The town is crammed to bursting as some 6,000 local inhabitants play host to upwards of 50,000 visitors. What really catches the eye, though, is not the heaving mass of people or the many market stalls or even the colorful street entertainers. It is the horses! They are everywhere!

Where are we? At the small town of Ballinasloe, located about 90 miles west of Ireland's capital city, Dublin. What has brought such dramatic changes to this normally peaceful location? It is what the organizers describe as "Europe's oldest international horse fair," the October Fair.

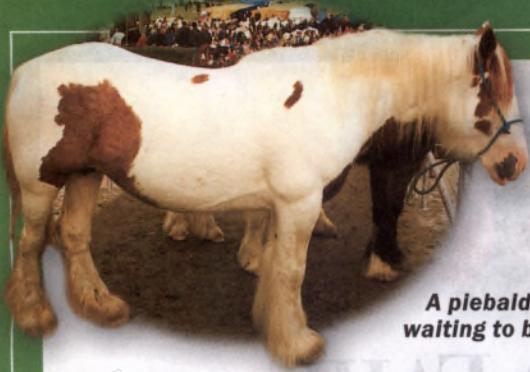
Why Ballinasloe?

What makes the October Fair so popular? *Awake!* interviewed George, a local farmer who has sold many horses here. "At Ballinasloe," he says, "anyone—the rich and the poor alike—can bring any kind of horse to sell. It is as simple as that." But why is that so different? "In many other places, horse dealing is a very restricted and regulated activity," George explains. "Some public sales feature only one breed of horse. And there is usually a lot of detailed paperwork involved

in the sale. There are not too many horse fairs around where anyone can turn up with a horse, lead it onto the fair green, and simply sell it! Here at the October Fair, horse trading still takes place in much the same way as it has for the last two or three hundred years—by straight trading without any formality, right here on the fair green."

'How,' we wondered, 'did Ballinasloe become the center of such frenetic activity? Why did dealers come from as far away as Russia to buy horses here?' A little trip back in history provides the answer.

Some of the high kings of Ireland used to rule at Tara, located about 20 miles northwest of Dublin. This was a religious, and later political, center in Ireland. People went to Tara to pay their taxes and to hear about new laws that had been introduced. What is Tara's connection with Ballinasloe? Well, Ballinasloe grew up around a river ford on one of the natural routes to Tara from the west. Travelers to and from the royal residence found this river ford, which was about one day's horse ride from the west coast, a convenient place to exchange news and goods. There is, say the organizers of the October Fair, 'evidence of horse trading in the area as far back as the fifth century C.E.'



**A piebald cob
waiting to be sold**

In more recent times, Ballinasloe's strategic location made it an ideal place for the large official fair that was established here early in the 18th century. Some farmers would set off a month or so ahead of time in order to walk their cattle to this market to sell them, even though for some this meant a journey of 150 miles. In time, horses became the main attraction here.

The land around Ballinasloe is very fertile and is perfect for raising livestock. It produces strong-boned, healthy, productive animals. "Irish horses," explains author Mark Holdstock, "are well known for their sturdiness." He continues: "Breeds such as the Irish Draught have thrived for hundreds of years in this landscape, becoming tougher and tougher down the centuries."

The Need for Horses

Today the main item on the agenda is horse trading! What made horses so important? In the 18th and 19th centuries, farmers throughout Ireland used horses extensively

to work the land. They needed strong, dependable horses to pull plows on what was often wet, boggy land. But there was another huge demand for horses. Armies needed strong horses that would not be frightened by the noise of battle and that would have the strength and stamina to transport heavy supplies across rough terrain. The Irish Draught had all these characteristics and so was much sought after. Crossing it with a Thoroughbred produced a brave, athletic horse that was ideal for use in the cavalry.

Horses by the thousands, as well as soldiers, were casualties in war. To replace those lost in the many battles fought in Europe, army representatives from many European countries, even from as far away as Russia, were willing to make the journey to Ballinasloe to purchase new, dependable bloodstock. By the middle of the 19th century, the October Fair had become "the largest horse fair in Europe." "Rumour has it," says Holdstock, "that half the horses at the Battle of Waterloo were bought at Ballinasloe."^{*}

Horse Trading Techniques

That particular demand for horses, of course, rapidly diminished during the 20th century. Military vehicles replaced cavalry, and tractors took the place of horse

* The Battle of Waterloo was fought in Europe in 1815. It involved several armies totaling about 185,000 troops. It seems likely that there would have been thousands of horses used for cavalry and transport.

The fair green at Ballinasloe on opening day



drawn plows. In fact, trading almost stopped at Ballinasloe. About 40 years ago, however, this fair was revived.

How did George, mentioned earlier, go about trading horses here? "I just went onto the fair green with the horses that I wanted to sell," he says, "and sooner or later someone would come up to me and ask what price I wanted." George then explains some of the secrets of horse trading: "We would barter for a while, often very aggressively. If the buyer really wanted my horse, he would be careful not to show too much interest, being afraid that I might keep the price high. He might go away and return later, hoping that no one had made a better offer in the meantime. He might even send a colleague to argue with me and keep me occupied, to prevent others from making an offer. Eventually we would agree on a price and seal it with a handshake. Usually, he would just pay in cash, and the horse would change hands then and there. As there was no central body regulating any of this, once the money was handed over, there were no guarantees!"

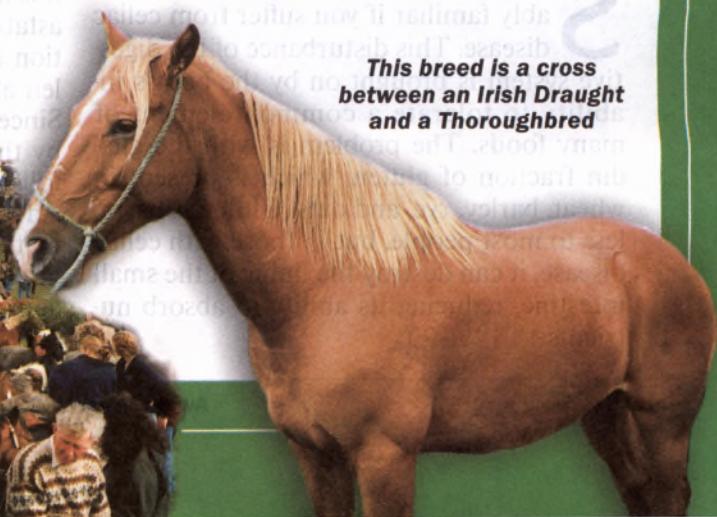
An outsider might find it difficult to know which horse was for sale and which was not. "If it is on the green," George says, "it is for sale." Then he mentions some of the local customs: "In the past—and sometimes even today—a lump of earth was placed on the horse's hindquarters if it had been sold. Otherwise, it was just led away by its new owner."

Following another old tradition in horse dealing in Ireland, the seller used to hand back 'luck money' after the buyer paid for a new horse. This was a small sum of money given back after the main transaction was over. It was supposed to give the horse 'good luck' with its new owner.

"You need a really good knowledge of horses and their worth," warns George. "You normally get what you pay for, and most people leave the fair satisfied. But even experienced horse dealers have to be wary. I know of a dealer who sold a horse and then went to the bar for a few drinks before going home. Meanwhile, the new owner combed and trimmed the horse's hair, dramatically altering its appearance. The 'new' horse was presented to the original owner, who promptly bought it back for a much higher price, thinking it was a different horse!"

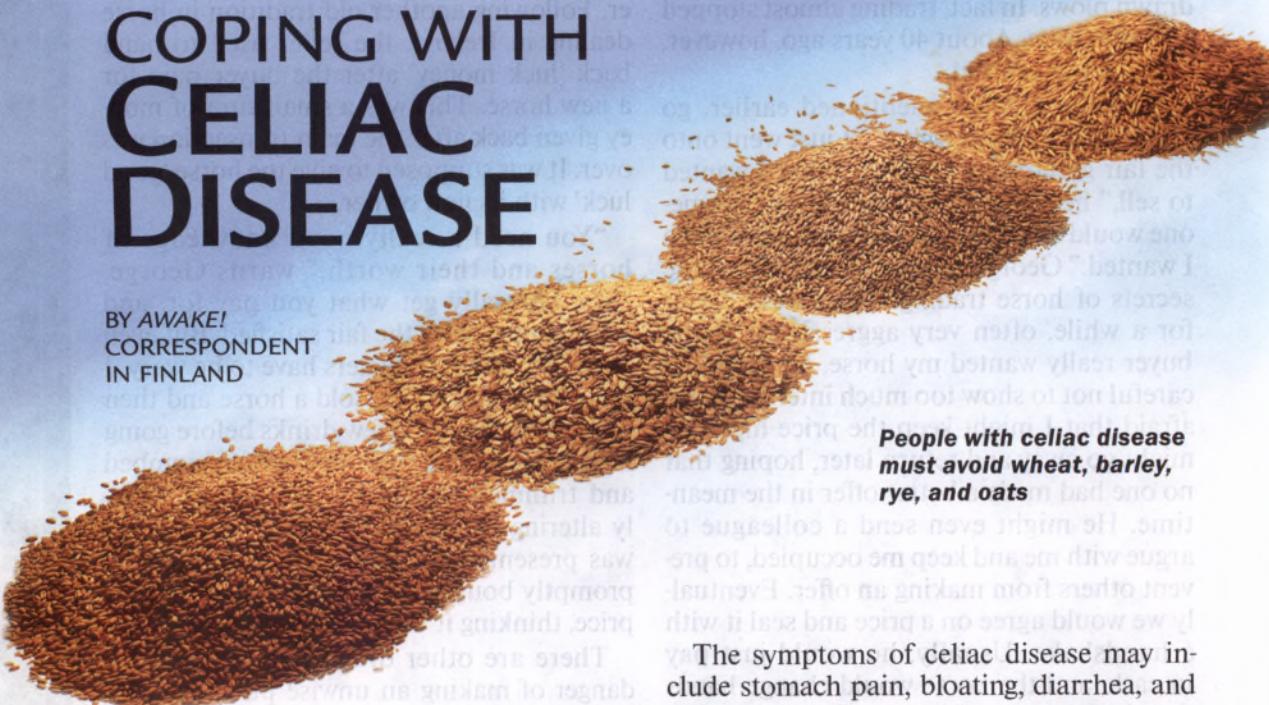
There are other drawbacks besides the danger of making an unwise purchase. "Be careful where you stand!" George advises. "Don't forget that with this many horses standing so close to one another—perhaps for hours on end—and with all this activity going on around them, many will be nervous and liable to kick. I have seen many a frightened horse rear up, even when being handled by an experienced horseman." He continues: "Oh, yes! Wear a good pair of Wellingtons [rubber boots]. That might not be mud you are stepping in!"

**This breed is a cross
between an Irish Draught
and a Thoroughbred**



COPING WITH CELIAC DISEASE

BY AWAKE!
CORRESPONDENT
IN FINLAND



"What flour did you use to make this cake?"

"Why, corn flour."

"And what did you apply to the lining of the cake pan?"

"Bread crumbs."

"In that case, I'm sorry, but I cannot eat it."

SUCH an awkward interchange is probably familiar if you suffer from celiac disease. This disturbance of the digestive system is brought on by the body's inability to tolerate a common element of many foods. The problem is with the gliadin fraction of gluten, which is present in wheat, barley, rye, and oats. Gluten is harmless to most people, but in those with celiac disease, it can destroy the lining of the small intestine, reducing its ability to absorb nutrients.

People with celiac disease must avoid wheat, barley, rye, and oats

The symptoms of celiac disease may include stomach pain, bloating, diarrhea, and weight loss. Of course, these symptoms are present in a number of illnesses, so diagnosing celiac disease can be difficult. "For years I was told I suffered from 'irritable bowel syndrome,'" says a sufferer named Judy.

Celiac disease usually becomes manifest in childhood, but some sufferers do not show symptoms until middle age. Doctors say, though, that in at least some of these cases, the condition may have been present all along, albeit latently. In any event, when it is left untreated, celiac disease can be devastating. Typically, children with the condition are small and emaciated, with a swollen abdomen and underdeveloped muscles. Since the absorption of vitamins is impaired by the disorder, a number of diseases may follow, including anemia, rickets, and scurvy. Advanced cases may manifest bone deformation or osteoporosis. In rare cases, celiac disease can even be deadly, especially among adults whose condition has been prolonged and severe. Yet, with proper treatment, most

people who have celiac disease can cope with—and even improve—their condition.

What Can Be Done?

The best treatment for celiac disease is a gluten-free diet—that is, a plan that avoids all foods containing wheat, rye, barley, and oats. Following such a regimen can be challenging. Says one sufferer: “At first when I heard that I was no longer allowed to eat wheat, barley, rye, or oats, I thought to myself, ‘Well, that’s easy enough. I’ll just leave out the bread and pastries.’ But when I finally realized the vast variety of items that include these grains—especially wheat—I was shocked!”

People with celiac disease must read food labels carefully. While they must avoid wheat, rye, barley, and oats, celiac patients *can* eat buckwheat, corn, rice, soybean, millet, and potato products. There are also a number of gluten-free flour mixtures that are acceptable. Granted, it can be disheartening to find that supermarket shelves are for the most part stocked with ‘forbidden foods.’ But do not become discouraged. Instead, concentrate on the foods that you can eat rather than on those you cannot. In time, food shopping will become less daunting.

It may seem that a gluten-free diet will hinder your social life. But do not cut yourself off from others just because you have celiac disease. Instead, tell your friends what

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Children in Crisis—Who Will Protect Them?

Lending and Borrowing Among Friends

Muscles—Masterpieces of Design

Providing Support

If you know someone who has celiac disease, do not think that he or she is just being troublesome by refusing to eat a particular food. And refrain from making such callous remarks as, “How can a person who looks so healthy be ill?” Most important, do not try to persuade a celiac sufferer to eat something with gluten in it, perhaps saying: “A little bit can’t do that much harm.” It certainly can! Remember, the small intestine of the celiac patient regards gluten as poison, and it reacts accordingly.

It is not difficult to comply with the dietary needs of a celiac patient. A few adjustments in your shopping list will make a sufficient number of food items acceptable. It may even be possible to prepare everything on the celiac patient’s “terms.” Really, all guests can enjoy gluten-free meals. They will likely not even recognize the difference. In addition, the celiac patient will not be made to feel like the center of attention—something for which he or she will be grateful!

celiac disease is, and let them know how they can help you maintain a gluten-free diet. When others know your needs, they will likely be glad to accommodate them. If some make remarks that are insensitive, do not become embittered. Your friendly response will encourage them to be more empathetic.

In time, some patients with mild cases of celiac disease are able to reintroduce gluten into their diet. Whether or not this occurs in your case, maintain a positive attitude. “Keep in mind the good points involved,” recommends one celiac patient. *Good* points? She continues: “Celiac disease is not contagious, and the treatment is simple and clear—a strict diet. The longer you follow it, the better you will feel. In all likelihood, you will be able to feel quite well in spite of the fact that you suffer from celiac disease.”



I Thank Jehovah for My Five Sons

AS TOLD BY HELEN SAULSBERRY

March 2, 1997, was one of the saddest days of my life. Some 600 friends and family members gathered in Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A., for the funeral of my beloved husband, Dean.

He was a Christian elder and the presiding overseer of a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

As I think about our 40 happy years of marriage, I have so much for which to be thankful. I know that Dean is protected in the safest place, in the memory of Almighty God, Jehovah, and that we will see Dean in the future.

DEAN enlisted in the air force after he graduated from high school in 1950. He was not a religious man and seemed to take issue with the teachings of my then beloved Catholic Church. But we agreed to raise our children as Catholics. Every night we knelt and prayed silently. I repeated my Catholic prayers, and Dean said whatever was in his heart. In the years that followed, our five sons were born: Bill, Jim, Dean Jr., Joe, and Charlie.

I was a faithful churchgoer and always took the boys with me. But I became disillusioned with the church, particularly with its involvement in the Vietnam War. The late Cardinal Spellman said to people who might question the rightness of the U.S. cause: "My country right or wrong." I could not approve of my sons going to war, even though my church was involved. Yet, I would pray that at least one of them would become a priest and that my husband would become a Catholic.

A Change of Thinking

One Saturday evening I was socializing with some Catholic friends and a local priest. We were drinking and having a good time when one of the women asked the priest: "Fa-

ther, is it really a mortal sin if after partying like this, you aren't able to get up the next morning and go to Mass?"

"No, no," he replied. "That's all right. On Tuesday night we hold a Mass at the rectory. That way you can come for the Mass and fulfill your obligation."

I had been taught from childhood that you must go to Mass on Sunday no matter what. When I disagreed with him, he cursed and angrily said that a woman should not correct a priest.

I thought to myself, 'Is this what I have been praying for my sons to become?' Even though I knew that all priests weren't like that, it made me wonder.

During the mid-1960's, Jehovah's Witnesses called on us in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and later in Newark, Delaware. Although I admired their Christian zeal, I would always say: "I'm sorry, I'm not interested because I'm Catholic."

Then, one cold November morning in 1970, the Witnesses came again. They asked a question about the Bible and read Psalm 119: 105: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." Those words struck

me. I remember thinking to myself, 'The Bible! Maybe that's the answer, but I don't even have one.' I had been taught that Catholics didn't need a Bible, that it would confuse us, and that the Bible was only for priests to read and explain. I thought that I was being a loyal Catholic by not having one.

That day I accepted from the Witnesses the Bible study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. I read it that week and just knew that I had found the truth! The Witnesses returned with two Bibles, one a Catholic translation. I was surprised to see that the scriptures quoted in that Bible study aid were right there in the Catholic Bible. At that point a progressive home Bible study was started with me, and I was baptized in August 1972, along with my sister Sally, who had also begun studying the Bible.

My husband, Dean, never opposed me, but he was shocked to see me take an interest in something other than the Catholic religion. He was constantly listening and watching. Before, it seemed that I was always screaming at the boys to get them to listen. But I learned that the Bible warns against "wrath and screaming and abusive speech." (Ephesians 4:31, 32) Besides, you don't train children by screaming at them. Once, I heard my husband tell his mother about Jehovah's Witnesses: "Mom, those people practice what they preach!" Not long after that, he accepted a Bible study. Dean became a baptized Witness in January 1975.

Training Our Five Sons

When I started going to the Kingdom Hall, I thought that the meetings were rather long for my sons. So I would leave them at home with their father. It was nice and relaxing for me to go alone. But, then, when talking about the length of Christian meetings, a speaker at our meeting asked: "Have you ever thought about the length of time your children can sit in front of the television set?" That's where my boys were at that very mo-

ment! So I thought, 'No more of that! They are coming with me!' My husband agreed to let the boys come with me, and in time he started attending too.

Regular meeting attendance gave structure and stability to our family life. But there was more. Dean and I always tried to improve our parenting skills, admitting when we were wrong and carefully applying Bible guidelines. We never allowed double standards. What was right for my husband and me was right for our sons. Regularity in the public preaching activity was a must.

When it came to entertainment, no violent, immoral movies were allowed. We always enjoyed wholesome family activity together, including skating, bowling, playing miniature golf, going to amusement parks, having picnics, and enjoying pizza on Friday nights. And Dean was the loving head of our family. During all our married life, we recognized that this is the way it is supposed to be.

—Ephesians 5:22, 23.

When I began to study with Jehovah's Witnesses in 1970, Billy was 12, Jimmy 11, Dean Jr. 9, Joe 7, and Charlie 2. They had already been used to going to church, but now they were learning the Bible. It was exciting for us. I would say to them: "Look! Look at this! Come here!" They would come, and we would excitedly discuss something that was new to us. Through our study of the highest authority on earth, the Bible, the boys were learning to love Jehovah and to feel an accountability to him as their God and Creator—not just to their father and mother.

Before learning Bible truths, we had incurred a lot of debts. In order to pay off some of the bills, we sold our home and rented a house. We also sold our new car and bought a used one. We tried to keep our lives as simple as possible. This allowed me to stay home with the boys rather than work secularly. We felt that our sons needed a mother at home. This also enabled me to spend more time in

the Christian ministry when the boys were at school. Eventually, in September 1983, I was able to become a pioneer (full-time minister). True, our boys did not always have the best things materially, yet they did not feel unnecessarily deprived. They each attended technical high school and learned such trades as horticulture, carpentry, auto mechanics, and graphic arts. So they were equipped for making a living.

Oftentimes I would think about our family life and say to myself, 'I imagine that we are one of the happiest families on this earth, even though we have little materially.' Shortly, Dean began to reach out for responsibilities in the congregation, and the boys did also. In 1982, Dean was appointed a Christian elder. Eight years later, in 1990, our oldest son, Bill, was appointed an elder. Then Joe was appointed that same year, Dean Jr. in 1991, Charlie in 1992, and Jim in 1993.

I know that we did some things wrong as parents, and it's not always easy to remember the things we did right. A friend asked my sons what they remember about their early years as Christians and especially what Bible principles they learned from their early training that helped them to reach out to qualify as Christian elders. Their comments warm my heart.

What My Sons Have to Say

Bill: "What we learned from Romans 12:9-12 stands out in my mind. It reads in part: 'In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead. . . . Be aglow with the spirit. . . . Rejoice in the hope.' My parents had the ability to show what it means to love people. You could see that showing love to others made them happy. It was this loving atmosphere in our home that made Bible truths become a part of our thinking. It is what held us to the truth. My parents loved Bible truth inside and out. As a result, it was never difficult

for me to love the truth, and it has never been difficult to hold on to it."

Jim: "One of the foremost principles that comes to my mind is Matthew 5:37: 'Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No; for what is in excess of these is from the wicked one.' My brothers and I always knew what my parents expected of us, and we saw in them living examples of what Christians should be. The two of them were always in harmony. They never argued. If they ever disagreed on anything, we boys never knew it. They were united, and that certainly made a deep impression on all of us. We didn't want to disappoint Mom and Dad and, most of all, Jehovah."

Dean: "Proverbs 15:1 says: 'An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up.' Dad was mild-tempered. I don't ever remember having an argument with him—even when I was a teenager. He was always very mild, even when he was upset. Sometimes he sent me to my room or took some privileges away, but we never argued. He was not just our father. He was also our friend, and we didn't want to let him down."

Joe: "At 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible talks about 'bringing every thought into captivity to make it *obedient* to the Christ.' In our home we were taught to be obedient to Jehovah's standards and instructions. The truth was our life. Meeting attendance was a way of life. The thought of doing anything else on a meeting night is still a foreign idea to me. The Christian ministry was also a regular part of our lives—never an option. Our friends were at the Kingdom Hall. No need to look any farther. What more can a father do for his sons than put them on the road to life?"

Charlie: "Proverbs 1:7 stands out in my mind. It reads: 'The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge. Wisdom and discipline are what mere fools have despised.' My parents helped us to see that Jehovah is

real and to understand the importance of developing fear of and love for him. They would reason with us, saying: 'Don't do this because we tell you to. What do *you* think? How do you think Jehovah feels when he sees this? How do you think Satan feels?'

"That brought us back to the real issue. Dad and Mom couldn't be with us all the time. They could do only so much to inculcate Bible truths into our hearts and minds. We were on our own at school, at work, and with our friends. That wholesome fear of Jehovah made a big difference in us—and it is still with us today."

"Also, Mom talked continually about her pioneer ministry and the fine experiences she was having. She was always very positive about the ministry, and that had a wonderful effect on us. We developed a love for people like hers, and we came to appreciate that the door-to-door activity can be most enjoyable."

Helen Saulsberry and her family today



Cause to Be Grateful

My sons are married now, and I have five lovely daughters-in-law, all serving Jehovah faithfully. I have also been blessed with five more boys—yes, five grandsons! All are being reared to love Jehovah and to keep his Kingdom solidly in first place in their lives. We pray that someday they will be elders, as their fathers are and their grandfather was.

Not long after Dean's death, one of my sons wrote: "I'm really going to miss my dad, for now he sleeps. No more pain. No more suffering. No more surgeries, needles, and feeding tubes—just peace. I didn't get to say good-bye before he died. Things don't always go the way you plan. I can only say that I'm determined to live my life so that I won't miss saying hello!"

How I thank Jehovah for my loving husband and the sure hope of the resurrection! (John 5:28, 29) And how I thank Him for my five sons!

The Remarkable Voyage of Vasco da Gama



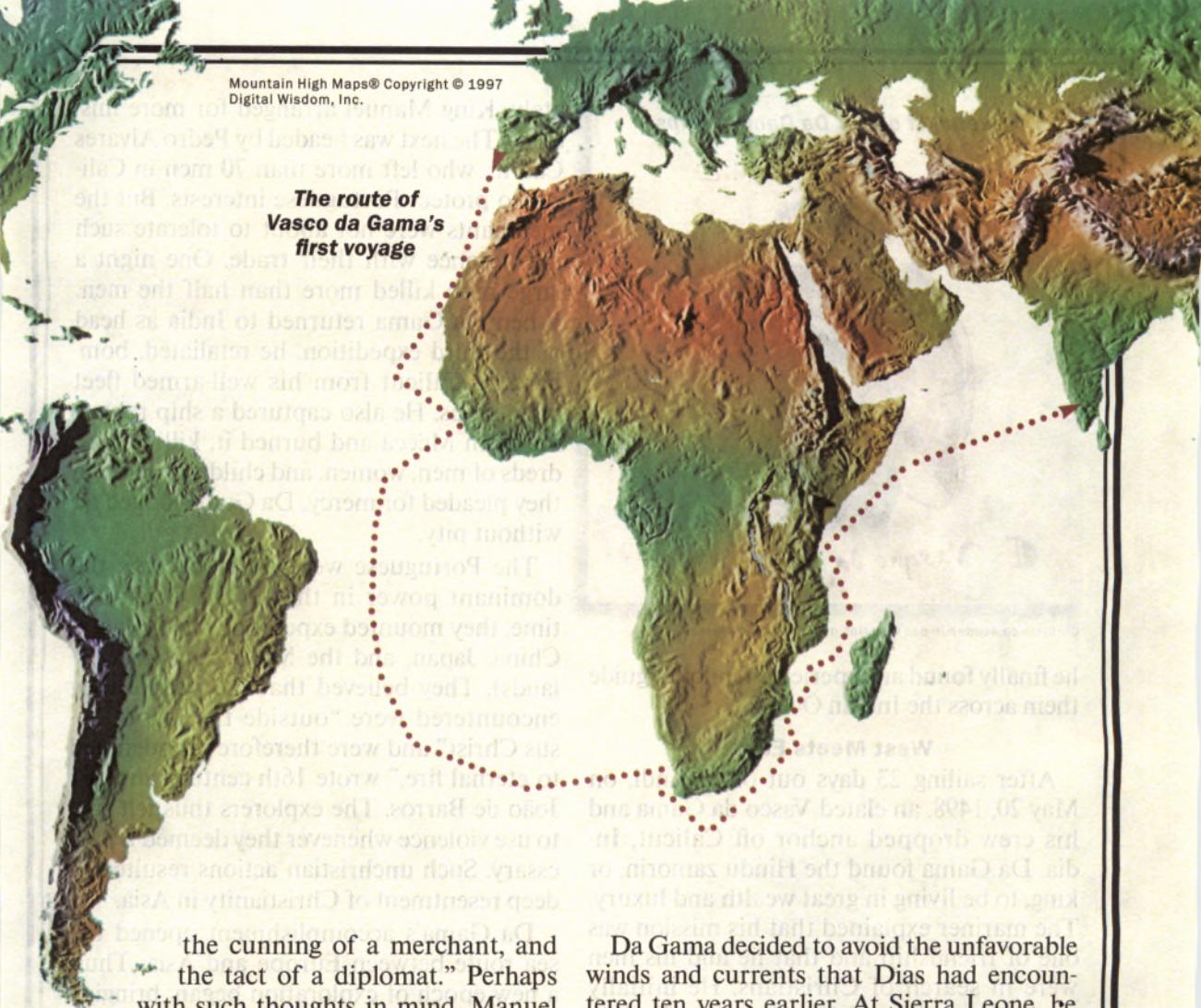
Cortesia do Museu Nacional da Arte Antiga, Lisboa, Portugal, fotografia de Francisco Matias, Divisão de Documentação Fotográfica - IPM

Sheets of seawater arch outward as the ship's wooden prow crashes down on wave after wave. After months at sea and many hardships, Vasco da Gama and his crew are about to become the first Europeans to reach India by sailing around the southern tip of Africa. Such a voyage would be arduous even with today's navigational knowledge and equipment. But to the men aboard Da Gama's three little ships 500 years ago, it must have seemed nearly like a trip to the moon. What drove this intrepid Portuguese explorer and his men to undertake such an adventure? How did it affect the world?

BEFORE Da Gama's birth, the groundwork for the trip had been laid by Portuguese Prince Henry, sometimes called the Navigator. Under Henry's patronage, Portuguese seamanship and ocean commerce had made great strides. For Henry and the explorers who came after him, discovery, commerce, and religion were closely intertwined. Henry's aims were to enrich Portugal and to promote Catholicism. He was governor of the Order of Christ, the highest military-religious order in Portugal. It was sponsored by the pope, and Henry's projects were largely paid for with funds made available through this order. For this reason, all of his ships bore on their sails a red cross.

By the time of Henry's death, in 1460, the Portuguese had explored the west coast of Africa as far south as what is today known as Sierra Leone. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias sailed around the tip of Africa. King John II then confidently ordered preparation for an expedition to India. John's successor, King Manuel I, continued preparations. At the time, Indian spices could be obtained in Europe only through overland connections involving Italian and Arabic traders. Trade on the Indian Ocean was dominated by the Arab Muslim merchants. Manuel knew that the leader of the expedition would have to be, in the words of one historian, "a man who could combine the courage of a soldier,

**The route of
Vasco da Gama's
first voyage**



the cunning of a merchant, and the tact of a diplomat." Perhaps with such thoughts in mind, Manuel chose Vasco da Gama.

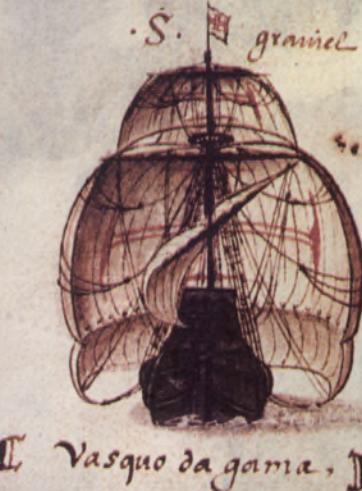
The Epic Voyage

On July 8, 1497, under the banner of the Order of Christ, Da Gama and his crew of 170 marched two by two down to their newly built ships. On the beach a priest granted him and his crew absolution. Should any of them die on the voyage, they would be absolved of whatever sins they may have committed along the way. Da Gama evidently expected trouble—he went equipped with cannons plus many crossbows, pikes, and spears.

Da Gama decided to avoid the unfavorable winds and currents that Dias had encountered ten years earlier. At Sierra Leone, he steered his ships southwest until he was closer to Brazil than to Africa. Prevailing winds in the South Atlantic then carried him back to Africa and close to the Cape of Good Hope. No record exists of anyone taking this route before, but afterward, it was used by every sailing vessel headed to the Cape.

Passing the point where Dias had turned back, Da Gama sailed his fleet up the east coast of Africa. At Mozambique and at Mombasa, the local sultans plotted to kill Da Gama and his crew. So Da Gama moved on to Malindi (now southeast Kenya). There

A sketch of one of Da Gama's ships



Cortesia da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Portugal

he finally found an experienced pilot to guide them across the Indian Ocean.

West Meets East

After sailing 23 days out of Malindi, on May 20, 1498, an elated Vasco da Gama and his crew dropped anchor off Calicut, India. Da Gama found the Hindu zamorin, or king, to be living in great wealth and luxury. The mariner explained that his mission was one of friendship and that he and his men were in search of Christians. He initially made no mention of the spice trade. But the merchants who controlled the trade in the area quickly discerned the threat to their position and advised the king to destroy the intruders. If he dealt with the Portuguese, they warned, he would lose everything. Unsettled by this counsel, the king vacillated. But finally he gave Da Gama what he wanted—a letter to the king of Portugal in which the zamorin agreed to trade with the king.

A Changed World

Da Gama returned to Lisbon on September 8, 1499—to a hero's welcome. Immedi-

ately, King Manuel arranged for more missions. The next was headed by Pedro Álvares Cabral, who left more than 70 men in Calicut to protect Portuguese interests. But the merchants were not about to tolerate such interference with their trade. One night a large mob killed more than half the men. When Da Gama returned to India as head of the third expedition, he retaliated, bombarding Calicut from his well-armed fleet of 14 ships. He also captured a ship returning from Mecca and burned it, killing hundreds of men, women, and children. Though they pleaded for mercy, Da Gama looked on without pity.

The Portuguese went on to become the dominant power in the Indian Ocean. In time, they mounted expeditions to Malacca, China, Japan, and the Moluccas (Spice Islands). They believed that the people they encountered were “outside the law of Jesus Christ” and were therefore “condemned to eternal fire,” wrote 16th-century annalist João de Barros. The explorers thus felt free to use violence whenever they deemed it necessary. Such unchristian actions resulted in deep resentment of Christianity in Asia.

Da Gama’s accomplishment opened the sea route between Europe and Asia. Thus, a new epoch of exploration began, bringing new ideas to the peoples contacted by the explorers. “None of these peoples,” writes Professor J. H. Parry, “escaped European influence, whether social, religious, commercial or technical.” To some extent, Eastern ideas, flowing back through the same channels, began to exert greater influence in Europe. Eventually this exchange of ideas helped to increase awareness of the immense diversity of human culture. Indeed, for better or for worse, the modern world still feels the effects of the remarkable voyage of Vasco da Gama.

A Unique West African Penny

By *Awake!* correspondent in Sierra Leone

HAVE you ever seen money that looks like this? It is a Kissi penny. Some of these coins are displayed at the Sierra Leone National Museum, in Freetown. The information card states: "This curious form of money is native to both Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was in current use in the provinces as late as 1945. Since it was the symbol of a head (rounded end) and foot (pointed ends) it was said to be money with a spirit. When a chief died, many would be broken and stuck into his grave. The last exchange rate noted was 50 Kissi to one West African Shilling."

According to the book *The African Slave Trade*, by Basil Davidson, long ago slaves were purchased for "lengths of iron." Were these Kissi pennies? Some experts believe that they were. Others disagree. Yet, while these coins may not have been used to buy slaves, they were certainly used to purchase wives.

As indicated above, these coins were sometimes used in religious ways, particularly in connection with the unscriptural belief in the immortality of the soul. When a person died, it was considered proper to bury him in his native village. Of course, if the death occurred far away, it was not always convenient to bring the corpse home. The solution was to transport the soul by means of a Kissi penny.

A relative of the deceased would travel to the village

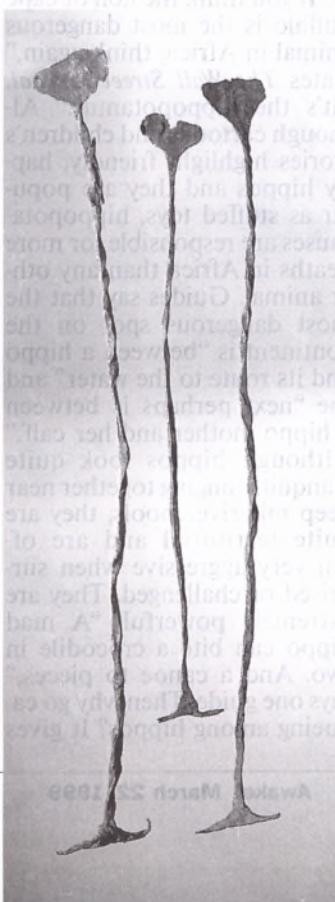
where the death occurred and obtain a penny from the medicine man, who, through incantation, would supposedly attach the soul of the dead person to it. It was then the task of the relative to carry the soul (the penny) home and bury it in the ancestral grave.

The relative would wrap the penny in clean cloth and begin his journey, which was to be completed in silence. It was believed that if he spoke to anyone on the way, the soul would leave the penny and return to the village where the person had died. Then the relative would have to go back to collect it again—undoubtedly after another payment to the medicine man!

If it became necessary to speak during the journey, the relative could do so if he care-

fully put the penny down, though not on the ground, before talking. Once the penny was picked up again, the law of silence was binding.

Measuring 13 to 14 inches in length, Kissi pennies were hardly suited for either pocket or pocketbook. However, the shape was practical for their day, since they could easily be tied in bundles and carried on the head. Rich people used to store these pennies in their lofts. When the climatic conditions were right, condensation would form on the money and drip to the room below. The amount of "rainfall" was a good indication of the wealth of the person in whose home you were sitting.



Mother's Milk Is Best

"Breast milk is the mother of all medicines," says *Newsweek*. "Babies who drink it get the nutrients they need for proper brain development, while lowering their risk of everything from allergies and infections to diarrhea, eczema and pneumonia." The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dietetic Association thus urge mothers to nurse their newborn for at least a year. "Yet this exceptional resource goes largely untapped," notes *Newsweek*. Why? Often because of misinformation. Some mothers worry that they will not produce enough milk to keep their babies healthy. Others think that other foods are needed early on. "The fact is, most moms can meet all of a child's nutritional needs until 6 months, when solid foods are gradually added to the diet," the article states. "And no matter what else they're eating, kids as old as 2 can benefit from the antibodies and fatty acids in mother's milk." There are also benefits for the mothers: Nursing lowers the risk of breast cancer and hastens post-partum weight loss.

Poverty—No Respecter of Countries

According to the *International Herald Tribune*, a recent United Nations report reveals that poverty is on the increase, even in the world's richest countries. Many people in industrialized lands are deprived of "basic human needs," such as employment, education, and health

care. According to the report, 16.5 percent of the population of the United States live in poverty. In Britain the figure is 15 percent. In the industrialized world, 100 million are homeless, 37 million are unemployed, and almost 200 million have "a life expectancy of less than 60 years."

Not Really Cuddly

"If you think the lion or cape buffalo is the most dangerous animal in Africa, think again," states *The Wall Street Journal*. "It's the hippopotamus." Although cartoons and children's stories highlight friendly, happy hippos and they are popular as stuffed toys, hippopotamuses are responsible for more deaths in Africa than any other animal. Guides say that the most dangerous spot on the continent is "between a hippo and its route to the water" and the "next perhaps is between a hippo mother and her calf."

Although hippos look quite tranquil lounging together near deep mid-river pools, they are quite territorial and are often very aggressive when surprised or challenged. They are extremely powerful. "A mad hippo can bite a crocodile in two. And a canoe to pieces," says one guide. Then why go canoeing among hippos? It gives

spectacular views of the river and the animals on shore, say the guides, and "is probably less dangerous than some of the other pursuits that tourists undertake in these parts: bungee-jumping 350 feet off the Victoria Falls bridge, for example."

Pre-Holocaust Warning Flags Reappear

"There are ominous patterns in human rights abuses these days, grimly reminiscent of the dark days of the 1930s when similar activities foreshadowed the Holocaust," says Irwin Cotler, a McGill University law professor and cochairman of the Canadian Helsinki Watch Group, according to *The Toronto Star*. He says that a study conducted in 41 countries by the Helsinki Federation for Human Rights highlights a clear danger signal—a strong growth in hate speech against minorities. Often in the form of hatemongering by broadcasters and state publications, it results in persecution of the minorities. Said Cotler concerning the trend: "This is a lesson of the Second World War that we have not learned." Another forgotten lesson, he said, is "the crime of indifference, the conspiracy of silence."

Children—Victims of War

"According to UN special representative Olara Otunnu, wars and conflicts in the last decade claimed the lives of two million children, left more than one million as orphans, and seriously injured or crippled another six million," reports the German daily *Grevene Zeitung*. The UN Security

Council has condemned all practices that make children the target of aggression. Of special concern are the more than 300,000 children worldwide who are put to use as soldiers. Many of these are said to be pressed into military service, and a third of them are girls. Often child soldiers are used as suicide assassins. A newly formed coalition of nongovernmental organizations is demanding an international protocol that would raise the minimum age for soldiers to 18 years.

Vatican on the Web

In 1994 the Vatican signed a contract to open a Web site on the Internet. Religious services, such as direct confession and consultation with priests about "any doubt" on religious matters, are now available on the Internet, reports the newspaper *El Financiero*. At one site, "cybercatholics" can request prayers to be said for them. It is also possible to watch a live broadcast of the pope giving his Sunday blessing. Then there is advertising that offers "specials on the purchase and sale of religious material." "The problem is that very few Catholic pages are visited frequently," says *El Financiero*. "The Vatican page receives fewer than 25 visits a day, and most of the viewers are from the Catholic press."

Choosing to Remain Ill

"TB remains the world's No 1 killer," reports the *Cape Times* newspaper. Running rampant among the very poor in South Africa, it kills over 13,000 there each year and renders many too ill to work. For the

latter, government disability grants are given and TB treatments are made available. But since work is scarce and pay is often little, some patients decide to quit their TB treatment in order to have their monetary allowances continue. "The money is about 10 times more than what they are used to getting for the odd jobs they do," explained Ria Grant, a director of the South African organization TB Care. "They believe it is better to be diseased than it is to be well once they see how much money they can get."

Sleepy Drivers



"Some experts say drowsy drivers are just as dangerous as drunk drivers," reports *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. "The role that sleepiness plays in [motor vehicle] crashes is largely underestimated, and drowsy drivers pose a major public health and safety threat." According to *The Toronto Star*, studies have found that people are just not able to predict when they will fall asleep or to judge their own sleepiness. "Sleep is a need like hunger and breathing," says Stephanie Faul, a spokesperson for the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety. "When your body needs sleep, it can just click off." What should drivers do when they find themselves repeatedly yawning or

their eyes closing or their car drifting? "Common attempts to wake up, such as rolling down the window or turning up the radio, simply don't work," says *The Toronto Star*. "Caffeine is good for short-term alertness but will not decrease a person's physiological need for sleep." Sleepy drivers are advised to pull over in a safe place and take a nap.

How Many Bacteria?

Bacteria are a common form of life on earth. They exist under the floor of the deepest ocean and 40 miles up in the atmosphere. Their total mass is greater than that of any other life-form. What may be the first serious attempt to estimate their number has now been published by scientists from the University of Georgia, U.S.A. Their estimate is five followed by 30 zeros. "Most people think that bacteria cause disease," states *The Times* of London. "But only a tiny fraction are pathogenic. Even if all the bacteria that live in all animals are added up, they amount to about 1 per cent of the total. Most are not only harmless but vital, helping in such activities as digestion." Surprisingly, 92 to 94 percent of all bacteria are found in sediment more than four inches below the seabed and in the ground below at a depth greater than 30 feet. These areas were previously thought to be virtually devoid of life. About half the dry weight of bacteria consists of their carbon content, an element essential for life. "The amount of carbon stored in bacteria nearly equals that stored in all the world's plants," says *The Times*.

FROM OUR READERS

Self-Medication I was delighted to see the series of articles "Self-Medication—Can It Help or Harm You?" (July 8, 1998) It is well written and gives a balanced overall view of the subject, which could be practical in most countries around the world. It is excellent in stressing the importance of taking personal responsibility for our health by means of healthy life-styles rather than resorting to a 'pill for all ills.'

J. M. J., England

Flirting Thank you for the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: What Is Wrong With Flirting?" (July 8, 1998) My family is recovering from the effects of my flirtatious life. I allowed myself to ignore the pain I was causing my family, especially my loving wife. If I could say anything to my Christian brothers and sisters, it would be: "Please listen to our Father, Jehovah. Turn away, get help, pray to Jehovah, and run, run, run from badness."

D. B., United States

For me, this article confirmed the fact that flirting is not a trivial matter. Our family was hit by a blow in the form of divorce, and seemingly innocent joking played a key role in the problem. I hope this counsel will help those who on their own would not foresee how their conduct, speech, or gestures could influence the opposite sex.

O. M., Czech Republic

It was like a soothing balm for the aching hearts of many sisters. Through this article, we have seen that Jehovah notices and cares about our innermost feelings.

A. M. P., Spain

The paragraph under the subhead "Emotional Affairs" was a revelation to me. My husband was developing an intellectual at-

tachment to another sister in the congregation because of similarities in their backgrounds. In our 17 years of marriage, he had never given me any reason to mistrust him, but I was having doubts. Telling my husband wasn't easy. He was taken aback at first but tried to understand my point of view. He said that he didn't want to hurt me or our three children, and he stopped all contact immediately. I was so relieved by his response.

D. T., Canada

Nazi Peril I read the article "Jehovah's Witnesses—Courageous in the Face of Nazi Peril" with great interest. (July 8, 1998) In the Christian ministry, I have often met people who, in good or bad faith, have accused Jehovah's Witnesses of compromising with the Nazi regime. The information in this article will help me to assist sincere people to understand the historical truth behind the false accusations about us that are in circulation.

A. F., Slovenia

Thank you very much for the article. A few months ago, my husband, who does not share my faith, saw some negative material published by apostates. I am so grateful for the article that gives an answer to such lies.

C. G., Germany

Bird-Watching I am a seven-year-old girl. I liked the article "Bird-Watching—A Fascinating Hobby for Everyone?" (July 8, 1998) The photos and explanations really helped me to see that Jehovah made the world in a wonderful way. The animal I liked best was the black-crowned crane from Africa—because it looks funny. Thank you for the research you did.

F. C., Italy

How Should a Baby Sleep?

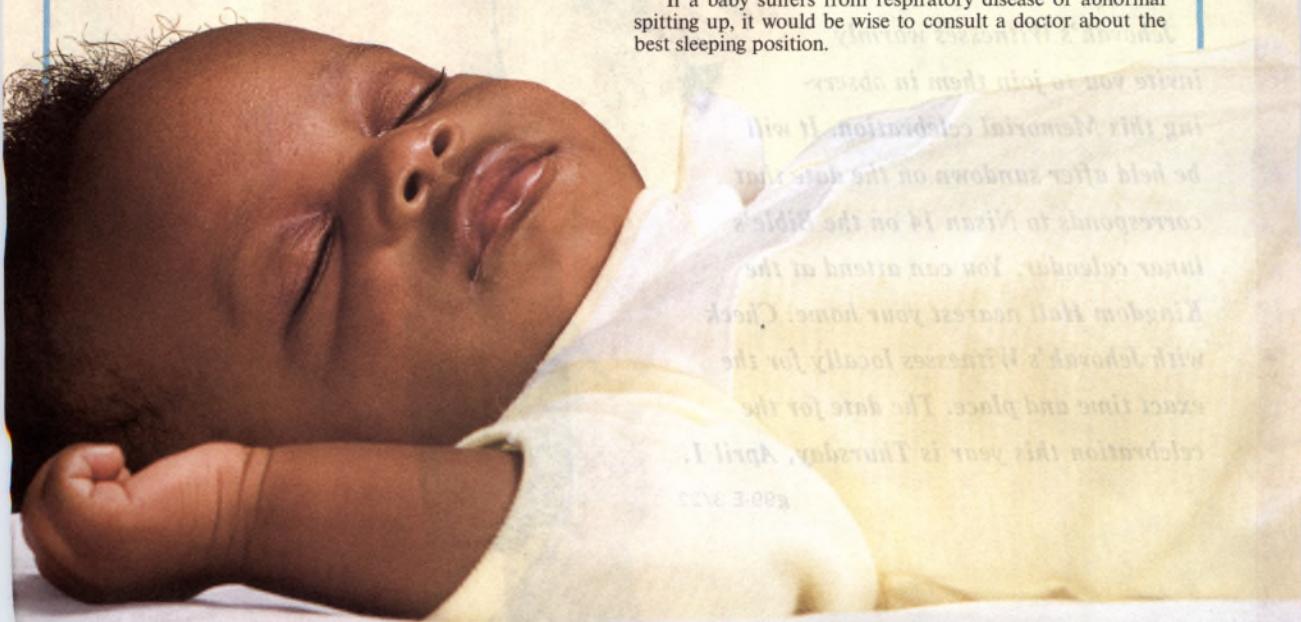
MANY babies around the world have died as a result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In the United States, it is the most common cause of death among babies between the ages of 1 month and 12 months. Is there any way to reduce the risk? According to *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*), research in recent years indicates that the risk of SIDS seems to drop significantly when babies sleep on their back rather than on their stomach. Several countries have instituted programs to alert parents to the association between sleep position and SIDS. In Australia, England, Denmark, New Zealand, and Norway, SIDS fell by at least 50 percent after one to two years of public campaigns to promote putting babies to bed on their back.

Exactly how a baby's sleeping on its stomach is linked to SIDS is not known, but some researchers suggest that this prone position may result in a baby's rebreathing its own expelled air, thus increasing the level of carbon dioxide in its blood. The baby's body may also become overheated because it does

not dissipate heat as well when lying on its stomach. In any case, infants laid down either on their back or on their stomach tend to remain in that position. Studies also suggest that putting a normal, healthy infant on its back is better than putting it on its side.

Why do mothers choose one sleep position over another? *JAMA* notes that mothers often just follow custom—they put their babies to bed the way their own mothers or others in their community would. Or they may adopt the practice they observed in the hospital. Some mothers also feel that their baby prefers or sleeps better in a particular position. Many mothers consistently lay the baby down on its back for the first month but then change to the stomach later on. "This trend is disturbing," states *JAMA*, "because the risk of SIDS is highest among infants at 2 to 3 months of age." Doctors are striving to inform parents of small infants about what they say is a simple, effective measure for reducing the risk of SIDS—placing healthy infants on their back to sleep.*

* If a baby suffers from respiratory disease or abnormal spitting up, it would be wise to consult a doctor about the best sleeping position.



You Are Cordially Invited

THE death of the man Jesus Christ over 1,900 years ago was the most important event in history. It opened up the prospect of attaining everlasting life under Paradise conditions. During a simple ceremony, Jesus used wine and unleavened bread as symbols of his loving human sacrifice. Then he told his disciples: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) Will you remember?

Jehovah's Witnesses warmly invite you to join them in observing this Memorial celebration. It will be held after sundown on the date that corresponds to Nisan 14 on the Bible's lunar calendar. You can attend at the Kingdom Hall nearest your home. Check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place. The date for the celebration this year is Thursday, April 1.

