

Awake!

AUGUST 8, 1984



OLYMPIC IDEALS

On the Way Out?

Awake!

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AWAKE! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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Feature Articles

In 776 B.C.E., the first Olympian Games were organized in Greece. They were revived in the late 19th century to promote goodwill among nations and a high standard of sportsmanship. Professionalism was ruled out and nationalism was discouraged. Have these ideals been maintained? Our opening series of articles examines these and other issues related to the Olympic Games

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Frederick W. Franz, President



A Death Knell for the Olympics?

May 8, 1984:

"The National Olympic Committee of the U.S.S.R. is compelled to declare that participation of Soviet sportsmen in the Games of the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles is impossible."



THUS the bombshell fell on the world of Olympic sports. The Soviets had withdrawn from the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Within a few days other communist nations had imitated their example.

What provoked the sudden withdrawal of the U.S.S.R. from the Olympic Games? According to the official Russian statement put out by the Soviet news agency Tass, the chief motive is SECURITY. They alleged, "Political demonstrations hostile to the U.S.S.R. are being prepared, undisguised threats are made against the U.S.S.R. National Olympic Committee, Soviet sportsmen and officials." They added that the attitude of the U.S. authorities had been a "gross flouting of the ideals and traditions of the Olympic movement."

But was security really the only motive behind the Russian action? In the labyrinth of devious international politics, could there be other motives? Analyzing this move in the superpowers' world "chess" game, the Western press offered other possible causes for the Soviet drop-out. They can all be summed up in one word—POLITICS.

The British weekly *The Economist* stated: "Ever since the Americans stayed

away from the Moscow Olympics in 1980, a Soviet reprisal was a possibility." Thus many observers see the Russian action as simply a tit-for-tat revenge move but with additional ramifications. 1984 is presidential election year in the United States. Thus *U.S. News & World Report* stated: "Once again a weary world watched in dismay as the Olympic Games . . . were held hostage to big-power politics. . . . the real impact of the boycott is political." It then added, "The prime target in the pullout was Ronald Reagan." *Newsweek* said that Moscow's bombshell "was also a harsh signal of the Kremlin's deepening antagonism toward Ronald Reagan." A *New York Times* writer offered the view that "the Kremlin's decision was inseparable from the deep hostility that has settled over Soviet-American relations in recent years."

This is already the fifth consecutive time



that the Olympic Games have become a victim, in one way or another, of politics. Since 1968 the Olympic Games have been tainted by political overtones. They have been used more and more as a vehicle to express political protest and resentment. Terrorists have converted the Olympic arena into a scenario for their bloodletting. The two superpowers have now demonstrated how the Olympic Games can become a pawn in their struggle for supremacy. And the logical question is, What effect will all of this have on the future of the Games?

Long-Term Effects

Will the Olympic Games survive this additional dent in their image? Some officials are still optimistic. William Simon, president of the United States Olympic Committee, is reported as saying, "The Olympic movement is strong. With all its warts, it is still a positive force for peace."

Others, however, have a more somber view. Said Alberto Salazar, holder of the world marathon record, "I'm just sad that this has happened and feel that it's going to be a death blow for the Olympics." *Newsweek* ventured the opinion that "it may foreshadow the final destruction of the modern Olympic movement itself."

Certainly, serious questions are now raised about future sponsorship of the Games. What city or business consortium will want to accept the financial liability of organizing the Games if they are always to be sacrificed like a pawn in political squabbles? Will athletes still want to prepare so hard if their participation cannot be guaranteed because of international politics? These are just some of the doubts now being expressed. But there are other questions—What about nationalism? The use of drugs? The participation of sham amateurs? In other words—Are Olympic ideals on the wane? Or on the way out?

The Olympic Games— Really “for the Glory of Sport”?

A RELIGIOUS festival held in Olympia, southern Greece, over 2,760 years ago was the forerunner of events in Los Angeles, California, that have likely captured your interest. The festival was in honor of the god Zeus, who was supposed to rule on

Mount Olympus. Out of it came the Olympic Games, first celebrated in 776 B.C.E. The different city-states of ancient Greece sent their best athletes to compete there every four years.

The tradition continued until 393 C.E.,



when the ancient games were held for the last time. The following year they were banned by "Christian" Emperor Theodosius who prohibited all pagan (non-Christian) practices in the Roman Empire. So how is it that they exist today?

In the late 19th century, Pierre de Coubertin, a young French educator, became impressed by the use of sports in English public schools. He was convinced that a balanced education should include sports. Later, as one biographer writes, "he became obsessed with [the revival of] the Olympic Games." Coubertin campaigned successfully, and in 1896 the Olympic Games were renewed, appropriately in Athens, Greece.

Among other things, Coubertin felt that the Games, held every four years, would serve to promote world peace. On that score he was wide of the mark. Since 1896 they have been interrupted twice due to two world wars and have often been bedeviled by politics. In 1974 Lord Killanin, then president of the International Olympic Committee, was constrained to say: "I appeal to every single sportsman and woman not to come to the Olympic Games if they wish to make use of sport for political purposes."

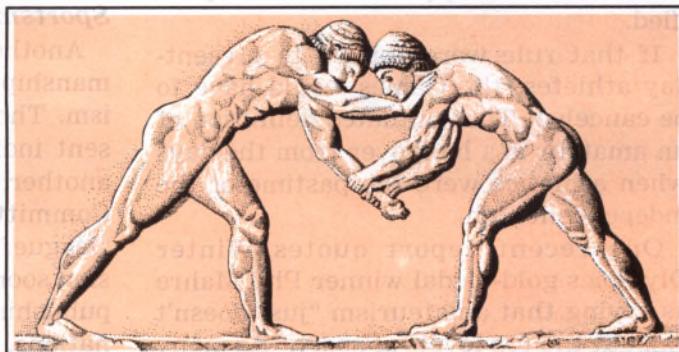
In 1976 and 1980 his counsel backfired. Many nations boycotted the Games precisely to highlight their political grievances. Then at the end of the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980, Lord Killanin made another appeal: "I implore the sportsmen of the world to unite in peace before a holocaust descends . . . The Olympic Games

must not be used for political purposes." The very fact that these appeals were necessary indicates the danger that politics represents for the Olympic ideals. The withdrawal of many communist nations from the Los Angeles Olympic Games lends further weight to this point.

"For the Glory of Sport"?

Were the ancient Olympic Games necessarily based on sportsmanship and fair play? In his critique of the book *The Olympic Games: The First Thousand Years*, British writer-scholar Enoch Powell commented: "They were essentially unsporting and unsportsmanlike. The game did not matter: all that mattered was victory. There were no 'runners-up'; but a victory, even if gained by a punished foul . . . was a victory as good as any other. They were dangerous and brutal." In fact, the book states: "Competitors prayed for 'either the wreath [of victory] or death.'"

The modern Olympics ostensibly have a purer motivation. As the Olympic Creed states: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in



The ancient Olympic Games were "essentially un-sporting . . . They were dangerous and brutal"



life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." One athlete repeats the Olympic Oath, or Promise, in the name of all at the opening of the Games. It was devised by Coubertin and states: "In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."

Certainly it all sounds very noble, but it

has the ring of a different age. What is the reality today? Were these ideals truly reflected in Los Angeles, California, where thousands of athletes were competing for a few hundred gold medals? Were they competing according to Coubertin's original ideals? What is the true driving force behind the Olympic Games? Is it sportsmanship and fair play? Do the Games promote international peace and friendship in a significant way? Or are they another cockpit where political rivalries are fought?

Olympic Ideals in Danger

ONE of the rules of the Olympic Games is that only amateur athletes are allowed to compete. Until recently, any athlete who had gained financial benefit in excess of \$50 (U.S.) from his or her athletic prowess was disqualified.

If that rule were applied to present-day athletes, the Games would have to be canceled! That outdated definition of an amateur is a hangover from the days when athletics were the pastime of the independent rich.

One recent report quotes Winter Olympics gold-medal winner Phil Mahre as saying that amateurism "just doesn't exist at the top levels of sport." As many athletes argue, who today can spend most of his time trying to achieve Olym-

pic standards without some kind of financial support? Thus payments are made to "amateur" athletes through labyrinthine channels that avoid the supposed stigma of professionalism.

Sportsmanship or Nationalism?

Another Olympic ideal is that sportsmanship should prevail over nationalism. The Games are supposed to represent individuals competing against one another, not nations. Thus the Olympic Committee does not post any nation "league." However, the press and television soon make up for that deficiency by publishing their own medals league by nations. As a result, the Games have become politicized. The press has turned them into a competition between the so-



called capitalist and communist nations. Former Olympic athlete Harold Connolly said that for some the Games have become an "ideological battleground of sport."

Writer James Michener, in his book *Sports in America*, speaks of "attempts throughout the United States to forge an alliance between sports and nationalism. Our political leaders have been goading sports into performing three improper functions . . . 1) Sports are being asked to serve as propaganda in support of specific political parties. 2) They are being used to buttress military goals. 3) They are being grossly misused to create a fuzzy, shallow patriotism." He commented, "I am beginning to feel most uneasy when I watch sports being asked to serve as handmaiden to politics, militarism and flamboyant patriotism."

Has Michener noticed this same tendency in the Olympics? "In the 1936 Olympics, Adolf Hitler became the first to exploit sports as an arm of nationalism," he writes. He also quotes other examples from the 1968 and 1972 Games, adding, "Sober critics began to warn that if this unbridled nationalism were to continue, the Olympics would have to be halted."

Are nationalism and patriotism in the Olympics just something played up by the media? Or are the participants actually caught up in it? The recent Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, perhaps illustrate the point. The American ice skaters Charles (Peter) and Maureen (Kitty) Carruthers (brother and sister) won the silver medal. How did they react? *The New York Times* reported: "When the American flag went up," said

Peter, "it was a moment I will never forget." "I just saw the flag go up," said Kitty, "and it looked so good."

When Scott Hamilton of the United States won a gold medal at the Sarajevo Winter Olympics, he "followed his performance by taking an American flag from a front-row spectator and waving it as he skated an extra victory lap around the rink." (*The New York Times*, February 17, 1984) Yes, both athletes and spectators often turn the Olympics into a display of nationalism, with flags as the predominant symbol.

"All That Glitters Is Not Gold"

"Olympic athletes may strive for years to win the coveted prizes, but the value of the gold, silver and bronze medals that finally hang around their necks is more symbolic than real," stated *The New York Times* of February 17, 1984. Contrary to popular belief, the gold medal is not solid gold. That fact was discovered rather ruefully by Charlie Jewtraw, the very first gold-medal winner of the first Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France, in 1924. He is the lone survivor of the Chamonix gold medalists and recently stated: "It really bothered me when I found out about the medal not being solid gold. It wasn't the value. It was the principle of the thing that got me."

The "gold" medals awarded at the Winter Olympics this year in Sarajevo were actually 4.3 ounces of silver covered by 0.21 ounce of pure gold. Market value? About \$120 (U.S.) each. In pure gold the medal would have been worth more than ten times as much.



But as sports writer George Vecsey put it: "Originally, the Olympics were supposed to be free of nationalism, were supposed to be a chance for individuals to test their skills against the best athletes in the world." All of that has changed. "The extra hook in the Olympic Games is nationalism," he added.

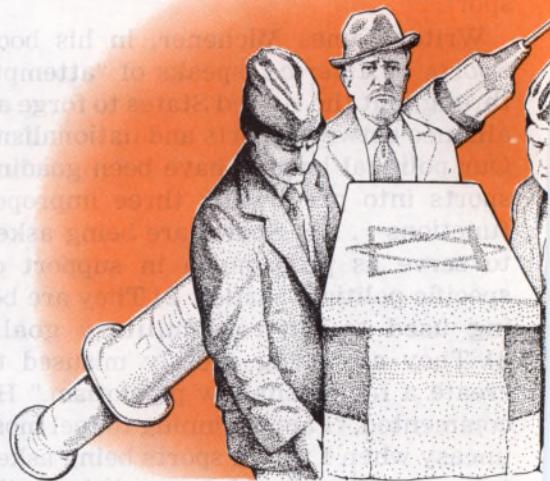
Of course, not all athletes are affected by extreme patriotism. Phil Mahre, the U.S. slalom gold-medal winner, is reported as saying that he did not ski for his family or his country, "but for myself." He added, "I was never in the sport to win one thing. I was here to compete. I was here to perform to my abilities. I was in the sport because I loved it."

However, the pressure to win at any price has now mounted to such a degree that another insidious influence has worked its way into the Olympics —drugs!

Olympic Glory Through Drugs?

The win-at-all-costs criterion has now brought the blight of drugs into the Olympics. For a long time it has been known that athletes in many sports use drugs such as muscle-building anabolic steroids, testosterone and other substances to enhance their ability. However, the scandal that really took the lid off the subject took place in August 1983, at the Pan American Games, when 13 athletes from the United States voluntarily withdrew from the competition. What triggered their dropping out? The sudden disqualification of 11 other athletes because of the use of banned drugs. *The New York Times* correspondent described these disqualifications as "the most sweeping of their kind in international sports history."

Will Olympic ideals lose out to big business, drugs, nationalism and violence?



The following day the U.S. Olympic Committee, responsible for American athletes who would participate in the 1984 Olympic Games, ordered that random tests be made on athletes who qualified to represent the United States. Any found to have used banned drugs would be excluded from the Los Angeles Olympics.

As a result of the spread of drugs in sports, an Olympic drug-testing center, costing \$1,500,000 (U.S.), has been constructed on the University of California, Los Angeles, campus. Tests are performed to try to ensure that no Olympic athlete has the artificial advantage of any banned drug.

Olympics—"Greatest Social Force in the World"?

In 1964 Avery Brundage, then president of the International Olympic Com-



mittee, stated: "The Olympic Movement today is perhaps the greatest social force in the world." That was a disputable opinion then, and still is. As veteran sports journalist Leonard Koppett expressed it in his book *Sports Illusion, Sports Reality*: "Sports reflect social conditions; they don't cause them. . . . What's more, sports have the form they have because they were shaped by the society in which they developed. . . . Whenever society changes, sports change . . . sports don't initiate change."

Like everything else in our modern world, the Olympic Games are subject to the pressures of 20th-century developments—whether it be in the field of big business, competition, violence or the use of drugs. As a result, many people associated with sports are asking disturbing questions about the future of the Olympic movement. Can Coubertin's original

Olympic ideals be sustained? Can the Olympics really remain amateur in the true sense of the word? Will the pressure of big business on so many athletes put an end to the "shamateur" era? Can the rising tide of politics and nationalism be kept at bay? Will fair play and sportsmanship be undermined by the win-at-all-costs philosophy? Will the Olympic motto of *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (Swifter, Higher, Stronger) be achieved by sheer strength and ability—or by drugs? The next few years should provide some answers.

For Christians there are also other questions: Is religious sentiment involved in the Olympics? Could there be a clash with Christian principles? How should Christians view participation in sports? Should sports be the principal interest of one's life? We invite you to follow the discussion in the final article of this series.



The Olympics, Sports and Religion— Is There a Conflict?

“THE last of the ancient Olympic Games was held in A.D. 393. In the following year the edict of the emperor Theodosius prohibited the holding of the Games.” (*History of the Olympic Games*, by Xenophon L. Messinesi) Why did the “Christian” emperor ban the Games? He wanted to purge all pagan activities from the empire. But why were the Olympic Games considered pagan?

Writer Messinesi adds: “We are told that, during the sacrifices to [the Greek god] Zeus . . . a priest stood at the end of the stadium holding a torch. The athletes among the worshippers . . . raced to the end of the stadium toward the priest . . . [the victor] had the privilege of lighting the fire at the altar for the sacrifices. The flame at the altar burned symbolically during the whole period of the Games . . . It is this part of the ceremony which has been resurrected for the contemporary Games.”

The pagan origin of the Games is perpetuated to this day in several ways. The Olympic torch is lit by the sun’s concentrated rays in a ceremony at the Sacred Grove in Olympia, Greece. A head priestess and priestesses participate in the act. The sacred flame is then carried from Olympia to the current Olympic Games city. Millions follow by TV and radio the journey of the torch. The climax is at the

final stage when it is brought into the Olympic stadium to light the flame that will burn throughout the Games.

Historian Messinesi explains: “Nothing of all the ceremonies seems to create such an impression as the Flame which comes from Olympia . . . It links the Games about to be held with the *religious expression* sanctified over the centuries.” (Italics ours.) This opinion is confirmed by the words of the modern founder of the Olympic movement, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who in the year before he died stated: “I therefore think that I was right in trying from the outset of the Olympic revival to rekindle a *religious awareness*.”—Italics ours.

Even as observed in the Los Angeles Olympic Games, there is a quasi-religious atmosphere to the ceremonies—the host country’s national anthem is played, the Olympic flag is raised and the Olympic hymn is intoned. In view of all of this, how should a Christian view the Olympic Games? Moreover, what ideals should be his guide? Is ‘winning the only thing’? Or can simple participation be its own reward?

Sports in the Bible

Anyone reading the writings of the Christian apostles Peter and Paul has to recognize their exposure to the sports of



their day. For example, Paul counseled the Corinthians, who were well aware of the athletic contests held at the Isthmian Games: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it.... Now they, of course, do it that they may get a corruptible crown [fading crown of leaves, *Phillips*], but we an incorruptible one [an eternal crown that will never fade]."—1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.

Was Paul in effect saying that 'winning is the only thing' in sports? Not at all. He was making the point that there is only one first prize in a secular race—but in the Christian race *everyone* can attain a first prize. So run with your mind fixed on winning the prize!

The victor's crown is also alluded to by Peter. Both apostles knew that the different games awarded crowns—of wild olive leaves in the Olympian Games, laurel leaves in the Pythian Games and a crown made of the pine for the Isthmian Games. These all faded and perished with time. Thus Peter recommended "the unfadable crown of glory" to Christian elders.—1 Peter 5:4.

Therefore the point is well made—glory achieved in sports is ephemeral, transient. That is why Paul could say: "For bodily training is *beneficial for a little*; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) He clearly indicates that some physical training and exercise is beneficial or has a limited value. But it should not displace or replace a Christian's dedication to God through Christ. God's Kingdom, not sports, should occupy the first place in

every Christian's life. (Matthew 6:33) Of what good would it be to have an athletic body if the mind became degenerate or debased? Or what if he became an apostate by participating in pagan religious sports events? (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) And therein lies the danger today. Many things in modern sports philosophy compromise Christian principles and ideals, as do those who practice such philosophy. How so?

Winning Is Not the Only Thing

Powerful pressures are generated in sports today. For example, vast sums of money are being paid openly or covertly to all kinds of athletes. Recently a U.S. football player signed a contract guaranteeing him \$40 million. For that kind of money, and even lesser amounts, the athlete has to deliver—victories. He has to



The pagan Olympian ceremony is repeated in modern times



pull in the cash-paying public and the TV advertisers.

These top athletes are the patterns, the role models, for millions of children and young people. Their aggressive, competitive attitudes percolate down to the lower levels of sports participation. Thus the saying "Nice guys finish last" reflects the negative psychological effects of much of modern sports.

The implication is that to be a winner you usually have to be merciless and violent. It is no exaggeration to say that these attitudes are prevalent even at school levels. John McMurtry, a former football player in the Canadian League, wrote: "Progressively and inexorably, as I moved through high school, college and pro leagues, my body was dismantled. Piece by piece. . . . It is arguable that body shattering is the very *point* of football, as killing and maiming are of war. . . . Competitive, organized injuring is integral to our way of life, and football is one of the more intelligible mirrors of the whole process: a sort of colorful morality play showing us how exciting and rewarding it is to Smash Thy Neighbor."

The role model for Christians, Jesus Christ, exhorted his followers: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 19:19; 7:12) The win-at-all-costs driving force that motivates so many sports today is obviously incompatible with the teachings of Christ. A balanced person does not have to win every time in order to enjoy healthy participa-

tion in a sport. That may be difficult for some to understand, but surely it is a matter of focus. Sports should be a health-promoting, relaxing pastime. Certainly for the average amateur, participation should bring its own satisfaction. Otherwise, why would thousands participate in athletics if there can only be a handful of satisfied winners? The vast majority know they cannot win. For many, their pleasure is in having participated and having finished the race.

The competitive spirit leads to divisions, pride and bragging. Then the dignity of the loser is not respected. Because of this worldly spirit, Christians would not want to be involved in competitive leagues, not even among themselves. Neither would they want to play one Christian congregation against another in any sport. Remember, regardless of current philosophy, *winning is not everything*. As James Michener wrote: "Losing a game is not equivalent to death. Failing to be *numero uno* does not make me a lesser human being."

Far more important than any accomplishments in the field of sports are the qualities we develop as imitators of Christ. Defeating others in a sport does not make us better people. *We might even become worse*. As the apostle Paul counseled: "Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another." "But let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person."—Galatians 5:26; 6:4.

Young People Ask...

How Can I Improve My Study Habits?

HOW much homework do you get," han *Awake!* staff writer asked a group of school-age youths. Their reply was immediate and in almost perfect unison: "TOO MUCH!" Complained one girl, "After we've spent hours in school, why don't they give us a *break* when we get home?"

But if you want both good grades and skills that will benefit you for the rest of your life, it will take time and effort on your part. 'What one sows one reaps.' (Galatians 6:7) How, though, can school and study time be used most effectively?

In the Classroom

"I always daydreamed," said Ronda. "That was my biggest problem. That's why I got such bad grades. My mind would be off somewhere else. Always wandering." Failure to listen is so widespread that some schools have classes for listening instruction. Perhaps all that is really needed, though, is strong motivation and a willingness to put forth some extra effort.

Says the author of *How to Study in High School*: "Time spent in class is learning time. When you are in class, listen carefully to the teacher's explanations and to the discussions and other lessons." As a youth, Jesus took advantage of opportunities to learn. At age 12 he came to be in the company of teachers of the Bible. Did he daydream? No, for his parents "found

him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and *listening* to them and *questioning* them." (Luke 2:41, 46) Why not do the same?

Your Study Environment

Following through on homework assignments, however, is difficult for many youths. Dr. William Glasser points out, though, that many students "have less than ideal conditions at home in which to work." Most of us need a quiet place that is set aside for study. If you share a room, or if space is limited in your home, improvise! Perhaps the kitchen, or someone's bedroom, can be proclaimed your study area for an hour or so each evening. Or, as a last resort, try a public library or a friend's home.

If possible, use a desk or a table with plenty of space on which to spread out your work. Keep supplies such as pencils and paper handy so you won't have to get up constantly. Distracting pictures, or desk-top souvenirs might best be removed. And, sorry to say, having the TV or the radio on generally works *against* concentration. So do telephone calls or visits. As author Eugene Schwartz says, "Study is business—all business."

Make sure, too, that you have adequate, glare-free lighting (at least 100 watts). Good lighting reduces study fatigue and protects your eyes as well. And don't forget to check ventilation and room temper-



The environment in which you study will often have a powerful effect on both your learning and your grades



ature. A cool room provides a more invigorating study environment than a warm room does.

What if you find yourself thinking, 'I'm just not in the *mood* for studying'? Remember, study is serious business, and life seldom allows us the luxury of indulging our moods. Your parents likely have to perform their various tasks in and out of the right mood. Homework can therefore be viewed as an exercise in self-discipline, a rehearsal for later work experience. At a secular job, you will have to start work at the same time every day. And employers value workers who can be trusted to work by themselves. So be businesslike about your homework. Says one educator: "If possible, studying should be done in the same place and at the same time every day. Thus, regular study will become a habit, and . . . will reduce your resistance to study."

Your Study Routine

At Philippians 3:16 Paul encouraged Christians to "go on walking orderly in this same routine." Paul was speaking of the course of Christian living. However, a routine, or pattern of doing things, is helpful in other aspects of life too—such as

when you study. Try organizing what you are going to study. Avoid studying similar subjects (such as two different foreign languages) in sequence. Plan brief breaks between subjects, especially if your homework load is heavy.

If your assignment involves a lot of reading, you might try the following method. First, you SURVEY your material. Glance through the assigned material, looking at subheadings, charts, and so forth, so as to get an overall view of it. Next, make up QUESTIONS based on chapter titles or topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs. (This keeps your mind focused on what you read.) Now you READ, looking for the answers to these questions. When you've finished each paragraph or section, you RECITE, or tell yourself from memory, what you have read, without looking at the book. And when you have finished the entire assignment, you REVIEW by scanning headings and testing your memory of each section. Some claim that this method has helped

students retain up to 80 percent of what they read!

Thinking on what you read will help you to retain it. One educator says: "It's important to have the student realize that a fact doesn't exist in isolation but is always related to other information." Try, therefore, to relate what you study to what you already know and have experienced. In this way, facts begin to *mean* something to you; your knowledge grows into understanding. And as Solomon observed, "To the understanding one knowledge is an easy thing."—Proverbs 14:6.

There Will Be a Test on This Next Week'

These words need not cause you needless anxiety. Your regular routine of studying puts you miles ahead of the student who tries to cram at the last minute. Still, there are a few points to keep in mind.

First of all, try to find out from your teacher what kind of test it will be. Will it be an essay test? Multiple choice? Also, in the days or weeks preceding the test, lis-

ten carefully for clues as to what will appear in the test. ("This next point is very important" or, "Be sure to remember that" are typical hints, says *Senior Scholastic* magazine.) Next you can start (days in advance, if possible) reviewing your notes, textbooks and homework assignments.

Now, homework is a very personal thing, and it would be pointless, even dishonest, somehow to talk a friend into doing it for you. Nevertheless, one of your parents would probably be happy to drill you with questions or listen to you as you recite classroom material. "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another," Solomon reminds us.—Proverbs 27:17.

The night before the test, relax and try to get a good night's sleep. "Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span?" says Jesus. (Matthew 6:27) Interestingly, studies indicate that one of the biggest causes of test anxiety is a *failure to prepare ahead of time*. Beat such anxiety by cultivating good study habits!

Do Your Best!

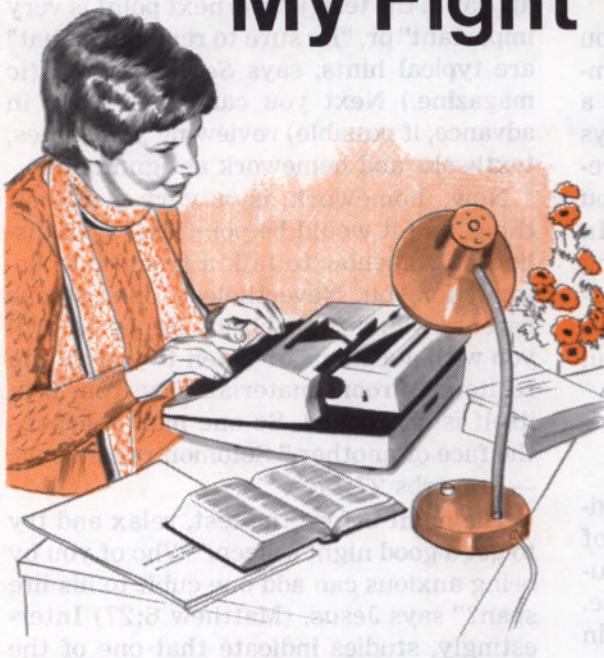
One girl said, "I feel very defeated when I fail a test . . . Even if I've studied real hard, I still feel I've let myself down." But there's no reason to feel defeated if you have really done your best. And if your efforts at studying have resulted in your attaining a workable knowledge of the subject—even if your test scores don't seem to reflect that—your efforts have not been wasted.

Grades are merely a way of gauging academic progress. They are not the final judgment on your worth as a person. Nevertheless, take advantage of the time you are in school and learn as much as you can. Usually that effort will be reflected in grades that will make you—and your parents—happy.



Good study habits will allow you to face tests with more confidence

My Fight to the Finish



Millions of people have at times found themselves faced with difficulties, such as chronic health problems that held no promise of any quick solution, that called for a real fight to the finish. I hope my experience may encourage those with such difficulties not to lose hope but to keep on fighting.

—As told by Monika Siebert

I WAS brought up in northern Germany as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Other than the fact that I was raised without a father—he died when I was very young—my childhood was quite normal. I grew up to be a carefree, happy-go-lucky redhead with plenty of freckles and a cheery disposition to match. In time I took up the full-time ministry as a pioneer preacher.

One Wednesday in the month of May, 16 years ago, Walter, the seven-year-old son of one of the Witnesses, and I were walking alongside the Rhine River, headed for a small village where we intended to preach, when little Walter scolded: "Monika, why do you keep stumbling? Be careful, or you'll fall down." I laughed: "Don't worry, nothing's wrong." But something was wrong, as I was soon to discover.

Several weeks later my eyes began to play tricks on me. Everything became

blurry and I began seeing double. But I talked away my fears, saying: "I've been reading too much. I've strained my eyes. Maybe I need glasses."

So I went to an optometrist and asked about being fitted for glasses. But to my surprise, he said: "No, glasses will not help. Let me send you to a neurologist for a checkup." I found this rather strange but decided to do as he suggested. However, since Hannelore, my partner, and I had friends visiting us at the time, I put it off for the moment.

Struck by a Disease

A few evenings later, when we were returning home with our friends from one of our Christian meetings, a piercing headache hit me like an electric jolt. It felt as though someone was trying to drill a hole in my head. The vibrations caused by the moving car were almost unbearable. As soon as we got home, we called

the doctor and I was taken to the hospital. I'll not soon forget the date: July 5, 1968.

At first no one seemed to know what was wrong. But at least medication was effective in relieving the pain. It was surmised I might have a brain tumor. To make sure, more extensive tests were necessary, so I was transferred to the University Clinic in Bonn, Germany's capital, on the Rhine River.

In this difficult period I was greatly strengthened by experiencing the love of a worldwide brotherhood, a brotherhood of which I was privileged to be a part. Local Witnesses, whom I had never met before, came to visit me, many even bearing gifts. No disease—regardless of its severity—could ever rob me of that loving bond!

After days of agonizing uncertainty, I was returned to the local clinic and told, as gently as possible, the real problem. I had a disease I had never even heard of: *multiple sclerosis*. At first I failed to grasp the full implications. Then the awesome truth: It is a crippling disease for which, as yet, no cure has been found.

Depression or Action—Which?

I learned that multiple sclerosis is a disease of the brain, the spinal cord and the nervous system. The myelin, or fat-like substance surrounding the nerves, is destroyed, thus blocking the travel of nerve impulses from the brain to the muscles they are meant to activate. Partial paralysis with a loss of feeling in the limbs is the result. It is a difficult disease to deal with, affecting each victim in a different way. It is also highly unpredictable, often times misleading the patient into thinking he is cured, only to strike again at an unexpected moment. It is this uncertainty and unpredictability that play havoc with your emotions.

Of course I was depressed. My plans for the future were now shrouded in uncertainty. It took time to adjust. But I was determined that there would be no self-pity, nor would I allow others to feel sorry for me. I could either resign myself to the crippling effects of my illness or fight. I chose to fight.

I had so many things for which to be grateful. I was alive. My mind was active.

“I could either resign myself to the crippling effects of my illness or fight. I chose to fight”

And I could still use my hands. Why not use them in writing letters, telling people about the wonderful hope of God's Kingdom? I was permitted to continue in the full-time ministry, although my methods of carrying it out were now quite different. Still, it gave me something to hang on to, a reason to keep fighting.

Mother taught me that way—to hold on. She had become one of Jehovah's Witnesses while I was still small, so from childhood on I had been diligently trained in the ways of Jehovah. By the time I was seven, I was regularly accompanying her in the preaching activity from door to door. This was good training and brought me real joy. Her exemplary zeal for God's Kingdom interests created in me, even at that early age, a desire to serve Jehovah with all my strength. At 18, after completing school and learning an occupation, I took up the vocation of the full-time ministry.

Had I lost this wonderful privilege of service when I became sick, I would have felt as though the rug had been pulled out from under my feet. Although my

strength continued to ebb, yet what I still had I could use in worshiping Jehovah, thus serving him with my entire strength. This thought was most comforting.

My letter writing did not go without results. For example, there was 16-year-old Claudia who, because of parental opposition, could not study the Bible at home. So we studied by letter. She progressed nicely, became one of Jehovah's

"My closest friends know that at times the tears flow long and hard"

Witnesses and is now serving in the full-time ministry too.

Meanwhile, the doctors were doing their best to help me. Baths, massages, different kinds of medication, even electric-current treatments were tried. But nothing brought real improvement.

New Treatment—Scare Tactics

The doctors were determined to slow down the debilitating effects of my disease. One day, with several doctors gathered around my bed, the head physician said: "We have decided to give you massive blood transfusions. Some people have been helped in this way."

This suggestion came so unexpectedly that I could only shout "NO!" I then explained my religious reasons for refusing. (Acts 15:28, 29) The head physician accepted my decision, but the assistant medical director did not. At least twice a day he tried to get me to reconsider, arguing that my refusal would mean shortening my life. But I was adamant.

One of the nurses resorted to a more subtle method. I was in a single room, but my bed was shoved over to the win-

dow to make room for another person. It was claimed that my room was the only one that had an oxygen outlet. (Later I learned this was untrue.) Dying patients were placed in the room and given oxygen while I was forced to watch their death struggles! When two of them died, the nurse was explicit in pointing out what would happen to me should I continue to reject their method of treatment. This continued for several days until a kind lady working at the hospital intervened.

During the same time an elderly doctor secretly slipped me a medical journal and a book containing articles about the blood-transfusion treatment that the doctors were so strongly recommending. But the articles did not describe it as a cure; they explained it was simply for the purpose of research. Knowing this made me even more determined to remain firm.

Finally, the matter was dropped, and suddenly I was the main topic of conversation. Whispers echoed through the corridors about "the strong faith of that girl in room 327." How grateful I was that prayer and Bible study had made my relationship with Jehovah so strong that I was enabled to demonstrate my love for him not just "in word" through my letters but also "in deed."—1 John 3:18.

Determined to Walk Again

I tried to stand—repeatedly—but over and over again my legs collapsed beneath me. At home I would crawl around on my hands and knees, and, of course, try to walk, but always without success. Then one day I was actually able to stand up! I could hardly wait for my doctor's next visit. When she came I slowly pulled myself out of bed, propped myself up on my feet—and promptly fell to the floor in a pitiful little heap. My willpower was

strong, but my disease was stronger. Was it of any use to continue the fight?

I entered another clinic where exercising was stressed. My arms were still strong, so I was trained to prop myself up against a wall and then pull myself up into a standing position. Later I was instructed to walk along the crossbars, holding myself up by the arms. It looked so easy,

But not all is bleak. There are disappointments, true, but they are counterbalanced by many happy experiences. I am acquainted with many faithful and loving brothers whose encouragement is most valuable. I have learned to conserve my strength, changing my way of life to fit the new situation. I have learned to be patient and to rejoice at the smallest sign of progress. My personal relationship with Jehovah has been strengthened by my seeing how helpless man is in his fight against disease. Only Jehovah can bring about complete healing. He has promised to do so.—See Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:4.

The full-time ministry continues to strengthen me, as do also the words of Isaiah 41:10, 13: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness.” For I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, the One saying to you, ‘Do not be afraid. I myself will help you.’”

Every Christian must “fight the fine fight of the faith,” each in the situation in life peculiar to him alone. (1 Timothy 6:12) But the fight is the same. And one day our fight will have been fought to the finish! I often think about what that will mean for me personally when I read God’s promise at Isaiah 35:5, 6: “Then shall blind men’s eyes be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. *Then shall the lame man leap like a deer*, and the tongue of the dumb shout aloud.”—*The New English Bible*; italics ours.

Be sure of one thing. If I am blessed by Jehovah with everlasting life in his new system of righteousness, it will take a mighty frisky deer to outleap me!

‘My relationship with Jehovah has been strengthened by seeing how helpless man is. Only Jehovah can bring about complete healing’

but at first I could take only two or three steps, then four, then five, slowly but surely.

I remained optimistic, although my doctors said that even though I was learning to walk again, I would never be able to do without my wheelchair. To my joy, they were mistaken. I left the clinic in June of 1970 and have not used my wheelchair since! Of course, since each case is different, not all may be as fortunate as I have been.

What of the Future?

Sixteen years have passed since those first stumbling steps along the Rhine. Now, in 1984, I am still walking without a crutch. And although my friends say I have kept my sunny disposition and that I’m as cheery as ever, this partially has been my attempt to ward off pity. My closest friends know that at times the tears flow long and hard. My disease is still incurable and may very well remain so until God’s new system of things makes all things new.

Chinese Characters

—Why Are They Written That Way?



THE little boy sitting at the desk is the very image of concentration. His left hand is holding down a sheet of rice paper with large grids printed on it. His head is cocked slightly to the left, and his eyes are focused on the tip of a brush with a slender bamboo shaft, held vertically in his right hand. Moving the brush in a slow and controlled motion, punctuated by an occasional dip of the brush in an inkpot, he is painstakingly trying to learn how to write—Chinese.

What comes out on the paper may look impossibly complicated and hopelessly confusing to the Western eye. Yet, by endless practice and repetition the little boy, like millions of other young pupils in China, is being taught, in perhaps the only practical way, the rudiments of written Chinese.

A Record of Ideas

What sets Chinese apart from most other languages is the fact that it does

not have an alphabet. Because of this, Chinese characters are not written by simply spelling out the sounds with letters, as one does in English or in other alphabetic languages. Basically, written Chinese is not a record of spoken *sounds*; rather, it is a record of *ideas*.

In the parlance of the linguists, written Chinese is *ideographic writing*, or idea writing. Each word or character, by its shape and appearance, conveys to the reader a certain idea. If the idea is a simple one, the character may just be a simple picture of it. The linguists call this type of character *pictographic*, or picture writing. They include words for common objects that are familiar in everyday life, such as

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|---|------|---|
| SUN | 日 | MOON | 月 | TREE | 木 |
| MAN | 人 | MOUTH | 口 | | |

Looking at the words above, you may or may not recognize them as pictures. This is because through the years, these picture words have gone through successive stages of simplification to make them easier to write. But if you were to examine the older versions of these words, the picture element is quite apparent. In the accompanying chart, you will see the changes some characters have gone through, from the purely pictorial characters at the left to the stylized form in use today.

Obviously, a system of writing made up of picture words alone would be very limited because there are only so many ideas that can be depicted by simple pic-

tures. Thus, for more complicated and abstract ideas, the characters are usually made up of several of the simple picture words, put together in such a way that people, out of their common experience, can recognize the ideas. For example, the "sun" and "moon" together means "bright," the "man" leaning against the "tree" means "rest."

日 + 月 = 明
SUN MOON BRIGHT

人 + 木 = 休
MAN TREE REST

It is perhaps easy to see why these two characters are formed in those particular ways. In the simpler way of life in times past, there was probably nothing brighter than the sun or the moon, and a brief pause under a tree would be most restful.

Some Unusual Ideas

There are, however, some words that appear to have the most unusual stories behind them, stories that seem totally unrelated to the common, everyday experience. Take, for instance, the character for "ship." This is surely not a particularly complicated idea to express. Yet, surprisingly, the character is quite complex. It is made up of three simple characters:

舟 + 八 + 口 = 船
VESSEL EIGHT MOUTH SHIP

The third part, "mouth," is a very common character that can also mean "people," much as it does in the English expression "another mouth to feed." So the character for "ship" is derived from the idea of "eight persons in a vessel." Curious, is it not? Where did such an idea come from?

Consider another example. The character for "greed" or "greedy" is written with two "tree" characters above the character for "woman" or "female."

木 + 木 + 女 = 懒
TREE TREE WOMAN GREED

The top part of the word, two trees side by side, is itself the character for "forest." Nevertheless, pictorially, the entire character seems to represent a woman in front of, or perhaps looking up to, two trees. Why would the idea of "greed" be represented this way?

Many other characters can be analyzed with similar results. They tell fascinating stories that appear to be totally unrelated to the common, daily experiences of the people. They seem to reveal a background or source of ideas quite different from what most people, especially the Chinese themselves, would consider typical. Where did such ideas come from?

A Possible Connection?

If you are at all acquainted with the Bible, you might have noticed something familiar in the story behind the character for "ship." Do you not agree that there is a striking resemblance to the Bible account about Noah and his family, a total of eight persons, surviving the Flood in the ark?—Genesis 7:1-24.

What about the idea behind the character for "greed"? Well, you may recall the Bible's description of the garden of Eden, in which two trees were mentioned specifically by name: "The tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." (Genesis 2:9) Was it not Eve's *inordinate desire* for the fruit of one of those trees that eventually led to mankind's downfall?

Are these mere coincidences, or is there more to it? In a book entitled *Discovery of Genesis*, the coauthors, C. H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson, analyzed dozens of ideographic Chinese characters, including the two mentioned above, and observed that "the characters when broken down into component parts time and again reflect elements of the story of God and man recorded in the early chapters of Genesis."

However, you may wonder, what connection could there possibly be between the Bible and ancient Chinese writing? In fact, it would seem difficult to think of anything that could be farther removed from the Bible than the language of the mysterious Orientals. But an objective consideration and comparison of what is recorded in the Bible and what is known from established history will help us to see that such a tie is not unreasonable.

Clue From the Bible

Historians have long pointed to the plains of Mesopotamia as the original home of civilization and language. This, in fact, is in full agreement with what is recorded in the Bible. The book of Gen-

esis, in chapter 11, describes an event that took place in the land of Shinar, in Mesopotamia, which provides the needed clue to our investigation.

"All the earth continued to be of one language and of one set of words," says Genesis 11:1. The unity, however, was misused by the people in defiance of God's purpose for them. "They now said: 'Come on! Let us build ourselves a city and also a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves, for fear we may be scattered over all the surface of the earth.'"

—Genesis 11:4.

The tower, of course, was the infamous Tower of Babel. Thus, it was in the land of Shinar in Mesopotamia that God confused man's language. "That is why its name was called Babel, because there Jehovah had confused the language of all the earth, and Jehovah had scattered them from there over all the surface of the earth."—Genesis 11:9.

A Controversy

This Biblical account, of course, is not readily accepted by the scientific community. As far as the latter is concerned, there is really no agreement on how the language of China developed. And opinions among scholars are divided as to whether Chinese writing developed in China or it was imported, at least initially.

For example, I. J. Gelb in his book *A Study of Writing* states: "The direct derivation of the Chinese writing from Mesopotamia, suggested by some scholars on the basis of formal comparisons of Chinese and Mesopotamian signs, has never been proved by rigorous scientific method." Similarly, David Diringer wrote in his book *The Alphabet*: "The attempt of some scholars to prove the



Development of some Chinese characters over the centuries

Sumerian origin of the primeval writing of China, implies at least great exaggerations."

What must be noted, however, is that the Bible does not say that all the other languages *developed* or *derived* from the "one language and one set of words" used by the people there at Shinar. What is indicated is that the languages resulting from the confusion were so different from and unrelated to one another that the people had to abandon the construction project and move out "over all the surface of the earth" because they could no longer understand or communicate with one another.

Evidently what happened was that the confusion process obliterated the original language patterns in the minds of the people and replaced them with new ones. Thus the new languages that they spoke were completely different from what they had known before. These were not offshoots or spin-offs of the original "one language."

The point to bear in mind, however, is that although their *language patterns* were changed, evidently their *thoughts and memories* were not. Their experiences, traditions, fears, loves, feelings and emotions remained. These they carried with them wherever they went, and they had a profound influence on the religions, cultures and languages that developed in far-flung corners of the earth. In the case of the Chinese, such memories apparently cropped up also in their pictographic and ideographic characters.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Diringer, quoted above, after stating his objection to the theory that Chinese writing was derived directly from Sumerian writing, conceded that "the general con-

ception of writing might perhaps be borrowed, directly or indirectly, from the Sumerians."

What May We Conclude?

Our brief examination of the *ideas* behind the ideographic Chinese characters brings to the fore the question of their source. As we have seen, scholars find it difficult to accept the proposition that Chinese writing is derived from an outside source. But their objection is based on the lack of formal or outward similarity. Until more archaeological evidence is available, the issue may remain unresolved.

On the other hand, we have noted that the similarity between the *thoughts* behind many of the Chinese characters and the Bible record of man's early history is nothing less than remarkable. Although the evidence is only circumstantial, it is, nonetheless, fascinating to think that there is a possibility that the Chinese calligraphy practiced by our young student could have a basis in the ideas brought over from Shinar as a result of the confusion and dispersion at the Tower of Babel.

In Our Next Issue

- **Survivalists—Are They Prepared for the End?**
 - **You Can Be a Better Reader!**
 - **Bible Prophecies—How Reliable?**
 - **How Can I Get Rid of My Jealous Feelings?**
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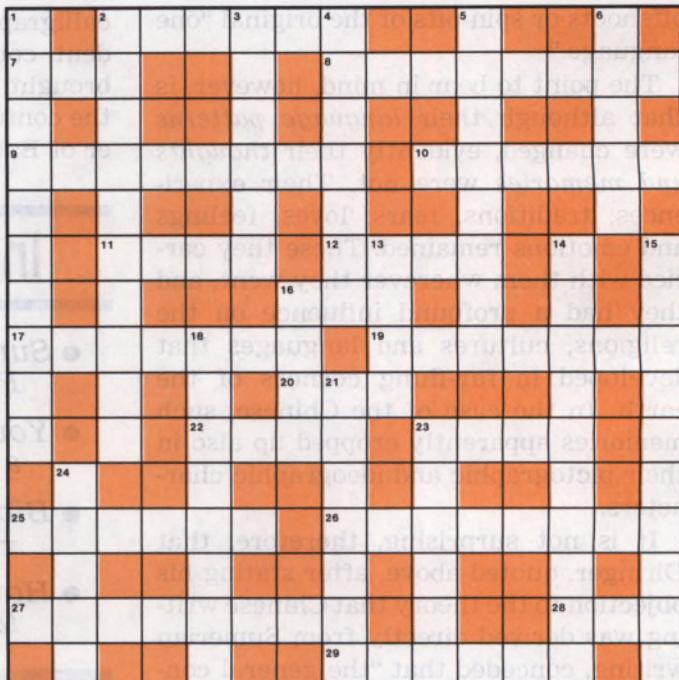
crossword puzzle

Clues Across

2. The state in which Jael found Sisera, enabling her to kill him (Judges 4: 21, 22)
7. Assistance (Acts 9:27)
8. Freeing from impurities (Zechariah 13:9)
9. There was only one before the Flood (Genesis 11:1)
10. Wood used in the construction of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:10)
11. Second letter of the Greek alphabet
12. Journey (Mark 6:8)
16. Relying on Jehovah, he was given the victory over a million Ethiopians (2 Chronicles 14:9-13)
17. God instructed Hosea to give this name to his son (Hosea 1:4)
19. Directed (James 3:4)
20. Cinder (Lamentations 4:5)
22. The tabernacle faced this direction (Numbers 3:38)
23. Would not again pitch his tent in Babylon, according to Jehovah's prophecy (Isaiah 13:19, 20)
25. Place where God's spirit caused Saul and his messengers to behave like prophets (1 Samuel 19: 18-24)
26. Principal source of ivory
27. Descendants of Dedan, Abraham's grandson by his second wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:1-3)
28. Self-esteem

Clues Down

1. Praise Jah, you people
2. Defeated, he had his thumbs and great toes severed—just as he had done to 70 other kings (Judges 1:5-7)
3. One of David's sons (2 Samuel 5:13, 16)
4. Those in Egypt and Babylon practiced magic (Exodus 7:22; Daniel 4:9)
5. Joseph from Arimathea was a secret one (John 19:38)
6. The eastern limit of the Persian Empire (Esther 1:1)
13. Reckless
14. He led the Jewish remnant back from exile in Babylon (Ezra 2:1, 2)
15. Symbolized by the plate of pure gold worn on the high priest's turban (Leviticus 8:9)
16. The first word Jephthah uttered when his daughter met him and he recalled his vow (Judges 11:30-35)
18. Alloy of gold and silver (Ezekiel 8:2)
21. Continuous flows (Lamentations 3:48)
23. One of the last two fortified cities of Judah to fall before the Babylonians overthrew Jerusalem (Jeremiah 34:7)
24. Reason (Exodus 9:16)



CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS PAGE 27

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC!" "Constant manipulation, the deliberate suppression of views contrary to the accepted party line." The description of some despotic regime? No! The verdict of a clergyman delegate at an assembly of the World Council of Churches. But he is also convinced that the World Council is on the right road. What happened at that assembly to produce such contradictory responses? Which is the right road?

The Council's sixth world assembly was held last year for 18 days in Vancouver, Canada. In attendance, along with thousands of visitors, were 838 delegates from 253 churches, representing many different religions in more than 90 lands. They met to examine the theme, "Jesus Christ, the Life of the World," and to explore pathways to unity.

The World Council's ecumenical road began in the years after World War I when a few religious dignitaries got together to see what could be done to heal the rifts in Christendom. A series of conferences on ecumenism led to the formation of the World Council in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1948. It is a fellowship of churches, not a superchurch; a forum for the exchange of views, with unity as the destination. Its logo is a boat with a cross for its mast; its slogan: *oikoumene*, meaning "all the inhabited earth." From this Greek word comes "ecumenical," which one dictionary defines as "seeking worldwide Christian unity."

Although membership is open to all churches that believe in the Trinity doctrine, Christendom's largest religion—the Roman Catholic Church—has not joined. Nevertheless it has lately been sending observers to the Council's assemblies.

Initially the majority of the Council's members were from the Western world.



The World Council of Churches

—Which Road?

But additions from communist and Third World countries gradually altered the balance. Now it "appears to be an ecclesiastical clone of the United Nations," according to *Time* magazine. By 1968 the Council had made little progress toward "the visible unity" it seeks. Worship and evangelism were troublesome subjects that only emphasized the lack of such unity. So the social gospel gained prime attention. Here was a cause that would surely win wide support. Preach justice and freedom for the exploited.

London's *Daily Telegraph* headlined a

feature article: "Clerics with other gospels to preach." It said: "Some activities of the Churches, too, might be regarded by the faithful as outside the legitimate field of religious activity, which is to propagate the Gospel.... Most notorious is the World Council of Churches, which has announced further grants of £320,000 [\$480,000, U.S.] to 47 'liberation movements.'" The Salvation Army was so incensed over this that it withdrew from the Council and now has only associate status.

Many within the World Council believe that violence is defensible when liberation is not forthcoming by negotiation. Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, reasoned this way at the World Council assembly in Vancouver. He said: "When oppressed people are put in a situation where, after years of non-violent struggle there has been no response and they pick up the gun, then the Church must clearly choose for the oppressed." Nearly all the audience of 3,000 gave him a standing ovation.

Is the road the Council walks the same road walked by Jesus Christ, in whose name the assembly was convened? Jesus, well aware of human exploitation and misery, taught his hearers to seek, not a temporary political solution, but a complete solution by the Kingdom of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said: "What I tell you is this: Do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you." (Matthew 5:39, *The New English Bible*) He also counseled: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) Jesus did not try to reform government. He taught his followers to wait patiently for God's Kingdom. It alone, by massive inter-

vention at the appropriate time, would bring peace, justice and equality to the human family. Never did he advocate political activism. Never did he support Jewish movements for liberation from Rome, though invited to do so.—John 6:15.

Should Christians Proselytize?

At Vancouver, one of the markers laid down for the road ahead concerned the need to promote evangelism. For some years, emphasis on the social gospel had pushed traditional evangelism aside. The intention now is to revive it. Interesting questions arise. What about taking the gospel to the large sections of the human family that do not accept the truth of the assembly theme—"Jesus Christ, the Life of the World"? What about Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, for instance? What do the churches of the World Council propose to do about preaching the profound and unique truths of the Bible to *all* mankind?

According to the dictionary, "proselytize" is not a disparaging word. It means simply "to convert (someone) from one religious faith to another." Is that not precisely what Jesus taught his followers to do? "Make disciples of people of all the nations," he commanded. (Matthew 28:19) Jesus' close associate, the apostle Peter, emphatically and unambiguously said of his Master: "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved."

—Acts 4:12.

However, the world in general frowns on religions that proselytize. And the World Council has its own definitions of proselytism, saying that it is "an unworthy kind of witness." For its contacts with non-Christian religions the Council pre-

fers the word "dialogue," which it defines as an "encounter where people holding different claims about ultimate reality can meet and explore these claims in a context of mutual respect."

No evangelistic conviction and fervor there. Nothing about making disciples. If that is how the member churches of the World Council intend to go about their evangelism, how will people ever become disciples of "Jesus Christ, the Life of the World," and get on the road to salvation?

John Whale wrote in London's *Sunday Times*: "Growing numbers of Western Christians find the idea of spreading the word awkward, because it can imply a claim that Christianity is right and other religions are wrong, perhaps damningly wrong. But they don't like to say so."

Is the goal of the World Council to get "all the inhabited earth"—their *oikoumene*—onto the broad ecumenical road to unity, regardless of what they believe? Is this timid approach born of a fervent desire to evangelize, or is it symptomatic of a lack of conviction? Roman Catholic priest Tissa Balasuriya wrote in *One World*, the World Council's official magazine: "The God of the Christians is not a particularist deity, a monopoly of Christians and their churches. Liberated from captivity to Christians, Christ would be seen as the God whom all theists accept."

However, the apostle Paul thought differently. He wrote: "They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ." And later in the same letter: "Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right

and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together? How can Christ and the Devil agree?"—2 Corinthians 4:4; 6:14, 15, *Today's English Version*.

The Road to What?

Despite all the controversy, the World Council is confident that it can achieve reasonable success in its journey down the ecumenical road. The question is: Is that the right road for Christians? Is it the narrow road that leads to life? Or is it the broad road that accommodates nearly everyone and that Jesus warned his hearers to avoid?—Matthew 7:13.

Jesus said of his followers: "The world has hated them, because they are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." And he told Pilate, "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 17:14; 18:36) The World Council considers it to be its Christian duty to influence world affairs as powerfully as it can. It thus makes itself a part of the world and ignores Bible truth and Jesus' instructions.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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From Our Readers

Worry About Grades

Thank you so much for the articles "Young People Ask . . . How Important Are Grades?" (March 8, 1984) and "Why Worry About Grades?" (March 22, 1984). I'm in grade 8 and I hate History. I just couldn't pass History at all with a good mark. Since I've read your articles and applied the counsel, I made 25 points higher on my exam, and my teacher is really impressed.

H. C., Canada

Romance Novels Harmless?

It was truly a pleasure to read the article "Young People Ask . . . Are Romance Novels Harmless Reading?" (November 8, 1983). I have personally experienced the hurt that such reading can bring. I often used to dream about the rich, strong, handsome men they described. That was how I ended up marrying a selfish, cynical, pleasure-seeking man, resulting in a marriage that turned out to be a fiasco. No one can afford to dream in life. Two years after my husband's death I married again, but this time a quiet, hardworking man, so different from the males depicted in romance novels. Our little family now knows what true happiness means.

J. O., France

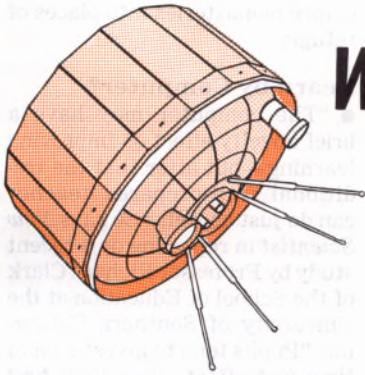
Gandhi

While I really enjoyed your article on Mahatma Gandhi (April 8, 1984), I must say I was disappointed in your section about the caste system. While Hindu gods are black and white, that is, Krishna is black and Radha, his wife, white, I

cannot say Hinduism practices apartheid like Christians in South Africa, nor that it allows the caste system. People who believe in the caste system are losing their respect in society, and there are a lot of doctors and professional people from lower caste in India. We even had a low-caste prime minister—Jagjivan Ram—who was a Sudra. Discrimination against caste is illegal in India just as racism is in Britain.

N. P., England

As the Indian journalist who wrote our article stated, untouchability has been outlawed in India since 1950. Yet a recent survey of about a thousand villages throughout India revealed that if you were an Untouchable, 61 percent of other people would not let you use their well; 82 percent would not allow you to enter the temple; you would be refused lodging by 56 percent; 52 percent of the washermen would refuse you their services; and 45 percent of the barbers would refuse you a shave. Further, "The Hindu" of May 4, 1982, reported that The Mandal Commission warned against any assumption that the caste system was on the way out. However, our article was not intended as a criticism of India or of the fact that the caste system still prevails in the minds of many even though it is outlawed. Rather, we wanted to show the problems that Gandhi faced, and that others like him face today. We also wanted to show that men cannot really solve these problems even with the best of laws. Only through the administration of God's Kingdom by Christ Jesus will all human discrimination, selfishness and violence be done away with. Happily, the time is near when that Kingdom will move to rid the earth of all unrighteousness.—ED.



Watching the World



AIDS in Brazil

● Since the discovery of the first case of AIDS in Brazil, "the numbers are increasing rapidly," reports the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. Twelve new cases appeared between January and March and, according to Paulo R. Teixeira of the São Paulo Health Department, these "are cases originating right here" in Brazil. Twenty persons have died from AIDS in São Paulo State alone. Also, Brazil's first case of AIDS among hemophiliacs struck in January. A 13-year-old boy was afflicted. His doctor feels that the boy "contracted the disease from the frequent blood transfusions" he receives as a hemophiliac. "We do not have conditions to make thorough examinations of every blood donor," the doctor admitted.

Use of Hypertension Drugs

● The U.S. government suggests nondrug therapies for some of the estimated 60 million Americans who suffer from hypertension, or high blood pressure. They recommend diet, exercise and behavior modification as treatment for those with the mildest cases. "There is also a growing appreci-

ation of the fact that obesity and hypertension are closely related," says Dr. Harriet P. Dunstan, director of the cardiovascular research and training center at the University of Alabama. "You may be able to control mild hypertension with weight reduction alone." Hypertension increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

Earthquake Deaths

● "Deaths annually caused by earthquakes throughout the world average 20,000 persons," reports the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Precarious earthquake zones in Europe run through Greece and southern Italy, and, in the Middle East, Turkey. According to the Institute of Geophysics located in the city of Kiel in northern Germany, earthquakes kill from 2,000 to 3,000 people each year in the Mediterranean area alone.

Growth of Canadian Witnesses

● Canada's 1981 Census shows that there are 143,480 people who claim to be Jehovah's Witnesses. But the Canadian Witnesses themselves report 77,628 presently active in neighborhood

evangelism. Why the difference? Government census figures include children and persons studying the Bible with the Witnesses. Statistical breakdowns in the 1981 Census show 65,160 males and 78,320 females. Nearly 41,000 are under 15 years of age, 24,000 are from 15 to 24 years old, 65,000 are from 25 to 64, and more than 16,000 are over 65. Incidentally, these latest census figures represent a 111-percent increase in just 20 years, up from 68,015 listed in the 1961 Census.

"Marketing" the Church

● Of Austrian cities, Vienna has the most people leaving the Catholic Church. In 1979 only 9,010 Viennese left, but in 1982 a wave of withdrawals raised the figure to 16,760. To counter the trend, Austria's bishops, headed by their cardinal, appeared on television to speak a "personal word" to all those who had left the church. As a result, some members returned. Others wrote to the church. The Viennese publication *Börsen-Kurier* reports: "These letters are now being analyzed to find out the motives of those who left. With this kind of motivation research and with the pope acting as publicity agent (the Catholic Conference in Austria included the biggest advertising campaign in history, according to suffragan bishop Weber) the Church in Austria for the first time has made use of modern marketing and management methods."

Children With VD

● More and more children under ten years of age are showing up in doctors' offices with venereal diseases, says Paul Fritz, program planner for the child protection branch of Alberta Social Services in Canada. The 1982 provincial vital statistics show 12 cases of gonorrhea in children

under ten—7 of them under five years of age! In one instance, that of a ten-year-old girl, the doctor diagnosed gonorrhea, "the child's third dose in five years," reports *The Edmonton Journal*. Since 1982, reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases in young Albertans have increased about 15 percent each year. Yet Fritz feels that what is now being reported may be only "the tip of the iceberg."

Seat-Belt Safety

● Since February 1983, the wearing of seat belts in the front seats of cars and small vans has been compulsory in Britain. With what results? Fatal and serious injuries have dropped by 20 to 25 percent since then, reports the Department of Transport, even though the number of vehicles on the road in seat-belt categories rose by 1 percent. For years the government encouraged car users to wear belts voluntarily, but with disappointing results. The government is now considering the compulsory wearing of belts for rear-seat passengers also.

Sports Force

● The galvanizing force of major sports events is a powerful phenomenon that can serve a variety of political and social ends, says Dallas Willard, director of University of Southern California's School of Philosophy. "Sports provide distraction and a means of purging emotion. Great sports spectacles serve to unify the spectators," he claims. "Not surprisingly, governments have shown a historical tendency to use sports as a political tool to placate the masses."

"Survival Problems"

● The Methodists, who trace their beginnings back to John Wesley, a Church of England

clergyman in the 1700's, are celebrating their bicentennial in America this year. As they enter their third century of existence, to what future can they look? In the booklet *The Exodus Into Our Third Century*, James E. Magaw, a minister of the largest Methodist body, the nine-and-a-half million member United Methodist Church, writes: "Many of our local churches are struggling with survival problems. The number of members is declining, Sunday Schools are dwindling, budgets are soaring, enthusiasm is cooling, and burnout is becoming a blight affecting the quality of our leadership."

Pork and Microwave Ovens

● At times microwave ovens give uneven heat, according to Dr. Peter Schantz of the United States Centers for Disease Control. Unfortunately, this may result in pork roast that looks well cooked, but that is "still infected with the roundworm that causes trichinosis," says the report in *The Medical Post*. Further, a University of Iowa study found that "more than a quarter of 189 pork roasts cooked in five different microwave ovens showed the presence of trichinae."

Refuge Places

● The Dutch professor Herman Bianchi proposes reintroducing places of refuge where criminals can "escape the first reactions of vengeance," reports the Dutch magazine *KRI*. Bianchi believes that these temporary shelters can be used to help lawbreakers, such as drug addicts, overcome their problems without the threat of arrest. He feels that five or six shelters located in cities scattered throughout the Netherlands would be appropriate. Taking a clue from history, Bianchi suggests converting

empty monasteries into places of refuge.

Learn by Computer?

● "The computer may have a brief novelty effect on improving learning—but after that the traditional well-prepared teacher can do just as well." So says *New Scientist* in reporting on a recent study by Professor Richard Clark of the School of Education at the University of Southern California. "Pupils tend to invest a lot of time and effort when they first encounter the new machines," observes the professor. "But the same time and effort spent at traditional lessons would probably yield comparable results." Students without computers, take heart.

Satellite Coffins?

● With the increasing demand for burial ground, many are turning to cremation as an acceptable alternative. But Italian inventor Dominico de Renzo has proposed another "solution." At Primavera '84 Inventors' Exhibition in Genoa he displayed a coffin built of special heat-resistant aluminum—designed to float in orbit above the earth. Commenting on the problem of overcrowded graveyards due to an expanding worldwide population, Dominico remarked: "Above us is unlimited space and the dead will be able to float there in perfect peace forever." The one thing he apparently did not mention was the cost of such a 'burial,' which may well be 'out of this world' for the average income.

Canine Drug Patrol

● "The first small dogs in the world to work for customs" is how *Mainichi Daily News* described the terriers and cocker spaniels that joined the ranks of canine drug sniffers at Tokyo's Narita Airport. Till now, German

shepherds, pointers and retrievers sniffed out illegal drug smugglers. These big dogs nosed out drugs on the lower shelves, but being too heavy to lift could not reach the top shelves of the eight-meter high (26 ft) luggage racks. Officials, realizing that not one case of drug detection has come from those upper shelves, decided it was time to train small dogs for the job.

Milk Shake for Fresco

● An ingredient used to make milk shakes thick, methyl cellulose, helps clean Michelangelo's frescoes. A small amount of a jellylike concoction containing the ingredient is spread across the painted ceilings and walls of the Vatican's Sistine chapel. When the cleaning mixture is removed, *Voila!* Michelangelo's original colors are restored. Traditional-

ly, these 400-year-old frescoes were described as a "harmony of rare, pale tones, a sort of diffused light." But instead of being in pastel shades, the restorers discovered Michelangelo's color selection to be so vivid that now his paintings seem to jump out from the wall.

Chicken Music

● The Soviet magazine *Sputnik* reports that the harm caused by industrial noise to egg-laying chickens can be reduced by music. Too much noise results in a drop in egg yield and a rise in mortality. Too little noise has a similar effect. The right acoustic level, according to a report, is 75 decibels. In some poultry factories the noise level is as loud as an electric power saw—94 decibels. This adversely affects the hens by lowering their body tempera-

ture and killing their appetite. Music seems to reverse that lethal effect.

No Hiding Place

● A strong box in a bank vault is normally thought to be safe for jewelry and cash. Not anymore—at least not in Paris. For two years a highly efficient gang, dubbed the "wig gang" by the Paris police because of their use of false hair and whiskers, have raided banks during the business hours. While some corral the staff and customers into a back room, others break open the boxes. Hapless customers entering the bank during the theft are politely taken to join the other victims. The only violence used is on the boxes. The "wig gang" has struck as often as four times and opened as many as 250 boxes in a week.

