

# Awake!

December 22, 1990



## Eating Disorders What Can Be Done?

## Eating disorders

were rare 20 years ago. Why has the incidence of these increased so dramatically? Why have so many young women—and some men—developed bizarre eating habits to the point of endangering their emotional and physical health?



# Why a Modern-Day Plague?

"**B**EING thin became the most important thing in my life," admitted 34-year-old Ann. Her fear of being overweight led to a greatly restricted diet and the loss of 60 pounds in a short time. "She became skin and bones and looked as if she had come out of a concentration camp," her husband said.

Then, out of sheer hunger, she started to go on a food binge. Afterward, to avoid gaining weight, she used laxatives and induced vomiting to get rid of the food. 'How could anybody get into such a revolting habit?' you may wonder.

"It's easier than you think," confided Ann. "I just wanted to be thin. There's a great deal of

pressure put on women to look trim. I was bombarded by the fashion magazines, which stress 'thin, thin, thin.' So I was determined to be superthin and attractive."

Ann thus fell into the relentless grip of eating disorders. She was held there for ten long years. As she noted: "You never dream that it will lead to what it does." But Ann is not unique. She is among an estimated one million American women who develop either anorexia nervosa or bulimia each year. Many men have also developed these eating disorders, and many men are also very overweight. But just what are these disorders?

### **The Disorders**

*Anorexia nervosa* is characterized by severe and prolonged inability or refusal to eat because of emotional conflict. It is not caused by physical illness. This condition leads to significant weight loss. The person—usually a young woman—is intensely fearful of becoming obese and feels too fat even when emaciated. Menstruation ceases. She refuses to maintain her weight above the minimum normal for her age and height.

*Bulimia* is characterized by repeated binges, that is, the uncontrollable eating of large amounts of food in a short time. Thereafter, a bulimic tries to get rid of the calories by self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives and diuretics, or vigorous exercise. The constant concern of the bulimic is body shape and weight.

*Compulsive overeating* is characterized by uncontrollable eating, followed by guilt and feelings of shame regarding the behavior and

the subsequent weight gain. The compulsive eater seems to overeat when upset or excited. Obesity often results, since compulsive overeaters generally do not purge themselves of the food.

But simply gaining or losing weight, or being overweight or thin, does not indicate that you have an eating disorder. There may be genetic or physiological causes. An eating disorder exists when one's attitude about food and weight has gone awry. Then one eats—or refuses to eat—because of profound emotional disturbances.

### **On the Increase**

Most authorities report an increase in eating disorders, some even calling them an epidemic. In an article entitled "Eating Disorders: Implications for the 1990's," researchers explained that these disorders "have increased dramatically in frequency since 1970 and are now commonly encountered in clinical practice." Reportedly, 150,000 die annually from complications associated with anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

## **Health Risks From Eating Disorders**

### **Anorexia Nervosa**

Blood disorders, abnormally low blood pressure, abnormal drowsiness or weakness, irregular heartbeat, sudden heart failure, yellowing skin, hormonal disorders, cessation of menstruation, bone-mass loss.

### **Bulimia**

Irregular menstruation, muscle weakness and cramping, dehydration, dizziness, tooth-enamel erosion and cavities, cold intolerance, fatigue, digestive problems, irregular heartbeat that can lead to sudden heart attack, tears and hemorrhages in the esophagus, abdominal pain.

### **Compulsive Overeating**

Weight-related high blood pressure and fatigue, severe obesity (increasing the risk of diabetes), coronary heart disease, cancer, hormonal disorders, and gallstones.

Ann, however, fully recovered. She was fortunate. As many as 21 percent of those who develop anorexia nervosa die from the disorder. Suicidal thoughts are common in those with bulimia, and several doctors report that one third of their patients have tried to take their own lives.

These eating disorders affect all age, ethnic, and racial groups and cut across all social levels. This growing plague has invaded many economically developed lands. In Japan the increase reportedly "has been dramatic" since 1981. Sweden, Britain, Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia, and Canada all have had increases.

But why have eating disorders, though reported for hundreds of years, become epidemic in the 20th century?

### **"The Shrine of Slimness"**

After 40 years of research, Dr. Hilde Bruch explains: "I am inclined to relate it to the enormous emphasis that Fashion places on slimness. . . . Magazines and movies carry the same message, but most persistent is television, drumming it in, day in day out, that one can be loved and respected only when slender."

Before the year 1900, dressing in fashionable clothes was primarily the concern of the wealthy. But after World War I (1914-18), the advent of department stores, women's

magazines, and fashion photography created an increased interest in fashion among the masses of women. Chic new fashions were mass-produced in standard sizes. But to wear these, a woman had to have the "right" figure. Thus, figure flaws became a source of frustration and embarrassment for women who could not fit into such stylish clothing.

Then, in 1918, America's first best-selling diet book linked weight control to self-esteem. Overweight in women became viewed as a character flaw and a social impediment. In her book *Fasting Girls*, Joan Brumberg explains the result: "In effect, by the 1920s outward appearance was more important than inner character because sexual allure had replaced spirituality as woman's 'shining ornament.' . . . Many internalized the notion that the size and shape of the body was a measure of self-worth."

Thus, an obsession with dieting and physical beauty developed. Today, an estimated 50 percent of the women in the United States are on a diet at any given time, most of them for appearance' sake! A poll taken by *Glamour* magazine asked 33,000 women: "Which would make you happiest?" Forty-two percent answered, "Losing weight." That was nearly twice as many as for any of the other selections offered by the poll, such as "Success at work."

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As we enter the 1990's, thinness has become a symbol of strength, achievement, and attractiveness. "Given our longstanding and extravagant collective worship at the shrine of slimness, it is no wonder that so many contemporary young women make

# Who Develop Eating Disorders?

While a reasonable interest in one's appearance is normal, an eating disorder may develop if how one looks becomes an obsession. The following interview illustrates the matter.

*AWAKE!*: Were you overweight, Ann, when your problems began?

ANN: No, but I was starting to date, and I wanted to look good.

*AWAKE!*: Did your self-esteem depend on the way you looked?

ANN: I'm sure it did. When people looked at me, I would always ask myself, 'What are they thinking?' My mind kept saying, 'You have to have the right shape to be attractive.'

*AWAKE!*: So when you felt you looked good, you felt good about yourself?

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

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dieting an article of faith," explained Brumberg. One apparent result? An epidemic of eating disorders.

Despite social pressure to be thin, not all women develop eating disorders. Thus, who are especially vulnerable?

ANN: Absolutely! If I put on weight, I hated myself. When I looked in the mirror, I didn't think about the inner qualities.

No one knows why some people develop an eating disorder while others in a similar situation do not. Culture, genetics, health or biochemical abnormalities, and family environment evidently all play a part. Yet, there are certain personality traits that seem to be characteristic of most sufferers.

## Striving to Be Perfect

As a group, most of those with eating disorders tend to be high achievers and perfectionists who excel in school or at work. After treating over 130 patients with anorexia, Dr. Hilde Bruch, in her book *The Golden*

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*Cage*, describes the feelings that are typical of such ones: "You have one great fear, namely that of being ordinary, or average, or common—just not good enough. . . . You think you are worthwhile only if you do something very special, something so great and dazzling that your parents and other people you care about will be impressed and admire you for being super-special."

Lee, who developed anorexia, admitted: "I was trying to do the superb thing, trying to be the best at *everything I did*." Often this striving to be perfect is demonstrated by a fervent desire to please others, to be the 'best little girl in the whole world.'

How a woman perceives her role in society may also make her especially vulnerable. Though men do develop eating disorders, those affected are predominantly women. The book *Surviving an Eating Disorder* explains: "Girls who become eating disordered have often grown up believing that they should be undemanding of others. The good girl is the quiet, unseen girl who learns not to show what is bothering her." However, such an upbringing causes some to feel that they have no control of their lives.

For some women, trying always to please others while at the same time suppressing their own desire to take charge of their lives creates an inner conflict that can lead to an eating disorder. Dawn, now recovered from compulsive overeating and bulimia, explains: "My family expected me to do it all their way, to be what they wanted me to be. While on the outside I appeared very secure and very intelligent, inside I wasn't that way at all. I never felt I could live up to their expectations. I couldn't please anybody—my friends or my parents. Then I realized that I could control the weight! I could gain it, I could lose it, I

could do what I wanted with it. That gave me a sense of control of my life. If I could control this, I could control *everything*."

### ***Feelings of Inadequacy***

Dawn's insecurity is typical of the self-doubts many with eating disorders have. Despite having talents, most have a basic lack of self-worth. Overeating may at times be an indication of low self-esteem. The person is saying, in effect: 'I'm not worth anything. Why should I care about myself or my weight?' Such feelings spawn depression, which afflicts nearly all who have eating disorders.

What causes this spirit of worthlessness? The Bible answers: "Because of the pain of the heart there is a stricken spirit." (Proverbs 15:13) A variety of things can cause inner pain—bitter disappointments, rejection, an environment where one's emotional needs are ignored, or traumatic childhood experiences, to name a few. Research reveals that a surprising number of patients with eating disorders have been sexually abused, even raped.

But low self-esteem may also develop because of the attitudes of others. "As far back as I can remember I was too fat and my mother always harped on it," explained one young woman. "Everything was done to make me thinner; that was the only thing that mattered. That's why I hate myself and my body." Today's social climate, which greatly praises slenderness, contributes to the self-hatred of some who are overweight.

In other cases the eating disorder itself strips away one's self-respect. Lynn, who vomited as many as ten times a day, admitted: "I would look at my face in the mirror after I purged and say, 'I hate you,' and then I would cry. I felt worthless."

Deep down, most people with eating disor-

ders are convinced that their basic personality is defective. Thus, all their efforts are directed toward hiding the fatal flaw of their basic inadequacy and to finding ways to build their self-esteem. Those who become anorexic try to do this in a unique way. Their effort to find self-worth is what makes anorexia so insidious—and deadly.

When Lee was rejected by a man she loved, her self-esteem plummeted. "I wanted to prove that he passed up a good thing," she said. "So I was determined to be superthin and supersmart." To trim down, she stopped eating and became intensely busy. "I began to feel good about myself. I felt that I was really special because I could do something others could not do. I thought, 'I'm a strong person.'"

Lee's weight dropped from 160 pounds to a disturbing 103. Reflecting on those who tried to get her to eat, she said: "I thought that all those people were trying to ruin my life and my happiness by taking away all my self-esteem. I thought that I would end up being just like everybody else." That stance by Lee is typical of anorexics, who try to gain self-worth by subduing their desires and doing what others cannot do.

If a girl's emotions have been exploited, her efforts to protect her fragile self-esteem from further abuse may also lead to anorexia. Shirley, for instance, was disturbed by the way boys treated her because of her newly developed shapeliness. Then her own father made improper advances. "I was so embarrassed and disgusted that I went to my mother and just cried," Shirley said. "After I lost weight and got rid of my curves, no one was bother-

ing me. I was free of the attention of the opposite sex."

In some cases anorexia is a flight from the duties of adulthood. "I didn't want to grow up and face family responsibilities," Shirley commented. "How could I ever let myself gain weight? No, never! Not for anyone!" Sadly, her obsession with making time stand still led to a painful death due to self-induced starvation.

Not all anorexics fit these descriptions. However, it seems that all of them gain a feeling of strength by making out of themselves someone whom they can admire. They thereby gain a little self-esteem. Thinness becomes their pride and joy.



An intense concern for one's physical appearance may lead to an eating disorder

## **Handling Painful Emotions**

Since food soothes and calms, it may be misused to cope with feelings of loneliness, anxiety, boredom, anger, depression, rejection, or betrayal. "While in school, I was a victim of a harsh experience that was too painful to talk about," explained Dawn. "Whenever I thought of that incident, or there was a situation that I couldn't face, I would go on a binge. I just tried stuffing these feelings with food." The food numbed her emotional pain. But her compulsive overeating led to a 100-pound weight gain.

At times the eating disorder becomes an escape from the pressures of life. For instance, Anne was reared in a home with an alcoholic father and was constantly teased about her weight. She explained why she became bulimic: "It was my way to deal with everyday stress, and it worked because when you are obsessed

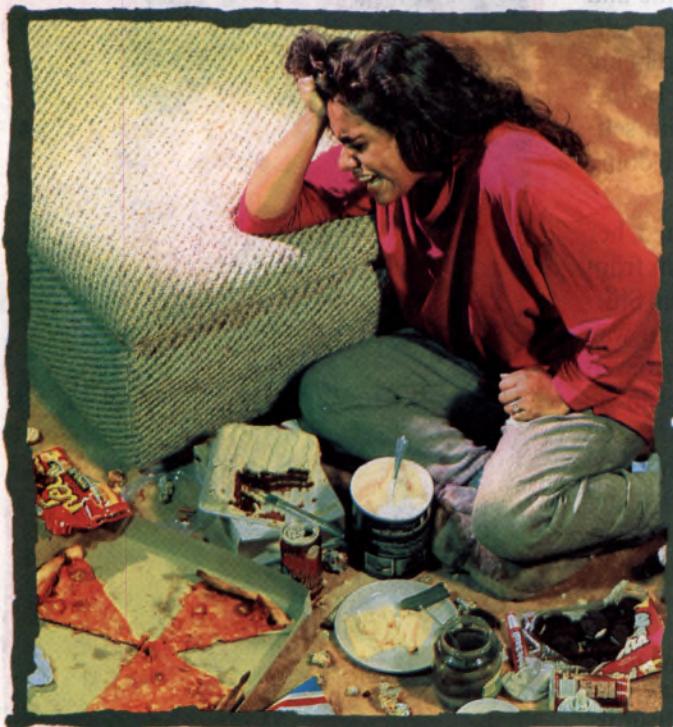
with something, you don't have to think about your real problems. You blame everything on your being overweight and tell yourself that when you lose the weight, life will be great."

While all of us may eat a little more if we are upset or lonely, a person at risk of developing an eating disorder does not use the normal means of dealing with inner turmoil. For instance, the individual may feel an underlying hostility toward some person or situation but would rather eat to soothe his hostility than voice such resentment.

## **The Role of Dieting**

Adopting a rigid diet, according to research, is the most common reason people give for binge eating. A 1989 study of the causes of obesity revealed: "Dieting behavior in response to weight concerns appears, perversely, to be implicated in increasing overweight." But why?

When people try to follow a strict diet, they usually cut out sweets and other good-tasting foods. These "forbidden" foods become a constant temptation. Then, when upset, anxious, or lonely, they feel sorry for themselves. To improve their mood, they gorge on the very foods that they have deprived themselves of. Then follows an even more stringent diet, leading to the same result—a binge. This vicious cycle leads to weight gain and eating



**Some go on an eating binge to handle painful emotions**

disorders. Lee explained how dieting created the environment for her anorexia: "I had tried all kinds of diets. I would lose weight, and then I would gain it back. This time I wanted to keep it off."

While knowing the causes of an eating dis-

# Winning the Battle!

When you first meet Lee, an articulate, outgoing, and slightly overweight young woman, it is hard to believe that five years ago she almost died from anorexia. But when you begin to talk to her, you are deeply impressed with the mental changes she had to make—some very difficult—to defeat this deadly eating disorder. "It was not just a battle with food," she explains.

Since eating disorders are the result of underlying emotional problems, the battle to overcome them is fought in the mind. Trying to develop a different set of values is one of the first steps to recovery. All of us have certain established values, things that we consider important. This shapes our viewpoint of ourselves and directs our response to stressful problems. Those with eating disorders must change their values, which means developing a different mental attitude.

"By your new attitude of mind be transformed," urges the Bible, "so that you can find out what God's will is—what is good, pleasing, and perfect." (Romans 12:2, *An American Translation*) Yes, one's attitude must be molded by God's view of what is pleasing. Our Maker knows us intimately. He

order is not the full answer to overcoming it, such knowledge can help one to break free. It can also help prevent problems from starting. But what if you recognize some of these personality traits in yourself, your family, or a friend? How can such traits be overcome?

is certain of what will bring us lasting happiness. Just what does he consider important?

## ***Focus on Real Beauty***

God values what we are inside. "The secret person of the heart," when adorned with a quiet and mild spirit, "is of great value in the eyes of God." (1 Peter 3:4) Yet, we live in a world where women are commonly evaluated by their appearance. But how unwise to adopt this same standard, for what if today's thin-is-in mentality changes? A hundred years ago in the United States, plumpness was chic. In 1890 one ad urged: "Respectfully tell the ladies get plump with . . . 'Fat-Ten-U' foods which are GUARANTEED to make the Thin Plump and Comely."

"I had always measured others by their physical appearance," admitted Lee, who then made some changes in her attitude. "But now I learned to value Christian qualities in others and in myself. I now try to develop likable qualities. I realize how superficial it is to judge myself and others by physical appearance."

Maintaining the right attitude about looks is not easy. We may need to avoid constant

association with those who are obsessed with their weight or who harp on physical appearance. "It is a constant struggle to fight society's pressures and keep the right attitude," admits Lynn, who successfully recovered from bulimia. "I didn't automatically have the right attitude, but I had to make myself think the right way." This change in thinking also affects the type of things upon which we build our self-esteem.

### **Reject "Empty Glory"**

Many people with eating disorders build their self-worth by striving for perfection or by totally dominating their hunger. The self-centered praise they find for themselves is in reality vain or empty. God's Word tells us to do nothing 'out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind consider that others are superior.' (Philippians 2:3) The original Greek word for "egotism" literally means "empty glory," or praise that is hollow. So those who do things out of egotism try to draw attention to themselves for reasons that are void of any genuine or lasting value. They glory in things that are empty.

For instance, Lee said: "I felt special because no one could make me eat." Yet she admitted: "I believed if I was only thinner, I would feel better about myself. But when I took off more weight, I still felt bad about myself."

Lee then revealed a major turning point in her recovery. "I realized," she said, "that to God I was like a tiny drop in a bucket, so why did I have to be the greatest? One doesn't have to be the best. It's okay if others are better than you in certain things."

Yes, Lee learned to 'consider others as su-

perior.' Actually, others do have certain abilities and assets that are superior to ours, even as we may excel in certain things. Yet, that does not mean that others are of intrinsically greater worth than we are or that we are of greater worth than they are.

Since those with eating disorders ardently desire to feel good about themselves, they must focus on what brings real self-esteem. "Rather than trusting in my looks for praise," confided Melissa, a recovered bulimic, "I found that accepting God's values and re-



**Learn to reject the world's propaganda that your worth depends on your looks**

specting his view has given me a greater sense of self-worth." Yes, just as the Bible says: "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures [genuine, not empty,] praise for herself."—Proverbs 31:30.

### **Friendship With God**

The proper "fear of Jehovah" is not a morbid apprehension of divine punishment but is a dread of displeasing God because he has become our Friend. "Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight," states Psalm 112:1. As God's friend, one can find pleasure in obeying His laws. This gives strong motivation. But how does God view the matter of eating disorders?

God's Word tells us to respect our bodies, a precious gift from God. (Romans 12:1) The apostle Paul listed 'uncleanness of every sort and greediness' as things displeasing to God, noting that there are 'things that take place in secret by unbelievers that are too shameful to relate.' Among these things likely was the custom of some Roman banqueters of relieving themselves by vomiting during a feast and then returning to continue eating greedily. (Ephesians 5:3, 5, 12) The apostle wrote: "I will not let myself be brought under authority by anything." (1 Corinthians 6:12) Thus, to enjoy God's favor, we cannot allow food and dieting to dominate our life.

Since there are several types of eating disorders and different degrees of involvement, the seriousness of one's conduct in God's sight may vary. Yet, the desire to be a friend of God will move one to overcome eating disorders. "The biggest thing in my recovery," said Ann, "was realizing that I couldn't practice this habit and please God." But what if there are some setbacks in one's fight?

"The guilt that came with bulimia is indescribable," admitted Melissa. "Nights and days when no one was around, I cried and cried, begging God for his help and forgiveness." How comforting to know that God "will forgive in a large way" and will show "mercy to those fearing him." (Isaiah 55:7; Psalm 103:13) Even if our hearts may condemn us, "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." (1 John 3:20) He sees more than our weaknesses. He knows the depth of effort we are putting forth to break free and the progress we are making.

Never weary of turning earnestly to God, seeking his forgiveness no matter how often you have to approach him about the same weakness. If you are sincere, he will give you a cleansed conscience because of his undeserved kindness. (Romans 7:21-25) "Through it all," affirmed Melissa, "God was a true and dependable Friend who heard my prayers." Not giving up is a key to winning the battle!

### **Handling Painful Emotions**

To win the battle, one must learn to handle negative feelings rather than resorting to food as a tranquilizer. Often, obtaining relief requires telling someone about such feelings. For instance, her father's teasing her about her weight led to Mary's bulimia. "It was really my fault because I didn't tell anyone how bad I felt about his teasing me," explained Mary. "I would just go into my room and cry."

But expressing such feelings is not easy for a person obsessed with pleasing others. Yet, the book *Bulimia: A Systems Approach to Treatment* states: "Recognizing feelings of anger and learning to express them in a safe and appropriate manner are major issues in recovery from bulimia." How fitting is the Bible's advice: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state!"

(Ephesians 4:26) When angered or pressured to say yes when you really feel like saying no, ask yourself: 'How can I be honest and straightforward without being caustic?'

Remember also that the Bible does not describe a woman's role as simply being a people pleaser. Faithful women of God, while submissive to their husbands, were at times properly open with their feelings. They showed initiative and chose ventures that were not always easy. (Proverbs 31:16-18, 29) Of course, there is the risk of failure when pursuing an unfamiliar endeavor. Those with eating disorders are often terrified of making mistakes and appearing foolish. But everyone makes mistakes! "The righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up," says Proverbs 24:16. Learning to profit from mistakes and failures is vital for recovery and for prevention.

At times, painful emotions involve what happened in the past. While memories of those experiences may still pain you, strive to 'show yourself attentive toward Jehovah's acts of loving-kindness.' (Psalm 107:43) Surely, there were some good times when you could see evidence of God's goodness and love. Try to focus on these. Even if you were terribly victimized, it does not mean that you deserved such mistreatment, nor does it determine your worth as a person.

### **Get Help!**

A person trying to overcome an eating disorder needs to confide in someone he or she can trust. Don't try to go it alone. Lynn explains what was a major turning point in her recovery: "One night I brought my mother to my room. After crying for ten minutes, I finally blurted out that I was bulimic." She adds: "My parents were so understanding. Mom helped me to be patient and not to expect an overnight recovery. Dad gave practical sugges-

tions and prayed with me. If I hadn't opened up, I would have missed all this help."<sup>\*</sup>

Having the support of others is often essential for full recovery. Avoid isolating yourself, especially when you feel vulnerable. (Proverbs 18:1) When she gets upset, Lynn no longer turns inward. She says of her recovery: "Mom and I would go for a walk and talk about the upsetting problem. Instead of returning to bulimic behavior, I would do something, such as calling a friend, rather than isolate myself."

Within the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are persons who have been helpful to some who were trying to break free of an eating disorder. "I could no longer help myself," admitted Ann, who had reached her lowest point in her struggle with bulimia. "So I poured out my heart, revealing the problem I had kept secret for ten years." Christian friends were very supportive. "My pride had kept me from seeking help, and it almost cost me my life. The relief was beyond words. With the help of my friends, I made a full recovery."

In some cases help is needed from professionals who specialize in treating eating disorders. Usually, a medical evaluation is the first step. The help available may include various types of talk therapy, nutritional counseling, and perhaps the use of medication. In extreme cases hospitalization may be required. Likely a doctor or a hospital would know of any such specialists in your community.

### **Reasonableness and Hope**

"The doctor assured me that if I just ate

\* In some cases of eating disorders, a parent may be the central part of the problem. Hence, parents may need to seek help as well. When such counseling is given privately, it makes it easier for the child to maintain parental respect. The parent is thus able to play a continuing role in the recovery.

balanced meals, my metabolism would return to its normal state, and I wouldn't get fat," explained Lynn. "And that's exactly what has happened." Thus, how wise is the Bible's recommendation: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men."—Philippians 4:5.

Success in losing excess weight can be achieved by consistently cutting back on the amount of fats and refined foods, such as sugar and white flour, and increasing the intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Moderate exercise is important too.\* Because of genetics, age, and other factors, however, some people are heavier than what may be fashionable.

Lisa, who overcame a long battle with dieting and bulimia, reached a sound conclusion: "I do not feel that the victory is in losing weight. I think the victory is in achieving moderation in all things, even if that means weighing more than this world dictates is fashionable." However, as one develops a reasonable view of physical appearance, he or

she may seek weight loss, not solely for appearance' sake, but to avoid the health risks associated with obesity.

Instead of constantly trying to reduce to fit into smaller sizes, a person can wear clothes that are becoming and that also fit comfortably. Try to keep occupied with wholesome activities rather than daily weighing and measuring yourself. If you are battling bulimia, make sure that you remove all extra food you may have stashed away, and when food shopping, have someone go along. Strive to eat meals with others. Work to maintain a reasonable schedule, and take necessary time for leisure activities.

Above all, cultivate a purpose in life. Focus intently on the Bible's hope of a coming new world of righteousness. God will soon rid the earth of the many frustrations that lead to eating disorders and end forever this 20th-century plague.—2 Peter 3:13.

But what can a parent or a spouse do to help someone in the family who has an eating disorder? A later issue of *Awake!* will consider this.

## Are They Consistent?

WHEN Roman Catholic cardinal John O'Connor indicated that Catholic politicians could be excommunicated if they do not support the church's position on abortion, syndicated columnist Mike Royko wrote: "Meanwhile, we have a priest [Louis Gigante] going into court and saying that one of New York's best-known gangsters, a career mug and menace, isn't really a gangster at all."

Royko added: "I've never read anything about O'Connor announcing: 'Anybody who is connected with a crime family—the Genovese outfit, the Gambino mob and the rest of them—faces excommunication. Just because someone became a member of our church as a tiny tot doesn't mean that we have to tolerate his anti-social behavior when he becomes the Godfather.'"



# Christmas and New Year's Celebrations in Antiquity



Aleksander Krawczuk, professor of history and former minister of culture in Poland, wrote an article for *Polityka*, a weekly magazine in that country. After discussing the historical background of New Year's celebrations, he stated:

"Were ancient Romans acquainted with New Year's celebrations? There can be no doubt, especially when one considers imperial Rome. . . . Such gaieties were occasions of great joy and laxity. This in turn influenced the attitude ancient Christians had toward celebrating the official New Year. They considered the custom to be scandalous and thoroughly pagan, alien in form and spirit to the worshipers of enlightened religion. After all, sacrifices to deities were offered. For this reason the church categorically forbade its worshipers to have any part in New Year's celebrations, especially in the gaieties."

The professor then goes on to explain the fixing of the date for Christmas:

"The Roman custom of

celebrating December 25 prevailed only from the fourth century. It was thus possible to Christianize the popular holiday of the Unconquered Sun.

"Despite the fall of its empire, Rome slowly but steadily forced first Western civilization and finally the whole world to accept its tradition and will regarding both calendar dates. Taking January 1 as the beginning of the new year, however, meant a triumph for a tradition of parties, feasts, wedding festivities, gift-giving, and wishes, and this in spite of the intense aversion of ancient Christians."

Having established that New Year's celebrations are of pagan origin, how does Professor Krawczuk feel about Christians' sharing in these festivities? His own wish for Christians:

"That [Christians] should morally be in a position to repeat the words of their fellow believers of antiquity. When scoffed at by pagans

who said: 'What kind of religion is that, without splendid temples containing images and statues, without precious garments or liturgical vessels?' the early Christians answered: 'It is true that we are poor. But our temples are hearts full of love for God and neighbor; our liturgical garments are modesty, industriousness, submissiveness and humility; and the vessels are our good deeds.'"

Pointedly, the Bible states at 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 that Christians should "not harness [them]selves in an uneven team with unbelievers; how can uprightness and law-breaking be partners, or what can light and darkness have in common? How can Christ come to an agreement with Beliar and what sharing can there be between a believer and an unbeliever? The temple of God cannot compromise with false gods, and that is what we are—the temple of the living God. . . . 'Get away from them, purify yourselves,' says the Lord. 'Do not touch anything unclean.'"—*The New Jerusalem Bible*, a Catholic translation.

## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK...



# How Can I Be Happy Living With Just One Parent?

*"Kids with two parents can have their own rooms and buy new clothes. But I have to share a room; I hardly ever get the kind of clothes I like. Mom says she can't afford them. With all the chores I have to do around the house while she works, I feel like a maid—like I'm being cheated out of part of my childhood."—Shalonda, 13 years old.*

THE two-parent home is ideal. Two loving parents can usually offer more guidance, protection, and support than can one. "Two are better off than one," says the Bible, "because together they can work more effectively."—Ecclesiastes 4:9, *Today's English Version*.

It is no surprise, then, that despite the spiraling increase in one-parent households, many youths feel ashamed to live in such families. They may feel that they aren't ready to cope with the pressures and problems to which such a life subjects them. What, then, if circumstances beyond your control deprive you of the love and care of one of your parents? Are you doomed to misery? Hardly.

Much has to do with your view of the situation. Proverbs 15:15 says: "All the days of the afflicted one are bad; but the one that is good at heart has a feast constantly." In harmony with this principle, Dr. Helen Mendes says: "Single-parent families must view themselves as teams and accept themselves as intact families," not broken homes. She adds: "Such families have an entirely different attitude and outlook on life when they begin to consider

themselves as socially acceptable units." But is it realistic to have such a positive view?

### Quality—Not Quantity

Researchers for the journal *Family Relations* remind us: "The presence of two parents in a home is no guarantee that love, proper nurturance and wise guidance are being provided." They also note: "A physically present parent in a home may be psychologically [mentally] absent much of the time." Hence, your happiness depends, not on how *many* parents you live with, but on the *kind* of parent or parents you have in the home and the interest and concern they show in your well-being. As psychologist Richard A. Gardner observed: "Bad parents, whether one or two, cause children to be unhappy; and good parents, whether one or two, help children grow up healthier and happier." And single parents often make admirable efforts to give their children needed attention.

Seventeen-year-old Melanie says: "It hasn't been easy since my dad left us. It's been real hard on my mom because she works now. But

we get to our Christian meetings and have regular Bible studies, something we rarely did when my father lived with us." She adds: "We do more things as a family, and we are very close. Of course, I miss my father, but I'm very happy living with my mom." If your one parent is putting forth similar effort to raise you in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," you can still thrive and flourish even if your family structure is not ideal.  
—Ephesians 6:4.

### **Making Do With Less**

There are some practical concerns that may arise, however. One study indicated that immediately after a divorce, a single-parent household may suffer a 73-percent decline in its standard of living. Understandably, then, money is a big concern in most one-parent families.\*

What can you do? You probably have little control over your family's finances. But you can help conserve and stretch what resources you have by avoiding waste. (Compare John 6:12.) Young

\* One-parent homes headed by fathers fare better economically than those headed by mothers because (1) men enjoy a higher pay scale and (2) noncustodial fathers frequently default on alimony or child-support payments.

**Making your own lunches is one way to save your parent time and money**

Rodney says: "Around the house, I try to be careful not to break or misplace things, since it costs money to repair or replace items. I try to turn off electrical appliances or lights not being used. This helps to lower our electric bills."

Fourteen-year-old Tony tries a different approach. He says: "Kids in my school demand that their parents buy them designer sneakers and clothes. They refuse to go to school without them." Tony adds: "I don't have the latest designer clothes, but I'm neat and clean, and I take care of what I have. My mom's doing the best she can; I don't want to make it harder for her." Such fellow feeling not only conserves limited resources but is a real source of encouragement to a parent.—1 Peter 3:8.

Cutting back on or eliminating snacks and junk foods may also be helpful. Young Rita observes: "Eating at home may not be as appealing as eating at a fast-food restaurant, but



it saves money." A wise assessment indeed! Other youths donate part of their earnings from part-time jobs to the family fund. Thirteen-year-old Danny gives his mother the money he makes on his paper route. His mother explains: "After I pay the mortgage, the gas, the telephone, the food, and buy the clothes, that's the money we have to live off. And Danny is really a super kid; he doesn't really mind." Cooperating in this regard is one way to 'honor your parent.'—Matthew 15:4.

Before you seek part-time employment, though, discuss it with your parent.\* A part-time job may interfere with your schoolwork, household duties, and Christian meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Parents are usually able to work out some means of supporting their children without their children having to take on a major portion of the responsibility. Still, you may have to cope with having a limited income. But remember that while material things and money are useful, Christians are admonished to be content with "sustenance and covering."—1 Timothy 6:8-10; Luke 12:15.

For example, your family may have to move from a larger home to a smaller one or to an apartment, requiring that you now share a room with a family member. But you can still be content. And with a little ingenuity, you may be able to retain a measure of privacy. Some families, for example, have built sleeping lofts in the living room, screened from view by bookcases. Simply organizing the available space or using a room divider may likewise suffice to give you at least a sense of privacy.

At any rate, psychologist Richard A. Gardner reminds one-parent youths: "It is important to remember that money—and the things that money can buy—are not the most im-

\* The November 22, 1990, and December 8, 1990, issues of *Awake!* discuss the matter of afterschool employment more thoroughly.

tant things in life. It's . . . things like the kind of person you are and how you treat other people that will determine how happy you are going to be in life." (Compare Acts 20:35.) Along these lines, the apostle Paul said: "I have learned to be satisfied with what I have . . . so that anywhere, at any time, I am content."—Philippians 4:11, 12, TEV.

You may also have to assume a greater share of the responsibility for the functioning of your home than if you lived in a two-parent home. But rather than viewing this negatively, try to see it as a chance both to help your parent and to train yourself for future responsibilities.

### **How to Handle Overload**

Sometimes, though, a youth ends up with more responsibility than he or she can handle. This is particularly likely to happen if you are the oldest child. What should you do? Try talking to your parent and explain how this problem is affecting you. Perhaps you can suggest that the chores be more fairly distributed. For example, some families post a list showing all the chores that each family member must perform. So that no one has to do the more unpleasant tasks all the time, some families regularly rotate the chores among capable family members.

The foregoing suggestions may prove helpful in making the most of your situation. This is not to say, however, that you won't from time to time wish you had a second parent at home. But a youth named Carrie puts it this way: "You never really get over the pain, but it gets smaller. It's like a big freckle on your hand. It's always there, but sometimes you don't notice it."

Much has to do, though, with how hard you endeavor to cope with your situation. For in spite of the disadvantages of living in a one-parent home, you can help make your life there a success and a joy!

# The Vicuña Wears the Finest Wool

By "Awake!"  
correspondent in  
Bolivia



side of the Andes are dry deserts. How do vicuñas survive in such a place?

Besides having a special coat, the vicuña has blood that is so loaded with red cells that even at the high altitudes where it lives, the animal can run at 30 miles an hour for some distance without tiring. And like camels they can survive under extremely dry conditions. In fact, vicuñas, llamas, alpacas, and guanacos are often called cameloids because they are like camels. But our Creator has given vicuñas another advantage to help them survive.

Whereas llamas and alpacas give birth at any time of the year, vicuñas give birth in March and April. This is at the end of the rainy season, when there is more food. In addition, the birth is usually in the morning, to give the little one time to dry out before it encounters its first freezing night. The mother separates from the rest of the herd of about 20 vicuñas and, after less than half an hour's labor, gives birth to a creature weigh-

**W**HAT makes the wool of the vicuña so special? And why is its wool so rare?

You may have seen a similar animal, the llama—that snooty-looking, slow-moving beast of burden so common in zoos. Its wool is coarse. You may also have seen garments made from the soft fleece of the alpaca, another domestic animal of the Andes kept for its wool. But have you ever seen a vicuña?

The vicuña is different. It is wild! Touch its coat if you can. It is the finest wool on earth, with hairs less than half the diameter of the finest sheep's wool.

The vicuña needs that insulating coat, since it lives at an elevation of from 12,000 to 18,000 feet on the slopes of the Andes Mountains. There, near the snow line, days are delightfully sunny, but at nightfall the temperature suddenly drops to many degrees below freezing. Also, many areas on this western

ing less than 14 pounds. She does nothing to help it, not even licking it. If it rains, the cold will weaken the newborn and make it easy prey for the world's largest flying bird, the Andean condor. But soon the newborn is on its feet, and within 30 minutes it is able to outrun a man.

However, it is sad that greedy poachers have nearly exterminated the vicuña, often killing the animals with machine guns. In some years up to 50,000 pounds of wool has been exported, nearly all from illegally slaughtered animals. In an effort to save the creature from extinction, some nations have banned the import of vicuña wool and skins.

### *Why Is the Wool So Warm?*

All wool is warm because, unlike silk, cotton, or polyester, there are tiny scales on the hollow, air-filled fibers that cause them to interlock and trap insulating air. Also, wool has a natural crimp, or wave, that remains even after processing and washing. This means that less wool touches the skin than is the case with other fibers. In addition, wool continues to absorb moisture—up to 30 percent of its weight—without feeling damp to the touch.

Significantly, silky vicuña wool is finer than any other wool. And, usually, the finer the wool, the finer the quality. Fine wool means finer yarn and finer cloth—cloth that feels soft, light, and warm. A scarf made of vicuña is so fine that it can be drawn through a wedding ring. Because the fine fibers are very sensitive to chemical treatment, vicuña wool is normally used in its natural golden color.

The vicuña fleece has been appreciated since the time of the Incas, before the Spanish conquest of the 16th century. Millions of vicuñas thrived in the Andes in those days. Every few years the Incas would organize

thousands of people to surround entire mountains and trap the herds of vicuñas so that they could be sheared. Vicuña cloth was a respected mark of rank; only the highest-ranking ones in the kingdom could use it. Today, it is almost impossible to obtain legally.

### *Why So Rare?*

Whereas an alpaca can provide 15 pounds of wool every two years when it is sheared, a vicuña provides only one pound. Yet, is it possible to produce sufficient quantities of wool for commercial use from domesticated vicuñas?

"Personally, I think it's a Utopian dream," explained a warden at a research station on the Bolivian altiplano. "You see, llamas and alpacas are domestic animals, but the vicuñas are wild. They leap our fences, and we have to spend many hours catching them again. They fought so furiously when we tried to dip them that two died." Evidently, some animals were created to be domesticated and others not. Regarding this, the Bible says that God created "domestic animal and moving animal and wild beast of the earth according to its kind." (Genesis 1:24) But what about crossing vicuñas with domestic alpacas?

This has been tried, but the offspring become sterile after just a few generations. "The only hope of legally produced vicuña cloth," the above-quoted warden said, "lies in protecting the wild animals until their numbers grow sufficiently so that they can be herded into nets. Then they can be sheared and released, as in Inca times. Some countries hope to achieve this soon."

Surely, to care better for earth's animal life is a worthy goal. This was done in past generations, and it will certainly be done in the future under the rule of God's righteous government.—Isaiah 9:6; 11:6-9.

# Perfect Government at Last!

**HUMAN RULE**  
Weighed in the Balances



PART 10

*Theocracy: from the Greek words “the-os” (god) and “kra’tos” (a rule); thus, a government by the direction or administration of God, at times through appointed representatives.*

IF YOU could afford to buy a genuine pearl necklace or a diamond ring, would you settle for a poor imitation of the real thing? Probably not, unless you had been deceived into believing that what you were getting was the best that could be had.

As regards government, hundreds of millions of people have been deceived into believing that they are getting the best that can be had. In reality they are ending up with poor imitations. No wonder they are disappointed, dissatisfied, and frustrated.

## ***The Search for Good Government***

William Ralph Inge, onetime Anglican Church dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, wrote in 1922: "A good government remains the greatest of human blessings, and no nation has ever enjoyed it." Why?

A partial explanation can be found in the words of John F. Kennedy, 35th president of the United States. "No government is better than the men who compose it," he said. Since

even the most gifted politician is imperfect, every government that humans set up is doomed to failure.

Seventeenth-century English playwright Philip Massinger was correct when he wrote: "He that would govern others, first should be the master of himself." But what imperfect human is really master of himself? Really, no politician has sufficient knowledge and wisdom to control events and situations and thus ensure his own happiness and well-being, much less the happiness and well-being of millions of fellow humans. And even if he were always able to make correct decisions, he would not have the power to carry them out.

American essayist Brooks Atkinson, recognizing the problem, concluded back in 1951: "We need supermen to rule us—the job is so vast and the need for wise judgment is so urgent. But, alas," he said, "there are no supermen." Today, four decades later, there still are none.

Actually, God never intended for humans to rule themselves. In order to enjoy perfect government, humans need more than just government by supermen. They need theocracy, government by God.

### **What Kind of Theocracy?**

Theocracy is the type of government that prevailed in Eden, where God placed the first human pair. As rightful Sovereign, God originally administered affairs and exercised authority.

When Jewish historian Flavius Josephus first coined the Greek word translated "theocracy" about 19 centuries ago, he used it to refer to the ancient nation of Israel. This was a correct identification, since Israel at that time was a nation chosen by God. It was actually ruled by him, even though his rule was administered through earthly representatives.—Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Chronicles 29:23.

When the term "theocracy" was introduced into other languages, it was at first mostly limited to the meaning Josephus intended. But it later took on additional connotations. According to *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, it has been "widely applied to such varied cases as pharaonic Egypt, ancient Israel, medieval Christendom, Calvinism, Islam, and Tibetan Buddhism."

Historian W. L. Warren says that there was "in the English monarchy an element of theocratic kingship—the king as the chief instrument in the divine scheme for the ordering of the world, the king as God's representative and judgement-deliverer." In modern times the word has even been used, explains Dewey Wallace, Jr., of George Washington University, as an expression of "enlightened contempt for 'priest-ridden' societies."

The broad scope of meaning now included in the word allows for the existence of many kinds of theocracy. Which kind do we need?

### **Counterfeit Theocracies**

The first human government in recorded history was founded some 4,000 years ago by Nimrod. This great-grandson of Noah made himself a king and became, as he is described in the Bible, "a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." (Genesis 10:8, 9) By setting himself up as ruler in opposition to Jehovah, Nimrod made himself a political god. As such, he had the backing of God's chief opposer, the false god Satan the Devil. (2 Corinthians 4:4) So Nimrod's rule was a counterfeit of the real theocracy.

When the inhabitants of Nimrod's empire were later scattered throughout the earth, people continued to assume that their governments were theocratic, that is, deriving authority from the god or gods they worshiped. (Genesis 11:1-9) "Theocracy" thus came to be used, says *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, "to describe that early phase of ancient oriental civilization in which there was no distinction between religion and the state."

In some cultures, such as Egypt under the Pharaohs, the king was believed to be the spouse of a great goddess or the son of a god. Other cultures said little about the king's supposed divine qualities or descent, stressing

## **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

*'And the Wall Came Tumbling Down'*

*"Jehovah's Witnesses From the U.S.S.R.—Brighter Days Ahead"*

*Mexico City—A Growing Monster?*

rather the idea of his having been divinely chosen. In the Greece of Alexander's time and thereafter, the king was considered divine, explains the book *A History of Political Theory*, "because he brought harmony to his kingdom as God brings harmony into the world." This history book continues: "He possessed a divinity which the common man did not share and which brought to disaster the unworthy usurper who claimed the high office without the blessing of Heaven."

This concept that the king is divine was carried over into the so-called Christian era. After the Teutonic tribes were converted to Catholicism, the king's prestige increased. The crowning by the church implied that God himself had chosen the king to rule. From this background, the doctrine known as the divine right of kings gradually developed.

Even before the "Christian" era, the Caesars of Rome had given their government a theocratic twist by claiming godship. In Roman eyes, human rule was the equivalent of god-rule, making their government, after the fashion of Nimrod, a counterfeit theocracy.

So when Jewish clergymen of the first century C.E. rejected Jesus as prospective King, saying, "We have no king but Caesar," they were, in effect, expressing preference for a counterfeit theocracy over the real one that Jesus was proclaiming.—John 19:15.

Since theocratic rule by Jehovah is vastly superior to every other form of rule, Satan has, not surprisingly, tried to incorporate some of its aspects into his man-made counterfeits—but unsuccessfully. All these self-styled theocracies have fallen far short of the ideal. In reality, none of them has been a rule by God or by his representatives. They have been poor imitations of the real thing, expressions of imperfect human rule under the control of a counterfeit god.

Appropriately, the Bible calls this god "the ruler of this world" and "the god of this system of things." (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4) That is why he was able to offer "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" to Jesus, a temptation Jesus resolutely rejected. (Matthew 4:8-10) Knowing that genuine theocracy is rule by the one true God, Jehovah, Jesus was not deceived into accept-

## What Theocratic Rule by Jehovah Will Do

- ◆ *Restore feeble old people to youthful vigor.*—Job 33:25.
  - ◆ *Make wars a thing of the past.*—Psalm 46:9; Isaiah 9:7.
  - ◆ *Furnish every family with excellent housing.*—Isaiah 65:21.
  - ◆ *Heal the sick and the disabled.*—Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6.
  - ◆ *Resurrect the dead.*—Isaiah 25:8; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:13.
  - ◆ *Rid the earth of corruption, immorality, and crime.*—Proverbs 2:21, 22.
  - ◆ *Provide abundant food for all.*—Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 25:6.
  - ◆ *Reinstate a peaceful relationship between humans and animals.*—Isaiah 11:6-9; Ezekiel 34:25.
  - ◆ *Assign everyone meaningful and rewarding work.*—Isaiah 65:22, 23.
  - ◆ *Transform the earth into a global paradise.*—Isaiah 35:1, 6, 7; Luke 23:43.
- These are not empty political promises made by humans; they are promises made by God, and "it is impossible for God to lie."*—Hebrews 6:18.



The eternal blessings of perfect government can be yours!

zations, he cannot yet rest from seeking new forms of government to meet the ever-new needs of his times." Since Nimrod's day, humans have been doing just that, repeatedly devising new forms of government to meet the needs of the times. But just how much time is needed to prove that human rule simply does not work?

Happily, in 1914 the time came for senseless experimentation in human government to be challenged by the establishing in heaven of Jehovah's Messianic Kingdom!\* Since 1914, human governments, although still clinging to life, have been living on borrowed time. (Daniel 7:12) We are living in the period that the Bible identifies as "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:

ing man-made substitutes that are incapable of expressing in perfect balance the divine attributes found in the real thing.

### **Perfect Government At Hand**

Some years ago, Hugh Brogan of the University of Essex concluded: "If man, the political animal, is to save himself and his civili-

1-5) The handwriting on the wall that bodes imminent destruction for human rule is so plain that no one can honestly overlook it. It can be ignored, but it cannot be erased.

\* For proof that God's Kingdom was established in 1914 and that this world has been in its last days since then, see chapters 16 and 18 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published in 1982 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Theocratic rule by means of Jehovah's Messianic Kingdom is represented in the Bible at Daniel chapter 2 by a stone "cut out not by hands" that "struck the image [symbolic of human rule] on its feet of iron and of molded clay and crushed them." This means that God's established Kingdom will soon strike bad human rule in its every form, crushing it. How completely? The Bible answers: "At that time the iron, the molded clay, the copper, the silver and the gold were, all together, crushed and became like the chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that no trace at all was found of them."—Daniel 2:34, 35.

If evil human governments are to be swept away so completely that no trace of them will ever be found, it is obvious that advocates of human rule are in for difficult times. Millions

of people, recognizing this fact, are seeing the wisdom of shifting their trust from corrupted human rule to something better. Only rule by Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe, can solve the problems caused by thousands of years of human misrule and mismanagement. Only true theocracy can meet the needs of our times.

*Awake!* hopes that the ten-part series "Human Rule Weighed in the Balances" has impressed upon you the importance of making a personal decision in this matter of government. And above all it is hoped that it will help you to make a wise decision. Human rule has been weighed in the balances and found deficient. What will you choose? Will it be a cheap counterfeit or the real thing? Will it be human rule or rule by the true God, Jehovah? —Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:10.



In some lands the Christmas tree is considered indispensable to celebrating Christmas, but not all who want a tree are willing to pay for one. Parks and land-

## Trees That Punish Thieves

scaped rights-of-way of many highways in the United States have been invaded by tree thieves. In search of the ideal fir, spruce, or pine, thieves chop them down and haul them off regardless of who owns the land.

Some states have begun to fight back. During last year's Christmas season, authorities in various northern regions began spraying some trees with a special chemical. It isn't noticeable in the cold outdoors, but once a tree is safely inside

the thief's warm living room, the chemical makes its presence known. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, it stinks "like a fertilizer factory."

The parks director for Monroe, Connecticut, estimates that the town has lost hundreds of trees to thieves over the years. But ever since town officials placed notices in the local newspaper warning would-be thieves that the tempting-looking trees were, in effect, stink bombs, thefts have gone down.



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

# My Agony on Flight 232

"WE'RE going to make an emergency landing in Sioux City," the pilot warned. "It's going to be rough."

It was July 19, 1989, and my husband and I were on our way to Chicago to attend a convention of a computer company that my husband, Kevin, managed. We had already flown from Albuquerque to Denver, where we met up with a friend going to the same convention but on another flight. I remember that we joked about who would reach Chicago first. Our plane, United Flight 232, left first; the other was scheduled to take off about ten minutes later.

## Trouble on Board

Suddenly, during our in-flight meal, there was a loud noise, and the plane began to shake

### As told by a survivor

**When United Airlines Flight 232 crashed in an Iowa cornfield last year, 110 passengers and crew died. But, remarkably, 186 survived.**

and lose altitude. Shortly thereafter the pilot announced that we'd lost an engine and that we would be late arriving in Chicago. He sounded calm.

The flight attendants were concerned but not extraordinarily so. Everyone was talking about the situation, but there was no panic. Later, I learned that the plane could fly only to the right because the hydraulic lines had been cut when an engine disintegrated.

Soon the pilot announced that we would land in Sioux City, Iowa, and would have a rough landing. He said that everything should be all right, but he instructed us to prepare for a crash landing. The flight attendants demonstrated how to tighten our seat belts and grab our ankles.

From the moment the engine broke up, I started crying, and I couldn't stop. Kevin held me, and he said a prayer to Jehovah God for both of us. How glad we were that our two girls, ages six and two, were not with us on this trip!

The woman next to me, with her two boys, reached over and held my hand as we prepared to land. The plane descended smoothly, and I really thought that we had made it when I imagined that we had touched down.

#### *Survival and Hospitalization*

I kept my eyes closed and felt as though I were on a roller coaster, seeing sunlight through my closed eyes. The last thing I remember was that my shoes were being sucked off, and I tried to curl my toes to keep them on.

When I opened my eyes, it was dark, and I was moving. My seat was being turned over by a rescuer. We were in a field. It was black and green, and the sun was shining brightly. Kevin was still strapped in next to me. I called his name, but he didn't answer.

They put me on the ground, where I raised myself up on my elbows. I asked if my husband had made it. The rescuer shook his head no. I just relaxed. During the ambulance ride, I heard all the sounds but was not really listening. I could feel my eye swelling.

At the Marion County Health Center, the people were caring and helpful, especially a nurse named Lori. I was alert enough to give her my sister's telephone number in Albuquerque, and she called to let my family know that I was alive.

I really thought that since I was in Iowa, no one would be there to see me. But that first night, two elders from the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses visited me in the hospital. The local Witnesses continued to visit, call, and write during my four-day stay. Unit-



**With my husband before the flight**

ed Airlines opened an account at J. C. Penney's, and the Witnesses shopped for me so that I could have something to wear.

The next day I was surprised again when my mother, my sister, and Kevin's brother and parents all arrived to be with me. None of them would let me think Kevin was dead, so I still entertained a glimmer of hope that he might be among the unidentified injured.

When I watched the television news, I couldn't believe what I saw. I didn't even know we had crashed! When I thought that the plane had just touched down, I had assumed we were safe. I hadn't even stopped to analyze why we were out of the plane. The row of seats Kevin and I were in was behind the wing. We were in the middle section of five seats, and when the plane broke apart, our seats tumbled out on the ground. Kevin and the woman next to me died, but her two small boys and I survived.

One rescuer—the only one I remembered—visited me in the hospital. That certain ones lived and others died bothered him. It was a matter of 'time and unforeseen occurrence befalling those involved,' I explained. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) God didn't appoint certain people to seats where they would be killed and others to seats where they would survive. I gave him the Bible tract *What Hope for Dead*

*Loved Ones?* and the brochure “*Look! I’m Making All Things New.*” We hugged, and I think he felt a little better when he left.

Lori, who tended to my wounds in the emergency room, continued to visit me throughout my hospital stay, even though I wasn’t on her list of patients. She admired my inner strength, and I tried to explain to her that I derived it from my God, Jehovah, who was helping me to cope.—Psalm 121:1-3.

### ***Continuing to Cope***

By Sunday, July 23, I was ready to complete my recuperation at home. As we boarded the plane, I gave myself calming pep talks and concentrated on my breathing so as not to panic. When my two-year-old, Mercedes, saw me all bandaged and bruised, she wouldn’t have anything to do with me. It took three or four days for her to warm up to me again. Tarrah was glad to have her mother back, but she missed her dad.

Being with those who knew Kevin and who had seen his spiritual progress (he was to be baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in October) made it harder for me to face the reality of his death. Some say Santa Fe never saw a bigger funeral than his. He knew how to be a friend and had touched many people’s lives.

I realized that I needed to keep busy and that there is no better activity than the Christian ministry. In April and May, I had shared in the auxiliary pioneer work, a form of full-time ministry. Now I was determined to do so again in September. Being involved with other people and their problems was indeed helpful. I also set about doing things around the house, such as putting blinds on the windows, wallpapering the dining room and den, and refinishing the dining-room table.

At the time of the accident, I was conducting two home Bible studies with people interested in God’s Word, and after the crash a former student wanted to resume her study. All

three students asked: ‘Why did Jehovah save you and not Kevin, since he also was doing his utmost to please God?’

I explained to them the difference between an act of God and a natural disaster or an accident. With an act of God, we are given divine warning that something is going to happen. An example is the Flood of Noah’s day. In that case God told Noah what to do to avoid the calamity. He was to build an ark. On the other hand, accidents and natural disasters are unforeseen and affect everyone indiscriminately, good and bad. No one knew anything was going to go wrong with our plane. If they had known that, nobody would have boarded it. My survival was as much an accident as was Kevin’s death.

People who tell me how “strong” I am don’t realize how often I am close to tears. It is taking a while to get over my experience. I can talk about Kevin or see pictures and be fine until I’m alone; then I cry. It pains me greatly that I lost my mate after so short a period of time together, just seven years.

My little daughters pay more than the usual attention to any Christian brothers that come over to visit, holding onto their legs at times so they won’t leave. Tarrah was angry for a while and at times cried without knowing exactly why. She does well in school, though, and tries to tell her schoolmates about the resurrection.—John 5:28, 29.

We are trying to simplify our lives and make the Christian ministry a way of life. With Jehovah’s help we will accomplish that. About a year ago, a friend encouraged me to go ahead and begin serving as a regular pioneer. I am happy that I accepted that encouragement. As a full-time minister, helping others learn about God’s purposes has helped me keep in focus God’s grand purpose to create an earthly paradise and resurrect dead loved ones. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4)—*As told by Lydia Francis Atwell.*

# WATCHING THE WORLD

## INACCURATE DATING

For decades, historians and paleontologists have often relied on radiocarbon dating to estimate the age of fossils. However, according to *Time* magazine, "those estimates, while valuable, are also known to be somewhat uncertain." The magazine added that "carbon 14 levels in the air—and thus the amount ingested by organisms—are known to vary over time, and that can affect the results of carbon dating." After comparing the results of a carbon-14 test with a uranium-thorium test, a group of geologists at the Lamont-Doherty Geological Laboratory in Palisades, New York, found that the "radiocarbon dates may be off by as much as 3,500 years—possibly enough to force a change in current thinking on such important questions as exactly when humans first reached the Americas."

## WIRE DIET

The *Jerusalem Post* reported on a recent trend in Israel among some people who want to lose weight. In order to cut down on their food consumption, some have been asking doctors or dentists to wire their jaws shut. The authorities took notice of this trend when "advertisements announcing the wiring began appearing in newspapers." The practice is illegal; Israel's Health Ministry has been able to stop about a dozen dentists from doing this type of dental wiring on patients. According to the *Post*, Dr. Moshe Kelman, head of the Health Ministry's Dental Health

Department, stated that his office is investigating the suicide of an 18-year-old girl whose jaws were wired shut to lose weight.

## POLLUTION BLAMED

"Each generation is getting weaker as pollution builds up and wears down the immune system," claims allergy specialist Dr. Jean Monro of Britain's Breakspear Hospital for Allergy and Environmental Medicine. Environmental pollution, failure to breast-feed babies, the addition of chemicals to food and water supplies, and an unwise use of medicines and



drugs are cited as contributing factors. Diseases ranging from asthma to cancer, and even child behavioral problems, result. As reported in *The Times* of London, an estimated 17 million people, some 30 percent of Britain's population, could be suffering from environmentally induced ailments, many without realizing it.

## VIOLENT TURTLES

School authorities in Australia are facing an increasing problem with violence among children. According to *The New York Times*, some are blaming the popular Teen-Age Mutant Ninja Turtles

craze. One expert stated that children "are learning that violence, as used by the good guys, is the answer to all problems and this is then translated into their behaviour." Many Australian schools have banned the toy weapons, warning the students to "leave their Ninja swords, nunchakus and sticks at home." The newspaper adds that "despite widespread concern about the Turtles' effect on children, both the Ninja Turtle movie and the television series are scoring record ratings."

## THE SECRET OF LONGEVITY

A new world record for longevity has been set by the Japanese with the average life expectancy for women reaching 81.77 years and for men 75.91 years. The experts attribute this to "a decrease in deaths among infants and middle-aged people," reports the *Mainichi Daily News*. At 112 years of age, Waka Shirahama, the oldest person in Japan, and one of the nation's 3,298 centenarians, said that the secret of her longevity is "to live a diligent, moderate and honest life," according to *The Daily Yomiuri*. In another interview she added: "Eat all kinds of foods without having likes and dislikes, get plenty of sleep, and don't forget to keep smiling."

## CLEAN THE KLONGS

Klongs, Bangkok's picturesque, bustling canals lined with houses on stilts, have helped to make Thailand's capital famous. But *Asiaweek* magazine notes that "some of the waterways have been turned into soupy, putrescent cesspools of refuse and sewage."

Most of the homes along the khlongs are not linked to Bangkok's sewage system and cannot be reached by garbage trucks. The result: Every day 140 tons of sewage and garbage ends up in Thailand's mighty Chao Phraya River, which sustains the khlongs. Some khlongs, choked with refuse and depleted of life-sustaining oxygen, give off a stench that is hard for riverside residents to bear. A campaign has thus been launched to clean the khlongs. *Asiaweek* notes that "armies of volunteers have responded to the drive."

### BLOODY FILMS

"If you have the impression that movies today are bloodier and more brutal than ever in the past, and that their body counts are skyrocketing," noted *The New York Times*, "you are absolutely right." Modern technology and new plastic substances enable movie producers to add shocking realism to violent scenes. Some of the more popular films include hundreds of violent deaths. As an example, the newspaper mentioned the film *Die Hard 2* in which over 260 people were violently put to death, including one man who was stabbed in the brain through his eye socket and another who was sucked into a jet engine. According to the same article, a good number of these films are "the sort of action-adventure movies that have come to dominate today's market."

### SEAL SLAUGHTER?

The proposed clubbing of 30,500 seals on the west coast of South Africa has drawn so much emotional public reaction that the plan has been shelved. However, some conservationists believe that culling the seals is necessary for

the marine environment. According to *The Star* of Johannesburg, overcrowding by 1.3 million seals around the Cape and the Namibian coast already poses a threat to the marine habitat. Says conservationist Vic Kabalin: "Years ago Seal Island . . . was noted for its Cape fur seals and its jackass penguin rookeries. Now you see only seals." The reason for the ecological imbalance? *The Star* states: "The Cape seal's major predator, the large sharks, have been greatly reduced in numbers through shark nets and fishing. So the 1.3 million or so seals . . . have little to control their numbers except man."

### UNUSUAL LANGUAGE

Visit Gomera, one of the seven Canary Islands, and you will likely hear what sounds like canaries with megaphones. As reported in *The Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune* of New Zealand, it is the *silbo*, or



whistling language, that for centuries has been used as a second language by the island's inhabitants. Although it takes five years to learn and requires a high degree of skill, it was widely used by peasants working the island's mountainous interior, as it carries much farther than a spoken tongue. "You can say anything by whistling and if the weather's good you can hear it 3 km [2 mi] away," says one user. Because each letter of the alphabet has a corresponding

whistle sound, even modern words can be whistled.

### AIRLINE ACCIDENTS

A major airplane manufacturer, Boeing, has been studying the frequency and causes of airline accidents. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the manufacturer has examined about 850 large-scale crashes that have occurred since the late 1950's. Boeing claims that "mistakes by flight crews have caused more than 72% of the accidents during the past 10 years." The report stated that if the number of airline flights continues to increase at the present rate and the number of accidents fails to decrease at a faster rate, by the middle of the next decade, the net effect "would be an average of 20 major crashes a year for all makes of airliners . . . , up from 15 now."

### MINE DEATHS

"For every ton of gold mined, a miner is killed," reports *The Star* of Johannesburg, South Africa. According to statistics provided by the Chamber of Mines, an average of more than 560 fatalities have occurred annually in South African gold mines for the last seven years. Although fatalities have shown a slight decline, Mr. Reinoud Boers, liaison officer for the Chamber of Mines, says: "The fact is that mining is a hazardous occupation. Although we would prefer to have no deaths, this is the reality of mining worldwide." Half of the deaths are caused by pressure bursts and rock falls. "South African mines," explains Mr. Boers, "are the deepest in the world (up to 4 km [2.5 mi]) and we are therefore dealing with both heat and extreme rock pressure. We are also digging the hardest rock anywhere in the world."

# FROM OUR READERS

**Crack Addiction** Thanks so much for your July 22, 1990, article "Crack Addiction—The Plight of the Unborn." We need more public awareness and public education on this subject. I know because I work in a program that treats pregnant drug addicts.

D. P., United States

**Suicides** Thanks so much for the article "Suicides—A Resurrection?" (September 8, 1990) It helped me appreciate how much Jehovah cares for us and that we need to respect the life that he has given us. It also taught me never to underestimate the power of undeserved kindness.

M. R., United States

My mother committed suicide when I was 14 years old. A big part of me died with her. But now I am 26 and a dedicated servant of God. Your article, giving evidence that my mother might be resurrected, tells me that the part of me that I lost can be regained when I see her again.

L. R., United States

**"Young People Ask" Book** I read with keen interest the article "Reader Response to the Book *Young People Ask*." (September 8, 1990) Shortly before receiving this issue, I handed the book to an elderly Bible student, suggesting that she give it to her grandchild. However, the next time I visited her, the elderly woman herself had read through the book. I showed her the portion in the article where it spoke of a woman "74 years young" who benefited from reading it. When she read this, she said: 'I agree. I thought I should know the book's content before giving it to my grandchild, but soon I was fully absorbed in reading it.' Incidentally, she is 80 years "young"!

K. H., Japan

**Youth—Challenge of the '90's** This afternoon I received the September 8, 1990, issue dealing with youth. I read it immediately and enjoyed every article. Lately I have felt that no one understands me. But after reading the magazine, I realized just how wrong I was. Thank you so much for caring about us young people.

B. P., United States

**Nature Articles** The May 22, 1990, issue fascinated me. It contained an article on Point Lobos, a truly marvelous place for animals and nature lovers. You also helped us discover the Haida, a people living farther north in the Pacific. Of course, not everyone can go there. But with a little imagination, a good part of the trip can be conjured up by reading the material and looking at the photos. Thank you for these well-presented articles.

R. F., France

**Lupus** The report about lupus in *Awake!* of May 8, 1990, left me flabbergasted. While reading it through, I underlined those passages that described my own condition. Then, armed with a copy of *Awake!*, I paid my doctor a visit. He read the report and immediately ordered blood tests. Now I am being treated for my immune system, not for rheumatism.

C. K., Federal Republic of Germany

**Teen Pregnancy** Thank you so very much for the article "Teen Pregnancy—What Should a Girl Do?" (May 8, 1990) On August 16, 1989, I was blessed with a beautiful baby girl. When I was pregnant, I didn't know what to do. I was confused about marriage and adoption but didn't even consider abortion. When the article came out, I knew I had made the right decision. I now attend Christian meetings with my daughter and hope to be a dedicated Witness soon.

D. A., United States

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