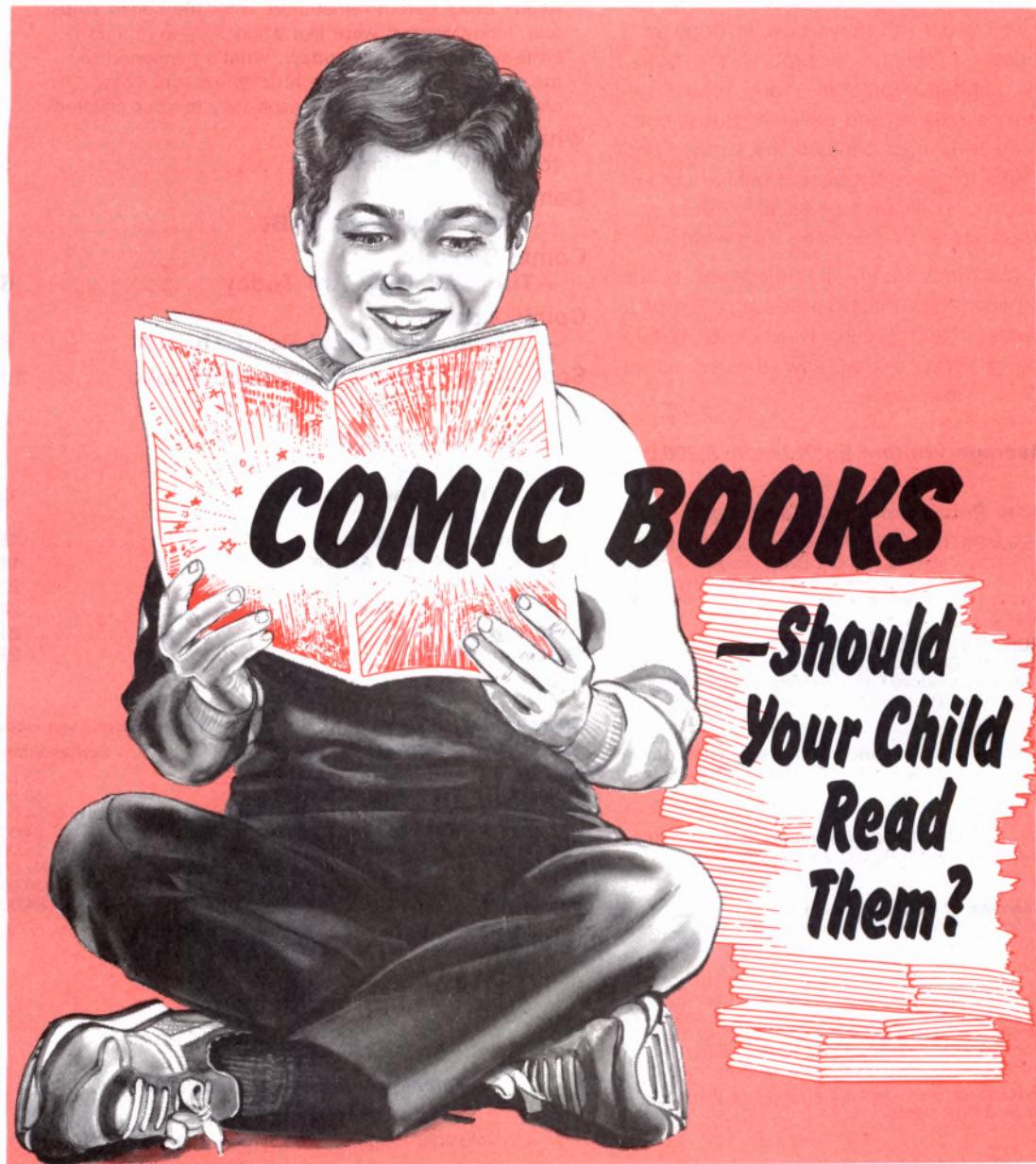


# **Awake!**

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JUNE 22, 1983



**—Should  
Your Child  
Read  
Them?**

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

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

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Little wonder they ask today: 'What's happened to the comics?' The following articles explain. They also warn of the dangers—especially to your children	
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# What Has Happened to Comic Books?

"COMIC books have really changed!" So exclaimed one woman after looking through some of the comic books her brother was reading. An avid reader of comics in her youth, she remembered them as "light-hearted, stimulating, adventuresome and fun." But now she found herself "shocked at the nudity and blood" that fill some comics.

"Nudity and blood—in comic books?" you skeptically ask. It does seem hard to believe that a medium once the home of "Mickey Mouse" and "Donald Duck" could now be infected with such decadence. One man therefore decided to investigate matters himself. After attending the "Comics and Fantasy Fair" held in Atlanta, Georgia, he reported the following:

"My remembrance of 'the funnies' [as they are often called in the United States] goes embarrassingly far back. So I was curious as to whether the comic book had really changed all that much. Entering the comic fair, my first impression was of a huge exhibition and trading center. There were enormous showrooms crowded with rows of tables and counters, on which were long cardboard boxes stuffed with magazines. An atmosphere of li-



brary quiet reigned. People of college age and breeding pored over the literally millions of comics up for sale. They seemed to know what they were searching for.

"As I glanced through *The Comic Book Price Guide*, it became apparent to me why these collectors found comic books so attractive an investment. Why, one rare comic (the most expensive single book) goes for \$14,000! And dealers told me that fantasy publications now outsold and outearned almost everything on the newsstands except 'adult' (pornographic) magazines.

"Since displays proclaimed 'The Best in Comics,' my eyes searched for *comics* —the kind I used to read as a kid. What I saw, however, was out of my ken . . . Many were preoccupied with portraying the uncanny, the supernatural, the monstrous, the ghoulish and the horrible. 'What in the world has happened to the comic books?' I asked myself."

This should be of concern to you if you are a parent! A survey taken just a few years ago indicated that 90 percent of youths in the United States read them. And they are popular with youths in other countries too. Have comic books really got that bad?

# COMIC BOOKS —What They Used to Be

**I**T ALL began with "The Yellow Kid." This was a humorous cartoon feature that began appearing in the New York *World* back in 1896. It became enormously popular. Soon newspaper readers were also amused by the antics of the likes of "Foxy Grandpa," "Buster Brown" and "The Katzenjammer Kids." The funnies were born!

And funny they were. The titles alone reveal the mirth embodied in these cartoon creations: "Happy Hooligan," "Maude the Mule," "Mutt and Jeff," "Krazy Kat," and so forth. These playful characters well reflected the innocence of the age before the climactic year of 1914. In retrospect, however, perhaps not everything was truly funny. The popu-

lar "Katzenjammer Kids," for example, made readers howl at what has been called "a systematic campaign of sabotage that successfully resists spankings, threats, and promises."

## ***The Rise of the Superhero***

Soon publishers decided to reprint some of these popular features in book form. At first, however, these comic books were merely promotional items given away by advertisers. But in 1934 publishers Wildenberg and Gaines wagered that youngsters would be willing to spend 10 cents for a comic book they called "Famous Funnies." It, too, was a success. So, using artists barely out of high school, publishers waged a fierce competition for readers.



**The Yellow Kid**



**Buster Brown**



**Polly and Her Pals**

**"The Yellow Kid" was the first comic strip in the United States**

In 1938 a turning point came. The young team of Siegel and Shuster found a publisher for a comic-book character they had invented—Superman! According to one of his originators, he was to be "a character like Samson, Hercules, and all the strong men I ever heard tell of rolled into one. Only more so." This "man of steel" captured the imaginations of young and old. Soon the monthly magazine was grossing a million dollars a year. And, spurred on by this success, publishers began inventing other caped crusaders.

But the next generation of comic books descended into the realms of sex, violence and horror. Graphically violent comics, such as one entitled "Crime Does Not Pay," actually paid their publishers quite well. And as the 1950's rolled around, comics also began to horrify their youthful readers with titles such as "Tales From the Crypt."

In many cases, the comics no longer were comical.

**With the beginning of World War II, the next generation of comic books descended into the realms of sex, violence and horror**

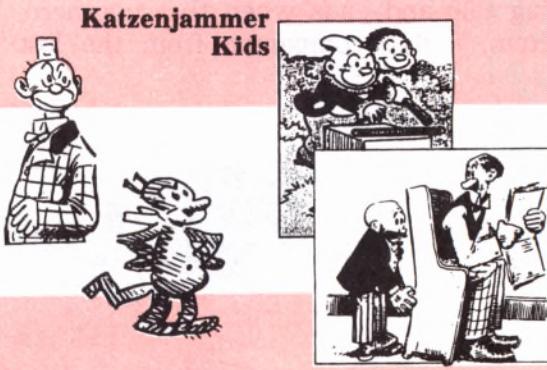
### **The Public Protests**

In 1954, Frederic Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* indicted the comic-book industry for corrupting youth. Dr. Wertham studied emotionally disturbed children and found that many of them were avid readers of comic books. Concluded Dr. Wertham, "Comic book stories teach violence."

Some, however, felt that Dr. Wertham's research did not prove that comics had a bad effect on *normal* children. Nevertheless, at least in the United States, steps eventually were taken to "police" the comics industry by setting up a code restricting excessive violence and nudity. But have such measures been effective? What are the comics like today?



**Tillie the Toiler**



**Happy Hooligan**

**Krazy Kat**

**Mutt and Jeff**

**These playful characters also illustrate what the comics used to be**

# COMIC BOOKS —The Way They Are Today

COMIC books have come a long way from the crude line drawings and simplistic writing that filled early issues. Today, the artwork is even praised in some circles. And a more sophisticated writing style may send readers on an occasional scramble for the dictionary.

The biggest change, however, is the fact that the superheroes must battle not only their comic foes but also the pervasive influence of television. A recently published study entitled "Television and Behavior" reveals that TV's power to captivate a young audience is formidable indeed. How, then, do the comics contend with this potent competitor?

One innovation was to serialize the stories—hooking the reader into keeping up with each installment. A recent issue of *Rom*, for example, tells an engrossing tale and ends when the superhero, Rom, and a companion from the lost

continent of Atlantis are threatened by an awesome monster. What next? You must read the next issue to find out!

To sustain the interest of today's TV saturated youths, comics have had all but to ignore their "codes" and give readers large doses of violence. One issue of *Daredevil* comics (about a blind superhero who wears a devil costume) was found to be violent in 53 percent of its panels. When Daredevil fights, a realistic, blow-by-blow depiction is drawn, punctuated with 'sound effects.' ("Whok," "Klugg," "Kangg," "Chudd," and "Thwakk," to name a few.) And since skintight leotards are the standard garb for superheroes, readers can gape at rippling muscles. (Female superheroes are clad no less seductively.) It should be no surprise, then, that advertisers for muscle building and martial-arts courses often pick the comics to display their wares.



Some comics devote more than half their contents to violent scenes

The religious and the occult are also comic-book attractions. For example, one issue of *Thor* begins on a pseudo-Biblical note: "In the beginning was the void. As time passed, matter grew within the void, and the matter formed stars, and the stars formed planets . . . The air above the earth crackled with power and life-energy . . . until the energy itself became aware of its own awesome potency." From here on the reader is drawn into a tale of mythological gods and goddesses.

Writers also have a way of subtly working religious ideas such as the transmigration of the soul into their story lines. In one issue of *Daredevil*, a dead woman is resurrected by a mysterious man who nonchalantly says regarding the miracle, "Yeah. Tricky Stuff." Comics with names like Ghost Rider and I . . . Vampire! show that some publishers want to cash in on the current fascination with the occult.

Even promoters of pornography have found the comic medium a handy way to display nudity and erotic behavior. Many of these obscene "comics" can find their way into the hands of children.

Naturally, not all comic books and

strips are degrading. Neither are they all read merely by children. Hundreds of millions of adults follow the comics in their favorite newspapers. In the Philippines many—including adults—rent a comic book for a few cents and read it near the sales kiosk before handing it back. In Spain it is common on the Madrid or Barcelona Metro (subway) to see adults reading comic books.

One popular French series is published as a comic book in at least 18 languages. This is "Astérix," a diminutive and fearless Celtic warrior who gets himself involved in all kinds of adventures in his travels across the ancient Roman Empire. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "'Astérix,' besides being simply humorous and adventurous, indulges in sophisticated puns, witty anachronisms, and satirical flashes that have endeared the strip to millions of adult Europeans."

However, it is undoubtedly true that many comics are designed primarily for children and are unwholesome, dealing in occultism, sadism, horror or gratuitous violence. Does that mean that concerned parents should forbid their children to read *all* comics?



Many comic books portray sex and the occult

## **COMIC BOOKS**

# **—Should Your Child Read Them?**

**W**HEN wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul," said Solomon, "thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, *discernment itself* will safeguard you." (Proverbs 2:10, 11) A discerning parent takes an interest in what his child reads. So, what about comic books?

It would be unfair to make a sweeping condemnation of comic books. For one thing, there are so many different types of comics. Some still are what they purport to be—comic, amusing, entertaining stories. Comics can also be educational. Some cultivate a child's interest in classical literature. The comic medium has even been used to portray Bible stories. And with TV drawing so many youngsters away from books, some educators feel that comics can be used to rekindle interest in reading.

### **Fantasy—Good or Bad**

'But is it healthy to expose a child to fantasy?' some ask. Well, a certain amount of fantasy seems to be a normal part of growing up. Observe small children at play and you will notice how easily a cardboard box becomes a spaceship, or how they love to imitate an accelerating auto. So some exposure to fantasy may not necessarily be harmful.

You should, however, weigh what actually appears in certain comics. What is the fantasy your child will be en-

tering? Is he enjoying the adventures of a character that manifests reasonably sound values, or is he being entertained by ghoulish or demonic villains? Is the emphasis on constructive approaches to problems, or is everything solved with a "zap"?

Some children have difficulty separating imagination from reality. The younger your child is, the less experience he has in this. So if your child reads comics, you might want to observe if he or she is adversely affected by them. Does your child dismiss comic heroes as mere entertainment or does he or she excessively talk about these characters?

### **Comic-Book Violence**

Another concern may be comic-book violence. Dr. Wertham, author of *Seduction of the Innocent*, claimed that "comic books may have such diverse effects on children, from distortion of human values to nightmares and violent games." However, a study made in 1976 on the short-term reading of violent comics failed to establish a link between the comics and aggression in children.

So it is really up to parents to determine if the comics are having a bad effect on their own children. If a child continually fantasizes about "zapping" or destroying, a parent may wisely conclude that other reading material would be more appropriate.

True, some would claim that comics

"provide readers both with an outlet for hostile and aggressive tendencies *and* with a way of learning to control them." But that is not the way the Bible recommends dealing with such emotions. Rather, it says: "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable . . . continue considering these things."—Philippians 4:8; see also Colossians 3:5-9.

#### **A Comic-Book Buff Speaks**

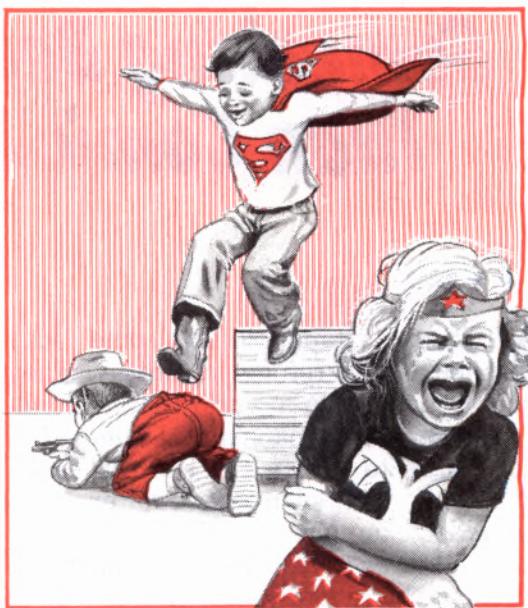
Danny, a Christian in his late 20's, still occasionally enjoys thumbing through comic books. But he also remembers a time when he was thoroughly addicted to them, spending 50 to 60 dollars a month on them! "I'm kind of a dreamer and so I liked the comics because they stirred up my imagination. I didn't go for the way-out superheroes—they were unbelievable. But I did like ones like Spider-Man who used acrobatic skills. I could see myself being like him. If you're not careful they become your idols and you want to be like them, to imitate them. For example, my friends and I used to pretend we were Captain America. Captain America always had this shield that he would throw. We pretended garbage-can lids were our shields and used to hurl them at one another."

But how did he get hooked into spending so much money on comic books? "They're like soap operas," he explains. "They end with your hero in trouble and you can't wait till the next issue to find out what happens to him. Before I knew it I had a gigantic stockpile of comic books. And when I would go to the newsstand, I wouldn't buy just one book but eight or nine dollars' worth."

Did such a huge diet of fantasy affect him? "I have to admit that it did," Danny says. "Often I would go for a walk on a cold winter day and just let my mind go, thinking about the adventures I had read about in my comic books. Before I realized it, I would have walked three or four miles—and wouldn't even feel cold!"

#### **Teaching Children to Be Selective**

Some parents might react to this by simply ridding their home of comic books. Danny, however, says that "if kept in balance, comic books can be quite enjoyable." And comics are so popular with youngsters it might be next to impossible to prevent their reading them. Some of your children's schoolmates may collect them by the hundreds. Said one youth: "I have over 600 comic books in my col-



**Are you concerned if your children imitate violent comic-book characters?**

lection. But some kids have far bigger collections."

So rather than simply becoming a "censor" you might try a more positive approach—teaching your child to be selective. Dr. Gary Stollack of Michigan State University suggested to parents: "Take the time to read the material and talk about it with [your] child. Outlandish and immoral material can then gradually be shown to be what it is, and the child's understanding sharpened and his tastes improved."

Find out how your child feels about the comics. What does he like about them? Is there any other reading material in your home that would interest a child his age? Rather than condemning

all comics, might it not be more helpful to encourage your child to branch out in his or her reading? If some of your child's reading material is objectionable, why not explain how *you* feel about what he is reading and *why* you feel that way? Helping your child to be selective in his reading is a lot harder than simply making the decision for him. But you may need to do that, too, as a parent who really cares about the welfare of your son or daughter.

Of course, comics are only a small part of the immensely popular "fantasy" industry that caters to children as well as adults. But is it wise to get too immersed in fantasy? Is there a danger of confusing fantasy with reality?

## Something Better Than Comic Books

IT IS understandable that some today should seek refuge in fantasy. They have grown up in a world that is morally and spiritually bankrupt. Religion has done little to satisfy the spiritual thirst of people. Politicians have often been wretched examples morally and have left their followers disillusioned. Popular philosophies have really broken down faith in God. Hence, it is no wonder that some youths experiment with everything from bizarre religious cults to drugs.



Fantasy and the supernatural, therefore, have a compelling attraction to some of these refugees from the world's spiritual wasteland. But is wrapping oneself up in a cocoon of fantasy practical? No, for there is something better than fantasy.

If a person's preoccupation with fantasy were to lead to his dabbling in the occult, he would be playing into the hands of one who has for centuries misled mankind—Satan the Devil. Few

people these days would confess a belief in the Devil. But the Bible assures us that he is a real, intelligent creature. "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," says the Bible at 1 John 5:19.

### **Pre-Flood "Supermen"**

According to the Bible, this wicked spirit creature used disobedient angels to dominate the worldly scene. These angelic 'sons of God' became obsessed with the idea of having sexual relations with the "daughters of men" and somehow materialized to fulfill their selfish fantasies. Their offspring were a freakish race of giants called Nephilim, noted for their violent disposition. Along with their angelic fathers, they turned the world into a place of violence, and God was forced to bring that world to an end by means of a Flood.—Genesis 6:1-7, 13; Jude 6.

Man has never forgotten these pre-Flood "supermen," however. Likely, Greek mythologies about gods coming down out of heaven are but an echo of these real pre-Flood happenings.

In view of this a Christian avoids entertainment that borders on magic, witchcraft, spiritism and similar encounters with the supernatural. The Bible condemns all such.—Leviticus 19:26, 31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Nor are Christians impelled to retreat from the harsh realities of life in this system of things. They know that the Bible predicted these conditions and advises: "But as these things [the prophesied world conditions] start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads



### **Bible stories—far better than comics**

up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) This promised deliverance will come through the resurrected King Jesus Christ who has powers far outstripping any fictional superhero. (Revelation 19:11-16) His intervention in world affairs will mean destruction for corrupt governments and religions that have failed to satisfy the spiritual hunger of their supporters. (Daniel 2:44) His righteous heavenly government will take over the rulership of the earth and restore paradise conditions.—Revelation 21:3-5.

These facts—not fantasies—merit your consideration, and that of your children. Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to examine the Bible with you so that you can understand the basis for this hope. Do not make the mistake of retreating into an unreal world of fantasy. Instead, turn to the promises of the Bible. They are encouraging, firm—and REAL!

## Young People Ask...

# Can I Trust Grown-Ups?

**D**ON'T accept candy from strangers. Never get into a car with someone you don't know." Mom's familiar warnings tipped you off that all is not well in the world of grown-ups.

"Never trust anyone over 30," became the slogan of antiwar protesters a few years ago. They expanded on mother's warning: "If it is safer without their candy," they reasoned, "why accept their advice?" What do you think? Was that too extreme, or was there some truth to it?

### **Don't Take Any Wooden Nickels**

You have good reason for caution in sizing up what the adult world offers. Opportunists make you their target, legally or illegally; so watch your money. "Penny pinchers are rare among the under-21 group," observed *U.S. News & World Report* in 1981, "and firms are scrambling to tap the lucrative market." Even in countries where young people don't have much spending money, illegal child labor attracts commercialists. "From the age of 5 in some places, in mines and on farms, in sweatshops and on city streets, . . . the exploited children number in the millions, and their ranks are increasing."—*The World's Exploited Children: Growing Up Sadly*, 1980, U.S. Department of Labor.

You might ask, though, "Should I trust older people in the right situations?"

Trusted friends enjoy one another's company; they rub off on each other. Usually their personalities become richer, more interesting. Why? Because, regardless of age, "people learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron."—Proverbs 27:17, *Today's English Version*.

### **So, What's the Problem?**

"I get along with adults. But I can't really talk to adults," admitted one 15-year-old girl. She explains why: "I think of adults as adults, somebody you watch out for." Many youths, feeling the same anxiety, watch what they say around adults.

This could explain why some young people settle for superficial relationships with grown-ups. "I never had an honest relationship with adults, it was always a surface one," admitted Therese, a young New York woman who as a teenager never trusted adults. "My motto was, 'Don't give too much information to adults—you might be sorry later.' So I just told them what they wanted to hear and kept what I did for fun my secret."

But fear of being exploited or hurt—physically or emotionally—is only one reason for this distrust. With many it stems from a bitter taste of

### **Adult Hypocrisy**

"I met some of these guys," said an insurance company stockholder af-

ter certain executives embezzled an estimated \$500,000,000. "They looked fine to me," he maintained. "Clean-shaven, clean shirts, nicely dressed. They certainly didn't *look* like crooks." But they were. Looks can deceive. Often adults cover up gross corruption with a facade of respectability. So young persons may ask, "If adults aren't honest with us, why level with them?" Yes, "Who needs their advice if what they say is for show and not for them to do?"

But remember—hypocrisy is not limited to today's adults. Jesus Christ called some in his day "hypocrites" and "white-washed graves, which outwardly indeed appear beautiful but inside are full of dead men's bones." Yet Jesus did not tell us to disregard all their advice. He said: "All the things they tell you, *do and observe*, but do not do according to their deeds, for they say but do not perform." Evidently some of their advice was based on sound principles that would benefit anyone.

—Matthew 23:3, 25-28.

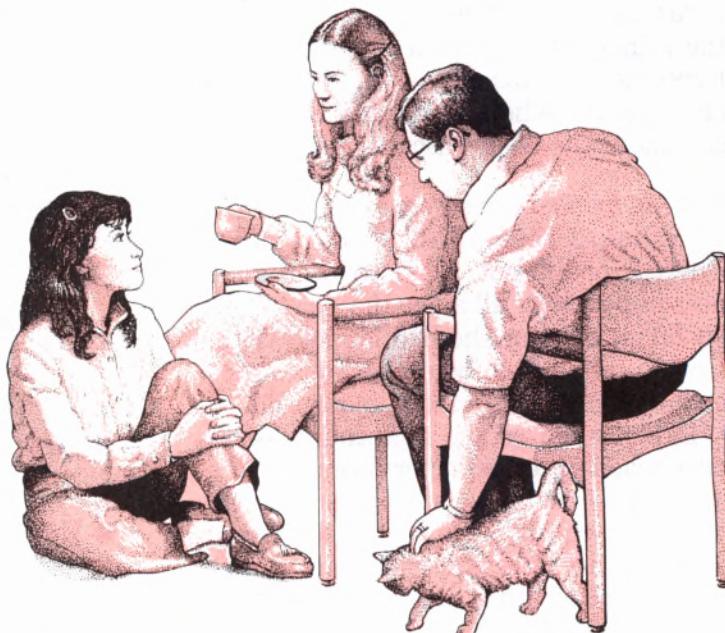
Have you noticed some adults who "say but do not perform"? This can be discouraging. But why go against good advice—especially Scriptural advice—just because another does not follow it? That would only mean that *two*, instead of *one*, would lose out.

You can best cope with hypocrisy in older people when you recognize it also among the young. "I thought serious hippies, like my friends and me, were better, the 'chosen

ones,'" Tom explains. "We would survive when the world crumbled under its own corruption. But we sometimes approved of 'cheating the rotten system.' My best friend started a gardening business. It made me mad that he wasn't honest. I saw he was using our viewpoint as an excuse to be unprincipled. We young people were doing the very things we protested against." There has to be a better way.

### **Be Selective**

"While in high school," reports Therese, "I didn't trust adults at all, but when I became 18 something changed my thinking. I learned to see who is worth trusting and who isn't. I met some adults who convinced me that they could be honest, caring and very open with me." She was learning to be selective.



**Warm conversations with adults can be enriching**

Therese met Janet and Dan, former hippies who had shared her disgust for the hypocritical adult world. They had lived in a commune with other youths. There this couple found that peace and love were preached but not practiced in daily life. Janet and Dan had since become Jehovah's Witnesses. They explained to Therese, openly and honestly, why their life now was better.

"I went to the Kingdom Hall with them and was deeply impressed by the older Witnesses," Therese relates. "They treated me at their level and did not talk down to me because of my youth. They took an interest in me, asking about my life and freely volunteering information about their own past—what changes they had to make and how much they valued their present way of life. Because they were so open and honest—not trying to impress anyone—I was drawn to them." Therese admired the principles they lived by. She saw no hypocrisy. It was her way of selecting older people whom she could trust. You can show the same discernment.\*

### **Benefit by Trusting People**

"When I began to trust adults," Therese points out, "I discovered goodness in people of all ages. If a person was 30, 50 or 80 he or she had learned things I could use. I quit being so apt to view negatively what someone older said."

Experienced people in authority—parents, teachers, office supervisors and foremen—have valuable resources to share if you establish a rapport. "A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out."—Proverbs 20:5, TEV.

\* See "Who Really Is My Friend?" in the March 8, 1982, *Awake!*

To "draw them out" may take initiative—especially in the beginning. "I had to force myself at first to greet and speak with older ones," confessed John, who now at age 24 can see valuable results. He had resolved *not* to associate just with his youthful peers. But this Detroit, Michigan, youth added: "I didn't always know what to say, but I would shake hands and say 'Hi.' To my surprise the older person usually warmed up to my interest and carried the conversation. I realized it wasn't as hard as I thought."

How did John benefit from such mutual trust? "You learn so much more by talking with adults," he observed. "With kids your own age, after you've talked about girls and music you are about done. But adults have the experience to broaden and enrich you."

So why not take the initiative in trusting grown-ups? We all like to be trusted. Trust someone and most likely he or she will respond. If someone you trust disappoints you, learn from the experience. Don't turn bitter. (Proverbs 25:19) Hypocrisy in the adult world doesn't have to defeat you. With caution and selectivity not only can you trust older people but you will be further ahead if you do.

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## **In Our Next Issue**

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- *Should Archaeology Make You Doubt the Bible?*
  - *When the Rod of Discipline Is Broken*
  - *Whom Can I Turn to When I Have Problems?*
-



# Who Is to Blame Russia or the Tourist?

**I** WILL never visit this country again," said the man sitting next to me in an opera house in Leningrad, U.S.S.R. He had just finished relating some irritating experiences he had had while touring the Soviet Union and was blaming the country for them. At the time I agreed with him, having had some uncomfortable experiences there myself. But, really, who was to blame—the country or the tourist? May you be the judge.

## ***Camera Etiquette in Russia***

As we traveled in from Finland, the first Soviet town my friends and I stopped at was Vyborg. We were to go into the train station to rest or to change some of the currency. But, since this was my first opportunity to see the typical Russian in his environment, I could not resist the temptation to take a few photographs of the crowds of people walking up and down the sidewalk.

Two soldiers were walking toward me among the crowd as I shot the picture. But by the time I put my camera down, they were right in front of me, staring at my camera. One of them pointed at it and made some quick, sharp gestures. It was obvious that they wanted me to open the camera, but since they were not specific and had not said a word, I

gave them a puzzled look to try to discourage them. They simply repeated the same gestures, this time in a firmer way. I could see they were getting impatient, so I opened my camera, thinking that all they wanted was to expose the film to light. I was hoping that at least some of the pictures I had already taken would survive the exposure. What a surprise when they seized the whole roll of pictures I had taken for the past two days!

My first reaction was to blame the country for this incident. But who should take the blame? A little research on my part prior to my visit would have been enough to learn about Russian regulations on picture taking. When traveling abroad it is good to keep in mind that many nations forbid photographs in certain sensitive places or circumstances. One travel guidebook on Russia simply states: "Don't photograph anything that is clearly a 'sensitive' installation—airports, factories, military installations or personnel, prisons, railway junctions or stations, . . . etc." And 'don't photograph people before asking their permission.' So there I was, taking a picture of soldiers in a train station! Who should be blamed for this embarrassing situation—the country or the tourist? A little reading on the local customs and regulations

would have spared me embarrassment. But there were more surprises coming my way.

### **Museums—How to Get In**

We were now in Leningrad, called by some the Venice of the North. Our visit to the Winter Palace reminded me that it was there that the last czar ruled. It was also there that the first Soviet (from the Russian word meaning "council") government established its headquarters. It was a thrilling experience for me to be standing on the exact location where some of the most important events in Russian history took place. Right before our eyes was one of the most famous art museums in the world, the Hermitage, where one can see outstanding paintings by da Vinci, El Greco, Titian, Rubens, Velázquez, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and others. But imagine how disappointed we were to learn that the Hermitage was not included in our tour.

The same was the case with the Kanzansky Cathedral on Nevsky Prospect, now converted into the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. After inquiring we found out that we could try to visit the latter on our own. One day we walked over to find a large crowd of people trying to get in. Once in a while the doors would open and only certain ones were admitted. We tried to decipher the system but gave up and finally got in only after some arguing with the doorkeeper. Who should be blamed?

In a recent conversation with a Soviet government official stationed in New York, I found out that even though museums might be crowded on some days, all a foreigner has to do is show his passport to the doorkeeper and he will

be admitted without having to stand in line, and sometimes even free of charge. Regrettably, at the time I was in Russia I did not know this and I paid the price of not being prepared for my travel into a different country. Honestly, now I have no choice but to blame myself, the tourist.

### **What About Shopping?**

The mistake that many tourists make is to expect exactly the same circumstances abroad that they have in their home country. That happened to us one day when we decided to go out to buy some groceries on the nearby Nevsky Prospect. It did not turn out to be as easy as we thought it would be. After trying several stores we still couldn't figure out the procedure to follow to make a purchase. We tried making gestures and pointing out exactly what we wanted, but it didn't work. Finally, after two hours and several stores, we were able to get a loaf of bread and some cheese!

Some months later I read in a travel guidebook how the shopping system works in the U.S.S.R.: "You will find that you have to line up three times—first to pick out what you want to buy and collect a ticket, then at the cashier's desk to pay and get the ticket stamped, and finally to collect your purchase." Yes, the information was there available, but it was of little use for me to read it after the trip was over. The time for getting acquainted with the country you will visit is not after, nor during, but *before* you visit it.

### **The Language Barrier**

It is obvious that most of these occurrences would never have happened if I had spoken the language. Of course, no

one is expected to learn the language before visiting Russia, or any other country. But if one has the opportunity, it surely helps to learn the basics. At least, a pocket phrase-book should be a must. You can always point at words when trying to communicate.

The language barrier was the cause for some of my frustrations in Russia. But why blame the country for that? It is good to recognize that the same frustrations are sometimes experienced by tourists that visit one's own country.

### **Illegal Activities**

Some tourists end up going through very embarrassing situations because of purposely engaging in illegal activities just to make some easy money. This shows lack of respect for those who have opened a hospitable door into their country.

More than once we were approached by men who tried to buy some of our clothes or our currency. I remember one coming to me, asking, "Don't you have anything at all to sell?" No wonder travel books warn not to deal with the black market, whether it involves currency, clothing, cameras or something else.

Although many others did, we, being Jehovah's Witnesses, never cooperated with the black market nor knowingly participated in any other illegal activity. (The camera incident was due to ignorance on our part.) As Christians we have to show respect for the local authorities. We 'render to Caesar what is Caesar's.' (Matthew 22:21) If one is in doubt about anything, perhaps it would be better to follow this rule: If you are not certain something is permitted, it is safer to assume it is definitely forbidden. Such an attitude serves as a protection

when traveling, regardless of the country one visits.

### **What Is Your Verdict?**

So, now, what is your verdict? Who is to blame—Russia or the tourist? No doubt the tourist, and not the country, should take the greater blame. And this is probably the case with many others who have visited Russia and other countries having cultural and governmental differences. The fact of the matter is that many travelers, although well prepared in other ways, may not be ready to come in contact with a foreign country. So, when preparing for your next trip abroad, ask yourself: How much do I know about the people I will meet, their language and customs? You may find that although your luggage may be ready your mind may not be.

But you might ask, is all this information really available? Yes, and in what an abundant way! For example, if you are traveling to the U.S.S.R. you will find that the Intourist Travel Agency, owned and operated by the Soviet government, has offices in most countries and is willing to help in whatever way it can. From it you can get official data on the latest regulations, as well as other useful information.

Guidebooks on travel to many countries are also abundant and available in many bookstores and libraries. Why not read one on the country you are planning to visit *before* making your trip? It will help you to enjoy your vacation, avoid unnecessary embarrassment and even return without having a precious roll of film confiscated!

So, next time you go through an irritating experience while vacationing abroad, whom will you blame? The country or yourself?—Contributed.

# New Laser Systems Arrive

**S**OMETHING is different about this morning. There are four 55-gallon barrels sitting in the street with a sign attached that says: "No parking—October 6." And on the seventh floor of the Watchtower Society's main office building there is an open space where a window once was. In addition, the prayer said during morning worship at the Watchtower headquarters at 7:15 includes a request for God's blessing on the safety of workers and the machine that is to be installed by them today.

Shortly after eight o'clock, a red motorized behemoth with wheels as tall as a man arrives. Out from the sides of its front and back bumpers glide four rectangular beams with hydraulic feet at their ends. The crane squats solidly on its stubby legs. Upward rises the 135-foot (41-m) boom to the roar of its diesel engine.

Why all the special activity this morning? It is in preparation for the arrival of a new machine—Laserite-V—that will help speed the spreading of the "good news" worldwide by means of the printed page. (Matthew 24:14) But is this Laserite-V so heavy that it requires all this special rigging? "Not really. It weighs only 3,000 pounds (1,360 kg) with rigging," answers Don Underwood, overseer of Watchtower Construction. "Last Saturday we lifted a section of a printing press that weighed 36,000 pounds (16,300 kg)."

Where, then, is the challenge here? "It's bulky, fragile and cannot be tilted," continues Don. "A machine like this you

normally install on the first floor, or use a freight elevator to lift it to higher floors, but it won't fit into the elevators in this building. So we are going to swing it through that window opening with just four inches (10 cm) of clearance." The machine has an outer shell of orange and beige fiberglass, and is in the shape of a chest about ten feet long by four feet wide by five and a half feet high ( $3 \times 1.2 \times 1.7$  m). Housed inside is precision optical and electronic equipment.

Is there any danger of the crane's dropping this sensitive machine? "There is always that danger," Don answers. "You have human imperfection. A supporting wire could snap or the brake on the crane could slip. With every lift I always get a knot in my stomach until it is safely completed."

Although about one hundred similar laser machines are in use, fewer than a half dozen of this particular model have been built. "This is the first one that I know of that's being installed in the U.S. About four or five are slated for Europe," states Jerry, the machine's factory representative.

Dick, the crane operator, maneuvers the boom close to the seventh-floor gap on his first of two trial runs. Smooth is the response as he manipulates the crane with a feather touch on the two control levers, one for the right hand, the other for the left.

What does Dick think about swinging this machine through this high window opening? "The rigging and the proper signal man are the most important parts,"

he says. "I've worked for Watchtower people quite a few times before and they are excellent riggers." Dick is being modest; you need a good man operating the crane too. And Dick is good.

At 9:00 a.m. the truck carrying Laserite-V arrives. The millwright and riggers begin their work, carefully tying the steel ropes securely around the supporting pallet; adjusting and readjusting their length. This is done so that the end of the crane's boom can get as close to the seventh-floor opening as possible.

By 10:30 a.m. Laserite-V is being lifted gently out of the bed of the truck and lowered toward the sidewalk for a final inspection. The "OK" is given. Slowly, deftly, the machine rises past the second floor, the third and on up to the seventh.

Next a difficult maneuver—similar to threading a needle—the gliding of the 3,000 pounds through the open space with only inches of clearance. The millwright loosens one side of the supporting ropes so that the machine glides through the seventh-floor opening and into the waiting "arms" of a specially adapted forklift truck.

Applause rings out spontaneously from spectators who have gathered at windows of the adjacent 30 Columbia Heights build-

ing, and with it a huge sigh of relief. The 30 years' experience of the crane operator and the skill of the riggers will benefit over two million Jehovah's Witnesses and eventually will help millions of others.

How will this machine do that? Werner Bohn, overseer of the Watchtower's Graphics Department, explains: "Saved time and improved quality of print are two immediate benefits that this machine will bring to our readers."

"They will be able to get new or reprinted publications faster than before," continues Werner. "By using laser techniques we can bypass several

working steps in preparing our offset printing plates. In effect, a page of literature that is put into Laserite-V can emerge as a printing plate ready to be handed to the pressman. So we are speeding up our production cycle. For example, producing plates for and printing the book *Aid to Bible Understanding* by the letterpress method would normally take up to a year, but by using this laser method and offset printing it can be done in one fourth of the time."

Laserite-V is a precision copying system using laser beams. It can do two basic things: electronically "read" (scan) and



"write" (reproduce). By means of its helium-neon laser beam it can "read" a page of copy that is scheduled to be printed. What it "reads" it then "writes" with its argon ion laser on photosensitive materials. Presently it is being used to reproduce documents on photographic film that is then used to make offset plates. Later Laserite-V will reproduce documents directly onto offset plates, bypassing use of film for some items. The printing materials produced by Laserite-V are used for the publishing of Bible literature.

### An Electronic "Artist"

A few days after the excitement of safely placing the Laserite-V on the seventh floor in the Graphics Department a companion piece of equipment arrived, the Autokon 8400. It is another laser system, a tool that does many things conventional cameras do but in a faster, simpler, less costly and more flexible way. This machine produces many special effects that are difficult to achieve with conventional cameras. Autokon uses only helium-neon laser beams to reproduce artwork on film or in digital form for storage in a computer memory system for later use. Its laser scanning system "reads and records" photographs and different types of artwork, and then transforms what it sees into digital information. While Laserite-V reproduces complete pages for offset printing plates, Autokon speeds up the production of artwork that is included in pages scanned by Laserite-V.

Even as early Christians used the then new codex system of bookmaking for spreading the good news, so modern-day Christians are using the marvel of electronic printing tools. And for the identical purpose, namely, to give a "thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God."—Acts 20:24.

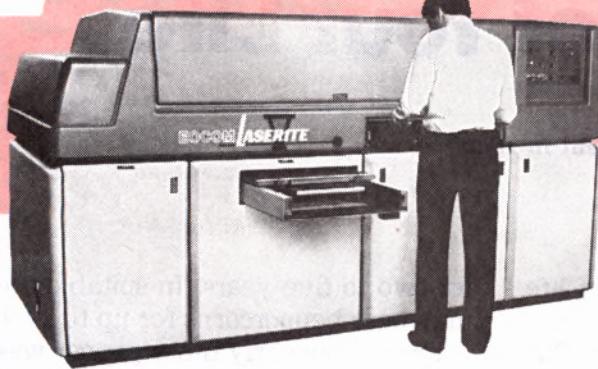
### How They Work

The simplified diagram on the opposite page will help you to understand how the *Laserite* and *Autokon* work. They operate in a similar way.

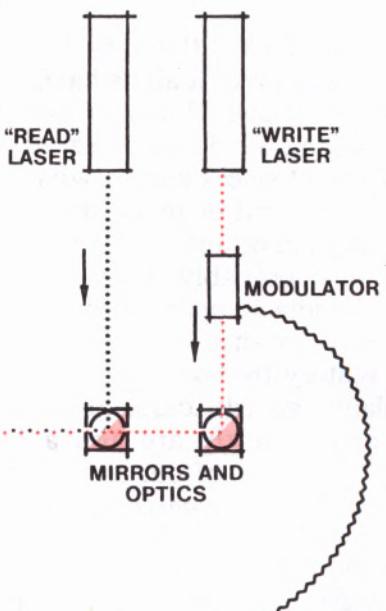
First, the "read," or scan, laser sends a beam of coherent light (black dots on diagram) through a mirrored optical system to the moving *mirrored deflector*. This *deflector* bounces the "read" laser beam off its mirrored surface, through an optical system and scans across the surface of the *original document*. The "read" laser beam then reflects off the *original document* and into the *converter*, which changes the beam into electrical signals that travel to the *modulator*.

The "write," or output, laser sends a continuous coherent light beam (colored dots on diagram) to the *modulator*. At this point the *modulator* turns the "write" laser beam "on and off" according to the electrical signals received from the *converter*. The "write" laser beam then passes through an optical system along the same path as the "read" beam to the moving *mirrored deflector*. And from there the beam is directed through a second optical system to the *light-sensitive material*, either film or plate, to reproduce the images (words or pictures) found on the *original document*.

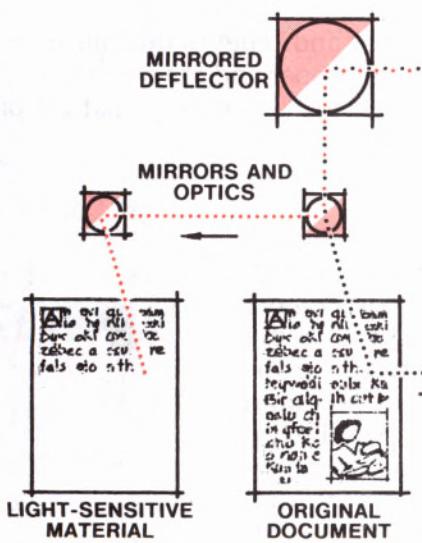
The *light-sensitive material*, if film, is now ready for use in the process of making offset printing plates. By using light-sensitive plates instead of film, more time and money can be saved in printing our Bible literature. Yes, the laser was used in the preparation of this magazine.



**LASERITE**



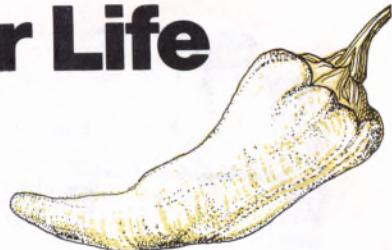
### New Laser Equipment Uses Light Beams to "Read" and "Write"



**AUTOKON**

# The Spice of Your Life

By "Awake!" correspondent in India



"**V**ARIETY'S the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavor," wrote 18th-century poet William Cowper. This lively saying alludes to the zest and color that food spices add to what we eat. And in our land of India, spices play an especially important role. Why is this so?

As you probably know, the staple food of India is boiled rice. Rice alone, especially polished rice, is rather tasteless. Watery tropical vegetables such as eggplants, gourds, okra, gherkins, spinach, and so forth, are also a big part of our diet. So without *something* to liven the meals up, the Indian diet would be a bland one indeed. Hence, to excite the taste buds, the Indian cook adds tongue-tingling spices. Let's "sample" some of them.

*Black pepper* has been called the king of spices, and is probably the most popularly used spice on earth today. It comes from a climbing vine that can attain a height of 33 feet (c. 10 m). Native to the

Malabar coast of southwest India, the pepper plant begins yielding berries af-

ter two to five years. In suitable areas it may bear peppercorns for up to 40 years.

From very early times pepper was one of the chief items of trade between India and Europe. It has thus even influenced the course of world history! But this long-time, worldwide demand for the lowly peppercorn does not solely center around its natural properties for enhancing food flavors. It also releases stomach juices to neutralize the gassy effects of our vegetable diet and relieves difficult digestion. In India, pepper and other pungent spices help balance the cooling nature of the watery foodstuffs residents of India consume.

But if black pepper is "king," then *cardamom* is "queen," being next to pepper in demand and popularity. It has a penetratingly fragrant aroma and a bittersweet, slightly lemony, flavor.

Cardamom, either in seed or capsule form, is a favorite spice in cakes, biscuits, drinks, Arabian coffee, fruit salads, ice creams, and in soups, meat and rice dishes.



Black pepper



Cardamom

This delightful spice comes from the warm, moist and shaded hills of southern India. Cardamom belongs to the ginger family and, like ginger, has underground stems. However, lovely, greenish-hued, lilac-veined flowers emerge from the secondary stem that grows above ground. A mature healthy shrub can produce about 2,000 of the characteristic three-sided seed pods each season in a ten-year life.

But let's not forget our pungent *chilies*. Fresh green and dried red chili pods are the hottest condiments known to man. From these cayenne pepper is made. (Not to be confused with black pepper, however.) Chilies are the seed pods of the tropical shrub called *capsicum*. It grows like the tomato plant and is, in fact, related to the tomato. But it surely doesn't taste like a tomato! After a mouthful of food, liberally seasoned with chili, the uninitiated inevitably experiences an inflamed tongue, watering eyes and a runny nose. It may thus seem hard to believe that *capsicum* is also a relative of the bland potato. But botanists say it is!

Not all our spices, however, will make you suffer such distress. Delicate *cinnamon*, for example, is quite mild when you contrast it with chili! It originates in the sunbathed, monsoon-drenched hills of Sri Lanka and adjacent southern India. Actually, cinna-

mon is the inner bark of the laurel tree, a bushy evergreen. After being cut out, it is allowed to dry in the sun. The bark then curls into the familiar, light-brown, scroll-like "quills."



Chilies



Cinnamon

Trade in cinnamon spice goes back some 3,600 years. In Bible times it was considered one of the "choicest perfumes" and was used as one of the ingredients in an anointing oil that was exclusively used in Jehovah's worship. (Exodus 30:23-33) By the end of the first century of our Common Era, cinnamon was apparently still considered a valuable item of trade, inasmuch as the Bible refers to it as part of the stock of "traveling merchants." (Revelation 18:11-13)

At one time its source was such a tightly held trade secret that true cinnamon was more costly than gold! Just a small amount was a present fit for a king.

Fortunately it does not take a king's wealth to enjoy these spices today. Likely, most of them are available in your locality, and if so, we encourage you to try them. Try some of the hotter ones in small doses, though, until you get used to them. If they are judiciously used, spices can help you create truly tasty meals.

No wonder peoples of the past exerted strenuous efforts to find the Indies — "where the spices grow." They can really put a little spice in your food and in your life!

# My Rescue From Prostitution

IT WAS the beginning of another day. I lay in my bed, perspiring. I tried to sit up, but a spell of dizziness threw me down. I knew I was sick. But suddenly there came a loud knock at the door and a middle-aged woman, one of my employers, walked in.

"What's the matter with you, girl? Still not up?"

"Madam, I'm very sick," I pleaded. "Can't I rest just for today? I assure you I'll be all right tomorrow."

"Listen. I well know this trick of feigning illness. Come on, now, it looks like we're going to have good business this evening."

You have just received a glimpse of my life in the inner chambers of a brothel. Yes, I was a prostitute—certainly not a profession to be proud of. For nine long years I flashed false and vacant smiles and conducted shameless bargains. Then in rare moments of solitude I shed many a tear of remorse, feeling helpless. Oh, I wanted desperately to escape. But it seemed as if I was bound fast and would never be free. You may wonder how I came to be a prostitute.

Well, 29 years ago I was born in a little mountainous village cradled in the mid-Himalayan range. When I was but three years old my father died. Soon after, my mother began living with another man, and I was taken in and cared for by my eldest sister and her husband.

When I was 14 years of age they ar-

ranged for me to marry a man 25 years my senior. I was taken to my husband's home where his parents treated me with contempt because I had no dowry to offer them—except my poverty-stricken self. Although this phase of my life was short—lasting only two years—it was long enough to cast long-lasting shadows of serious doubts and questions in my mind.

My husband had begun having relations with another woman in our neighborhood. Yet, in spite of his misconduct, he would go to religious shrines every week, and at his invitation, Brahmin priests would visit our home. But never a word of rebuke!

## **Sold Into Prostitution**

Then one evening the man with whom my mother was living came around to see me to make a proposition. He said he felt that life for me was becoming

**W**e had been sold! He had sold us girls for 500 rupees apiece!

unbearably difficult and that he wanted to help me out. He could get me a very good job that involved little work yet lots of money. But, I, with a group of several other village "belles," would have to travel with him to a distant city. At home there were no emotional ties or

material attractions to hold me back, so I agreed to make the trip. Thus, within a few days, this journey to a city I'd never heard of, and to a life I'd never, never dreamed of, began.

On arriving at Bombay he took us to a home full of many young girls like us—except they were much better dressed and flaunted heavily made-up faces. Inside, we were introduced to two women who looked us up and down with gloating eyes. Then the man who brought us left, promising to return later in the day.

We had been sold! He had sold us girls for 500 rupees (about \$56, U.S.) apiece! No sooner had he made his departure than we were told we would have to pay back what he had taken—no, not 500 rupees, but 5,000 rupees (\$560, U.S.)!

"Why?" we asked.

"That is the rule!" they announced with finality.

Then threats were resorted to just in case we tried to escape. But I couldn't run away. I had nowhere to go! So I accepted that initial debt of 5,000 rupees, which soon acquired interest. There was only one recourse left to become free from it, and that was to do the "work" they had for me to do—to be a prostitute!

### ***Religious Hypocrisy***

But, surprisingly, it was those nine years as a prostitute that gave me clear, closeup views of the fruitage of the religious "tree" of my birth. Immorality and hypocrisy went hand in hand! For example, one of my employers was a devout Muslim, and maintained the long fast of Ramadan every year. She piously gave alms to the beggars at the mosque. Fellow Islamic believers freely associated with her, and in spite of her utterly

corrupt practices she was an accepted member of her religious community.

And it was no different with my other employers. One frequented the Hindu temple, while another attended one of Christendom's churches. Their private lives were not unknown to their respective religious leaders and friends, and yet they also were respected members of their religious communities. In short,

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### **I couldn't run away. I had nowhere to go!**

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they all had the silent consent to practice what their religions openly condemned—prostitution. Is that not hypocrisy?

It did not take long for me to become infected with such hypocrisy. Thus, every Saturday morning I bathed, and with my friends, visited the temple of the goddess Mahalaxmi to offer sweetmeats and money and then return to our brothel with salved consciences! Upon our request, Brahmin priests would visit us to perform religious rituals, and then they would accept whatever we paid them and vanish. There was never any counsel to uplift us from our degradation, nor any fatherly rebuke that we longed to hear.

### ***Imprisoned***

Then, in the beginning of my ninth year in the brothel, my employers quarreled among themselves. One of them slyly reported matters to the police and our brothel was raided. All of us were taken to the police station—all, that is, except our employers. They were hidden away within their large and "respectable" homes.

For the next two weeks, the cold pris-

## In rare moments of solitude I shed many a tear of remorse, feeling helpless

on floor was our bed, while our food, which really was unfit for human consumption, consisted of dry, half-cooked bread served with an occasional assortment of greens.

The only visitors we had were a group of well-meaning women who wanted to help by teaching us Hindu hymns. But they failed pathetically! What we really needed was to know the truth about life's purpose, and the truth about God, whether or not there is a Creator. And if there is, does he care for us? If so, why had he permitted unclean practices like ours to exist? But those women, however good were their intentions, did not have the answers.

The 14 nights in prison took their toll on me and I fell seriously ill. I was taken to the hospital where I was on a sickbed for the next 17 days. I was reduced to half my size! When I left the hospital, my employers gave me some time off to recuperate. So I decided to make a journey back home, spend some time with my people, recuperate in the mountain air and finally return to where I thought I belonged—the brothel!

### A Turning Point

Back home in the village nothing much had changed, except that my husband's lover was now his wife and mother of his children. My sisters, as usual, worked in the fields from sunup to sundown. The first few days were spent making social calls and distributing the little gifts I had remembered to pack. But the novelty of those days soon wore off and I was left wondering. What did I really want out

of life? Did I want the life my people were living in the village or the life back in the city? The two life-styles were different and yet both lacked meaning and true purpose.

About that time two women stopped by our door. We invited them to sit and offered them some tobacco (as is our custom). But they refused the tobacco, and we asked them why. They said they had just returned from the city after hearing something wonderful. So my sister and I asked them to tell us all about it.

They said the gods we had been worshiping were entirely different from the true God, our Maker. His name is Jehovah and he loves us all. Jehovah is soon going to eliminate all forms of wickedness, they explained, and bring in a New Order of righteousness, peace and security on this very earth. We were also told that the invitation to live in that New Order was open to all. But accepting that invitation meant making necessary adjustments in our lives now.

"How do we know what you're saying is the truth?" we interrupted. "And what are these changes we have to make?"

"You must study the Bible, which is God's only book of truth," they continued. "In its pages you'll learn all you need to know. As for the changes, this is one we've already made—we've stopped smoking cigarettes!"

"But what does smoking a cigarette have to do with God?" I questioned.

"In the Bible," they answered immediately, "we are told, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' But how can we say we love ourselves when we fill

## **Tears of joy rolled down my cheeks as I learned that my past could be forgiven!**

our lungs with harmful tobacco smoke? It is an unclean thing to do and Jehovah God wants us to be clean."—Matthew 22:39; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

I was taken aback! Somewhere in the depths of my unhappy mind an undefinable feeling of joy was coming to life. I threw my cigarettes outside and never touched one again. A very significant change after having smoked 20 cigarettes a day, every day!

### ***My Questions Answered***

Immediately my sisters and I began making plans to go down to the city and find out more about this God, Jehovah, and his purposes. The family we were introduced to were Jehovah's Witnesses. I had never heard of Jehovah's Witnesses before. I now decided to work and live in that city so that I could study the Bible with the family, who gladly took me into their home. Every morning we had a Bible discussion for at least an hour. Gradually, the questions and long-lasting shadows of doubt cast in my short-lived married life and years in brothel slavery began disappearing.

For the first time I learned that there is a purpose to life. I discovered that the Bible teaches that man was created by God to live forever on earth in permanent peace and happiness; also, that death was no part of God's original purpose for humans. Instead, the marvelous prospect set before our first human parents and their potential offspring was to fill their days by gaining knowledge of their Grand Creator and to enjoy the work of their hands.—Genesis 1:28; 2:16, 17; Psalm 37:29.

I also learned why God has permitted wickedness and unclean practices until now. Our first human parents chose to rebel against God and instead be guided by his adversary, Satan the Devil. (Genesis, chapter 3) So Jehovah, the Great Judge, allowed the passage of time to prove beyond doubt that man-rule apart from God-rule cannot possibly succeed. My joy knew no bounds when I learned that God's time limit for man-rule under Satan's domination is fast running out. But what about me, a former prostitute?

I related my entire background to the family with whom I was studying, and they explained to me from the Bible about the gracious benefits of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As I listened tears of sheer joy rolled down my cheeks. My past could be forgiven and erased! I was welcome to embrace the hope of living forever under righteous conditions. And until the realization of that grand hope, I could live among clean, honest people who do their best to practice what the Bible teaches, a people who tolerate no corruption in their midst.

As I studied the Bible the months raced by and I lost no time in symbolizing my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism in 1979. Since then I have rejoiced in the privilege of Christian preaching, sharing with others the comforting truths I have learned from the Scriptures.

My gratitude to our heavenly Father, Jehovah, and to his Son, Christ Jesus, knows no bounds. For, thanks to them, I have indeed been rescued from prostitution!—Contributed.

## From Our Readers

### Ulcer Treatment

In your article "So You Think You Have an Ulcer?" (September 8, 1982), you recommend the drug "cimetidine," known by the brand name Tagamet, as being very effective and having very few side effects. I am a pharmacologist and have learned from several gastroenterologists here in Thailand that cimetidine does have many side effects. Since your article might influence people's thoughts regarding drug treatment, there is a need to be careful when recommending any type of medicine. Many doctors here prefer to use antacids. Sometimes they use cimetidine only for a short period of time and then go over to antacids so as to avoid the side effects of prolonged use of the drug.

L. S., Thailand

*We agree that there is no completely safe drug. Our article stated that the first type of effective medication prescribed for peptic ulcers is antacids. But many doctors believe that there are cases that respond better to cimetidine, which in its early use showed few noticeable side effects. However, the circular entitled "The Medical Letter" (December 24, 1982) acknowledges that while cimetidine has a low incidence of toxicity, its wide usage has produced many reports of serious adverse effects and interactions with other drugs. Commenting on cimetidine and a newer drug of a similar type called ranitidine, the circular states: "Ranitidine appears to be as effective as cimetidine for treatment of duodenal ulcers. Preliminary evidence suggests that the newer drug may cause fewer adverse effects and drug interactions." The magazine "Medical*

*Progress" (January 1983) states concerning cimetidine: "Minor side effects became apparent during clinical trials, but other adverse reactions have emerged only after a period of time." While acknowledging the value of cimetidine and ranitidine in treating ulcers, "Medical Progress" states: "We must not allow these fashionable agents to obscure our lack of basic knowledge as to the causes of peptic ulcer disease and the need to continue research in this area with the aim of prevention in mind."—ED.*

### How to Get a Job

After one and a half years without full-time employment, the practical advice in *Awake!* (February 8, 1983, "How Do I Handle a Job Interview?") helped me to get employment at a greenhouse/nursery, although my experience in this field is limited. I especially feel that the suggestion of a follow-up thank-you letter after the interview helped me to secure the job. I'm glad to be working again.

C. C., Washington

### Woman's Changing Years

Thank you very much for the article "A Woman's Changing Years." (April 8, 1983) To say the least, it was very enlightening. This change has affected me for more than two years now. But there were still things happening I couldn't understand before reading the article. Situations are easier to adjust to when you know what's taking place or, rather, understand why they're happening.

E. M., New York



## Watching the World

### Morality or Fear?

● To justify their entry into the recent debate over nuclear weapons, many religious leaders contend that nuclear war is immoral because it supposedly has a "new quality." But London columnist Gwynne Dyer, member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, disagrees: "That is utter nonsense, of course. The quality—the morality—of the act of killing in war is just the same as ever; what has changed is the quantity of death that will ensue. The churches, which have justified and blessed almost every war in history (on both sides), are simply reacting to the same circumstances that have stirred the rest of the population." Their own skins are at stake.

### Would You Want It?

● Medical authorities disagree over methods of screening donated blood for the dreaded AIDS, a new disease that is over 40-percent fatal. "In contrast to the U.S. National Hemophilia Foundation recommendation that high risk donors [such as homosexuals] be screened out by 'direct questioning,'" reports Canada's *The Medical*

*Post*, the Canadian organization suggests checking "symptoms—rather than risk groups." Dr. Hanna Strawczynski, chairman of the Canadian society's medical and scientific advisory committee, asserts: "We really don't have the right to intrude on people's private lives. . . . We are not going to ask, 'Are you a homosexual?', and then, 'Are you a fast-lane homosexual? Do you have more than 60 partners a year?' We do not feel that this is justified at the moment." Either way—would you want to take such a chance with your life?

### Space Firsts

● On June 13, Pioneer 10, the first spacecraft to leave the solar system, was scheduled to pass the orbit of the solar system's outermost planet at more than 30,000 miles per hour (48,000 km/hr). Launched 11 years ago, the craft carries a plaque that, among other things, locates the position of earth and the solar system for the benefit of any "intelligent life" that may receive it. "We're still getting irate phone calls from people angry that we're telling the aliens where we are," says a NASA (National Aero-

nautics and Space Administration) spokesman.

● Last year's record seven-month stay in space by Soviet cosmonauts recently bore literal fruit. "For the first time the cosmonauts managed to coax the plant arabiopsis, chosen for its brief life cycle of about 40 days, to produce seeds in space," reports the British magazine *New Scientist*. Some of the seeds were returned to earth, where they sprouted and grew normally. "It is the first small step towards growing crops in space to make long spaceflights self-sufficient in food," notes the article.

### Jab at Religion Acclaimed

● The play "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You" was recently given the \$25,000 Kenyon Festival Theater Award. Described by syndicated columnist Patrick J. Buchanan as "perhaps the most anti-Catholic and anti-Christian piece of bigotry to be presented in the American theater," the play pokes derisive fun at much of church life and tradition. "Who is this audience that openly laughs at religion?" asked film producer John Prizner. His answer: "I looked closely at the theatergoers. They were white, affluent, upper-middle-class professional people between the ages of 30 and 50." Grumbled Buchanan: "How far we have come in a generation!"

### "World at War"

● Forty-five nations are currently involved in wars around the world, according to the U.S. Center for Defense Information report "World at War." Thus one quarter of the world's countries are engaged in 40 conflicts that have slaughtered millions in the past decade. Ten of the wars are in Asia, ten in the Mideast, ten in Africa, seven

in Latin America and three in Europe.

### Flee War, Flee Crime

● "Seven Cambodian families who fled war and starvation in their homeland . . . to take up new lives in New York have fled again," reported *The New York Times*, "this time from robbers, muggers and young toughs on the streets of Brooklyn." Over 40 members of the families left New York, hoping to find safer quarters in Pennsylvania. "I tried to make it better for them while they were here, but even with police assistance, I couldn't make it tenable," said a resettlement worker. "Every other day, it was something, a minor robbery to a major beating. . . . We're talking about serious crimes, people breaking into apartments while they're sleeping, beating up grandmothers and children. These people were afraid for their lives."

### Talk by Light

● On February 10 the first fiber-optic telephone transmission link between major metropolitan centers was opened between New York City and Washington, D.C., followed shortly by the initial part of a new system between major cities of California. Light pulses transmit tens of thousands of conversations at a time through glass fibers pure enough to carry the light long distances. The glass transmission lines are much smaller and lighter than the former metal ones.

### Science: Always Objective?

● The classic science text *Coming of Age in Samoa* by the late anthropologist Margaret Mead has recently been attacked as misleading by Professor Derek Freeman of the Australian National University in Canberra. In his new book he asserts that

she used faulty data in preparing her 1928 book, which is still read in anthropology courses. The dispute, observed the *Los Angeles Times*, "may tell more about anthropology than it does about adolescence in Samoa." Anthropologist Vinson Sutlive of William and Mary College in Virginia asserted: "She went with a particular bias into the field. She sought data to corroborate what she was looking for, and as frequently happens—not in the social sciences alone but sometimes in the natural sciences—she found what she was looking for." And anthropologist Paul Shankman of the University of Colorado agreed: "Mead was so eager to get her interpretations out that she didn't want to let the facts get in the way."

### Video-Game Kids and Crime

● Some Japanese children addicted to video games have turned to crime to support their habit. *The Daily Yomiuri* reports: "In Tokyo, 36 boys aged 8 to 13 were apprehended for breaking into homes and shops and stealing cash, valuables or merchandise in order to 'spend lavishly in video-game arcades,' according to a police official." In another case in the northern city of Sendai, police reportedly "discovered a gang of five boys aged 10-11 whose criminal patterns, they said, resembled adult, organized crime." In 30 burglaries over four months, the little "professionals" managed to steal 9.57 million yen (\$40,000, U.S.), which they squandered away on the 100-yen (\$0.42, U.S.) arcade games.

### What Is "Viable"?

● In its daily summary of events around the United States, a recent edition of *The Oregonian* newspaper pub-

lished two seemingly unrelated items. The first told of a Kentucky Supreme Court ruling that a man charged with killing his wife's unborn fetus cannot be charged with murder. The court said that the fetus was not a "viable" (capable of living) person under the law.

The other news item updated the story of a 17-ounce (482-g) baby girl who was born at just 22 weeks of development (compared to the normal nine months). Active and alert at 50 days, according to her doctor, she had gained 12 ounces (340 g) and was "doing well." "By all standard criteria, she wasn't viable," marveled the doctor. Yet millions of babies who may be even more "viable" than this one continue to be aborted worldwide.

### Sugar and Cancer

● "A striking correlation between dietary intake of sugar and mortality from breast cancer across 20 countries" was found by a study recently reported in Britain's *New Scientist* magazine. The article notes that though "breast cancer is primarily a hormone dependent disease, . . . diet also appears to have a strong connection." A statistical survey by British and Canadian researchers found that the highest number of deaths from breast cancer among older women (who are most likely to have the disease due to dietary factors), "in descending order, occurs in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark and Canada, and the lowest in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia and Japan." In striking similarity, *New Scientist* reports that the researchers found "this geographical pattern [to be] best matched by that of sugar consumption"—in almost the precise order listed! Of course, statistics must be viewed with

caution, but most doctors agree that people are better off with less sugar in their diet.

### **"Barbie's Right-Hand Man"**

● *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada, reports that Klaus Barbie, recently extradited to France as a war criminal, had a "right-hand man" in his collaboration with the Nazis, a French aristocrat named Count Jacques de Bernonville. As military governor of Lyons during World War II, the count was second in command to Barbie when many atrocities reportedly were committed. After the war, "de Bernonville slipped quietly into Quebec," says the article. There (according to a former member of

the French Resistance), as "the darling of the ultra-Catholic aristocracy," he was helped to escape deportation for five years. *The Globe and Mail* account explains: "[Deportation] was stymied by the efforts of powerful Quebecers . . . and the reluctance of federal authorities to offend the Quebec hierarchy. Newspaper accounts from the late 1940s show that Count de Bernonville's staunchest supporters included . . . church officials and the St. Jean Baptiste Society of Montreal." The count fled to Brazil after a second deportation order and later was murdered.

### **London Lost**

● Almost half the students asked to locate London on a

world map could not do so, reports Professor David Helgren of the University of Miami. "It's the sort of thing one should learn in junior school," he said. "But geography just isn't taught anymore in our schools." Some of the students placed London in Iceland, while others placed it on the European mainland. "If they got it somewhere in the South of England I gave them a mark," said the professor. "But 42 percent failed to place it even in the South." London, however, was not the only place lost. Algeria was placed in Mexico, Capetown in South America, and 8 percent couldn't even locate Miami where they were taking the test!

and the other members of the congregation. "I am so grateful for the love and support I received from my church family," she says. "It was a very difficult time for me, and I am so grateful for the love and support I received from my church family." She adds, "I am so grateful for the love and support I received from my church family."

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