

Awake!

December 22, 1994

Can Our Atmosphere Be Saved? (2-1)

Photographer: Peter Mather
A gull soars over the ocean off the coast of California. The bird's wings reflect the golden glow of the setting sun.



Our Atmosphere: A Thin Bubble

What Our Atmosphere Is Doing to Us

How Can We Improve It?

What's Happening to the Ozone Layer?

Change for Africa's

Oil-Richlands

Tragedy in S.

Rwandan Refugees

Read how Leopoldo, Winnie,

and their family are fighting for

CAN OUR ATMOSPHERE BE SAVED?

Can Our Atmosphere Be Saved? 3-11

Pollutants have punctured holes in our upper atmosphere's shield of ozone. The warming up of earth's temperatures has also been attributed to pollution. Learn how our atmosphere will be saved.



Caring for Victims of Rwanda's Tragedy 12

Read how Jehovah's Witnesses have provided relief for Rwanda's refugees.



The Catholic Church in Africa 18

Catholic bishops face the reality of Catholics in Rwanda and Burundi slaughtering one another by the tens of thousands.

Jerden Bouman/Sipa Press

Our Precious Atmosphere	3
When Our Atmosphere Is Damaged	6
How Our Atmosphere Will Be Saved	10
Making True Disciples Today	21
Young People Ask . . . Why Should I Obey My Parents?	25
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
Index to Volume 75 of Awake!	31
'What Saved My Son's Life'	32



OUR PRECIOUS ATMOSPHERE

ON May 4, 1961, Malcolm Ross and Vic Prather were carried aloft to an altitude of 21.5 miles. At the time, setting a new record did not mean much to Ross. What impressed him was the view as he carefully raised a blind and looked out of the gondola for the first time.

"The scene as we topped 100,000 feet," he recalls, "was utterly magnificent." Ross was amazed by the colors that mark different layers of the atmosphere. First, there is the "bright and whitish-blue" of the troposphere, which extends about ten miles above the earth. Then the deep blue stratosphere gets darker and darker until finally there is the blackness of space. "In silent awe we contemplated the supernal loveliness of the atmosphere," Ross wrote in *National Geographic*.

Indeed, our lovely atmosphere is worth contemplating.

Life Sustaining

Our atmosphere is, in effect, an ocean of air that encircles the earth to a height of about 50 miles. It weighs more than 5 quadrillion tons and presses down on our heads

with a force of 14.7 pounds per square inch at sea level. Without that air pressure, we could not survive, since it prevents our body fluids from vaporizing. The upper atmosphere lacks sufficient air pressure to sustain human life. For that reason Ross and Prather had to wear pressurized space suits. "Without artificial pressure," explained Ross, "our blood would boil, our blood vessels and organs rupture."

Of course, we also need this ocean of air to keep breathing. Most of us, however, take it for granted because we cannot see it. A religious man of ancient times said appreciatively: "[God] gives to all persons life and breath and all things."—Acts 17:24, 25.

Without our atmosphere, there would be no medium to hold aloft dust around which drops of water form. So there would be no rain. If it were not for our atmosphere, we would be scorched by the sun's direct rays, and we would freeze at night. Thankfully, the atmosphere acts like a blanket, trapping some of the sun's heat so that nights are not too cold.

Furthermore, the atmosphere provides protection from incoming meteors that would

harm earth's inhabitants. "Solid bodies from space," explains Herbert Riehl in his book *Introduction to the Atmosphere*, "arrive at the outer limit of the atmosphere with an estimated total mass of several thousand tons per day." However, most meteors disintegrate in the atmosphere before reaching the earth's surface.

The atmosphere adds to our enjoyment of life. It gives us our lovely blue skies, puffy white clouds, refreshing rain, and gorgeous sunrises and sunsets. Moreover, without the atmosphere we could not hear the voices of those we love, nor could we listen to our favorite music. Why? Because sound waves need a substance through which to travel. Air is a perfect conveyer of sound, whereas no sound is heard in outer space.

A Marvelous Mixture

In ancient times men viewed the atmosphere as a single substance. Then, in the late 18th century, scientists discovered that it is composed mainly of the two complementary gases, nitrogen and oxygen. About 78 percent of the atmosphere is nitrogen and 21 percent oxygen; the remaining 1 percent is composed of such gases as argon, water vapor, carbon dioxide, neon, helium, krypton, hydrogen, xenon, and ozone.

Oxygen, of course, is the life-sustaining gas that our bodies absorb through breathing. The level of oxygen in our atmosphere is perfect for life on earth. If it were to drop significantly, we would become drowsy and eventually lose consciousness. If its concentrations were to increase too much, it is said that even damp twigs and the grass of the forest would ignite.

Nitrogen is the perfect diluent of oxygen, yet it plays more than a passive role in sustaining life. All organisms must have it to live. Plants obtain nitrogen from the atmosphere with the aid of lightning and a special class of bacteria. We, in turn, obtain nitrogen from the food we eat.

That our atmosphere maintains the correct ratio of oxygen and nitrogen is a marvel. Nitrogen is returned to the atmosphere, thanks to the valuable work of microorganisms. What about oxygen? Vast quantities are used up in fires and through the breathing of humans and animals. Yet the atmosphere maintains its level of 21 percent oxygen. How? Through photosynthesis—a chemical process in green leaves and algae—which releases over one billion tons of oxygen into the atmosphere every day.

Photosynthesis cannot take place without carbon dioxide—a trace gas that makes up only 0.03 percent of the atmosphere. With the aid of light, plants depend on carbon dioxide to grow and produce fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables. Carbon dioxide also reflects heat back toward the earth to keep our planet warm. But if the level of carbon dioxide were to increase through the combustion of

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

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too much wood, coal, gas, and oil, the temperature on earth would eventually become so hot that life would cease. On the other hand, if carbon dioxide were to decrease too much, photosynthesis would cease, and we would starve.

Ozone is another trace gas upon which life on earth depends. Ozone in the upper part of the atmosphere called the stratosphere absorbs ultraviolet rays from the sun. Thus we on earth are shielded from these harmful ultraviolet rays.

Indeed, the more we get to know about the atmosphere, the more reason there is to marvel. Its composition of nitrogen, oxygen, and other trace gases is just right. The size of the earth is also just right to maintain the balance. If the earth were smaller and weighed less, its gravitation would be too weak, and much of our precious atmosphere would escape into space.

"On the other hand," states the science textbook *Environment of Life*, "if the earth were slightly more massive than it is, the increased gravitational force would cause larger quantities of gases to be retained. . . . The delicate balance between the gases of the atmosphere would be upset."

Sadly, however, the "delicate balance" is being upset by man's modern life-style. How serious is the situation, and what hope is there that our precious atmosphere will be saved from ruin?

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When Sunsets Look Better

The atmosphere reflects the sun's rays in such a way that it gives the sky a pleasing blue appearance. As the sun drops toward the horizon, its rays have to pass through much more atmosphere. This produces a variety of vivid colors that city dwellers may never see.

Sunsets over industrial cities are usually dull and lack colors other than shades of red. If the region is heavily polluted, observes the journal *New Scientist*, "the Sun appears as a dull red disc that may fade away even before it reaches the horizon."

"In an exceptionally clear, unpolluted atmosphere," the above journal explains, "the colours of sunset are especially vivid. The Sun is bright yellow and the adjacent sky is shades of orange and yellow. As the Sun disappears below the horizon, the colours change gradually from orange to blue. Low-lying clouds continue to reflect the light of the Sun, even after it has vanished."

Just imagine the variety of beautiful sunsets that will be enjoyed in a pollution-free world!—Revelation 21:3-5.

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America, United States of, Wallkill, NY 12589	New Zealand, P.O. Box 142, Manurewa
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WHEN OUR ATMOSPHERE IS DAMAGED

IN 1971, while en route to the moon aboard Apollo 14, Edgar Mitchell said upon viewing the earth: "It looks like a sparkling blue and white jewel." But what would a person from space see today?

If special spectacles permitted him a view of the invisible gases of earth's atmosphere, he would see a very different picture. In the magazine *India Today*, Raj Chengappa wrote: "He would see giant punctures in the protective ozone shields over Antarctica and North America. Instead of a sparkling blue and white jewel he would see a dull, dirty earth filled with dark, swirling clouds of dioxides of carbon and sulphur."

What has punctured holes in our upper atmosphere's protective shield of ozone? Is the increase of atmospheric pollutants really so dangerous?

How Ozone Is Being Destroyed

Over 60 years ago, scientists announced the discovery of a safe refrigerant that could replace others that were toxic and gave off a bad odor. The new chemical was composed of molecules having one carbon, two chlorine, and two fluorine atoms (CCl_2F_2). It and similar man-made chemicals are called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

By the early 1970's, the production of

CFCs had grown into a huge worldwide industry. They were being used not only in refrigerators but also in aerosol spray cans, in air conditioners, in cleaning agents, and in the manufacture of fast-food containers and other plastic-foam products.

However, in September 1974, two scientists, Sherwood Rowland and Mario Molina, explained that CFCs gradually rise into the stratosphere where they eventually release their chlorine. Each chlorine atom, the scientists calculated, could destroy thousands of ozone molecules. But rather than ozone being destroyed evenly throughout the upper atmosphere, destruction of it has been much greater over the poles.

Every spring since 1979, large amounts of ozone have vanished then reappeared over the Antarctic. This seasonal drop in ozone is called the ozone hole. Moreover, in recent years the so-called hole has been getting bigger and lasting longer. In 1992, satellite measurements revealed an ozone hole of record size—larger than North America. And not much ozone was left in it. Balloon measurements revealed a drop of more than 60 percent—the lowest ever recorded.

Meanwhile, ozone levels have also been dropping in the upper atmosphere over other

parts of the earth. "Latest measurements," reports the magazine *New Scientist*, "show that . . . there were unusually low values of ozone concentration in 1992 between latitudes 50° North and 60° North, covering Northern Europe, Russia and Canada. The ozone level was 12 per cent below normal, lower than at any time in the 35 years of continuous monitoring."

"Even the most dire predictions," states the journal *Scientific American*, "are now shown to have *underestimated* ozone loss caused by chlorofluorocarbons. . . . And yet at the time, powerful voices in government and industry strongly opposed regulations, on the grounds of incomplete scientific evidence."

An estimated 20 million tons of CFCs have already been released into the atmosphere. Since it takes years for CFCs to drift up to the stratosphere, millions of tons have not yet reached the upper atmosphere where they do their damage. However, CFCs are not the only source of ozone-destroying chlorine. "NASA estimates that about 75 tons of chlorine are deposited in the ozone layer each time a shuttle is launched," reports the magazine *Popular Science*.

Today scientists are continuing to research methods to reduce the amount of chlorine in the atmosphere.

Destruction of ozone in the upper atmosphere has led to an increase of skin cancer

What Consequences?

The consequences of less ozone in the upper atmosphere are not fully understood. One thing that seems certain, however, is that the amount of harmful UV (ultraviolet) radiation reaching the earth is increasing, resulting in a greater incidence of skin cancer. "During the last decade," reports the journal *Earth*, "the annual dose of harmful UV striking the northern hemisphere rose by about 5 percent."

Just a 1-percent rise in UV is estimated to cause a 2- to 3-percent rise in skin cancer. The African magazine *Getaway* states: "There are more than 8 000 new cases of skin cancer in South Africa every year . . . We have one of the lowest levels of ozone protection and one of the highest incidences of skin cancer (the connection is no coincidence)."

That the destruction of ozone in the upper atmosphere would cause an increase in skin



Woman swimming

cancer was predicted years ago by scientists Rowland and Molina. They recommended an immediate ban on the use of CFCs in aerosols in the United States. Recognizing the danger, many countries have agreed to stop production of CFCs by January 1996. In the meantime, however, the use of CFCs continues to pose a danger to life on earth.

The drop in ozone over Antarctica, reports *Our Living World*, "has allowed ultraviolet radiation to penetrate deeper into the ocean than previously suspected. . . . This has caused sizeable reductions in the productivity of the single-cell organisms that form the base of the oceanic food chain." Experiments also show that an increase in UV reduces the yield of many crops, posing a threat to the global food supply.

Indeed, the use of CFCs is potentially catastrophic. Yet our atmosphere is being bombarded by many other pollutants. One is an atmospheric gas that in trace amounts is vital to life on earth.

Effect of Pollution

In the mid-19th century, humans began to burn ever larger amounts of coal, gas, and oil, adding large amounts of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. At that time the amount of this trace atmospheric gas was about 285 parts per million. But as a result of man's increased use of fossil fuels, the amount of carbon dioxide has reached over 350 parts per million. What has been the consequence of more of this heat-trapping gas being in the atmosphere?

Many believe that the increase of carbon dioxide levels is what has caused the rise in earth's temperatures. Other researchers, however, say that global warming is due particularly to our sun's variability—that the sun has been emitting greater energy in recent times.

Whatever the case, the decade of the

1980's was the hottest since records started to be kept in the mid-19th century. "The trend continued into this decade," reports the South African newspaper *The Star*, "with 1990 the hottest year on record, 1991 the third warmest, and 1992 . . . the tenth warmest year in the 140-year record." The slight decrease over the past two years is attributed to dust ejected into the atmosphere when Mount Pinatubo erupted in 1991.¹³ *never*

The future effects of the increase of temperatures on earth are hotly debated. But one thing global warming evidently has done is to complicate the already difficult task of weather forecasting. *New Scientist* notes that wrong forecasts "may be increasingly likely as global warming changes the climate."

Many insurance companies fear that global warming will make their policies unprofitable. "Faced with [a] spate of misfortunes," admits *The Economist*, "some reinsurers are reducing their exposure to natural disasters. Others are talking of quitting the market altogether. . . . They are scared of uncertainty."

Significantly, in 1990, the warmest year on record, a large portion of the Arctic ice pack retreated to an unprecedented degree. This resulted in hundreds of polar bears being stranded on Wrangell Island for over a month. "With global warming," warns the magazine *BBC Wildlife*, "these conditions . . . might become a regular occurrence."

"Weather experts," reported an African newspaper in 1992, "are blaming global warming for a dramatic increase in the number of icebergs which are drifting north from Antarctica and presenting a hazard to ships in the south Atlantic." According to the January 1993 issue of *Earth*, the gradual rising of the sea level off the coast of southern California is due, in part, to a warming of the water.

Unfortunately, humans keep pumping

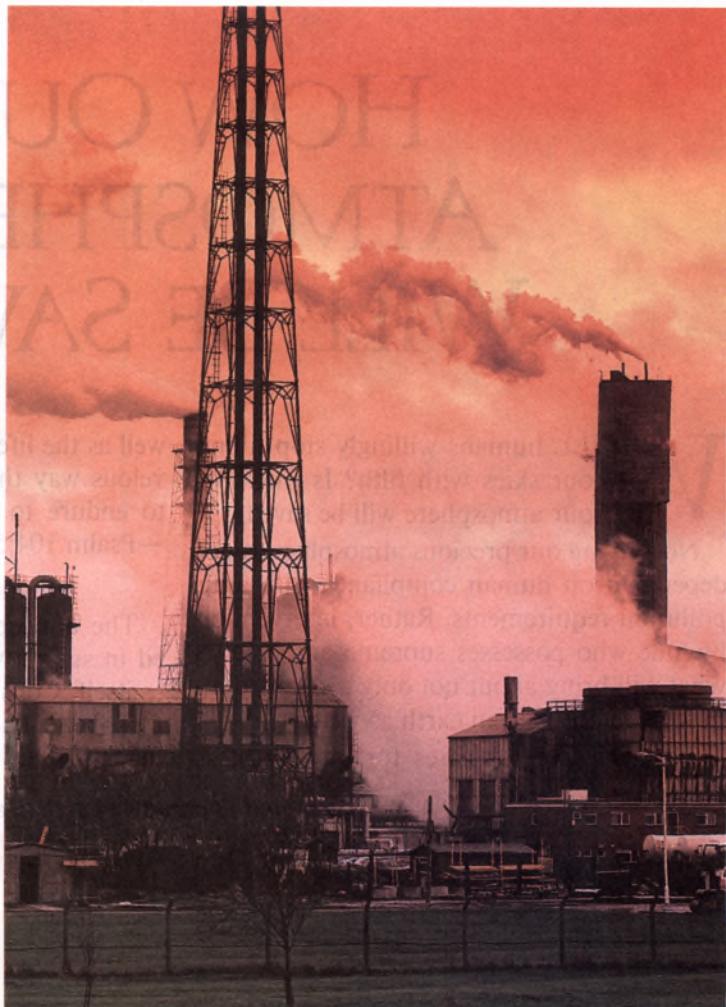
**What are the
consequences of
such pollution?**

a staggering amount of toxic gases into the atmosphere. "In the USA," states the book *The Earth Report 3*, "a 1989 report by the Environmental Protection Agency estimated that more than 900,000 tonnes of toxic chemicals are pumped into the air every year." This figure is considered an underestimate because it does not include exhaust fumes from millions of motor vehicles.

Shocking reports of air pollution also come from many other industrialized countries. Especially horrifying have been the recent revelations of uncontrolled air pollution in Eastern European lands during decades of Communist rule.

Earth's trees, which absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, are among the victims of toxic air. *New Scientist* reported: "Germany's trees are growing increasingly unhealthy, according to . . . the minister of agriculture [who said] that air pollution continues to be one of the main reasons for the forest's failing health."

The situation is similar in the Transvaal Highveld of South Africa. "The first signs of acid rain damage are now appearing in the Eastern Transvaal where pine needles are changing from a healthy dark green to a sick-



ly mottled beige," reports James Clarke in his book *Back to Earth*.

Such reports come from around the world. No country is immune. With chimney stacks that reach high into the sky, industrialized countries export their pollution to neighboring lands. Man's record of greedy industrial development does not inspire hope.

There is, however, basis for optimism. We can be confident that our precious atmosphere will be saved from ruin. Learn in the next article how this will be accomplished.

HOW OUR ATMOSPHERE WILL BE SAVED

WILL humans willingly stop filling our skies with filth? Is this how our atmosphere will be saved?

No. Saving our precious atmosphere is not dependent on human compliance with anti-pollution requirements. Rather, intervention by One who possesses supreme authority is what will bring about not only a cleansed atmosphere but a clean earth as well.

That the Creator cares for our earth, as

well as the life upon it, is shown by the marvelous way that he designed it. He made it to endure to time indefinite, even forever. —Psalm 104:5, 24.

Provisions for Maintenance

The atmosphere, for example, was created in such a way that it repairs and cleanses itself. Consider the ozone in the upper atmosphere. The ozone shield was ingeniously made so that it absorbs ultraviolet radiation

A clean, unpolluted paradise earth is at hand



that would be deadly to humans on earth. At the same time, it allows safe light needed by earthly life to pass through.

We learned earlier that the ozone shield is being badly damaged by man-made chlorofluorocarbons, which rise into the upper atmosphere. How will the protective shield of ozone be replenished? Amazingly, the Creator designed it so that it is self-repairing. Yes, ozone is constantly being created in the upper atmosphere—in fact, by those same dangerous rays that ozone filters out! Thus at the same time that man's pollution is rapidly destroying ozone, some ozone is being replenished.

The situation is similar in the lower atmosphere, where most of the more than 5 quadrillion tons of air is found. Natural cycles rapidly cleanse this air of contaminants in remarkable ways. *The World Book Encyclopedia* comments: "Wind scatters pollutants, and rain and snow wash them into the ground."

Clearly, then, if humans stopped polluting the air, or greatly limited such pollution, soon the air everywhere would be sweet and fragrant. Yet the above reference work identifies the problem, explaining: "In many areas, pollutants are put into the air faster than weather conditions can dispose of them."

How, then, will man's selfish polluting of the atmosphere be stopped?

A Cleansed Earth At Hand

Pollution will be stopped only by God himself, when he intervenes. The Bible foretells that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) He will not allow greedy men to continue to pollute this beautiful earth and its life-sustaining atmosphere indefinitely. He promises: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth."—Psalm 37:9.

How will an end be brought to all evildoers? It will be by means of God's heavenly government, his Kingdom, which will replace inadequate governments of men. The Bible promises: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will . . . crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) This Kingdom government of God is the one for which Jesus taught his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matthew 6:10.

God's will for our earth is that humans should be ruled by his Kingdom and thereby enjoy life in an unpolluted environment. That is why God is determined "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) What a mighty act of deliverance that will be!

Imagine living on an earth free of all the pollution that selfish humans have heaped upon it! At that time our precious atmosphere will be restored to a healthy condition. This will occur when the Bible promise is fulfilled: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:13.

What must you do to survive into the righteous new world that God promises? You need to learn about and to follow the teachings of the one whom God sent to earth as His representative. (John 3:16; 7:29) This one, Jesus Christ, said in prayer to God: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." —John 17:3.

CARING FOR VICTIMS OF RWANDA'S TRAGEDY



RWANDA, located in the heart of Africa, has been called "the Switzerland of Africa." The lush greenery seen by people when flying over the country has given them the impression of a garden of Eden. No wonder they used to describe Rwanda as a paradise.

At one time, for every tree cut down, two were planted. One day a year was dedicated to reforestation. Fruit trees were planted along the roads. Travel around the country was free and easy. The main roads that connected the different prefectures to the capital, Kigali, were asphalt. The capital was mushrooming. The average worker made enough to make ends meet at the end of the month.

The Christian activity of Jehovah's Witnesses was also prospering in Rwanda. Earlier this year over 2,600 Witnesses were engaged in carrying the good news of God's Kingdom to the country's predominantly Catholic population of about eight million. (Matthew 24:14) In March the Witnesses were conducting more than 10,000 Bible studies in the homes of the people. And there were 15 congregations in and around Kigali.

A traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses noted: "In November 1992, I was serving 18 congregations. But by March 1994, these had increased to 27. The number of pioneers (full-time ministers) was also increasing each year." On Saturday, March 26, 1994, the attendance at the Memorial of Christ's death was 9,834.

Then, overnight, the situation changed tragically in Rwanda.*

Sudden End to Established Order

On April 6, 1994, about 8:00 p.m., the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, both of whom were Hutu, were killed in an airplane crash in Kigali. That night police whistles could be heard everywhere in the capital, and the roads were blocked. Then during the early morning hours, soldiers and men armed with machetes started killing people who were Tutsi. Ntabana Eugène—the city

* See the December 15, 1994, *Watchtower* article "Tragedy in Rwanda—Who Is Responsible?"

overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kigali—his wife, his son, and his daughter were among the first massacred.

A European family of Jehovah's Witnesses had studied the Bible with several neighbors who were Tutsi. Nine of these neighbors took refuge in the home of the Europeans as crazed killers went from house to house. Within minutes, some 40 looters were in the house, smashing things and overturning furniture. Sadly, the Tutsi neighbors were killed. However, the others, despite their efforts to save their friends, were allowed to escape with their lives.

The slaughter went on for weeks. Eventually an estimated 500,000 or more Rwandans were killed. Thousands fled for their lives, particularly Tutsi. The Zaire branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses made known to the brothers in France their need for relief supplies. "We asked for one container of used clothing," the Zaire branch explains. "The brothers in France have sent us five containers of mostly new clothing and shoes." On June 11, some 65 tons of clothes were sent. The Kenya branch also sent the refugees clothes and medicines, as well as *Watchtower* magazines in their local language.

By July the Tutsi-dominated forces, called the Rwandan Patriotic Front, had defeated the Hutu-dominated government forces. After that, Hutu began fleeing the country by the hundreds of thousands. Chaos resulted as two million or more Rwandans sought refuge in hastily established camps in neighboring countries.

They Tried to Help One Another

Two of the six who worked in the Translation Office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kigali were Tutsi—Ananie Mbanda and Mukagisagara Denise. The efforts of the Hutu brothers to protect them were suc-

cessful for a few weeks. Toward the end of May 1994, though, these two Tutsi Witnesses were killed.

At the risk, and even sacrifice, of their own lives, Jehovah's Witnesses sought to protect fellow Christians of a different ethnic background. (John 13:34, 35; 15:13) For example, Mukabalisa Chantal is a Tutsi. When Rwandan Patriotic Front members were searching for Hutu in the stadium where she was staying, she intervened in behalf of her Hutu friends. Although the rebels were annoyed by her efforts, one exclaimed: "You Jehovah's Witnesses really do have a solid brotherhood. Your religion is the best there is!"

Keeping Free From Ethnic Hatred

That is not to say that Jehovah's Witnesses are totally immune to the ethnic hatreds that have existed for hundreds of years in this area of Africa. A Witness from France who was sharing in relief work noted: "Even our Christian brothers must put forth great effort to avoid being contaminated by the hatred, which has contributed to massacres that are impossible to describe."

"We met brothers who saw their families massacred before their eyes. For example, a Christian sister had been married just two days when her husband was killed. Some Witnesses saw their children and parents killed. One sister, who is now in Uganda, saw her whole family slaughtered, including her husband. This simply highlights the suffering, both emotional and physical, that has touched each family of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Altogether, about 400 Witnesses were killed in the ethnic violence. Yet none of these died at the hands of fellow Witnesses. Tutsi and Hutu members of Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, however, slaughtered thousands. As is well

documented, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide take no part whatsoever in the wars, revolutions, or other such conflicts of this world.—John 17:14, 16; 18:36; Revelation 12:9.

Suffering Beyond Description

This past summer, people around the world were exposed to visual images of almost unbelievable human suffering. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees were seen streaming into neighboring countries and existing there under the most unsanitary conditions. One of Jehovah's Witnesses on a relief mission from France described the situation his delegation saw on July 30 as follows.

"We were confronted with scenes of absolute horror. Mile after mile, bodies lined the road. Communal graves were filled with thousands of corpses. The stench as we went through the seething mass of people was unbearable, with children playing next to dead bodies. There were corpses of parents whose children were still alive and were clinging to their backs. Such scenes, reproduced over and over again, leave a deep impression. A person is overwhelmed by a feeling of complete helplessness, and he cannot remain unmoved by the extent of the horror and desolation."

When refugees by the tens of thousands were streaming into Zaire in mid-July, Witnesses in Zaire went to the border and held up their Bible publications so that their Christian brothers and interested ones could identify them. The refugee Witnesses from Rwanda were then gathered together and taken to the Kingdom Hall in nearby Goma, where they were provided care. Witnesses with medical experience worked hard to lessen the distress of the sick, despite the absence of adequate medicines and proper facilities.

Quick Response to Suffering

On Friday, July 22, Jehovah's Witnesses in France received a faxed SOS from Africa. It described the dire plight of their Christian brothers fleeing Rwanda. Within five or ten minutes of receiving the memo, the brothers decided to load a cargo plane with relief supplies. This led to a weekend of intense preparation, which was all the more remarkable in view of their total lack of experience in mounting such a huge relief effort on short notice.

There was tremendous response to the need for relief funds. Witnesses in Belgium, France, and Switzerland alone contributed over \$1,600,000. Relief materials were obtained, including food, medicine, and survival equipment, and everything was boxed and labeled at the facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Louviers, France, and in Brussels, Belgium. Witnesses worked day and night to get the shipment ready for delivery to Ostend, Belgium. At the airport there, on Wednesday, July 27, over 35 tons was loaded onto a cargo jet. The following day a smaller shipment, mainly of medical supplies, was sent. On Saturday, two days later, another flight carried more medical supplies for the victims.

Witnesses from France, including a medical doctor, went to Goma ahead of the large shipment. On Monday, July 25, when Dr. Henri Tallet arrived in Goma, about 20 Witnesses had already died of cholera, and others were dying daily. Because the shipment had to be delivered by way of Bujumbura, Burundi, some 150 miles away, it didn't arrive in Goma until Friday morning, July 29.

Coping With Disease

In the meantime, on the plot of land where the small Kingdom Hall in Goma was located, some 1,600 Witnesses and their friends were packed together. For all these



Left: Ntabana Eugène and his family were massacred. **Right:** Mukagisagara Denise, a Tutsi, was killed, despite efforts by Hutu brothers to save her

people, there was one toilet, no water, and very little food. The dozens infected with cholera crammed into the Kingdom Hall. The death toll was escalating.

Cholera completely dehydrates a person. The eyes become glassy and then roll upward. If rehydration therapy is started in time, the person is back on his feet in two days. Efforts, therefore, were immediately made to rehydrate the brothers with the little medicine that was available.

In addition, brothers attempted to isolate the sick to prevent their contaminating others. They sought to transfer the refugees away from the terrible conditions in Goma. A suitable location was found near Lake Kivu, away from the dust and the smell of corpses that hung heavy in the air.

Toilets were dug, and strict rules of hygiene were imposed. These included wash-

ing one's hands in a bowl of bleach and water after going to the toilet. The importance of these measures was stressed, and the people accepted what was required of them. Soon the deadly tide of disease was turned.

When the large shipment of relief supplies arrived on Friday, July 29, a little hospital was established at the Kingdom Hall in Goma. Some 60 camp beds were set up, as well as a water treatment system. In addition, tents were taken to the Witnesses located on the banks of Lake Kivu. In a short while, they had set up 50 tents in neat, orderly rows.

At one time about 150 Witnesses and their friends were seriously ill. By the first week in August, over 40 of them had died in Goma. But medical supplies and assistance arrived in time to save many lives and to stop a great deal of suffering.

A Grateful, Spiritual People

The Witness refugees showed extreme gratitude for all that was done for them. They were touched by the love shown by their Christian brothers in other countries and by the clear evidence that they truly belong to an international brotherhood.

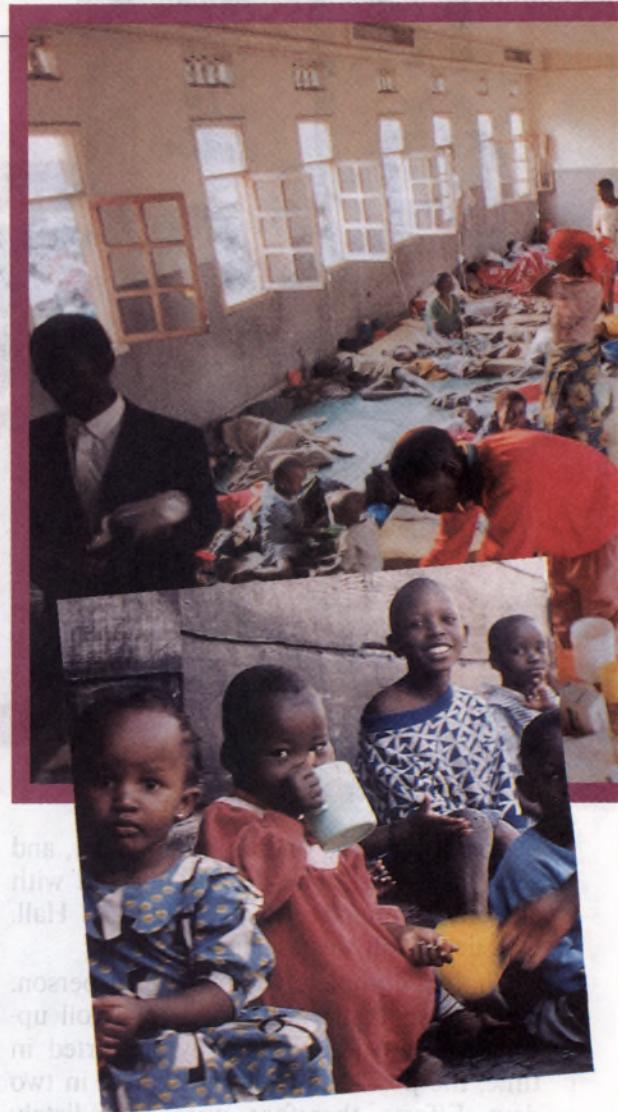
Despite their hardships, the refugees have maintained their spirituality. In fact, one observer noted that "they seem more concerned to receive spiritual food than material help, although they are in dire need of everything." Upon request, 5,000 copies of the Bible study aid *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* in the Rwandan language of Kinyarwanda were shipped to the various refugee camps.*

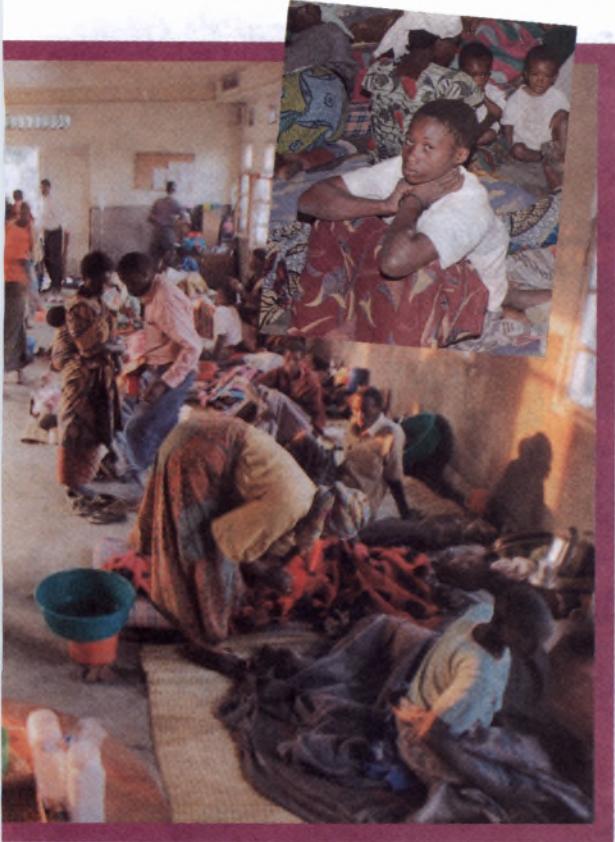
The refugees considered a Bible text each day, and they organized congregation meetings. Arrangements were also made to conduct school classes for the children. Teachers took advantage of these classes to give instruction on rules of hygiene, emphasizing that survival depended on observing them.

Ongoing Care Needed

Hundreds of Witness refugees were located in other places besides Goma, such as Rutshuru. Similar aid was provided these

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.





Top: Caring for the sick at the Kingdom Hall in Goma. Bottom left: Over 35 tons of relief supplies prepared by Witnesses and sent by cargo jet. Below: Near Lake Kivu, where Witnesses were moved. Bottom right: Rwandan refugees at a Kingdom Hall in Zaire

brothers. On July 31, a Witness delegation of seven flew south from Goma to Bukavu, where there were some 450 Witness refugees. Many of these were also from Burundi. Cholera had broken out there, and assistance was provided in an attempt to prevent any deaths among the brothers.

The following day the delegation traveled nearly 90 miles by road to Uvira, Zaire, where along the way there were about 1,600 Witnesses in some seven locations from both Rwanda and Burundi. Instruction was provided on how they could protect themselves from disease. A report based on the findings of the delegation said: "What has been done thus far is just a beginning, and the 4,700 persons that are now receiving our assistance will need further help for many months."

Hundreds of Witnesses reportedly returned to Rwanda by August. Yet practically all homes and belongings had been pillaged. So the challenge exists of reconstructing homes and Kingdom Halls.

God's servants continue to pray fervently in behalf of those who have suffered so terribly in Rwanda. We know that as the end of this system of things draws closer, violence may increase. However, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide will continue to maintain their Christian neutrality and to show their genuine compassion.



The Catholic Church in Africa

BY AWAKE!
CORRESPONDENT
IN ITALY

THE Catholic Church has tens of millions of adherents in Africa, and its problems there are significant. Earlier this year over 300 church leaders met in the Vatican in Rome to discuss some of these problems during a month-long special synod.

Opening the sessions the pope said, as reported in *L'Osservatore Romano*: "Today for the first time there is taking place a Synod of the African Church involving the whole continent. . . All of Africa is present today in St Peter's Basilica. With deep affection the Bishop of Rome greets Africa."

Photo: Jerden Bouman/Sipa Press

Tribal Warfare

As many are aware, the problems of the Catholic Church are particularly great in the African countries of Burundi and Rwanda, which are predominantly Catholic. The tribal warfare there became international news this spring when hundreds of thousands were slaughtered by their neighbors. One eyewitness reported: "We saw women with small children on their backs killing. We saw children killing children."

The *National Catholic Reporter* told of the anguish of Catholic leadership. It said that the pope "felt 'immense pain' at fresh reports

of conflict in the tiny African nation [of Burundi], whose population is predominantly Catholic."

The massacres in Rwanda were even more damaging to Catholic leadership. "Pope Decries Genocide in 70% Catholic Nation," proclaimed a heading in the same paper. The article observed: "The fighting in the African nation involves 'a real and true genocide for which, unfortunately, even Catholics are responsible,' the pope said."

Since atrocities in Rwanda were being committed as the history-making Catholic synod convened in Rome, obviously the attention of the bishops was focused on the situation in Rwanda. The *National Catholic Reporter* observed: "The Rwandan conflict discloses something alarming: Christian faith has not set down deep enough roots in Africa to overcome tribalism."

Noting the concern of the assembled bishops, the *National Catholic Reporter* went on to say: "This theme [of tribalism] was tackled by Albert Kanene Obiefuna, bishop of Awka, Nigeria, speaking to the synod." In his address, Obiefuna explained: "The typical African lives the family life and also his Christian life in the context of his or her tribal work."

Then, no doubt with Rwanda in mind, Obiefuna continued in his speech to the synod: "This mentality is so pervasive that the saying goes among the Africans that when it comes to the crunch, it is not the Christian concept of the Church as a family which prevails but rather the adage that 'blood is thicker than water.' And by water here one can presumably include the waters of Baptism through which one is born into the family of the Church. Blood relationship is more important even for the African who has become a Christian."

Thus the bishop admitted that in Africa

the Catholic faith had been unsuccessful in creating a Christian brotherhood where believers truly love one another as Jesus Christ taught that they should. (John 13:35) Rather, "blood relationship is more important" to African Catholics. This has resulted in their putting tribal hatreds ahead of all other considerations. As the pope acknowledged, Catholics in Africa must bear responsibility for some of the worst atrocities in recent memory.

Survival Said to Be at Stake

African bishops at the synod expressed fears for the survival of Catholicism in Africa. "If we want the Church to continue to exist in my country," said Bonifatius Haushiku, a Namibian bishop, "we must give very serious consideration to the question of inculturation."

Expressing similar sentiments, the Italian Catholic press agency Adista said: "To speak about 'inculturation' of the Gospel in Africa means speaking about the very destiny of the Catholic Church in that continent, of its chances of surviving or not surviving."

Just what do the bishops mean by "inculturation"?

The Church and "Inculturation"

John M. Waliggo explained that "*adaptation*" is the term that has been used for a long time to signify the same reality." Put more simply, "inculturation" means the assimilation of traditions and concepts of tribal religions into Catholic ceremonies and worship, giving a new name and a new meaning to ancient rites, objects, gestures, and places.

Inculturation allows Africans to be Catholics in good standing and yet to hold on to practices, ceremonies, and beliefs of their tribal religions. Should there be any objection to this? The Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, for example, asked: "Is it not true that

'The war in Rwanda is a true genocide for which even Catholics are responsible,' said the pope

in Europe Christmas was anchored to the festival of the *Solis Invicti*, which fell on December 25?"

Indeed, as Josef Cardinal Tomko, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, noted: "The missionary Church practiced the work of inculcation long before the term began to be used." The Christmas celebration illustrates the matter well, as *La Repubblica* noted. Originally it was a pagan celebration. "The date of December 25 does not correspond to Christ's birth," acknowledges the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, "but to the feast of the *Natalis Solis Invicti*, the Roman sun festival at the solstice."

Christmas is only one of many church customs anchored in paganism. So are such beliefs as the Trinity, immortality of the soul, and eternal torment of human souls after death. John Henry Cardinal Newman of the 19th century wrote that "the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared, should the occasion arise, to adopt, or imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace." Listing many church practices and holidays, he said they were "all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church."

When Catholics enter non-Christian areas, such as parts of Africa, they often find that people already have religious practices and

beliefs similar to those of the church. This is because during previous centuries the church adopted practices and teachings from non-Christian peoples and introduced them into Catholicism. Such practices and teachings, Cardinal Newman claimed, were "sanctified by their adoption into the Church."

Thus, when Pope John Paul II visited non-Christian peoples in Africa last year, he was quoted in *L'Osservatore Romano* as saying: "In Cotonou [Benin, Africa] I met the adherents of voodoo, and it was evident from the way they spoke that in some way they already have in their mentality, rites, symbols and dispositions something of what the Church wants to offer them. They are only waiting for the time for someone to come and give them a hand to cross the threshold and live through Baptism what in some sense they were already living and experiencing before Baptism."

What Should You Do?

The church's failure to teach true, unadulterated Christianity to peoples of Africa has had disastrous consequences. Tribalism has persisted, as nationalism has elsewhere, resulting in Catholics slaughtering one another. What dishonor to Christ! The Bible says that such lawless killing of one another identifies people as "the children of the Devil," and Jesus says of such ones: "Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—1 John 3:10-12; Matthew 7:23.

What must honesthearted Catholics therefore do? The Bible urges Christians to be on guard against compromise with any practices or beliefs that would make their worship unclean in God's eyes. "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers," the Bible says. To enjoy God's favor, you need to 'separate yourselves and quit touching anything unclean in God's sight.'—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

MISSIONARIES

AGENTS OF LIGHT OR OF DARKNESS? PART 6

Making True Disciples Today

JESUS CHRIST commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them." (Matthew 28:19) *Everyman's Encyclopedia* says that this commission "has been carried out by Christians in every age," though it adds, "sometimes with but little vigour." The book *The Missionary Myth* asks: "Has the missionary era ended?"

In January of this year, *Newsweek* magazine reported: "Pope John Paul II is taking Roman Catholicism to the streets." The magazine explained: "He's sending out 350 lay evangelists to scour for converts in Rome's discos, supermarkets and subway stations. The pilot program begins on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 16). If it succeeds, the pontiff is going global—a move that could have Catholic missionaries ringing doorbells from Buenos Aires to Tokyo."

Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, have long understood their obligation to do evangelizing work. (2 Timothy 4:5) Of course, not all preach as missionaries in foreign countries. But they can—and do—preach wherever they are. In this sense, all of them are missionaries.

A Special Kind of School

In the early 1940's, the Watch Tower Society set up a school to train experienced ministers to serve as missionaries in foreign lands where help was urgently needed. Over the years the curriculum has been modified, but it has never deviated from its basic goal of emphasizing Bible study and accomplishing the vital work of evangelizing.

The name chosen for the new school was Gilead, which in Hebrew means "Witness Heap." By helping to pile up a heap of witness to Jehovah's honor, Gilead has played a pivotal role in carrying out the global preaching work that Jesus foretold would take place in our day.—Matthew 24:14.

Speaking to the first class of Gilead School in 1943, Nathan H. Knorr, then president of the Watch Tower Society, said: "You are being given further preparation for work similar to that of the apostle Paul, Mark, Timothy, and others who traveled to all parts of the Roman Empire proclaiming the message of the Kingdom. . . . Your principal work is that of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom from house to house as did Jesus and the apostles."

When the first class had completed its training, its graduates were sent to nine Latin-American countries. To date, over 6,500 students from more than 110 countries have been trained at Gilead School and have been sent as missionaries to well over 200 lands and island groups.

Missionaries of Different Sorts

Previous articles in this series told of the activity of Christendom's missionaries in the past. Many, like those sent to Greenland, translated the Bible or parts of it into the vernacular. Yet, such early missionaries often had interests other than teaching people the Bible.

Christendom's missionaries to Japan, for example, were involved in "educational institutions and schools," notes the *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*. It says: "A number of missionaries have distinguished themselves through their scholarship." They became linguists or professors, teaching subjects like literature, language, history, philosophy, East Asian religions, and Japanese folklore. "Charitable and social welfare institutions were also an important part of missionary work," adds the encyclopedia.

Preaching the gospel did not have top priority with missionaries in general. Too often they emphasized the satisfying of physical needs rather than spiritual needs. Pursuit of

personal interests became their focus. Thus, a missionary of the Church of England sent to Japan in 1889 is today best known as the "father of Japanese mountaineering."

Gilead-trained missionaries differ in major ways from those of Christendom. The book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, chapter 23, observes: "Missionary graduates of Gilead School teach people the Bible. Instead of setting up churches and expecting people to come to them, they call from house to house . . . , not to be served, but to serve."

What Has Been the Fruitage?

After having centuries of time to make Christian disciples in Europe, how successful have Christendom's missionaries been? The book *A Global View of Christian Missions* answers: "An estimated 160 million people in Europe make no profession of religion. Among those who still claim allegiance to Christianity there are few who take their religion seriously. . . . By no stretch of the imagination can Europe be called a Christian continent."

What of the situation in Asia? The *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* answers: "In popular estimation Christianity is still regarded as a 'foreign' creed, . . . not suitable for ordinary Japanese people. . . . The Christian movement remains on the periphery of Japanese society." Indeed, in Japan less than 4 percent of the people are professed Christians, in India less than 3 percent, in Pakistan less than 2 percent, and in China less than 0.5 percent.

After centuries of Christendom's missionary activity in Africa, what is the situation there? In a report on the meeting of African bishops held this spring in Rome, the German magazine *Focus* reported: "African religions are no longer to be condemned as heathen idolatry. The official, as yet un-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Do You Suffer From Burnout?

My Hate Turned to Love

Who Go to Heaven?

published, document places 'traditional African religions' on the level of worthy and vital partners. Their members deserve esteem. The synod recognized that religions formerly condemned as being fetish in nature have 'often determined the life-style of even the most convinced Catholic.'**

After having centuries of time to make Christian disciples in the Americas, how successful have Christendom's missionaries been? The book *Mission to the World* answers: "Latin America" still merits the title of 'the neglected continent' in spite of great advance in missionary activity in recent decades." Regarding the United States, *Newsweek* notes that recent surveys "demonstrate that while

* See the article "The Catholic Church in Africa," on page 18.

religion pervades the American landscape, only a minority take it seriously.... Half the people who tell pollsters that they spend Sundays in church aren't telling the truth. Nearly a third of Americans 18 and older are totally secular in outlook.... Only 19 percent regularly practice their religion."

In summary, in their efforts to allay the problems of poverty, poor health, and lack of education, Christendom's missionaries have, as a group, advocated human schemes that have at best brought only temporary and partial relief. True Christian missionaries, on the other hand, direct people to God's established Kingdom, which will bring lasting and total relief. It will not just *allay* problems; it will *solve* them. Yes, God's Kingdom will bring to humankind perfect health,

Gilead-trained missionaries from 16 countries relate experiences at a recent convention



genuine economic security, unending opportunities of productive work for all, and life without end!—Psalm 37:9-11, 29; Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6; 65:21-23; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Christendom's missionaries may point to professed Christians who occasionally attend religious services as proof that they have made "disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them." But the facts show that these missionaries have failed to teach these

baptized ones 'to observe all the things Jesus has commanded.'—Matthew 28:19, 20.

However, the teaching activity of true Christians will continue on into God's new world. It will reach out to embrace millions of resurrected ones who will need instruction in the ways of God. Then, without satanic interference, Christians will have the delightful privilege of continuing to make disciples—even as they have been doing for decades.

How They Have Helped People

The following are comments by those who have benefited from the help of Gilead-trained missionaries.

"I marveled at their tenacity, putting up with so much that was different from their homeland: climate, languages, customs, food, and religions. But they stayed in their assignments, some even until death. Their good study habits and zeal in the ministry helped me cultivate the same things."—J. A., India.

"I was impressed by the missionary's punctuality in studying with me. He showed remarkable self-control in putting up with my prejudices and ignorance."—P. T., Thailand.

"My wife and I appreciated the purity displayed by Witness missionaries. Their activity influenced us to make full-time service our goal, and today we have the joy of being missionaries ourselves."—A. C., Mozambique.

"My life had become self-centered. Meeting the missionaries provided the impetus I needed to change it. In them I saw not superficial but true happiness."—J. K., Japan.

"Christendom's missionaries lived comfortable lives. Servants cleaned the house, cooked, did the laundry, cared for the garden, and drove the car. I was surprised to see Gilead missionaries efficiently doing their own housework, while also helping local people learn about God's Kingdom."—S. D., Thailand.

"The missionary sisters rode bicycles to visit the people even when the temperature

soared to over 115 degrees Fahrenheit. Their hospitality and impartiality, as well as their endurance, helped me recognize the truth."

—V. H., India.

"The missionaries did not feel superior. They humbly adjusted to the local people and to the poor living conditions. They had come to serve, so they never complained but always seemed joyful and content."—C. P., Thailand.

"They did not water down Bible truth. Yet, they did not make local people feel that all aspects of their traditional culture were wrong or that they must adopt Western ways. Never did they make others feel inferior or inadequate."—A. D., Papua New Guinea.

"Unlike missionaries of Christendom, she was willing to sit on the floor with crossed legs, Korean style, while we had our Bible study. She was willing to try our Korean dishes. The affection I felt for her helped me progress."—S. K., Korea.

"I was ten years old and got out of school at noon. A missionary invited me to accompany him afternoons in the field ministry. He taught me many Bible principles and instilled in me a real appreciation for Jehovah's organization."—R. G., Colombia.

"They taught me to stick to assignments, doing what needed to be done without complaining. I thank Jehovah and Jesus Christ from the bottom of my heart for sending us the missionaries."—K. S., Japan.

Young People Ask...



Why Should I Obey My Parents?

STAN was raised by God-fearing parents. But at the age of 16, he rebelled. Stan explains: "I wanted to meet people and be accepted by them. I wanted to have all the things other people have." Stan's idea of accomplishing these goals was to become a drug dealer. Naturally, he had to lie about his comings and goings and about all the cash he was bringing home. "My conscience had died," recalls Stan.

John was baptized as a Christian at the age of 11. "But the truth wasn't really in my

heart," he admits. "I did it because my family expected me to do it. When I got to high school, I started getting wild. Rock music also had a bad influence on me. I got into surfing and started spending a lot of time at the beach with youths who were not guided by Bible principles. There were a lot of drugs there." Before long he had moved out of his parents' home and taken up a life-style that went against everything he had been taught.

Why They Rebel

It is normal for youths to try to test their limits and to develop a measure of independence. But rebellious, outrageous, and self-destructive conduct is another thing entirely. What provokes it? The reasons are many and varied. "When you're young," explains John, "you're looking for fun. You want to have a good time." However, because they lack experience in life, young people do not always exercise the best judgment. (Hebrews 5:14) Sensible parents therefore impose reasonable restrictions on their children—constraints that some youths fiercely resent.

Sad to say, some youths have even turned their back on the training that they received from God-fearing parents. (Ephesians 6:1-4) Jesus said that Christianity would be a "narrow" and "cramped" way of life. (Matthew 7:13, 14) So Christian youths often cannot do the things that their schoolmates do. Most take restrictions in stride, appreciating that God's laws are not really burdensome. (1 John 5:3) Indeed, these laws protect youths from problems such as pregnancies out of wedlock, drug abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) But some youths refuse to see things that way; they feel that Bible laws cramp their style.

Resentment may run particularly deep if a youth feels his parents are overly rigid when



Rebelling against your parents may give you more "freedom," but have you considered the consequences?

my parents weren't around that much, they would always leave me with lots of money." Lacking supervision, Taylor began attending nightclubs and getting drunk. It wasn't until her arrest for drunk driving that her parents realized she had a problem.

In addition, there is the situation pointed to by the apostle Paul when he asked a group of Christians: "You were running well.

Who hindered you from keeping on obeying the truth?" (Galatians 5:7) Often bad association is the problem. (1 Corinthians 15:33) "I got involved with the wrong crowd," says a teenager named Elizabeth. She admits that as a result of peer pressure, she "started smoking and abusing drugs." She adds: "Fornication was an everyday thing."

Why Rebellion Is Foolish

Perhaps you too find yourself in a situation that seems frustrating—or even oppressive. It may seem tempting to defy your parents and simply do what you want to do. But as the righteous man Job was warned, "take care that rage does not allure you into spiteful [actions]. Be on your guard that you do not turn to what is hurtful."—Job 36:18-21.

Spiteful, outrageous behavior may get a reaction out of your parents, but it is not likely to be a pleasant one. If anything, they will probably put you under more restrictions. Furthermore, hurtful behavior will cause your parents great pain. (Proverbs 10:1) Is that loving? Will it really improve your situation? A much more sensible approach is to talk matters over with them if you feel you

it comes to such matters as discipline, recreation, and entertainment. "I think my parents are being too strict with us," lamented one young girl. True, it can be disappointing when you are not allowed to do things that other Christian parents permit. (Colossians 3:21) Some youths act out their frustrations by disobeying.

On the other hand, some youths deflect because their parents display no respect whatsoever for godly principles. "Dad was an alcoholic," recalls John. "He and Mom would argue because he drank too much. We moved several times to get away from him." Alcoholics and other substance abusers simply cannot adequately care for their children's needs. In such homes, verbal battering and humiliation may be a youth's daily lot.

Other youths rebel because their parents, in effect, abandon them or ignore them. Rebellion may seem like a way to get their parents' attention—or to hurt them. "As far back as I can remember, my parents never seemed to be around," says a young girl named Taylor who comes from a wealthy family. "You see, I was an only child, and since

have legitimate complaints.* They just may be willing to make some adjustments in the way they treat you.

Another matter to consider is the effect your actions might have upon God. ‘Upon God?’ you may ask. Yes, because rebelling against your parents amounts to rebelling against God himself, inasmuch as he is the one who commands you to honor your parents. (Ephesians 6:2) How does such disobedience make God feel? The Bible says regarding the nation of Israel: “How often they would rebel against him in the wilderness.” With what effect? “They would make [God] feel hurt!” (Psalm 78:40) Granted, you may be upset with your parents, feeling that they are too restrictive. But do you really want to bring pain to the heart of Jehovah God—the one who loves you and wants you to live forever?—John 17:3; 1 Timothy 2:4.

The High Price of “Freedom”

With good reason, then, we need to listen to our loving heavenly Father. Do not be fooled by false promises of “freedom.” (Compare 2 Peter 2:19.) It may seem that some youths do get away with misconduct. But the psalmist warned: “Do not show yourself heated up because of the evildoers. Do not be envious of those doing unrighteousness. For like grass they will speedily wither, and like green new grass they will fade away.” (Psalm 37:1, 2) Youths who revolt often pay a high price for their so-called freedom. Says the Bible at Galatians 6:7: “Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”

Consider Stan, who was mentioned at the outset. Just as he hoped, he became popular with his unsavory friends. “I felt accepted,” he recalls. However, things soon started going

* A number of articles have provided helpful information along these lines. See, for example, the “Young People Ask . . .” articles in our January 8, 1985, August 8, 1992, and November 8, 1992, issues of *Awake!*

sour. He says: “I’ve been shot, jailed, and now I am going to prison. And all I can ask myself is, ‘Was it worth it?’”

What about John’s search for “freedom”? After being arrested for drug possession, he was expelled from the Christian congregation. From there he sank into even more deviant behavior. “I stole cars for money,” John confesses. “I was very violent.” John made a lot of money from his criminal activities. But he recalls: “I blew it all. The amount of dope we used was unbelievable.” And when John wasn’t fighting, stealing, or getting drunk, he was running from the police. “I’ve been arrested about 50 times. Usually they couldn’t make any charges stick, but once I did a whole year in jail.” Yes, far from being a free man, John found himself mired in the “deep things of Satan.”—Revelation 2:24.

The same can be said for Elizabeth. Her fling with worldly friends eventually landed her in jail. She confesses: “I even became pregnant—and because of my drug use I lost the baby. Drugs were my life—I seemed to live for my next high. Eventually I lost my apartment. I could not go home, and I was ashamed even to ask Jehovah for help.”

Many similar examples could be given of youths who have rejected godly principles only to suffer tragic consequences. The Bible warns: “What you think is the right road may lead to death.” (Proverbs 14:12, *Today’s English Version*) The wise thing to do, then, is to try to get along with your parents, *discussing*—rather than rebelling against—any restrictions you feel are unfair.

What, though, about the youths for whom this information has come too late, youths who already find themselves deep into wrong conduct? Is there any way for them to set matters right with their parents—and God? Our next article in the following issue will explore these questions.

WATCHING THE WORLD

New and Reemerging Diseases

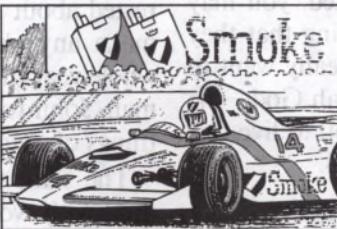
The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that outbreaks of diseases, including new ones, threaten the lives of millions of people. The most dramatic example is AIDS, a disease caused by a virus that was virtually unknown ten years ago. Another disease is hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, recently discovered in the southwestern United States. A completely new strain of cholera has emerged in Asia. Two types of hemorrhagic fevers have developed in South America, both fatal. Examples of outbreaks of well-known infectious diseases during 1993 include cholera in Latin America, yellow fever in Kenya, dengue in Costa Rica, and diphtheria in Russia. WHO is calling for a global network of centers to identify and combat new or reemerging diseases.

Not Enough Calcium

A committee of experts appointed by the National Institutes of Health in the United States recently concluded that "half of America's adults are not getting enough calcium, and that is contributing to a plague of brittle bones and fractures that produce \$10 billion a year in medical bills," according to *The New York Times*. Reportedly, more than 25 million people in the United States are afflicted with osteoporosis, a bone disease. The committee explained in their report that the current recommended daily allowance for calcium is not adequate. The best source of calcium in food is "mainly dairy products and green leafy vegetables," noted the experts. However, they added that "most Americans might need to supplement their diet with calcium pills or processed foods enriched with calcium."

Races That Promote Smoking

Traditionally, European countries have hosted the popular Formula One Grand Prix car races. However, organizers now prefer to hold these events in Asian countries such as Japan and China. Why? Because of Europe's tougher regulations on tobacco advertising. The principal sponsors of the races are tobacco companies, so racing cars display tobacco ads prominently. According to Japan's *Asahi*



Evening News, one tobacco company "invests several billion yen annually financing two teams." Advertisements on racing cars have had to be erased or covered up when racing in Europe. Recently the French Grand Prix was almost canceled because of a prohibition on cigarette advertising. Asian nations, where about 60 percent of all adult men smoke, are now regarded as better places to advertise cigarettes on racing cars.

Plenty of Beer —Not Enough Food

In Venezuela, 726,000 children six years old and under are shorter in stature than they should be for their age because of malnutrition, according to the Venezuelan newspaper *El Universal*. That is a startling 23.8 percent of children in that age group, almost 1 in 4. While there may not be enough nutritious food to feed

the children, the country seems to have plenty of beer. *El Universal* reports that among Latin-American countries, Venezuela is in first place in beer consumption. In 1991, Venezuelans drank an average of 79 quarts per person.

The Netherlands' Church Membership Falling

A recent survey shows that church membership in the Netherlands has been falling sharply during the last 40 years. In 1950, reports the *Ecumenical Press Service* (EPS), 3 out of 4 Dutchmen were church members. In 1991 that average had dropped to fewer than 2 out of 4, and researchers predict that before long there will be only 1 church member left among every 4 Dutchmen. EPS notes that according to Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, "among 15 countries surveyed, only in the former East Germany were the figures for church membership and belief in God lower than in the Netherlands." However, despite dwindling membership, the survey also showed that 75 percent of all Dutchmen still believe in God.

Deserts in Europe

Desertification, the deterioration of fertile farmland into deserts, is "one of the most serious global environmental problems," asserts the United Nations Environmental Program. The newspaper *The European* reports that although generally associated with Africa, desertification now plagues some 10 percent of Europe's agricultural land. Spain is the most severely affected country. Scientists believe that a combination of overgrazing and water wastage has left the ground prone to drought and erosion, costing farmers some \$1.5 billion a year. A serious con-

sequence is the migration of people to urban areas, which leads to overcrowding and civil unrest. Meteorologists predict a worsening shortage of rain for southern Europe.

Smoke in the Eyes

The director of Australia's National Vision Research Institute, Professor Robert Augusteyn, claims to have indisputable evidence that chemicals from cigarette smoke cause cataracts. A study demonstrates that smokers are two or three times more likely to develop cataracts than are non-smokers. Chemicals from cigarette smoke are first absorbed by the body, but then they make their way to the eye where they destroy "pumps" that drain excess salt and water from the lens in the eye. The resulting swelling and bursting of cells in the eye produce cataracts. "I am perfectly satisfied. There is no question that something in the cigarette smoke is preventing the pumps from working in the lens," explains Professor Augusteyn.

Growing Biblical Illiteracy

"There is frightening and growing ignorance of the Bible in all sections of Western society," reports the World Council of Churches' *Ecumenical Press Service*. Bible societies estimate that 85 percent of Western Christians have never read the whole Bible, and a poll in the United States shows that only 12 percent of churchgoers there read the Bible regularly. Today's university students, says Fergus Macdonald, general secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland, "are so unfamiliar with biblical persons like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the names of the apostles of Jesus, that they are not able to grasp the content of classical works in European literature."

Spring-Cleaning on Mount Everest

Besides being the world's highest peak, Mount Everest is now also known as the world's "highest junkyard," according to the magazine *UNESCO Sources*. During the last 40 years, mountaineers have littered Everest with about 20 tons of oxygen bottles, tents, sleeping bags, and food packaging. On the lower slopes, where the landscape is marked by fluttering bits of tissue, the path to the Everest Base



Camp is now "known as the toilet paper trail." Higher up the mountain, the amount of debris is staggering. "Photos of these scenes," writes *UNESCO Sources*, "come as a shock for those whose visions of Everest are of a pristine wilderness beyond human interference." To rid the mountain of this eyesore, Nepal's government approved this year several "spring-cleaning" expeditions.

Pope's Call to Preach

Earlier this year, Pope John Paul II told a group of Catholics in Italy that it was time to take the gospel directly to the people. How did Catholics in Australia react? "Catholics Won't Heed Pope's Call to Preach," headlined the Australian newspaper *Illawarra Mercury*. It noted that Catholics in that country "are not keen to adopt the Jehovah's Witness-type approach to their faith." Local Catholic cleric Sean Cullen said that he was not sure whether the pope's call to preach was directed to all

Catholics or just to those in Italy. "We would encourage people to live out the Gospel they know through their own lives. Whether that means doorknocking is another thing." A local city council worker had a less evasive reply. He said: Evangelism is "not part of the Catholic psyche."

Scuba-Diving Accidents

In the United States, "about 90 people die each year while scuba diving," reports *The New York Times*. Government officials object to the fact that, unlike other risky activities such as bungee jumping and flying planes, there are no laws regulating the scuba-diving industry. In the United States alone, there are between three million and five million certified divers. Scuba-diving shops certify some 300,000 to 400,000 people every year. One shop owner explains that the problem is that "divers do not always follow directions." Al Hornsby of the Professional Association of Diving Instructors claims that the number of diving accidents is actually going down. The *Times* reports: "In the mid-1970's, he said, there were 12 deaths per 100,000 divers, and now there are a little more than 2 per 100,000."

Thieves in the Library

Recently a study was conducted by the Consortium of Libraries and Archives of Rome's Cultural Institutes. According to researchers only a small number of libraries in Italy are presently protected by efficient electronic antitheft systems. As a result, every year some 100,000 books are either vandalized beyond repair or stolen, according to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. The newspaper notes that even university professors are guilty of stealing books that are no longer on the market but are useful for their studies.

FROM OUR READERS

Suicide I read the article "Young People Ask . . . Is Suicide the Answer?" (April 8, 1994) with my heart in my mouth. I am a 20-year-old and am now a full-time minister. But not so long ago, I was suicidal. Jehovah has helped me and continues to hold me by the hand. When, just a few days ago, one of my closest friends told me that she had tried to kill herself, I looked for practical advice that would help her not to give up. This article answered my prayers.

A. C., Italy

Only last week thoughts of suicide were strong in my heart. A Christian elder and his wife became close confidants and helped me through. Your many articles on depression have been lifesaving to me.

D. J., United States

I just had to express my deepest thanks to you for the article. It stirred me like no previous article that I can ever remember. You see, some years ago I believed suicide was an option—a way out of seemingly intolerable circumstances. Yet, with the help of parents and friends, I came to know that I had the best reason of all for living—Jehovah wanted me to live.

M. V., United States

I found this article to be comprehensive and well written. I feel this is an extremely valuable tool to assist any who may entertain thoughts of suicide. I was touched by all the examples included.

L. S., United States

Hitchhiking Hippie I want to thank you for the article about Richard Fleet, "From Hitchhiking Hippie to South American Missionary." (March 22, 1994) Following our wedding my fiancé and I plan to move to Hungary to help with the preaching activity

there. Until now I felt so apprehensive about the complete change in life-style and learning a new language. The article clearly showed that what counts is not personal concerns but the people to whom we preach.

S. H., Germany

I believe all single people should read this article and should realize that you can be a servant of Jehovah and be happy without a mate. It's wonderful to read how a single man fully used Matthew 6:33 in his life. Since I began serving as a full-time evangelizer two and a half years ago, I have experienced joy similar to Richard Fleet's.

D. M., United States

I was touched to the core to learn that there are men whose hearts go out to fatherless boys. I am a single mother with four boys. A Christian brother took an interest in one of them, and now that son is preparing to be baptized very soon. When someone reaches out to fatherless ones, it is much appreciated.

P. T., United States

Chile I have just read the May 8, 1994, issue, and I particularly enjoyed the article "Chile—Unique Country, Unique Convention." I felt as if I had attended the convention myself. I even sensed the feeling of reluctantly pulling myself away when the program ended.

K. K., Japan

Compact Discs Thank you for your article "The Compact Disc—What Is It All About?" (April 22, 1994) It cleared up the mystery in my mind about these discs. After listening to a friend's compact disc system, I marveled at its superiority over other music reproduction systems.

S. D., Nigeria

INDEX TO VOLUME 75 OF AWAKE!

ANIMALS AND PLANTS

- Alligators—Rare, White, Blue-Eyed! 5/22
- Australia's Wildflower Spectacular, 9/22
- Banana—Remarkable Fruit, 4/8
- Butterflies Poisonous? 11/8
- Dapper Dipper, 3/22
- Elephants—Friends or Foes? 3/8
- Elusive Creature (Wolf), 9/8
- "Extinct" Bird Rediscovered, 11/8
- Finch, 9/8
- Giant Leatherbacks, 7/8
- Hippopotamus, 10/8
- Magpie, 7/8
- Nut With a New Name, 8/22
- Pelican, 5/8
- Perfect Little Housekeepers (Ants), 5/8
- Warm-Water Seal, 10/22
- Wetlands of the World, 1/22
- Wholphin, 2/22
- Whooper Swan, 8/8
- Woodpeckers, 1/8

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT

- Creating Jobs in Developing Countries, 10/22
- Material Prosperity—Key to Happy World? 12/8
- Mexico's Economic Recovery, 3/8
- Money Chase, 3/22
- Worker Worthy of His Wages? 3/22

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

- Addictions, 4/22
- Back Pain, 6/8
- Breast Cancer, 4/8
- Breast-Feeding Basics, 8/22
- Contaminated Blood to Hemophiliacs, 5/22
- Guam's Mystery Diseases, 8/8
- Helping Those With AIDS, 3/22
- Pain, 6/22
- Physical Inactivity, 4/22
- Radial Keratotomy, 9/22
- Rh Factor, 12/8
- Search for New Medicines, 5/8

HUMAN RELATIONS

- Are You an Empathetic Listener? 12/8
- Caring for Aged Parents, 2/8
- Communication in Marriage, 1/22
- Difficult Children, 11/22
- Family Life Happier Without TV? 8/22
- Parents—Be Supportive! 8/8
- Problems at School, 8/8

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

- Addie Found the Answer (A. Few), 7/22
- "Atom-Bombed Out Of Prison" (T. Miura), 10/8
- Big Dream Fulfilled! (Nigeria), 9/22
- Caring for Victims of Rwanda's Tragedy, 12/22
- Chile—Unique Country, Unique Convention, 5/8
- From Hippie to Missionary (R. Fleet), 3/22
- How People Can Live Together in Peace (H. Lang), 4/22
- I Found True Wealth in Australia (G. Katsikaronis), 6/22

I Learned to Hate What I Had Loved (O. Nunez), 6/8

- Jerusalem's High Court, 11/8
- "Job Well Done!" (St. Helena), 3/8
- Kiev Reporter Praises Witnesses, 2/22
- Life I Would Not Want to Change (M. Kendall), 4/8
- Life's Challenges in South Asia (A. Abraham), 1/22
- Making True Disciples Today, 12/22
- My Escape to the Truth (B. Garner), 2/8
- Neither Magicians nor Gods (M. Uwasi), 5/8
- No Longer a Rock or an Island (L. Rubin), 11/22
- Parents and Children Learn Together (Japan), 7/22
- Philippine Supreme Court, 1/8
- Protected by Faith in God (F. Borys), 2/22
- Trained to Kill, Now I Offer Life (R. Oved), 9/8
- We Did Not Support Hitler's War (F. Wohlfahrt), 10/22
- When Life Is Not Easy (K. Roberson), 8/22
- "Why I Don't Celebrate Christmas," 12/8
- Youths Who Put God First (Blood Issue), 5/22

LANDS AND PEOPLES

- Australian Aborigines, 2/22
- Bamboo Organ—Philippine Novelty, 10/22
- Canada's Magnificent "Moving Roadway" (St. Lawrence), 4/8
- Canary Islands, 11/22
- Floating Islands of Lake Titicaca, 6/22
- Haiti's Gingerbread Houses, 8/8
- Handy *Furoshiki* (Japan), 9/22
- Krakatoa—Catastrophe Revisited, 6/8
- Land That Never Melts (Baffin Island), 1/8
- Moscow's Underground Palaces, 6/22
- Norway's Olympic Games, 11/8
- Red Sea Wonders, 10/8
- Sapporo's Festival of Snow and Ice (Japan), 2/8
- Train With "Teeth" (Greece), 7/8
- Yemen—Full of Surprises, 4/22
- Your Chop—Your Signature (Taiwan), 5/22

MISCELLANEOUS

- Balanced View of Education, 8/22
- Battle for a Tunnel, 7/8
- California's Quakes, 7/22
- Compact Disc, 4/22
- Conversation Piece You Can Eat (Fondue), 8/8
- Crossword Puzzles, 2/8, 6/8, 12/8
- Drugs, Spiritism, and Bible, 2/22
- Exxon Oil Spill, 1/22
- Helping People to Read, 2/22
- History of Ice Cream, 3/22
- Hoarfrost, 11/22
- Mountains, 10/8
- Night at the Opera, 7/8
- Pornography Goes to College, 7/22
- Put Humor Into Your Life, 5/22
- Toys, 9/8
- Trumpet, 8/22
- Wealth Buy Happiness? 6/22

RELIGION

- Bible Irrelevant? 5/22
- Catholic Church in Africa, 12/22

Ever Wondered? (Quiz on Soul), 1/8

- Ever Wondered? (Quiz on Trinity), 9/8
- Festival of Black Nazarene, 3/8
- God Take Sides in Sports? 2/8
- Guide Life by the Stars? 7/8
- Inquisition in Mexico, 10/8
- Mexico Changes Laws on Religion, 7/22
- Missionaries, 10/8, 10/22, 11/8, 11/22, 12/8, 12/22
- New Age Movement, 3/8
- Real Significance of 1914, 11/8
- Reincarnation, 6/8
- Satanism, 9/22
- True Christians and War, 10/22
- Walsingham—Controversial Shrine, 6/22
- When Religion Takes Sides, 10/22

SCIENCE

- "Lesson From Nature" (Biomimetics), 4/22
- Scientists Take Public for Ride, 1/8

THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

- Always Wrong to Get Angry? 4/8
- Apostle Paul Against Women? 7/8
- Be Baptized Again? 1/8
- Bible Discourage Freedom of Thought? 6/8
- Coping With Stress, 9/8
- Does God Give Rewards? 12/8
- Gambling for Christians? 8/8
- Help for Your Grief, 3/8
- Kind of Divorcing God Hates, 2/8
- "Weaker Vessel"—Insult to Women? 10/8
- Wrong to Grieve? 5/8

WORLD AFFAIRS AND CONDITIONS

- Can Atmosphere Be Saved? 12/22
- Cities, 1/8, 1/22, 2/8, 2/22, 3/8, 3/22
- Decay of Manners, 7/22
- Drought in Southern Africa, 8/8
- Gunshots That Still Shake Our World, 11/8
- Hope for Children, 5/8
- Illiteracy, 2/22
- Land Mines—Global Menace, 8/8
- Pestilences, 9/22
- Sarajevo—From 1914 to 1994, 11/8
- Schools in Crisis, 8/8

YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

- Class Trips, 10/22
- Death of Father, 8/22, 9/8
- Double Life, 1/8, 1/22
- Fads, 11/22, 12/8
- Fall For Unbeliever? 5/22
- Glue Sniffing, 6/22
- How Can I Lose Weight? 5/8
- How Can I Stop Liking Someone? 6/8
- Keeping Mind Off Opposite Sex, 7/22, 8/8
- Moving, 2/22, 3/8
- Suicide, 4/8
- Thrill Sports, 7/8
- Toying With Immorality, 2/8, 3/22
- Unforgivable Sin, 11/8
- Unwed Mothers, 10/8
- Why Obey My Parents? 12/22
- Why So Fat? 4/22
- Why Talk About God? 9/22



'What Saved My Son's Life'

A mother in California, U.S.A., explained that it was what she had read in *The Watchtower* and its companion magazine, *Awake!* She wrote:

"My young son (age four) and I were abducted at gunpoint and forced to drive to my bank. The assailant robbed me, but I was able to grab my son and escape. What I feel really saved my son's life, as well as my own, was the practical Bible suggestions printed in these most valuable magazines."

The mother added further explanation: "Earlier I had read in one of the *Awake!* magazines how to stay calm when faced with a dangerous situation like this. Immediately I prayed to Jehovah God to help me to be calm. I was also able to keep the assailant calm by quoting Bible texts to him."

The purpose of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* is to show that our troubled times were foretold in the Bible. They also provide help for people to cope with today's stressful conditions. But the magazines do much more. They highlight the only permanent solution—God's Kingdom government for which Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray. (Matthew 6: 9, 10) Surely you can benefit from reading regularly *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*