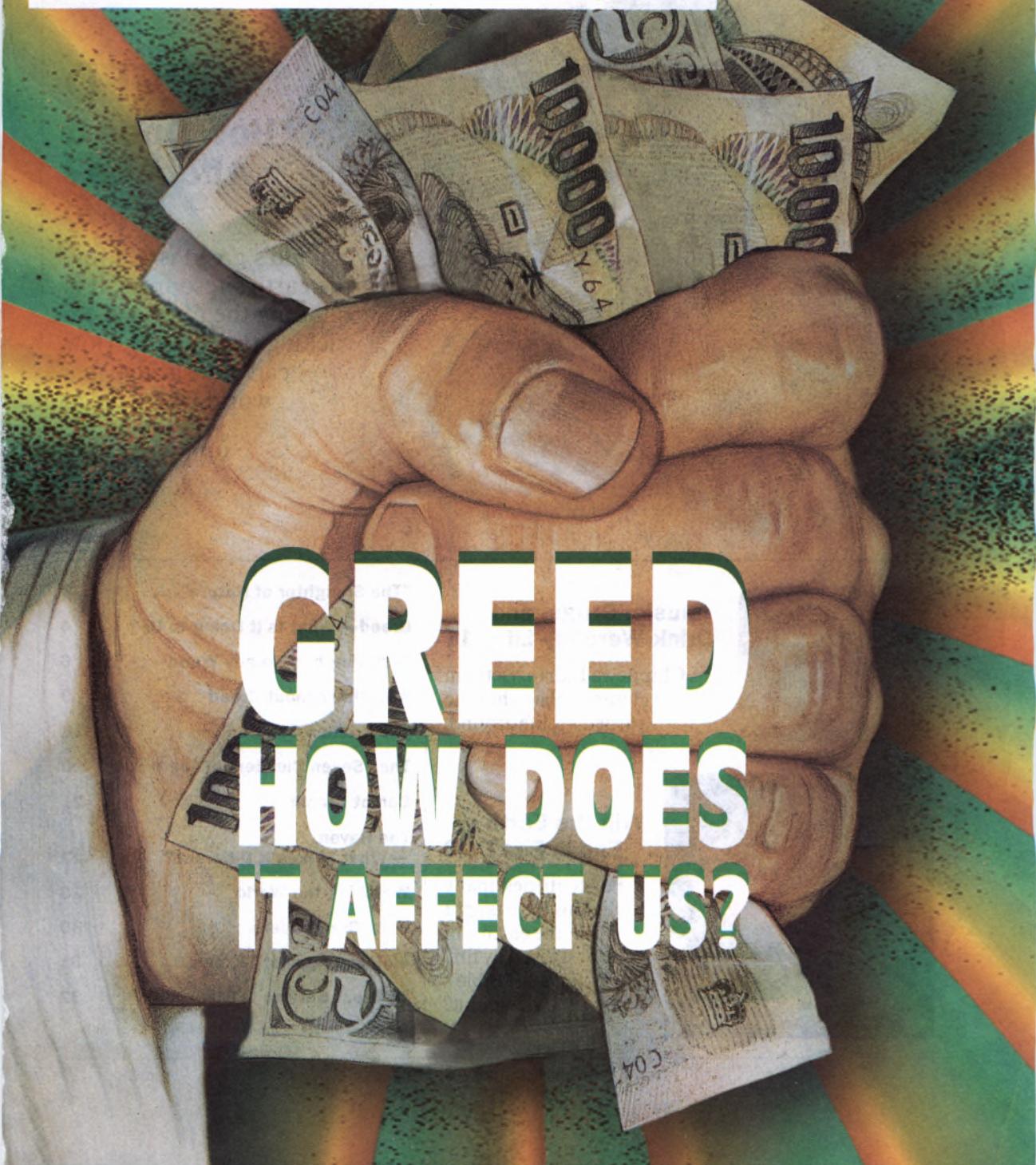


Awake!

BEST SELLING RELIGIOUS PUBLICATION

January 8, 1997

GREED HOW DOES IT AFFECT US?





GREED **How Does It** **Affect Us?**

3-10

Mankind's greed is destroying the earth's resources. It is exploiting the poor and enriching the wealthy. How can you survive in a world where greed predominates? Will greed ever disappear?



Music, Drugs, and Drink Were My Life 11

A Chippewa Indian Vietnam veteran explains how he turned his life around.

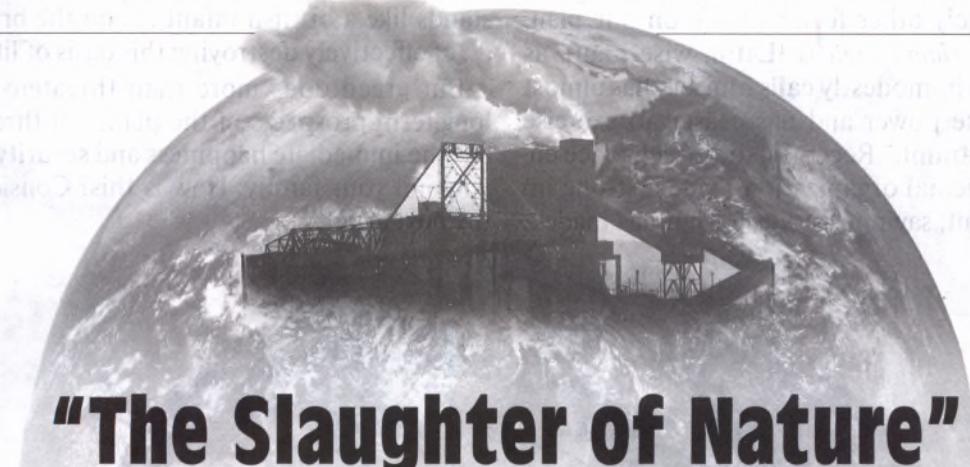


Will the Earth End in Fire? 26

For centuries, many religions have taught that the earth will be destroyed by fire. What is the Bible's viewpoint?

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Earth on pages 2-4, 6, 9, and 26: Based on NASA photo



"The Slaughter of Nature"

GREED is threatening your home. It is undermining the earth's potential to provide the food and shelter all of us need to survive. No doubt you are already aware of how greed is damaging the earth, but here are a few reminders.

Poisoning the Planet

Back in 1962, Rachel Carson, in her book *Silent Spring*, warned about the poisoning of the planet by pesticides and toxic waste. Says *The Naked Savage*: "Mankind was contaminating its own environment and fouling its own nest, the signal for the extinction of the species." Men are still greedily poisoning the planet. "Seeking the greatest profits in the shortest time," says *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*, "big growers are willing to overuse the soil, water, and chemical inputs without thought to eroding the soil, depleting the groundwater, and poisoning the environment."

Instead of protecting the world's invaluable rain forests—which are crucial to earth's survival—men are destroying them faster than ever. "Living tropical forests," say the writers of *Far From Paradise—The Story of Man's Impact on the Environment* (1986), "will have all but disappeared in fifty years

if the present rate of exploitation continues unchanged."

Unscrupulous fishermen use dynamite and chemical poisons to catch fish around coral reefs—which have been described as "the marine equivalents of tropical rain forests" because of the abundance of life forms they shelter. These brutal fishing methods along with thoughtless chemical pollution have "gravely damaged" much living coral.
—*The Toronto Star*.

We Are Our Own Scourge

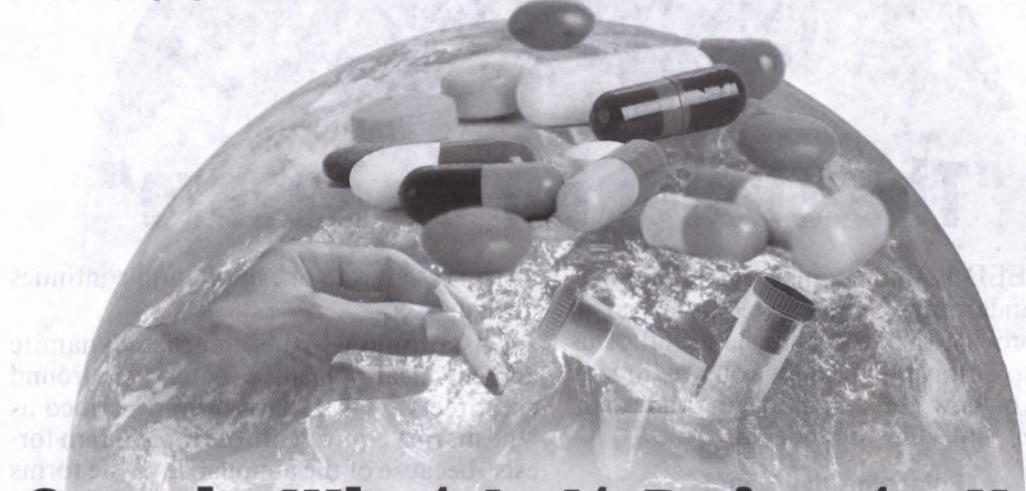
Sir Shridath Ramphal, who was president of the IUCN-The World Conservation Union from 1991 to 1993, describes this kind of mismanagement of earth's resources as "the slaughter of nature." Just how bad is it? Citing an example, Ramphal writes: "Most of India's rivers are little more than open sewers carrying untreated waste from urban and rural areas to the sea." What is his conclusion? "We are our own scourge."

Greed has dominated man's history for centuries, but the threat to the survival of the planet today has increased. Why? Because man's ability to destroy is now so much greater. "Only in the last fifty years," says *Far From Paradise*, "have we had the

chemical and mechanical means to destroy effectively other forms of life on our planet. . . . *Homo sapiens* [Latin, wise man], as man so immodestly calls himself, has almost absolute power and has ceased to exercise any restraint." Recently, the Greenpeace environmental organization made a strong indictment, saying: "Modern Man has made a

rubbish tip of Paradise [earth] . . . and now stands like a brutish infant . . . on the brink . . . of effectively destroying this oasis of life."

But greed does more than threaten the long-term prospects of the planet. It threatens the immediate happiness and security of you and your family. How is this? Consider the next article.



Greed—What Is It Doing to Us?

GREED is wrecking the lives of millions. It is dehumanizing the greedy and bringing pain and grief to their victims. In your life you may well be feeling the effects of greed. Even common shoplifting increases the prices of what you buy. If your wages are low and the cost of daily essentials is beyond your reach, you are

probably a victim of someone else's greed.

The Hungry and the Dying

Greedy national self-interest impedes governments' efforts at effectively helping the poor. As far back as 1952, scientist and nutrition expert Sir John Boyd Orr said: "Governments are prepared to unite men and resources for a world war but the Great Powers

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

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

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are not prepared to unite to banish hunger and poverty from the world."—*Food Poverty & Power*, by Anne Buchanan.

Some semblance of aid is provided, of course. But what is the reality of life for the poor, neglected majority of the world's population? A recent report stated that in spite of increased food output in some areas, "hunger and malnutrition still stalk the majority of the world's poor . . . One-fifth [over one billion] of the world's people goes hungry every day." The report goes on to say: "In addition, 2 billion people suffer from 'hidden hunger' because of . . . [diet] deficiencies which can lead to serious disorders." (*Developed to Death—Rethinking Third World Development*) These figures should certainly make the headlines!

The Enslaved

Crime bosses enrich themselves at the expense of their victims and the public in general. Drugs, violence, prostitution, and economic exploitation enslave millions. Also, Gordon Thomas says in his book *Enslaved*: "According to the Anti-Slavery Society, there are an estimated 200 million slaves in the world. Some 100 million of them are children." What is the basic cause? The report explains: "The urge to enslave remains the dark side of human nature . . . [Slavery is] the product of lust, greed and the love of power."

The powerful dispossess the weak and vulnerable and kill many. "Of the two million Indians who were living in Brazil when the white men first arrived, perhaps two hun-

dred thousand now survive." (*The Naked Savage*) Why? The basic reason is greed.

The Growing Gap Between Wealthy and Poor

The New York Times reported that James Gustave Speth, an administrator in the United Nations Development Program, stated that "an emerging global elite . . . is amassing great wealth and power, while more than half of humanity is left out." This dangerous gap between rich and poor is made more evident by his words: "We still have more than half the people on the planet with incomes of less than \$2 a day—more than 3 billion people." He added: "For poor people in this two-class world, it is a breeding ground for hopelessness, for anger, for frustration."

This hopelessness is increased by the fact that many of the wealthy appear to have neither a conscience nor any compassion for the plight of the poverty-stricken and hungry masses.

The victims of greed are everywhere. See, for example, the bewildered look in the eyes of the refugees caught in the middle of struggles for power in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Liberia. See the resignation in the faces of those starving in the midst of world plenty. What is behind it all? Greed—in one form or another!

How can you survive when surrounded by greedy predators in such a hostile environment? The next two articles take up this question.

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Surviving in a Greedy World

HOW can I survive?" James Scott faced that question when he was hopelessly lost in the Himalaya Mountains. He was in real danger of freezing or starving to death. He recalled having seen people in karate competitions "get slowly ground down, each blow draining them of their spirit, until . . . they became completely defenceless." He said: "That was how I felt as I zipped up my sleeping bag and feebly ate some snow. My spirit had been crushed and all the will to live had left me. Never had I felt so defeated."—*Lost in the Himalayas*.

Many today are, in a sense, like him—trapped in a world dominated by greed. You may feel that you are slowly being ground down and defeated. Few people can completely escape the immediate effects of greed. Depending on where you live in the world, the problems you face will vary immeasurably—greed affects people in developing countries very differently from those in affluent nations. Nevertheless, whatever the difficulties are, maybe you can learn how to survive relatively intact physically, emotionally, and spiritually until rescue comes.

How? By following basic advice given by survival experts.

Two points stand out in their advice. The first is to avoid worsening an already difficult situation. "Your strategy," says *The Urban Survival Handbook*, "must be to avoid unnecessary risks . . . and minimize the damage caused by those you can't avoid." The second—and perhaps the more important—has to do with attitude. "Survival," says *The SAS Survival Handbook*, "is as much a mental attitude as physical endurance and knowledge."

Do What You Can Under the Circumstances

"Someone is murdered in the United States every 22 minutes, robbed every 47 seconds and seriously assaulted every 28 seconds," reports *Staying Alive—Your Crime Prevention Guide*. In conditions like that, what can you do? At the very least, you can try to avoid making yourself an obvious target or an easy victim. Be alert and prudent. Do what you can to minimize the danger.*

* See the article "Violence—You Can Protect Yourself," in the April 22, 1989, issue of *Awake!*, pages 7-10.

For example, do not make your situation worse by being gullible. *The New York Times* reports that 18 percent of Americans admit to being scam victims—duped out of thousands of dollars by unscrupulous people who hunt for vulnerable victims. Often the victims are older folks like a 68-year-old widow who was robbed of \$40,000. Her experience prompted the headline: “If the Hair Is Gray, Con Artists See Green [meaning greenbacks, or dollars].”

But you need not be just another innocent, helpless victim waiting to be exploited. *Staying Alive* warns us: “Beware of the wolf in sheep’s clothing.” One 70-year-old grandmother took this advice. She was offered total insurance coverage for medical bills, at a cost of only \$10 per month. “The only

thing Grandma had to do,” says the report, “was give the salesman \$2,500 up front.” She didn’t. By telephoning the insurance company, she found out that the man was a fraud. “While she poured the salesman his second cup of tea, police arrived and took him away.”

Doing what you can to protect yourself is implicit in the advice given in the Bible. “Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps.” (Proverbs 14:15; 27:12) Many dismiss the Bible as old-fashioned and impractical. But its sound advice can help you survive. Wise King Solomon wrote: “Wisdom [like that found in the Bible] is for a protection the same as money is for a protection; but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom

The Bible’s Timely Warnings

Proverbs 20:23 “Two sorts of weights are something detestable to Jehovah, and a cheating pair of scales is not good.”

Jeremiah 5:26, 28 “Among my people there have been found wicked men. They keep peering, as when birdcatchers crouch down. They have set a ruinous trap. It is men that they catch. They have grown fat; they have become shiny. They have also overflowed with bad things. No legal case have they pleaded, even the legal case of the fatherless boy, that they may gain success; and the judgment of the poor ones they have not taken up.”

Ephesians 4:17-19 “This, therefore, I say and bear witness to in the Lord, that you no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk in the unprofitableness of their minds, while they are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts. Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to

work uncleanness of every sort with greediness.”

Colossians 3:5 “Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

2 Timothy 3:1-5 “But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away.”

2 Peter 2:3 “With covetousness they will exploit you with counterfeit words. But as for them, the judgment from of old is not moving slowly, and the destruction of them is not slumbering.”

itself preserves alive its owners.”—Ecclesiastes 7:12.

Many readers of *Awake!* have found this to be true. For example, some have gained a measure of protection by screaming loudly when threatened with rape or other violence, in harmony with what is mentioned at Deuteronomy 22:23, 24. Others have followed the Bible’s advice to keep clear of anything “that pollutes either body or spirit.” (2 Corinthians 7:1, *The Twentieth Century New Testament*) They have thus protected themselves from peddlers of tobacco and drugs, who enrich themselves at the expense of people’s health. Many readers have also avoided the traps of money-grubbing TV preachers and power-hungry politicians. (See box, page 7.) Read the Bible. You may be surprised at how much practical help it gives.

Avoid Becoming Infected by Greed

Of course, there is another danger from greed—you can become greedy yourself. This will rob you of the finer moral qualities that distinguish you from beasts. Describing a commercial free-for-all where businessmen were grabbing all they could get, one observer was quoted as saying: “The hogs were really feeding. The greed level . . . just got out of control.” That is likely more of an insult to the pigs than to the business opportunists! They certainly seemed to ignore the good advice offered by Jesus Christ: “Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness.”—Luke 12:15.

Jesus Christ gave that counsel because he knew how badly you can damage yourself if greed grips you. A lust for material things—and also, of course, a lust for power or sex—can become the all-consuming passion in your life, robbing you of any time or inclination you might have to care for people or for spiritual values. “Money,” says Anthony

Sampson in his book *The Midas Touch*, has “taken over many attributes of a religion.” How so? Money becomes a god. Everything else is sacrificed on the altar of greed and gain. The bottom line is profit. The bigger, the better. In actual fact, though, no matter how much time you give to it, greed for material things will never be fully satisfied. Says Ecclesiastes 5:10: “A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income.” Equally, “a mere lover” of power, possessions, or sex will never be satisfied, however much he gets.

Never Give Up Hope of Rescue

One important key to survival is maintaining a hopeful and positive outlook. Sometimes there is little you can do to escape the effect of greedy people. Starving people, for example, can often do very little to escape their immediate plight. However, don’t give up; don’t throw up the sponge. “It is easy to let yourself go, to collapse and be consumed in self-pity” when exposed to a hostile or dangerous environment, says *The SAS Survival Handbook*. Do not give in to negative thoughts and emotions. You may be amazed at how much you can endure. “Men and women have shown that they can survive in the most adverse situations,” says the same handbook. How did they do it? They survived, it says, “because of their determination to do so.” Be determined not to be defeated by this greedy system.

James Scott, mentioned earlier, was eventually rescued from what could have become his Himalayan grave. He said that his struggle to survive had taught him at least one important lesson. What was that? “There is no challenge in life that is too hard to confront,” he said. Tim Macartney-Snape, an experienced mountaineer who was amazed that James Scott was able to survive long enough to be found alive, also

drew a lesson. He said: "As long as there is any hint of hope, you must never give up." So, no matter how dark things may appear to be, you only make matters worse if you lose hope. Never give up hope of rescue.

But is there any "hint of hope," any real hope? The answer is yes. There is hope. It is the hope of billions of people who are determined to change the world for the better. They are the ones who are making a difference. They are the ones who are changing the world.

Is there any realistic chance of rescue from a world glutted with greed? Will we ever be rid of the greedy people who are wrecking this planet and blighting the lives of billions? There is, in fact, a sure prospect of rescue. Consider the Bible's answer in the following article.

A World Without Greed

WITHOUT a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which our world is headed . . . will be unavoidable."—Václav Havel, president of the Czech Republic.

Many people recognize that the present world order cannot survive. Some, like Václav Havel, see a global change in human thinking and actions as the only solution. One observer of the current world scene, for example, says: "For hundreds of millions of the desperately poor, the outlook for food and other necessities of life will be no better . . . unless the nations of the world act decisively to alter current trends."—*Food Poverty & Power*.

However, is it realistic to pin our hopes for survival on some kind of fundamental

change in human nature? Can we confidently trust governments to "act decisively to alter current trends"? Some think so. 'God gave us free will, and it is up to us to change things,' they say. But the harsh facts of history raise serious questions about man's desire and ability to make the changes that are needed. This view is not pessimistic, but rather, it is realistic. Would you put your life in the hands of a surgeon if you knew that all his previous patients had died?

A Problem of Education?

"The problem is an educational one," says Ted Trainer, in *Developed to Death—Rethinking Third World Development*. He says that unless people can be educated to see that fundamental change is needed, "we cannot hope to achieve a transition to a sustainable world order." No doubt there is a need to educate

people on the importance of a change in attitudes and actions if the world is to survive. In fact, it is essential, and the Bible speaks about such an educational program. It says that the earth will "be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah." Then, no one will "do any harm or cause any ruin" anywhere on earth.—Isaiah 11:9.

But no amount of education, not even God's educational program, will of itself rid the earth of greedy people who do great harm and cause widespread ruin. Education will produce change only in people who want to change, people who want to conform to God's standards. According to Jesus Christ, they are in the minority. (Matthew 7:13, 14) So the Bible does not base its promise of change on some illusory hope that one day all mankind will wake up to the magnitude of the problem and change their ways. It says that God will take direct action to rid the earth of greedy people.

Intervention by God

Many consider this idea of direct action by God a dream or a mirage. "Eighteenth-century intellectual breakthroughs forced us to relinquish the comforting notion of an interventionist God who would put the human house aright," says *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*. But should we put our faith in the intellectual arguments and philosophies of those who have lost faith in "an interventionist God"? Are not their solutions a mirage?

It is wiser to base our hope for survival on the unerring prophecies found in the Bible that point to intervention on God's part. It is not merely a "comforting notion" to believe God's promises—it is the only realistic hope for survival that we have!

"Ruin Those Ruining the Earth"

What exactly does God promise? Well, for one thing, he promises to rid the earth of those who pollute and destroy the environ-

ment. Revelation 11:18 declares that he has an "appointed time" to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." What will that mean? It will mean an end to all of those who currently oppress the poor and vulnerable. God will "judge the afflicted ones of the people, save the sons of the poor one, and crush the defrauder." He will get rid of the greedy and allow their innocent victims to prosper. "He will deliver the poor one crying for help . . . From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul."—Psalm 72:4, 12-14.

What a change that will bring! According to the apostle Peter, this change will be so all-embracing that it will produce "new heavens and a new earth." (2 Peter 3:13) In this "new earth," everyone will enjoy a fair share of earth's produce. (Micah 4:4) Even now, there is plenty of food for everyone. Unequal distribution is the problem. "It has been estimated that we could produce enough on the potentially cultivable area of the globe to support 38-48 billion people," says Anne Buchanan, in her book *Food Poverty & Power*.

This planet will survive. Its Creator "did not create it simply for nothing [but] formed it even to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18) God's action against greedy people will mean a short period of "great tribulation." (Matthew 24:21) Survivors of that tribulation will then enjoy a paradise earth, populated by people totally free of greed. (Psalm 37:10, 11; 104:5) It will be as the Bible promises: "Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isaiah 25:8.

You can be one of the happy beneficiaries of God's action to cleanse the earth of greed. If you really want to do God's will, avail yourself of all the help provided to assist you to survive now in a greedy world. Take action to survive the "great tribulation." Jehovah's Witnesses are ready to help you learn what you need to know. Feel free to contact them at the local Kingdom Hall or write to the nearest address listed on page 5.

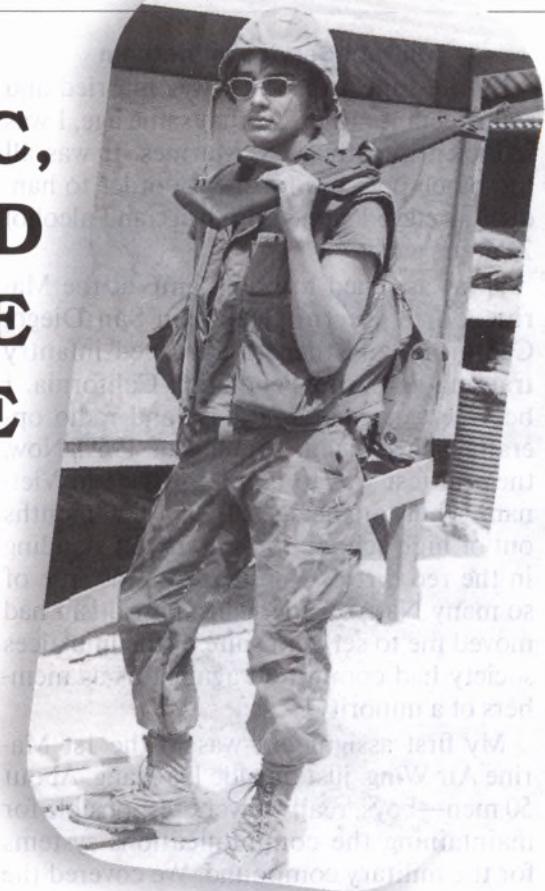
MUSIC, DRUGS, AND DRINK WERE MY LIFE

I AM a Native American. Father, who died four years ago, was Chippewa, from Sugar Island, Michigan, U.S.A. My mother, from Ontario, Canada, is of the Ottawa and Ojibwa Indian nations. Through my father I am a member of the Sault Sainte Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians. Because of the influence of the Catholic mission and boarding schools, we were raised Catholic, which meant attendance at Mass every Sunday.

My childhood on the Indian reservation was simple and happy. From a child's viewpoint, the summers were long, lazy, and peaceful. We lived in a remote area—we had no running water and no indoor toilets, and we bathed in the lake or in a washtub. Our playground was the outdoors. Horses, cattle, and other farm animals were our toys. At the time, I wished the whole world could be like that forever.

The Challenges of Growing Up

When I grew older and went to public school, my visits to the reservation were infrequent. School, sports, and music began to occupy most of my time. As a teenager in the 1960's, I was shaped by the spirit of the times. By the time I turned 13, drugs and alcohol were a regular part of my life. Rebel-



lion against society was the fashion, and I hated everything that the system stood for. I couldn't understand why people did inhumane things to one another.

About this time, I got my first guitar. Ours was a musical family. My father was a piano player and a tap dancer, and his brothers were also musically inclined. So when Dad and my uncles got together, we played jigs and had hoedowns till the early morning hours. I loved it. Soon, I learned to play the guitar and joined a rock-and-roll band. We performed at school dances and other events. That led to bars and nightclubs, which naturally meant more alcohol and drugs. Marijuana and methamphetamine (speed) were part of my life-style.

Military Service in Vietnam

By the time I was 19, I was married and an expectant father. At that same age, I was inducted into the U.S. Marines. It was all too much pressure for me. In order to handle it, I stayed stoned on drugs and alcohol 24 hours a day.

I was assigned to boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California, and then to advanced infantry training at Camp Pendleton, California. I became a trained field wire and radio operator. This was at the end of 1969. Now, the real test was to come—service in Vietnam. Thus, at the age of 19, a few months out of high school, I found myself standing in the red dirt of Vietnam. As was true of so many Native Americans, patriotism had moved me to serve in spite of the injustices society had committed against us as members of a minority.

My first assignment was to the 1st Marine Air Wing, just outside Da Nang. About 50 men—boys, really—were responsible for maintaining the communications systems for the military compound. We covered the area from the DMZ (demilitarized zone) between North Vietnam and South Vietnam to about 50 miles south of Da Nang.

Refugees were flocking to Da Nang, and shantytowns were springing up all around. There were also many orphanages. Seeing the young children, many maimed, had a deep impact on me. It struck me as strange that they were nearly all girls or small boys. I soon found out why. The boys from 11 years old and up were fighting in the war. Later, I met a young Vietnamese soldier, and I asked him how old he was. "Fourteen" was the answer. He had already been in combat for three years! This staggered me. He reminded me of my 14-year-old brother, except that my brother's preoccupation was not killing but Little League baseball.

During my service in the marines, I began to have questions that needed answers. One night, I went to the church in our compound. The Catholic chaplain gave a sermon on Jesus, peace, and love! I wanted to scream. His sermon was contrary to everything that was happening there. After the ceremony I asked him how he could justify being a Christian and at the same time fighting in this war. His answer? "Well, Private, this is how we do our fighting for the Lord." I walked out and said to myself that I never wanted to have anything to do with the church again.

When my tour of duty ended, I knew I was fortunate to be alive; but mentally and morally I had suffered a great deal. Hearing, seeing, and smelling war and death on a daily basis left a deep impression on my young mind and heart. Even though it all happened over 25 years ago, the memories seem to be only a day old.

Struggle to Adapt to Civilian Life

On returning home, I started to put my heart into my music career. My personal life was a mess—I was married and had a child, and I was still consuming large quantities of drugs and alcohol. My relationship with my wife became tense, and the result was a divorce. That was probably the lowest point of my life. I started to isolate myself and found solace outdoors, trout fishing in remote areas of Minnesota and Upper Michigan.

In 1974, I moved to Nashville, Tennessee, with the aim of advancing my music career as a guitarist and singer. I played in many nightclubs, always hoping to break into the mainstream of music. But it was a tough challenge—there were so many talented guitar players, all trying to make it to the big time.

However, just when it got to the point where things were really beginning to go

my way and I smelled the possibility of professional success, something happened that shook me up.

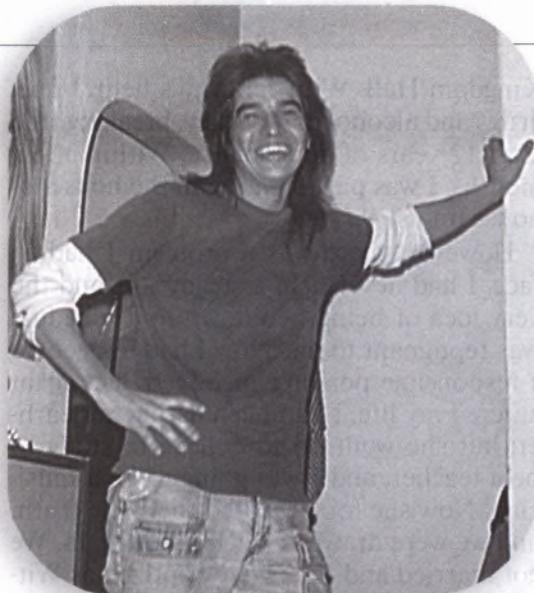
Dangerous Life-Style

I went to visit an old acquaintance with whom I had had drug dealings. He greeted me at the door with a 12-gauge shotgun. He was in a partial body cast, and his mouth was wired shut because of a broken jaw. Speaking through his clenched teeth, he told me what had happened. Unknown to me, he was involved with a drug cartel in Nashville, and a large quantity of cocaine had disappeared. The drug barons pointed the finger at him. They sent enforcers, or thugs, to beat him up. They told him to return the cocaine or pay its \$20,000 street value. Not only was he threatened but his wife and child were in jeopardy. He told me that it was not safe for me to be seen with him and that maybe I should leave. I took the hint and left.

This incident made me a little fearful for my life. Without realizing it, I had become part of a violent world. The majority of the people I knew in my music and drug circle carried a handgun. I had almost bought a .38 revolver for my own protection. I realized that the closer I got to the mainstream of the music industry, the higher the price to be paid. So, then, I decided to quit Nashville and was planning to go to Brazil to study Latin-American music.

Many Questions, Few Answers

In spite of my negative experiences with religion, I had a strong desire to worship God. And I still had unanswered questions. So I started my search for the truth. I attended various nondenominational church groups but remained dissatisfied. I recall one church I attended in Minnesota. The pastor cut the sermon short because the Minnesota Vikings football team was play-



*I was searching for the answers
to my questions about God*

ing that day. He encouraged all of us to go home and pray for victory for the Vikings! I got up and walked out. Shallow thinking that relates God to superficial sports activities annoys me to this day.

While I was working in Duluth, Minnesota, a friend left a *Watchtower* magazine in my apartment. I read its discussion of Matthew chapter 24, and it all rang true. It made me think, 'Who are these Jehovah's Witnesses? Who is Jehovah?' I did not get the answers until 1975. That same friend left me the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life** and a Bible.

That night I read the book. By the end of the first chapter, I knew that I had found the truth. It was as if a veil had been removed from my mind. I completed the book, and the next day I went across the street to some Witness neighbors and asked them to study the Bible with me.

I abandoned my plans to travel to Brazil and started to attend the meetings at the

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; now out of print.

Kingdom Hall. With Jehovah's help, I quit drugs and alcohol cold turkey, breaking free after 12 years of dependence. Within a few months, I was participating in the house-to-house ministry.

However, there was a problem I had to face. I had never held a steady job, and the very idea of being tied down to a schedule was repugnant to me. Now I had to become a responsible person, since Debi had again entered my life. I had been dating her earlier; but she went on to college to study to be a teacher, and I was going to be a musician. Now she too accepted the Bible truth, and we were drawn to each other again. We got married and then were baptized as Witnesses in Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario, Canada, in 1976. In time, we had four children—three boys and a girl.

To provide for my family, I opened up a music store and taught jazz improvisation and guitar. I also ran a small recording studio and occasionally played in supper clubs. Then, of all things, opportunities came my way to get back into the big-time professional music world. I was approached three times to play backup for famous recording artists. Here was my big chance—in fact, my third in two years. I was offered the opportunity to go to Los Angeles, California, to play with a well-known jazz group. But I knew it would mean going back to frequent travel, concerts, and recording ses-

sions. I thought about the offer for about five seconds and respectfully said, "No thanks." Just remembering my past life of drugs, alcohol, and danger from thugs made me realize that it just wasn't worth it. My new Christian life with my wife and children meant much more to me.

For several years I worked as a broadcast engineer for educational and documentary programs that were shown on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) television. In my present work, I coordinate video communication to the Hopi Reservation for a university in northern Arizona.

Back With My Own People

Twenty years have passed since I made my dedication to Jehovah God. I have also had twenty years of happy marriage. Debi, our son Dylan, aged 19, and our daughter, Leslie, aged 16, are all in full-time service. In fact, Dylan is now serving at the Watchtower Society's printing and farm complex at Wallkill, New York. Our two younger boys, Casey, aged 12, and Marshall, 14, made their dedication to Jehovah and were baptized recently.

Three years ago we accepted the invitation to move where the need for Christian preaching was greater and came to Keams Canyon, Arizona, to serve among the Navajo and Hopi Indians. I am an elder in the congregation. It is a pleasure to be living once again among Native Americans. Because of the contrast between culture and living conditions here and those in typical American suburbia, we get the sense of being in missionary work. We left a large, comfortable home to come to live—six of us—in a much smaller mobile home. Life here is harder. Many homes have no indoor plumbing, only outdoor toilets. Some families travel miles in the winter just to get wood and coal. Water is hauled from community

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Florida's Everglades

—A Frantic Call From the Wild

"When I Am Weak, Then I Am Powerful"

**Why the Grass Is Green
—A Closer Look at Photosynthesis**



wells. Many roads are just dirt and are not marked on a map. As a child on the reservation, I took all of that in my stride. Now, my family and I appreciate how much hard work and energy are required just to do the necessary chores of daily life.

Even though Indians have their own jurisdiction on the reservations, they are still faced with the same problems that afflict all governments—internal conflicts, favoritism, lack of funds, misappropriated spending, and even crime among their officials and leaders. Indians face the scourges of alcoholism, drug abuse, unemployment, domestic abuse, and marriage and family problems. Some still blame the white man for their present situation, but the white man is afflicted with the same plagues. However, in spite of pressure from family, friends, and fellow clansmen, many Native Americans are responding to the Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses. They see



**Top: My family
and, at left, a Navajo friend
Bottom: Our mobile home near
the Kingdom Hall**

that friendship with God is worth any price. Many travel more than 75 miles each way to attend Christian meetings. We are happy to be sharing the good news of God's Kingdom with the Navajo and the Hopi.

I look forward to the day when Jehovah's rule will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth" and when all obedient mankind will live together in peace and harmony as one united family. Then life will be as I wished it to be as a Chippewa boy in Canada. (Revelation 11:18; 21:1-4)—*As told by Burton McKerchie.*



The Kitchen Can Be Fun

STAY out of the kitchen!" Many a hungry child has received that admonition while trying to get an early taste of supper. However, rather than keeping them out, parents have





good reason to invite their children into the kitchen. Why so? Because the kitchen is, in effect, a fascinating classroom.

The kitchen is a place where children can develop creativity and problem-solving skills, a place where they can learn to serve others and work as part of a team, a place where meaningful conversations that touch the heart can spontaneously arise, a place where deeply held values can be quietly instilled. Yes, in the crowded cupboards and drawers and on the shelves of every kitchen lie many valuable lessons—ready to come to life with the preparation of the next meal.

In this age of technology and information, why use the kitchen as a place for training children? The answer is *time*. Many parents recognize that there is simply no substitute for spending



The First Lesson—Safety

Be Safety Conscious

- In a serious but nonfrightening way, explain the dangers of working in the kitchen, much as you would explain the dangers of traffic on a busy street. Set a good example yourself.

- Provide adult supervision whenever children are working in the kitchen. Do not allow a child to use any utensil or appliance, especially electrical, until he can use it safely.

- Keep your kitchen orderly. Clean up spills and clear away clutter promptly. Pets and other distractions should be kept out of the kitchen while you are cooking.

Protect Fingers

- Electric mixers, blenders, and food processors should be used only when an adult is supervising. Make sure that the appliance is turned off and unplugged before your child puts a utensil into the bowl.

- Keep knives sharp, since a dull knife requires more pressure and is therefore more likely to slip.

- When your child is learning to use a knife,

have him follow these steps: (1) pick the knife up by its handle, (2) place the knife on the food, (3) put the other hand on the back of the knife, and (4) apply pressure to cut the food.

- Use a cutting board. To keep vegetables from rolling around while your child is trying to cut them, slice them in half first and place the flat side down on the cutting board.

Guard Against Burns

- Always turn off stove-top and oven dials when not in use. Keep towels, cookbooks, and pot holders away from burners.

- Position the handles of pans toward the center of the stove, where they cannot easily be bumped and cause spills.

- If you let your child work at the stove, be sure that he is standing on a sturdy and stable surface.

- Don't pick up a hot item unless you already know where you are going to set it down. Make sure others in the kitchen know when you are carrying a hot item, especially if you are going to walk behind them.

time with their children—lots of it!* The problem is where to find it. Some authorities urge parents to look at the routine work they do around the home as an opportunity to do things with their children and educate them. This is in agreement with a commandment that God gave to parents in the ancient nation of Israel: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." —Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

* For a discussion of this subject, see the article "'Quality Time' Doled Out in Limited Quantities," in the May 22, 1993, issue of *Awake!*, pages 16-17.

Because we regularly have to spend time in the kitchen anyway, it would seem to be an obvious place for shared family activity. And unlike special outings, which often have to wait until we have the time, energy, or money to fit them in, healthy appetites refuse to be put off. Besides that, the kitchen has a natural attraction for children. After all, where else are they trained to use knives carefully and handle other utensils? Children having fun may even make an occasional mess! What lessons, though, does the kitchen have to offer?

Learning in the Kitchen "Classroom"

Louise Smith—known to her four-year-old students as the Gingerbread Lady—made

this observation based on 17 years of experience in teaching cooking to young children: "Food makes a great teaching tool because it's something all children relate to. Their senses of smell, taste, and touch are so keen at young ages that they become totally involved. And you can teach phonics, math, and problem-solving skills through food." Pouring, pounding, peeling, sifting, stirring, and rolling help children develop manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination. Sorting (putting raisins and nuts in separate piles) and sequencing (nesting measuring cups in order) teach concepts that serve as building blocks for learning mathematics. Following a recipe is an exercise in the use of numbers, measurements, timing, logic, and language. And one cannot venture into the complex and hazard-filled world of the kitchen without learning something about safety, responsibility, personal organization, and teamwork.

Not to be overlooked is the value of learning to cook. It is not uncommon for children who start out by helping in the kitchen to be able to prepare entire meals by the time they reach their teen years. What busy parent wouldn't welcome that from time to time? Furthermore, cooking helps youths develop confidence and self-sufficiency—qualities that can benefit them when they later take on adult responsibilities, whether they marry or remain single.—Compare 1 Timothy 6:6.

Lee, who remained single into his early 30's, recalls: "My mother began training me in basic kitchen routines when I was about six years old. At first, I was mainly interested in making cookies, cakes, and other sweets. But by the time I was nine, I was able to plan and prepare an entire meal for our family, and I did it on a regular basis. Later, as a single adult, I found that knowing how to handle a variety of household duties, including cooking, made life easier. And I would def-

initely say that this has contributed to my now enjoying a successful marriage."

Cooking Is Fun!

How can a parent find the time to train children in the kitchen? One mother suggests scheduling a time when there are as few distractions as possible. If you have several children, you may want to work with one child at a time when they are starting out. To do this, choose a time when the other children are taking naps or are at school. Plan on spending more time than if you were cooking alone. And be prepared to have fun in the kitchen!

For your first session, you might let your child select something that he or she enjoys eating.* Look for a simple recipe that brings swift results. Make sure it includes tasks that he can successfully complete. To keep your child from getting restless and bored, have him find some of the needed ingredients and utensils beforehand. You might even partially prepare some of the ingredients in advance so that the session does not become drawn out and tedious.

Read through the recipe with your child, showing him how to perform each of the tasks. Give your child his own space in the kitchen—perhaps a drawer with a couple of bowls and a few utensils—and give him an apron. Rather than have a boy wear a woman's apron, you might get him one made for a male chef. Right from the start, emphasize the importance of safety and set sensible rules for the kitchen.—See the box entitled "The First Lesson—Safety," page 18.

Most of all, try to make it fun. Don't have your child just watch you; have him wash his hands, and keep them busy in the actual preparation of the food. Allow opportunity for him to explore, experiment, and ask questions. And when a dish doesn't turn out

* For the sake of brevity, after this the child will be referred to as "he." However, the information applies equally to girls.

perfectly, don't worry. If your child made it himself, he'll probably eat it anyway!

Family Togetherness

Undoubtedly, the greatest benefits to come out of the kitchen involve the unity and values of the family. You may have observed that in some households today, family members busily go about their separate activities without having much real contact with one another. Under such circumstances, the home may become little more than a rest stop, a refueling station. In contrast, a family that cooks together is more likely to eat together and to clean up together. These activities provide them with regular opportunities to communicate, interact, and keep in touch with one another. "I had some of my best discussions with my boys over the kitchen sink," one mother recalls. And Hermann, a Christian father, adds: "We deliberately did without a dishwasher for several years, so that the dishes had to be washed

and dried by hand. Our sons were assigned to do the drying, taking turns. There was no better time for casual communication."

Yes, the time you spend in the kitchen with your children—week after week, year after year—provides a basis on which spiritual values and godly qualities can develop. It is during such unforced moments of togetherness that heart-to-heart conversations between parent and child can naturally arise and that the influence of a parent's example can quietly affect a child's heart. Such training can benefit a child for a lifetime, for Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."

So if as a parent you are looking for ways to spend more time with your children, why not invite them to help you prepare a cake or a whole meal? You may find that working with them in the kitchen is a means both to nourish and to nurture your family.

The "Seven Blunders of the World"

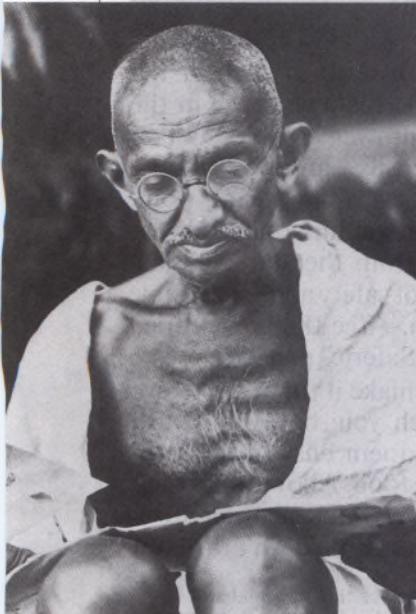
IT IS said that Mohandas Gandhi devised a list of what he termed the "Seven Blunders of the World." They are as follows:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice
- Politics without principle

His grandson Arun Gandhi is said to have added an eighth:

- Rights without responsibilities

Maybe you could suggest a few more, but this list is certainly thought-provoking. The Bible's answer to these "blunders" is condensed into two commandments: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets."—Matthew 22:37-40.



UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

Comet Crash!



*Dark bruises
mark areas where comet
fragments crashed into Jupiter*

Hubble Space Telescope Comet Team and NASA

FOR a week in July 1994, the collisions of about 20 fragments of the comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 into the planet Jupiter captured the attention of stargazers around the world. Comet watchers marveled, since the display turned out to be, as one astronomer put it, "the celestial drama of the century." Why did this event far exceed expectations?

First, the comet fragments, speeding at some 120,000 miles per hour, produced huge blasts that only the most extreme predictions had indicated. Their entrance into Jupiter's atmosphere brought forth flashes that lasted just a few seconds. Then, superheated gases shot out of the atmosphere, forming immense fireballs that for the largest blasts briefly exceeded the surface temperature of the sun! Over the next 10 to 20 minutes, a large plume rose as high as 2,000 miles.

Furthermore, what initially were thought to be poor viewing conditions turned out to be nearly ideal. Because the impacts occurred on the darkened side of Jupiter, the brilliant flashes and plumes were more easily detected. In some cases the tops of the plumes could be seen rising above Jupiter's horizon, and within ten minutes of impact, Jupiter's rotation brought the impact sites into direct view of the earth. Anoth-

er ten minutes brought the impact sites into the sunlight. By then, the plumes had dissipated, and they were replaced by huge, dark bruises. These spots—the largest was twice the size of the earth—had not been predicted by astronomers, and yet they turned out to be the most distinct features that could be seen.

The Galileo spacecraft provided direct views of the impacts. In earth orbit, the Hubble Space Telescope viewed the impacts at the wavelengths of visible and ultraviolet light. Other observatories measured the response of the comet blasts at various wavelengths specifically chosen to yield valuable information. At the South Pole, the sun never rose, permitting full-time viewing from the South Pole Infrared Explorer telescope.

Sky watchers have experienced a rare treat. When will the next comet spectacle take place? Comet Hale-Bopp, already visible to the naked eye, may be the brightest comet we see this century. It will pass within 123 million miles of our planet. Comet watchers in the Northern Hemisphere will want to view Hale-Bopp during the month of April 1997. All of this reminds us that we live in a dynamic, changing universe created by Jehovah, "the Father of the celestial lights." —James 1:17; Psalm 115:16.

THE RAVEN

What Makes It Different?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CANADA

*"Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the
Nightly shore . . . , take thy beak from out my heart, and
take thy form from off my door!" Quoth the Raven,
'Nevermore.'"*—Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven."

WHO would expect anything from this bird with its somber colors and mournful croak? Why, to the uninitiated, at first glance it appears to be merely an oversize crow. The raven doesn't quickly attract attention like the blue jay, its colorful cousin with the bright blue outfit. And few would consider the raven's croaking to be much of a song, although the bird is classified along with the passerines, or songbirds. However, do not underestimate this bird. What it lacks in tuneful song and colorful appearance, it more than compensates for in other ways. The raven has beauty and characteristics all its own. Indeed, many bird authorities rank the raven in a class by itself.

Distinguishing Features

The common raven (*Corvus corax*) is by far the largest and most dignified of the entire crow family (Corvidae). It can be more than twice the weight of a common crow and measures about two feet in length, with a wingspan of some three feet. It differs from the crow in that it has a heavier bill and a long, wedge-shaped tail. Closer observa-

tion also reveals the raven's identifying shaggy throat feathers. In flight, it is famous for soaring, while crows tend to flap and glide.

The raven is ranked as the largest of all perching birds. Observing this large bird crouched on a limb resting, you would wonder how it keeps from falling off its perch. At the back of each foot is a strong claw for grasping a branch or a twig; however, the secret to hanging on is a built-in locking device. Muscles and tendons automatically pull the toes into a fist when the bird crouches. The raven's strong, all-purpose feet are also suited for walking and scratching, thus equipping it well for gathering food from a wide variety of feeding grounds.

Range and Flight of the "Black Thunderbolt"

Very few birds have as wide a range as the raven. It is indeed a roamer. It can be found in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere. It lives in such dissimilar terrain as desert areas; the coniferous forests of Canada and Siberia, where it makes a complex nest of sticks and other available material in high

trees; the cliffs of the sea in North America and Scandinavia; and the tundra and islands of the Arctic Ocean. Wilderness appears to be the one common denominator of its range, for the raven is usually a bird of the wilderness.

Examples of its diverse habitats can be found in the land of the Bible, where two varieties of the great black raven live. One makes its home in the wide expanses of desert in the south, while the other inhabits the northern region. Black ravens nest among the nooks and crannies in the rocks along ravines. Ravens were used by Jehovah to feed Elijah while he concealed himself in the torrent valley of Cherith. (1 Kings 17: 3-6) Isaiah's account of the ravens inhabiting the "emptiness and the stones of wasteness" of Edom is also descriptive of their habitat.—Isaiah 34:11.

Ravens are wonderful fliers. They are beautiful to watch as they soar effortlessly in wide circles, scanning the area below for food. They perform aerial acrobatics with ease—somersaulting and even briefly flying upside down—particularly during courtship and, it would seem, sometimes for mere pleasure. The raven's flight is aptly described by Bernd Heinrich in *Ravens in Winter*: "It dives and rolls like a black thunderbolt out of the sky or speeds along with liquid, gliding strokes." He adds that it is "the paragon of the air, and more." The raven's strength of flight has been given as a reason why Noah chose it as the first creature to be sent outside the ark at the time of the Flood.—Genesis 8:6, 7.

Adaptable and Resourceful Thieves

Naturalists regard the raven as one of the most adaptable and resourceful of all birds. As one source says, "its cunning is legendary." Whatever circumstances the raven encounters, it proves equal to the challenge of adapting to existing conditions, especially in regard to food. Of course, not being a finicky eater helps! The raven will eat almost anything it can get its claws

on—fruits, seeds, nuts, fish, carrion, small animals, refuse. "Ravenous" appetite? Perhaps. And it is not fussy about where it finds its food, even resorting to digging beneath snow to raid garbage bags during subzero weather in the northern parts of its range. Ravens will also follow hunters and fishermen for days, somehow sensing that there will be food for them in time.

The Corvidae, or members of the crow family, are notorious thieves, and ravens are no exception.

They are not averse to stealing food



from other birds or animals and have been observed playing tricks on dogs. A pair will take turns—one distracting the dog while the other swoops in to take its food. Inuit art



The Raven in Legends and Literature

LEGENDS:

Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Semitic, and Siberian legends depict the raven as a foreteller of storms or bad weather. Perhaps such legends had Noah and the Flood as their origin.

The raven signifies life and creation in the legends of Siberia and is the creator-god of the Aboriginals in North America.

In legends of Africa, Asia, and Europe, the raven portends death.

LITERATURE:

In the Bible the raven has the distinction of being the first bird specifically named.
—Genesis 8:7.

Shakespeare's ravens are portrayed primarily as ominous and evil (*Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*) but are also pictured as benefactors who feed forsaken children.
—*Titus Andronicus*, *The Winter's Tale*.

Charles Dickens pictured the raven as a character of amusement in *Barnaby Rudge*.

In his poem *The Raven*, Edgar Allan Poe associated the raven with lost love and despair.

depicts a crafty raven stealing fish from an ice fisherman.

Ravens have a special rapport with wolves, routinely following wolf packs. They dine on the wolves' kill, but here again, they seem to enjoy some humorous antics while doing so. Wolf biologist L. David Mech records seeing ravens playing pranks on wolves. He tells the story of one raven that waddled to a resting wolf, pecked its tail, and then jumped aside when the wolf snapped at it. When the wolf stalked the raven, the bird would let it come within a foot of him before rising. Then it would land a few feet beyond the wolf and repeat the prank. Another account tells of a raven playing tag with wolf pups. When the pups tired of the game, the raven sat squawking until they resumed play.

Canadian Geographic magazine refers to a radio broadcast from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, that told of ravens perching on sloped metal roofs of commercial buildings, apparently waiting for unsuspecting pedestrians to pass below so they could send the accumulated snow sliding down upon them. No wonder the Haida people of Canada's west coast call the raven a trickster!

Vocalizations and Learning Ability

The raven's "vocabulary" is exceptionally large and varied. In addition to the most recognizable, deep, penetrating croak—which is understood to be a signal of perceived disturbance—its vocalizations have been said to display tenderness, happiness, surprise, excitement, and anger. Ravens can also imitate the calls of other birds within their voice range, especially performing a realistic impersonation of a crow.

The extent to which ravens can be taught to speak has been a matter of some dispute. However, Candace Savage, in her book *Bird Brains*, documents accounts of tame ravens being taught to imitate human speech. Leg-

end has it that the poet Edgar Allan Poe acquired a raven and painstakingly trained it to utter in its somber croak the word "nevermore," inspiring his famous poem *The Raven*, which describes "a young man mourning the death of his beloved."

There is little dispute about the raven's ability to learn. If birds could be ranked for intelligence, it seems the raven would be at the top of the list. Field biologist Bernd Heinrich notes that the raven "is assumed to be the brains of the bird world." He says that "when put to the test, ravens display insight." In one experiment a raven figured out in six hours how to get a chunk of meat that was suspended from a string, while crows were still working on the problem 30 days later. Ravens have even been taught to count. Their savvy may contribute to their longevity, for ravens live more than 40 years in the wild and up to 70 years in captivity. Of course, any capabilities the raven has must be credited to the wisdom of its Creator.

This bird is widely known, and it is respected by those aware of its special qualities. It can be found in legends of people throughout the world. It has been made famous by writers of the past and present. (See box, page 24.) Yes, the raven is a most interesting bird. But what can be said about its beauty?

A Beauty of Its Own

Well, have you not heard of 'black hair like the raven'? (Song of Solomon 5:11) Its glossy black coat with iridescent steel-blue and purple hues—the underparts sometimes have a touch of green—gives real meaning to the word "raven." Picture the soaring raven with its impressive size and shiny black plumage, standing out against the barren wastes of its desert home. Or imagine the contrast between this glistening jet-black bird and freshly fallen, clean white snow. Artists have cap-

tured the raven's beauty. The artist Robert Bateman recalls: "I was drawn to the wonderful snowy slopes in Yellowstone Park, a strong, bright landscape that combined well with the powerful form of the raven."

Truly, it can be said that in beauty, history, range, flight, cunning, and hardiness, the raven is a bird of distinction.



Lessons Learned

There are lessons to be learned from the raven. It was God's own Son who said: "Mark well that the ravens neither sow seed nor reap, and they have neither barn nor storehouse, and yet God feeds them." (Luke 12:24) Since its home is often in desolate places, food must be sought over a wide range. Ravens choose only one mate for a lifetime and are devoted parents. When nesting, they need to supply food constantly to silence the raucous cries of their hungry young. When teaching Job a lesson regarding the wisdom reflected in creation, Jehovah included the raven as an example. (Job 38:41) Since God provides for the raven, which was declared unclean by the Mosaic Law, we can be certain that he will not forsake people who trust in him.

Will the Earth End in Fire?

CHARRED in a nuclear holocaust, incinerated by a bulging sun, or torched by an angry god—the manner may differ, but many people are convinced that planet Earth, the home of mankind, will meet its end in an all-consuming inferno, a cataclysmic apocalypse.

Some cite Bible texts that portend a divinely directed conflagration as retribution for man's transgressions against the earth. Others echo the opinion of Paul Davies, a professor at the University of Adelaide, Australia, who writes about what he sees as the earth's unavoidable plunge into fiery destruction. He theorizes in his book *The Last Three Minutes*: "As the sun grows ever more distended, it will engulf . . . Earth within its fiery envelope. Our planet will be reduced to a cinder." What is the truth about the earth's destiny? How are we to understand Bible texts that appear to predict fiery annihilation?

Does God Care?

At Jeremiah 10:10-12, we are informed: "Jehovah is in truth God. . . . He is the Maker of the earth by his power, the One firmly establishing the productive land by his wisdom, and the One who by his understanding stretched out the heavens." God made the earth and firmly established it. So with wisdom,

love, and understanding, he carefully prepared the earth to last indefinitely as a beautiful home for mankind.

Of God's creation of mankind, the Bible reports: "Male and female he created them. Further, God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.'" (Genesis 1:27, 28) When he completed his creative work, he could unequivocally declare that "it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) He wanted it to stay that way. Just as some prospective parents design and furnish a nursery for their expected newborn, God planted a beautiful garden and placed the man Adam there to develop it and care for it.—Genesis 2:15.

Adam abandoned perfection and his duty to care for the earth. But did the Creator abandon His purpose? Isaiah 45:18 implies not: "This is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, . . . the Former of the earth . . . , the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited." (See also Isaiah 55:10, 11.) Though man neglected his custodial duty, God continued to execute his contract with the earth and life upon it. The Law given to the ancient nation of Israel made provision for "a sabbath of complete rest for the land"



every seventh year. It included humane laws that gave a measure of protection to animals. (Leviticus 25:4; Exodus 23:4, 5; Deuteronomy 22:1, 2, 6, 7, 10; 25:4; Luke 14:5) These are but a few examples in the Bible that clearly indicate that God cares very much about mankind and all that he charged to man's care.

"The Former Earth"

So how do we reconcile Bible texts that seem to conflict? One such is 2 Peter 3:7, which, according to the *King James Version*, says: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Another is Revelation 21:1, which states: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away."

If Peter's words are to be taken literally and the planet Earth is to be consumed by real fire, then the literal heavens—the stars and the other heavenly bodies—are also to be destroyed by fire. This view, however, conflicts with the assurance found at such scriptures as Matthew 6:10: "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth," and Psalm 37:29: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." Furthermore, what effect would fire have on the already intensely hot sun and stars, which produce nuclear explosions continuously?

On the other hand, the Bible often uses the term "earth" in a figurative sense. For example, Genesis 11:1 says: "Now all the earth continued to be of one language." Here, the word "earth" refers to mankind in general, or human society. (See also 1 Kings 2:1, 2; 1 Chronicles 16:31.) The context of 2 Peter 3:5, 6 implies the same figurative use of "earth." It refers to Noah's day when a wicked human society was destroyed in the Flood but Noah and his household as well

as the globe itself were preserved. (Genesis 9:11) Likewise, at 2 Peter 3:7, it says that the ones to be destroyed are "ungodly men." This view agrees with the rest of the Bible. The wicked society earmarked for desolation is also "the former earth" referred to at Revelation 21:1, quoted earlier.

Indeed, just as a caring earthly father will take every measure possible to ensure the inviolability of his home, Jehovah God is keenly concerned about his creation. He once evicted an immoral and wicked people from the fertile Jordan Valley and assured the new caretakers of the land, who were in a covenant with him, that if they kept his statutes, 'the land would not vomit them out for their defiling it the same way as it would certainly vomit the nations out who were before them.'—Leviticus 18:24-28.

"A New Earth"

Today, a society that is sexually depraved, violently brutal, and politically corrupt has polluted the earth. Only God can rescue it. He will do just that. At Revelation 11:18, he promises "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." The restored and renewed earth will be populated by people who fear God and sincerely love their fellowmen. (Hebrews 2:5; compare Luke 10:25-28.) The changes that take place under God's heavenly Kingdom will be so profound that the Bible speaks of "a new earth"—a new human society.

When we read scriptures like Psalm 37:29 and we comprehend the statement by Christ at Matthew 6:10, we are convinced that neither blind natural forces nor man with all his destructive power will bring an end to our planet. They will not thwart God's purpose. (Psalm 119:90; Isaiah 40:15, 26) Faithful mankind will live on earth amid conditions of boundless beauty and endless joy. That is the truth about earth's destiny, for this is and always has been the purpose of mankind's loving Creator.—Genesis 2:7-9, 15; Revelation 21:1-5.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Be Lighthearted —and Stay Healthier!

"Through humor, people become more tolerant, handle frustrations well, and maintain physical and mental health," states São Paulo University Professor Sueli Damergian. According to a report in the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, good humor can be learned—just like reading and writing. Clearly, this requires a change in thinking for a grumpy person. Explains professor of psychology Raquel Rodrigues Kerbauy: "If one thinks that he will only be able to smile when the world is just, he will be ill-tempered forever. After all, there are injustices everywhere." Even with a full schedule, good-natured people enjoy their social contacts, notes the report. They value such little things as "a chat, a candy, or five minutes of good music." Damergian cautions, however: "One should not confuse good humor with frivolity and bad taste."

Birds at Risk From Bird Lovers?

Bird lovers may be doing more harm than good by leaving food in their gardens for birds to eat, reports London's *Sunday Times*. Food poisoning caused by salmonella bacteria, parasites, and an additional unidentified microorganism have recently killed tens of thousands of Britain's favorite garden birds. James Kirkwood, chief veterinarian of the London Zoo, is concerned that certain species may be wiped out in some areas. The resilient bac-

teria and parasites survive for many days on fecal matter on bird tables or on the ground. Moldy nuts are especially dangerous, warns Professor Chris Perrins, of Oxford University. "The government bans infected nuts from being sold to humans but allows them in bird food," he notes, adding: "They are killing a lot of birds."

Cozy Home for Fleas

Harsh winter weather used to mean the demise of the flea population. But things are changing, reports Britain's *New Scientist* magazine. "Over the past decade there has been an increasing incidence of cat fleas," says John Maunder, of the Cambridge Medical Entomology Centre. Modern homes



now serve as a cozy hideout for these fleas, which also live on dogs. In the past, cold weather brought with it a drop in relative humidity—a fatal blow to flea larvae. "Now," Maunder notes, "the ventilation in many homes is so poor that the relative humidity remains high, and even prolonged cold weather won't see the fleas off."

How to Cope With School Bullies

With the recent publicity about bullying in schools, Ja-

pan's Education Ministry conducted a survey of 9,420 children and their parents and teachers. The findings revealed that up to 70 percent of the parents of bullied students from elementary and junior high schools are either unaware of the problem or have not taken their children's complaints seriously. Fearing retaliation, many victims do not tell a teacher that they are being bullied. The survey showed, however, that when a teacher tackles the problem seriously, only 2 percent of the victims suffer retaliation and the bullying stops for about 40 percent of the victimized students. Professor Yoji Morita, of Osaka City University, observed: "I'm more convinced than ever that bullying can be overcome if victims complain to their teachers and the teachers deal with it properly."

Children's Loves and Hates

What do children enjoy doing the least? In a study of 6- to 11-year-olds by Professor Gustavo Pietropolli Charmet, of the University of Milan, Italy, the majority of children said: "Staying at home watching TV," or "Staying in with Mom to do homework." The most unpleasant thing they do, says the newspaper *La Repubblica*, is "have appointments," that is, run between lessons in dancing, English, piano, and so forth. Also generally hated is "being alone." On the other hand, 49 percent of boys want parents to "let children play outdoors," while girls wish parents would "have fun playing with their children." They say, in effect:

'When Mom plays with me, she *really* has to play. You can tell if she's not having fun, and then I don't have fun either.'

Cardinal Recommended Witnesses' Activity

Cardinal Suenens, of Belgium, a promoter of the Catholic ecumenical and charismatic movements, died recently at the age of 91. The Belgian newspaper *Het Belang van Limburg* commented that although Suenens accomplished many things, he did not realize his dream in life. His successor, Cardinal Danneels, stated that Suenens "had always desired that Christians become more active. He . . . asked himself if we should go from door to door, just as Jehovah's Witnesses do. And in the end, he found that this wasn't a bad method. A statement often heard from him was: 'You are a true Christian only if you have made someone else a Christian as well.'"

Cleaning Up the Ocean

Even on a dry day, tens of millions of gallons of polluted runoff water and debris from city streets flow into coastal waters around Los Angeles, California. On a rainy day, runoff can reach billions of gallons! The city government sponsored a program to inform residents that everything dumped, washed, or swept into streets goes directly to the ocean via storm drains—untreated! This includes oil and other fluids from cars, yard clippings, trash, and pet droppings. To avoid damaging the ecology of the adjacent Santa Monica Bay, residents are encouraged: Never dump waste in the street; sweep

sidewalks instead of hosing them off; clean up after pets; repair car leaks; and recycle motor oil. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that people swimming close to a storm drain were 50 percent more likely to develop fevers, vomiting, respiratory infections, or earaches than those staying at least 400 yards away.

Furry Submarines

The Swedish Navy maintains a network of underwater microphones to detect the sound of bubbles caused by the rotating propellers of submarines, according to *New Scientist* magazine. Examining 6,000 reports



of "alien underwater activity," based on the microphone system and sightings by the public, a government commission found firm evidence of submarine activity on only six occasions. Many of the rest of the alarms may have been triggered by "the furious paddling of little legs," says the report. It seems that swimming mink and otters generate sound very similar to that of submarine propellers, thus confusing the navy listeners.

Children Abusing Children

Thousands of youngsters in South Africa suffer sexual abuse from other minors, reports the Johannesburg newspaper *Saturday Star*. Evanthe Schurink, of

the Human Sciences Research Council, attributes this abuse in part to the young perpetrators' being brutalized themselves. Marilyn Donaldson, a child counselor at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation's Trauma Clinic, concurs, saying: "In so many . . . homes, these children are exposed to horrific domestic violence and often their own victims are part of their extended family." She also blames boredom and parental neglect for much of the abuse. "There is nobody at home for the children when the parent is working," she observes, "so they are at the mercy of the abusers." Pointing out a further danger, Donaldson said that she sees more and more "little 6 to 10-year-old children coming into the centre with Aids, which had been sexually transmitted."

Alcohol During Pregnancy

"New research has confirmed an association between maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy and an increased risk of infant leukemia," reports *The Medical Post*, of Canada. The study involved 302 leukemia victims who were 18 months of age or younger when the disease was diagnosed, along with a control group of 558 other babies. For children whose mothers drank alcohol during the second or third trimester of pregnancy, the risk of developing acute myeloid leukemia was nearly ten times higher than for those whose mothers did not drink. The new research was said to be consistent with other studies regarding expectant mothers who drink alcohol and their baby's increased risk of leukemia.

FROM OUR READERS

Reads From Cover to Cover I've always liked *Awake!*, but I used to read only articles that caught my attention. Now I read the magazine from cover to cover and end up liking subjects that I formerly would skip. For example, I just finished reading "An Ancient American Indian Tradition" (March 8, 1996), and I simply loved it!¹⁰

E. A. S., Brazil

Offending Others The article "The Bible's Viewpoint: What to Do When You Offend Others" (February 8, 1996) came at just the right time. A Christian sister suddenly stopped speaking to me. I asked her if I had done anything to offend her, and I apologized. But this did not change her attitude. I was deeply hurt by this and began to think that my service to Jehovah was not acceptable. What comfort I felt on reading the last paragraph of the article! It said that "once you have expended yourself to make peace, Jehovah will be pleased to accept your worship."¹¹

M. R., Argentina

Cobra The article "Would You Like to Meet a Cobra?" (March 22, 1996) was very interesting. But a picture caption on page 16 reads: "A black cobra spreads its hood while sunning itself on a warm rock." As far as I know, the cobra spreads its hood only when it senses danger or when the cobra is annoyed.

R. F., Germany

This was explained in the article on page 18, paragraph 1, and on page 20, paragraph 2. Our correspondent in India says that in the photo the cobra was reacting to a provocation from the photographer's assistant.—ED.

Disabled Driver The article "Disabled—Yet Able to Drive" (May 8, 1996) arrived at the right time. As a disabled person, I find

that my Christian ministry is very limited. Thanks to Jehovah, I now own a modified car, and this article has stimulated me to enlarge my ministry.¹²

A. A. V., Brazil

Dancing I enjoy dancing to classical, Latin, and soft popular music as a leisure activity. I truly appreciated the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Is Dancing for Christians?" (May 8, 1996). It helped me place this form of recreation under closer scrutiny. The soul-searching questions that you raised will help me remain blameless and "without spot from the world."—James 1:27.

D. D. G., Trinidad

I am 15 years old, and I have found it very hard to decide what is proper and improper when it comes to dancing. Using the guidance that the article provided—along with the scriptures cited from the Bible—I can now decide what is proper.

M. R., United States

Provisions for Hearing-Impaired I am deaf and blind, and I want to thank you for the article "Reaching Out With Hands That Sign." (April 8, 1996) It told about the "Joyful Praisers" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses that were held in American Sign Language. It was very encouraging for me to know that many who are blind and deaf were there. I am very grateful for those who interpreted the convention program for me when we had our convention here in December 1995. I have never learned Braille, so in order to preach to others, I have memorized 121 Bible texts. It is my desire to see the fulfillment of God's promise at Isaiah 35:5, 6, which tells of the deaf hearing and the mute speaking. I want to be able to sing praises to Jehovah in the coming Paradise!

A. F. A., Argentina

VIOLENCE

Against Women

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN NIGERIA

FROM the womb to the grave, women fall victim to violence, according to the United Nations' *Human Development Report 1995*. Studies from around the world reveal the following:

Before birth. In some countries tests are made to determine whether a fetus is male or female. Females are often aborted.

In childhood. In Barbados, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and the United States, 1 woman in 3 reports having been sexually abused during childhood or adolescence. In Asia and elsewhere, about one million children—mostly girls—are forced into prostitution each year. Millions of girls worldwide suffer genital mutilation.

In adulthood. In Chile, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, and the Republic of Korea, 2 out of every 3 married women are victims of domestic violence. In Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, 1 woman in 6 has been raped.

In later life. More than half the women murdered in Bangladesh, Brazil, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand were slain by past or present partners. In Africa, South America, several Pacific islands, and the United States, marital violence is a leading cause of female suicide.

Violence against women is typical of what the Bible calls "the last days," in which many would be "abusive," "callous," and "brutal." (2 Timothy 3:1-5, New American Bible) We can be thankful for Jehovah God's promise that after these troubled "last days," he will establish a peaceful new world in which earth's inhabitants "will actually dwell in security, with no one to make them tremble." (Ezekiel 34:28; 2 Peter 3:13) Under God's Kingdom, Jesus Christ will "deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul."—Psalm 72:12, 14.

"A Great Service to Mankind"

"You have done a great service to mankind in publishing this book. It is a marvel. Excellent compilation. Deserving of appreciation.

"The beauty of the book is that it deals with every aspect of religion, and in doing so care was taken not to criticize. Well done. Really well done."

To what book was the doctor from Tiruchirappalli, India, who wrote this letter referring? *Mankind's Search for God*, a 384-page compilation of the origins and teachings of

the major religions of the world—Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The final chapters explain modern disbelief and a return to the true God. Over 16 million copies of this book have been printed in 37 languages.