

Awake!

July 22, 1991



AIDS Its Most Tragic Victims



Wallis Robert

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Have you seen their pictures? Have you read their stories? Does your heart ache as the toll of dying infants mounts earth wide? Their suffering and dying come from this horrendous malady now sweeping the world

—AIDS!



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AIDS Its Tragic Toll on Children

HAVE you seen their pictures? Have you heard or read their stories? If you have, did it send shock waves through you? Could you hold back the tears or keep a lump from coming up in your throat? Does your heart ache for them? Can you still hear the quiet moans of those about to die without being noticed? Even now, can you erase the pathetic scenes of dying infants—two, three, and four in a bed? Most of them were abandoned. Their suffering and dying comes from this horrendous malady now sweeping the world—AIDS!

The reports and live pictures telecast from one European country in February 1990 shocked a viewing audience of tens of millions. Worldwide, more millions read of the tragedy in newspapers and magazines. *Time* magazine reported: "The sight is sickening and terrifying. In crib after crib lie babies and toddlers who look like old people, their skin shriveled, their skeletal faces bearing the unmistakable mark of approaching death." "It is worse than anything I have seen," lamented one doctor. "Manifestly, this is an epidemic transmitted through medical acts."

How is this so? Unlike most AIDS babies born with the virus from AIDS-infected mothers, these children were not born HIV positive. The tragedy resulted after birth when frail or premature newborns were given blood transfusions in the belief that such would fortify the weak infants—a practice long discredited by the medical profession. "One HIV-positive blood donor could have infected 10, 12 or more children," said one doctor.

"For the first time in the history of AIDS," said Dr. Jacques Lebas, president of the Paris-based humanitarian organization Doctors of the World, "we are confronted with childhood AIDS. It's an epidemic."

For example, in September 1990, for the first time, WHO (World Health Organization) released startling evidence that revealed the worldwide epidemic of AIDS in children. WHO reported that the virus that causes the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome will probably infect ten million children by the year 2000. "The vast majority of these will have developed Aids and died by the year 2000," said Dr. Michael Merson, director of the organization's global program on AIDS. Through the last part of 1990, one third of the 1.2 million estimated cases of full-fledged AIDS are believed to have occurred in children under the age of five.

Is it any wonder that the spread of the AIDS scourge has been called pandemic? By the end of 1992, about four million infants will have been born to HIV-infected mothers. Four out of five children born with the virus develop AIDS by their fifth birthday. Once they have AIDS, they usually die in one or two years, Dr. Merson told a Geneva news conference.

Experts predict that there will be 150,000 AIDS cases in African women alone in 1992 and an additional 130,000 cases in African children. In the United States, up to 20,000 infants to date may have been born to HIV-infected women, WHO reported. The *Evening Post* of Wellington, New Zealand, reported in

its July 12, 1989, edition that an estimated 140,000 of Brazil's youngsters are carrying the virus. "But activists fear that estimate may be low," the paper reported. "I believe that this group, if not given special treatment, will become an atomic bomb loose in the city," said the medical director of the National Foundation for the Welfare of Minors. "It is an extremely serious problem," lamented a noted Brazilian psychologist.

The Problems Grow

Can anyone be emotionally unmoved by the plight of these innocent victims suffering from this deadly plague? Consider, for example, this report: "At least 50 children have been murdered in central Africa—some by their own parents—because they had Aids, according to the Norwegian Red Cross." Other African children with AIDS are being driven from their homes by families desperate to erase any links with a disease that has a stigma worse than leprosy, reported the *Sunday Star*, a newspaper of Johannesburg, South Africa. "In some areas Aids victims and their families are barred from waterholes and churches," the paper said.

Additional chilling statistics leave no room for complacency. Worldwide reports indict the AIDS pandemic as the direct cause of another tragedy. Millions of children who are not infected with the AIDS virus are destined to become orphans in the 1990's. Why? Their parents will die from AIDS. WHO estimates

that there will be five million AIDS orphans worldwide by 1992. "It's a deluge starting to happen. And unless we have the vision to plan for foster care, we'll have to open big orphanages," said one expert on child care.

"The pain is almost incomprehensible," said a caseworker, describing one New York family. "The mother is infected, the father is infected, the baby is sick, the parents and baby are going to die, and they will leave a 10-year-old boy who is going to be without any family."

And, finally, there is this sobering observation by Dr. Ernest Drucker of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. "In the aftermath of a parent's death, the children often find themselves caught in custody battles, shunted from one family member to another while trying to come to terms with their loss and the stigma of AIDS."

AIDS is rapidly becoming one of the leading causes of death among children and young adults. It is the ninth leading cause of death among children from one to four years of age, and the seventh leading cause among teenagers and young adults under 25. By the early 1990's, AIDS could become one of the top five leading causes of death, reported *The AIDS/HIV Record*, September 1989. Yet, reports indicate a worldwide complacency among many potential victims of this dreadful disease. Consider some startling facts in the next article.

Awake!

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 before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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

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AIDS A Crisis for Teenagers

THE AIDS epidemic knows no age or generation gap. Worldwide reports provide tragic proof that "AIDS Is Spreading in Teen-Agers, a New Trend Alarming to Experts," as proclaimed in the title of a *New York Times* article on AIDS. The extent of AIDS infection among teenagers "is going to be the next crisis," said Dr. Gary R. Strokash, director of adolescent medicine of a noted Chicago medical center. "It's dreadful and it's going to be devastating," he said. "There is no doubt," lamented Dr. Charles Wibbelsman, chief of the teen clinic at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in San Francisco, "the AIDS epidemic of the 1990s, if there is no vaccine, will be among... teenagers." Speaking of AIDS-infected teenagers, the observation of a noted New York City AIDS educator was: "We think it's a crisis emergency situation."

The *Toronto Star* of Canada, headlined the forbidding outlook as AIDS spreads among the teens. "At the moment, it's far worse than anybody realizes," said one doctor. "I think it's a terrible problem we don't have much of a handle on. We're going to find out how bad it is eventually." The doctor's simple phrase

becomes the unanimous opinion of health officials and government leaders throughout the world as the AIDS scourge escalates.

Until recently, AIDS experts did not focus on adolescents as being at high risk of infection by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), which causes AIDS. "We're talking about something that only a year ago was just a theoretical possibility," said one New York City doctor. However, "doctors who just a year ago did not have one infected teen-age patient now have a dozen or more," reported *The New York Times*.

Researchers feel that while available information on teens infected with the AIDS virus is alarming, it is only a faint outline of the tip of the iceberg, since symptoms often do not appear until an average of from seven to ten years after infection. So those infected with HIV in their early teens may not develop full-blown AIDS symptoms until their late teens or early 20's.

For example, in a recent study of all births in the state since 1987, the New York State Health Department found that 1 in 1,000 babies born to 15-year-olds had antibodies to

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the AIDS virus, indicating that the mother of the baby was infected. Alarmingly, the same study revealed that 1 in 100 babies born to 19-year-olds had antibodies to the AIDS virus. A further study by CDC (U.S. Centers for Disease Control) revealed that 20 percent of American males and 25 percent of American females diagnosed as having AIDS are in their 20's. The CDC study reports that in most of the cases, the disease was contracted in adolescence.

How can this be, though, when babies born with the AIDS virus seldom, if ever, live to become teenagers? The reasons are devastating!

Researchers and doctors are quick to testify that today's teenagers are "extremely sexually active, as the rates of sexually transmitted diseases among them indicate," reported *The New York Times*. The Center for Population Options reports that each year 1 in 6 teenagers contracts a sexually transmitted disease and that 1 of every 6 sexually active high-school girls has had at least four different partners.

"Despite exhortations to 'just say no,' the average American teenager loses virginity at age 16," reported *U.S. News & World Report*. "Since few teens are tested, most of those who are infected do not know they are carrying the HIV virus," the magazine said. With or without the sexual promiscuity associated with the use of crack cocaine, whether they are runaways or not, "American teenagers are ripe targets for AIDS," wrote one expert on AIDS. "They're already experiencing 2.5 million cases of sexually transmitted disease every year." Dr. Gary Noble of CDC made this observation: "We know their sexual behavior results in significant risk for infection."

Adding to the already rapidly growing number of conduits for transmission of the

AIDS virus are the streetwise adolescents, some not yet in their teens, many runaways from child-abusing parents. Among them there has been a dramatic rise in the number who have turned to crack cocaine use. Many have turned to prostitution to support their habit or for a place to sleep. In South America, for example, "girls as young as nine and 10 often work as prostitutes, sometimes for a plate of food," said a Brazilian children's counselor. "Many know little about AIDS or sex. I've had girls who were pregnant and thought they 'caught it,' like a cold," she said.

Dr. Philip Pizzo, an AIDS expert and chief of pediatrics at the National Cancer Institute, said that the HIV-infection rate in teenage runaways bodes ill for the AIDS epidemic. "There are more than a million runaways who are making their living through sex. Without doubt, a number of them will be reintegrated into society."

Is it any wonder that the AIDS epidemic is escalating by leaps and bounds among teenagers worldwide? Is it on an unstoppable course? It will be as long as indifference and complacency continue to be manifest by those infected with the AIDS virus and those who cannot say no to premarital sex. Consider, for example, this report from *The Sunday Star* of Johannesburg, South Africa. In a recent survey conducted among 1,142 clinic patients having sexually transmitted diseases, 70 percent admitted to having from 3 to 80 sex partners a month. Some were still active and infecting others.

Unfortunately, many teenagers are not too concerned about contracting AIDS. To them every day is such a fight for survival—so many ways to die on the street—that they cannot focus on something that may kill them years from now. *In the meantime* a cure will surely be found, they feel, to save them.

"Adolescents are a prime example of a group that does not look 10 years ahead," said one AIDS expert.

There is also a sinister misconception among many that their sexual partners are not lying when they say that they are free of the AIDS virus. Very often this is not the case. Even in advanced stages of the disease, many victims willfully infect others out of anger or revenge.

Not to be overlooked are those who are infected with the virus through contaminated

needles used to mainline drugs—a conduit that has already taken its toll. And, finally, there is the ever-present threat of contracting AIDS through blood transfusions. Many innocent victims have already died from the disease, and others will yet die from HIV-contaminated blood. Many doctors and nurses fear pricking themselves with needles contaminated with the AIDS virus, which can unalterably change their lives. Is it any wonder that AIDS is said to be the crisis of the '90's and beyond?

AIDS What Parents and Children Should Know

UNFORTUNATELY for many adolescent victims who have developed AIDS, their problems are often compounded by the unbalanced thinking of many adults who know little about AIDS. In many cases parents have prejudiced the minds of their own children against those with the disease. Even after doctors have said that there is no danger, school superintendents and principals have refused to admit students who are infected with the AIDS virus. Thus it is that secrecy is the watchword for many parents with HIV-infected children. They are afraid, in some cases with good reason, that their children will be ostracized, abused, or worse.

For example, a mother with an AIDS-infected daughter was so afraid of trouble with her neighbors that she kept her child from playing with their children. "You don't want the people who live around you to know

your child has AIDS, because people do weird things." According to reports, this is no exaggeration. Parents have been shunned by their best friends and neighbors. Friends have turned away on the street rather than acknowledge their presence or say a greeting to them. The stigma of AIDS runs so deep in its prejudice that patrons have walked out of restaurants, shouting insults when a family with an AIDS-afflicted child entered. Fathers have lost their jobs. Others have received bomb threats. Still others have had their homes set on fire.

Children with AIDS have been the victims of cruel jokes by classmates. One such AIDS victim, who contracted the disease through a blood transfusion, was repeatedly accused by schoolmates of being a homosexual. They would taunt: "We know how you *really* got AIDS." The family was shunned by members

of their church. Nasty anonymous letters arrived. Piles of garbage were thrown on their lawn. Someone even fired a bullet through a front window.

"It's such a hush-hush thing," said one mother of an AIDS-infected child, "and that's what makes it so lonesome." *The New York Times* adds its voice: "Most of the 1,736 American children under the age of 13 diagnosed with AIDS have been set apart by their disease, forced to hide their condition from healthy friends or schoolmates who might shun them." And, finally, there was this observation from *The Toronto Star*: "Even after a youngster dies, many families are afraid to reveal the truth, which increases the pain and isolation that accompanies the loss of any child."

What You Should Know

It must be acknowledged that AIDS is no respecter of persons. It can infect the rich, the poor, the young, the very young, and the old. Among the young, there is, in some countries, a poor and superficial knowledge of AIDS. Most people "have no conception of how huge a danger AIDS is to teenagers," said a New York City expert on AIDS.

For example, a study of young people in a large American city revealed that 30 percent of those surveyed believed that AIDS could be cured if treated early. No cure of AIDS has yet been found. One third did not know that one cannot contract AIDS by merely touching someone with the disease or by using his comb. An additional survey of 860 teenagers, ages 16 to 19, in another part of the United States found that 22 percent did not know that the AIDS virus can be transmitted by semen and that 29 percent were unaware that it can be transmitted by vaginal secretions.

During the entire incubation period as well as during the time when AIDS has actually

appeared, the victims are infectious and can transmit the AIDS virus to others. It cannot, however, be transmitted by shaking hands with or hugging an AIDS victim, since the virus quickly dies outside the body. Similarly, the virus cannot live on toilet seats, a fear held by some. Did school principals and superintendents fear that AIDS-free students could contract the disease by drinking from a water fountain just used by an AIDS victim? Experts say that these fears are not valid inasmuch as the virus would have no way of getting into the bloodstream of the uninfected person.

Doctors are often asked about the danger of having ears pierced, since needles are used. Experts admit that if contaminated equipment is used, this could be an avenue for contracting the AIDS virus. And what about kissing? "If someone with AIDS or infected with HIV kisses you, and you have a bleeding cut or sore on your lips or in your mouth, it's conceivable, but highly unlikely," said one expert. It is possible, however.

The only way you can know if you are infected, even after certain suspicious symptoms may appear, is through a doctor's thorough examination and a blood test.

And, finally, if you are a child, be truthful with your parents. When all others fail you, they can be the ones to stick with you and give you the comfort and assistance you will need. Be wise and say no to drugs and premarital sex. It can save your life. Many young people who have contracted the AIDS virus through sex or contaminated needles have admitted that they were influenced by bad associations. Surely, the apostle Paul's words have profound meaning to them now. "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits"—and can, in some cases, *cost you your life*. —1 Corinthians 15:33.

The Watchtower and Awake! In Appreciation

A columnist writing in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* of July 24, 1990, had this to say regarding *Awake!* and its companion magazine, *The Watchtower*:

'Those who, like me, for two decades have considered the magazines *Awake!* and *The Watchtower* [published by Jehovah's Witnesses] not worth a glance but have chanced upon them recently will be amazed. They have radically changed, both in format and in content.'

'Formerly, in both periodicals, what struck one the most were the drawings: pictures in one color and on newsprint paper. The stories, if I rightly remember, were a sort of *Reader's Digest* of the good news and touched only incidentally on difficult world problems, such as war, drugs, sex, and politics.'

'That is completely changed now. Both periodicals are sort of miniature current-affairs commentaries. They are abundantly illustrated with color photographs . . . Now and then one may even admire a somewhat edifying work of art too, such as a reproduction of the apostles at the Last Supper (in *The Watchtower* of July 1, 1990), but whenever possible, photographs are used. It is noticeable that *Awake!* goes in a lot for science. In the July 8 issue, there is a piece about the lunar eclipse on August 16 last year, short notes on breast-feeding and on the link between osteoporosis and the level of manganese in the blood, and last but not least, a three-

part feature article in which views for and against animal research are presented.'

The writer makes this further observation: 'With its circulation figure of 11,930,000 copies in 61 languages [now 12,980,000 copies in 64 languages], *Awake!* forms an inestimable source of scientific news for a very large reading public.'

Of course, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* have 'radically changed' in appearance only—not content. For decades now, both magazines have been presenting well-researched articles that point to God's Kingdom as the only hope for mankind. But it is hoped that the improved appearance of our magazines will result in more individuals reading our journals and benefiting from the life-giving message.



The Power of the Truth to Rehabilitate



"One burglar, released early, committed 500 burglaries in seven months. A rapist, freed four years before his ten-year minimum, sexually assaulted and murdered a woman. A paroled killer broke into two homes and killed three people."

—*Reader's Digest*, November 1990.

"Nearly 63 percent of the inmates released from state prisons were arrested for a serious crime within three years, the Justice Department said in a study released today."

—*The New York Times*, April 3, 1989.

"The ideal of prison as a place criminals can be rehabilitated simply does not hold up."

Prisons are combination 'warehouses' and 'schools for crime.'"

—*Toronto Sunday Star*, March 20, 1988.

The warden at Rikers Island, a New York City jail, says: "A kid comes here, nineteen years old, he was the lookout man for a robbery. When he gets out of here, he's not going to be the lookout man. Next time, he's going to be the guy who pulls the trigger."

—*New York magazine*, April 23, 1990.

"Prison gates have become more like revolving doors: nearly two-thirds of all convicts are rearrested within three years of their release."

—*Time magazine*, May 29, 1989.

NONE of the above is news. It's an old story: Prisons do not rehabilitate. Truth does. A case in point: Ron Pryor.

Ron starts each day reading a text from the Bible with his family. His marriage is peaceful and loving. The home is orderly and clean. Their two sons were good students—no

drugs, no alcohol, no problems. By now they are out on their own and engaged in Christian activities. Ron and his wife, Arlynn, are busy in their community doing volunteer work as Christians. Useful lives serving others.

In 1970, however, Ron Pryor was in jail awaiting trial for murder. *He was found guilty*, was convicted, and started serving time

in a state penitentiary. It was the culmination of a long criminal career that had taken him repeatedly to prison. But let Ron tell his story.

"The first 'imprisonment' I remember was a harness connected to a leash on a clothesline. When I was three or four years old, I seemed to have a wanderlust programmed into me. I would wander off, get lost, be picked up by the police and returned home. Finally, my mother told me that if I didn't stop it, she would call an orphanage and have them come get me and lock me up. I sat in the yard crying, waiting for them to come. They didn't. Instead, my mother harnessed me to the clothesline.

"As I grew older, I was always getting into trouble, and violence became my answer for every problem. I felt confused, frustrated, rejected. I had no sense of right and wrong. I let my feelings, not a conscience, be my guide. In school I was passed from one grade to the next because the teachers were glad to get rid of me. I dropped out in the seventh grade and ran away from home. I fell in with bad companions, and true to the Scriptural warning, it led me into deeper trouble.—1 Corinthians 15:33.

Reform schools soon replaced the clothesline harness. They did not reform me. I would run away and get recaptured. Escaping from one school in Virginia, I stole a pickup truck and got arrested. Appearing before a judge named Jenkins on auto-theft charges, I discovered it was Judge Jenkins' truck that I had stolen! I was only 16, but I was declared incorrigible and tried as an adult. I was put away for two years.

"After I was out of prison and in my 20's, I got a motorcycle. I was fascinated with the feeling of power it gave me, but that was not enough. I joined the Pagans—a motorcycle gang that was always on the prowl for trouble, always itching to start a brawl. I fitted in perfectly.

"Later, I was a truck driver and hauling produce out of Florida. I was no longer active with the Pagans, but coming through Virginia at this particular time, in 1969, I met some of my old Pagan buddies. We started to party—drinking wine, getting high on drugs. A fuss started, it escalated, and in the ensuing melee fueled by liquor and drugs, I shot and killed a man. More fruitage from bad associations! Later, two detectives questioned me, and I confessed to murder. This was in 1970.

"I was in jail awaiting trial and still a rebellious troublemaker. For example, one morning a trustee came by with the coffee. They usually gave you an extra cup for later. On that particular morning, I stuck my other cup under the pot, but he said, 'No extras.' What that meant to me was that he had decided to give it to someone else. So I said, 'So you're short on coffee this morning, eh?' He said, 'Yeah.' 'Well, have mine back.' I threw it in his face. I wound up in solitary.

"So I'm walking around in circles in that eight- by ten-foot hole with no windows. For the first time in my life, I really began to think. Questions came crowding in. 'Why is my life always in such a mess? Why am I

It was Judge Jenkins' truck that I had stolen!

always in and out of jail? Why am I in this hole? Why am I living? Why? Why? Why? The whys kept coming but no answers. Then I said to myself: 'I'm at the end of my rope. There's no place to go. Unless—unless there's a God—a God who sees me, knows that I exist, understands me—which I certainly don't! God, if you exist, if you are aware of me, if there is anything I can do—just tell me something, anything!'

"There was a Bible in there with me. I thought, 'That's a beginning.' I started reading. I don't remember what I read. I just remember reading it, understanding nothing. Within a week I was back in a cellblock. One cell was open, both its beds empty. They put me in, and two days later they put another

There was a Bible in solitary. I started reading it

prisoner in with me. I was reading the Bible at the time, struggling with it. He saw me reading and asked: 'Would you like to understand the Bible?' 'Yes!' 'I'll get you a book that will help you.' He contacted one of Jehovah's Witnesses—at one time they had studied with him—and soon gave me a book entitled *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. That was in July 1970.

"I started reading, and I read it from cover to cover. I didn't understand everything, but it made sense. As Jehovah's Witnesses came and studied with me, all the questions I was asking in solitary began to get answered. For the first time in my life, I got some insight into what was right and what was wrong. The more I consumed this spiritual food, the closer I came to being like 'those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.' (Hebrews 5:14) My conscience was stirring, coming to life!

"This sudden acquisition of Bible truth caused a real upheaval to my state of mind. I had read the book in 24 hours. Overnight I went from one extreme to the other. I was determined to make my prison inmates see the truths that I was learning. I thought everyone would be as excited about it as I was. They weren't. I had been a problem for the other

inmates before; now I was an even greater source of irritation—which nobody thought was possible! But as the Witnesses continued coming to the county jail to study with me, I became more tactful in my preaching.

"I made many changes, and in two months I became a trustee. They even let me go outside, which was unheard of in view of my past record and why I was in there. The principles I was learning from the Bible were having their effect. The waters of truth from God's Word were doing their cleansing work, as they had in the days of the apostles. Their rehabilitative powers are indicated at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, as follows:

"What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean."

"Eventually I came to trial. They gave me 20 years for murder. In 1971, I was sent to a maximum security prison. It was there that my

They gave me 20 years for murder

Bible study with the Witnesses resumed. My conduct had changed drastically. Soon in this new prison, they made me a trustee and started giving me furloughs. On one of them, I asked the Witness I was staying with: 'What prevents me from getting baptized?' He checked with the local congregation and the answer came back: 'Nothing.' In 1973, in the early evening, I was baptized in a cow pond on a nearby farm. I prayed as I entered the water,

since that was what Jesus did when he was submerged in the Jordan River by John the Baptizer.

"After that, my spiritual progress was rapid. I joined the Theocratic Ministry School conducted in the local congregation—attending in absentia, of course. I received assignments in the school and put my talks on tape, and they were played to the congregation. The school counselor would send back counsel to help me improve. We had weekly meetings in prison where other inmates were welcome to attend."

"All the while I was adding many scriptures to my knowledge of the Bible. They were like stepping-stones leading me up out of the moral morass in which I had been living for most of my life, until I appreciated the transformation the apostle Paul spoke about at Colossians 3:9, 10: 'Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it.'

"In 1978 a third hearing before the parole board was coming up. Twice I had been turned down because of the serious nature of my crimes. This time the board received some 300 letters from Witnesses and others testifying to the changes I had made.

"With my chances for release looking better, I thought of the possibility of getting married. Arlynn, a widow with two children, was a Witness who had been writing to me while I was in prison. She visited me with her two sons. I fell in love with her and she with me. I was released on February 1, 1978. We were married February 25, 1978.

Ron Pryor and his wife, Arlynn, today

Now, 13 years later, we are still happily married. One of our sons is married and active as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The other son works full-time at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

"My prayers have been answered. I'm thankful for the brothers and the sisters who have been so helpful to me. I owe all my happiness to the happy God, Jehovah.—1 Timothy 1:11.

"I do, however, feel remorse for past sins. I look back with loathing on my former degraded conduct. I have prayed many times for Jehovah to forgive me, and I feel that he has forgiven me. I hope also that people I wronged in the past can find it in their hearts to forgive me. And especially do I hope that Jehovah will bring back to life the man I killed and that he will have the opportunity to live forever in God's Paradise earth. That would make my joy complete!"

What prison bars and solitary confinement could not do, Bible truth did. It enabled Ron Pryor to strip off an old criminal personality and clothe himself with a new Christian personality. Why? Because "the word of God is alive and exerts power," including the power to rehabilitate.—Hebrews 4:12.



The High Price of Anger

ARE you prone to anger, ready to explode with rage at the least provocation? Do you simmer and fume for days, nursing a deeply offended spirit whenever someone slighted you? If so, you may be doing more than alienating those around you; you may be killing yourself with anger.

Can anger really be lethal? According to a recent report from *The New York Times News Service*, the possibility is not at all farfetched. The report asserts, for instance, that "chronic anger is so damaging to the body that it ranks with, or even exceeds, cigarette smoking, obesity and a high-fat diet as a powerful risk factor for early death."

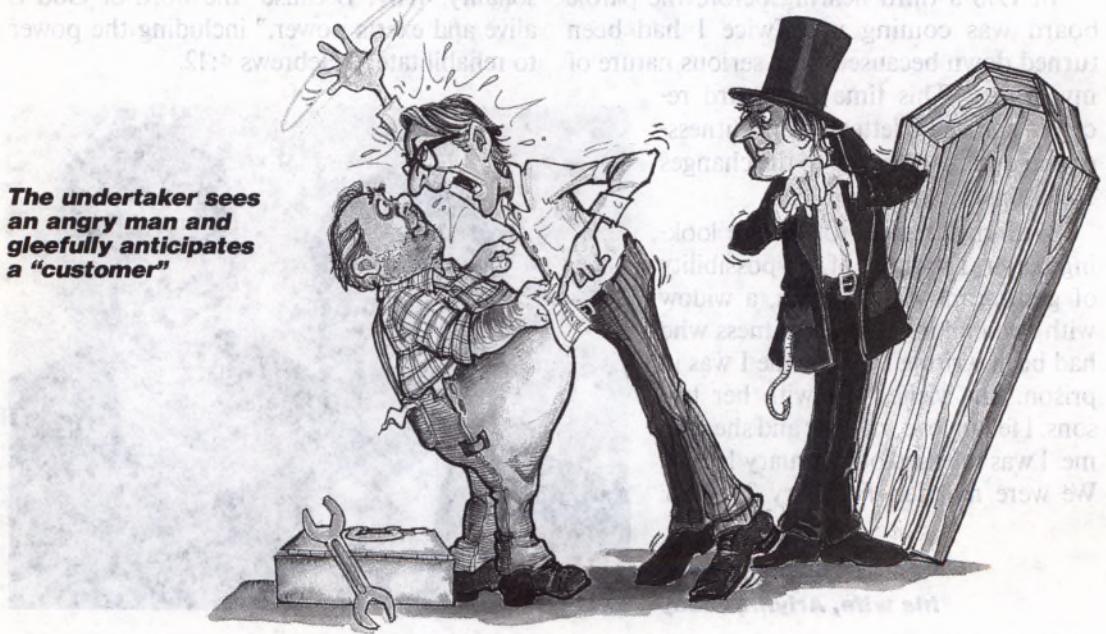
As evidence, the report cites several scientific studies. In one, some 25-year-old university students were given personality tests to gauge the level of hostility they felt in various everyday situations. Researchers followed up on these students 25 years later. Those who were rated the least hostile had a very low death rate. Only 4 percent of them had died by age 50. But the most hostile did not fare as well—20 percent had died! Another study found that those who were

rated the most hostile in youth tended to have much higher levels of harmful cholesterol later in life, putting them at greater risk of heart disease.

What about those who simmer with repressed rage instead of finding positive ways to deal with their problems? Dr. Mara Julius, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan, surveyed a group of women over an 18-year period. She found that those who showed obvious signs of chronic, suppressed hostility had a death rate some three times higher than those who did not harbor such anger. She concludes: "For many women, constant suppressed anger seems to be a stronger risk factor for early mortality than smoking."

Thousands of years before any such scientific studies, the Bible warned against anger. "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state," says one verse. (Ephesians 4:26) "Let anger alone and leave rage," counsels another. (Psalm 37:8) Even more remarkably, the Bible drew a connection between our emotional state and our physical health when it asserted: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism."—Proverbs 14:30.

The undertaker sees an angry man and gleefully anticipates a "customer"



The Battle Over Irish Bogs

By Awake! correspondent in Ireland

IF SOMETHING isn't done, and quickly, a unique part of the world's living heritage could be lost for ever." So said British writer Dr. David Bellamy. What heritage did he have in mind? Ireland's bogs, or peat lands.—*Bellamy's Ireland—The Wild Boglands*.

Not everyone in Ireland sees the boglands as a heritage. In the past, says writer Michael Viney, "the bog was synonymous with hardship and the poorest way of life." Today, according to the IPCC (Irish Peatland Conservation Council), many think that all bogs should be "dug up, drained and changed into something dry and more 'useful.'" Since digging up and draining bogland produces valuable fuel and leaves behind good agricultural land, why are conservationists concerned? Because they view the boglands as "unique wetland ecosystems."

Two main bogland types are under threat. One is called raised bog, and the other, blanket bog. Blanket bogs, according to Dr. David Bellamy, "swathe the wet west [and other wet, mountainous areas] with a living blanket, the like of which is seen nowhere else on earth." What exactly are these two types of bog? Are they really anything more than squelchy, treacherous places from which to dig winter fuel? Must they all go up in smoke?

Raised Bogs and Blanket Bogs

Bogs are huge masses of peat with a living cover of vegetation made up of mosses, heathers, sedges, and flowers. Raised bogs,

they say, started to grow thousands of years ago in places like shallow lakes. Vegetation died and sank to the bottom, where it slowly decayed to form peat. These deposits of decaying plants piled up, layer upon layer, until eventually they filled the lake. Some deposits grew to 40 feet deep.

Bog mosses colonized the soggy mass that rose out of the lakes and acted like sponges, keeping the bog surface saturated with water. Great hummocks of these bog mosses spread upward and outward and produced amazing dome-shaped raised bogs. "The cupola of a raised bog," says David Bellamy, "is in effect a gigantic drop of water held together by a matrix of dead, partly decayed plant remains, held intact by a living skin of peat."

Blanket bogs, on the other hand, did not need lakes in order to grow. They got all the water they needed from persistent rainfall in waterlogged parts of the country—places where the rain falls at least 235 days each year and produces more than 50 inches annual rainfall. David Bellamy says that blanket bog, which can be 20 feet deep, is a giant, "inefficient compost heap . . . super-saturated with water."

Below the surface, then, bogland is made up of layers of vegetation in varying stages of decomposition. Near the top, you can clearly see the remains of dead plants in the soft brown peat. At the bottom these have decayed into a much darker, denser peat that feels almost like putty.

Ireland's Bogs Preserve More Than Peat

Bodies of people who drowned in the bogs or who were ritually executed centuries ago have been dug out of bogland in an amazing state of preservation. Country people used to store butter in the bog as in a primitive refrigerator. Turf cutters often come across wooden casks containing butter that were buried in the peat and never dug up. Beautiful artifacts in gold, silver, and bronze have been unearthed from hiding places in the bogs, where they were put to keep them secure from marauding Vikings.

This might sound bleak and unappealing. But bogs, besides being vast reservoirs of fuel, have a beauty all their own. Michael Viney describes the blanket bog in the west of Ireland as wrapped around the mountains like a great brown rug wrapped around the knees of an old man. He goes on: "If you look closer into the rug, you find it woven of rich fabrics—velvety mosses of black and bottle-green, brocaded lichens in gold and rose, filigree trimmings of grey-green lace."—*The IPCC Guide to Irish Peatlands*.

This wet wonderland is what conservationists want to preserve. Bogland is home to myriads of animals, such as frogs, newts, hares, birds, and various insects. It supports a wide variety of plants; there are the ubiquitous bog cotton, water lilies, pitcher plants, pipewort, wintergreen, bog asphodel, and dozens more. The round-leaved sundew is an unexpected inhabitant of the boglands. Carnivorous, it traps insects on its sticky leaves and slowly digests them.

Digging the Peat

If you drive or, rather, bounce over any of Ireland's old bog roads in the spring or sum-



Top clockwise:

Turf stacked in Connemara, Ireland

Virgin bogland—squelchy and treacherous

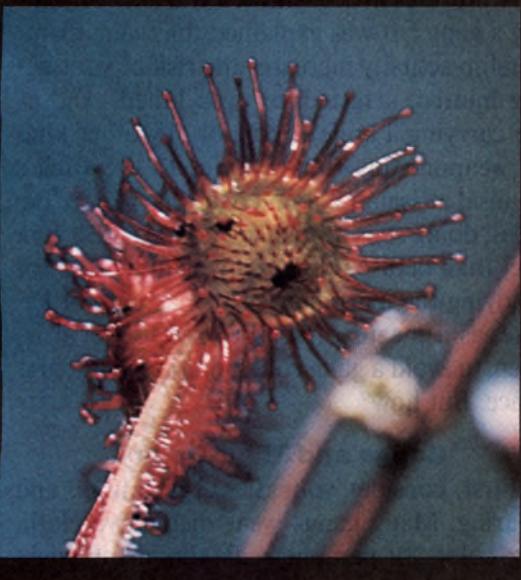
Carnivorous, round-leaved sundew

Safe haven for curlew's nest



Dr. R. F. Hammond, Teagasc, Ireland (above and top right)

mer, you will still see men and women digging the peat, or turf, as they call it. They still use the traditional slane, a special narrow-bladed spade often with an extra cutting edge set at right angles to the blade so that it can cut a sod of turf with one slice. The diggers spread these sods out to dry in the summer sunshine and later collect them for winter fuel. The aromatic smell of burning peat adds to the pleasure of soaking



Dutch Foundation for Conservation of Irish Bogs

up the warmth of the fire on a cold winter night.

When men dig peat in this way, they are rather like ants raiding a huge food store. Even such digging, however, when added to land drainage schemes, has slowly altered the boglands over the past thousand years. The real threat, though, to the survival of the boglands has come in the last 40 years. That is when the mighty machines of *Bord na Móna* (The Irish

Bogs Can Be Dangerous

"Bogs can be dangerous places; never visit them alone," is the warning sounded by some. Bogs are complex areas, full of drains, streams, and pools. Floating bogs can develop over deep lakes when a mat of peat forms over the lake surface. They quake when walked upon and can swallow people and animals.

"Sections of peat on sloped areas can break off from the main body of a blanket bog and flow downslope pushing over trees and destroying houses in much the same way as a volcanic lava flow destroys everything in its path."

Peat Board) have dug and scraped the peat from the boglands at an alarming rate.

Extracting peat on a large scale is not easy. Untouched bogland is 95 percent water, and it needs at least five years of constant drainage before the ingeniously designed digging machines can operate safely on the bog.

Once they have dug the peat, they do not leave wastelands. The authorities work hard to convert cutaway bogland into useful and productive land. However, this still means that the bogs themselves face extinction. In Ireland, less than 5 percent of the raised bogs with some kind of nature-reserve potential are left. It is no longer a case of ants raiding a food store. Now the whole store is being emptied and the building demolished.

Can They Survive?

Conservationists know that it is unrealistic to prohibit digging for peat. Using such accessible sources of energy makes good sense. But, they ask, must exploitation mean extinction? Catherine O'Connell of the IPCC asks: "Do we want the same thing to happen to our bogs as happened to the Dodo?"

Time will tell.

**Young
People
Ask . . .**



How Can I Protect Myself From Gang Attack?

ONE cool autumn evening, 12-year-old Tom went to the neighborhood store to pick up a few items. Tom was nervous because he was on the turf controlled by a local street gang, and his fears soon proved warranted. Without warning, several members of the gang descended on him, throwing him to the ground under a hail of fists.

Because of the predicted "increasing of lawlessness," many live in neighborhoods too violent even for the authorities to control. (Matthew 24:12) And if you live in an area where gang activity is prevalent, Tom's experience may be all too familiar. Consider, for example, the situation in Los Angeles County, U.S.A. According to *Maclean's* magazine, of the 257 gang-related fatalities that occurred there in 1988, half involved unprovoked gang killings of nonmembers! Thus, youths who live in areas where gangs are active face a real challenge: protecting themselves.

A previous article showed the folly of joining a gang.* It was explained that gang membership actually increases the risk of your being injured, arrested, or even killed. And as for carrying a knife, a gun, or any other kind of weapon, this runs counter to the Bible's counsel at Isaiah 2:4 and Matthew 26:52. Besides, doing so is more likely to escalate a conflict than defuse it. The same can be said for studying the martial arts, such as judo or karate, as a means of self-defense. Better it is, then, to avoid a gang confrontation in the first place. But how?

Gangs and Their Colors

First, consider your dress, grooming, and bearing. Many gangs wear distinctive clothing, colors, or paraphernalia that distinguishes them from other gangs. A bandanna or even the way a hat is worn may establish gang membership. Oftentimes, gangs adopt certain gestures and their own vocabulary and posture.

The problem is that gang colors and other such trademarks often become fashionable among youths in general—including non-gang members. Observed the Canadian news-

* See the article "Should I Join a Gang?" appearing in the June 8, 1991, issue of *Awake!*

Flee scenes of violence. Do not let curiosity get you killed

paper *The Globe and Mail*: "Some adolescents ape part of the dress of certain gangs, even though they are not members. . . . They may be trying to impress other teen-agers."

Some youths apparently feel that the special garb will make them look tough. Others reason that being decked out in gang colors may provide them a measure of protection. They reckon that some will feel less inclined to offend them, assuming they are associated with a certain gang. Is this sound reasoning? Not at all. *The Globe and Mail* put it bluntly: "They run the risk of being beaten up if spotted by real gang members."

Bernard, once a gang member but now one of Jehovah's Witnesses, confirms this assessment. Recalling the former days, he says: "If someone dressed like one of us and he was not one of us, most likely he would be a target. Either he would have to join our gang or get himself hurt."

It Pays to Be Different!

Knowing this should guide your choice of clothing. After all, does not the way we dress say something about us—even identify us? This was true thousands of years ago when the Bible was being written. In the book of 2 Kings, we read of some messengers who reported back to King Ahaziah of Israel. They told of meeting a man who gave them a certain message. The king asked, "What was the appearance of the man?" When they de-



scribed his garments, the king immediately said, "It was Elijah the prophet!" How did he know? Because Elijah wore the distinctive garment of a prophet. (2 Kings 1:5-8) Today, just as then, the way we dress can link us up with certain classes of people, even though we may not practice what they practice or believe what they believe. Others will tend to assume that we at least sympathize with the class of people who dress that way.

Michael, a former gang member quoted in *Sports Illustrated*, says: "The shoes, the jackets and the hats are just symbols . . . I can drive down the street and point out a gang member just by the way he or she dresses."

How unwise it would be, then, for a Christian youth to groom himself, dress, walk, talk, or even assume a posture like members

of a street gang! Jesus' counsel to be "no part of the world" would be particularly applicable here. (John 17:16) Indeed, gang members usually have little difficulty spotting those who are not of their sort. Michael recalls: "We see a guy in some dress slacks, a nice sweater, loafers. You couldn't convince me that he's a gang member."

Bernard, earlier quoted, adds: "Gang members often tend to dress in the latest fashions." In view of this, care and caution should be observed before adopting styles of dress and grooming that may be popular at school or in your neighborhood but that could easily make you a target of gang violence due to mistaken identity. Dressing in a modest fashion may prove to be a protection.—Compare 1 Timothy 2:9.

Be careful, too, about the kind of language and vocabulary you use. If you try to prove that you are in by using slang expressions commonly used by gang members, you may very well attract the attention of gang members. Avoid trying to project a tough-guy image. Remember: "A live dog is better off than a dead lion."—Ecclesiastes 9:4.

Another safeguard is to avoid being "a friend of the world" when it comes to your choice of associates. (James 4:4) You might figure that having a few "tough" friends would work to your advantage. But drawing on his gang experience, Bernard says: "If you have friends who belong to a gang, more than likely you will be pressured to join the gang." Even efforts to direct gang members on the path to life should be made with due caution. —Matthew 28:19, 20.

Yes, your best avenue of protection might very well be your reputation as an exemplary Christian. True, because you do not 'run with them in the low sink of debauchery, they may speak abusively of you.' (1 Peter 4:4) But they may also begrudgingly respect you. At the

very least, they will probably consider you an unlikely candidate for gang membership.

Avoiding Danger

Nevertheless, a good reputation is not always enough to keep you from harm's way. Proverbs 27:12 gives this good advice: "The shrewd one that has seen the calamity has concealed himself; the inexperienced that have passed along have suffered the penalty." This sound counsel stresses the need to be discerning and alert when faced with potentially dangerous situations. For example, if invited to go out to a certain place or event, ask yourself, Who will be there? Is it a known gang hangout?

One former gang member gives similar advice: "Avoid areas where gangs hang out. Take an alternate route if possible." Yes, avoid unnecessary travel into areas that are known to be unsafe. And if violence erupts, do not let curiosity get you killed. Proverbs 17:14 says: "The beginning of contention is as one letting out waters; so before the quarrel has burst forth, take your leave."

But suppose that in spite of all your efforts to avoid trouble, you are confronted by individuals who want you to join their gang. Calmly state that you cannot join them. Youths who are Jehovah's Witnesses often add that their time and efforts are being used for the Christian ministry. Whatever you say, avoid being disrespectful or antagonistic. Jesus told his disciples at Matthew 10:16: "Prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves." Again, your conduct, dress, and grooming must harmonize with the stand you have taken.

Realize, though, that even the most stringent precautions cannot totally guarantee your safety. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) But with reasonable effort, you can likely avoid becoming a victim of gang violence.

Seeing the UNSEEN The Science of OPTICS

A SCENIC landscape, a brilliant sunset, a lovely flower—all beautiful sights that are a joy to behold. Though we seldom give thought to what is involved in seeing, we are certainly glad that we are able to see.

Marvelous as the eye is, what we are able to see with the unaided eye is but a fraction of what there is to be seen. By the use of optical instruments—from the simple magnifying glass to telescopes, microscopes, special cameras, spectrosopes, and so forth—the science of optics, as the study of light is called, has greatly expanded our knowledge of ourselves and of the world around us.

Though you may be familiar with some of these optical instruments, do you know how they work? Why, for instance, does a magnifying glass magnify? What makes one instrument bring up the world of the microorganisms and another bring into view the vast expanse of the universe? The science of optics has been an intriguing field of study for a long time.

The Basic Element

Have you ever used a hand-held magnifying glass to burn a hole in a piece of paper by

focusing a beam of sunlight on it? What you had there was an optical instrument in its simplest form—a lens. That little spot on the paper was actually an image of the sun produced by the simple lens you had in your hand. Concentrating all the energy in that beam of sunlight into one little spot made it hot enough to burn the paper.

Another lens many are familiar with is the one in the front of a camera. You may know that it focuses the light from an object to form an image on the film for a picture to be taken. Essentially, that is what a lens does. It brings the light together to form an image of suitable size and intensity so that it can be observed or recorded. But how does the lens cause the light to be bent and brought together, or focused? The answer lies in an optical phenomenon called refraction.

When you dip a stick into a pool of water, what do you see? Doesn't the stick appear to be bent at the point where it enters the water? This common but strange event illustrates that when a beam of light passes from one medium to another, such as from water to air, it does not continue on in a straight line; it is bent except when it hits the boundary perpendicularly. This is what scientists call refraction. The extent to which the light is refracted depends on the mediums—air, water, oil, glass, and so on—and on the angle of incidence, that is, the angle between the light ray and the vertical at the point of entry.

Take a look at the lens of a camera again. You will note that the surface of the lens is not flat but curved like the surface of a sphere, or convex. Now imagine a beam of light coming to it from a distance. At the center, the light is perpendicular to the surface of the lens; thus it travels straight through with no refraction taking place. The angle of incidence becomes progressively larger toward the edge of the lens. This means that the refraction caused by the lens is also greater the

farther away from the center the light strikes. Because of this, all rays issuing from the same point on one side of a properly shaped lens will come together, or be focused, on the other side to form an image.

Designing an Optical System

To complicate matters, however, light of different colors, or wavelengths, is refracted in different degrees. This is why a prism spreads a beam of sunlight into its colors, forming a rainbow. This is exactly what happens with a simple lens; the image usually has colored, thus distorted, fringes.

This problem can be overcome by careful design. Scientists know, for example, that the chemical content of the glass used in a lens will alter its refractive properties. By creating a system of lenses made of different kinds of glass and having different curvatures, a designer can keep aberration and distortion to a minimum.

Designing such a system, however, is not simple. It used to involve many people performing laborious calculations for weeks and months to come up with a design. Today, computers are used to calculate all the possible variations in the angles of the light rays, the distances between lenses, the curvature of each lens, and a host of other factors. The computer is programmed to pick out the combination that will result in a system of the highest accuracy.

In Our Next Issue

**How to Cope
When You Lose Your Job**

Is Smoking Really That Bad?

Overcoming a Life of Violence

A good camera lens may have from four to seven, or more, individual elements, with surfaces accurate to a few millionths of an inch. Each element must be mounted in precise relationship to the others. To capture as much light as possible, the diameter of each element should be as large as practical. All these things are expensive to do, and that explains why a precision camera is so expensive. For example, one of the cameras used on the space shuttle can photograph details on earth 30 feet across from over 150 miles up in space. This camera has a lens with eight elements, and it cost nine million dollars!

Seeing the Invisible

Imagine what is involved in designing, producing, and testing an optical system for use in a telescope that will allow us to look out into our vast, awe-inspiring universe. Distant stars are so faint that most of them are invisible to the naked eye. A telescope will gather as much light from these remote stars as possible, focus it to a common point, and form a visible image.

Most optical telescopes use a concave mirror to collect the faint light rays. The famed Hale telescope on Mount Palomar, for example, has a mirror 200 inches in diameter and can peer out to several thousand million light-years. Awesome as it is, the Hale telescope has now been eclipsed by one atop Hawaii's Mauna Kea. This telescope has a 400-inch mirror—four times the light-gathering capacity of the telescope on Palomar. It is so powerful, in fact, that "it will permit one to see the light of a single candle from the distance of the moon," said Howard Keck, president of the foundation that donated 70 million dollars to support the project.

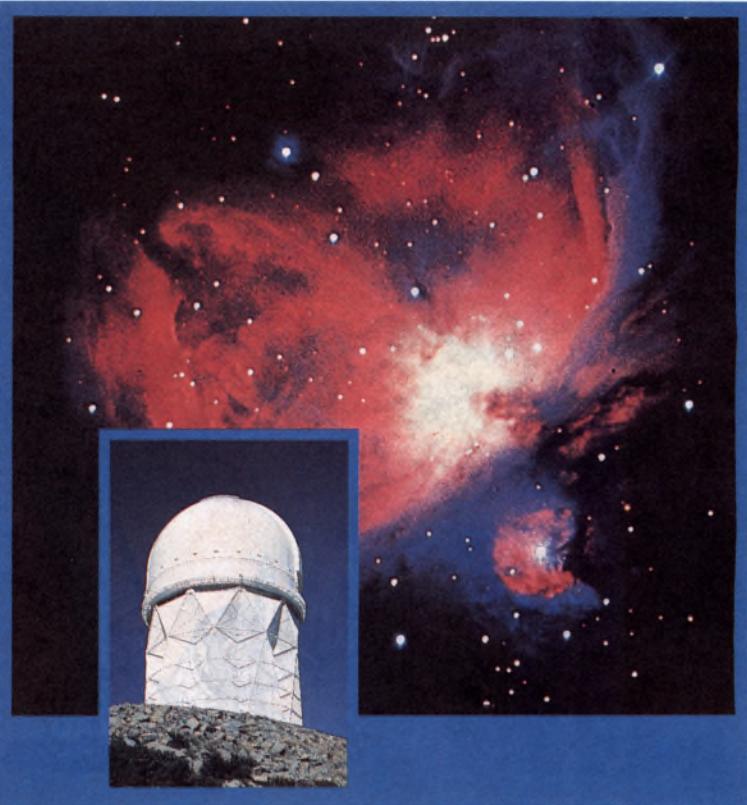
For some time the eyes of astronomers had been on a telescope of a different kind: the \$1,600,000,000 HST (Hubble Space Telescope). Launched by the space shuttle, it cir-

The spectacular Orion nebula, 1,300 light-years away

Inset: One of the telescopes at Kitt Peak National Observatory, Arizona, U.S.A.

cycles the earth in an orbit 300 miles out in space. Without the obstruction of earth's atmosphere, it can see so well that, theoretically, its resolving power is "equivalent to distinguishing a car's left and right headlights from a distance of 2,500 miles," says the magazine *Sky & Telescope*. To achieve this degree of resolution, the surface of its modest 94-inch mirror had to be accurate to within two millionths of an inch. To everyone's great disappointment, however, the first images the HST sent back from space were blurry, evidently the result of a manufacturing flaw. "A fragment of synthetic film the size of a grain of sand," says a report in *New Scientist*, "broke off a calibrating device during the making of the telescope's primary mirror. As a result the mirror was ground too flat." Apparently, even the highest of high tech is vulnerable!

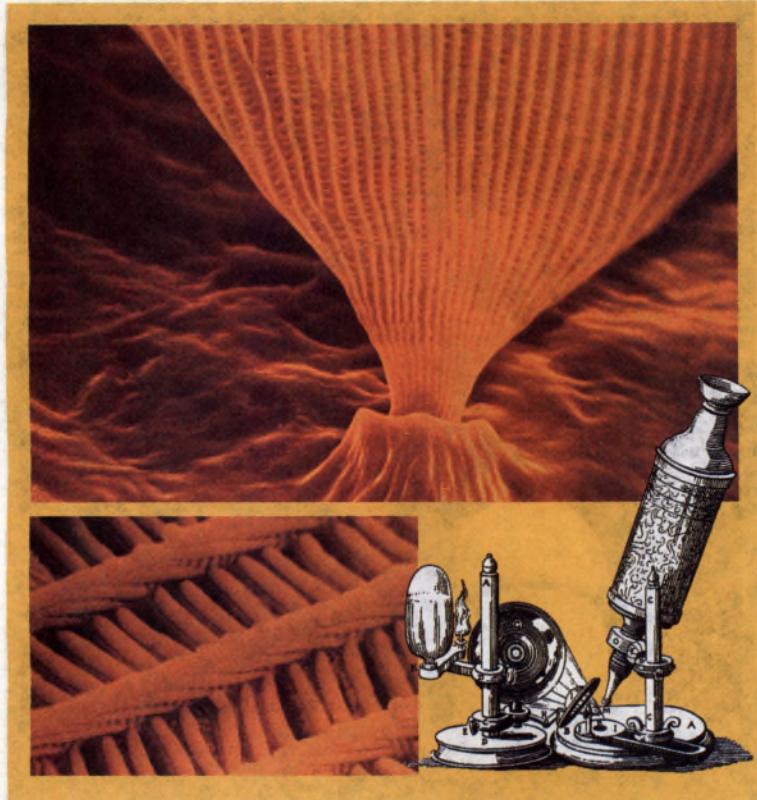
From seeing far with a telescope, we can turn to seeing close with a microscope. Early microscopes were no more than a magnifying glass. By the 17th century, compound microscopes came into use, in which the image formed by one lens was further magnified by another lens. The first lens is usually called the objective because it is directed toward the object to be viewed, and the second lens, the eyepiece.



NASA photo

For a microscope to do its job, it must be able to collect as many light rays as possible from a tiny object. To do so, the objective lens is shaped somewhat like a half sphere, something like the cap of a mushroom. Although only four hundredths of an inch or less in diameter, its surfaces must be accurate to four hundred-thousandths of an inch.

Interestingly, the ability to see small objects is dependent not so much on the instrument as on the light used to illuminate the object. The smaller the object to be viewed, the shorter still the wavelength of the illuminating light must be. Optical microscopes use visible light, and this limits them to seeing objects no smaller than four millionths of an inch across. Early microscopes enabled scientists to discover that plants consist of



Top and bottom left: Outdoor Pictures

Historical Pictures Service

innumerable cells—a revelation. Today, biology students can peer into the realm of bacteria and blood cells through their classroom microscopes.

To see still smaller objects, we have the electron microscope. As the name implies, instead of visible light, beams of high-energy electrons are directed at objects as small as four hundred-millionths of an inch. This brings into view viruses and larger molecules.

What about the structure of the atom or its nucleus? To get a look at these things, scientists have to “smash” an atom and then use computers to construct a picture of the result. So, in a sense, the largest and most powerful “microscopes” are the particle accelerators—cyclotrons, synchrotrons, and others—the size of some being measured in miles. These

Top: The base of a single scale on a moth's wing, magnified by electron microscope

Bottom left: At 40,000 times magnification, even more detail is seen, illustrating the intricate design present in the structure of all living things.

Bottom right: Hooke's early compound microscope from "Micrographia," by Robert Hooke, 1665

instruments have given scientists a glimpse of the secrets of the forces holding the universe together.

The Marvel of Vision

Compared to these complicated instruments, the human eye, one might think, would be primitive indeed. Simple, perhaps; primitive, never! The eye has no problem with different colors of light. Its automatic focusing system is fast and efficient. It can see in three dimensions. It can detect millions of gradations of light and shades of color. It can create and record a new image every tenth of a second. The list goes on and on. What a masterpiece—the human eye!

How grateful we are for the ability to see—with or without the use of optical devices! The increased knowledge of things large and small, visible and invisible, has brought many tangible benefits. But above all, the marvelous gift of vision, coupled with what is learned through the science of optics, should help us see the wisdom and love of the one who provided these things, the Creator, Jehovah God.—Psalm 148; Proverbs 20:12.

Read to Expand Your Horizons

HAVE you ever wanted to travel to far-away places; meet people of different cultures; see and explore natural wonders like awesome waterfalls, majestic mountains, and mysterious jungles; and learn about strange birds, animals, and plants? Or would you like to dive to the bottom of the ocean; soar into outer space; peer into the microscopic world; study the marvels of the brain, the eye, and the heart; or witness the miracle of birth? Perhaps even turn back the clock and delve into the past through history and archaeology?

All these exciting adventures are open to you through the printed page. Without having to leave the comfort of your home, you can experience all these things by reading books and other publications that are a storehouse of knowledge from every field. As the Bible says: "To the making of many books there is no end." (Ecclesiastes 12:12) Good reading will enable you to draw from this storehouse at will.

A Handicap Worth Overcoming

Sadly, worldwide more than 800 million people over the age of 15 cannot read and write. This severely limits their ability to learn and to communicate. It suppresses their thinking ability and makes them dependent on those who can read, thus exposing them to the danger of being manipulated or exploited.

Even basic daily activities can become pitfalls for those who are illiterate. For example, traveling is, at best, confusing if one cannot read street signs and directions at bus terminals, railway stations, and airports. There is

also the inconvenience and embarrassment of having to ask someone to read and write personal letters and documents or even to fill out simple forms. Mothers who cannot read instructions regarding food or medicine run the risk of giving their children things that can harm them.

Clearly, illiteracy is a tremendous handicap. Yet, with a little help, it can be overcome. The situation is much like that of Marthe. At 70 she had been blind for over 20 years and had only memories of what the world of light and color looked like. Then a surgeon performed an operation. This reopened to her the marvelous world of sight—and the pleasures of reading. Then there is Kalu, who is now 70. As a young man, he was "blind" to the printed page—he could not read. But he enrolled in a literacy class. He now reads and writes in three languages.

There may be few people like Marthe, but there are thousands like Kalu who have overcome their handicap by learning to read. Of course, it does not happen overnight. It takes time and effort and, above all, a great deal of encouragement and help. Can you help someone? Jehovah's Witnesses in many countries conduct literacy classes such as the one that helped Kalu, and this has contributed to the high literacy rate among the Witnesses. In Nigeria, for example, the literacy rate among Jehovah's Witnesses is more than twice as high as among the general population.

Become a Better Reader

Perhaps you have no problem with illiteracy. But how good a reader are you? Maybe

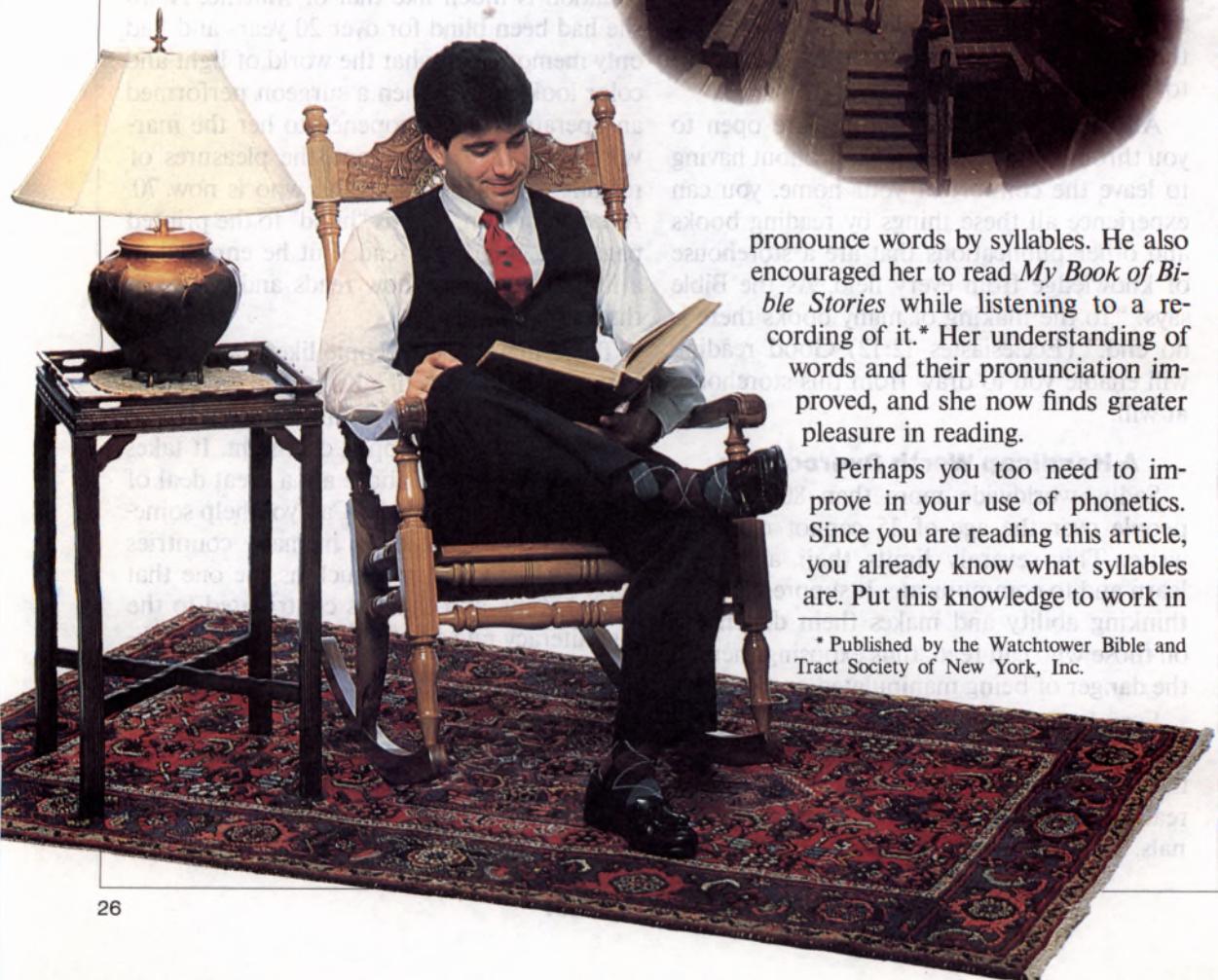
you read laboriously and make regressions, that is, you habitually stop halfway through a line or sentence and go back to reread it. Or perhaps you mispronounce words or have difficulty getting their meaning. Can these problems be overcome?

Thirteen-year-old Beatrice could associate words with ideas but had difficulty pronouncing them. She would read "person" as "somebody" or "building" as "house." Someone taught her the phonetics of words —how the sounds of vowels and consonants combine to make other sounds—and how to

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

pronounce words by syllables. He also encouraged her to read *My Book of Bible Stories* while listening to a recording of it.* Her understanding of words and their pronunciation improved, and she now finds greater pleasure in reading.

Perhaps you too need to improve in your use of phonetics. Since you are reading this article, you already know what syllables are. Put this knowledge to work in



pronunciation exercises. Take a word, break it down into syllables, and pronounce each syllable. (Example: pro-nun-ci-a-tion) Then put the word back together and pronounce it as a whole. Practice doing this with other words, and then try to read them without isolating each syllable. Learn to recognize whole words without physically pronouncing them.

Good readers do not read word for word. They see whole phrases and grasp words in thought groups or complete ideas. So instead of stopping and looking at each word, try to see several words at each fixation of the eye, and each fixation should be just an unconscious pause of the eye, a brief glance. With practice you will be able to do this. But watch out for any tendency to regress. Backing up to reread parts of sentences will break up your flow of thought and hamper your comprehension. So practice reading straight ahead.

Even when you are able to read fluently, there are other factors involved in being a good reader. Comprehension, ability to recall, and a rich vocabulary—all of these are worthwhile goals to pursue. The accompanying boxes give some hints on how to achieve them. Why not check yourself against the suggestions?

Choose the Right Reading Material

With improved reading ability, a world of knowledge—a wealth of information on the printed page—becomes accessible to you. Of course, you can learn some of these things through TV and videotapes, but reading stimulates and improves your thinking processes, your imagination, and your ability to express yourself. It gives you both words and mental pictures with which to remember, talk about, and write intelligently on many subjects, making you a more interesting person with whom to associate.

However, with so many subjects to delve into, where do you start? The Bible verse that

How to Improve Comprehension

- Think actively while reading, asking questions and drawing conclusions.
- Keep in mind the theme of the article and any subheadings.
- Try to see how each paragraph ties in with the main theme.
- Relate the material to what you already know.
- Apply the material to your life and experiences.

Build a Larger Vocabulary

- Mark unfamiliar words while you read.
- Note how such words are used in the context.
- Consult a dictionary for word meanings as you read.
- Learn to pronounce words correctly.
- Practice using new words in conversation with others.

says, "To the making of many books there is no end," also says, "Much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh." (Ecclesiastes 12:12) You cannot read everything—and not everything is wholesome and truthful. So be selective. By all means read material that will mold your personality for the better and that will help you on the job, in school, or in caring for your family responsibilities. You can expand your horizons immensely by reading international publications like *Awake!* In the space of a few pages, you can enjoy information gathered from around the world.

Selectivity will make your reading purposeful and bring you practical, intellectual, and spiritual benefits. So choose well, and buy out time to read at home, during break periods at your workplace, while waiting, when traveling, and on other occasions. Read—it will expand your horizons.

Watching the World

More Addicts in Asia

In many Asian countries, heroin addiction has skyrocketed. For example, in 1980, Sri Lanka had fewer than 50 known heroin addicts. Now there are about 40,000. Over the same period, the number of addicts in Pakistan went up to 1.8 million from just a few thousand. *AsiaWeek* magazine says that "tougher penalties have failed to slow the rising tide of drug traffic. Sri Lanka has one of the world's stiffest sentences for possession: holding two grams [0.07 oz] of heroin or cocaine carries a death sentence or life imprisonment." The financial gain in the drug business is a formidable incentive for farmers to switch from other crops to heroin-producing poppies. Dr. Ravi Pereira of Colombo's National Dangerous Drugs Control Board noted: "If there's no sugar tomorrow—so what. But if there's no heroin, you'll have people crawling up the walls. They'll pay anything to get it."

Cholera in South America

Health authorities in Peru estimated that an average of two thousand people are infected with cholera every day in that country. In March 1991, *Visión*, a Latin-American magazine, reported that a cholera epidemic in Peru claimed the lives of some 200 people and infected over 40,000—all in just a two-month period. According to the Peruvian Ministry of Health, the number of deaths could rise to some ten thousand. Carlos Ferreira, president of the Epidemiology Society of Argentina, noted that the number of cases in Peru is greater than the

total number of cases reported worldwide during 1990. In the neighboring countries of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador, and even as far north as Mexico, the governments are adopting preventive measures against the disease. Mr. Ferreira added: "Cholera is in South America and is here to stay for a long time."

Balloon Industry Deflated

Watching thousands of brightly colored balloons slowly rise into the sky and disappear from sight may be an exhilarating experience for many, but it is one that is no longer as common in the United States. Ever since a balloon was found in the stomach of a dead whale that washed ashore in New Jersey in 1985 and another



was found in a dead leatherback sea turtle, children throughout the nation have been clamoring for a ban on balloons, believing that thousands of animals have been killed by eating stray balloons. Legislators have listened to the children's cry, and several states and cities have already banned or restricted balloon launchings. While the claims of animal deaths have been disputed by the balloon industry, balloon sellers were said to be losing \$6 million a year in sales.

Death of the Dolphin

A recent study shows that "a growing number of the world's 65 species of cetaceans (sea mammals) are on the brink of extinction," notes *Perspectives*, a bulletin published by the International Institute for Environment and Development. Researchers assert that more than 500,000 dolphins are killed each year. According to the Environmental Investigation Agency, which conducted the study, the worst offenders are Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan, "with Japan the most excessive accounting for more than 100,000 cetaceans yearly." The principal cause of death is drift nets. However, dolphins are also "being shot, stabbed, speared, gaffed, hooked, drowned, beached, electrocuted, harpooned, bombed and mutilated."

Cigarette Advertisements Banned

Tobacco companies in France have been sidestepping a law against cigarette advertisements by using their brand names and logos to advertise nontobacco products. Such advertising invariably associates smoking with scenes that depict adventure, sports, and pleasure. The French government has passed a new law that will ban all forms of cigarette advertising as of January 1, 1993. The new law will prohibit all such forms of indirect publicity, as well as sponsorship of sports events by cigarette companies. Government officials quote statistics showing that smoking causes over 60,000 premature deaths each year in France. Worldwide, about three million people die

each year from diseases related to smoking.

AIDS in Argentina

According to the Argentine newspaper *Clarín*, for every 500 persons in Buenos Aires, there is one infected with AIDS. Dr. Emilio Hass, president of the First Argentine Immunogenetics Center, noted that by "next year this proportion could rise to 4 infected individuals for every 1,000 citizens." One medical source revealed that many donate their blood in order to receive a free test and find out whether they are infected with AIDS or not. Dr. Hass added that in one important Buenos Aires hospital, 36,000 blood bags were tested, and it was revealed that out of every 1,000 bags, 2 were contaminated with the AIDS virus. Hass reported that the number of AIDS victims in Buenos Aires "doubles every 13 months."

Alcohol and Work

A leading German labor union estimates that "one in seven employees in the Federal Republic has problems with alcohol," reports the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. This costs German society between 50 thousand million and 120 thousand million German marks every year. On the average, Germans drank four times as much alcohol in 1990 as in 1950. A board member of the labor union noted that alcohol has become like a drug "with which people render themselves insensitive so as to put up with their work and working environment."

What Is Genesis?

A religious journal conducted a survey among teenage Italian students. The results were "disconcerting," the Italian daily *La Repubblica* said. The poll revealed

that 56 out of 100 students had not read even one verse of the Scriptures since the time of their first Communion. Also, 83.4 percent of the students could not "explain the difference between the old and the new testament," and 75 percent admitted that they did not even have a Bible in their home. According to *La Repubblica*, 36 out of 100 students recognized the word "Genesis" as the name of an English rock group but not as the first book of the Bible.

Useless Guns

Because of the continual threat of crime, many in Rome are resorting to various means of self-defense. According to *La Repubblica*, people are using trained attack dogs, martial arts, chemical sprays, daggers, crossbows, and sword canes to disable assail-



ants. More than 15,000 people, both men and women, have obtained permission from the police to carry firearms. *La Repubblica* noted that according to Gianfranco Rodolico, Rome's delegate to the Italian Union of Marksmen, it is useless for the ordinary person to carry a gun. He said: "You cannot walk around all the time with a pistol in your hand. If someone attacked me, I almost certainly wouldn't have time to pull it out."

Shark-Eating Men

Sharks are in danger, especially off the coasts of Australia, Japan,

South Africa, and the United States. The shark population in these areas is dwindling because of the increased popularity of the shark's meat on the dinner table. According to *Time* magazine, "commercial shark catches in the U.S. jumped from less than 500 tons in 1980 to 7,144 tons in 1989." Shark fins are used to make a soup considered a delicacy in Asia. Some restaurants charge as much as \$50 (U.S.) for a bowl of the gelatinous soup. *Time* notes that in obtaining the fins, fishermen engage in "the cruel practice of catching sharks, slicing off their fins and tossing the maimed creatures back into the ocean to die."

"The Lung of Humankind"

A new international organization known as *Parlamento Amazoníaco* (Amazonian Parliament) has recently been formed in South America. The members are government officials and scientists from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela. The purpose of this organization is to encourage a more rational development of the Amazon region, which covers some 2.7 million square miles and is the home of more than 150 million people in eight countries. The Argentine newspaper *La Nación* reported that the Amazonian Parliament referred to the Amazon region as "the lung of humankind." Regarding the 150,000 square miles of jungle that have been destroyed in recent years, spokesmen for the organization stated that "although it may be good business, the money will be of no use should the planet become uninhabitable, which will happen soon if this destruction is not halted."

From Our Readers

Narcolepsy Thirty years ago I was diagnosed as having narcolepsy. All my life I have lived with the problems that arise from falling asleep at the wrong moment. Because I fall asleep at Christian meetings, others have concluded that I have little appreciation for spiritual matters. Efforts to explain my situation have been in vain. Therefore, thanks for your fine article (April 8, 1991) about the strange sleeping sickness.

R. N., Germany

Honor the Elderly Thank you for the articles on "Do You Honor the Elderly?" (March 22, 1991) After 40 years of faithful service to God, my mother needed full-time nursing care because of Alzheimer's disease. The calendar published by the Watch Tower Society proved to be a great help, as her many visitors would write their names on the date of their visit. I was thus able to remind her that I had not been her only visitor, since more than half of the dates were filled with names! Also, she received excellent care from the nursing-home staff because they knew so many were interested in her welfare. Thank you for your concern for us.

W. J. H., United States

My mother, paralyzed from the waist down, suffers from incontinence. Every morning we have to wash her completely and change the bed sheets. She has to be dressed and fed, and she often needs medical treatment. My husband and children are a real support, but the greater part of the responsibility falls on me. I have moments of discouragement, and a spirit of self-denial is constantly needed. It was therefore with immense joy that I read your articles. Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

L. D., Italy

Example for Siblings Your article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Be an Example to My Younger Brothers and Sisters?" affected me

deeply. (April 8, 1991) Being the eldest of three children, I can only say I wish I had read that article in my youth. I now have two children of my own and am relieved that they will have such good counsel to follow.

L. K., Germany

Baby-Sitting Thank you so much for the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Be a Good Baby-Sitter?" (March 8, 1991) I received it in the mail while baby-sitting my six-year-old brother. As I was reading it, I told him to pick up his toys. Then I came to the paragraph where it mentioned that rewarding good behavior may work better than a barrage of threats. I tried this, and it worked! I also appreciated the part where it mentioned that it's not good to call a child stupid or dumb. I've been calling him stupid, and now I realize that this is stupid on my part.

A. L., United States

Asbestos As a trained Asbestos Project Worker, I would like to say how much I enjoyed the balanced article "The Asbestos Story." (March 22, 1991) As part of my training, I heard lectures from cancer specialists. One doctor verified that your chances of being adversely affected by asbestos are far greater if you smoke. As usual, your articles are accurate and meaty.

J. M., United States

Lupus My uncle sent me the article with Robin Kanstul's story "How I Live With Lupus." (May 8, 1990) I read the entire magazine and enjoyed it. I too am afflicted with lupus, and doctors never told me half of what the article did. Thanks, Robin Kanstul, for telling. Thanks, *Awake!*, for publishing her story. I now know I'm not alone, and I'm learning to cope.

R. B., United States

Migratory Birds Beware: Detour Europe!

"SMILING like the cat that swallowed the canary, the waiter proudly presents the main course. On a plate, beside a serving of steaming cornmeal, three tiny, blackened beaks point up at the hapless diner. The birds' grilled bodies are plucked but not gutted. Their charred wings and spindly legs resemble insect appendages. They glisten in fragrant olive oil."

So began an article in *The Wall Street Journal* last year. It is a festive, expensive holiday dish served in a restaurant in Italy. The diner usually pops the birds into his mouth whole, crunching bones and all. Only this time it doesn't happen that way. Instead, the diner, Piergiorgio Candela, an official of Italy's bird-protection society, prods the three small corpses, trying to identify the species. He concludes: "These birds are illegal." On one such raid, he found 1,400 plucked robins in the kitchen.

The article continues: "A few species can be killed and sold legally; most can't. No matter. Each year, 50 million protected robins, larks and other songbirds end up on Italian dinner plates. . . . Altogether, hunting and trapping kill about 15% of migratory birds in the Mediterranean area. In Spain, Catalonian farmers smear twigs with glue to stick birds fast, before pickling them. Near Bergamo, in Italy, trappers blind songbirds to make sweeter-singing house pets. And in Malta, 10% of the 300,000 inhabitants have an annual orgy of shooting, caging and stuffing four million wild birds."

Migratory songbirds don't have much to sing about these days. In some regions hardly a peep is heard from them.

G.C. Kelley photo

