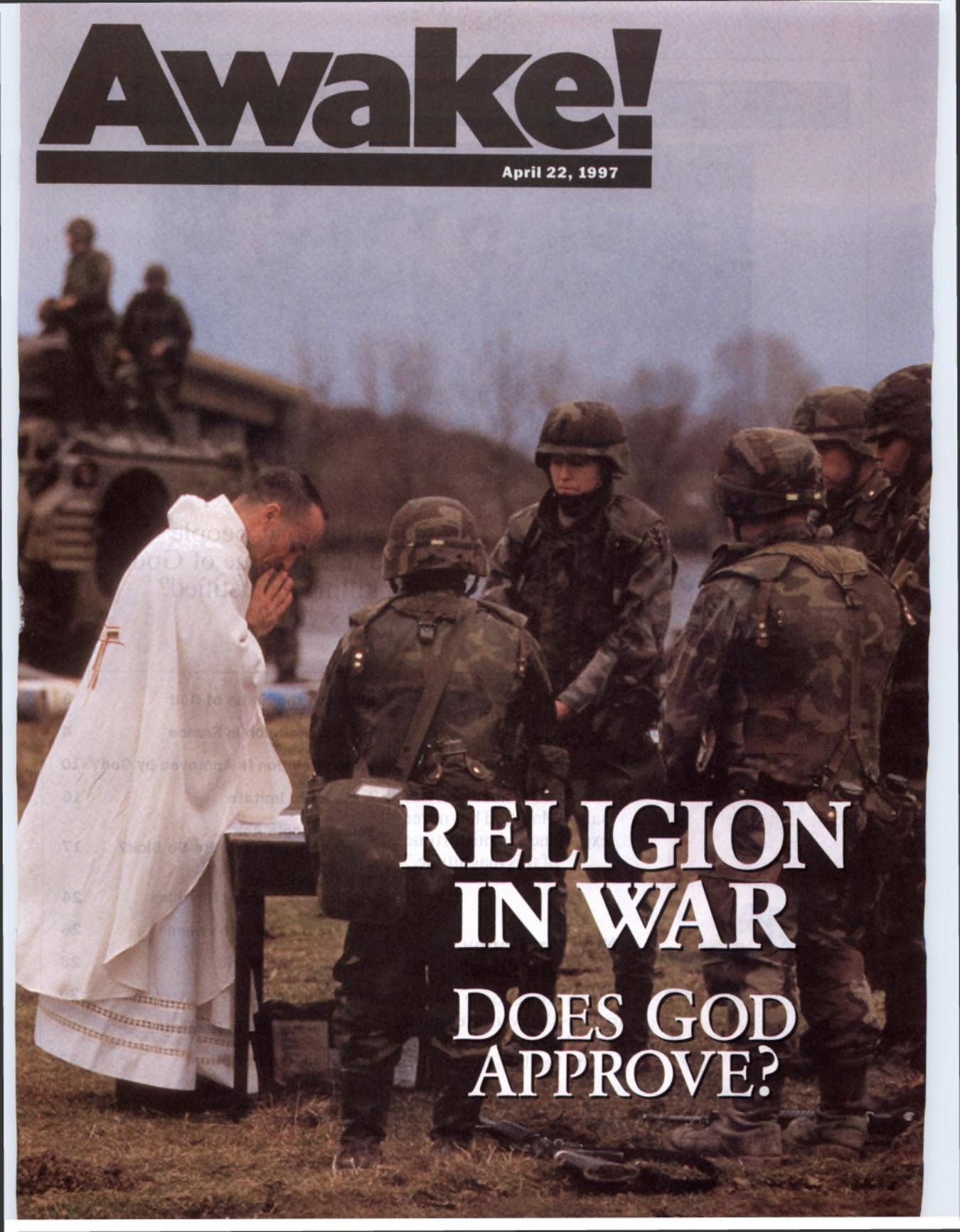


Awake!

April 22, 1997



RELIGION IN WAR DOES GOD APPROVE?

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Religion in War Does God Approve?

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Throughout history, people have killed in the name of God. Can such killing be justified? What is God's view?

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Russian President Yeltsin said: "Mankind has never experienced a misfortune of this magnitude."



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Cover: Alexandra Boulat/Sipa Press

KILLING IN THE NAME OF GOD

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE

"IN THE NAME OF GOD, WE KILL AND WILL GO ON KILLING"

UNDER the above quoted headline, the *International Herald Tribune* observed: "This century, which occasional optimists like to consider as enlightened, has been as marked as any of its predecessors by the dreadful tendency of men to kill each other in the name of God."

The writer cited examples of religious massacres in early centuries. Then, pointing to massacres that have occurred in the 20th century, he concluded: "What we see is a horrifying continuation of the savage intolerance of bygone ages. Worship remains an excuse for political violence and territorial conquest."

Some try to justify today's religious wars by noting that God approved of the killing of Canaanites by ancient Israelites. Yet, that is no justification for professed Christians to wage war today. Why? Because the Israelites were directly instructed by God to act as executioners of his righteous judgments against demon-worshiping peoples, whose worship included gross sexual immorality and child sacrifice.—Deuteronomy 7:1-5; 2 Chronicles 28:3.

An evidence that the wars of ancient Israel were no ordinary conflicts is the miraculous nature of the victories that God gave the nation. For example, the ancient Israelites were once directed to use horns, jars, and torches—hardly instruments of classic warfare! On another occasion singers were positioned at the front of

an Israelite army that was facing an overwhelming force of invading armies from several nations.—Judges 7:17-22; 2 Chronicles 20:10-26.

Moreover, when, on occasion, the Israelites engaged in wars that were not ordained by God, they were not blessed by him and they suffered defeat. (Deuteronomy 28:15, 25; Judges 2:11-14; 1 Samuel 4:1-3, 10, 11) Israel's wars, therefore, cannot be invoked to justify the wars waged in Christendom.

In the name of religion, Hindus have fought against Muslims and Sikhs; Shiite Muslims have warred against Sunni Muslims; and in Sri Lanka, Buddhists and Hindus have slaughtered one another.

Typical of killing in the name of God were the wars that took place in France during the 16th century. The story of these wars comprises some of the bloodiest pages in the history of the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions in Europe. Let us examine these wars, and see what we can learn from them.

U.S. Army photo



WARS OF RELIGION IN FRANCE

ON Sunday, March 1, 1562, the duke of Guise and his brother Charles, cardinal of Lorraine—two spearheads of French Catholicism—were riding with their armed guards toward Vassy, a village east of Paris. They decided to stop at the church in Vassy to attend Mass.

Suddenly they heard the sound of hymns. The singing came from several hundred Protestants who were assembled in a barn to worship. The soldiers forced their way in. During the confusion that followed, insults were exchanged and then stones began flying. The soldiers opened fire, killing dozens of Protestants and injuring a hundred others.

What events led up to this massacre? What was the Protestant response?

Historical Background

During the first half of the 16th century, France was prosperous and well populated. This economic and demographic situation was accompanied by efforts to practice a more spiritual and brotherly form of Catholicism. People wanted a church that would be less rich and more holy. Some members of the clergy as well as scholarly humanists demanded religious reforms to com-

bat abuses by high-ranking prelates and the incompetence of the lower clergy. One cleric who strove for renewal was the Catholic bishop Guillaume Briçonnet.

In his diocese of Meaux, Briçonnet encouraged all to read the Scriptures. He even financed a new translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures into French. Soon the ire of the Sorbonne University of Theology in Paris, the guardian of Catholic orthodoxy, fell upon him, interrupting his efforts. But the bishop had the protection of Francis I, king of France from 1515 to 1547. At the time, the king was favorable to reform.

Francis I, however, tolerated criticism of the church only to the point that it did not threaten public order and national unity. In 1534, Protestant extremists put up posters that denounced the Catholic Mass as idolatry, even nailing a poster on the door of the king's bedroom. As a result, Francis I did an about-face and launched a fierce campaign of suppression.

Brutal Suppression

Protestants were soon being burned at the stake. Many humanists, their sympathizers, and followers of fledgling Protestantism fled

Awake!

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

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The massacre at Vassy touched off the wars of religion

the country. The authorities began censoring books and controlling teachers, publishers, and printers.

The Waldenses took the full brunt of official opposition. They were a minority group of Bible-oriented people who lived in poor villages in the southeast of the country. Some were burned at the stake, hundreds were massacred, and about 20 of their villages were ravaged.—See box on page 6.

Aware of the need for reform within the church, a council of Catholic bishops met in December 1545, in Trent, Italy. When the council concluded in 1563, according to *The Cambridge Modern History*, its “general effect ... was to strengthen the hands of those who were determined to root out Protestantism.”

The Prelude to War

Tired of waiting for changes, many members of the movement for reform within the Catholic Church sided with Protestantism. About 1560, numerous French aristocrats and their supporters joined the Huguenots, as Protestants had come to be called. The Huguenots became increasingly vocal. Their public meetings were, at times, a



Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

source of provocation and antagonism. For example, in 1558, thousands of them gathered in Paris for four consecutive days to sing psalms.

All of this angered both the powerful princes of the Catholic Church and the Catholic masses. At the instigation of Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, King Henry II, who had succeeded his father, Francis I, promulgated the Edict of Écouen, in June 1559. Its avowed purpose was to eradicate the “infamous Lutheran riffraff.” This led to a campaign of terror in Paris against the Huguenots.

Henry II died a few weeks later from wounds suffered in a tournament. His son, King Francis II, urged on by the Guise family, renewed the edict calling for the death penalty for persistent Protestants. The following year Francis II died, and his mother,

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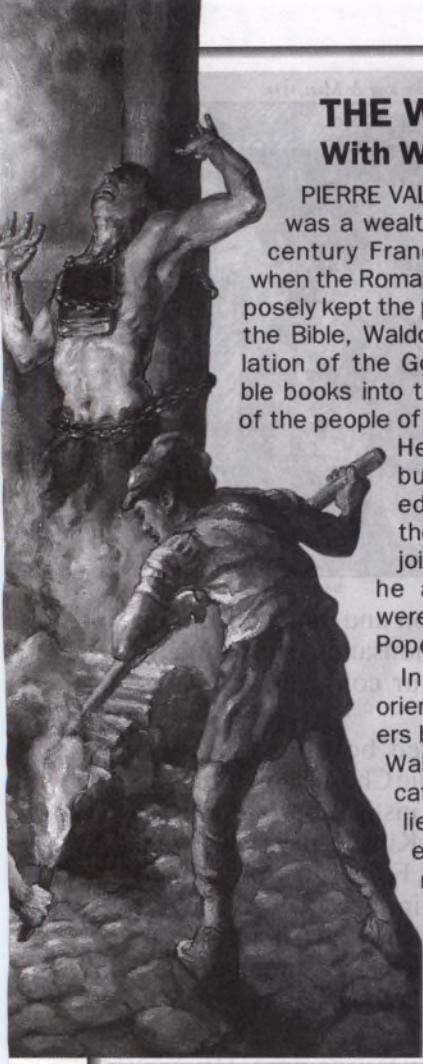
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THE WALDENSES STOOD FIRM With What Effect?



PIERRE VALDES, or Peter Waldo, was a wealthy merchant in 12th-century France. During this time when the Roman Catholic Church purposely kept the people in ignorance of the Bible, Waldo financed the translation of the Gospels and other Bible books into the common language of the people of southeastern France.

He then gave up his business and dedicated himself to preaching the Gospel. Soon many joined him, and in 1184 he and his associates were excommunicated by Pope Lucius III.

In time, these Bible-oriented groups of preachers became known as the Waldenses. They advocated a return to the beliefs and practices of early Christianity. They rejected traditional Catholic practices and beliefs, including indulgences, prayers for the dead, purgatory, worship of

Mary, prayers to the "saints," infant baptism, adoration of the crucifix, and transubstantiation. As a result, the Waldenses often suffered terribly at the hands of the Catholic Church. Historian Will Durant describes the situation when King Francis I launched a campaign against non-Catholics:

"Cardinal de Tournon, alleging that the Waldenses were in a treasonable conspiracy against the government, persuaded the ailing, vacillating King to sign a decree (January 1, 1545) that all Waldenses found guilty of heresy should be put to death. . . . Within a week (April 12-18) several villages were burned to the ground; in one of them 800 men, women, and children were slaughtered; in two months 3,000 were killed, twenty-two villages were razed, 700 men were sent to the galleys. Twenty-five terrified women, seeking refuge in a cavern, were asphyxiated by a fire built at its mouth."

Regarding such historical events, Durant commented: "These persecutions were the supreme failure of Francis' reign." But what was the effect upon those who observed the steadfastness of the Waldenses during the persecutions authorized by the king? Durant wrote: "The courage of the martyrs gave dignity and splendor to their cause; thousands of onlookers must have been impressed and disturbed, who, without these spectacular executions, might never have bothered to change their inherited faith."

Catherine de Médicis, ruled in place of his ten-year-old brother, Charles IX. Catherine's policy of reconciliation was not to the liking of the Guises, who were determined to stamp out Protestantism.

In 1561, Catherine organized a seminar in Poissy, near Paris, at which Catholic and Protestant theologians met. In the edict issued in January 1562, Catherine granted Protestants freedom to assemble for worship outside of cities. Catholics were incensed! This set the stage for what occurred two months later—the massacre of Protestants

at the barn in the village of Vassy, as described earlier.

The First Three Wars

The slaughter at Vassy touched off the first in a series of eight religious wars that submerged France into a horror of mutual killing from 1562 until the mid-1590's. Although political and social issues were also involved, the bloodbath was primarily motivated by religion.

After the Battle of Dreux in December 1562, which claimed 6,000 lives, that first

war of religion drew to a close. The Peace of Amboise, signed in March 1563, granted Huguenot nobles limited freedom to worship in certain places.

"The second war was precipitated by Huguenot fears of an international Catholic plot," says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*. At the time, Catholic magistrates were commonly hanging citizens merely for being Huguenots. In 1567 a Huguenot attempt to seize King Charles IX and his mother, Catherine, ignited the second war.

After telling of an especially bloody battle at St.-Denis, outside Paris, historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote: "France again wondered what religion was this that led men to such slaughter." Soon afterward, in March 1568, the Peace of Longjumeau granted Huguenots the modest toleration that they had previously enjoyed under the Peace of Amboise.

"Saint" Bartholomew's Day Massacre, during which thousands of Protestants were slaughtered by Catholics

Photo Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne



Catholics, however, were outraged and refused to carry out the terms of the peace. Thus, in September 1568, a third war of religion broke out. A subsequent peace treaty granted Huguenots even greater concessions. Fortified towns, including the port of La Rochelle, were ceded to them. Also, an important Protestant prince, Admiral de Coligny, was appointed to the king's council. Again Catholics were incensed.

"Saint" Bartholomew's Day Massacre

About a year later, on August 22, 1572, Coligny survived an assassination attack in Paris that took place while he was walking from the Louvre Palace to his house. Furious, the Protestants threatened to take harsh measures to avenge themselves if justice was not done speedily. In private council, youthful King Charles IX, his mother Catherine de Médicis, and several princes



sacre itself," reported a historian, "was the rejoicing which it excited." Upon hearing of the slaughter, Pope Gregory XIII ordered a thanksgiving ceremony and sent his congratulations to Catherine de Médicis. He also ordered a special medal struck to commemorate the slaughter of the Huguenots and authorized the painting of a picture of the massacre, bearing the words: "The Pope approves the killing of Coligny."

Reportedly, after the massacre, Charles IX had visions of his victims and would cry to his nurse: "What evil counsel have I followed! O my God, forgive me!" He died in 1574 at the age of 23 and was succeeded by his brother Henry III.

**Protestants killed
Catholics and
destroyed church
property
(above and below)**

**Religious
Wars Continued**

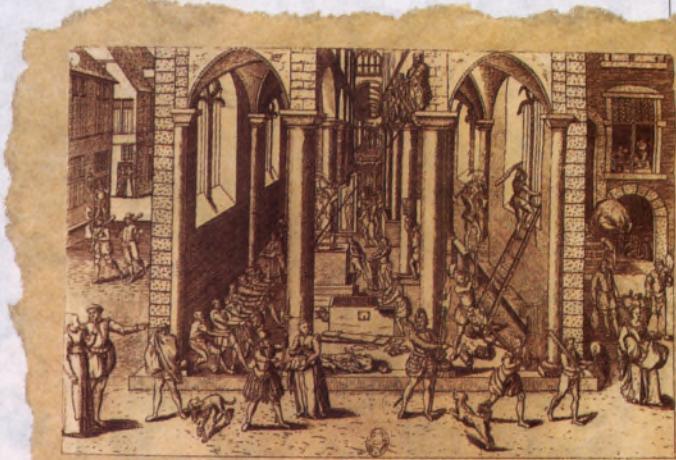
In the meantime, the Catholic population was stirred up by its leaders against the Huguenots. In Toulouse, Catholic clerics exhorted their followers: "Kill all, pillage; we are your fathers. We will protect you." By means of violent suppression, the king, parliaments,

decided to eliminate Coligny. To avoid any reprisals, they also ordered the murder of all the Protestants who had come to Paris to attend the wedding of Protestant Henry of Navarre and Catherine's daughter Margaret of Valois.

On the night of August 24, the bells of the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, opposite the Louvre, sounded the signal for the massacre to begin. The duke of Guise and his men rushed to the building where Coligny was sleeping. There Coligny was killed and thrown from the window, and his corpse was mutilated. The Catholic duke spread the word: "Kill them all. It is the king's order."

From August 24 to 29, scenes of horror marred the streets of Paris. Some claimed that the river Seine flowed red with the blood of thousands of slaughtered Huguenots. Other towns witnessed their own bloodbaths. Estimates of the death toll vary from 10,000 to 100,000; however, most agree on a figure of at least 30,000.

"One fact, as horrible as the mas-



governors, and captains set the example, and the Catholic masses followed.

However, the Huguenots fought back. Within two months of the "Saint" Bartholomew's Day massacre, they began the fourth religious war. Where they outnumbered Catholics, they destroyed statues, crucifixes, and altars in Catholic churches, and even killed. "God wants neither towns nor people to be spared," declared John Calvin, the leader of French Protestantism, in his pamphlet *Declaration to Maintain the True Faith*.

¶ Four more wars of religion followed. The fifth ended in 1576 with King Henry III signing a peace that provided the Huguenots full freedom of worship everywhere in France. The ultra-Catholic city of Paris eventually revolted and drove out Henry III, considered too conciliatory toward the Huguenots. The Catholics set up an opposition government, the Catholic Holy League, led by Henry of Guise.

Finally, the eighth war, or the War of the Three Henrys, saw Henry III (Catholic) form an alliance with his future successor, Henry of Navarre (Protestant), against Henry of Guise (Catholic). Henry III managed to have Henry of Guise assassinated, but in August 1589, Henry III himself was assassinated by a Dominican monk. Thus, Henry of Navarre, who had been spared 17 years earlier during the "Saint" Bartholomew's Day massacre, became King Henry IV.

Since Henry IV was a Huguenot, Paris refused to submit to him. The Catholic Holy League organized armed opposition to him throughout the country. Henry won several battles, but when a Spanish army arrived to support the Catholics, he finally decided to re-

nounce Protestantism and accept the Catholic faith. Crowned on February 27, 1594, Henry entered Paris, where the people, totally exhausted by the wars, hailed him as king.

Thus the French Wars of Religion came to an end after more than 30 years in which Catholics and Protestants periodically slaughtered one another. On April 13, 1598, Henry IV issued the historic Edict of Nantes, which authorized freedom of conscience and worship to Protestants. According to the pope, the edict was "the worst thing that could be imagined because it granted freedom of conscience to one and all, which was the most terrible thing in the world."

Throughout France, Catholics felt that the edict was a betrayal of Henry's promise to support their creed. The church did not rest until, nearly a century later, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, initiating an even more severe persecution of the Huguenots.

Fruit of the Wars

By the end of the 16th century, France's prosperity had vanished. Half the kingdom had been besieged, plundered, ransomed, or devastated. The soldiers made excessive demands of people, which led to peasant revolts. The Protestant population, decimated by death sentences, massacres, expatriations, and recantations, entered the 17th century diminished in number.

By all appearances, the Catholics had won the French Wars of Religion. But did God bless their victory? Evidently not. Weary of all this killing in the name of God, many Frenchmen became irreligious. They were the fore-runners of what has been called the anti-Christian orientation of the 18th century.

WHICH RELIGION IS APPROVED BY GOD?

UNFORTUNATELY, the religious hatreds of 16th-century France did not die. In the following century, deep prejudices tore Europe apart, as Catholics and Protestants again took to battlefields during the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). In the name of God, professed Christians renewed their vicious slaughtering of one another.

Religious hatred and killing has not ceased. Catholics and Protestants have recently slaughtered one another in Ireland, and members of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic religions have done the same in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. And unbelievable as it may seem, during World Wars I and II, both Catholics and Protestants killed hundreds of thousands of members of

their own religions on battlefields. Is there justification for this killing? What is God's view?

Efforts at Justification

The 1995 *Britannica Book of the Year* states: "Theological justifications for violence were attempted on several fronts in 1994." Over 1,500 years ago, a similar attempt to justify killing was made by the Catholic philosopher "Saint" Augustine. According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, he "was the originator of the just war theory," and the encyclopedia notes that his thinking 'exerts an influence even in modern times.'

The Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches have condoned, and even promoted, killing in the name of God. Although the record of these religions is a bloody one, that of many other major reli-



"THEY PUBLICLY DECLARE THEY KNOW GOD,
BUT THEY DISOWN HIM BY THEIR WORKS."

TITUS 1:16

gions throughout the world is no better. How, then, can you identify the people who practice true worship?

Not simply by listening to what they *profess* to believe. Regarding this matter, Jesus Christ warned: “Beware of false prophets who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves. You will be able to tell them by their fruits. . . . A sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit. . . . Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire.” (Italics ours.)—Matthew 7:15-20, *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

Known by Their Fruits

Millions of honest people are recognizing that the world’s religions are ‘rotten trees’ that have produced “bad fruit,” in particular, by promoting bloody wars. In the Bible the world empire of false religion is described as a spiritual harlot called “Babylon the Great.” The Bible says that “in her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth.”—Revelation 17:3-6; 18:24.

Thus, far from approving the wars that have been blessed by religious leaders, God will shortly execute judgment upon those religions that have murdered in his name. He will do this in fulfillment of the Bible prophecy that says: “With a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be hurled down, and she will never be found again.” When that glad-some event takes place, God will have “executed judgment upon the great harlot” and “avenged the blood of his slaves at her hand.”—Revelation 18:21; 19:2.

People who are disgusted with all the killing that has gone on in the name of God may wonder if there are Christians who actually live in harmony with the Bible prophecy: “They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.”

(Isaiah 2:4) Do you know a truly God-fearing people who have renounced war?

The Religion Approved by God

A sociological study entitled “More About Justifying Violence,” published by the University of Michigan, stated: “Since the turn of the century, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have consistently maintained their stand of nonviolent ‘Christian Neutrality’ through two major world wars and the subsequent military clashes of the ‘Cold War’ period.” Identifying the reason the Witnesses remain neutral, the study said: “The teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses stem from their conviction that the Bible is the inspired word of God.”

Yes, Jehovah’s Witnesses live by the Bible, which teaches: “The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. . . . We should have love for one another; not like Cain, who . . . slaughtered his brother.”—1 John 3:10-12.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have often drawn the attention of people to the bloodguilt of the world’s religions. They have also echoed the urgent Bible plea: “Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind.”—Revelation 18:4, 5.

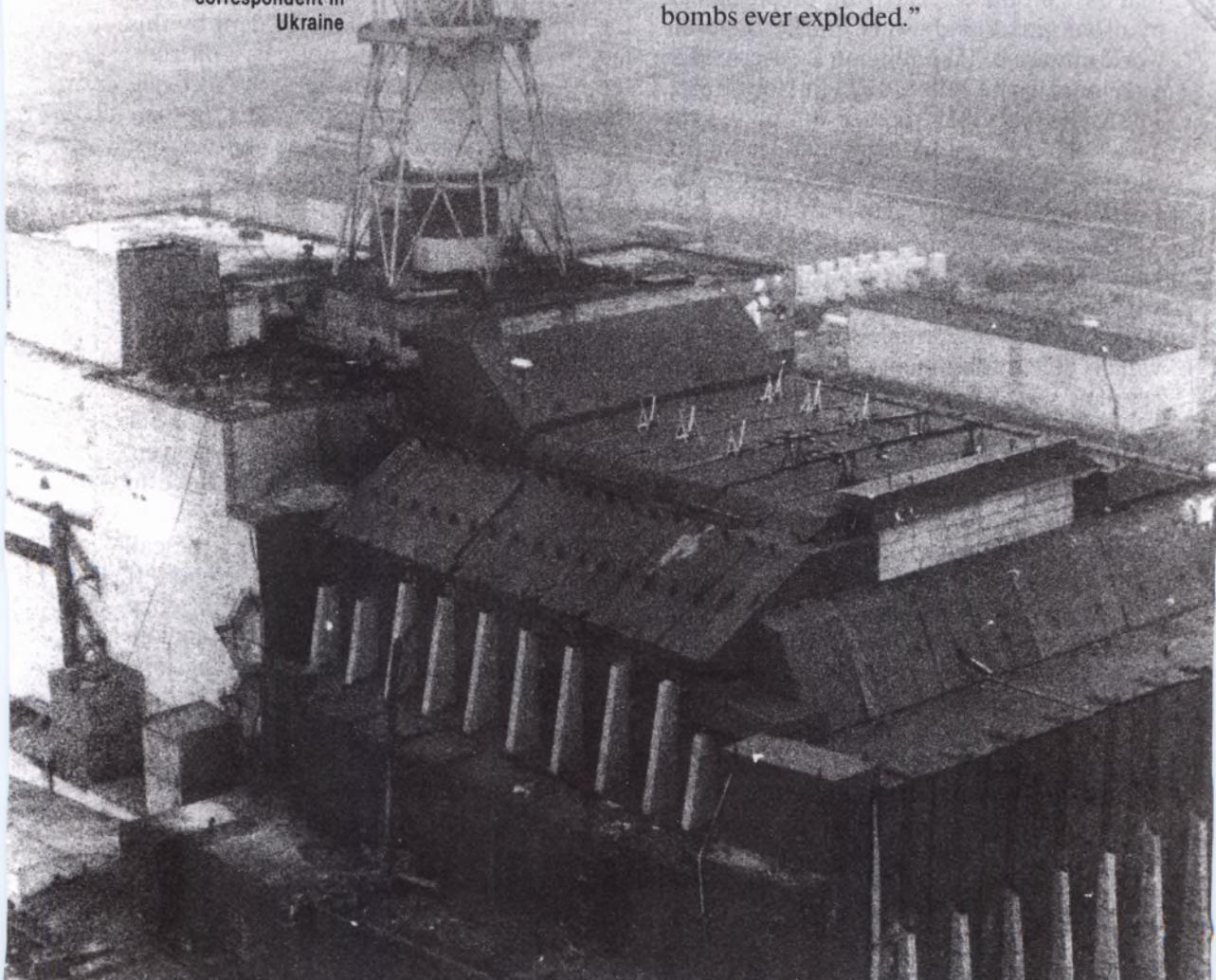
Many sincere people are heeding the call to quit the world empire of false religion. If you are deeply shocked by all the killing done in the name of religion, we invite you to contact the person who gave you this magazine or write to one of the addresses supplied on page 5. Jehovah’s Witnesses will be happy to help you learn about the Bible promise of a new world of righteousness, in which war will be no more.—Psalm 46:8, 9; 2 Peter 3:13.

Firm Hope Amid Chernobyl's Gloom

By Awake!
correspondent in
Ukraine

On April 26, 1986, the worst nuclear-power-plant accident in history occurred in Chernobyl, Ukraine. Later that year Mikhail Gorbachev, then Soviet president, noted that the tragedy was a cruel reminder that "mankind does not yet control the gigantic forces it has brought to life."

Emphasizing the significance of the Chernobyl disaster, the German edition of *Psychology Today* of February 1987, reported: "The reactor disaster in Chernobyl . . . was a turning point in the history of modern civilization. And it was a catastrophe that will substantially affect us for centuries." *The New York Times* said that "as much long-term radiation [had been emitted] into the world's air, topsoil and water as all the nuclear tests and bombs ever exploded."



The German newspaper *Hannoversche Allgemeine* predicted that "in the next 50 years an estimated 60,000 people all over the world would die of cancer as a result of the Soviet reactor meltdown . . . A further 5,000 would suffer serious genetic damage and up to 1,000 would suffer from health defects from birth."

The Chernobyl tragedy created a cloud of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty that has darkened hundreds of thousands of lives. Yet, some have come to enjoy a firm hope amid dense gloom. Consider the Rudnik family, consisting of Victor and Anna and their two daughters, Elena and Anja. In April 1986 the Rudniks were living in Pripet, less than two miles from the Chernobyl reactor.

The Day of the Accident

On that tragic Saturday morning, heroic action by firemen at the crippled reactor prevented an even worse outcome. Within hours the firemen were stricken with radiation sickness, and a number later died. Grigori Medwedew, deputy chief engineer at Chernobyl in the 1970's, describes in his book *Burned Souls*: "The cloud drifted across the small pinewood plantation that separates the reactor site from the town, covering the small forest with a radioactive rainfall of ash." Many tons of vaporized radioactive material were reportedly released into the atmosphere!

Remarkably, life in Pripet, a city of over 40,000 inhabitants, seemed to go on normally that Saturday. Children played in the streets, and people prepared for the celebration of the Soviet holiday on May 1. There was no announcement of the accident and no warning of the danger. Anna Rudnik was out strolling with her three-year-old daughter, Elena, when they met Anna's stepfather. He had heard of the accident. Worried about the risk of radiation, he quickly drove them to his home about ten miles away.

The radioactive cloud rose into the atmosphere and was swept hundreds of miles across Ukraine, Belorussia (now Belarus), Russia, and Poland, as well as over Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. On the following Monday, scientists in Sweden and Denmark became anxious when they recorded high levels of radioactivity.

The Aftermath

Soviet soldiers, firemen, construction experts, and others were sent to Chernobyl. This group—some 600,000 strong—became known as the "liquidators." They prevented an even worse disaster for Europe by sealing the damaged reactor with a sarcophagus of steel and concrete that was ten stories high and six feet thick.

Evacuation of nearby areas commenced within the next few days. "We had to abandon our home, leaving everything behind—clothes, money, documents, food—everything we possessed," explained Victor. "We were deeply anxious, since Anna was pregnant with our second child."

Some 135,000 people had to move—all settlements within nearly 20 miles of the reactor were abandoned. The Rudniks moved in with relatives. However, these relatives grew afraid that the Rudniks would spread radioactivity to them. "They became uneasy," Anna said, "and in the end they asked us to leave." Other evacuees had similar painful experiences. At last, in September 1986 the Rudniks resettled in Kaluga, about 110 miles southwest of Moscow, Russia.

"Then we finally understood that there was no going back," Anna observed. "We had lost our beloved family home, where we had been born and raised. It was a beautiful area carpeted with flowers and meadows, with water lilies in the creek. The forest was lush with berries and mushrooms."

Not only was Ukraine's beauty tainted but its role as granary of the Soviet Union was

affected. Much of the country's harvest that autumn had been contaminated. Similarly, in Scandinavia, 70 percent of the reindeer meat was declared unfit for consumption because the animals had grazed on radiated lichens. And in parts of Germany, vegetables were left to rot in the fields because of the fear of contamination.

Health Effects of Radiation

Official figures released five years after the accident state that 576,000 people were exposed to radiation. Incidences of both cancerous and noncancerous diseases are reported to be higher among such people. Especially have young people been affected. The *New Scientist* magazine of December 2, 1995, reported that one of Europe's leading thyroid experts believes that "as many as 40 per cent of the children exposed to the highest levels of fallout from Chernobyl when they were under a year old could go on to develop thyroid cancer as adults."

"Mankind has never experienced a misfortune of this magnitude, with consequences so grave and so hard to eliminate."

President Yeltsin of Russia

Because Anna had been exposed to the radiation during her pregnancy, doctors insisted that she have an abortion. When Victor and Anna refused, they had to sign a declaration promising that they would care for the

child even if it was born deformed. Although Anja is not deformed, she does have myopia, respiratory problems, and cardiovascular diseases. In addition, the health of the other members of the Rudnik family has deteriorated since the disaster. Victor and Elena both developed heart problems, and Anna is but one of many who are registered as Chernobyl invalids.

Among those most heavily radiated were the liquidators who sealed the damaged reactor. Thousands who helped with the cleanup are said to have since died before their time. Many survivors have neurological and psychosomatic complaints. Depression is widespread, and suicide not uncommon.

Angela is one of the survivors who began to suffer severe health problems. At the time of the disaster, she was living in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, over 50 miles from Chernobyl. But afterward, she spent time delivering supplies to the liquidators at the reactor site. Svetlana, another survivor, who lives in Irpin', near Kiev, developed cancer and underwent surgery.

Looking Back

In April 1996, ten years after the great mishap, Mikhail Gorbachev admitted: "We were just not prepared for that sort of situation." At the same time, President Yeltsin of Russia commented: "Mankind has never experienced a misfortune of this magnitude, with consequences so grave and so hard to eliminate."

Significantly, the German edition of *Scientific American* compared the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster to what would have resulted from a medium-size nuclear war. Some estimate the number who have died because of the tragedy at about 30,000.

According to a news report last year, by the tenth anniversary of the accident, there was still an 18-mile zone around the plant

that is unfit for human life. However, the report noted that "647 determined residents have sneaked, bribed their way or openly walked back into the zone." It observed: "Absolutely no one lives within a 6-mile radius of the plant. Another 12-mile-wide belt surrounding that is where the few hundred people have returned."

Confidence Amid Widespread Fear

For many thousands who once lived near Chernobyl, life has been and still is very difficult. One study of evacuees revealed that 80 percent are unhappy in their new homes. They feel sad, tired, uneasy, irritable, and lonely. Chernobyl was not just a nuclear accident—it was a social and psychological crisis of overwhelming proportions. Not surprisingly, many refer to events as being either pre-Chernobyl or post-Chernobyl.

In contrast with so many others, the Rudnik family cope with the situation remarkably well. They began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and, as a result, developed a strong faith in the promises found in God's Word regarding a new world of righteousness. (Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) Then, in 1995, Victor and Anna symbolized their dedication to God by undergoing water baptism. Later their daughter Elena was also baptized.

Victor explains: "Studying the Bible enabled us to get to know our Creator, Jehovah God, and his purposes for mankind on earth. We are no longer depressed, since we know that when God's Kingdom comes, such terrible accidents will never occur again. We look forward to the time when the countryside around our dear home near Chernobyl will recover from its depleted state and become part of a wonderful paradise."

Angela and Svetlana, who also trust in God's promises of a new world of righteousness, have the same bright outlook despite their radiation-induced sicknesses. "With-

out a knowledge of the Creator and of his purposes," Angela noted, "life would be difficult. But having a close relationship with Jehovah helps me remain positive. My desire is to continue to serve him as a full-time preacher of the Bible." Svetlana added: "My Christian brothers and sisters are a great help to me."

Chernobyl was not just a nuclear accident—it was a social and psychological crisis of overwhelming proportions

Study of the Bible has revealed to such ones that accidents caused by "time and unforeseen occurrence" affect people wherever they live and whoever they may be. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) But Bible students have also learned that regardless of how devastating their troubles may be, there is no damage that Jehovah God cannot repair, no injury that he cannot heal, and no loss that he cannot compensate.

How can you too develop confidence in the promises of God and thus enjoy a bright hope? The writer of the Bible book of Proverbs answers: "For your confidence to come to be in Jehovah himself I have given you knowledge today." (Proverbs 22:19) Yes, you need to take in knowledge by means of a regular Bible study. Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be happy to help you do this. They offer a free Bible study program that will be provided at a time and place convenient for you.



A Model to Imitate

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CHILE

Giacomo Castelli has an apartment in Antofagasta, a city of about 170,000 in northern Chile. From his balcony last June, he observed a group of people in a local park. "What was incredible was seeing teenagers laughing and enjoying themselves together with their parents," he wrote in a letter to the newspaper *El Mercurio*. To confirm this unusual sight, he went down to the park.

"I was in for another surprise," observed the inquisitive writer. "When some of the families finished their lunch, each and every one of their members began to pick up what had been accidentally dropped on the lawn and deposit it in each one's garbage bag. . . .

"I wanted to know who these unusual people were," the writer continued. "I went up to a lovely girl who could easily be queen of whatever she wanted, and she very sweetly told me: 'We are Jehovah's Witnesses, and we are meeting at the Regional Stadium for an assembly.'" During the noon break, groups from the circuit assembly attended by over 3,000 people had gone over to the park to have their lunch.

"I am an Apostolic Roman Catholic," the writ-

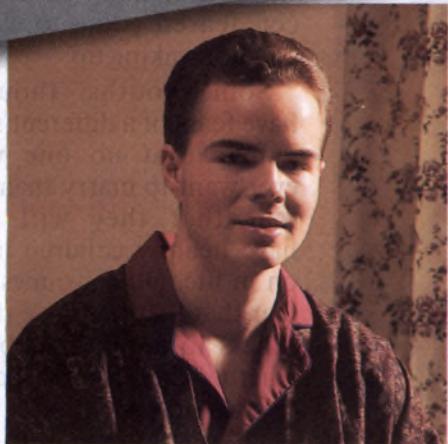
er said. "I faithfully attend holy Mass and even made a pilgrimage to Lourdes, in France, years ago.

"However, in honor of my profound Christian upbringing, I must honestly ask myself: What do they have that we Catholics, the religion of the majority in Chile, do not have? Why do these teenagers seem so comfortable with their parents while my three daughters run from me when I even propose the idea of going out together?

"Why are our Catholic children violent; why do they shout and play 'Power Rangers' while hitting other children, . . . whereas these children are peaceable, wholesomely cheerful, and ecology minded? Why can't we Catholics get together in assemblies without being caught up in the odious commercialism that surrounds our most holy religious places, such as the shrines La Tirana, Andacollo, and others?"

The writer, Mr. Castelli, concluded his letter to the newspaper with the question: "Will those of us who consider ourselves Catholics and Christians ever become like them? May God and the Virgin help us to do so."

Young People Ask...



Why Do I Have to Be So Sick?

WHEN Jason was 13 years old, he set his heart on one day serving as a full-time minister at Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. He made a wooden box for himself and called it his Bethel box. He began to accumulate things in it that he thought would be useful when he began his Bethel career.

However, just three months after his 18th birthday, Jason was diagnosed with Crohn's disease—a relentless, painful bowel disorder. "It just crushed me," he recalls. "All I could do was call my Dad at work and cry. I knew that, if nothing else, it meant my

dream of going to Bethel had met a road-block."

Illness is a basic reason why "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22) Untold millions of young people are included among the sick. Many young people eventually get better. But others must deal with diseases that are chronic or, in some cases, life threatening. Included among afflictions that youths often suffer are asthma, diabetes, sickle-cell disease, infectious illnesses, epilepsy, mental illness, and cancer. Some youths live with multiple ailments.

'Why Is This Happening to Me?'

Illness often creates mental and emotional stress, not to speak of physical distress. For instance, if sickness keeps you out of school for months, you may not only get behind academically but feel cut off socially as well. When 12-year-old Sunny has to miss school because of his periodic stays in the hospital, he worries, 'What are my classmates doing? What am I missing today?'

Similarly, spiritual growth can seem to suffer when you are too sick to attend Christian meetings or even to read the Bible. At this point you need extra emotional and spiritual support. At first, you may refuse to believe the diagnosis. Later, you may feel very angry, perhaps at yourself, thinking that you could have somehow avoided the illness. You may feel like crying out, 'Why did God let this happen to me?' (Compare Matthew 27:46.) Actually, it is normal to experience at least some depression.

In addition, a youngster may even imagine that if he makes some special effort, such as trying to be extra good, God will take away his illness. However, such thinking can lead to disappointment, since God does not promise miraculous healing at this time.
—1 Corinthians 12:30; 13:8, 13.



You may ask,
‘Why did God let
this happen to me?’

ten, feared that he was going to die during a bad asthma attack. And Elizabeth, 16, who was fighting bone cancer, feared going to sleep and not waking up.

Some youths, though, have fears of a different sort—fear that no one will ever want to marry them or fear that they will not have healthy children later on in life. Other youngsters fear that they may give their illness to family members, whether their illness is contagious or not.

Perhaps you had hoped that you would never have to die—that you would be alive when God brings “the great tribulation.” (Revelation 7:14, 15; John 11:26) If so, learning that you have a life-threatening illness can be doubly shocking. You may wonder if you have done something to offend Jehovah, or you may think that God has singled you out for some special test of integrity. However, these are not proper conclusions. “With evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone,” says God’s Word, the Bible. (James 1:13) Sickness and death are unhappy parts of the present human condition, and we are all subject to “time and unforeseen occurrence.”—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Dealing With the Fear

Getting a serious illness may also cause you to feel deep fear for the first time. The book *How It Feels to Fight for Your Life* records the observations of 14 young people with serious illnesses. For example, Anton,

Even if a disease has stabilized or is in remission, with any turn for the worse, fears can resurface. If you have felt such fears, you know that they are very real. Fortunately, the initial surge of negative emotions tends to subside in time. Then you can begin to evaluate your circumstances more rationally.

The Challenge of Being Sick

“When you are young, you feel invincible,” observes Jason, mentioned before. “Then, suddenly, being seriously ill shakes you out of that. You feel that you have become old overnight, since you have to sit back and slow down.” Yes, facing new limitations is challenging.

Jason found that another big challenge comes when others fail to understand your condition. Jason has what may be termed an “invisible illness.” His outward appearance belies the problems inside. “My body doesn’t digest food as it should,” Jason explains, “so I have to eat often and I eat great-

er quantities than many do. Yet, I still stay thin. Also, at times I get so tired that I cannot keep my eyes open in the middle of the day. But people make comments that show they think I'm overindulgent or lazy. They say things like: 'You know you can do better. You're not even trying!'"

Jason has younger brothers and sisters who don't always understand why he can't do the things he did before, such as taking them out to play ball. "But I know that if I get injured," Jason observes, "it could take weeks for me to heal. They tend to compare my pain to theirs and say, 'He's just groaning to get attention.' Their worst pain is probably something like a sprained foot, so they simply can't imagine what my pain is like."

If your illness seems to be putting a burden on your family, you may struggle with guilt. Your parents may also feel guilty. "Both my parents believe they may have given me the problem," says Jason. "Kids usually adjust to an illness after they come to grips with it. But parents have a harder time. They apologize to me over and over. I constantly have to do my best to try to relieve their feelings of guilt."

Medical Visits—Not Fun

Ongoing visits to the doctor can be a source of anxiety. They can make you feel small and helpless. Just sitting in a hospital examination room waiting your turn can be terrifying. "You feel...so alone and it would be nice if someone kept you company," says Joseph, 14, a heart patient. Sad to say, some youngsters do not get that kind of support, even from their parents.

Medical tests can likewise provoke anxiety. Frankly, some tests can be downright unpleasant. Then, afterward, you may have to endure anxious days or weeks while you wait for the results. But bear this in mind: Taking a medical test is not like taking a test

in school; having a medical problem doesn't mean you've failed somehow.

Actually, a test can provide very helpful information. It can show that you have a medical problem that is easily treatable. Or, if it isn't, a test can help show what you can do to live with the disorder. It may even show that you don't have a certain suspected illness after all. So try not to jump to conclusions about your condition.

Worrying too much will only wear you out. The Bible says: "Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down." (Proverbs 12:25) Instead, God invites us to tell him about our concerns. We need to trust that he cares for us and that he will give us his guidance and the wisdom to deal with the problem in the best way possible.—Psalm 41:3; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Philippians 4:6, 7; James 1:5.

We can be happy that our Creator, Jehovah God, has made provision to usher in a new world of righteousness. He will even resurrect those who have died, providing them an opportunity to enjoy that new world. The Bible assures us that at that time "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isaiah 33:24.

Until then, you may have to cope with serious illness. However, there are many practical things you can do to make the best of your situation. We will discuss these in a future article.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**How Did We Get Here?
By Accident or by Design?**

**The Trial and
Execution of a "Heretic"**

**Should Christians
Be Pacifists?**

Now I'm Happy to Be Alive!

"You realize that you will die, don't you?" the doctor asked.

Ironically, twice before, death would have been a welcome relief.

But not this time. Let me explain.

I WAS raised in a Long Island, New York, suburb, where my father was a popular race-car driver. He was a perfectionist who thrived on competition. He was also temperamental and very difficult to please. Mom, on the other hand, was a more peaceful, quiet person, who was so fearful of Dad's racing that she couldn't bring herself to watch him race.

My brother and I learned early on to maintain a low profile at home, something Mom had already been accustomed to doing. But it came at a cost. We all lived in fear of Dad. It affected me in that I never felt I could do anything right. My self-respect sank lower still when, in my early teens, a family "friend" sexually molested me. Unable to cope with my feelings, I attempted suicide. That was the first time I thought death would be a welcome relief.

I felt worthless and unloved and developed an eating disorder common to young women with low self-respect. I began leading a life of thrill seeking, substance abuse, fornication, and abortions—"lookin' for love in all the wrong places," as a line from a song goes. I was into motorcycling, car racing, and scuba diving, and periodically I took gambling trips to Las Vegas. I also sought the advice of a fortune-teller and used the Ouija board

for fun, not realizing the dangers of spiritism.

—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

In addition, thrill seeking led to involvement in such illegal activities as dealing drugs and shoplifting. My search for love and approval also resulted in a long line of boyfriends and fiancés. All these factors combined to create a life-style that was much more dangerous than I realized.

One night, after taking a combination of alcohol and drugs in the pits at the racetrack, I unwisely allowed my boyfriend to drive me home. After I passed out in the front seat, he evidently did the same. I was jolted awake by the impact of a collision. I was hospitalized with many injuries, but eventually I recovered with only a damaged right knee.

Desire for Something Better

Although I had little appreciation for my own life, I was very concerned about the safety and rights of children and animals and about protecting the environment. I yearned to see a better world and, in an effort to help create one, was active in many organizations. This desire for a better world is what initially attracted me to the things being said by a coworker who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She kept referring to "this system" in a frustrated way whenever things went wrong

on the job. When I asked her what she meant, she explained that one day soon life would be free from all anxieties. Since I respected her very much, I listened with interest.

Unfortunately, we lost touch, but I never forgot the things she had said. I realized that one day I would have to make major lifestyle changes in order to be pleasing to God. But I wasn't ready. Still, I would announce to prospective marriage mates that someday I would become a Witness and if they didn't like that, now was the time to break up.

As a result, my last boyfriend wanted to know more, saying that if I was interested, he might be also. So we began to search for the Witnesses. Instead, they found us when they called at my front door. A Bible study was started, but eventually, my boyfriend chose to stop studying and go back to his wife.

My Bible study was often irregular. It took time for me to appreciate Jehovah's view on the sanctity of life. Once I adjusted my thinking, however, I saw the need to cancel skydiving trips and to quit smoking. As life became more precious to me, I was ready to settle down and not take chances anymore. On October 18, 1985, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism. Little did I know how soon my life would hang in the balance.

Again Wishing to Die

A few months later—on the night of March 22, 1986—I was in front of my house, taking the laundry out of my car, when a speeding car hit me and dragged me more than a hundred feet! I was the victim of a hit-and-run accident. Even though I sustained head injuries, I was conscious the whole time.

Face down in the middle of a dark road, I could think only

of the horror of being hit again. The pain was excruciating, more than I could bear. So I kept praying to Jehovah to let me die. (Job 14:13) A woman appeared who happened to be a nurse. I asked her to adjust the position of my legs, as they were mangled. She did, and she also made a tourniquet with a part of her dress, to stop the bleeding from the compound fractures in one leg. My boots were found a block away, filled with blood!

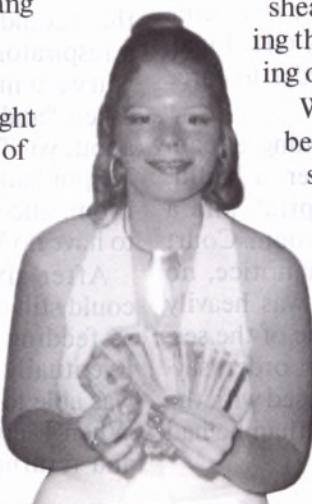
Passersby, not realizing that I'd been a pedestrian, kept asking me where my car was. Not knowing how far I'd been dragged, I thought I was still next to it! When paramedics arrived, they thought I was going to die. So they called police detectives, since vehicular homicide can be a felony. The driver was eventually apprehended. They roped off the area as a crime scene and impounded my car as evidence. Both doors on one side had been ripped off.

Facing a Crisis

*When
gambling was
part of my life*

Meanwhile, when I arrived at the local trauma center, I kept repeating, even through the oxygen mask: "No blood, no blood. I'm one of Jehovah's Witnesses!" The last thing I remember is feeling the huge clothing shears going up my back and hearing the trauma team frantically shouting orders.

When I awoke, I was amazed to be alive. I drifted in and out of consciousness. Each time I woke up, I asked my family to contact the couple who had studied the Bible with me. My family was unhappy that I had become a Witness, so they conveniently "forgot" to inform them. But I persisted—it was the first thing that I asked about every time I opened my



eyes. Eventually, my persistence paid off, and one day when I awoke, there they were. What a relief! Jehovah's people knew where I was.

My joy was short-lived, however, because my blood count began to drop and I experienced a high fever. Bones suspected of causing infection were removed, and four rods were put in my leg. But soon the high fever returned, and my leg turned black. Gangrene had set in, and survival depended upon amputating the leg.

Pressured to Take Blood

Since my blood count had dropped dramatically, surgery was considered impossible without a blood transfusion. Doctors, nurses, family members, and old friends were called in to pressure me. Then, whispering began at my door. I overheard doctors planning something, but I couldn't make out what it was. Fortunately, a Witness visiting at the time overheard the plan to try to force a transfusion on me. She immediately contacted the local Christian elders, who came to my assistance.

A psychiatrist was hired to evaluate my mental state. The clear intent was to have me declared incompetent and thereby override my wishes. This plan failed. Then, a member of the clergy, who himself had accepted a blood transfusion, was brought in to convince me that taking blood was OK. Finally, my family sought a court order to force blood on me.

About two o'clock in the morning, a team of doctors, a court stenographer, a bailiff, lawyers representing the hospital, and a judge marched into my hospital room. Court was in session. I had no prior notice, no Bible, no representation, and I was heavily medicated for pain. The outcome of the session? The judge denied the court order, saying that he was even more impressed with the integrity of Jehovah's Witnesses than he had been before.

A hospital in Camden, New Jersey, agreed to handle my case. Since the hospital administration in New York was infuriated, they withheld all treatment from me, including painkillers. They also refused to allow the helicopter to land that was to take me to the New Jersey hospital. Thankfully, I survived the ambulance ride there. Upon arriving, I heard the words mentioned at the beginning of this story: "You realize that you will die, don't you?"

Surgery—A Success

I was so weak that a nurse had to help me make an X on the consent form to grant permission for the surgery. My right leg had to be amputated above the knee. Afterward, my hemoglobin count dropped below 2, and the doctors suspected severe brain damage. This was because they had failed to get a response when calling in my ear, "Virginia, Virginia"—the name on my admittance papers. But upon hearing, "Ginger, Ginger," softly whispered some time later, I opened my eyes and saw a gentleman whom I had never seen before.

Bill Turpin was from one of the local congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in New Jersey. He had learned my nickname Ginger—by which I had been known all my life—from Witnesses in New York. He framed questions that I could answer by blinking, since I was on a respirator and could not speak at all. "Do you want me to continue to try to see you," he asked, "and to tell the Witnesses in New York about you?" I couldn't blink enough! Brother Turpin had taken a risk by sneaking into my room, since my family had ordered that I was to have no Witness visitors.

After six months of hospitalization, I could still do only basic daily activities, such as feeding myself and brushing my teeth. Eventually, I received an artificial leg and was able to get around a little with a walker. When I left the hospital in September 1986 and returned to my apartment, for another

six months or so, a health aide stayed with me at home to help me.

Help From Our Brotherhood

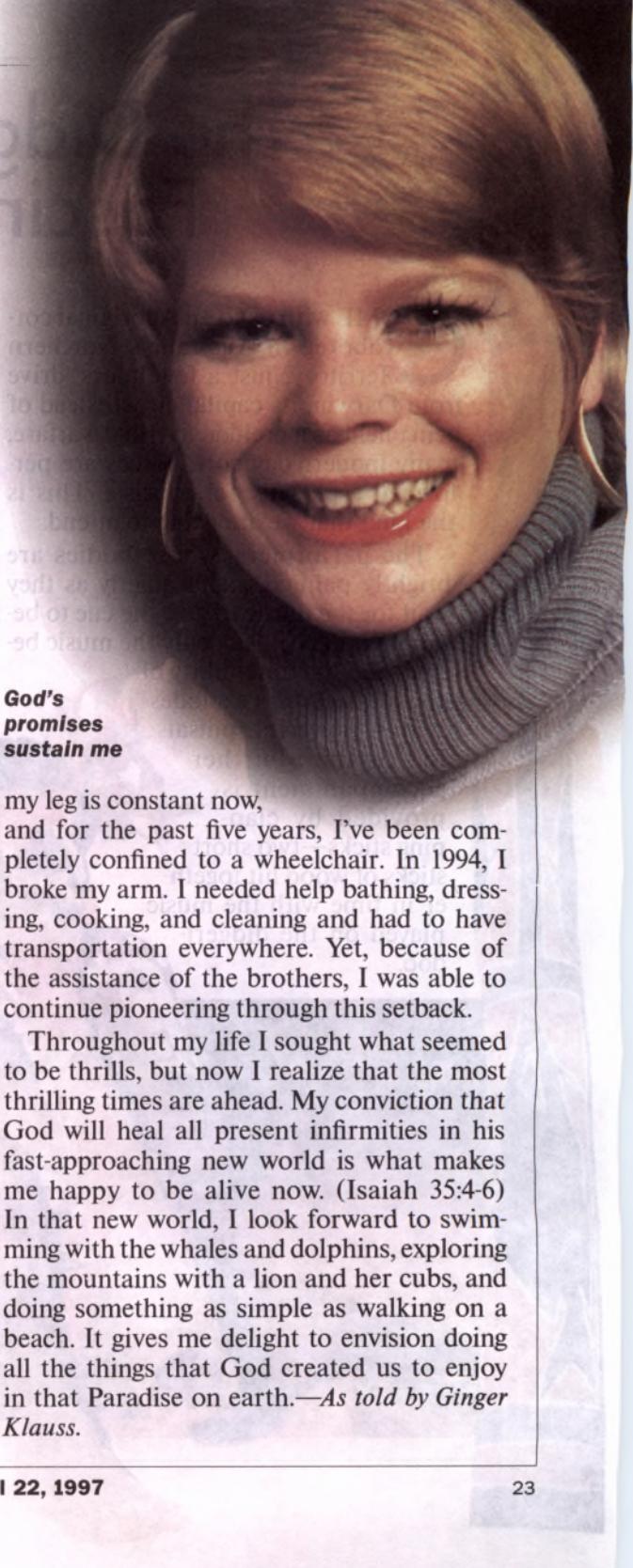
Even before returning home, I truly began to appreciate what it means to be a part of the Christian brotherhood. (Mark 10:29, 30) The brothers and sisters lovingly attended not only to my physical needs but to my spiritual ones as well. With their loving help, I was able to resume Christian meeting attendance and, in time, even to share in what is called the auxiliary pioneer ministry.

The civil lawsuit against the driver of the car, which usually takes a minimum of five years even to appear on the court calendar, was settled within several months—to the surprise of my attorney. With the proceeds from the settlement, I was able to move to a more accessible home. In addition, I purchased a van equipped with a wheelchair lift and hand controls. Thus, in 1988, I entered the regular pioneer ranks, devoting at least 1,000 hours to the preaching work each year. Over the years, I've enjoyed working territories in the states of North Dakota, Alabama, and Kentucky. I've put over 100,000 miles on my van, most of them in the Christian ministry.

I have had many amusing experiences in the use of my electric three-wheeled scooter. Twice I've turned it over while working with traveling overseer's wives. Once, in Alabama, I erroneously thought I could jump a small creek with it and ended up on the ground, covered in mud. Yet, keeping a sense of humor and not taking myself too seriously has helped me maintain a positive attitude.

Sustained by a Sure Hope

Sometimes health problems have been almost overwhelming. I had to discontinue pioneering on two occasions a few years ago because it appeared that my other leg might need to be amputated. The threat of losing



**God's
promises
sustain me**

my leg is constant now, and for the past five years, I've been completely confined to a wheelchair. In 1994, I broke my arm. I needed help bathing, dressing, cooking, and cleaning and had to have transportation everywhere. Yet, because of the assistance of the brothers, I was able to continue pioneering through this setback.

Throughout my life I sought what seemed to be thrills, but now I realize that the most thrilling times are ahead. My conviction that God will heal all present infirmities in his fast-approaching new world is what makes me happy to be alive now. (Isaiah 35:4-6) In that new world, I look forward to swimming with the whales and dolphins, exploring the mountains with a lion and her cubs, and doing something as simple as walking on a beach. It gives me delight to envision doing all the things that God created us to enjoy in that Paradise on earth.—*As told by Ginger Klauss.*

The Didgeridoo and Its Fascinating Rhythms

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA

COME with us to an Aboriginal corroboree in Australia's Northern Territory, just a few hours' drive from Darwin, its capital city. Instead of being held as a prelude to tribal warfare, many modern-day corroborees are performed especially for tourists. This is the kind that we are going to attend.

The performers, whose bodies are brightly painted, stand quietly as they wait for the music to give the cue to begin their dance. Suddenly the music begins, and the tranquillity of the outback dusk explodes with a powerful, pulsating rhythm. Further accompaniment is provided by clapping sticks—two short sticks of wood hit together in time with the music played on the didgeridoo.

Perhaps few outside of Australia have heard the didgeridoo, a musical instrument unique to the Australian Aborigine. It is usually made from the hollowed out branch of a eucalyptus tree, and the preferred length is from three to five feet. The musician sits on the ground to one side of the main performing area, blowing into his didgeridoo—a seemingly simple yet intriguing instrument.

A Unique Sound

Although the didgeridoo produces a relatively constant pitch—it is fittingly described as a “drone trumpet”—it can create complex rhythms and trills. One minute it has the sound of a solo instrument, but the next, it can be rich in power and mood, like a full orchestra.

Before Europeans came to Australia some 200 years ago, the didgeridoo was known only to the Aborigines who roamed the northern parts of the island continent. At corroborees, it provided musical accompaniment to danced reenactments of Aboriginal mythology about creation. At the time, those who played the didgeridoo well were held in high esteem, and even today a skilled player is regarded as a celebrated member of the tribe.



The didgeridoo may be colorfully painted

An Aboriginal corroboree

Versatile players often superimpose vocalized imitations of animals and birds on the fundamental notes of the didgeridoo. The laugh of the kookaburra; the howl of the Australian wild dog, or dingo; the soft call of the dove; and a host of other sounds are part of their clever mimicry.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians says of the didgeridoo player: "Among his attributes are accurate and agile tonguing, great breath control, a perfect seal of the lips in the end of the tube and an excellent musical memory. . . . Though he lacks technology and materials, and is unfamiliar with the concept of mouthpiece, reeds, slide or finger-holes, [the Aborigine] has nevertheless made a crude implement into a virtuoso musical instrument through the employment of musical imagination and physical skills of a very high order."

Undoubtedly the most remarkable aspect of didgeridoo music is its continuous note, or drone. The player gives the impression of having an infinite lung capacity, for there may be no break in the music for up to ten minutes at a time.

Making a Didgeridoo

With a trained eye, a native craftsman scouts the bush for a suitable hardwood tree, preferably a eucalyptus. Though softer timber can be used, hardwoods give a superior tone. The tree needs to be located reasonably close to termite mounds because termites are the engineers of the didgeridoo. They hollow out the branches used for this musical instrument.

After the branch has been selected, it is cut



Pages 24-5 Aborigines: By Courtesy of Australian Northern Territory Tourist Commission

to the desired length. The length chosen determines the pitch of the finished instrument. The bark is then stripped, the external sapwood shaved away to prevent cracking, and the inside cleaned out. If the core has been eaten out sufficiently by the termites, it should be possible to roll a good-size coin down the core. The next step is the decoration, which may be quite attractive. But the didgeridoo is not ready to play just yet.

The skin around the player's mouth would soon become irritated by the constant rubbing against the wood. So a rim of beeswax is placed around the opening of the didgeridoo, leaving a smooth finish that is kind to the player's skin. Today, however, many didgeridoos are factory made, often from softwoods. But factory-made didgeridoos usually fall far short of the unique timbre and richness of the natural hardwood product.

So, as the corroboree comes to an end and our tropical evening under the stars draws to a close, we no longer see the didgeridoo as simply a curiosity. Truly, the haunting harmonies of the didgeridoo are a credit to the music-loving indigenous people of the land down under.



We Are Inseparable Friends

TRACY is my guide dog, a ten-year-old black Labrador retriever. Thanks to her I can get around quite normally. She also provides me company and comfort. So it is little wonder that I have come to love her dearly and that we are inseparable friends.

Sometimes, unintentionally, humans fail in a way that Tracy never does. One day, for example, I had left Tracy at home and was walking with a friend. We were talking happily when suddenly I fell to the ground. My friend had forgotten that I am blind, and she did not warn me about the curb. This would not have happened with Tracy at my side.

Once, Tracy actually saved my life. I was walking down a street when suddenly a truck began to swerve out of control toward me. I heard its engine but, of course, could not see where it was headed. Tracy saw and understood the danger and quickly pulled me to safety.

Blind, yet Seeing

I was born in 1944 in the south of Sweden, and I have been blind since birth. I was sent to a boarding school for blind children, where I

learned to read and write Braille. Music became an important part of my life, especially playing the piano. After graduating from high school, I continued studying languages and music at the University of Göteborg.

My life, however, was changed forever when two of Jehovah's Witnesses called at my door on the university campus. Soon I began attending the meetings of the Witnesses and even started sharing with others what I was learning. In 1977, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. Although physically blind, by a study of God's Word, I had received something of surpassing value—*spiritual sight*.

Today I consider myself much better off than those who can see physically but are spiritually blind. (Compare John 9:39-41.) I am delighted to have a clear mental vision of God's new world where, according to his promise, the eyes of the blind will see—yes, where all physical infirmities will be healed and where even the dead will be resurrected!

—Psalm 146:8; Isaiah 35:5, 6; Acts 24:15.

Although I am unmarried and physically blind, with Tracy as my loyal companion,



I get along quite well. Let me describe how she helps me carry on my secular work and perform my ministry as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Matthew 24:14; Acts 20:20; Hebrews 10:25) But first, a little more about Tracy herself.

Selected for Special Training

When Tracy was only eight months old, she was tested to see if she would qualify as a guide dog. She proved to be calm, easy to teach, and not easily frightened by sudden loud noises. Therefore, she was next put with a family for some time to learn what normal family life is like. Afterward, when she was mature enough, she was sent to a training school for guide dogs.

At this school Tracy learned to do what is required of a guide dog, namely to help her future master find doors, stairs, gates, and pathways. She also learned how to walk on busy sidewalks and how to cross streets. She was also taught to stop at the curb, to obey traffic signals, and to turn away from dangerous obstacles. After about five months of training, she was ready for work. That is when Tracy was introduced to me.

What Tracy Does for Me

Each morning Tracy gets me out of bed so that I can feed her. Then we get ready for work. My office is about 20 minutes' walk from our flat. I know the way, of course, but Tracy's job is to help me get there without bumping into vehicles, people, lampposts, or whatever. When we arrive, she lies under my desk. Then, during my lunch period, we usually go for a walk.

In the evening, after returning home from work, the best part of our day begins. This is when Tracy guides me out in the house-to-house preaching work and to the homes where I conduct Bible studies. Many people are friendly to her, patting and hugging her and sometimes giving me a nice tidbit for

her. We also attend Christian meetings each week. After these the children like to greet and hug Tracy, much to her delight.

I realize that Tracy is just a dog and that she will die someday. That means I will eventually have to get another guide dog. But, for the time being, we are a team and we need each other. When Tracy is not around, I become quite unsure of myself, and she gets nervous and restless when she cannot guide me.

Need for Understanding

Surprisingly, sometimes people try to separate us. They view Tracy as just an ordinary dog or pet and do not understand our deep relationship. These people need to understand that Tracy is for me what a wheelchair is for a paralyzed person. Separating us is like taking away my eyes.

The better others understand the relationship between me and Tracy, the fewer problems there will be. A wheelchair, for instance, is readily accepted but, unfortunately, not always so a guide dog. Some people are frightened by dogs, or they just don't like them.

What is found in a folder about guide dogs, published by the Swedish Association for the Visually Handicapped, is very helpful. It says: "The guide dog is a moving aid for the visually handicapped person. Yes, more than that. It is a living aid. . . . It is a friend that will never let you down."

Indeed, Tracy serves as my eyes in the darkness, and she helps me live as normal a life as possible now. Yet, I am convinced that soon, in God's promised new world, I will be able to see all the awesome marvels of creation. Thus, I am determined now to maintain my spiritual vision.

So, with Tracy's head in my lap, we are now ready to listen to the recording of the latest issue of the *Watchtower* magazine.—*As told by Anne-Marie Evaldsson.*

WATCHING THE WORLD

AIDS and Development

Globally, the AIDS epidemic has set back human development by 1.3 years, states a recent report by the United Nations Development Programme. Hardest hit are certain African nations—Zambia has lost more than ten years of human development progress; Tanzania, eight years; Rwanda, seven years; and the Central African Republic, more than six years. AIDS has also set back life expectancy. In North America and Europe, AIDS has become the leading cause of death among adults under 45. Worldwide, 6,000 people each day are infected with HIV, 1 every 15 seconds. More than 85 percent of AIDS deaths occur in people between 20 and 45 years of age.

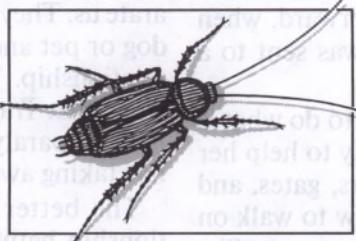
Reading Skills and Employment

"Between 56 and 64 per cent of unemployed Canadians possess low literacy skills," says a Statistics Canada report, according to *The Vancouver Sun* newspaper. A 1995 survey to test literacy skills in prose, document, and number reading revealed that 36 percent of Canadians had trouble in all three areas. In the "older" industries, such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and construction, . . . literacy tends to be lowest," says the *Sun*. With employment declining in these sectors, workers with poor literacy skills are particularly vulnerable to layoff and displacement. John O'Leary, the president of a literacy organization, noted that "to be marginally literate in 1996 is to be cut off from a huge range

of personal and professional opportunities."

Cockroach Allergy

According to the *University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter*, it is estimated that between 10 million and 15 million people in the United States are allergic to cockroaches. When exposed to roaches, an allergic person may experience "skin



irritation, hay fever, or asthma symptoms." The newsletter noted that "up to 80% of all asthmatic children are sensitive to cockroaches." Roaches are not necessarily a sign of a dirty kitchen. Even "the cleanest kitchen can harbor them," claims the *Wellness Letter*. It has been estimated that for every roach noticed, there could be up to 1,000 undetected roaches crawling throughout a home. One pair of cockroaches can produce about 100,000 descendants in just a year.

Poverty's Increase

The number of people worldwide who now live in absolute poverty—defined as earning less than \$370 per year—is about 1.3 billion, almost a fourth of the world's population. Most live in the developing world. Typically, these people lack access to sufficient food,

safe water, health care, adequate shelter, education, and employment. In most cases, they are undervalued in the societies in which they live and are powerless to change their circumstances. According to the United Nations Development Programme, the number of people living in absolute poverty is increasing by nearly 25 million each year.

European Drug Addiction

A new European organization dedicated to monitoring the use and abuse of drugs has recently published their first annual report. Their study, according to the French daily *Le Monde*, reveals that there are "between 500,000 and one million" heroin addicts in the European Union. While heroin addiction appears to be stable or even in decline in major European cities, it is on the increase in smaller towns. Cannabis products such as hashish and marijuana remain the most widely used drugs in Europe. Experts are concerned by the growing success of so-called cocktails, in which drugs are mixed with medicines and alcohol. In Northern Europe, amphetamines, Ecstasy (a methamphetamine derivative), and LSD are increasingly popular among the young.

The Tyranny of Thinness

Under the headline "Fighting the Tyranny of Thinness," *The Irish Times* reports: "Record numbers of adolescent girls are developing anaemia because of food fads." Doctors have expressed great concern about the trend. In some cases the fashion

industry is blamed "for their destructive effect on impressionable young people." The report says that a generation ago the average fashion model weighed 8 percent less than the average woman. Nowadays she is 23 percent lighter. "Famine stricken limbs," says *The Irish Times*, "are high fashion, and Superwaif—pale, young, anorexic . . . is now being offered as the norm." Under pressure to conform to this norm, many young girls in their quest for thinness adopt a diet that deprives them of essential iron, protein, and vitamins.

Unexpected Interest in the Bible

"Half-a-million copies of the New Testament in Danish [a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures] have been given away—one each to about 98 per cent of households in Copenhagen," reports *ENI Bulletin*. This was done as part of the celebration of Copenhagen's role as the 1996 European Cultural Capital. It had been predicted by many that between 10 and 20 percent of Copenhagen's households would refuse the gift. Yet, according to Morten Aagaard, general secretary of the Danish Bible Society, "only one or two per cent of the households" turned down the offer. A similar distribution is planned for Stockholm, Sweden, in 1998.

A Friend for Life

In Germany, 9 out of 10 people say they have a friend for life, reports the *Nassauische Neue Presse*. This was revealed by a survey carried out by the Society for Empirical Scientific Social Research, which questioned over 1,000 people between 16 and 60 years of age.

Communication and honesty were considered of prime importance among the factors in a long-lasting friendship. Almost all the interviewees agreed that disloyalty and betrayal would definitely put an end to such friendships. "Only 16 percent expect a good friend to lend [them] money in an emergency," according to the newspaper. On the other hand, a large percentage considered having the support of a friend in times of sickness to be of great importance.

Eat Fruit Daily

Eating fresh fruit daily is associated with a reduction in the risk of heart disease, according to a 17-year study of 11,000 people, published in the *British Medical Journal*. Among those in the study who ate fresh fruit every day, there were 24 percent fewer deaths from heart attacks and 32 percent fewer deaths from strokes. Of those who ate fruit



daily, 21 percent fewer died compared with those who ate fruit less frequently. Diets lacking in fresh fruit may contribute to increases in vascular ailments such as stroke and heart disease in certain populations, notes a team of British and Spanish scientists. For the greatest health benefit, researchers now recommend eating at least five servings of vegetables and fruits a day. If fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable, then frozen fruits and vegetables may pro-

vide similar benefits, according to the *British Medical Journal*.

Caring for Dementia Patients

"Hot porridge, quiet music and carefully designed surroundings aren't medical breakthroughs, but they're transforming the care of the elderly," states *The Globe and Mail* of Canada. Employing simple and inexpensive changes in the way patients are bathed and fed helps to lessen their confusion and anxiety. As an example, the report noted that serving each type of food separately at mealtime relieves a patient of the need to decide what to eat first, which is often confusing to someone with dementia. The willingness to try new approaches has even yielded a notable reduction in the use of mood-altering medication by patients.

More Dangerous Than Smoking?

According to Statistics Canada, "a sedentary lifestyle poses more than double the health risk of cigarette smoking," reports *The Medical Post*. While some seven million Canadians are likely to experience serious health problems and early death because of tobacco smoking, between 14 million and 17 million are facing similar health risks as a result of lack of exercise. Lack of time, energy, and motivation are mentioned as major factors interfering with regular exercise. Sedentary people are also more likely to consume more fats and less fruits and vegetables. "The current goal for optimal heart benefits is to get people exercising at least every other day for at least 30 minutes at moderate or higher intensity," says the *Post*.

FROM OUR READERS

Having Fun I am 12 years old, and I really enjoyed the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Do Other Youths Have All the Fun?" (July 22, 1996) I used to ask the same question. In my school you can sign up for parties, dances, and other activities. I have often wanted to go. But the article helped me appreciate that I am responsible before Jehovah for the choices I make. So I'll stick with my Christian friends.

A. S., United States

I've had times when I experienced the feelings of [the Bible writer] Asaph, just as you discussed in the article. This article gave me the added strength I need to deal with school.

A. S., Japan

It is true that some youths do feel left out or deprived because they are not "allowed" to participate in worldly parties. But not all of the children of Jehovah's Witnesses feel that way! Personally, I am disgusted at a lot of the things that take place at worldly parties, and my Christian friends feel the same way. We—and, no doubt many others—do not feel deprived!

C. H., United States

Brewery Gulch I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed the article "Spiritual Flowers Grew Out of Brewery Gulch." (July 22, 1996) It brought back many wonderful memories of the 21 months I spent there some years ago. I was away from home for the first time. Some of the families you mentioned in the article—the Smiths, Griffins, and Pughs—became like mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles to me. They helped me mature as a Christian. Reading the article made me wish I could be back with them. I remember them all with deep love and appreciation.

P. A., United States

Cassava Leaves Thank you for the article "Cassava Leaves—Daily Food for Mil-

lions." (July 8, 1996) In Africa great esteem is given to cassava because it has been our chief food for centuries. In Nigeria we know little about the leaves, however, as it is the roots that provide us with our favorite meals, such as *gari* and *foo-foo*. It was interesting to know that in other parts of the world, the leaves are used not only for medicine but for appetizing meals. Thanks to Jehovah for making cassava!

J. S. E., Nigeria

Changed Priorities I must tell you how encouraged I was by the article "Why He Changed His Priorities." (July 22, 1996) I have served as a full-time evangelizer for over 13 years, and setting priorities is not always easy in our increasingly stressful world. Every year, staying in the full-time ministry becomes more of a challenge. To think that Jeremy gave up a rewarding career as the warden of a nature reserve in order to become a full-time minister reassured me that keeping the ministry as a priority in my own life is well worth the effort.

N. C., United States

Window on the Womb I recently learned that I am pregnant. Because of a botched medical procedure, there was a danger that my child would have birth defects. Your article "A Window on the Womb" (August 8, 1996) helped me decide not to abort my baby. I received the magazine one week before I learned of my pregnancy.

M. C., United States

Dyslexia Thank you so much for your article "Overcoming the Frustration of Dyslexia." (August 8, 1996) All my life I knew something was wrong with me, but I never knew what. Recently I was diagnosed as dyslexic by an Attention Deficit Disorder specialist. Now I'm learning to use my forefingers as an aid in reading.

P. C., United States

Spiritual Hunger in Romania

AN Associated Press report from Brasov, Romania, said that about 90 percent of Romania's 23 million people are members of the Orthodox Church, which was permitted to operate under Communist rule. However, the Canon City, Colorado, U.S.A., *Daily Record* noted that many now find the church wanting. It carried the headline: "Romanians Find Orthodox Church Lacking in Relevance."

"Alexandru Paleologu, a writer and philosopher," the paper reported last October, "cited a lack of trust in church authorities, and said the style and substance of the religion have gotten mixed up. People cross themselves and fast on the right days, for instance. But abortion, which the church regards as a sin, is widespread."

The *Daily Record* observed that many have become Jehovah's Witnesses, citing the effect that the Bible teaching program of the Witnesses had on one family: "Florentina Petrisor's husband used to drink heavily and beat her, she says. But since the couple became Jehovah's Witnesses, her family life is a picture of harmony."

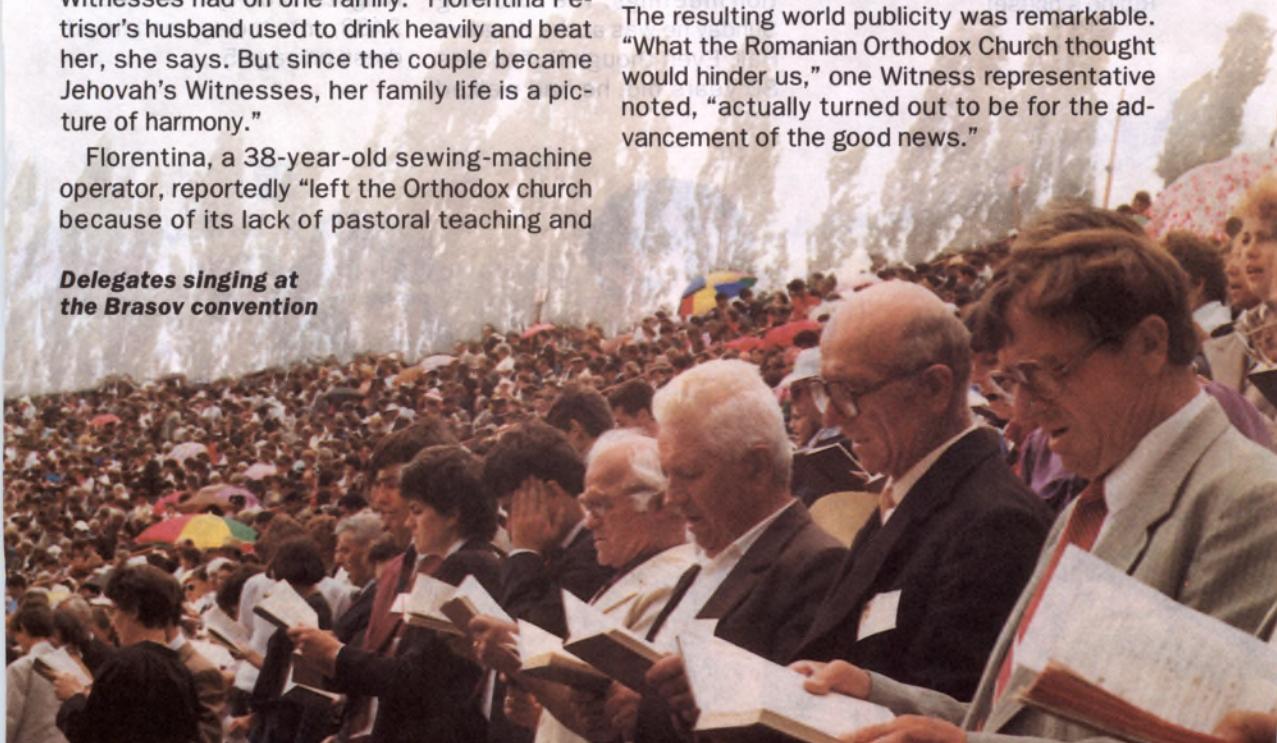
Florentina, a 38-year-old sewing-machine operator, reportedly "left the Orthodox church because of its lack of pastoral teaching and

her local priest's materialism." The paper explained: "When her father-in-law died, Petrisor said the family had to pay and feed the priest to ensure a nice service before she could feed her children. 'I thought it wasn't right,' she said."

Regarding the church campaign of spreading misinformation about the Witnesses, the *Daily Record* observed: "In Romania, the Orthodox church, which has regained influence, helped maneuver the government into moving a mass gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses this summer from the capital Bucharest to the Transylvanian cities of Brasov and Cluj."

The February 22, 1997, *Awake!* told of the church campaign to influence the government to cancel the international convention scheduled for Bucharest in July 1996. You can read in that magazine how alternative conventions were quickly arranged in Cluj-Napoca and Brasov and how a total of 34,866 attended them. The resulting world publicity was remarkable. "What the Romanian Orthodox Church thought would hinder us," one Witness representative noted, "actually turned out to be for the advancement of the good news."

Delegates singing at the Brasov convention



It moved him to action!

You Can
Live Forever
in Paradise
on Earth

A man from Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, visited his aged father, Rufino. The father lived in La Loma, a remote village in the country. The son took Rufino the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.

Later, Jehovah's Witnesses from Los Humocaros went to preach in La Loma. To their surprise, people kept saying that a Witness was already visiting them. The Witnesses were puzzled because they knew that there were no Witnesses living in the area. Then someone pointed out the house of the alleged Witness—it was Rufino's house!

Rufino was delighted to meet his visitors. Why had those in his village identified him as one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Well, Rufino had begun reading the *Live Forever* book, and when he came to chapter 13, he saw the illustration of Jesus sending his followers out in the preaching work. Rufino reached the conclusion that Christians today should be doing the same work. So he began sharing with his neighbors the Bible truths that he had been learning.

A regular Bible study was started with Rufino, and he was told about congregation meetings. The following Sunday he was at the Kingdom Hall. Even though Rufino was 80 years old, he had walked

three hours to be there! From that day on, he never missed a meeting unless he was very ill. He even enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School and gave a fine talk. Rufino became sick last year, and he died in July 1996, with the firm hope of a resurrection to a paradise earth.

We believe that you too will benefit by reading the attractively illustrated, 256-page book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. If you would like to receive a copy of it or would like to have a free home Bible study, please write to Watchtower, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483, or to the appropriate address on page 5.

