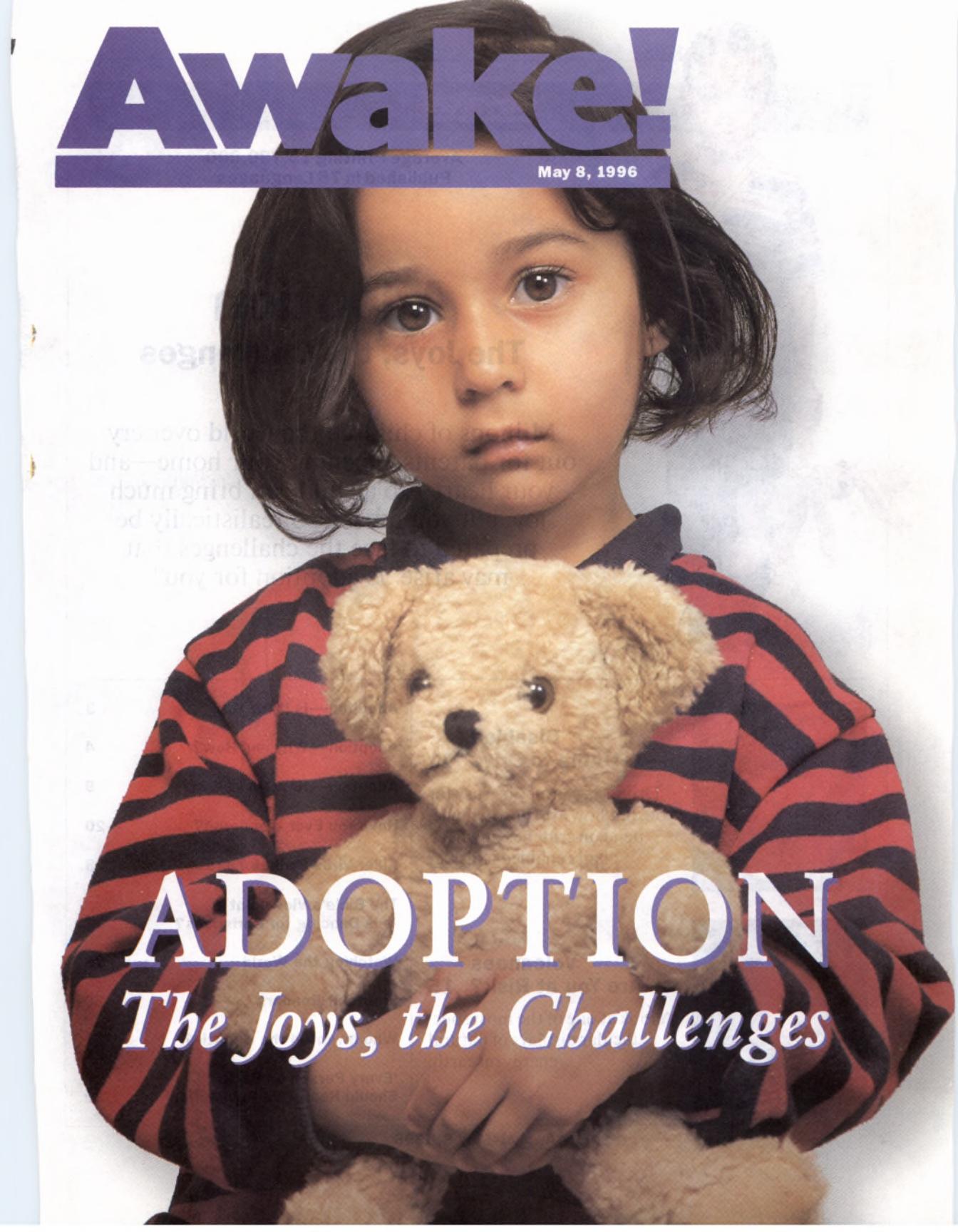


Awake!

May 8, 1996



ADOPTION
The Joys, the Challenges

Adoption

The Joys, the Challenges

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Millions of children the world over cry out for parents. Opening your home—and your heart—to a child can bring much joy, but you must also realistically be prepared to face the challenges that may arise. Is adoption for you?



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ADOPTION

Is It for You?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRITAIN

ADOPPTION is a service for children, not a service to provide childless couples with a baby," maintains one British social worker. Even so, what say does a child usually have in his or her adoption?

Are you considering adopting a child? Then you face a decision that is not only emotional but also irreversible. How successfully will the child integrate into your family?

If you are an adopted child, do you know who your biological parents are? If not, what difference do you think it would make if you did?

Are you a mother considering whether to give up your baby for adoption? Is adoption really the only solution and in the best interests of your child?

In 1995 more than 50,000 children were adopted in the United States, and about

8,000 of them were foreign-born. Increasingly, people are adopting children from foreign countries. According to *Time* magazine, in the past 25 years families in the United States have adopted over 140,000 foreign-born children. Comparable figures for Europe are Sweden 32,000, Holland 18,000, Germany 15,000, and Denmark 11,000.

Do you fit into this picture somewhere? Undertaking an adoption means that your life—not just the life of the child—will never be the same again. Adoptive parents rightly expect many pleasures, but they must also be prepared for many problems and disappointments. Likewise, the heartache a mother experiences in giving up her child for adoption may never heal completely.

Each case presents the challenge of constructing or rebuilding a young life with love. The following articles will convey some of the joys—and challenges—of child adoption.

ADOPTION

Why and How?

WHY has the number of children adopted in Britain dropped drastically during the last 20 years? Two reasons have been suggested—the availability of legal abortion and the growing acceptance of a mother bringing up her child without a husband. Being a single-parent family is now seen as a challenge that can be met successfully in modern society.

Just over 100 years ago, however, things were different. When Polly, the mother of Edgar Wallace, the English writer of crime novels, became pregnant by the son of her employer, she went away and gave birth secretly. Edgar was nine days old when the mid-wife arranged for the wife of George Freeman, a porter at London's Billingsgate fish market, to care for him. The Freemans already had ten children of their own, and Edgar grew up known as Dick Freeman. Polly made regular payments to help maintain her child, and the father never did learn of his son's existence.

Today when babies are unwanted, the state authorities often assume responsibility for them. Many children are taken into care because they need protection from abuse or because they have physical or mental disabilities. Those orphaned by the horrors of war and babies resulting from rape constantly swell the numbers of children crying out for parental affection and protection—in a word, adoption.

To Adopt or Not to Adopt?

Adopting a child is never easy, and it is never wise to make a snap decision when contemplating it. If you have lost a baby, it may be best to wait to get over the shock or grief before making a final decision about adopting. The same may be true for a couple who are told they are infertile.

Every child inherits a unique genetic profile. Parents are often surprised at the propensities of their own children, but it is difficult to assess a baby's mental and emotional potential if its parentage is unknown.

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 that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589**. Printed in U.S.A.

Will My Son Look for Me?

MY PARENTS divorced when I was 11 years old. I was desperate for love. When I was in college, I got involved in a romantic relationship; it was my way of getting affection. Then I found to my chagrin that I was pregnant. It was so ridiculous. My fellow student and I were so immature. I had never used drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, but my boyfriend was badly damaged from his days on LSD.

I was advised to have an abortion, but my father talked me out of that. I did not want to be pregnant, but I also did not want to destroy a life. When my son was born in 1978, I decided not to put his father's name on his birth certificate to ensure that the father would not have access to him. In fact, I agreed to have the baby adopted from birth; so he was taken from me straightaway and put into temporary care. I did not even see him. But then I changed my mind. I took my baby out of care and tried desperately to raise him myself. But I could not, and I nearly had a nervous breakdown.

My son was about six months old when the adoption order went through and I had to give him up. I remember feeling as if someone had

just stuck a knife through me. I died emotionally. Only since receiving professional counseling during the past two years have I been able to build up meaningful relationships. I could not grieve—my son was not dead. But I could not think about him either—I refused to allow myself to do so. It was horrible.

What hurts most is hearing people say: "If you give up your child for adoption, you don't love your child." But that was not true in my case! It was because I loved my son that I gave him up! To the last minute, I kept asking myself: 'What on earth am I going to do? What can I do?' There was no way out. I knew that I just could not cope and that my baby would suffer if I tried to keep him.

In England, society now accepts single-parent families—but not when I gave birth. I wish I could have cared for my son properly. The counseling I have recently received would have helped, I suppose, but it is too late now. Is my son still alive? What kind of boy has he grown up to be? At age 18, adopted children are legally entitled to look for their parents. I often wonder if my son will look for me.
—Contributed.

Do you place a high value on academic achievement? If so, how will you feel if your adopted child does not meet your expectations? Would you find a mentally handicapped or physically disabled child a challenge with which you could cope?

Trained personnel at adoption agencies or government social workers will take you through this kind of questioning before you commit yourself. Their overriding concern must be for the security and happiness of the child.

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If You Decide to Adopt . . .

Each country has its own adoption laws and regulations that need to be studied. In Britain there are hundreds of adoption societies, and they usually work along with the local governmental authorities. All societies have their own rules.

Particularly popular in Britain are adoption parties, where a number of prospective parents can mix with children available for adoption, without the emotional strain that can accompany a one-on-one meeting. The relaxed atmosphere makes it easier for prospective parents to say no and makes it less probable that the children will be disappointed, since no individual child is isolated as the sole focus of attention.

Age limits are usually imposed for those adopting, likely around 35 or 40 years of age—though this often applies to the adoption of babies, not necessarily of older children. Adoption societies say that age limits take into account the life expectancy of prospective parents. However, they are aware that valuable experience comes with age.

Years ago adoptions could be arranged only with married couples. Today, unmarried persons can apply successfully to adopt certain children. Also, unemployment and disability are not necessarily reasons for prospective parents to be turned down. The basic question is, What can the arrangement offer the child?

Even when an adoption is eventually finalized, the parents may be consistently monitored to ensure that things are going smoothly.

From Another Race?

Thirty years ago black children in Britain were hard to place for adoption with black families, and as a result, many went to white parents. Since 1989 it has been the national policy in Britain to place children with adoptive parents who are of the same ethnic background. It is felt that in this way a child will

more readily identify with his or her race and culture. This has, however, led to some paradoxical situations.

Recently *The Sunday Times* reported that some white parents have been “reclassified as ‘black’” to enable them to adopt a black child. It is not unusual for white parents to *foster* a black child, which means they care for it on a temporary basis. But if they are later denied the right to adopt that child permanently, the result is emotional trauma for both child and parents.

A Scottish couple, who for six years fostered two Indian children, recently faced a typical problem of mixed-race adoption. The court allowed the adoption on the understanding that the parents “use their best endeavours to secure that the children will be made aware of their [ethnic] identity and brought up with an understanding of their ethnic origins and traditions,” reports *The Times*. In this case the adoptive parents had already been doing so. The children were being taught the Punjabi language and were sometimes dressed in their native attire.

Many will agree with the observations of the British social services spokeswoman who said that mixed-race adoption should be more freely allowed. “We live in a multicultural society,” she said, “and fostering and adoption should reflect that.”

From Abroad?

The adoption of children from foreign countries is a ‘booming trade,’ according to *The Independent* newspaper. Although reports indicate that some of the traffic may not be legal, Eastern Europe is a major source of supply for Britain.

For example, some babies born as a result of rape during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia have been abandoned. Others, it is claimed, would have been aborted were it not for the intervention of a “baby broker,” who promised adoption if the child was brought to full term. Governments of Western coun-

tries, however, are concerned about payments made to procure some of these adoptions.

A cause for greater concern relates to alleged falsification of documentation by doctors at the time of birth. The newspaper *The European* reported allegations that some mothers in Ukraine were told their infants were stillborn. It was also claimed that these babies were subsequently sold. Other mothers may have been informed that their children were mentally handicapped. Under such pressure, distraught mothers are more easily persuaded to sign over their children for adoption. Yet other children may never have reached the orphanages to which they were sent but may have ended up in foreign countries.

Resentment surfaces in developing countries. They claim that the affluent West should be doing more to help indigenous

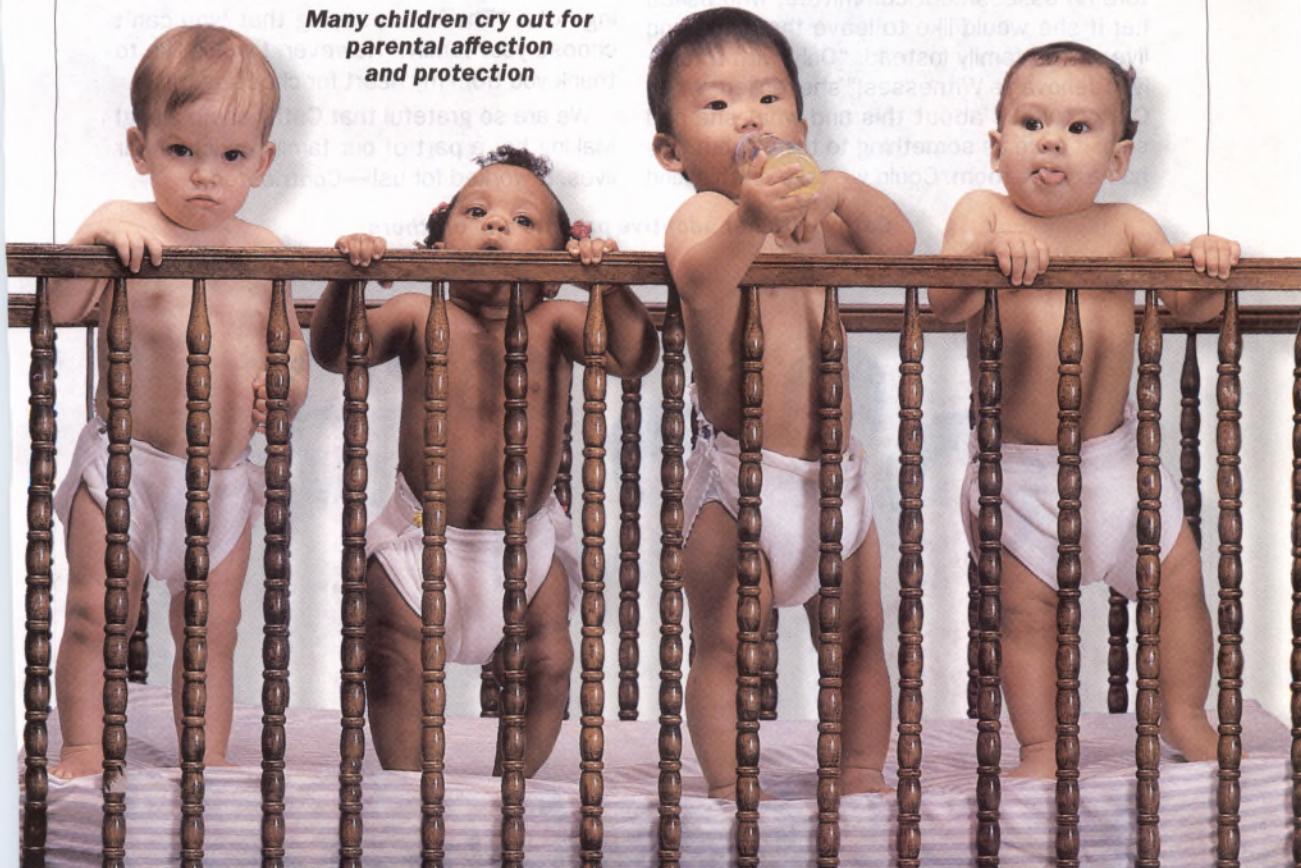
families care for their offspring in their home environment instead of taking them away for adoption into a foreign culture.

The West must also understand the age-old tradition of extended families, the backbone of the community in many cultures. A child will usually not be deprived of care when living in tribal groupings, even if the parents die. Aside from immediate family members, such as grandparents, the wider family of aunts and uncles will consider the child theirs, and any offer of adoption by outsiders can be misunderstood and viewed as an unacceptable intrusion.*

To arrange an adoption is not easy, and even when it has been finalized, hard work is necessary to make it a success. But as we will see, there are also great joys.

* For a thorough discussion of the practice of lending children to other family members, see *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1988, pages 28-30, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

**Many children cry out for
parental affection
and protection**



It Worked for Us

WITH two teenage boys of our own, we were a contented, united English family. The thought of having a daughter—and of a different race—had never even crossed our minds. Then Cathy came into our lives. Cathy was born in London, England. She was brought up as a Roman Catholic, but as a young child, she attended with her mother a few meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the age of 10, however, she was placed in a children's home.

Although things were more difficult for her there, she still managed on her own to attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall, which was where we met her. Cathy was a thoughtful girl. When my wife and I visited her at the children's home, we noticed that the wall by her bed was covered with animal pictures and country scenes, unlike the pop star posters that the other girls pinned up.

Some time later Cathy had to appear before an assessment committee, who asked her if she would like to leave the home and live with a family instead. "Only with a family of Jehovah's Witnesses!" she replied. When Cathy told us about this and what she had said, it gave us something to think about. We had a spare room. Could we take on this kind

of responsibility? As a family, we talked and prayed about it. It was only much later that we discovered that this approach—asking a child's opinion—was a new venture on the part of the social services, an experiment then being documented.

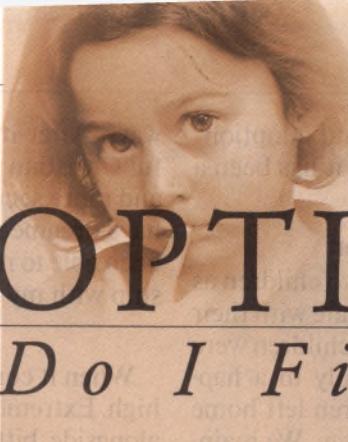
Social services checked us out with the police and our doctor and obtained personal references. Soon an agreement was made. We were told that we could have Cathy on a trial basis and that we could send her back if we did not like her! This horrified us, and we were very firm in saying that we would never do that. Cathy was 13 years old when we officially took her into our home.

The unique bond of love among all of us continues to grow stronger. Cathy is now serving as a pioneer (a full-time evangelizer) with a French congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in north London. The year she left home to pioneer, she wrote us a touching note: "There is a saying that 'you can't choose your family.' However, I would like to thank you from my heart for choosing me."

We are so grateful that Cathy came along! Making her a part of our family enriched our lives. It worked for us!—Contributed.

Cathy with her adoptive parents and brothers





ADOPTION

How Do I Fit In?

IT GOES without saying that problems can arise if adoptive parents divorce or if one partner dies. But it is the adopted child who may feel the greater strain. Why?

The majority of us know who our biological parents are. Even if we lost them early in life, we have memories, or probably some photographs, to complete the link. What, though, of a baby put up for adoption soon after birth? The adoption society retains details of the mother, but that information is often not made available until the child comes of age. In other cases, the mother registers her own name on the birth certificate but omits that of the father. Some babies are foundlings—discovered after their unknown parents have abandoned them. Children in all of these situations lack roots—they may feel cut off from their background or origin.

How Stable?

Trees need a good root system to stand firm. A new shoot grafted on to a mature stock may flourish well, but it might also wither and fail to produce fruit. Similarly, although adoptive parents may give all the care and loving devotion possible, some children never recover from the shock of being cut off from their original roots.

Consider the case of Kate.* Born of West Indian parents, as a baby Kate was adopted by a loving, caring white couple, but she

could not come to grips with her new environment. At the age of 16, she left home, never to return. Bitterness had by that time turned to unreasoning hatred. "Why did my mother give me away to *you*?" she demanded. Sadly, this family was unable to bridge the gap.

Mervyn was placed in the care of the local authority at birth and then with foster parents. When nine months old, he was adopted. His initial insecure background, along with a burning resentment at being of mixed race, developed into a rebellious attitude bringing much trouble upon him and deep sorrow to his adoptive parents, who did so much for him. "If anyone were to ask my advice about adoption," his mother said, "I would now say, 'Think twice about it.'"

In contrast, consider the experience of Robert and Sylvia. They had one son and were unable to have any more children. "Have you thought of a child of another nationality?" they were asked. Soon they were adopting Mak-Chai, a nine-month-old baby girl from Hong Kong. "I often wonder why I was abandoned," says Mak-Chai, "and whether I have any brothers or sisters. But I think I am closer to my adoptive mum and dad than a lot of natural children are to their parents. If I knew who my biological parents were, it would not make a lot of difference, except that I would understand a few of my characteristics a bit better, maybe." Do

* Some names have been changed to safeguard anonymity.

her adoptive parents recommend adoption? "Yes," they say, "because for us it has been a marvelous experience!"

Reasons for Caution

Graham and Ruth adopted two children as babies, a boy and a girl, to integrate with their own son and daughter. All four children were brought up as one united family in a happy environment. "All our children left home years ago and went their own way. We maintain regular contact and love them all," says Ruth. But sadly, both adopted children had serious problems. Why?

"Our doctor told us that the environment for a child is all-important," says Graham, who now feels that inherited traits are a major factor. He adds: "Also, what about the mother's health when she was carrying her baby? Drugs, drink, and tobacco, we now know, can affect an unborn child. I recommend a thorough check be made of both parents, and even grandparents if at all possible, before undertaking adoption."

Peter's mother remarried, and Peter suffered physical and mental abuse from his stepfather. At the age of three, he was put up for adoption. "I rejected my adoptive parents the moment I stepped out of the court," Peter said. He added: "I destroyed everything I could lay my hands on. When I did sleep, I experienced horrific nightmares. Looking back now, I can see how highly disturbed I was. After my adoptive parents also divorced, things went from bad to worse for me—drugs, stealing, vandalism, daily orgies."

"At the age of 27, I could see no reason to continue living and contemplated suicide. Then one day a stranger handed me a Bible-based tract that stated that soon this earth will become a paradise. The message appealed to me. It had the ring of truth. I started to read and study the Bible and began to make changes in my life and character, but time and again I fell back into my old

ways. After much encouragement and helpful Christian association, I now feel happier and more secure in serving God than I could have dreamed of a few years ago. I have also been able to rekindle an affectionate relationship with my mother, which is delightful."

Facing Reality

When it comes to adoptions, emotions run high. Extremes of love and gratitude are seen alongside bitterness and ingratitude. Edgar Wallace, for example, never forgave his mother for abandoning him, which is how he assessed her actions. She went to see him in the last year of her life, reluctantly seeking some financial assistance, but Edgar, affluent as he was by that time, brusquely turned her away. Soon after, when he learned that his mother would have been buried in a pauper's grave but for the kindness of friends who paid for her funeral, he deeply regretted his insensitivity.

People considering adoption must be prepared to face realistically the problems and challenges that may arise. Children are not always grateful for what their parents—adoptive or biological—do for them, even in the best of circumstances. The Bible, in fact, speaks of individuals in our day as "having no natural affection" and being "unthankful" and "disloyal."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

On the other hand, opening your home—and your heart—to a child that needs parents can be a positive, enriching experience. Cathy, for instance, is deeply grateful to her adoptive parents for providing her with a Christian home and caring for her physical and spiritual needs.—See the box "It Worked for Us," page 8.

When describing how they feel about their adopted sons and daughters, the parents of such children may well call to mind the words of the psalmist: "Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real blessing."—Psalm 127:3, *Today's English Version*.



Disabled *Yet Able to Drive*

ICAN drive a car!" These words may sound unremarkable to you, but they had a profound effect on me. The 50-year-old man who spoke them was on the ground before me. Because he had contracted polio as a baby, his legs had scarcely grown at all. Tiny and useless, they were crossed beneath his body. Nonetheless, he had developed powerful arms and shoulders from years of moving about on his hands. And his complete lack of self-pity shamed me—especially the happy pride

in his voice when he spoke of being able to drive.

You see, I had contracted polio myself at 28 years of age. I was devastated by the news that I could no longer walk without crutches. This man's simple words helped me to cope with my depression. I reasoned to myself that if he, although more severely disabled than I, could rise above his affliction, then why couldn't I do likewise? I decided right there that I too would drive a car again!

Not Quite So Easy

That was nearly 40 years ago. Back then, driving a car as a disabled person was not for the fainthearted. My modified car was quite a contraption! There was a crutch fitted under my left armpit, extending down to the clutch pedal. I engaged the clutch by moving my left shoulder forward. The accelerator was a hand-operated lever from an early Model T Ford, and the brake was also operated by a hand lever. Can you picture me driving? My shoulder was moving back and forth, my left hand was both steering and braking, and my right hand was occupied with steering, accelerating, and making hand signals! (In Australia we drive on the left side of the road.) Cars didn't have traffic-indicator blinkers then.

I am thankful that those days of driving with cumbersome attachments are in the past. Today, with automatic transmissions and fingertip turn indicators, driving has been greatly simplified. Technological advances have enabled many disabled persons to drive. Some devices that are commonly used are described in the box on page 14.

My Personal Recommendations

If you are disabled and are thinking about modifying an automobile so that you can drive, I strongly advise that you approach a specialist in this field. He can arrange to have all machinery inspected to safeguard you as the driver and also your passengers. Because of the possibility of accidents, it is important to have comprehensive insurance from a recognized insurance company.

In general, it may be a wise precaution to take a companion along when driving. An ancient proverb prudently advises: "Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him." (Ec-

clesiastes 4:9, 10, *Today's English Version*) A companion can be a great help in case you have an accident, a motor malfunction, or a flat tire. Some disabled drivers keep a cellular telephone in the car. They can thus drive alone, if necessary, with greater confidence.

It is also sensible for a disabled driver to join a motorists' roadside service organization so that a call for help can fetch a quick response, day or night. The annual fee is usually modest—a small price to pay for the peace of mind it can offer.

It goes without saying that we disabled drivers should acknowledge our limitations and drive accordingly. We do not have to drive aggressively to prove we can drive as well as others. Rather, many disabled drivers have notices on their vehicles reading: "Disabled Driver—Caution," or one with similar wording. This is simply a notice that the disabled driver may be cautious and may drive a little more slowly than others. It does not imply that others need to steer clear. In fact, in my experience, a disabled person scarcely takes longer to put on the brakes than an unimpaired driver does, particularly since the advent of modern attachments.

To Drive or Not—A Responsible Decision

If you are disabled and would like to drive a car, you should approach the matter with the utmost seriousness. First, consult your doctor and family members. You might also consider such questions as these: Is it necessary that I drive? Can I handle the possibility of an accident? Can I overcome any fears I might have? What are the advantages? Will my ability to drive enable me to get back into the work force? Might it help me to become more involved with other people?

Knowing when to quit is also vital. The day may come for *any* driver, disabled or not, when diminishing judgment and slowing reflexes make it imperative to make such a de-

cision. If that time should come for you, remember that you have more than yourself to consider. What about those you love—your family and also your neighbor, your fellowman on the road? Might your impaired driving constitute a real danger to him?

In some countries, such as my homeland, Australia, each disabled driver over 65 years of age can only renew his driving license for a year at a time—and this after first obtaining a doctor's certificate stating that he has no medical problems that might further impair his driving ability.

My Car and My Ministry

In this fast-moving age, the automobile has become a virtual necessity for Christians in some lands. Cars have helped them to reach thousands, perhaps millions of people with the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) This is especially so for the incapacitated, like me. My vehicle, modi-

fied for my personal needs, enables me to tell others of my conviction that there is a new world soon to come that will be free of accidents, sickness, and all disabilities. (Isaiah 35:5, 6) Some disabled persons have even been able to serve as full-time evangelizers.

One of Jehovah's Witnesses confined to a wheelchair in Iowa, U.S.A., has been able to do this for many years. She relates that her van has helped her greatly; a fellow Witness designed its special controls, such as a hoist that lifts her up into the van. Once inside, she moves from the wheelchair into the driver's seat. She says: "In this way I have been able to go out and call regularly on people at their homes, and I am usually able to conduct a number of Bible studies."

In my own case, although I am not able to work full-time in the ministry, my modified vehicle has nevertheless been an invaluable asset in the preaching work. For many

I can witness from my car



years I went from door to door on crutches, but as time went by, the demand on my arms and shoulders was taking its toll. So I had to work out a less strenuous way. Whether I'm working in town or out in the country, I choose houses with driveways that allow me to drive up close to the door.

On my first visit, I usually leave the car, walk to the front door on crutches, and briefly explain the purpose of my visit. If the householder shows some interest in the message, I try to build up a friendship so that on subsequent visits I may take the liberty of sounding the car horn to announce my presence—then it is their turn to come out to me.

This approach works well. Far from feeling inconvenienced, many householders agree to sit in the car with me for a few moments so that we can talk in comfort, protected from the elements. I am never without a number of householders who welcome my visit and look forward to discussing an encouraging Bible message and getting the latest *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines.

Of course, each disabled person's situation is different. But perhaps driving will bring you the same benefits it has brought me—renewed confidence, independence, the chance to help others, and a great deal of pleasure from being able to say, "I am going for a drive!"—As told by Cecil W. Bruhn.

How Cars Are Modified for the Disabled

MOST disabled drivers use their hands to do what their feet cannot. One type of hand control is especially convenient. It is a lever that fits neatly under the steering wheel and protrudes from the steering column. A steel rod runs from this lever down to the brake pedal. Pushing the lever forward applies the brake.

From this same unit, a cable is anchored to the accelerator. The lever has a two-way movement: forward for braking and upward for acceleration. It requires little strength. A marked advantage of this type of hand control is that it in no way hinders others from driving the vehicle in the usual manner. Additionally, the unit is easily transferred to other cars.

For those with reduced strength in their hands, a variation of this hand control is available. It works similarly, with forward movement for braking, but with a downward push for acceleration so that the mere weight of the hand activates the accelerator.

What About Wheelchairs?

An added problem confronts the disabled driver: What should he do with the wheel-

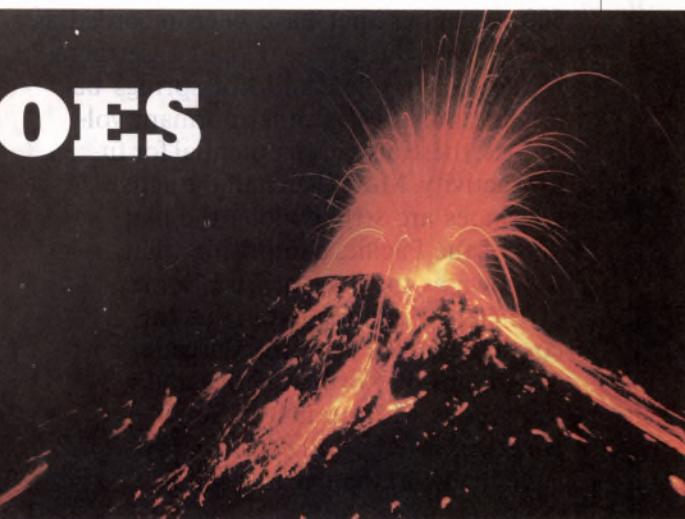
chair? Many younger drivers purchase two-door coupes that allow them to lift the wheelchair into the space behind the driver's seat. This, of course, requires a good deal of strength in the arms and shoulders. Those not strong enough must wait for a friendly passerby to lift their chair into the vehicle.

One alternative is the wheelchair loader, a large fiberglass box mounted on the roof of the car. At the touch of a button, a small motor slowly upends the box so that the wheelchair can be loaded into it with pulleys. Once loaded, the box lies flat again. One such loader available in Australia connects conveniently to the car's cigarette lighter.

A disadvantage to the wheelchair loader is that it adds wind drag to the car, which increases fuel consumption by 15 to 20 percent. In addition, the cost of the device itself may be daunting. Nevertheless, many still consider loading devices worthwhile for the independence they offer. One disabled woman remarked: "Now I can go anywhere by myself without someone having to be with me or be at my destination to help unload the wheelchair."

VOLCANOES

Are You at Risk?



ERUPTING volcanoes, spewing forth hot ash and flows of incandescent lava, produce some of the most spectacular displays of natural energy on earth. Perhaps you have not personally witnessed such an event, but you may have enjoyed bathing in volcanic hot springs or relished eating food grown in fertile soil composed of volcanic ash. Some even receive the benefits of geothermal energy in their homes.

Recently, however, many living near active volcanoes have witnessed death and destruction wrought by volcanic disasters. Since the violent blast of Mount St. Helens in southwestern Washington State, U.S.A., on May 18, 1980, various parts of the world have been subjected to a seemingly relentless barrage of lethal volcanic eruptions. Loss of life during this time period has exceeded the combined total recorded for the previous seven decades, and property damage has amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. Near disasters have occurred when airborne volcanic ash has caused airplanes to lose power, forcing emergency landings.

Most destructive have been the eruptions and subsequent mudflows of Mount Pinatubo, in the Philippines, which wiped out

tens of thousands of homes, and Nevado del Ruiz, in Colombia, which killed more than 22,000 people. More disasters are possible. Volcano experts Robert Tilling and Peter Lipman, of the U.S. Geological Survey, state that "by the year 2000, the population at risk from volcano hazards is likely to increase to at least 500 million."

You may therefore find it wise to ask: 'Do I live near an active, or potentially active, volcano? What kinds of eruptions are the most dangerous, and can they lead to even deadlier threats of other kinds? If I live in a volcanically hazardous area, what can I do to minimize the danger?'

Active Volcanoes—Where Are They?

You may be surprised if you learn that you live near a sleeping volcano and that you would be unavoidably affected if it should happen to reawaken. Scientists who study volcanoes (known as volcanologists) have been successful in recent decades not only in identifying active and dormant volcanoes but also in understanding why volcanoes tend to occur in certain places.

Take a look at the map (page 17), which shows the sites of some of the more than

500 volcanoes that have been recorded as active. Do you live near one? Elsewhere, geysers, fumaroles, and hot springs betray the presence of other dormant volcanoes; these also have potential for future activity. More than half the active volcanoes are strung along the margins of the Pacific, comprising what is known as the Ring of Fire. Some of these volcanoes occur on the continents, such as in the Cascade Mountains of North America and the Andes Mountains of South America, whereas others form island chains in the ocean, such as

USGS, David A. Johnston,
Cascades Volcano Observatory

**Ash from
Unzen volcano, Japan,
descending on a residential area**



Mount St. Helens erupting

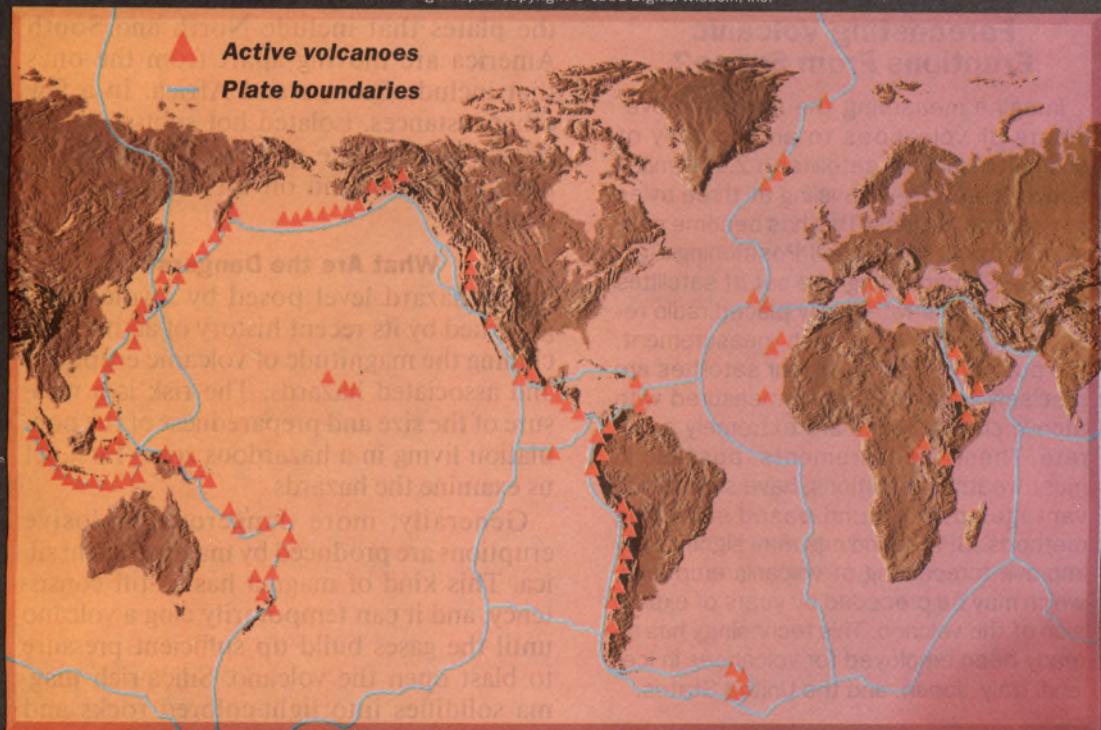
**Mount Etna,
Sicily, recently
expelled lava
for 15 months**



Jacques
Durieux/Sipa Press

Active volcanoes and crustal plates of the world

Mountain High Maps® copyright © 1993 Digital Wisdom, Inc.



**Represented above are some
of the more than 500
active volcanoes**

**Mount Kilauea,
Hawaii, has added
about 500 acres to
the island**

©Soames Summerhays/
Photo Researchers



Forecasting Volcanic Eruptions From Space?

Imagine measuring the surface movements of volcanoes to an accuracy of one half inch from satellites 12,000 miles above the earth—traveling at three miles per second, no less! This has become possible through the Global Positioning System (GPS), consisting of a set of satellites in addition to strategically placed radio receivers on earth. For each measurement, the positions of at least four satellites are precisely tracked. Time is measured with atomic clocks, which are extremely accurate. These measurements, possible in most weather conditions, have several advantages over ground-based surveying methods. GPS soundings may significantly improve forecasting of volcanic eruptions, which may be preceded by years of expansion of the volcano. This technology has already been employed for volcanoes in Iceland, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

the Aleutian Islands, Japan, the Philippines, and southern Indonesia. Volcanoes are also common in and near the Mediterranean.

Scientists have determined that these volcanoes occur along the boundaries of huge, moving slabs of crust, or plates, particularly where an ocean plate is plunging beneath a continental plate. This process is called subduction. Heat generated by this process yields magma (molten rock) that rises to the surface. In addition, sudden movements between the plates cause strong earthquakes in many of the same areas that experience volcanic eruptions.

Volcanoes may also form where ocean plates are spreading apart. Many of these eruptions take place on the ocean floor and are not seen by man. However, if you live in the island country of Iceland, you are perched atop the Reykjanes Ridge, which

connects to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, where the plates that include North and South America are moving apart from the ones that include Europe and Africa. In a few other instances, isolated hot spots beneath crustal plates have generated large volcanoes in Hawaii and on the African continent.

What Are the Dangers?

The hazard level posed by a volcano is governed by its recent history of activity, including the magnitude of volcanic eruptions and associated hazards. The risk is a measure of the size and preparedness of the population living in a hazardous zone. First, let us examine the hazards.

Generally, more dangerous explosive eruptions are produced by magma rich in silica. This kind of magma has a stiff consistency, and it can temporarily clog a volcano until the gases build up sufficient pressure to blast open the volcano. Silica-rich magma solidifies into light-colored rocks and is common for volcanoes along plate margins. Explosions can also result when rising magma encounters water and flashes it to steam. Hot ash produced by explosive eruptions can be deadly—three volcanoes in the Caribbean-Central America region killed more than 36,000 people in a six-month period in 1902.

On the other hand, oceanic hot-spot and plate-spreading volcanoes, and many others, are largely made up of dark basalt, which is low in silica but rich in iron and magnesium. Basalt magma is fluid and generally results in mildly explosive or nonexplosive eruptions and also slow-moving lava flows that are relatively easy for people to avoid. Yet, these eruptions may be long-lived—Kilauea volcano on the island of Hawaii has been erupting continually since January 1983. Although extensive property damage has resulted from such eruptions, they rarely result in injury or death.

Some eruptions deposit huge amounts of loose ash on a volcano's flank, which can result in landslides or, when mixed with a large volume of snow, ice, or water, can form heavy slurries that can quickly wash down valleys. Such mudflows (also known as lahar, from the Indonesian term for lava) can reach many miles from a volcano, perhaps long after eruptions have ceased.

Particularly far-reaching, but historically rare, are tsunamis—giant ocean waves produced by an eruption in the ocean or by a submarine landslide along the flank of a bulging volcano. These energetic waves can travel at speeds of hundreds of miles per hour. Although tsunamis are very low over the deep ocean, actually posing no threat to passing ships, they rapidly build in height near land. These waves crest higher than the tops of houses and many buildings. In 1883 when Krakatau exploded, 36,000 lost their lives as tsunamis slammed the coastlines of Java and Sumatra.

Other volcanic hazards that can harm or disrupt life include falling volcanic ash and fragments, atmospheric shock waves produced by explosive blasts, poisonous fumes, acid rain, and earthquakes. With scores of high-risk volcanoes identified around the world and a myriad of potential dangers, meaningful evaluation of volcanic hazards is indeed a complex, challenging task.

Can You Minimize the Risk?

As the world population grows, more people live in potentially dangerous volcanic areas. For this reason, as well as the recent increase in volcanic activity worldwide, volcanologists have been intensifying their efforts to mitigate volcanic risk. In some cases, eruption forecasts and predictions have been successful, and lives have been saved. What forms the basis for such predictions?

Eruptions are commonly preceded by earthquakes in the volcano or its underly-

ing plumbing system, signaling the upward movement of magma. As magma accumulates high in a volcano, pressure builds up. Gases are released, and groundwater may increase in temperature and acidity. Minor eruptions may also occur before a big one. All of these activities can be monitored.

Well in advance of an eruption, geologists can get an idea of potential risks by looking at the rock record. Many times the types of volcanic flows and secondary hazards repeat themselves, or eruptions mimic those of other studied volcanoes. Based on such data, maps showing areas of greatest risk have been drawn for many volcanoes.

Keys to saving lives from volcanic hazards therefore include hazard assessment and volcano monitoring by volcanologists as well as early warning of impending disaster by local authorities. In contrast with earthquakes, which still largely elude prediction, many erupting volcanoes can be monitored closely enough that people in harm's way may be evacuated prior to a devastating event. Leaving the danger area is crucial, for man-made structures generally offer little or no protection against the fury and heat of volcanic flows and blasts and the destructive forces of landslides, mudflows, and tsunamis.

Although commendable efforts are being made to reduce the human toll taken by volcanic eruptions and associated hazards, man remains unable to predict eruptions and related catastrophic activity with complete accuracy so as to ensure total safety from volcanic hazards. Even some of those who monitor volcanoes have been killed because of being caught in an unexpected eruption. However, if you live near a potentially active volcano, you should heed any warnings made by local authorities. By doing so, you will greatly increase your chances of surviving a volcanic disaster.—Contributed by an astrogeologist.

Have You Ever Wondered?

WHAT does the Bible really say about Mary, the mother of Jesus? Most believers in Christendom hold to the teaching that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God and yet that they are not three gods, but three in one. In other words, the Trinity. For large portions of Christendom (Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox), this teaching logically gave birth to the belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is therefore the "Mother of God." Is that really so? How did Jesus view his mother? How did the disciples view her? Let us see how the Bible answers:

1. When is Mary first mentioned in the Bible?—Matthew 1:16.
2. What religion did Mary practice at the time of Jesus' birth?—Luke 2:39, 41.
3. Did Mary make an offering for her sins?—Luke 2:21-24; compare Leviticus 12:6, 8.
4. Was Mary a virgin when she conceived Jesus? Why was that important?—Matthew 1:22, 23, 25; Luke 1:34; Isaiah 7:14; Hebrews 4:15.
5. How did Mary become pregnant?—Luke 1:26-38.
6. How did Mary react to her unique circumstances?—Luke 1:46-55.
7. How did Mary show she was a concerned mother?—Luke 2:41-51.
8. Did Mary later have other children?—Matthew 13:55, 56; Mark 6:3; Luke 8:19-21; John 2:12; 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 9:5.
9. How do we know that Jesus' brothers and sisters were not really his cousins?—Compare Mark 6:3; Luke 14:12; and Colossians 4:10.
10. Did Jesus view Mary as the "Mother of God"?—John 2:3, 4; 19:26.
11. Did Mary view herself as the "Mother of God"?—Luke 1:35; John 2:4, 5.
12. Did Jesus give his mother any special adulation or veneration?—Mark 3:31-35; Luke 11:27, 28; John 19:26.
13. How did Mary view her role in Jehovah's purposes?—Luke 1:46-49.
14. Is Mary a mediatrix between God and man?—1 Timothy 2:5.
15. In how many of the Bible's 66 books is Mary mentioned?
16. Did the Christian writers elevate Mary in their books and letters?—John 2:4; 2 Corinthians 1:1, 2; 2 Peter 1:1.
17. How many times is Mary named in the 21 letters written by Paul, Peter, James, John, and Jude?
18. What was Mary's hope as a follower of Jesus?—1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 14:1, 3.
19. Is Mary the woman referred to at Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 12:3-6?—Isaiah 54:1, 5, 6; Galatians 4:26.
20. What is Mary's present status?—2 Timothy 2:11, 12.



The Bible's Answers

1. "Jacob became father to Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ."—Matthew 1:16.

2. "When they had carried out all the things according to the law of Jehovah, they went back into Galilee to their own city Nazareth. Now his parents were accustomed to go from year to year to Jerusalem for the festival of the pass-over." (Luke 2:39, 41) As Jews, they followed the Law of Moses.

3. "When the days for purifying them according to the law of Moses came to the full, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to Jehovah, just as it is written in Jehovah's law: 'Every male opening a womb must be called holy to Jehovah.'" (Luke 2:22, 23) "At the fulfilling of the days of her purification for a son or for a daughter she will bring a young ram in its first year for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting to the priest. But if she cannot afford enough for a sheep, she must then take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one

for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering, and the priest must make atonement for her, and she must be clean."—Leviticus 12:6, 8.

4. "He [Joseph] had no intercourse with her until she gave birth to a son; and he called his name Jesus." (Matthew 1:25) "Mary said to the angel: 'How is this to be, since I am having no intercourse with a man?'" (Luke 1:34) "Jehovah himself will give you men a sign: Look! The maiden herself will actually become pregnant, and she is giving birth to a son, and she will certainly call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin."—Hebrews 4:15.

5. "The angel said to her: 'Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son. . . . With God no declaration will be an impossibility.'"—Luke 1:35, 37.

6. "Mary said: 'My soul magnifies Jehovah, and my spirit cannot keep from being overjoyed at God my Savior . . . The powerful One has done great deeds for me, and holy is his name.' "—Luke 1:46, 47, 49.

7. "Now when they saw him they were astounded, and his mother said to him: 'Child, why did you treat us this way? Here your father and I in mental distress have been looking for you.' But he said to them: 'Why did you have to go looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?'"—Luke 2:48, 49.

8. "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matthew 13:55, 56) "He and his mother and brothers [Greek, *a-del-phoi'*] and his disciples [Greek, *ma-the-tai'*] went down to Capernaum, but they did not stay there many days."—John 2:12.

9. There are distinct Greek words for brother and cousin. "'This is the carpenter the son of Mary and the brother [Greek, *a-del-phos'*] of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon, is it

not? And his sisters [Greek, *a-del-phai'*] are here with us, are they not? So they began to stumble at him." (Mark 6:3) "Do not call . . . your relatives [Greek, *syg·ge·neis'*]." (Luke 14:12) "Mark the cousin [Greek, *a-ne·psi·os'*] of Barnabas . . ." (Colossians 4:10)—See *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*.

10. "Jesus said to her: 'What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come.'"¹³ Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by, said to his mother: 'Woman, see! Your son!' (John 2:4; 19:26) Jesus' use of "woman" was not disrespectful according to the usage of the time.

11. No Biblical text uses the expression "Mother of God."

12. "A certain woman out of the crowd raised her voice and said to him: 'Happy is the womb that carried you and the breasts that you sucked!' But he said: 'No, rather, Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!'"—Luke 11:27, 28.

13. "Mary said: 'My soul magnifies Jehovah . . . because he has looked upon the low position of his slave girl. For, look! from now on all generations will pronounce me happy!'"—Luke 1:46, 48.

14. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus."
—1 Timothy 2:5.

15. Five—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. She appears as "Mary" 19 times, as the "mother" of Jesus 24 times, and as "woman" twice.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Tsetse Fly—Africa's Curse?

Lahars

—Mount Pinatubo's Aftermath

Why Can't I Keep Friends?

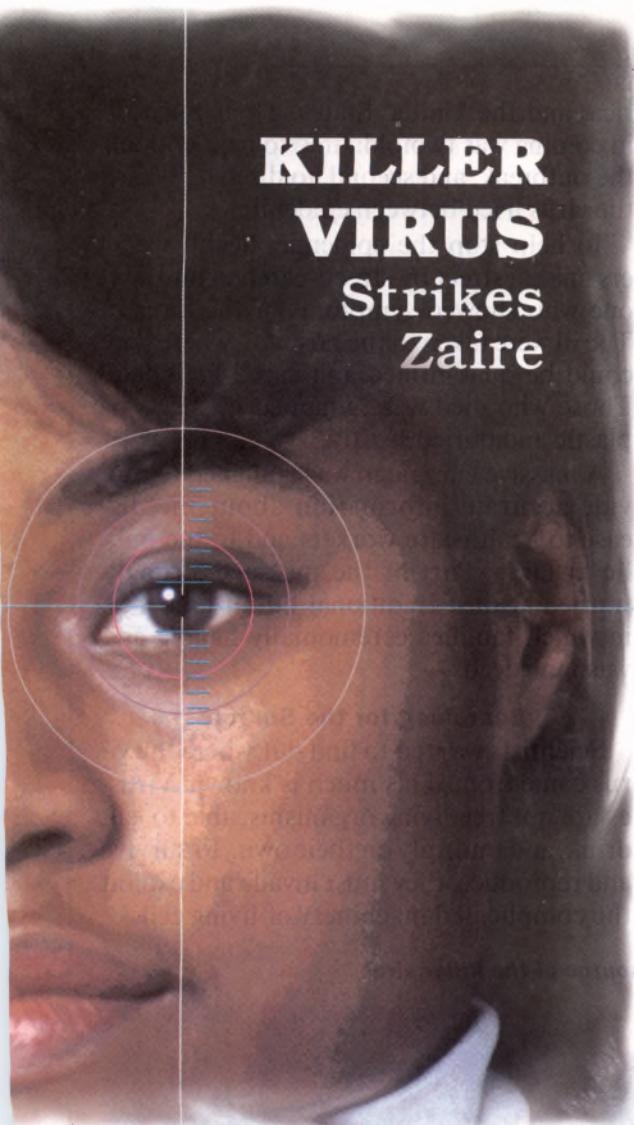
16. Apart from the four Gospel writers, Mary is never mentioned—not even in the prologues of apostolic letters. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will . . . May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:1, 2) "Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . by the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:1.

17. Not once.

18. "You yourselves also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house for the purpose of a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5) "I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And they are singing as if a new song before the throne . . . , and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth."—Revelation 14:1, 3.

19. "'Cry out joyfully, you barren woman that did not give birth! Become cheerful with a joyful outcry and cry shrilly, you that had no child-birth pains, for the sons of the desolated one are more numerous than the sons of the woman with a husbandly owner,' Jehovah has said. 'For your Grand Maker is your husbandly owner, Jehovah of armies being his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Repurchaser. The God of the whole earth he will be called.'"
(Isaiah 54:1, 5)
"The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother." (Galatians 4:26) God's symbolic woman, heavenly Zion, Jehovah's heavenly organization, is compared to a wife and mother, and she is the "woman" of these texts.

20. "Faithful is the saying: Certainly if we died together, we shall also live together; if we go on enduring, we shall also rule together as kings; if we deny, he also will deny us." (2 Timothy 2:11, 12) If Mary proved faithful to death, she now rules in heaven along with the others of the 144,000 who reign with Christ.—Revelation 14:1, 3.



KILLER VIRUS Strikes Zaire

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN AFRICA

Over the next few days, his condition deteriorated. On January 12, his family took him to Kikwit General Hospital. The Witnesses in Menga's congregation helped the family to care for him at the hospital. Sadly, his condition worsened. He began to vomit blood. Blood flowed uncontrollably from his nose and ears. On January 15, he died.

Soon others in Menga's family who had touched his body became sick. By early March, 12 people closely related to Menga had died, including his wife and two of their six children.

By mid-April, hospital staff and others began to sicken and die in a way similar to Menga and his family. Quickly the illness spread to two other towns in the region. Clearly, outside help was needed.

Professor Muyembe, Zaire's top virologist, went to Kikwit on May 1. He later told *Awake!*: "We concluded that Kikwit was suffering from two epidemics: one was diarrhea caused by bacteria, and the other was a severe hemorrhagic fever caused by a virus. Of course, we needed to confirm this diagnosis. So we collected some blood from patients and sent it to be tested at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, U.S.A."

The CDC confirmed what Muyembe and other doctors in Zaire had already suspected. The disease was Ebola.

KIKWIT, Zaire, is a sprawling town on the fringe of a tropical rain forest. Forty-two-year-old Gaspard Menga Kitambala, who lived outside the city, was the only Witness of Jehovah in his family. Menga was a seller of charcoal. He prepared his charcoal deep in the forest, bundled it up, and carried it on his head to Kikwit.

On January 6, 1995, he felt ill. He fell twice on his way home from the forest. When he reached his home, he said that he had a headache and a fever.

A Deadly Disease

The Ebola virus is ferocious. It can kill quickly. There is no vaccine against it, and there is no known treatment for its victims.

Ebola was first recognized in 1976. Named after a river in Zaire, the disease struck in southern Sudan and a short time later in northern Zaire. A smaller outbreak occurred again in 1979 in Sudan. After that, except for a few isolated cases of people dying with Ebolalike symptoms, the disease vanished for years.

So lethal is the Ebola virus that scientists who study it in Atlanta do so in a maximum-security laboratory built with a ventilation system that prevents any airborne microbe from escaping. Before entering the laboratory, scientists don protective "space suits." They shower in disinfectant when they leave. The teams of doctors who came to Kikwit brought protective gear with them—disposable gloves and caps, goggles, and special coveralls that do not allow penetration by the virus.

In contrast, most residents of Kikwit lacked both the knowledge and the equipment to protect themselves. Others knowingly risked or lost their lives in caring for ailing loved ones. Friends and family carried the sick and the dead on their back or shoulders with no protection at all. The consequence was a terrible loss of life; the virus devastated whole families.

Containing the Outbreak

The international community responded to Kikwit's cry for help with donations of money and medical equipment. Teams of investigators flew in from Europe, South Af-

rica, and the United States. Their purpose in coming was twofold: first, to help contain the outbreak; and second, to discover where the virus lived between epidemics.

To help stop the epidemic, health workers made a street-by-street search to find anyone who showed symptoms of the disease. The ill were taken to the hospital, where they could be quarantined and cared for safely. Those who died were wrapped in sheets of plastic and buried swiftly.

A massive campaign was launched to provide accurate information about the disease to health-care workers and to the public at large. Part of the message strongly warned against traditional burial practices, in which families ceremonially handle and wash the dead.

Searching for the Source

Scientists wanted to find out where the virus came from. This much is known: Viruses are not free-living organisms, able to eat, drink, and multiply on their own. To survive and reproduce, they must invade and exploit the complicated machinery of living cells.

Scientists search for the source of the killer virus



When a virus infects an animal, often the relationship is one of mutual coexistence—the animal does not kill the virus, and the virus does not kill the animal. But when a human comes in contact with the infected animal and the virus somehow passes to the human, the virus may become lethal.

Since the Ebola virus kills people and monkeys so quickly, scientists assume that the virus must survive in another organism. If health officials discover what type of organism carries the virus, then they may be able to take effective control and prevention measures to avoid future outbreaks. The unanswered question about Ebola is, Where does the virus reside between human epidemics?

To answer the question, researchers must track the virus to its source. Efforts to locate the animal reservoir following the previous outbreaks had proven unsuccessful. But the Kikwit epidemic provided a new opportunity.

Scientists assumed that the first victim of the Kikwit epidemic was Gaspard Menga. But how was he infected? If it was by some animal, what species of animal was it? Logically, the answer might be found in the forest where Menga worked. Collection teams set 350 traps in places where Menga worked to prepare his charcoal. They captured rodents, shrews, toads, lizards, snakes, mosquitoes, sand flies, ticks, bedbugs, lice, chiggers, and fleas—a total of 2,200 small animals and 15,000 insects. Scientists, wearing protective gear, killed the animals with anesthetic gas. They then sent tissue samples to the United States, where they could be screened for the virus.

Since the possible hiding places of a virus are nearly unlimited, there is no certainty that the source will be found. Dr. C. J. Peters, who heads the CDC's special patho-

The Epidemic in Perspective

Ebola is a killer, yet a greater threat to Africans lies in less spectacular diseases. During the outbreak, other diseases quietly took their toll. It was reported that a few hundred miles to the east of Kikwit, 250 people were recently stricken with polio. To the northwest, a deadly strain of cholera ravaged Mali. To the south, in Angola, 30,000 people were stricken with sleeping sickness. Over a broad area of West Africa, thousands died in a meningitis epidemic. Stated *The New York Times*: "For Africans, the troubling question arises why none of [Africa's] daily, deadly encounters with mostly preventable diseases hardly provokes a flicker on the screen of the world's conscience."

gens branch, said: "I don't think the odds of us finding the reservoir of Ebola virus is more than 50-50 this go around."

The Epidemic Fades

On August 25, the epidemic was officially declared to be over, there having been no new cases for 42 days, twice the maximum incubation period. Why had the disease not spread widely? One factor was the international medical efforts made to contain the epidemic. Another factor that cut short the epidemic was the severity of the disease itself. Because it appeared and killed so quickly and was transmitted only by close contact, it did not spread to large numbers of people.

Official records show that 315 people contracted the disease and that 244 of them died—a fatality rate of 77 percent. Ebola is quiet for the moment. In Jehovah's new world, it will be silenced forever. (See Isaiah 33:24.) Meanwhile, people wonder, 'Will Ebola reappear to kill again?' Probably. But no one knows where or when.

Is Dancing for Christians?

"ICANNOT watch this. I'll have to step outside," whispered the young man to his wife as he rose from his seat and left the room for a walk in the cool night air. He was embarrassed.

He and his wife had been invited to a social event by friends. The hosts had decided to put on a floor show that included three women dancing. The rest of the audience seemed unperturbed. Was he being overly sensitive? Were not the dancers simply expressing inner emotions and enjoying the freedom of dance? Let's try to understand dance from the Christian viewpoint.

Dancing Is Communication

One of the ways humans communicate is by means of gestures or movements. For example, when in a foreign land, many visitors have been surprised to learn that a movement they considered innocent has a different meaning there—perhaps an undesirable one. A former missionary to the Solomon Islands, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea commented: "In some areas sexual overtones are associated with certain body movements. For instance, when a woman is seated on the floor, it is considered improper for a man to step across her legs. Likewise, it is just as

indiscreet for a woman to walk in front of a man who is seated on the floor. In both cases sexual connotations are immediately perceived." Whether we are aware of it or not, our body movements speak. It should therefore come as no surprise that throughout history dancing has been used as a form of communication.

The full range of emotions may be expressed in dance—from the joy and exuberance of a celebration to the solemnity of religious rite and tradition. (2 Samuel 6:14-17; Psalm 149:1, 3) *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "The dancer communicates with the audience in two distinct ways, either through an outpouring of emotion through the body as well as the face or by a complex language of mime and gesture."

In some dances the communication may seem to be loud and clear. In other dance forms, the language may be understood only by an informed few. For example, in classical ballet the hand on the heart indicates love, whereas pointing to the fourth finger of the left hand signifies marriage. In Chinese opera walking in a circle indicates a journey, whereas circling the stage while holding a horizontal whip suggests riding a horse; a black flag trailed across

Picture Fund/Courtesy,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



the stage is a storm, while a light blue one signifies a breeze. Thus in dance movements and gestures, the body communicates. But is the message always proper?

Dancing—Proper and Improper

Dancing can be a delightful form of entertainment and exercise. It may be a clean and open expression, showing a joyous physical response to the sheer pleasure of living or appreciation of Jehovah's goodness. (Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34) Some group dances and folk dances can be enjoyable. Jesus, in his illustration of the prodigal son, even referred to a company of dancers, evidently a hired dancing troupe, as part of the festivities. (Luke 15:25) So, clearly, the Bible does not condemn dancing per se. However, it does warn against the stimulation of wrong thoughts and desires. It is in this regard that certain types of dancing may be immodest, even dangerous to one's spirituality. (Colossians 3:5) From ancient times dancing has on occasion been erotic and has lent itself to harmful purposes.—Compare Matthew 14:3-11.

Our Adversary, Satan the Devil, knows that the combination of dance movements and improper thoughts is a powerful weapon in his hands. (Compare James 1:14, 15.) He is well aware of the sensual allure of the body in movement and of how it can set erotic thoughts racing. The apostle Paul warned that Satan is bent on seducing us so that our "minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3) Imagine how pleased the Devil would be if we by our observing or participating in immodest dancing should allow our minds to dart off into the undergrowth of immoral thinking. He would be further delighted if our uncontrolled desires were unleashed and we became enmeshed in the brier of improper conduct. He has used movement and dance

to that end in the past.—Compare Exodus 32:6, 17-19.

Proper or Improper—How to Determine

Consequently, whether a dance is done by groups, by couples, or by one person alone, if the movements evoke impure thoughts within you, then the dance is harmful to you, even though it may not be to others.

Some have noted that in many modern dances, the partners do not even touch each other. However, is touching really the issue? The *Britannica* sums up the matter by saying that "the end product is the same—physical pleasure in the activity of dancing and sexual awareness of a partner, whether embraced or half-consciously observed." Is "sexual awareness of a partner" wise outside the bonds of marriage? Not according to Jesus' statement that "everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."—Matthew 5:28.

Whether you take the floor or not is your choice. Reflection on the following questions may help you to decide wisely. What is the object of this dance? What is its reputation? What do the dance movements accentuate? What thoughts and emotions do they stir in me? What desires do they stimulate in my partner or in those who are looking on? Certainly, one should react to one's conscience, as did the young husband in our introduction, regardless of what others do.

The Bible indicates that the Creator wants us to enjoy the gifts of beauty, rhythm, and grace. Yes, enjoy them—but keep in mind that when you dance, your body speaks. Remember Paul's guidelines at Philippians 4:8: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."

WATCHING THE WORLD

"Living in Sin" Not a Sin?

The Church of England's Board of Social Responsibility recently advised the church that "living in sin" is no longer sinful, said the *Guardian Weekly*. The board reportedly also advised the church that "congregations could learn from unmarried couples, including gays and lesbians, and should resist temptation to look back to a 'golden age of the family.'" The *Guardian* quotes clergyman Philip Hacking as responding: "This makes the Church a laughing stock and causes great distress among many faithful Christians."

Losing the Ability to Read and Write

Some three million persons in Germany have lost the ability to read and write well because of lack of practice. Johannes Ring, secretary of the Reading Foundation, explained that the advancement made by the electronic media is exacerbating the problem. At the World Conference on Combating Illiteracy, Ring stated that the increase in this type of illiteracy is partly because of the widespread use of television, computers, and video games, reports the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Drink to Think

Having trouble concentrating? Maybe you need to drink more water, suggests *Asiaweek*. The magazine reports that teachers and parents of some Hong Kong schoolchildren were recently advised that drinking plenty of water helps students combat list-

lessness. Children should drink 8 to 15 glasses of water a day, parents were told. Citing the book *The Learning Brain*, the report points to studies indicating that dehydration can lead to poor learning. Drinking pure, clean water is better than drinking soft drinks, coffee, tea, or even juices, which may actually stimulate the body to expel fluids, states *Asiaweek*.

Pesticide Warning

Americans suffer greater exposure to pesticides through household products than through sprayed fruits and vegetables, according to researchers at the University of California at Berkeley.



Roach sprays, hanging flypaper, flea foggers, mothballs, and similar products contain toxic chemicals. Besides causing thousands of poisonings a year, many pose long-term health dangers. The *UC Berkeley Wellness Letter* recommends safer alternatives: Repair or install screens and caulk cracks in floors and walls to keep out pests; seal foods and garbage in plastic; use a flyswatter; sweep up crumbs; steam-clean rugs; clean woolens frequently and store them in sealed bags. If roaches persist, try using sticky traps or sprinkling boric acid behind cabinets, but protect children and pets from contact with

these products, suggests the *Wellness Letter*.

TV Programs for Children—Too Violent

A study of American network television has concluded that there is too much "sinister combat violence" in many programs aimed at children. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the study at the University of California at Los Angeles singled out several popular cartoon series as containing "violence for the sake of violence." The programs are normally aired on Saturday mornings, when children are not in school and their parents may not yet be up. Although this type of program is not new, the study found that "the dark overtones and unrelenting combat in these shows constitute a fairly recent trend which appears to be on the rise."

Wonder Tree

British scientists have discovered seeds that can purify drinking water without the use of costly chemicals. The crushed seeds of the *Moringa oleifera* tree of northern India attract and stick to bacteria and viruses, which can then be skimmed off or trapped in filter beds, reports *The Times* of London. The versatile seeds can also be used to make cooking oil, soap, cosmetics, lamp fuel, and an ointment for skin infections. The tree is easy to cultivate, withstands drought, can act as a windbreak, and even provides fuel and pulp for making paper. Consequently, researchers recommend planting these trees to produce seeds that will help

prevent millions of deaths every year that result from the drinking of contaminated water.

Too Thin?

In a society obsessed with appearance, many assume that it is virtually impossible to be too thin. A recent study confirming the health hazards of obesity may seem to support this common view, but the study's author, JoAnn Manson of Harvard University, wants it known that being too thin is also a health hazard. "I believe you can be too thin through inadequate nutrition, excessive exercise, or smoking," she is quoted as saying in *The Wall Street Journal*. Citing a number of doctors who decry the hazards of excessive dieting, the *Journal* lists some dangers of being unnaturally thin, perhaps 20 percent under the average weight for one's height. These are anorexia, osteoporosis, hormonal disruption, falls, fractures, and retarded healing.

Snakebites—What Not to Do

When it comes to treating victims of snakebites, experts do not always agree. However, according to the *FDA Consumer* magazine, most U.S. medical professionals are "nearly unanimous in their views of what *not* to do." If you are within 30 to 40 minutes of a medical facility, the advice is: Do not apply ice to the bite, do not use tourniquets or electric shock, and do not make incisions in the wound. A widely accepted recommendation is that whether the snake appears to be poisonous or not, *all* snakebites should be treated as medical emergencies, and the victim should be taken to a hospital immediately. The best

preventive measure is to "leave snakes alone. Many people are bitten because they try to kill a snake or get a closer look at it," says *FDA Consumer*.

A Warning for Soccer Players

In soccer, the most popular sport in the world, players can hit the ball with their head. However, this can cause brain damage if done too often, reports the newspaper *Jornal do*



Brasil. According to a recent study, soccer players can suffer memory loss and reduced brain efficiency from heading the ball. Although less severe, the damage is similar in nature to that which strikes some boxers who receive frequent blows to the head. Neurologist Paulo Niemeyer Filho suggests that players should avoid using their head to hit the ball when it drops from high up in the air with force or when it is wet, which makes the ball heavier. Some experts believe that excessive heading of the ball may also damage the players' eyesight.

Genuine Smiles Are Contagious

There are two types of smiles, according to Finnish researchers Dr. Jari Hietanen of the University of Tampere and Dr. Veikko Surakka of the Institute of Biomedicine at the University of Helsinki. One smile category is known to experts as so-

cial smiles. These are prompted merely by a sense of obligation and involve only the muscles of the cheeks. *Genuine smiles*, on the other hand, express real feelings of pleasure and activate not only the muscles of the cheeks but also the muscles around the eyes. A recent study from Finland suggests that genuine smiles are contagious. By detecting and recording minute muscle movements, researchers found that the subjects of their experiment were induced to smile merely by looking at a photograph of someone with a genuine smile. This reaction was not observed when the subjects looked at pictures of people displaying social smiles.

Astrologers Fail

According to the German newspaper *Die Zeit*, 44 astrologers in the Netherlands recently submitted voluntarily to a test prepared by the Dutch Society of Skeptics. The astrologers were given two lists. One contained the place and date of birth of seven persons. The second provided abundant personal information about each of the seven individuals. The astrologers were asked to match each person on the first list with his respective description on the second list by using their alleged skills with astrology. How successful were they? Half the astrologers did not even get one correct answer, and no one was able to match more than three correctly. Previous experiments had yielded similar results, but the astrologers claimed that they had been supplied with the wrong information. In this case, however, the terms of the test were set by the astrologers themselves.

FROM OUR READERS

Fifty Years Ago I just finished reading the series "1945-1995—What Have We Learned?" (September 8, 1995) I was impressed by the way you put all those details of history in such a limited space. I learned a lot; it was better than reading a history book.

M. V., Philippines

Prayer I am unemployed and am in the process of moving. I was quite anxious—until I read the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Your Role in Your Prayers." (September 8, 1995) Thank you for publishing this article. I will do my utmost to prove that I am eager to have my prayers answered by living in harmony with them.

D. C., United States

Gambling I recently prayed for an article on gambling, as my relatives are in desperate need of help in this area. They are on the verge of filing for bankruptcy. I hope the series "Gambling—A Growing Addiction" (September 22, 1995) will help them. They suffer so much because of their addiction. We used to play poker as a family for 6 to 12 hours at a time! I'm so glad that I now have Jehovah in my life.

L. D., United States

You described my 20 years of marriage to a husband who is addicted to gambling. I have drawn much encouragement from the magazines in the past, but this time I received something for which I have been longing for 20 years!

F. E., Japan

Self-Defense I greatly appreciated the article "Young People Ask . . . Should I Learn Self-Defense?" (September 22, 1995) Here in Ukraine we get only one issue of *Awake!* each month, and "Young People Ask . . ." is missing. Since I read English, I was able to read

the article. It helped me to know God's point of view.

V. L., Ukraine

I am 12 years old, and I want to thank you for the articles you publish. I found the article on self-defense to be particularly useful. It made me better understand how to behave when my schoolmates persecute me.

D. C., Italy

African School I am an Akan who has benefited from both the traditional African school and Western schools, and I enjoyed your article "The African School—What Did It Teach?" (September 22, 1995) I was touched by the respect and dignity you accorded the African school. There are those who think your faith holds African tradition in contempt. This article makes it clear that this is not the case.

S. N., Ghana

Life Story I thank you very much for publishing the story of Karen Malone, "My Long, Hard Fight to Find True Faith." (September 22, 1995) It brought tears of joy to my eyes.

J. S., Czech Republic

I'm the oldest child in my family. I used to feel bad because I couldn't have many of the things I wanted. Sometimes we hardly had enough money to buy food. But thanks to Karen, I now realize that our service to God is more important than material things.

T. T., Greece

I have read the article four times so far, and each time I have been moved to tears. I could relate to her determination to serve Jehovah in the face of family opposition and hardship. Soon, I hope to start serving as a regular pioneer, a full-time evangelizer, and this article has really strengthened me.

D. F., Australia

AROUND the world some 600 million men wear them regularly. In Germany the average man owns about 20 neckties. Many a man has wondered with some irritation, while putting on a necktie, 'Whose idea was this, anyway?' Where did the tie originate?

Steenkerke, a town in Belgium, claims the honor of having "invented" the necktie. In 1692, English forces made a surprise attack on French troops stationed there. According to the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, "the [French] officers had no time to dress correctly. But without ado, they tied their uniform scarves around the neck with a loose knot and pushed the ends through the buttonholes of their jacket. Voilà, the birth of the necktie in its original form."

However, the soldiers' fashion novelty was not exactly unprecedented. Experts on the history of

WHO INVENTED THE NECKTIE?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN GERMANY

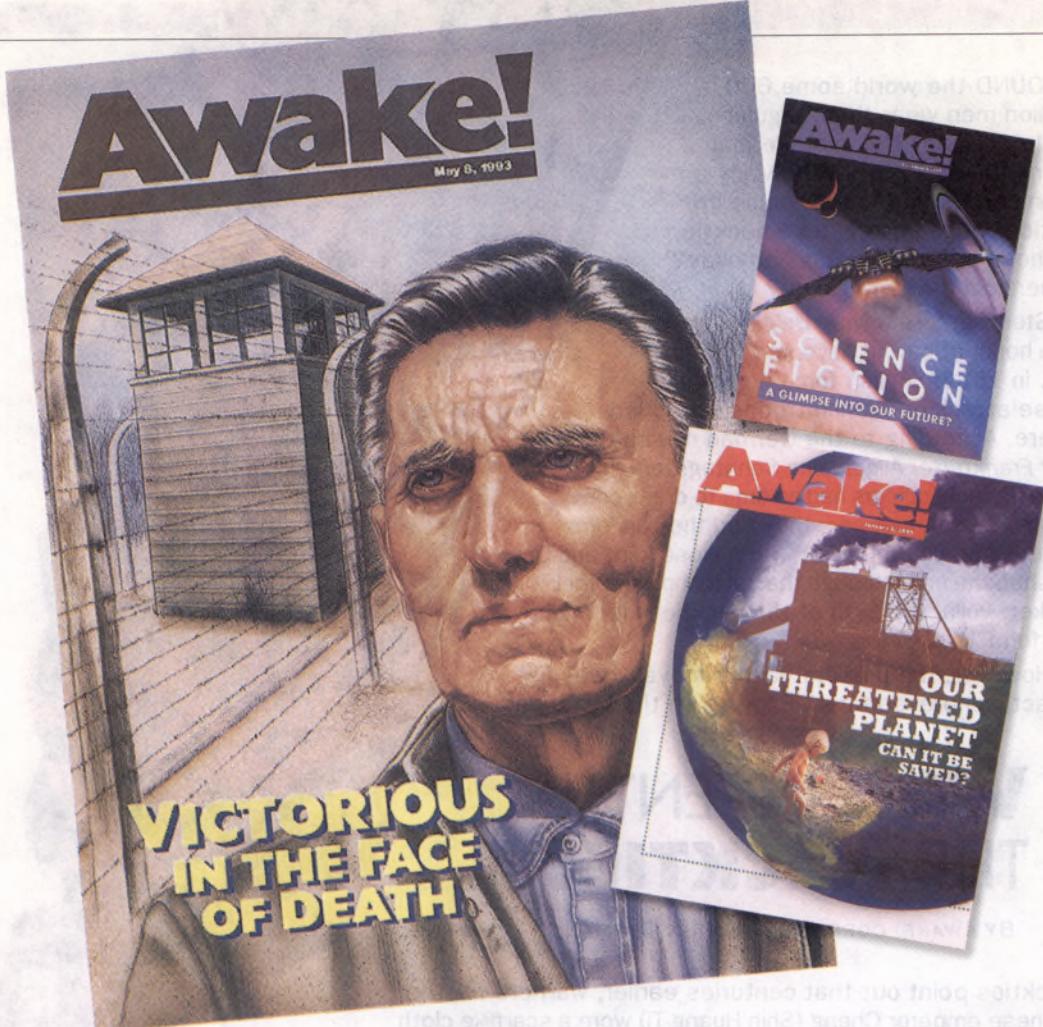
neckties point out that centuries earlier, warriors for the Chinese emperor Cheng (Shih Huang Ti) wore a scarflike cloth folded around the neck, indicating their rank.

Perhaps the most famous, though, were the scarves worn by Croatians fighting for King Louis XIV of France. During a victory parade in Paris, the French were so taken by the Croatians' scarves that they called them cravates, from *Cravate*, a Croat, and began wearing the scarves as well. "From then on," writes the aforementioned newspaper, "there was no stopping necktie fashions, although the soldiers in Steenkerke were the first to make the scarf into a knotted tie."

During the French Revolution (1789-99), a man would indicate his political inclination by the color of the "croat," or scarf, around his neck. In the 19th century, elegant European society "discovered" this form of attire. It was then that the cravat was elevated from the military and political arena and entered the wardrobe of the male population at large. Today the necktie is more than accepted in many societies worldwide; in certain settings, it is even mandatory.

Historic Costume in Pictures/Dover Publications, Inc., New York





'Every Person on Earth Should Read This Publication'

A READER from Alabama, U.S.A., expressed heartfelt appreciation for *Awake!* and wrote:

"I have just finished reading a back issue of the *Awake!* magazine, entitled "Victorious in the Face of Death." (May 8, 1993) I could not lay it down. It was informative, factual, educational.

"I think every person on earth should have the opportunity to read this publication!"

Awake! is published in 78 languages for the

enlightenment of others. Its articles discuss religion and science, as well as the social, emotional, and family issues that are on the minds of many people.