

# Awake!

December 22, 1993



WHAT WILL  
**UNITE**  
THE WORLD?



## What Will Unite the World? 3-15

Race, religion, and nationality divide people. Can the world ever be united? Read about the unity enjoyed in Eastern Europe that amazed the world. Learn how the whole world will soon be united.

Cover: NASA photo



Thomas Nast/Dover Publications, Inc. 1978

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# Can the World Be UNITED?

'All too often, hate thy neighbor seemed the motto of 1992.'

**T**HAT was the assessment of *Newsweek*. The magazine added: "These divisions—neighbor against neighbor, race against race, nationality against nationality—are something we have always been prone to, and this year's events raise doubts about whether we are getting any better at bridging these gaps."

Recently, sieges, massacres, and rapes in the former Yugoslavia have grabbed headlines around the world. In Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, as many as 150,000 have been killed or are missing. And some 1,500,000 have been uprooted from their homes. Do you say these tragic events could never happen in your neighborhood?

UN official José-Maria Mendiluce warned: "People can be transformed into hating and killing machines without too much difficulty. . . . There is an attitude in the West that war is raging three hours from Venice only because Balkan people are fundamentally different from other Europeans. That is a very dangerous mistake."

When the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, ethnic violence soon followed. Some



Graveyard in Bosnia. Haley/Sipa Press

1,500 were killed, and about 80,000 were displaced in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Hundreds died, and thousands were displaced by fighting in Moldova. There has also been loss of life in conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as in other former Soviet republics.

The largest of the former Soviet republics is Russia. Even there many ethnic groups are seeking to form their own independent states. Thus, *The European* reported this summer: "The Russian Federation faces disintegration." The newspaper said: "In the past few weeks, three regions have voted to declare themselves republics . . . Three more

indicated this past week that they would follow suit."

If separate countries are formed, you could be struggling with unfamiliar names, such as Kaliningrad, Tatarstan, Stavropolje, Chechnya, Vologda, Sverdlovsk, Bashkortostan, Yakutiya, and Primorye. Does this not sound similar to what has happened in the former Yugoslavia —where Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia have been formed and where yet other countries may be created?

U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher spoke about "the surfacing of long-suppressed ethnic, religious and sectional conflicts" and asked: "If we don't find some way that the different ethnic groups can live together in a country, how many countries will we have?" He said that there would be thousands.

### Divisions Everywhere

How many ethnic, religious, and sectional conflicts do you believe were in progress early this year? Would you say 4, 7, 9, 13, maybe even 15? In February, *The New York Times* listed a total of 48! Television may not provide you with pictures of bloodied corpses and terror-stricken children from all 48, but does that make the tragedy any less real for the victims?

There is scarcely a corner of the globe where fighting does not seem a possibility.

The West African country of Liberia has been devastated by ethnic violence. One guerrilla leader drew support from the Gio and Mano tribes to overthrow the president, who was from the Krahn ethnic group. Over 20,000 were killed in the ensuing civil war, and hundreds of thousands were displaced.

In South Africa, whites and blacks are pitted against one another in a struggle for political control. But the fighting is not just black against white. Last year alone, some 3,000 were killed in fighting between rival black groups.

In Somalia about 300,000 died and a million were left homeless when clan fighting erupted into civil war. In Burundi and Rwanda, ethnic clashes between Hutus and Tutsis have led to thousands of deaths in recent years.

Fighting seems almost unrelenting between Jews and Arabs in Israel, between Hindus and Muslims in India, and between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. Racial violence also erupted last year in Los Angeles, California, taking more than 40 lives. Wherever people of different races, nationalities, or religions live close together, vicious conflicts often occur.

Can humans solve this dilemma of ethnic strife?

### Awake!

**Why Awake! Is Published** *Awake!* is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5.  
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## Concerted Efforts of Humans

Consider, for example, what happened to the efforts in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. In 1929, Yugoslavia was formed in an attempt to unite into one country the various ethnic groups living in southeastern Europe. The Soviet Union was similarly created by bringing together diverse peoples of various racial, religious, and national origins. For many decades both countries had strong central governments holding them together, and eventually it seemed that their citizens had learned to live together.

"The ethnic map of prewar Bosnia, and indeed prewar Yugoslavia, was like a jaguar's skin," explained a leading Serb. "The peoples were inseparably mixed." In fact, about 15 percent of marriages in Yugoslavia were between persons of different ethnic groups. A similar situation of seeming unity had been created with the mixing of ethnic groups in the Soviet Union.

Thus, the shock was great when, after many decades of apparent peace, ethnic violence erupted. Today, as one journalist wrote, people now "chart the makeup of what was Yugoslavia by race, religion and nationality." Why, when these powerful governments fell, did these countries break apart?

## Factors Responsible

People do not naturally hate people of another ethnic group. As a popular song

once said, you need to be 'carefully taught before it's too late, before you're six or seven or eight, to hate all the people your relatives hate.' This song referred to a young couple with obvious racial differences. Yet, according to mental-health professional Zarka Kovac, people in the former Yugoslavia have "scarcely any physical differences." Nevertheless, the violence is extreme beyond comprehension. "You mutilate the person you have killed in order not to recognize your brother," Kovac said.

Clearly, such racial and ethnic hatred is not intrinsic to human nature. People have been carefully taught by propagandists and relatives who recount past atrocities. Who could be behind it all? Trying to understand the horrors of war, a businessman from Sarajevo was moved to conclude: "After a year of the Bosnian war I believe Satan pulls the strings. This is pure madness."

Although many do not believe in the existence of Satan the Devil, the Bible does point to the existence of an invisible, superhuman person who has a profoundly negative effect on mankind's behavior. (Matthew 4:1-11; John 12:31) When you think about it—about all the irrational prejudice, hatred, and violence—perhaps you may agree that the Bible is really not farfetched when it says: "The one called Devil and

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Satan . . . is misleading the entire inhabited earth."—Revelation 12:9; 1 John 5:19.

### A Ray of Hope

When we consider recent world turmoil, the dream of a united mankind seems more distant than ever. Nationalistic and ethnic rivalries threaten man's existence as never before. Yet, in the midst of this global darkness, a ray of hope shines brightly. During the summer of 1993, a group of people from warring ethnic groups demonstrated a common bond that has allowed them to transcend ethnic strife and to work together in love and unity.

Ironically, this bond has proved to be the very factor that has often divided mankind—religion. *Time* magazine reported: "If you scratch any aggressive tribalism, or national-

ism, you usually find beneath its surface a religious core . . . Religious hatreds tend to be merciless and absolute." In a similar vein, *India Today* said: "Religion has been the banner under which the most hideous crimes have been perpetrated. . . . It unleashes tremendous violence and is a very destructive force."

Indeed, religion is usually part of the problem, not the solution. But this one religious group mentioned above—a group with substantial numbers—has shown that religion can unite, not divide. Just who make up this group? And why have they enjoyed dramatic success where others have failed? In answer we invite you to read the following articles. Doing so may very well give you a new perspective on mankind's future.

# UNITY

## That Amazes the World

**T**HE world was shocked by the sudden fall of Communism and more recently by the ever-increasing ethnic violence. Yet, at the same time, millions in Eastern Europe have been amazed by the united, joyous activity of a group that has risen above racial and national animosities—Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses have succeeded in maintaining united worship even while war raged around them. In 1991, when an international crowd of 14,684 Witnesses met in Zagreb, Croatia, a policeman said: "It would be good to show the mass media what is happening in this stadium, right here, where we see

Serians, Croats, Slovenians, Montenegrins, and others sitting next to one another in peace."

That same year a newsman at a convention in Siberia saw Russians hugging a newly baptized person of Buryat descent. Knowing that real friendships between such diverse peoples are rare, he asked: "How were you able to overcome these national barriers?"

This summer 45 conventions were held by Jehovah's Witnesses in Eastern Europe and Asia, the one in Moscow and the one in Kiev being international. Altogether over 368,000 attended the 45 conventions—more than



**More than 64,000 assembled  
in Republican Stadium, Kiev**

**World War II enemies from Germany  
and Ukraine united by Bible truth**

112,000 in the former Soviet Union and nearly 11,000 in four cities of the former Yugoslavia.

Despite the fighting in their regions, about 215 Witnesses made it to the convention in Belgrade, Serbia, August 19 to 22. It was attended by 3,241. A reporter noted: "Groups around Sarajevo itself were able to attend. They rented a bus, and 56 came. These were from Lukavica, Pale, Ilidža, and Vogošća. Five persons also came from Benkovac. Another point worthy of note is that 23 of the 174 who were baptized at the convention were from these crisis regions."

**In Moscow and Kiev**

On July 28, 1993, the front page of *The New York Times* had a large picture of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow, with the caption: "The unleashing of religion in Russia brought converts into Moscow's Locomotive Stadium for a mass baptism as Jehovah's Witnesses."

The *Times* reported: "Members with tear-stained faces hug the wet recruits. In contrast to the usual behavior at Locomotive, nobody smokes, nobody curses, nobody is drunk." For four days Witnesses from Russia and from

over 30 other countries comfortably filled the stadium, the peak attendance numbering 23,743.

An even larger international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses was held in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. There was a peak attendance of 64,714 assembled in Republican Stadium, one of the largest in Eastern Europe. The front page of the *Evening Kiev* reported: "Jehovah's Witnesses . . . are united not only by blue badges with 'Divine Teaching' written on them but by true faith."

**How Unity Is Achieved**

How such unity is possible was well illustrated by an elderly Ukrainian Witness at the Kiev convention. She pointed heavenward and said, "Jehovah." Then, extending her arms to form a circle, she held up a single finger. Her message was clear: 'We are all one, united through the divine teaching of Jehovah God.'

Interestingly, *Encyclopædia Britannica* reported on Jehovah's Witnesses in the former Soviet Union, showing why the Witnesses are united. It explained: "They know their



**Over 23,000  
united worshipers  
in Locomotive  
Stadium, Moscow**



**7,402 were  
baptized in Kiev,  
and 1,489 in  
Moscow**



**Foreign delegates  
brought tons of  
food to those  
in need**

**Top and center:** Many ethnic groups met in peaceful unity  
**Bottom:** Witnessing in Red Square



[Bible-based] teachings, are keen proselytisers and arrange their whole life in accordance with their religious beliefs." How appropriate it was, therefore, that the theme for this summer's conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses was "Divine Teaching"!

Jesus Christ, who championed divine teaching, pointed to an important unifying principle when he prayed regarding his followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses' position of neutrality unites them, even as Jesus requested when he prayed: "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us." —John 17:16-21.

The experience of a delegate from Spain illustrates how being no part of the world unites God's people. En route to the convention in Moscow, he sat next to a man from Afghanistan who explained that even people of the same religion were killing one another in the civil war in that country. "What political party does your religion advocate?" he then asked. "None," was the answer. Since Je-

ovah's Witnesses are politically neutral, they are not involved in ethnic fighting, which pits one people against another.

Delegates traveling from a former Soviet republic personally experienced how frightening warfare can be. Their train was caught in the midst of gunfire between opposing forces. How happy they were to arrive safely in Kiev and enjoy the love and unity among the numerous ethnic groups of many nations in the stadium!

A number of German and Russian delegates particularly appreciated what divine teaching had done for them. As young men a generation ago, they were trying to kill one another during World War II. But during the Kiev convention, they were united in true worship, as seen on page 7.

#### Onlookers Were Amazed

Moscow, a city of some nine million, previously had little opportunity to become acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses. True, many had heard about their persecution and imprisonment under Communism. Also, by the summer of this year, 18 congregations had

**Convention delegates were delighted to receive the "Bible Stories" book, the "School Guidebook," and the new brochure in their language**



been formed in Moscow and 13 in Kiev to accommodate the growing numbers attending the meetings of the Witnesses. But now the local people saw tens of thousands of badge-wearing delegates at the convention sites and throughout their cities! Many observers were astonished.

The chief fire inspector of Moscow said: "This convention is most impressive. It is wonderful that so many people of different nationalities can find a common language. I am amazed at the cleanliness and orderliness of your people. I have been working at this stadium for 20 years and have never seen anything like it."

One tour guide said: "Usually when I lead a group, its disunity becomes manifest as soon as it leaves the airport. This has not been true of Jehovah's Witnesses." A visitor to the convention in Kiev exclaimed: "You are really united. What a difference with the way things are outside the stadium walls!"

When the Moscow convention began on Thursday, July 22, several workmen standing on top of a large construction site nearby were seen momentarily stopping their work. They were apparently impressed by the sound of over 23,000 voices raised in song. They would have been even more amazed had they known that the songs were being sung in well over a dozen different languages. Even deaf Witnesses unable to sing with their voices "sang" with their hands by means of sign language.

A favorite gathering spot in the evenings was Moscow's huge Red Square, right outside the walls of the Kremlin. The evening before the convention began (it didn't get dark until after ten o'clock), many hundreds of Witnesses from different races and nationalities were there happily embracing. A reporter from the *Moscow Times* happened to stop by and was curious. "Whom do you represent?" he asked.

When told, he said: "I've never seen a happy mingling of so many diverse peoples in Red Square. Usually such a large group is here to demonstrate or protest something."

Citizens of both Moscow and Kiev were indeed impressed by the thousands of badge-wearing delegates excitedly greeting, hugging, and trying to communicate with one another. A businessman from Iran who was visiting Kiev approached a Witness from the United States and said: "You have something wonderful. I have been observing you people the last couple of days. I want some of your literature in English to read." He explained that if he did not have to leave the following morning for Iran, he would come to the convention.

Throughout Moscow and Kiev—especially on the streets, in the squares, and on subway cars—convention delegates approached the people to offer Bible tracts and brochures. Every evening Witnesses could be seen standing near Lenin's Tomb in Red Square quietly conversing and distributing tracts. The offer was usually readily accepted, often with a warm smile. If the offer was made on a subway car, the person would generally begin reading immediately. It was not unusual to see five or six people in a car reading Bible tracts.

After reading the message, a subway passenger would often express appreciation. "We have not had opportunity to learn of such things," explained a middle-aged man in broken English. "Thank you very much." In another instance, a young man and his mother were so impressed with the message that they got off the subway car at the stop of the convention delegate to continue the conversation.

Kiev was filled with over 50,000 Witness delegates who had come from over 30 countries, all of whom required accommodations. Most stayed in hotels, private homes, and schools, but about 1,800 were accommodated on six boats. A housekeeper on one of the

boats left a note for the Witnesses. She said: "It seems to me that you have come from another planet. You have so much beauty and harmony that you bring a blessing. It could be you are the children of God. I think about this all the time."

How appropriate that Jehovah's Witnesses were able to hold their large conventions and that officials and the people alike could see such fine Christian qualities and conduct that glorify God! Local officials who worked with the Witnesses had nothing but praise for their efficiency, courtesy, and fine cooperation with stadium management and other city departments.

"The stadium has not been cleaned this well for 13 years," said an official in Kiev. A policeman there exclaimed: "What people! It's like being in a new world. I simply cannot understand why you people were persecuted."

#### CONVENTIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND ASIA

Country	Peak Attendance	Baptized
Albania (1 convention)	598	39
Bulgaria (1 convention)	704	45
Czech Republic (2 conventions)	20,025	620
Former Soviet Union		
Estonia (2 conventions)	4,732	383
Russia (3 conventions)	32,582	2,454
Ukraine (2 conventions)	69,333	7,797
Kyrgyzstan (1 convention)	5,678	604
Former Yugoslavia		
Croatia (1 convention)	5,003	157
Macedonia (1 convention)	642	27
Serbia (1 convention)	3,241	174
Slovenia (1 convention)	1,961	69
Hungary (5 conventions)	22,191	798
Poland (13 conventions)	152,371	4,352
Romania (9 conventions)	36,615	2,375
Slovakia (2 conventions)	13,215	473
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>368,891</b>	<b>20,367</b>

#### Convention Highlights

For the Witnesses in Moscow and Kiev, the main highlight was perhaps the presence of thousands of delegates from many other lands, including members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. The joy of just being together, united in peaceful worship with so many diverse nationalities, was beyond description. When the concluding speaker at Moscow and at Kiev said that our chief thanks go to Jehovah God, who made the convention possible, the audience rose to its feet and erupted in sustained applause for several minutes until the speaker continued his talk.

Other convention highlights were the talks given each day in English by members of the Governing Body and the brief reports delivered by delegates from various lands. These English presentations were simultaneously

translated into many languages. In Kiev, for example, into 16! So by sitting in those sections designated for a particular language group, delegates could hear that part of the program in their own language.

Still another convention highlight was the release in Russian and Ukrainian of the new brochure *What Is the Purpose of Life?* Especially appreciated was the release in Russian of the *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*, which is used to equip Jehovah's Witnesses to present Bible truths more effectively. Also released in Russian was *My Book of Bible Stories*, a concise, chronological presentation of Bible history written especially for young people. Al-

ready over 36 million copies of this book have been printed in more than 80 languages.

The huge baptism of new disciples was truly a convention highlight. The fact that many of those baptized were youths did not go unnoticed. At a press conference in Kiev, a correspondent from the newspaper *Osvita* asked: "Noticeable at your convention is the considerable number of young people. They are kind, good-looking, and well behaved. How do you do it? Do you have a special policy for young people? I work with youths, and I would be most interested in knowing."

Although dedication to God must be based on knowledge, not on emotion, the actual baptism is still an emotional occasion, touching the heart. In Moscow the crowd stood and applauded from the time the 1,489 baptism candidates started moving toward the three baptism pools until all had been baptized, more than an hour later.

In Kiev, where over 64,000 were present, six pools were set up for the baptism at one end of the stadium. With six or more baptizers in each pool, the equivalent of a good-sized congregation was immersed every two minutes. Still, the baptism continued for over two hours! At the 1958 "Divine Will" International Assembly in New York, 7,136 were baptized. But in Kiev, the 7,402 newly ordained Witnesses of Jehovah from Ukraine and other former republics of the Soviet Union made this the largest Christian baptism on record. These were Russian-speaking persons from territories where until just recently Jehovah's Witnesses were banned, and had been for decades!

A highlight of the convention in Belgrade was the presence of delegates from war-torn, besieged areas. "These delegates many times warmly expressed thanks for the privilege extended to them to come to the convention," a convention worker reported. "However, we feel that the real encouragement was for the

rest of us who were able to meet them and witness their love and zeal for Bible truth."

At many of the "Divine Teaching" Conventions, a moving letter written last winter from Sarajevo was read. "The temperature is about 5 degrees Fahrenheit," the writer said. "I am with my wife and two sons and do not have electricity and not enough firewood . . . Machine-gun fire and explosions can be heard. But in our hearts we are calm and warm because of the truth and because of our good relationship with Jehovah. . . . We beg you to keep on praying to Jehovah to help us persist and endure all these terrors, firm in faith. We are praying for you!"

#### **What Difference Does It Make?**

When viewed against the backdrop of the disunity manifest among the religions of the world, the Witnesses clearly stand in stark contrast. But really, what difference can they make? Concerning a Witness convention years ago, an editorial stated: "Suffice it to say that if all the world lived by the [Bible] creed of the Jehovah Witnesses there would be an end of bloodshed and hatred, and love would reign as king."

Yet, the majority of mankind have never followed divine teaching. In the first century, they even refused to listen to God's Son, Jesus Christ. So is it too much to expect that we will one day see a united world? How is such a thing possible?

#### **In Our Next Issue**

**Our Cities  
—Their Struggle to Survive**

**The Land That Never Melts**

**A Double Life  
—Who Has to Know?**

# How the World Will Be UNITED

**E**FFORTS of humans to rule themselves successfully have invariably failed. You will no doubt agree with the inspired assessment: "Man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Why have humans failed so miserably at self-rule?

The Bible gives the reason, explaining: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) No, it is not man's prerogative, or right, to govern either himself or his fellow humans. It is the special right of Jehovah God, our Creator, of whom we are told: "Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Statute-giver, Jehovah is our King."—Isaiah 33:22.

Only when all humans accept Jehovah God as Ruler will the world be united. But will that ever happen? Long ago a prophet of God spoke of "the final part of the days," when many peoples would begin looking to Jehovah for instruction.

## A Foretold Worldwide Peace

"It must occur in the final part of the days," the prophet Isaiah wrote, that "the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains . . . and to it all the nations must stream. And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways.'" When we read further, we see the result of looking to Jehovah for instruction. "They will have to beat

their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears," the prophecy continues. "Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."—Isaiah 2:2-4.

Yes, the result of heeding this divine teaching would be no more fighting, no more ethnic violence, no more war. Human rulers assumed that they could fulfill this Bible prophecy and even inscribed the last portion of it on a wall of the United Nations Plaza in New York City. Yet, war and hatred among national and ethnic groups has only increased right up to the end of 1993. So would you say God's prophecy has failed?

No, it has not—for people from among all the nations *are right now* streaming to Jehovah's house to receive divine teaching. Indeed, what a grand testimony this summer's "Divine Teaching" Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses have been in fulfillment of this prophecy! The worldwide brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses allow nothing—neither race, nationality, nor ethnic background—to cause them to hate or kill one another. They have figuratively beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears.

'But,' someone may object, 'you can't expect *everyone* to heed God's instruction to love one another.' Although this is true, God has the power to remove all opposers of his divine will.

## What God Will Do

Do you pray as Jesus taught his followers, namely: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"? (Matthew 6:9, 10, *King James Version*) If you do, you can be confident that our loving heavenly Father will answer that prayer. How will he do that?

God has already appointed his Son, "The Prince of Peace," as the chosen ruler of his "government," the Kingdom for which we were taught to pray. (Isaiah 9:6, *KJ*) We need such a superhuman spirit ruler, for only he can rid humankind of the evil influence of Satan and his demons. Human rulers, no matter how well-meaning, cannot do so.—1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:7-12.

Yet, what will happen to present-day governments that fail to submit to divine ruler-

ship? Another Bible prophecy that describes the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray says: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . [God's heavenly Kingdom] will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Thus, praying for God's Kingdom *to come* means that we are praying for one worldwide government under the rule of the "Prince of Peace." —Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 9:6.

Then, when the human family is united in peace under God's Kingdom, all will love one another regardless of race or ethnic background. What a glorious time that will be! (Revelation 21:3, 4) We invite you to enjoy a preview of that peaceful situation even now among Jehovah's Witnesses and then to look forward with them to the time when the whole world will be united in peace.

**God's Kingdom will unite all people in peace**





## *What Happened to the Traditional C H R I S T M A S ?*

*"Christmas was an enjoyable time for us children," says Rita, looking back to the 1930's. "Everybody went to church, where we sang our favorite hymns. When we came home, Mother cooked a turkey, and we had Christmas pudding and cream. We sincerely believed it was Jesus' birthday, his day. But things have changed. The only thing many children seem to think about now is Father Christmas coming to bring presents."*

Santa Claus: Thomas Nast/Dover Publications, Inc. 1978

Tree and stockings: Old-Fashioned Christmas Illustrations/Dover Publications, Inc.

By Awake! correspondent in Britain

OVER the years, the celebration of Christmas has changed in many ways—and not just in recent times. Even in 1836, English author Charles Dickens said: "There

are people who will tell you that Christmas is not to them what it used to be."

Perhaps surprising to some, Christmas has not always been a popular event. In the

19th century, when Dickens wrote, Christmas had diminished in popularity. Most British newspapers ignored it during the early part of that century.

Dickens and his older American counterpart, Washington Irving, made an effort to idealize Christmas. Why? Not solely to restore old traditions but also, at least as far as Dickens was concerned, to alert readers to the harsh realities of life for the underprivileged and thus to better their condition.

### 19th-Century Realities

While the industrial revolution brought prosperity to some, it also resulted in slums, squalor, and sweated labor. "Every great town has one or more slums," wrote Friedrich Engels in 1844, "where the working class is crowded together . . . , removed from the sight of the happier classes."

Britain's Factory Act of 1825, which only concerned cotton mills, stated that no person should work in a cotton mill for more than 12 hours a weekday or 9 hours on a Saturday. In 1846, historian Thomas Macaulay blamed such intense labor for "stunting the growth of the mind, leaving no time for healthful exercise, no time for intellectual culture."

A revival of Christmas festivities took place in the midst of such 19th-century social and moral problems.

### Dickens and Christmas

Charles Dickens led in arousing social conscience to the problems of the poor. In his classic novel *A Christmas Carol*, published in 1843, Dickens skillfully employed his knowledge of Christmas traditions to achieve his end.

*A Christmas Carol* was an immediate success, and thousands of copies were sold. The following year, nine London theaters staged dramatized versions of the tale. On Christ-

mas Eve 1867, Dickens presented a reading of it in the United States at Boston, Massachusetts. In attendance was a Mr. Fairbanks, a factory owner from Vermont, who said to his wife: "I feel that after listening to Mr. Dickens's reading of *A Christmas Carol* tonight I should break the custom we have hitherto observed of opening the works on Christmas Day." He was true to his word. The following year he added the tradition of giving a turkey to his employees at Christmastime.

### Christmas Commercialized

Charitable handouts became commonplace during the Christmas season, ranging from charitable trusts dispensing coal to poor widows to village squires making gifts of money and food. Christmas soon became, in theory, the opportunity for all classes to meet in social harmony. Allowing the divisions between the rich and the poor to become deliberately blurred at this time of year salved many consciences.

A number of festive traditions were either revived or created. For example, the first Christmas cards appeared in 1843, and as printing became cheaper, the market prospered. Christmas trees, a much older tradition, also greatly increased in popularity

### Did you know these facts?

- \* Jesus was not born on December 25.
- \* Shepherds in Israel had their sheep under cover in the depths of winter and not in the fields at night.
- \* The 'wise men' were in fact Magi, astrologers, and visited Jesus when he was a young child, not a baby.
- \* Nowhere does the Bible say that Christians are to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But there is an express command to commemorate his death.

after Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, introduced the German manner of decoration, employing tinsel, ornaments, and candles.

The commercial promotion of Christmas was gaining momentum. Today, a little over a century later, Christmas has become so

## Why Witnesses Don't Celebrate

*The Witness*, the official newspaper of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, U.S.A., presented the following question in its feature "Question Corner."

"My wife has asked my 10 children to help celebrate my 80th birthday."

"However, two of the children are Jehovah's Witnesses and said they do not celebrate birthdays because they live their lives closely following the example that Jesus left us and according to the Bible."

"They say that neither Jesus nor any early Christians celebrated birthdays. It was a pagan tradition and one that Christians would have nothing to do with. It was viewed as a pagan tradition at the time of Christ and is to be viewed the same way today."

Priest John Dietzen answered the question: "I know this is hurtful for you, but the information you give is correct. Among numerous differences in belief and practices between Jehovah's Witnesses and other Christian denominations is this one.

"Consistent with this belief, their members do not even celebrate Christmas, partly because it celebrates the birthday of Jesus and also because the date of Christmas was established, apparently in the fourth century on the day of the winter solstice (according to the old Julian calendar), which was before then a great pagan feast."

commercialized that there is public outcry over it. This raises the question: What was Christmas like originally?

## Origins of Christmas

Providing historical background, *The Chicago Tribune* just last December noted in a front-page story: "Ironically, the holiday that Christians now complain is being co-opted by commercialism traces its roots to a pagan festival that was taken over by Christianity."

"The first reported observance of Christmas as the birth of Jesus Christ was more than 300 years after the event. In the 4th Century, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and, scholars believe, Christians set Jesus' birthdate at Dec. 25 to coincide with existent celebrating by non-Christians."

"Rather than battle against the pagan holidays, they decided to join them and try to replace them," said University of Utah professor Russell Belk . . . "The pagan holidays replaced by Christianity were the Roman celebrations of Saturnalia—which were carnivalesque celebrations with gift-giving—and later the Yule celebrations in England and Germany that celebrated the winter solstice," Belk said.

"Christmas has gained and slipped in popularity over the centuries. It was banned for a time in England and America by Puritans who objected to the frivolity associated with it. But toward the mid-1800s, Belk said, 'Christmas was in trouble, waning in popularity.' He said religious leaders welcomed an injection of commerce, via gift-giving and Santa Claus, to revive the holiday."

"That revival, Belk said, was credited largely to English author Charles Dickens, whose 1843 'A Christmas Carol' showed a reformed Scrooge who became a generous giver."

## What About Christmas Customs?

Dickens is said to have "enjoyed all the attendant paraphernalia of Christmas." But from where did the paraphernalia come?

Providing interesting insights into this matter, *New York Newsday* of December 22, 1992, quoted John Mosley, who wrote the book *The Christmas Star*: "'The early church leaders didn't celebrate Christmas in December specifically to celebrate the birth of Christ,' [Mosley] said. 'It was their way of dealing with the winter solstice,' the turning point of winter, when the sun stops its drift to the south and heads north again, bringing new light.

"Evidence for this is seen in the symbols of Christmas, Mosley said. Most obvious is the use of green plants, which symbolize life in a time of darkness and cold. 'The most obvious green plant is the Christmas tree,' he said. 'And the northern Europeans celebrated the solstice in the forest; they worshiped trees. So the Christmas tree is really a throwback to tree worship in prehistoric times.'

"Also, Mosley said, 'What do you put on the trees? Lights. Light recalls the Sun and symbolizes the Sun. It's for the rebirth of the Sun and the return of light after the solstice. The main things involved in solstice celebrations everywhere are light and green plants.'

"Dec. 25, he added, 'was also the original date of the winter solstice, and many of the things we do now, and which we think are relatively modern Christmas customs, really trace their origins to the solstice celebrations."

Music also characterizes Christmas celebrations. Thus, it is not surprising that the Roman festival of Saturnalia was renowned for its feasting and merrymaking, including dancing and singing. That the modern Christmas owes much to the ancient Saturnalia, scholars no longer dispute.

## Deep Misgivings

England's Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, complained about the "Victorian, Charles Dickens Christmas." The reason? "I am concerned in case our children are affected by the commercialism," he said.

According to the newspaper *The Scotsman*, Anglican bishop David Jenkins believes that Christmas commercialism is driving people to the point of nervous breakdown. "We worship greed and Christmas becomes the feast of greed and folly," he said, adding: "Ordinary persons are made miserable by their credit card debts. . . . There is increasing evidence that after Christmas people get into despair and have family rows. It is increasingly causing more trouble than it is worth."

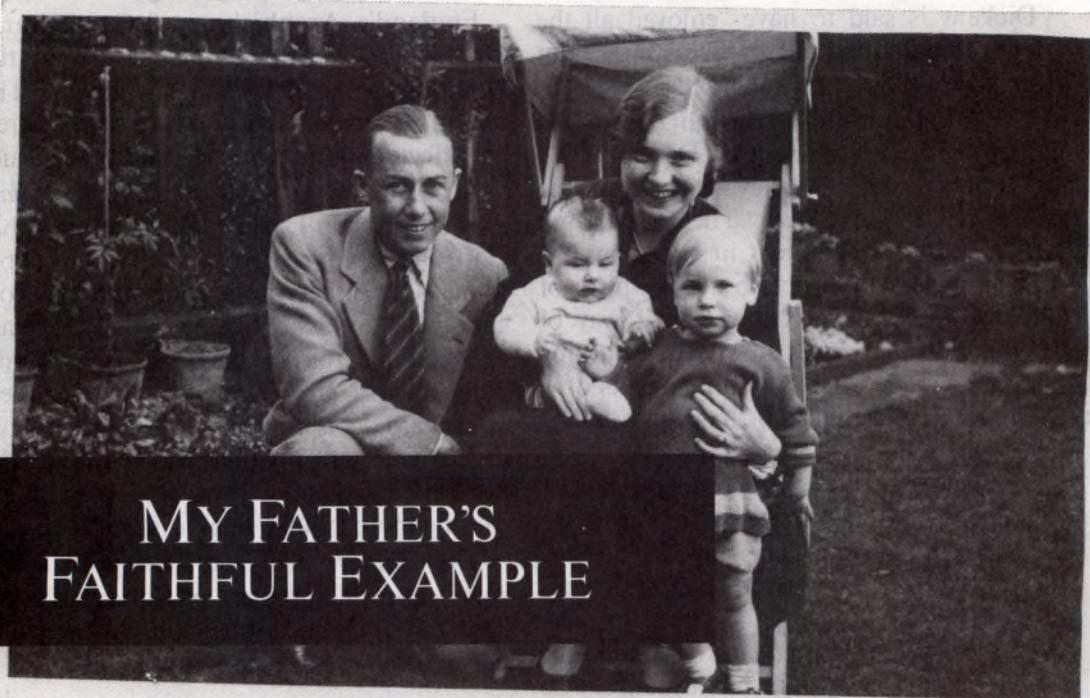
*The Church Times* of England aptly summed up the problem of Christmas: "We need to be liberated from the great bacchanalian orgy we have allowed it to become!"

## What to Do About It

You can recognize Christmas for what it is, a pagan celebration that falsely parades as the birthday of Jesus, and have nothing to do with it. That is what Rita did, the woman mentioned at the outset. She became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and she is now united with more than 4,500,000 fellow Witnesses, who shun Christmas completely.

Yet, it is not always easy to take a course that differs from that of the majority. (Compare Matthew 7:13, 14.) *The Church Times* acknowledged: "It takes a brave man, woman or family to opt out of a festival that is thrust upon us so aggressively by our peers."

Many who have made the decision to "opt out" agree. But they also know that a deep love of truth has given them both the incentive and the strength to take and maintain that stand. The same can be true of you—if that is your desire.



## MY FATHER'S FAITHFUL EXAMPLE

IT WAS July 6, 1947, and our family was attending a district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in London, England. My father had tears of joy in his eyes as he held out his hand to help me out of the baptism pool. My father and I had just been baptized in symbol of our dedication to Jehovah, the Creator and Universal Sovereign. My mother and three brothers were also present for this happy occasion.

Sadly, however, the unity of our family in Christian worship would soon be shattered. But before telling about this and how my father's faithfulness affected me, let me tell a little about his early life.

### **Eastern-Western Background**

My father, Lester, was born in Hong Kong in March 1908. His dad was the assistant harbormaster. When Father was a boy, his dad

would take him along on trips by boat to check on activities around Hong Kong and nearby islands. Then, when Lester was only eight, his dad died. Afterward his mother remarried, and the family moved to Shanghai. In 1920 his mother took Lester and his ten-year-old sister, Phyl, to England for schooling.

Father spent the following years in the shadow of Canterbury Cathedral, home of the Anglican Church. Attending church there was his introduction to religious matters. Phyl went to a boarding school north of London, but she and Father became very close during those years because they spent their school holidays together. Five years later, in 1925, when Father finished school, his mother returned to England and saw to it that Lester became established in business.

**At left: My parents with my older brother and me**

Then, the following year, she went back to Shanghai, taking Phyl with her.

Before Lester's mother left, she gave him a copy of a book written by his great-grandfather. It was a poetic story of the life of Buddha entitled "*The Light of Asia*." This started Father thinking about the real reason for life. At Canterbury he had been impressed with the grandeur of the cathedral and the solemnity of the religious proceedings, but the lack of spiritual instruction left him with an empty feeling. So he wondered: 'Do the Eastern religions have the answers?' He decided to investigate. During the years that followed, he looked into Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam. But each failed to answer his questions.

Father lived at a sports club operated by the firm he worked for, and he enjoyed rowing, playing rugby, and other sports. He soon fell in love with Edna, an attractive girl who had the same love of sports. They were married in 1929 and were blessed with four sons over the next ten years.

**Traumatic War Years**

During the 1930's, the storm clouds of World War II were gathering, so Father decided to move from London to the country. We made the move only a few months before the war broke out, in September 1939.

Conscription for war services was introduced, and age limits were gradually raised as the war dragged on. Rather than waiting to be conscripted, Father volunteered for service in the Royal Air Force and was called up in May 1941. Although he was occasionally able to get home on leave, it was six years before normal family relationships were resumed. The burden of caring for us

children—the two oldest of us were by then entering our teens—fell upon Mother.

**Spiritual Refreshment**

About two years before Father was released from the Air Force, two of Jehovah's Witnesses called on Mother and started a Bible study with her. Mother wrote Father and told him how much she was enjoying what she was learning. Once when he was on leave, she took him to a congregation Bible study in a private home.

Father was released from the military in December 1946 and began sitting in on the Bible discussions Mother was having with the two Witness ladies. They noted his interest and had Ernie Beavor, the presiding overseer, visit Father. In just one evening, Brother Beavor answered from the Bible all Father's objections. During the next two weeks, while traveling to work in London each day by train, he read the three books Brother Beavor gave him. When Brother Beavor visited again, Father greeted him: "This is the truth I have been searching for! What must I do?"

From then on Father began taking us boys to the meetings. Mother, however, did not always want to come with us. Her interest had begun to wane. Yet, all of us went to the convention in London in July 1947, where Father and I were baptized. Afterward, Mother only occasionally came to meetings.

Shortly after that baptism, my aunt Phyl came to England to visit and, to my father's great joy, readily accepted Bible truth and was baptized. When she returned to Shanghai, she contacted Stanley Jones and Harold King, two missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses who had been sent there shortly before. These missionaries were later imprisoned, for seven years and five years respectively, by the ruling Communist government. They helped Phyl spiritually until her

husband retired from work in China. Then she and her husband returned to England and settled near us.

### A Tragic Family Breakup

Meanwhile, real communication between Mother and Dad became a problem. Mother saw the zeal with which Lester pursued his newfound faith, and believing that the material security of the family would be threatened, she began to oppose his Christian activity. Finally, in September 1947, she confronted him with the ultimatum that he give up the Christian faith or else she would leave. Father felt that he had calmed Mother's fears by reasoning with her from the Scriptures, showing her that there was no reason to fear. However, the climax came without further warning on October 1, 1947. When Father arrived home from work that day, he found an empty house and me sitting on the doorstep with our suitcases. Mother had left, taking everything, including my three brothers. I told father that I had chosen to stay

**I was able to speak extensively to Winston Churchill about God's Kingdom**



with him. Mother had not even left a note.  
—Matthew 10:35-39.

Ernie Beavor made arrangements for us to stay with an older couple until Father found accommodations. They were very kind to us and comforted us with the apostle Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:15: "If the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace."

We eventually made contact with our family and visited them but soon realized that compromising our faith would be the only acceptable solution to Mother. We knew that making concessions would not bring blessings from Jehovah. So Father continued in secular work, providing Mother with the financial means to support my brothers. On leaving school in 1947, I took part-time work, and in January 1948, I was accepted for the full-time ministry.

### A Memorable Bible Discussion

In field ministry one day, when I was still only 17, I spoke with a man in a farm cottage. While I was visiting there, Winston Churchill, Britain's leader during World War II, arrived. My conversation was interrupted, but Mr. Churchill took note of *The Watchtower* and commended me for my work.

Several days later I was out preaching again when I rang the doorbell of a large house. A butler opened the door, and when I requested to speak to the man of the house, he asked if I knew who that was. I had no idea. "This is Chartwell," he said, "the home of Winston Churchill." At that moment, Mr. Churchill appeared. He remembered our previous meeting and invited me in. We spoke a little, and he accepted three books and invited me to return.

Later, on a warm afternoon, I returned and was again invited in. Mr. Churchill offered

USAF photo

me some lemonade and, after a brief greeting, said: "I will give you half an hour to tell me what you think God's Kingdom is, but then you must let me tell you what I believe it to be." That is what we did.

Mr. Churchill felt that God's Kingdom would be established through God-fearing statesmen and that until men learned to live at peace, it would never come. I was able to explain the Bible's view of God's Kingdom and the blessings it would bring. Mr. Churchill was very cordial and indicated he respected our work.

Unfortunately, I was never again able to contact him. But I am grateful that, even though I was still a teenager, with the training and encouragement I had received from my father, I was able to give a good witness to such a prominent world statesman.  
—Psalm 119:46

### An Expanded Ministry

In May 1950, Mother wrote to tell us that she was immigrating to Canada and would be taking with her John, my youngest brother. By then my brothers Peter and David were caring for themselves. So after 18 years with his firm (including the war years when he was kept on their list of employees), Father handed in his resignation and applied for the regular pioneer service. He began the full-time ministry in August 1950, after he returned from attending the huge international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York. A little over a year later, in November 1951, Father was appointed a traveling overseer and began visiting congregations to encourage them. Meanwhile, in the fall of 1949, I was invited to serve at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in London, England.

Then came another rich blessing—Father and I were invited to the 20th class of the Gilead missionary school in New York. The class started in September 1952, and we grad-



***My father, Lester,  
shortly before his death***

uated the following February. Afterward, I served at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, while father was sent out as a traveling overseer in Indiana.

The whole 20th class was held back from going to our missionary assignments so that we could attend the international convention in New York City in July. I had become very fond of one of my classmates, Kae Whitson, and we decided to get married. We were assigned to the traveling work in Michigan, and then two years later, we were given a missionary assignment in Northern Ireland.

However, just as we were due to sail, Kae discovered she was pregnant. So we began another assignment, that of raising a son and three daughters to become successful full-time ministers, even as my father had trained me to be. In November 1953, Father left for Africa, and on January 4, 1954, he arrived at his missionary assignment in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Father had much to learn—a new way of life, new customs, and new tests of faith. Back in 1954, Southern Rhodesia had not been affected much by Western ways. After a year in the branch office, Father was sent out in the traveling work as a district overseer. He was recalled to the branch office in 1956 and served there until his death July 5, 1991. He saw the branch staff grow from 5 in 1954 to more than 40, and the number of Kingdom publishers from 9,000 to over 18,000.

### Dad and Mom's Final Years

Father and Mother were never divorced. After leaving England, Mother stayed a while in Canada and then moved to the United States with John. None of my brothers have become Witnesses. However, Mother was contacted by the Witnesses in the mid-1960's. In 1966, she moved to Mombasa, Kenya, where she resumed studying. But the next year she had a nervous breakdown.

My brothers Peter and David arranged for her to go to England, where she received treatment. She recovered and again began studying with the Witnesses. You can imagine my father's joy when she wrote to tell him that she was to be baptized at a convention in London in 1972. My wife and I flew over from the United States to be with her at the time of her baptism.

The following year Father was due for a vacation, and when in England, he had the joy of working with Mother from house to house in the ministry. Afterward he came to visit our family in the United States. Father and Mother had discussed reconciliation, but she told him: "We've been apart too long. It would be difficult. Let's wait until the new world, when everything will be all right." So Father returned to his assignment. Mother's illness in Kenya left its mark on her, and eventually she had to be confined to a hospital, where she died in 1985.

In 1986, Father became very sick, so my brother Peter and I visited him at his home in Zimbabwe. This encouraged him greatly and seemed to give him a new lease on life. The African brothers could not do enough for me because I was Lester's son! Truly, Father's example had a positive influence on the lives of all he touched.

Now I myself am ill. The doctors tell me I have only a short time to live. They say that I have amyloidosis, a rare and fatal disease. However, I am happy that my children are following my example, as I followed the example of my faithful father. All of them are still loyally serving Jehovah with us. What a comfort it is to know that whether we live or die, we have the sure hope of enjoying forever the rich blessings of our loving heavenly Father because we have faithfully done his will! (Hebrews 6:10)—*As told by Michael Davey.\**

\* On June 22, 1993, while this account was being completed, Michael Davey fell asleep in death.



**With my wife, Kae**

## Young People Ask...



# Live a Double Life—Why Not?

**"I was living a double life—one with my Christian friends and another with my school friends."**

The situation of the young woman quoted above is hardly unique. But what is meant by "living a double life"? Ruth Bell, author of the book *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*, defined the practice as "anything you are doing that you don't tell your parents about."

This author interviewed dozens of young people and reported: "Many teenagers said they had things going on in their life that they

just couldn't talk to their parents about. The most common areas for secrecy were sex and drugs and drinking, but people also mentioned things like staying out late, picking up strangers, skipping school, fighting, and going around with friends their parents didn't like."

Sad to say, even some youths raised by Christian parents hide what they are from their parents and others.\* (Compare Psalm 26:4.) Around parents and fellow believers, these youths appear to be upright and God-fearing. But away from such scrutiny, they behave as if they are different people altogether.

Just what moves a youth to carry on a double life?

### The Lure of Independence

The Bible says that eventually "a man will leave his father and his mother." (Genesis 2:24) It is only natural, then, for you to want to grow up, to think for yourself, to make your own decisions. The problem is that you may not be ready for adulthood. Lacking life experience, you still need the support of godly parents.—Proverbs 1:8.

Many youths balk at accepting this fact. According to the book *How to Survive Your Child's Rebellious Teens*, many youths want to "flex their maturing muscles, as it were, test their newly developed strengths, and declare their independence." When parents refuse to give permission to do things they consider unwise—or wrong—some youths rebel. And they may feel little remorse for this betrayal. One teenage girl says: "I feel good doing things [my parents] don't know I'm doing because it makes me feel important. I have a separate life from them and I don't think they're on to it at all. . . . They wouldn't believe half of what I'm doing."

\* See the article "Youths—Guard Against Leading a Double Life," in the August 1, 1988, issue of *The Watchtower*.



### 'My Parents Are Too Strict'

Why, though, do even some youths who are receiving fine Christian upbringing engage in covert wrongdoing? When *Awake!* put this question to a group of youths, one teenage girl replied: "They're angry at their parents. They want to get back at them for restricting them." No doubt about it, Christianity is a restrictive way of life. Jesus said: "Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life." (Matthew 7:14) If you want to receive God's gift of everlasting life, you simply cannot do some of the so-called fun things that other youths do. For example, wild parties, drinking matches, premarital sex, loose conduct, all are things condemned in the Bible.—Galatians 5:19-21.

Then there is the fact that some parents may seem to be unusually strict. "We can hardly see any movies," complained a young girl named Kim. "I had also cut down a lot on

### Do you live a double life?

the time I spent listening to music, and I tried to be selective. But my father has forbidden us to listen to just about any music at all! We can listen only to classical and jazz records." Faced with what they see as unreasonable restrictions, some youths begin to feel envious of the freedom their peers enjoy.

### The Desire to Fit In

A young woman named Tammy recalls: "I started out by using bad language in school. It made me feel I was more like the rest of the kids. Later I tried smoking. I would also drink alcohol to the point of feeling high. Then I started having boyfriends—secretly because my parents were strict and didn't allow me to date."

A teenage boy named Pete had a similar experience: "I was brought up as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. But I was very afraid of being teased, so I always tried to be with the in crowd. I tried to be popular. I would lie and make excuses as to why I didn't receive any presents during religious holidays."\* Once Pete began making small compromises, it was not long before he engaged in more serious misconduct.

### "Bad Associations"—Where?

Such experiences highlight the truthfulness of the Christian apostle Paul's words: "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) So if you associate with youths who do not respect your Bible-based values and morals, you can easily be drawn into their life-

\* For a discussion of the position of Jehovah's Witnesses on religious holidays, see the brochure *School and Jehovah's Witnesses*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

style. Interestingly, though, the apostle was not talking specifically about associating with unbelievers when he issued that warning. He was warning against associating with those within the Christian congregation who fail to uphold Christian teaching. (1 Corinthians 15:12) Similarly today, there may be youths associated with the congregation who do not adhere to or recommend proper Christian living. They can place subtle pressure upon you to lead a double life.

Consider, again, Tammy, who admits that her parents are "very loving." She describes her father as "almost bubbling over with zeal, always talking about how Jehovah cares for us." He even serves in the congregation as an elder. How, then, was she misled? "Bad association within the congregation," she says. "Others would tell me about the fun they would have at different parties and about the drinking they were doing. Or they would talk about their boyfriends and how they would go out dancing after congregation meetings."

### **Warding Off Calamity**

Do not excuse such misbehavior of young ones by reasoning, 'It's just a part of growing up' or, 'All kids hide things from their parents.' Note the warning God gives young people at Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10: "Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart do you good in the days of your young manhood, and walk in the ways of your heart and in the things seen by your eyes. But know that on account of all these the true God will bring you into judgment. So remove vexation from your heart, and ward off calamity from your flesh."

Living a double life may seem like fun. But ultimately it is a lethal trap. (Compare Psalm 9:16.) Disobedient acts inevitably lead to more serious acts of wrongdoing. Young Pete, for example, was already indulging in sexual misconduct when he left home at age 17. By

age 18, Pete had been jailed for armed robbery.

Often many youths seem to get away with their mischief. You can easily begin feeling like the Bible writer Asaph, who admitted: "I was jealous . . . I saw that things go well for the wicked. They do not suffer pain; they are strong and healthy. They do not suffer as other people do." But the seeming security of the wicked proved to be a cruel illusion. Concluded Asaph: "[God] will put them in slippery places and make them fall to destruction!" (Psalm 73:3-5, 18, *Today's English Version*) With good reason, then, the Bible warns: "Let your heart not be envious of sinners, but be in the fear of Jehovah all day long."—Proverbs 23:17.

What about the notion that disobedience to parents helps a youth grow up and become independent? This flies in the face of the Bible's counsel to listen to your parents. (Proverbs 23:22) Really, foolish or irresponsible behavior would only impede your emotional and spiritual development. Rather, it is by applying Bible principles that you become "a full-grown man" with "the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ."—Ephesians 4:13.

True, some parents may seem unreasonably strict. But is that not because of their deep love for you and their desire to protect you? So if you feel that your parents need to lighten up a bit, why not talk things over with them—instead of secretly rebelling?\* Doing the latter would bring great grief to them, to you, and, above all, to Jehovah God himself.—Proverbs 10:1; 27:11.

What, though, if you have already begun leading a double life? Is there any way to break free from it? Future articles will discuss these questions.

\* See chapter 3 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

## Watching the World

### Women Advised to Resist a Rapist

New research has shown that women have a better chance of escaping rape and injury if they fight back than if they plead or cry. Examining records of women who had been sexually attacked, researchers at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, discovered that women who fought back or screamed and ran away fared much better than those who did not. "In fact, the women most apt to be raped or harmed were those who didn't fight back, relying instead on begging or reasoning with their attackers," says the magazine *American Health*. Dr. Sarah Ullman, who conducted the study, gives this advice: "A woman shouldn't hesitate to shout, fight and resist with all her strength. Pleading and begging probably won't help."

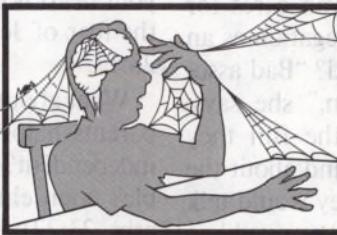
### The Church in Poland

Some four years after the fall of Communism in Poland, the Catholic Church is facing serious difficulties. According to the *Guardian Weekly* of London, public opinion polls reveal that "the priesthood has lost much of its prestige status." It adds that "the number of seminary applicants is falling off and attendances at religious instruction classes in schools are dwindling." The majority of those questioned believe that Catholic influence on public life is excessive. The *Guardian* notes that Polish "intellectuals believe that although in the past Poland acquired a reputation for religious fervour its Catholicism was in fact only skin-deep and ritualistic." Some are convinced that the church was mainly an instrument to fight Communism and that it did not stop Polish Catholics from "divor-

cing or having abortions while the law still allowed them to."

### "Use It or Lose It"

A number of studies conducted all over the world have revealed that the more a person uses his brain, the less likely he is to experience brain disorders. "Having more education means not only that you develop your brain more when you're young, but that you use it more throughout your life,



and that produces some sort of protective mechanism" against mental disease. "Reading, writing and arithmetic may be the best way to protect your brain against" a condition of deteriorated mentality, reports *The Toronto Star* of Canada. Neuropsychologist Marilyn Albert said: "This finding has been validated enough that we know it's real." She added: "For the brain, it means 'use it or lose it.'"

### Radiation-Induced Cancers

Seven years after the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine, doctors in Belarus (formerly Belorussia) are reporting a substantial increase in the number of thyroid cancers in children. According to the French medical journal *Le Concours médical*, reported cases in Belarus of thyroid cancer in children jumped from an average of 4 cases per year between 1986 and 1989 to 114 cases per year from

1990 to June 1992. Because the radioactive isotope that causes thyroid cancer, iodine 131, was released in the accident in far larger quantities than other radioactive elements, scientists are hoping that other types of radiation-induced cancers will be limited.

### Chickens With "AIDS"

It appears that AIDS is not restricted to humans and certain types of monkeys. The *Indian Express* of Bombay, India, reported that a disease similar to AIDS has stricken the country's poultry. According to the *Express*, the viral disease gumbaro, which results in an acquired immune deficiency syndrome, "has assumed epidemic proportions in the country, affecting lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of birds." More than 1.5 million egg-laying birds have died. The report claimed that there is likely to be an acute shortage of eggs in India.

### Teenager Troubles

"Today's teenagers [in the United States] face a reality far more grim and risky than the teenage years remembered by their parents and grandparents," reports the *International Herald Tribune*. Citing U.S. statistics, the *Tribune* says that the number of teenagers who drink alcohol is up 30 percent over the 1950's. Teenage suicide has risen from an extremely rare occurrence to the third most common cause of death, after accidents and homicides. Among youngsters from 10 to 14 years of age, unwanted pregnancies increased 23 percent from 1983 to 1987, and the rate of gonorrhea quadrupled between 1960 and 1988. Psychologists are groping for new ways to understand and help young people.

## Watching Them Without Eating Them

The catching and the eating of whales has become a major issue in recent years. In a few countries, such as Japan, some people claim that whale meat is part of their traditional diet and are upset by the ban on commercial whaling by the International Whaling Commission. Some Japanese, though, have discovered that whales can bring in a profit without being caught and eaten. The inhabitants of the Bonin Islands, south of Tokyo, are busy expanding their latest tourist attraction, whale watching. Upon seeing whales in their normal habitat instead of on their plates, whale watchers give rousing cheers, especially when the whales blow and splash about.

### "Gun Crazy"

Under that caption, an editorial in *The New York Times* of May 25 commented on the trial of a Louisiana man who was acquitted of manslaughter after killing a Japanese exchange student in October 1992. The 16-year-old student had mistakenly rung the man's doorbell. When the man's command to freeze went unheeded by the student, who did not understand its meaning, he shot the Japanese teenager in the chest. "You have the legal right to answer everybody that comes to your door with a gun," said the man's lawyer in his defense. That, said the editorial, means that anyone who comes to your door, including "the local minister . . . , can expect a bullet if he dares ring your bell." "We Japanese don't understand the gun society of America," said a Japanese reporter. "Actually, it's easy," the editorial replied. "Just think stupidity, intolerance, a warped interpretation of the 'right to bear arms' and a refusal to learn anything" from the deaths of countless people killed by guns.

## Women Drivers

Women behind a steering wheel are often stereotyped as being inferior to men in driving skills. Do the facts uphold this generalization? Not according to *The Motorist*, a journal published by the Automobile Association of South Africa. Of all road accidents in that country in one recent year, over 83 percent involved male drivers. Many insurance companies thus offer



women drivers better rates than men. "This confidence in women's driving skills," explains the above magazine, exists because the industry "believes that women are less aggressive behind the wheel, less inclined to take risks and less likely to be involved in traffic offences." The magazine concludes that the right attitude, irrespective of a driver's sex, is what ensures good driving habits.

### The State of the World's Health

How fares global health? A comprehensive report published recently by WHO (World Health Organization) reveals bad news and good news. The good news is that measles, polio, whooping cough, and neonatal tetanus are in decline because of global efforts to immunize children. Cardiovascular disease is likewise on the wane in most developed countries. Infant and child mortality rates are dropping worldwide, and life expectancy is increasing. The bad news, reports WHO, is that tropical diseases, such as cholera, yellow fever,

dengue, and malaria, "seem to have gone on a rampage." AIDS, tuberculosis, and diabetes are also on the increase.

## Video Gambling

Video lottery machines are "the crack cocaine of gambling" and should not be in public places, says Garry Smith, a University of Alberta professor. Interviewed in *The Edmonton Journal* of Canada, Smith, who authored a study on compulsive gambling, notes that addiction to video gambling can occur "in as little as six months." He states that gambling expansion brings an increase in crime and other serious problems. Two thirds of compulsive gamblers embezzle and commit forgery, fraud, and theft just to keep up their habit. The addiction brings on depression and suicidal thoughts that contribute to careless driving and accidents, in addition to defaults on debts "and costs to the health care system." According to Smith, "each compulsive gambler costs society \$56,000."

## Adolescents of the '90's

Vittorino Andreoli, psychiatrist at Verona University, Italy, reports that in contrast with previous generations, today's youngsters "lack or have a reduced perception of the future." He adds that this makes it difficult for young people to "sacrifice today for happiness tomorrow." Many also lack "the perception of good and bad," meaning that "all behavior is dictated by the situation alone" rather than by any fixed moral code. Many of today's youngsters do not quite understand what death is. Andreoli notes that "they know only television death, from fiction . . . Youngsters know how to bring about death, but they do not know what it is. Thus, they may cause it or even inflict it upon themselves, imagining completely different results."

## From Our Readers

**Children Under Stress** Thank you so much for the series of articles "Children Under Stress—How Can They Be Helped?" (July 22, 1993) When I read them, I cried out of both joy and pain. At about the age of four, I experienced sexual violence at the hand of my father. I grew up in constant pain and terror. I have been a Christian now for 20 years, and with Jehovah's help—and articles like these—I have begun to find relief. The information also enables me to protect my daughter.

S. S., Italy

I am 17 years old and under extreme emotional stress. There is a lot of verbal abuse in my home. Even though my father has not read these articles, there is no way that *every* abusive parent can ignore them. I hope the articles will open the eyes of such parents.

T. B., United States

My three-year-old daughter was sexually abused. She was deeply troubled by this experience; a child is never too young to hurt. I was so angry and sad that I wanted you to write an article to help parents see how bad things can be for our little ones. Words cannot express my joy at reading these articles. Never have I read something so beautiful. It shows others that we serve a God who understands the tremendous pain some are in.

M. G., United States

Thanks especially for the article "Abusive Parents—The Ultimate Stressors." I came from such an upbringing, with emotional and sexual abuse. The article showed how hard this can make the rest of one's life. It's nice to know someone really understands.

B. S., United States

As a survivor of childhood sexual and emotional abuse, I can really identify with the

damage that unwarranted childhood stress causes. Unless you have experienced it, you cannot begin to understand the devastation it wreaks on a person's life. The self-hatred, guilt, dread, and overwhelming feelings of worthlessness are unbearable at times. It is my prayer that parents who read this information will take a good hard look at themselves and treat their children with empathy and fellow feeling.

D. I., United States

As soon as I saw the cover, I gave way to tears. My seven-year-old had been so hard to deal with, and we didn't know what to do. We finally sent her to a hospital specializing in mental and emotional disorders. The day after she returned home, we received the issue on children under stress. We still have many unanswered questions, but through articles like these, prayer, and the support of friends, we are at least getting most of our questions answered.

D. G., United States

I am 13 years old, and two years ago I got very sick. I also had seasonal depression. I wish I'd had these articles back then. My mother took me to a special hospital for children because the doctors in our town couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. The doctors at the hospital figured out that I have what your articles called "psychosomatic reactions." The elders in my congregation, along with my parents, helped me to overcome my stress. I hope that your articles will help other young people to overcome their stress.

J. B., United States

I'm a youngster under stress too. I'm seven years old, and my mom and dad are split up. That's what makes it stressful. I have stomach problems just like what you wrote about. Thank you for caring.

J. H., United States

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# "Like Watching a Film on Jesus' Life"

A woman in France likened reading the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived* to watching such a film. The book makes an effort to discuss every event in Jesus' earthly life that is set forth in the Gospels. And to the extent possible, each of these events is related in chronological order. The woman explained:

"When I got to the end of the book, I felt as if I

had been invited by Jesus to associate with him, to live by his side, to share his joys, his emotions, in short, every aspect of his ministry. The magnificent illustrations truly convey the feelings and personalities of all those who associated with Jesus and even of Jesus himself. Reading the book from cover to cover is like watching a film on Jesus' life."



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## Jésus choisit ses apôtres

CELÀ fait environ un an et demi que Jean le baptiseur a présenté Jésus comme l'Agneau de Dieu et que Jésus a commencé son ministère public. A cette époque-là, André, Simon Pierre, Jean et peut-être Jacques (le frère de Jean), ainsi que Philippe et Nathanaël (aussi appelé Barthélémy), sont devenus ses premiers disciples. Depuis, de nombreux autres se sont joints à eux pour suivre le Christ.

Jésus est maintenant prêt à choisir ses apôtres. Ils seront ses proches collaborateurs et recevront une formation spéciale. Mais avant de les choisir, Jésus s'en va dans la montagne et passe toute une nuit en prière, demandant sans doute à Dieu de lui accorder de la sagesse et Sa bénédiction. Le lendemain matin, il