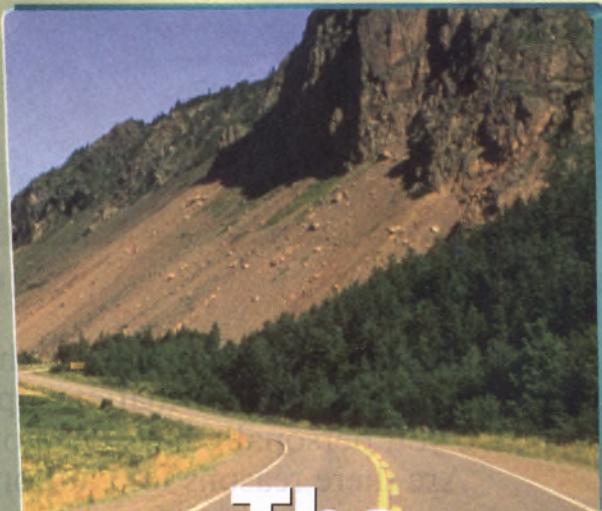


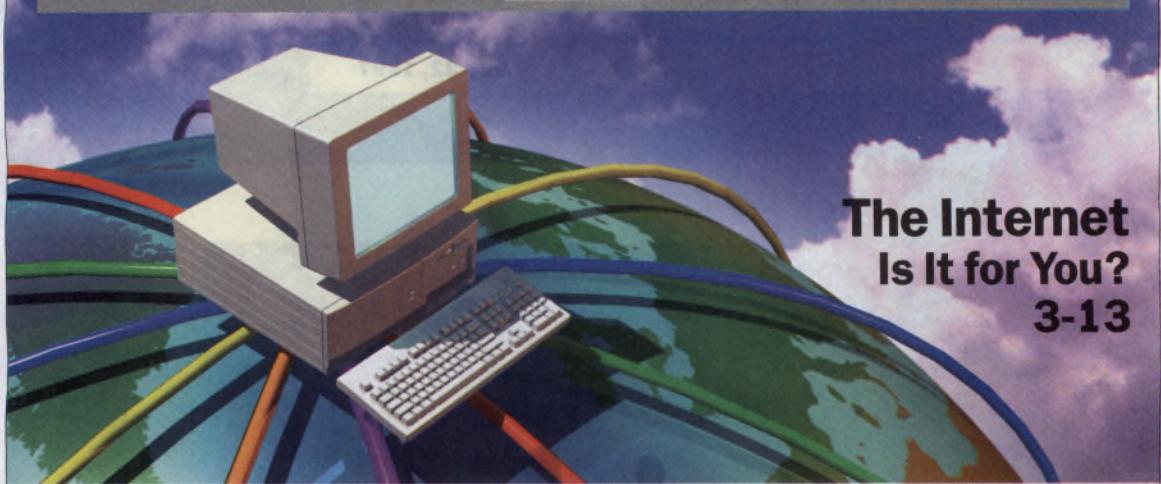
# Awake!

July 22, 1997



# The Internet Is It for You?





## The Internet Is It for You? 3-13

Average Printing 18,350,000

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It is a gateway into a world of seemingly inexhaustible resources.  
Some refer to it as the information superhighway.

Do you personally have need of it?  
Are there reasons for caution?



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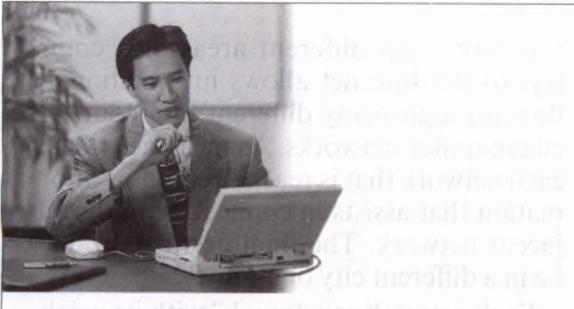
Does it seem that no matter what goes wrong, *you* will be blamed? How can you deal with unfair criticism?



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Many people are hospitalized for diseases and injuries that could have been avoided. The cause? Hazardous life-styles.

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# What Is the Internet?

**U**SING the Internet, David, a teacher in the United States, acquired course materials. A Canadian father accessed it to stay in contact with his daughter in Russia. Loma, a housewife, used it to examine scientific research on the early beginnings of the universe. A farmer turned to it to find information about new planting methods that make use of satellites. Corporations are drawn to it because of its power to advertise their products and services to millions of potential customers. People around the globe read the latest national and international news by means of its vast reporting and information services.

What is this computer phenomenon called the Internet, or the Net? Do you per-

sonally have need of it? Before you decide to get "on" the Internet, you may want to know something about it. In spite of all the hype, there are reasons to exercise caution, especially if there are children in the home.

## What Is It?

Imagine a room filled with many spiders, each spinning its own web. The webs are so interconnected that the spiders can travel freely within this maze. You now have a simplified view of the Internet—a global collection of many different types of computers and computer networks that are linked together. Just as a telephone enables you to talk to someone on the other side of the earth who also has a phone, the Internet enables a person to sit at his

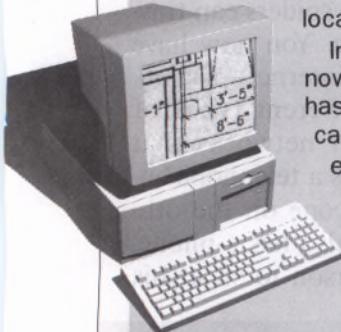


## Origin and Design of the Internet

The Internet began as an experiment by the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1960's to help scientists and researchers from widely dispersed areas work together by sharing scarce and expensive computers and their files. This goal required the creation of a set of connected networks that would act as a coordinated whole.

The Cold War generated interest in a "bombproof" network. If a part of the network were destroyed, data would still travel toward its destination with help from the surviving parts. In the resulting Internet, the responsibility of message routing was thus spread throughout the network instead of being centered in one location.

In large part the Internet, now over two decades old, has grown in popularity because of the use of browsers. A browser is a software tool that greatly simplifies the process of a user's "visiting" different locations on the Internet.



computer and exchange information with other computers and computer users anywhere in the world.

Some refer to the Internet as the information superhighway. Just as a road allows

travel through different areas of a country, so the Internet allows information to flow through many different interconnected computer networks. As messages travel, each network that is reached contains information that assists in connecting to the adjacent network. The final destination may be in a different city or country.

Each network can "speak" with its neighbor network by means of a common set of rules created by the Internet designers. Worldwide, how many networks are connected? Some estimates say over 30,000. According to recent surveys, these networks connect over 10,000,000 computers and some 30,000,000 users throughout the world. It is estimated that the number of connected computers is doubling each year.

What can people locate on the Internet? It offers a rapidly growing collection of information, with topics ranging from medicine to science and technology. It features exhaustive material on the arts as well as research material for students and coverage of recreation, entertainment, sports, shopping, and employment opportunities. The Internet provides access to almanacs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and maps.

There are, however, some disturbing aspects to consider. Can everything on the Internet be regarded as wholesome? What services and resources does the Internet offer? What precautions are in order? The following articles will discuss these questions.

### 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.

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# Services and Resources of the Internet

**A** COMMON resource provided by the Internet is a worldwide system for sending and receiving electronic mail, known as E-mail. In fact, E-mail represents a large portion of all Internet traffic and is for many the only Internet resource they use. How does it work? To answer that question, let's review the ordinary mail system first.

Imagine that you live in Canada and wish to send a letter to your daughter living in Moscow. After properly addressing the envelope, you mail it, starting the letter's journey. At a postal facility, the letter is routed to the next location, perhaps a regional or national distribution center, and then to a local post office near your daughter.

A similar process occurs with E-mail. After your letter is composed on your computer, you must specify an E-mail address that identifies your daughter. Once you send this electronic letter, it travels from your computer, often through a device called a mo-

dem, which connects your computer to the Internet via the telephone network. Off it goes, bound for various computers that act like local and national postal routing facilities. They have enough information to get the letter to a destination computer, where your daughter can retrieve it.

Unlike the regular mail, E-mail often reaches its destination, even on other continents, in minutes or less unless some part of the network is heavily congested or temporarily out of order. When your daughter inspects her electronic mailbox, she will discover your E-mail. The speed of E-mail and the ease with which it can be sent even to multiple recipients all over the world make it a popular form of communication.

## Newsgroups

Another popular service is called Usenet. Usenet offers access to newsgroups for group discussions on specific topics. Some newsgroups focus on buying or selling various consumer items. There are thousands of

### Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

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\* Audiocassettes also available.

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newsgroups, and once a user has gained access to Usenet, there is no cost to subscribe to them.

Let's imagine that someone has joined a newsgroup involved in stamp collecting. As new messages about this hobby are sent by others subscribing to this group, the messages become available to this newcomer. This person reviews not only what someone has sent to the newsgroup but also what others have written in response. If, for example, someone requests information about a particular stamp series, shortly afterward there may be many responses from around the world, offering information that would be immediately available to all who subscribe to this newsgroup.

A variation of this idea is the Bulletin Board System (BBS). BBSs are similar to Usenet, except that all files are located on a single computer, usually maintained by one person or group. The content of newsgroups reflects the varied interests, viewpoints, and moral values of those who use them, so discretion is needed.

### **File Sharing and Topic Searching**

One of the original Internet goals was global information sharing. The teacher mentioned in the previous article located another educator on the Internet who was willing to share already developed course materials. Within minutes the files were transferred, despite a 2,000-mile distance.

What help is available when one does not know where a subject may be located within the Internet? Just as we locate a phone number by using a telephone directory, a user may find locations of interest on the Internet by first gaining access to what are known as search sites. The user supplies a word or a phrase; the site then replies with a list of Internet locations where information can be found. Generally, the search is free and takes only a few seconds!

The farmer mentioned earlier had heard of a new technique called precision farming, which uses computers and satellite maps. By entering that phrase at a search site, he found the names of farmers who were using it as well as detailed information about the method.

### **The World Wide Web**

The part of the Internet called World Wide Web (or, Web) allows authors to use an old-fashioned idea—that of footnotes—in a new way. When an author of a magazine article or a book inserts a footnote symbol, we scan the bottom of the page and are possibly directed to another page or book. Authors of Internet computer documents can do essentially the same thing using a technique that will underline or highlight a word, a phrase, or an image in their document.

The highlighted word or image is a clue to the reader that an associated Internet resource, often another document, exists. This Internet document can be fetched and displayed immediately for the reader. The document may even be on a different computer and located in another country. David Peal, author of *Access the Internet!*, notes that this technique "links you to actual documents, not just references to them."

The Web also supports the storage and retrieval, or playing, of photographs, graphics, animations, videos, and sounds. Loma, the housewife mentioned at the outset of the previous article, obtained and played a short color movie of the current theories regarding the universe. She heard the narration through her computer's audio system.

### **Surfing the Net**

By using a Web browser, a person can easily and quickly view information and colorful graphics that may be stored on computers in many different countries. Using a Web



## Internet Addresses What Are They?

Identifying people connected to the Internet is accomplished with E-mail addresses. Imagine that you

wish to send E-mail to a friend whose E-mail address is `drg@tekwriting.com`.\* In this example, the person's identity, or log-in, is "drg." People often use their initials or full name as their log-in. The term following the "@" symbol may be their employer, their place of business, or their E-mail service provider. In this case, "tekwriting" identifies such a business. The last part of the address identifies the type of organization with which your friend has a log-in. In this case, "com" refers to a commercial organization. Educational organizations have a similar naming convention but end with

"edu," and nonprofit organizations end with "org." Another E-mail standard ends with the country code of the person. For example, the address `lvg@spicyfoods.ar` indicates that the person whose log-in is "lvg" is affiliated with a firm termed "spicyfoods" in Argentina.

Another type of address locates Web documents on the Internet. Suppose that information about research on rain forests can be found in the Web document located at `http://www.ecosystems.com/research/forests/rf`. The letters "http" (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) identify the protocol for handling a type of Web document, and "www.ecosystems.com" indicates the name of the Web server, a computer—in this case a commercial firm designated "ecosystems." The actual Web document is the last part of the address—"research/forests/rf." Web addresses are often called Uniform Resource Locators, or URLs, for short.

\* The Internet addresses cited are fictitious.

browser can be similar in some ways to actual travel, only easier. One can visit the Web exhibits of the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Holocaust Memorial Museum. This ability to move nimbly back and forth from one Internet Web site to another is commonly called surfing the Net.

Businesses and other organizations have become interested in the Web as a means to advertise their products or services as well as to offer other kinds of information. They create a Web page, a sort of electronic storefront window. Once an organization's Web page address is known, potential customers can use a browser to go "shopping," or information browsing. As in any marketplace, however, not all products, services, or information provided on the Internet are wholesome.

Researchers are trying to make the Internet secure enough for confidential and safeguarded transactions. (We will talk more

about security later.) Another worldwide Internet—dubbed by some Internet II—is being developed because of the increased traffic that this commercial activity has generated.

### What Is "Chat"?

Another common service of the Internet is the Internet Relay Chat, or Chat. Chat allows a group of people, using aliases, to send messages to one another immediately. While used by a variety of age groups, it is especially popular among young people. Once connected, the user is brought into contact with a large number of other users from all around the world.

So-called chat rooms, or chat channels, are created that feature a particular theme, such as science fiction, movies, sports, or romance. All the messages typed within a chat room appear almost simultaneously on the computer screens of all participants for that chat room.

A chat room is much like a party of people mingling and talking at the same general time, except that all are typing short messages instead. Chat rooms are usually active 24 hours a day. Of course, Christians realize that the Bible principles about association, such as the one found at 1 Corinthians 15:33, apply to participation in chat groups just as they apply to all aspects of life.\*

### **Who Pays for the Internet?**

You may be wondering, 'Who pays the charges for the large distances one can trav-

\* The need for caution regarding chat rooms will be discussed later.



**S**HOULD you use the Internet? Of course, this is a personal matter, one that you should weigh carefully. What factors might influence your decision?

#### **Need—Have You Calculated the Expense?**

Much of the recent growth of the Internet is due to strong marketing efforts of the business world. Clearly, their motive is to create a sense of need. Once this perceived need is cultivated, some organizations then require a membership or annual subscription fee for the information or service that you initially accessed without cost. This fee

on the Internet? The expense is shared by all users, corporate and individual. However, the end user is not necessarily presented with a long-distance telephone bill, even if he has visited many international sites. Most users have an account with a local commercial Internet service provider, who in many cases bills the user a fixed monthly fee. Providers generally supply a local number to avoid extra phone costs. A typical monthly access fee is approximately \$20 (U.S.).

As you can see, the potential of the Internet is enormous. But should you get on this information superhighway?

## **Do You Really Need the Internet?**

is in addition to your monthly Internet access costs. Some on-line newspapers are a common example of this practice.

Have you calculated the expense of equipment and software versus your actual need? (Compare Luke 14:28.) Are there public libraries or schools with access to the Internet? Using these resources at first may help you to assess your need without making a large initial investment in a personal computer and related equipment. It may be that appropriate public Internet resources can be used, as needed, until it is clear how often such resources are actually required. Remember, the Internet existed for more

**Surfing the Net can become a trap  
if self-control is lacking**

than two decades before the general public even became aware of it, let alone felt a need for it!

**Security**

**—Is Your Privacy Protected?**

Another key concern is confidentiality. For example, your E-mail message should be seen only by your intended recipient. While the letter is in transit, however, a clever and possibly unscrupulous person or group could intercept or monitor your correspondence. To protect messages, some people use E-mail software products to scramble their letter's sensitive contents before mailing it. At the other end, the receiving party may need similar software for unscrambling the message.

Recently, much discussion has focused on the exchange of credit-card and other sensitive information for commercial use on the Internet. Although substantial innovations are expected to strengthen security, the noted computer security analyst Dorothy Denning states: "Completely secure systems are not possible, but the risk can be reduced considerably, probably to a level commensurate with the value of the information stored on the systems and the threat posed by both hackers and insiders." Absolute security is not realizable in any computer system, whether connected to the Internet or not.

**Can You Afford the Time?**

Another important issue is your time. How long will it take to install and learn the tools to navigate the Internet? Also, one



experienced Internet instructor pointed out that surfing the Internet "can be one of the most addictive and time-intensive activities for a new Internet user." Why is this?

There are large numbers of interesting subjects and countless new things to discover. In effect, the Internet is a vast collection of libraries with visually appealing documents. Navigating through just a fraction of it can easily whittle away most of the evening hours before you even think of sleep. (See the box "How Valuable Is Your Time?" on page 13.) Of course, this doesn't mean that all Web navigators lack control. However, it would be wise to place time and content restraints on Web surfing—especially for youngsters. Many families do the same with television.\* This will protect time set aside for family and spiritual activities.

—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Matthew 5:3.

\* See the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Stop Watching So Much TV?" in the February 22, 1985, issue of *Awake!*

### **Are You Missing Out?**

In time, Internet technology will be more fully deployed in developing areas of the world. However, recall the people mentioned at the beginning of the first article. Most of the information they obtained could have been acquired by using librari-

ies, telephones, conventional mail, or newspapers. Of course, some of these methods may involve more time and expense. Still, for the majority of people throughout the earth, these more traditional methods will likely continue for a time to be the primary means of communication.



# **The Internet**

## **Why Be Cautious?**

**T**HE Internet certainly has potential for educational use and day-to-day communication. Yet, stripped of its high-tech gloss, the Internet is beset with some of the same problems that have long afflicted television, telephones, newspapers, and libraries. Thus, an appropriate question may be, Is the content of the Internet suitable for my family and me?

Numerous reports have commented on the availability of pornographic material on the Internet. Does this suggest, though, that the Internet is merely a cesspool full of sexually perverted deviants? Some contend that this is a gross exaggeration. They argue that one must make a conscious and deliberate effort to locate objectionable material.

It is true that one must make an intentional effort to find unwholesome material, but others argue that it can be located with much greater ease on the Internet than elsewhere. With a few keystrokes, a user can lo-

cate erotic material, such as sexually explicit photos including audio and video clips.

The issue of how much pornography is available on the Internet is currently a hotly debated subject. Some feel that reports suggesting a pervasive problem may be exaggerated. Yet, if you learned that there were not 100 poisonous snakes in your backyard but only a few, would you be any less concerned for your family's safety? Those who have access to the Internet would be wise to exercise caution.

### **Beware of Those Who Prey on Children!**

Recent news coverage has shown that some pedophiles join on-line interactive chat discussions with young people. Posing as young children, these adults have slyly extracted names and addresses from unsuspecting youngsters.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has documented some of this activity. For example, in 1996,

police found two South Carolina, U.S.A., girls, ages 13 and 15, who had been missing for a week. They had gone to another state with an 18-year-old male they met on the Internet. A 35-year-old man was charged with luring a 14-year-old boy into an illicit sexual encounter when his parents were not home. Both cases began with dialogue in an Internet chat room. Another adult, in 1995, met a 15-year-old boy on-line and boldly went to his school to meet him. Still another adult admitted to having sex with a 14-year-old girl. She had used her father's computer to communicate with teenagers via on-line bulletin boards. She too met this adult on-line. All these youngsters had eventually been persuaded to reveal their identities.

### Need for Parental Guidance

While cases such as the above are relatively infrequent, parents must nevertheless examine this matter carefully. What resources are available to parents to protect their children from being targets of crime and exploitation?

Companies are beginning to offer tools that range from rating systems similar to those for movies, to word-detection software that filters out undesirable content, to proof-of-age systems. Some approaches block material even before it reaches the family's computer. Most of these approaches are not foolproof, however, and can be circumvented by various methods. Remember, the original design of the

Internet was to make it resistant to disruptions, so censorship is difficult.

In an interview with *Awake!*, a police sergeant who supervises a child exploitation investigation group in California offered this advice: "There is no substitute for parental guidance. I have a 12-year-old child myself. My wife and I have allowed him to use the Internet, but we make it a family affair and place careful safeguards on the amount of time we'll spend." This father is especially cautious regarding chat rooms, and he places firm restrictions on their use. He adds: "The personal computer is not in my son's room but in an open area of the home."

### The Need for Courtesy and Caution

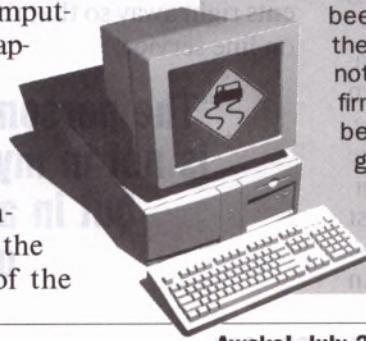
#### Courtesy

Learn the rules of courtesy and protocol. Most Internet service providers publish thoughtful and acceptable guidelines for conduct. Other users will appreciate your sensitivity and good manners.

#### Caution

Some discussion groups debate religious or controversial matters. Be careful about posting comments to such discussions; likely your E-mail address and name will be broadcast to all in the group. This often results in time-consuming and unwanted correspondence. Indeed, there are some newsgroups that are unfit to read, let alone interact with.

What about creating a discussion group, or newsgroup, for fellow Christians? This may present greater problems and dangers than initially expected. For example, individuals with ulterior motives have been known to misrepresent themselves on the Internet. Currently, the Internet itself does not enable individuals appearing on it to confirm identities. Furthermore, such a group can be compared in some ways to a large, ongoing social gathering, taxing the time and ability of its host to provide necessary and responsible supervision.—Compare Proverbs 27:12.





Parents need to take an active interest in deciding what use of the Internet, if any, they will permit for their children. What practical and reasonable precautions should be considered?

Staff writer David Plotnikoff of the *San Jose Mercury News* offers some useful tips to parents who decide to have Internet access at home.

- Your youngsters' experience is most positive when they work with you, as they learn the value of your judgment and guidance. Without your direction, he warns, "all the information on the Net is just like water without a glass." The rules you insist on are "an extension of the common-sense things you've told your kids all along." An

example would be your rules regarding speaking to strangers.

- The Internet is a public place and should not be used as a baby-sitting service. "After all, you wouldn't just drop your 10-year-old off in a big city and tell him or her to go have fun for a few hours, would you?"
- Learn to recognize the difference between Internet locations for playing games or chatting and places for getting help with homework.

The NCMEC pamphlet *Child Safety on the Information Highway* offers several guidelines to young people:

- Don't reveal personal information such as your address, your home telephone number, or the name and location of your school. Don't send photos without your parents' permission.
- Inform your parents immediately if you receive information that makes you feel uncomfortable. Never respond to messages that are mean or aggressive. Tell your parents right away so that they can contact the on-line service.

**"The personal computer  
is not in my son's room  
but in an open area  
of the home"**

# The Internet is a public place and should not be used as a baby-sitting service

- Cooperate with your parents in setting up rules for going on-line, including the time of day and length of time to be on-line and the appropriate areas to visit; stick to their decisions.

Bear in mind that precautions are also beneficial for adults. Some adults have already become ensnared in unwanted relationships and serious problems because of their carelessness. The mystique of chat rooms—the lack of eye contact and the anonymity of aliases—has lowered the inhibitions of some and created a false sense of security. Adults, take note!

## Keeping a Balanced View

Some of the material and many of the services found on the Internet have educational value and can serve a useful purpose. Growing numbers of corporations are storing internal documentation on their internal networks, or intranets. Emerg-

ing Internet-based video and audio conferencing have the potential for permanently changing our travel and business-meeting patterns. Companies use the Internet to distribute their computer software, thus reducing costs. Many services that currently use personnel to handle business transactions, such as travel and stock-brokerage services, will likely be affected as users of the Internet are empowered to handle some or all of their own arrangements. Yes, the effect of the Internet has been profound, and it will likely continue as an important medium for sharing information, conducting business, and communicating.

Like most tools, the Internet has beneficial uses. Yet, there exists the potential for misuse. Some may choose to explore the positive aspects of the Internet further, while others may not. A Christian is not authorized to judge another's decisions on personal matters.—Romans 14:4.

Using the Internet can be like traveling to a new country, with many new things to see and hear. Travel requires that you display good manners and take sensible precautions. No less is needed if you should decide to get on the Internet—the information superhighway.

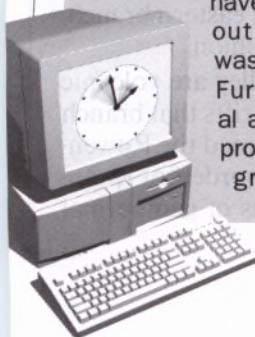
## How Valuable Is Your Time?

In this 20th century, life has progressively become more complicated. Inventions that have worked to the advantage of some have often turned out to be time wasters for many. Further, immoral and violent TV programs, pornographic books,

degrading music recordings, and the like are examples of technologies that have been misused. They not only eat up precious time but also damage people spiritually.

Of course, a Christian's first priorities are spiritual matters, such as reading the Bible daily and getting well acquainted with priceless Scriptural truths dis-

cussed in the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and other publications of the Watch Tower Society. Everlasting benefits come, not from surfing the Internet, but from using your time to take in knowledge of the only true God and of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to apply it zealously.—John 17:3; see also Ephesians 5:15-17.



# The Great Rift Valley

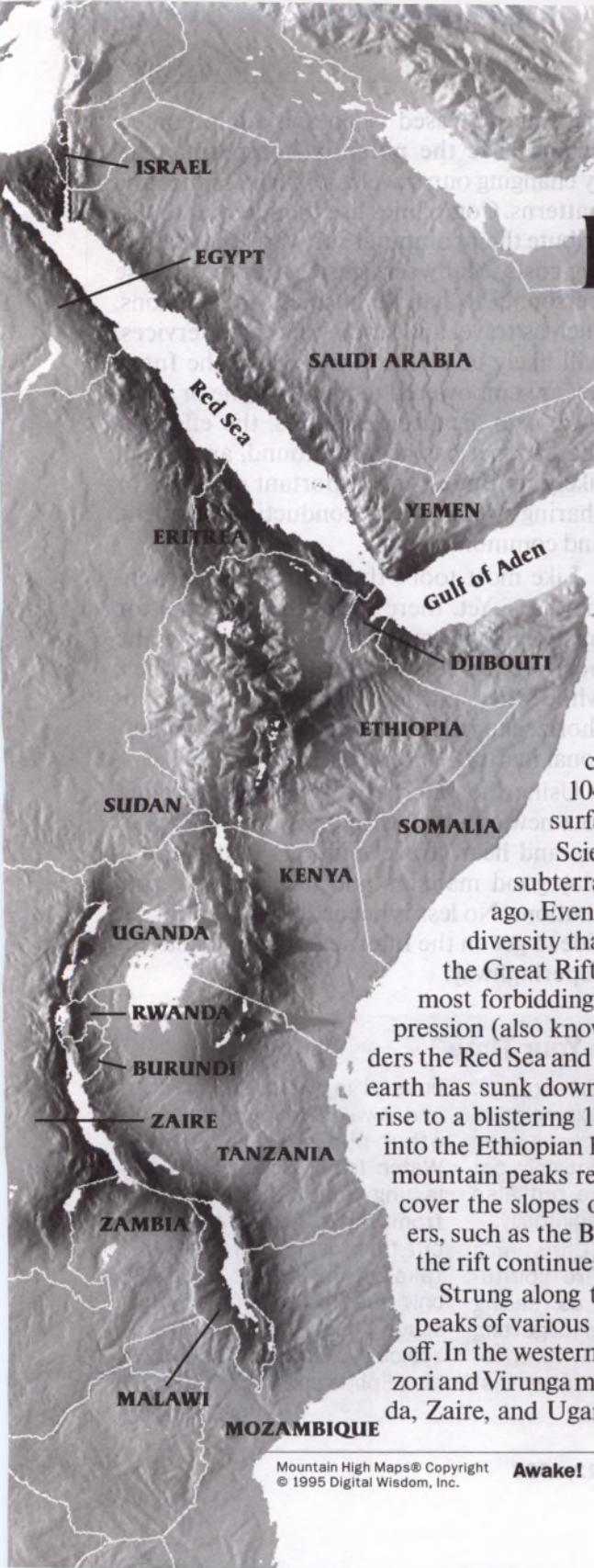
By Awake! correspondent in Kenya

**I**T IS a huge trench, a gouge in the earth's surface so colossal that it can be seen from the surface of the moon! Stretching from the Jordan Valley in northern Israel all the way down to Mozambique—an awesome 4,000 miles—it runs down much of the length of the African continent.

In 1893, Scottish geologist J. W. Gregory made the first detailed study of this natural wonder. Gregory discerned that the huge trench was formed, not by the erosion of water and wind, but "by the rock sinking in mass, while the adjacent land remained stationary." (Compare Psalm 104:8.) He called this enormous crack in the earth's surface the Great Rift Valley.

Scientists today still do not fully comprehend the subterranean forces that created this valley millennia ago. Even so, one cannot help but be fascinated by the rich diversity that can be found within it. The African section of the Great Rift Valley, starting in Ethiopia, contains one of the most forbidding places on the earth's surface, the Danakil Depression (also known as the Afar Triangle). This huge salt pan borders the Red Sea and is a desert covering 58,000 square miles. Here the earth has sunk down to 400 feet below sea level. Temperatures can rise to a blistering 130 degrees Fahrenheit. From there the rift rises into the Ethiopian highlands—a cool 6,000 feet *above* sea level, with mountain peaks reaching as high as 14,000 feet. Dense rain forests cover the slopes of these fertile highlands, feeding numerous rivers, such as the Blue Nile. Traveling south into its eastern branch, the rift continues to rise and fall in a dramatic fashion.

Strung along the length of the Great Rift Valley are volcanic peaks of various shapes and sizes as well as lesser rifts that branch off. In the western rift, volcanic movement has formed the Ruwenzori and Virunga mountain ranges that straddle the borders of Rwanda, Zaire, and Uganda. Some peaks still show signs of geothermal

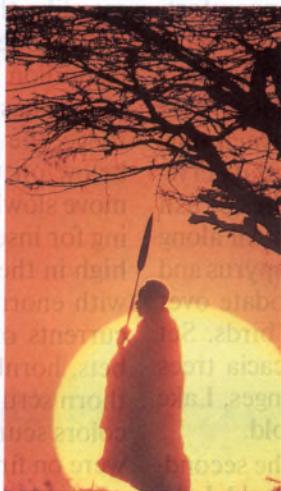


activity and, on occasion, belch out smoke and red-hot lava. Not far from the eastern rift, ancient volcanic peaks such as Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya are so lofty that despite the intense equatorial sun, they are capped with snow. Hot springs bubbling forth steam and superheated water are also found throughout the length of the Rift Valley, testifying to the turmoil that still exists deep below the earth's surface.

Further south, in Tanzania, a vast grassland plain borders the valley. It is called *siringet* in the Masai language, a word meaning "wide open space." Better known as the Serengeti Plain, its abundant grasses sustain vast herds of game animals. It is here that the great wildebeest migration occurs—a truly spectacular event!

#### Lakes of the Rift

Along the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley in Africa is a series of lakes that are tainted with sodium carbonates. These chemicals have leached down from volcanic catchment areas or have entered the lakes



**On the Serengeti Plain, a truly spectacular event occurs—the great wildebeest migration**



through subterranean volcanic activity. Some lakes, such as Lake Turkana in northern Kenya, have a slight alkalinity. Surrounded by thousands of square miles of lonely desert bush, Lake Turkana sometimes takes on a beautiful jade-green color and is home to the largest crocodile population in the world. Lakes such as Lake Magadi of Kenya and Lake Natron

in Tanzania are so saturated with salts that they form almost solid deposits of encrusted white soda. The cause? The absence of an outlet that would otherwise carry away the salts. Most of the water escapes through evaporation, leaving behind a high concentration of minerals. Few animals are able to survive in and around the bitter waters of the Rift Valley soda lakes. Notable exceptions, however, are the delicate pink flamingos that move from one soda lake to another, feeding on the microscopic algae that thrive in the caustic waters. Here flamingos congregate by the millions, forming a living sea of pink.



Another inhabitant that thrives in these otherwise deadly waters is a tiny fish called *tilapia grahami*. This alkaline-resistant fish is often found near underwater steam vents, where the water is so hot that it is uncomfortable to touch with the hand. Yet, there this tiny fish survives, feeding on the lake's algae.

Only a few of the eastern rift lakes have fresh water. Lake Naivasha, in Kenya, is one. It sits 6,135 feet above sea level, and its crystal waters provide shelter for varieties of fish as well as basking herds of hippos. All along the shores are lush green beds of papyrus and aquatic plant life, which accommodate over 400 different species of colorful birds. Set against the backdrop of yellow acacia trees and the surrounding mountain ranges, Lake Naivasha is most beautiful to behold.

Amid the rift-valley system lies the second-largest body of fresh water in the world, Lake Victoria. Its waters lap the shores of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, and it is one of the sources of the Nile River. Farther south, the waters of Lake Tanganyika plunge to a depth of 4,710 feet. This is the second-deepest lake in the world.

#### Animals of Great Variety

The East African Rift Valley supports a wide variety of wildlife. Buffalo, giraffes, rhinoceroses, and elephants are some of the large mammals that roam freely in the rift's wild, boundless expanse. In the dry water-

#### Flamingos congregate by the millions,

less regions, zebras, oryx, and ostriches can be seen. Graceful antelope leap high in the air as they race across the grasslands. Spotted cats like the leopard and the cheetah hunt on the open plains, and the roar of the majestic lion can often be heard in the hours of darkness. High in the Virunga mountain range, the rare mountain gorilla dwells. Far below on the rift floor, troops of baboons move slowly across the rough terrain, searching for insects, seeds, and scorpions. Soaring high in the air, powerful eagles and vultures with enormous wingspans ride thermals, or currents of hot air. Colorful touracos, barbets, hornbills, and parrots inhabit lowland thorn scrub. Lizards of all shapes, sizes, and colors scurry about hurriedly, as if their feet were on fire.

#### Nomads of the Rift

The East African Rift Valley is home to many semidesert tribes that are both pastoral and nomadic. They are a rugged people who





### **forming a living sea of pink**

walk with the loping stride that is characteristic of the African nomad. In areas where rainfall is scarce, whole villages often pick up and move in search of new pasturage for their livestock. Without passports or visas, they move freely across the unmarked borders of countries and seem indifferent to outside progress and other ways of life. In these remote areas, life moves at a slow pace. Time is measured by the rising and setting of the sun. A man's wealth is determined by the number of camels, goats, cows, or sheep that he owns or by the number of children in his household.

Homes are simply, but ingeniously, constructed. Tree branches are bent and tied together to form a dome-shaped structure. The outside surface is then covered with woven grass, the skins of animals, or mud mixed with cow dung. Such homes often contain a cooking fire, a small enclosure for domestic animals, and a bed that may be no more than a piece of animal skin. Fire from the hearth fills the home with smoke, keeping the interior

free of flies and mosquitoes. Often a village or family group will construct their small dome huts in a circle surrounded at the perimeter by impenetrable thorn branches, to protect their livestock from wild animals at night.

Throughout the length and breadth of the Great Rift Valley are found a diversity of people with distinct facial features, languages, and customs, varying according to their tribes and geographic location. Religious beliefs also vary greatly. Some have embraced Islam; others, nominal Christianity. Many are superstitious and inclined to attribute anything they cannot understand to supernatural forces. In recent years many of the remote areas have been opened up to outside influence through programs that provide education and medical care.

Not surprisingly, Jehovah's Witnesses are also making efforts to contact these rugged nomads. The Witnesses hope to acquaint them with the Bible's promise of a time when no one will have to eke out an existence from parched land. Says the Bible: "The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron." (Isaiah 35:1) In the meantime, the Great Rift Valley remains as a monument to the creative diversity of the Maker of all things, Jehovah God.



**Jehovah's Witnesses share the Bible's message with the people of the Rift Valley**



## Young People Ask...

# Why Is It Always My Fault?

**"My dad has allergies and has to work with people who smoke. When he gets home, sometimes he is very upset. He'll lose things and blame me for it. When I tell him that he lost it, he gets mad and tells me I shouldn't have corrected him."**

**—A teenage girl.**

**D**O YOU sometimes feel that you are the family scapegoat? Does it seem that no matter what goes wrong, you get blamed? It seems that way to 14-year-old Joy. She lives in a single-parent household and of-

ten looks after her younger brother and sister. "I'll be downstairs when they start fighting," complains Joy. "They are acting so stupid and immature, but when Dad gets home, he yells at me because I wasn't there to stop it."

If your parents call you spoiled, lazy, or irresponsible or use other labels that seem to cast your shortcomings in concrete, at times it may even seem as though they *expect* you to fail. Ramon's family dubbed him the absentminded professor—a nickname that he deeply resented. You may likewise resent a nickname or label that highlights your flaws, even if it is said affectionately. Instead of motivating you to improve, the negative label may simply reinforce the feeling that you are always to blame.

Blame can be particularly painful when it seems to be the product of favoritism. "I'm the middle child," says a teenager named Frankie, "and I always get the worst end of the deal." It may seem that your siblings are always above suspicion but that you are pronounced guilty at the first sign of trouble.

### **Why Parents Blame**

Of course, it's only normal for parents to correct their children when they err. Why, offering healthy, positive correction is one of the ways that God-fearing parents bring their children up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) At times, though, even the best of parents can overreact or even jump to wrong conclusions. Recall an event that took place when Jesus was young. On this occasion Jesus was missing. It turned out that he was in God's temple, having Bible discussions. Even so, when his parents found him, his mother asked: "Child, why did you treat us this way? Here your father and I in mental

***It is not unfair for a parent to offer corrective counsel when it is needed***

distress have been looking for you.”—Luke 2:48.

Since Jesus was perfect, there was no reason to fear that he would be engaged in delinquent behavior. But like all loving parents, his mother felt responsible for her child and reacted strongly, perhaps fearing that his best interests were threatened. Similarly, your parents may overreact at times, not because they are trying to be mean or cruel, but simply because they really care about you.

Realize, too, that we are living in “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Timothy 3:1) Working and caring for your home, your parents are under considerable stress, and this can affect the way they treat you. (Compare Ecclesiastes 7:7.) One mental-health worker observed: “In some families, when there is a crisis going on, parents can lose their tempers and make hasty decisions even though they are normally fair people.”

Single parents may be particularly prone to vent their frustrations on their children, simply because they do not have a mate with whom to discuss things. Admittedly, receiving the brunt of a parent’s personal frustrations is not fun. Says 17-year-old Lucy: “If I did something and I deserve to be punished, that’s okay. But when I get punished because my mother is in a bad mood, that’s really unfair.”



Favoritism is another factor. Although a parent usually loves all his children, it’s not uncommon for him to be particularly drawn to one child.\* (Compare Genesis 37:3.) Feeling that you are the less-loved child is painful in itself. But if it seems that your needs are being ignored or that you are often blamed for things your siblings have done, resentment is sure to follow. “I have this brother, Darren,” says young Roxanne. “He is Mom’s little angel. . . . She always blames me, never Darren.”

#### **Troubled Families**

In healthy families unfair blaming may happen occasionally. But in troubled families there may be an ongoing pattern of parents blaming, shaming, and humiliating.

\* See the article “Young People Ask . . . Why Is It So Hard to Get Along With My Brother and Sister?” in our July 22, 1987, issue.

Sometimes the blame is even accompanied by "malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech." —Ephesians 4:31.

Can a youth be blamed for such parental outbursts? It is true that a disobedient son or daughter can be "a vexation" to a parent. (Proverbs 17:25) However, it is to parents that the Bible says: "Do not be irritating [literally, "provoking to wrath"] your children." (Ephesians 6:4) As with all Christians, a parent must exercise self-control, "keeping himself restrained under evil." (2 Timothy 2:24) So when a parent loses self-control, he cannot blame it on his child's shortcomings.

Verbal assaults may be evidence that a parent is suffering emotional distress, depression, or low self-worth. It could also indicate problems such as marital distress or alcoholism. According to one source, children of addicted parents often become the scapegoats. "Nothing they do is right. They may be called 'stupid,' 'bad,' 'selfish,' and so on. Members of the family then focus on that child (or children) as the identified 'problem' and are distracted from their own uncomfortable feelings and problems."

### Dealing With Unfair Blame

Dr. Kathleen McCoy notes: "Labeling, belittling and criticizing [a] child's personality . . . can be a factor in a teen's low self-esteem, depression and noncommunication." Or as the Bible itself puts it, harsh treatment can 'exasperate' children and cause them to become "downhearted." (Colossians 3:21) You may begin thinking of yourself as a worthless failure. You may also develop negative feelings toward your parents. You may conclude that there is little you can do to please them and that there is no point in trying. Anger and resentment can set in, causing you to reject any discipline—even constructive criticism.—Compare Proverbs 5:12.

How can you cope? Much will depend upon your particular situation. Why not stop and assess it realistically? For example, is it really true that you are *always* to blame? Or could it simply be that your parents tend to be a bit overcritical at times and say the wrong thing? "We all stumble many times," says the Bible, and that includes parents. (James 3:2) So even if your parents do overreact a bit from time to time, do you need to overreact too? The Bible's counsel at Colossians 3:13 may well apply: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also."

Empathy for your parents can help you do this. Says Proverbs 19:11: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to pass over transgression." If your dad seems unusually touchy when he comes home from work and blames you for something you did not do, is there a need to make a big issue out of it? Realizing that he is probably tense and tired just might help you 'pass over his transgression.'

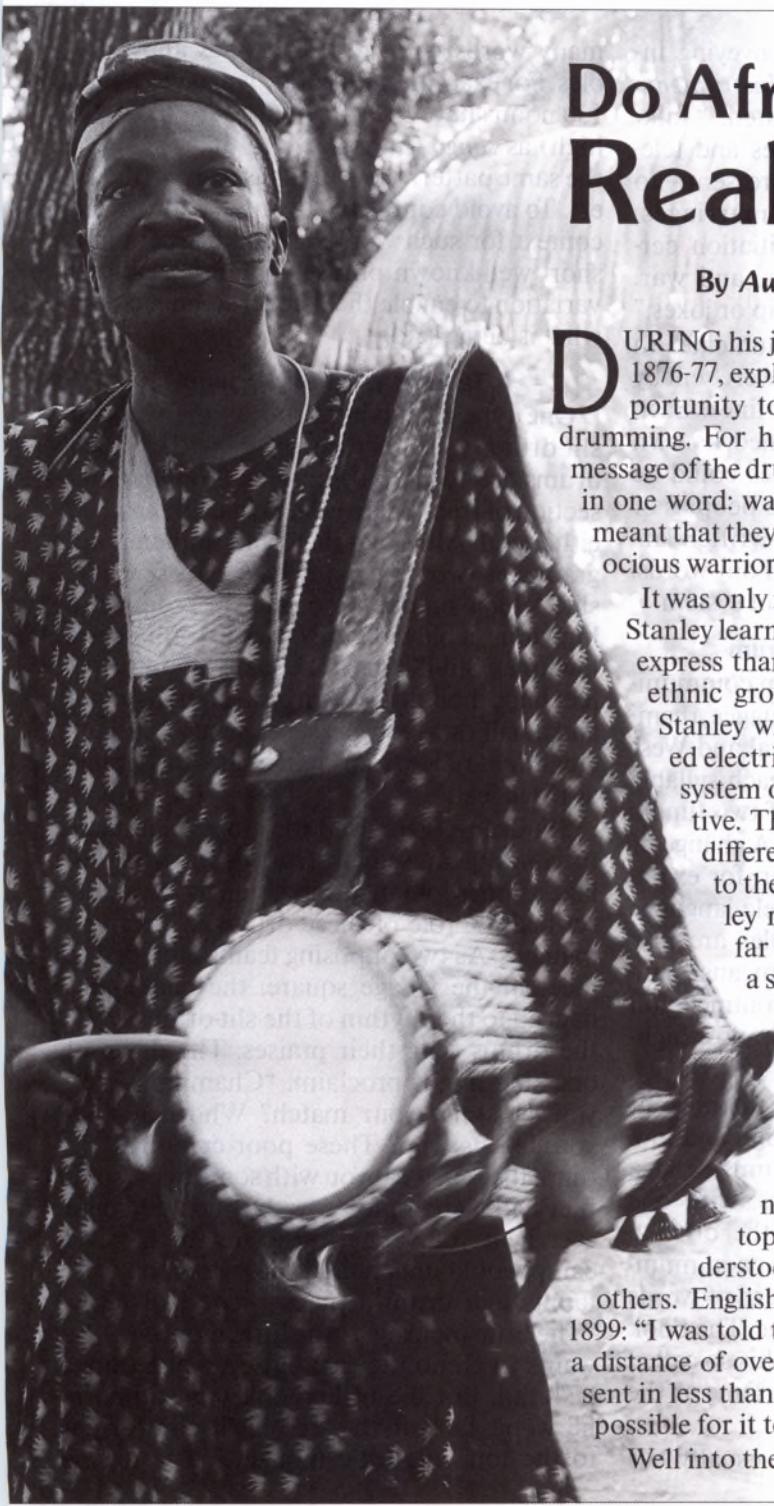
What, though, if being unfairly blamed is not just an occasional irritation but is constant and unrelenting? A future article will discuss ways to improve your situation.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Help Your Children to Thrive**

**The Colorful World of Coral Reefs**

**Is It Wrong to Eat Meat?**



# Do African Drums Really Talk?

By *Awake!* correspondent in Nigeria

DURING his journey down the Congo River in 1876-77, explorer Henry Stanley had little opportunity to reflect on the merits of local drumming. For him and his fellow travelers, the message of the drums could usually be summed up in one word: war. The dull booming they heard meant that they were about to be attacked by ferocious warriors armed with spears.

It was only in later, more peaceful times that Stanley learned how much more drums could express than a call to arms. Describing one ethnic group that lived along the Congo, Stanley wrote: “[They] have not yet adopted electric signals but possess, however, a system of communication quite as effective. Their huge drums being struck in different parts convey language as clear to the initiated as vocal speech.” Stanley realized that the drummers sent far more than a signal of a bugle or a siren; drums could convey specific messages.

Such messages could be relayed from village to village. Some drums were heard at a distance of five to seven miles, especially if they were beaten at night from a floating raft or a hilltop. Distant drummers listened, understood, and relayed the messages to others. English traveler A. B. Lloyd wrote in 1899: “I was told that from one village to another, a distance of over 100 miles, a message could be sent in less than two hours, and I quite believe it possible for it to be done in much less time.”

Well into the 20th century, drums continued

to play an important role in conveying information. The book *Musical Instruments of Africa*, published in 1965, stated: "Talking drums are used as telephones and telegraphs. All kinds of messages are sent—to announce births, deaths, and marriages; sporting events, dances, and initiation ceremonies; government messages, and war. Sometimes the drums carry gossip or jokes."

But how did the drums communicate? In Europe and elsewhere, messages were sent by electric impulses over telegraph lines. Each letter of the alphabet was assigned its own code so that words and sentences could be spelled out a letter at a time. The peoples of Central Africa, however, had no written language, so the drums did not spell out words. African drummers used a different system.

### The Language of the Drum

The key to understanding drum communication lies in the African languages themselves. Many languages of Central and West Africa are essentially bitonal—each syllable of every spoken word has one of two fundamental tones, either high or low. A change of tone changes the word. Consider, for example, the word *lisaka*, from the Kele language of Zaire. When all three syllables are pronounced in a low tone, the word means "puddle or marsh"; a low-low-high pronunciation of the syllables means "promise"; a low-high-high intonation means "poison."

The African slit-drums used to transmit messages also have two tones, high and low. Similarly, when skin-topped drums send a message, they are used in pairs, with one drum having a high tone and the other a low tone. Thus, a skillful drummer communicates by imitating the tonal pattern of words that make up the spoken language. The book *Talking Drums of Africa* states: "This so-called drum language is essentially the same as the spoken language of the tribe."

Of course, a bitonal language usually has

many words with identical tones and syllables. For example, in the Kele language, about 130 nouns have the same tone pattern (high-high) as *sango* (father). More than 200 have the same pattern (low-high) as *nyango* (mother). To avoid confusion, drummers provide a context for such words, including them in a short well-known phrase containing enough variation to enable the listener to understand what is being said.

### Talking With Slit-Drums

One type of talking drum is the wooden slit-drum. (See picture on page 23.) Such drums are formed by carving a hollow in a section of tree. There is no skin drumhead on either end. Although the drum in the photograph has two slits, many have only one long slit. A blow on one lip of the slit produces a high tone; a blow on the other lip produces a low tone. Slit-drums are usually about three feet long, though they can be as short as a foot and a half or as long as seven feet. The diameter might range from eight inches to as much as three feet.

Slit-drums were used for more than merely sending messages from village to village. Cameroonian author Francis Bebey described the role of these drums in wrestling matches. As two opposing teams prepared to meet in the village square, the champions danced to the rhythm of the slit-drums while the drums sang their praises. The drum of one side might proclaim: "Champion, have you ever met your match? Who can rival you, tell us who? These poor creatures . . . think they can beat you with some poor [soul] they call a champion . . . , but no one could ever beat you." The musicians in the rival camp would understand these good-natured taunts and drum a quick proverbial reply: "The little monkey . . . the little monkey . . . he wants to climb the tree but everyone thinks he'll fall. But the little monkey is stubborn, he won't fall off the tree, he'll climb right to the top, this little monkey." The drums

would continue to entertain throughout the wrestling match.

### The Drums That Talk Best of All

Pressure drums go a step further. The drum you see in the picture on the right is called a *dundun*; it is the famous Yoruba talking drum, from Nigeria. Shaped like an hour-glass, this drum has a head at each end, made of thin, tanned goatskin. The heads are joined by means of leather thongs. When the thongs are squeezed, the tension on the drumhead increases so that it can produce notes with a range of an octave or more. By using a curved drumstick and changing the pitch and rhythm of the sounds, a skillful drummer can imitate the rise and fall of the human voice. Drummers can thus hold "conversations" with other drummers who can interpret and play the drum language.

In May 1976 the remarkable ability of drummers to communicate using drums was demonstrated by court musicians of a Yoruba chief. Volunteers from the audience whispered a series of instructions to the master drummer who, in

turn, drummed the instructions to another musician located far from the courtyard. Responding to the drummed instructions, the musician moved from one location to another and carried out whatever action he was requested to perform.

It is not easy to learn to send a drummed message. Observed writer I. Laoye: "Yoruba drumming is a complex and difficult art that requires many years of study. The drummer is not only required to possess great manual skill and a sense of rhythm, but also a good memory for poetry and the history of the town."

In recent decades the African drums do not talk as much as they used to, although they still retain an important role in music. Says the book *Musical Instruments of Africa*: "Learning to play messages on drums is extremely difficult; therefore, this art is fast disappearing from Africa." Adds media specialist Robert Nicholls: "The huge drums of the past, whose voices traveled for miles and whose sole function was to transmit messages, are destined for extinction." Most people these days find it more convenient to pick up the telephone.



**Yoruba  
talking drum**



# UNHEALTHY LIFE-STYLES

## *How High the Cost?*

**S**ICKNESS is every man's master," states a Danish proverb. Anyone who has fallen victim to a chronic illness will readily testify that this "master" can be a cruel one indeed! Yet, you may be surprised to learn that illness is often more like an invited guest than a master. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes 30 percent of the days that patients spend in the hospital to diseases and injuries that could be avoided. The cause? Unhealthy and hazardous life-styles. Consider some examples.

**SMOKING.** Ira, 53 years old, has emphysema—the result of nearly four decades of smoking. To treat his condition, he needs a steady supply of bottled oxygen, costing about \$400 per month. In 1994 a nine-day hospitalization for his condition rang up a tab of \$18,000, bringing the total cost of Ira's health care that year to well over \$20,000. Still, Ira feels no urgency to quit smoking. "I just have this unbelievable craving," he says.

Ira's case is not unique. Despite the well-known dangers of smoking, people worldwide light up some 15 billion cigarettes daily. In the United States, the annual health-care cost for smoking-related illnesses is estimated to be \$50 billion. This means that in 1993, on the average, for every pack of cigarettes purchased, approximately \$2.06 was spent on smoking-related medical expenses.

When a child is born, smoking-related medical expenses can begin piling up. To cite just one example, a study in the United States found that babies born to mothers who smoke have twice the risk of developing cleft lips or palates, a condition that may require up

to four surgeries by the age of two. The average lifetime cost for medical care and related expenses for this condition is \$100,000 per person. Of course, no dollar amount can begin to measure the emotional toll of having a structural birth defect.

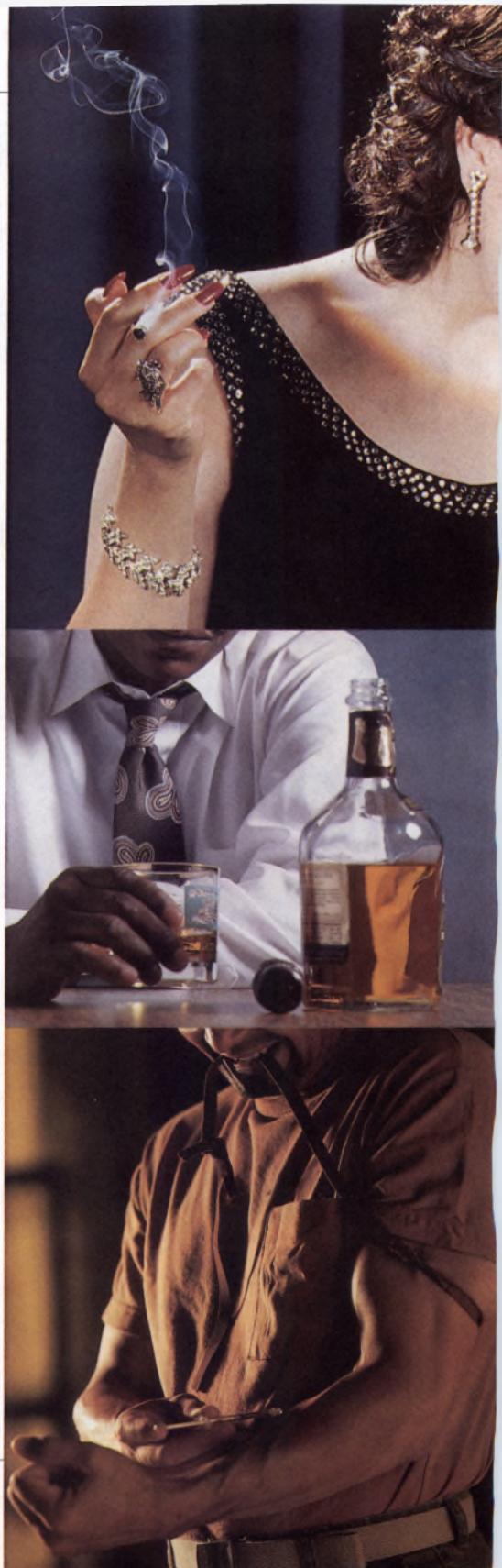
Some say that the high health-care cost of smoking is offset by the fact that many smokers do not live long enough to collect Social Security benefits. However, as *The New England Journal of Medicine* notes, "this conclusion is controversial; moreover, most would agree that premature deaths due to smoking are not a humane means of controlling health care costs."

**ABUSE OF ALCOHOL.** Alcohol abuse has been linked to a number of health problems, including cirrhosis of the liver, heart disease, gastritis, ulcers, and pancreatitis. It can also make one more susceptible to infectious diseases such as pneumonia. In the United States, each year "\$10 billion is used to treat people who can't handle their liquor," according to Dr. Stanton Peele.

Alcohol often affects the fetus in the womb. Each year tens of thousands of children in the United States alone are born with defects because their mothers drank when pregnant. Some of these infants are diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), and often these suffer from physical and mental impairments. The average lifetime medical cost for each FAS child has been estimated at \$1.4 million.

Since alcohol decreases impulse control, excessive drinking often plays a role in outbursts of violence, which can result in injuries that require medical attention. There is also the insurmountable harm caused by those who operate vehicles while intoxicated. Consider the effects on Lindsey, an eight-year-old girl who had to be pried loose from the backseat of her mother's car after a drunk driver collided with them. Lindsey spent seven weeks in a hospital and needed a number of operations. Her medical expenses exceeded \$300,000. She was fortunate to have survived at all.

**DRUG ABUSE.** One researcher estimates the annual cost of drug abuse in America to be \$67 billion.



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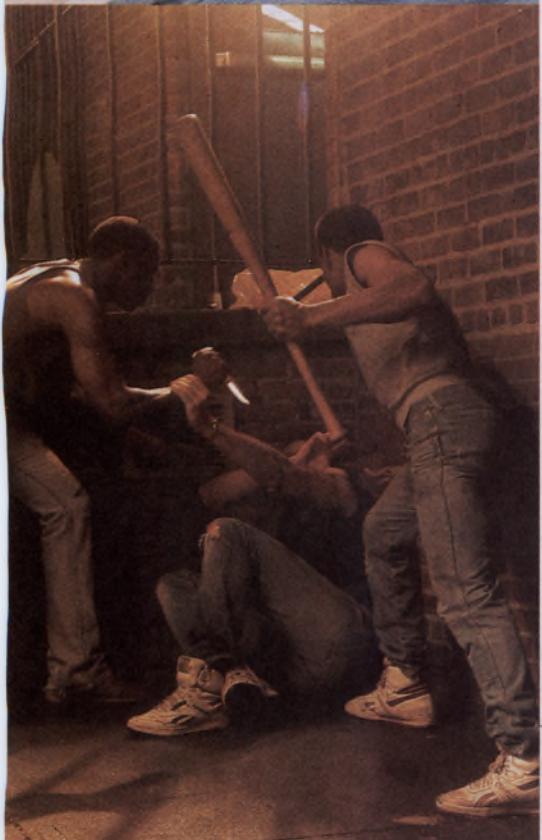
Joseph A. Califano, Jr., president of the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at New York's Columbia University, points out another costly aspect of the problem: "Crack babies, a rarity a decade ago, crowd \$2,000-a-day neonatal wards. . . . It can cost \$1 million to bring each survivor to adulthood." In addition, notes Califano, "pregnant mothers' failure to seek prenatal care and stop abusing drugs accounts for much of the almost \$3 billion that Medicaid spent in 1994 on inpatient hospital care related to drug use."

The tragedy of the situation is heightened when we consider the incalculable human cost of this vice. Marital strife, neglected children, and depleted financial resources are among the common problems affecting families torn by drug abuse.

**PROMISCUITY.** More than 12 million people in the United States contract sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) each year, giving the United States the highest STD rate of any developed country. David Celenzano, of Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, calls this "a national embarrassment." The direct cost of these diseases, not including AIDS, is about \$10 billion annually. Teenagers are at special risk. And no wonder! According to one report, by the 12th grade, some 70 percent of them have had sexual intercourse and close to 40 percent of them have had at least four partners.

AIDS is a health-care catastrophe in itself. In early 1996 the most effective therapy available—protease inhibitors combined with standard older drugs—cost between \$12,000 and \$18,000 a year per person. But this is just a fraction of the hidden cost of AIDS, which includes the lost productivity of the victim and those who take time off from work or school to care for him. It is estimated that by the year 2000, HIV and AIDS will have drained between \$356 billion and \$514 billion worldwide—the equivalent of wiping out the entire economy of either Australia or India.

**VIOLENCE.** When she was U.S. surgeon general, Joycelyn Elders reported that the medical cost of violence was \$13.5 billion in 1992. U.S. President Bill Clinton observed: "One of the reasons American health care is so expensive is that our hospitals



and our emergency rooms are full of people who are cut up and shot." With good reason *The Journal of the American Medical Association* calls violence in the United States "a public health emergency." The report continues: "Although violence is not a disease in the 'classic' sense, its impact on personal and public health is as profound as that of many physiologic ills—perhaps more so."

A report by 40 hospitals in Colorado says that the average cost for each victim of violence during the first nine months of 1993 was \$9,600. More than half of those hospitalized were uninsured, and many of these were unable or unwilling to pay for their expenses. Such situations lead to higher taxes, higher insurance premiums, and higher hospital bills. The Colorado Hospital Association reports: "We all pay."

### Change of Life-Style

From a human standpoint, the prospect of reversing the trend in unhealthy lifestyles is bleak. "America is not the Garden of Eden and we will never rid ourselves of all substance abuse," says a report by Columbia University. "But to the extent we curb such abuse, we will reap a rich harvest of healthier babies, less violence and crime, lower taxes, reduced health care costs, higher profits, better-educated students and fewer AIDS cases."

Jehovah's Witnesses have found the Bible to be the greatest help in accomplishing that goal. The Bible is no ordinary book. It is inspired by man's Creator, Jehovah God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) He is "the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." (Isaiah 48:17) The principles set out in the Bible are healthful, and those who walk in its counsel reap great benefits.

For example, Esther was once a heavy smoker.\* After she began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, her Bible teacher invited her to spend a day touring the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. At first, Esther was hesitant. Knowing that Jehovah's Witnesses do not smoke, she wondered how she could be with them for a whole day. So Esther put one cigarette in her purse, reasoning that if she felt the urge to smoke it, she would simply sneak into a rest room. Just as she had planned, after one of the tours Esther went into a ladies' room and got out her cigarette. But then she noticed something. The room was spotlessly clean, and the air was fresh. "I just couldn't dirty up the place by smoking that cigarette," Esther recalls, "so I flushed it down the toilet. And that was the last cigarette I ever touched!"

Worldwide, millions like Esther are learning to live in harmony with Bible principles. They benefit themselves, and they become greater assets to the communities in which they live. Most important, they bring honor to their Creator, Jehovah God.—Compare Proverbs 27:11.

Although man's best efforts cannot reproduce a "Garden of Eden," the Bible says that God will do so. Second Peter 3:13 states: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his [God's] promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (Compare Isaiah 51:3.) In that new earth, health care will no longer be a concern, for mankind will enjoy life with perfect health—the way God purposed it from the beginning. (Isaiah 33:24) Would you like to learn more about God's promises? Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to help you.

\* Not her real name.

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Slave Trade in Brazil

"Ten times more slaves were shipped to Brazil than to the United States—yet the death rate for Brazil-bound slaves was so high that in 1860 Brazil's black population was only half the size of that in the United States," reports the *ENI Bulletin* of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It is estimated that 40 percent of the African slaves died in the ships' hulls. To increase their value, African slaves were baptized collectively by having water thrown over them while priests uttered "the words of baptism." Speaking at a service of "remembrance, repentance and reconciliation" held in Salvador, Brazil, Aaron Tolen, a WCC leader from Cameroon, noted: "Those who brought us here were not alone in the making of this tragedy. We Africans share in the responsibility. We have degraded ourselves by selling our brothers and sisters as goods."

### European Smokers

European and Chinese citizens are the world's highest consumers of tobacco per capita, reports the *Nassauische Neue Presse* of Frankfurt, Germany. In the European Union, 42 percent of the men and 28 percent of the women smoke. The percentages, however, are considerably higher within the 25 to 39 age group. Smoking kills 100,000 persons in Germany and another 100,000 in Britain each year. Recently, the president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, a heavy smoker for many years, was treated for

lung cancer. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reports that the president wrote to the European movement called Smoking or Health saying that he admires anyone who manages to give up the smoking habit.

### Sick of Noise?

Exposure to noise, even at relatively low levels, can make you sick, according to studies reported in Britain's *New Scientist* magazine. In the light of such findings, the World Health Organization has revised its guidelines on safe nighttime noise



levels. Of special concern is evidence indicating that children may be at particular risk. One study found that children living near Munich's international airport had both higher blood pressure and higher levels of adrenaline. The researchers also found that the children suffered from impairment of their reading skills and their long-term memory. People who appear to adapt to noise do so "always at a cost to their system," says noise specialist Arline Bronzaft. "Noise is stress and eventually the body gives in some way."

### Pesticide Dangers

According to the International Rice Research Institute in

the Philippines, rice production would remain the same if farmers did not use any pesticides at all. A scientist with the rice institute informed the World Food Summit, held in the Philippines, that extensive spraying of crops is both wasteful and unnecessary. Not only do farmers spray at the wrong time of year, reports *New Scientist* magazine, but they actually kill the wrong insects. Moreover, many farmers ignore safety advice when applying chemicals and use fine sprays, which are easily inhaled, or they mix herbicides with soil and spread it by hand. The World Health Organization reports that worldwide pesticides currently cause 220,000 deaths and three million severe poisonings each year.

### Teens Describe Ideal Parents

How would teens describe the ideal parent? To find out, school counselor and psychologist Scott Wooding surveyed more than 600 teenagers. Since Wooding expected the youngsters to praise permissiveness, their responses surprised him. Consistently, the teenagers said they want "fairness, caring ('they want to hear the words: 'I love you')", humor, [and] the setting of a good example," reports *The Toronto Star* newspaper. Wooding also found that teens want their parents to help them develop a sense of responsibility. When they have done something wrong, they expect discipline. Most important, young people said that they long for their parents to spend more time with them.

## Bloodless Medicine

"Fears of blood-borne disease and chronic shortages of donated blood have sparked a major effort to eliminate transfusions wherever possible," reports *The Globe and Mail* newspaper. Bloodless medicine and surgery rely on the meticulous control of blood loss, and "many new techniques were originally developed to treat Jehovah's Witnesses," says the *Globe*. Dr. James A. Robblee, an anesthetist at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, one of many hospitals implementing bloodless surgery programs, acknowledged: "I really do think they [Jehovah's Witnesses] have tremendously raised our consciousness about this business."

## From "Stone Age" to Shotguns

A vast rain forest reservation between Brazil and Venezuela is home to the Yanomami Indians. First "discovered" in the 1960's, the Yanomami have slowly been introduced to modern inventions such as fishhooks, mirrors, matches, and radios. However, the latest modern device to reach them—the shotgun—is posing a threat to "the last Stone Age tribe in the Americas," reports *The Daily Journal* of Caracas, Venezuela. Through barter and trade, gold miners, jungle traders, and missionaries have introduced shotguns into the Yanomami's primitive culture. But the accidental shooting deaths of three Yanomami in one week is a shocking reminder of how contact with modern civilization can have disastrous consequences.

As Claudia Andujar, head of the Pro-Yanomami Commission, says: "Imagine how dangerous the sudden addition of guns and gunpowder can be to a tribe that prides itself on its ability to fight with poison arrows, stones and clubs."

## Blue Whale Makes a Comeback

Hunting blue whales has been strictly regulated since 1946. By then, these mighty 100-foot-long, 150-ton mammals had been hunted to the brink of extinction. But now, thanks to the U.S. Navy's Sound Surveillance System,



it has been revealed that the North Atlantic is home to a sizable whale population, including finbacks as well as humpback, minke, and rare blue whales. "There are many more whales off the coast of Britain than previously thought," says *The Sunday Telegraph* of London. The hydrophones lying on the seabed at depths of up to 10,000 feet were originally designed to track submarines. However, it has been found that they are also ideal for picking up the low-frequency calls of whales. The call of the blue whale is said to travel 2,000 miles underwater.

## Divorce Classes?

In Pima County, Arizona, U.S.A., parents who want a di-

vorce are required to take a four-and-a-half-hour seminar to understand the effect on their children, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. The classes are designed to help parents learn "how to structure visitation schedules" and consider "when a child may be old enough to live with a noncustodial parent for the summer." More important, parents are helped to understand divorce through a child's eyes, says class director Frank Williams. "I do wonder, though, why education like this is mandatory at this end of the process," says family law attorney Alyce Pennington. Why not "go through a class like this before they even get married?"

## World's Greatest Jailers

In 1995 there were 615 people in prison for every 100,000 residents of the United States, says the U.S. Justice Department. This is double the incarceration rate of 1985, making it the world's highest, reports *The Wall Street Journal*. Russia is in second place, with 590 per 100,000, based on the most recent data available (1994).

## Recycling Makes Sense

According to *El Universal* newspaper of Caracas, Venezuela, recycling aluminum cans saves 90 percent of the energy used to make new cans. Recycling paper also makes ecological sense. Fifty percent less energy is used to recycle paper than is used to produce new paper, water pollution is reduced by 58 percent, and air pollution is cut by 74 percent. Glass fares even better because it can be recycled totally, over and over.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Radio** Thank you very much for the excellent article "Radio—An Invention That Changed the World." (October 8, 1996) I am 18 years old, and I like listening to the radio a lot. I found the discussion of the development of radio very interesting. It was particularly interesting to learn that in the past Jehovah's Witnesses used radio to spread the good news of the Kingdom.

F. B., Italy

**Butterflies** I was preaching alone in a farming area and decided to highlight the article "A Fragile but Hardy Traveler." (October 8, 1996) I met a farmer, a very big man—not the type of person I would normally talk to about butterflies! However, after he saw the dazzling pictures, he took the magazines and said that many rare species of butterflies can be found on his farm. When I left, his wife was absorbed in reading the magazine. So, like the butterfly, I will return—and show them more about God's Kingdom!

B. B., England

This was one of the most enjoyable articles I have read. Just a few days after the magazine arrived, I noticed that our trees were covered with monarchs! I thanked God for his wonderful creation.

S. M., United States

**Wickedness Permitted** Thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?" (October 22, 1996) After suffering loneliness, humiliation, and deep sadness during 18 years of marriage to an unfaithful husband who does not respect women, reading that Jehovah is a loving God who cares about us was like a healing balm. It was as if Jehovah himself was comforting me.

H. T., United States

**Cigarettes** I would like to comment on the article "Cigarettes—Do You Reject Them?" (October 22, 1996) What a pity that I didn't have it years ago! My husband died of lung cancer this year. He had been a heavy smoker for 50 years. I myself did not know that cigarettes had such a disastrous effect.

H. G., Germany

**Akee** Your article "Akee—Jamaica's National Dish" (October 22, 1996) was very good. As a native of Jamaica, I have never served akee to anyone who said that he didn't like it. I encourage anyone going to Jamaica to try akee!

E. B., United States

How pleasant to see another discussion of our Creator's works! Akee trees abound here in Ghana and serve in some towns and villages as shade trees. In the wild forest, they become very tall. Bats, parrots, and other birds perch on their limbs. The akee tree is another wonderful gift from God.

P. A. E., Ghana

**Horses** I just had to write to express my appreciation for the article "They Still Work the Land With Horses." (October 22, 1996) I am an animal lover, and it stirred something within my heart. I liked the way you presented the relationship man can have with animals, especially the part about enjoying a "conversation" with one's horses.

V. H., United States

I have lived my entire life in a metropolitan area, and my desire to be close to Jehovah's creations has yet to be satisfied. By reading your article, I could work with horses in my imagination. Thank you so much for such pleasant articles.

L. A. D., United States

# Back to Basics in the Fight Against MALARIA

With the world's attention focused on civil wars, crime, unemployment, and other crises, malaria deaths are hardly the stuff of prime-time news. Nevertheless, almost half the world's population, says the World Health Organization (WHO), lives today under the threat of malaria, and some 300 million to 500 million people fall ill with it each year, making malaria "the most widespread of all tropical diseases and one of the most lethal." How deadly?

Every 20 seconds someone dies of malaria. That figure adds up to a death toll of over 1.5 million victims each year—a number equal to that of the entire population of the African nation of Botswana. Nine out of ten malaria deaths occur in tropical Africa, where most victims are young children. In the Americas, WHO registered the highest incidence of malaria in the Amazon area. Deforestation and other ecological changes have left a growing trail of malaria victims in that part of the world. In some of Brazil's Amazonian communities, the problem has now become so serious that more than 500 out of every 1,000 inhabitants are infected.

Whether in Africa, the Americas, Asia, or elsewhere, malaria hits primarily the poorest population groups. These people, notes WHO, "have the least access to health services, can least afford personal protection and are the furthest from organized malaria control activities." Even so, the plight of those poor is not beyond hope. In recent years, says *TDR News*, a newsletter on tropical-disease research, one of the most promising methods to

prevent malaria deaths has become more available. The name of that lifesaver? Insecticide-impregnated bed nets.

## Net Gains

Though using bed nets is a back-to-basics solution, Dr. Ebrahim Samba, director of WHO's Africa office, told *Panos Features*, a newsletter of the Panos Institute, that trials to test the effectiveness of bed nets in the fight against malaria have shown "very exciting results." In Kenya, for instance, using bed nets impregnated with biodegradable insecticides has cut overall deaths, not just malaria deaths, among children under five years of age by one third. Besides saving lives, "nets could radically reduce the burden on health services" because fewer patients will need hospital treatment for malaria.

One problem, however, has yet to be solved: Who pays for the nets? When people in one African nation were asked to contribute, most declined. And no wonder, for people living in

countries that spend less than \$5 (U.S.) per person a year on health care, even a mosquito net—with or without insecticides—is a luxury. However, since this method of prevention will cost governments less than treating malaria patients, UN experts note that "it would be a very cost-effective use of scarce government funds to distribute and fund impregnated bednets." Indeed, for governments, providing bed nets may be a way to save funds. For millions of their poor citizens, though, it is much more—it is a means to save their lives.

CDC, Atlanta, Ga.





## **"Bring Me Forty. I'll Distribute Them"**

As part of their Bible education work in southern Germany, Wolfgang and his wife, Waltraut, on several occasions offered a man copies of *Awake!* He would always decline, saying: "I've already got so much to read."

However, the couple sensed that the man might read the article "Removing Misconceptions About Jehovah's Witnesses," in the November 22, 1996, issue of *Awake!* The article was about a talk given at a Rotary Club in California in the United States.

When Wolfgang opened the magazine to that article and showed it to the man, the man started to read it. He then asked if he could keep it.

"I'll read it tonight when I get some peace and quiet," he said.

Wolfgang and his wife met the man three days later. What was his reaction? "The article was very interesting," he said.

Why was he so impressed? It seems that he had also had some misconceptions about Jehovah's Witnesses. He now felt sure that his friends at the Rotary Club would enjoy reading the article. "Can you get hold of more copies of the article?" he asked.

"How many do you want?" asked Waltraut.

"Bring me forty. I'll distribute them."