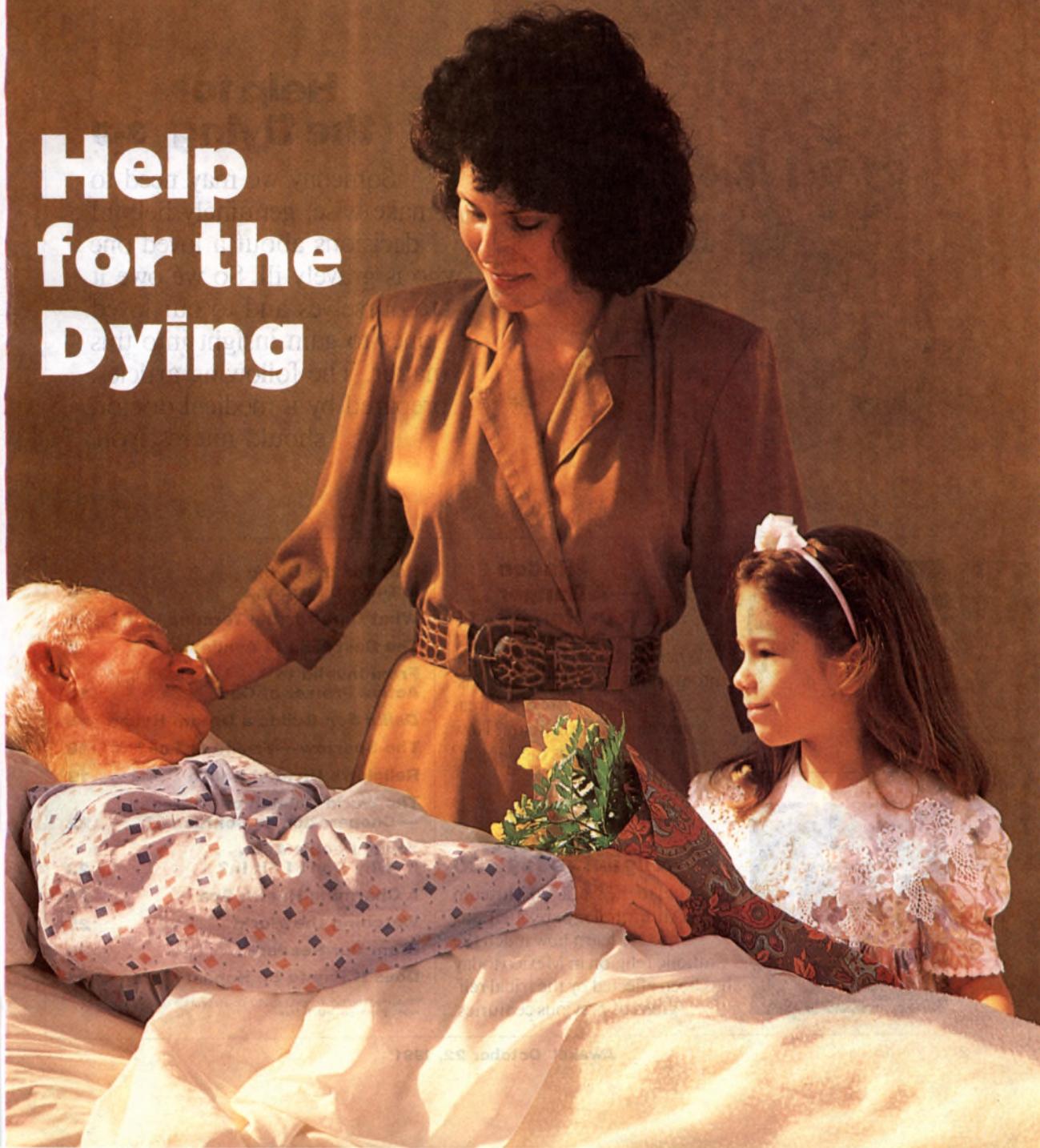


Awake!

October 22, 1991

Help for the Dying





Help for the Dying 3-9

Someday we may need to make wise, genuinely helpful decisions about a loved one who is gravely ill. So we owe it to ourselves and to our loved ones to gain insight into this matter. The following articles, prepared by a medical doctor, should interest you.



Radon —A Danger in Your Home? 11

What is radon? How does it get into your home? Why does it possibly present more of a threat now than in prior years? How great is the danger?



Mexico's Past Affects Its Religion Today 20

Visitors to the National Museum of Anthropology are often surprised to learn how much the Catholic religion in Mexico today has been affected by the tribal religions of previous centuries.

Help for the Dying in Our Modern Age	3
What Care for the Terminally Ill?	4
The Best Help Is Available!	7
From Invalid to Active Praiser of God	10
Daiku San Builds a Dream House	15
The Sparrow—Friend or Foe?	18
Religion's Divided House	19
The World Council of Churches —Cooperation or Confusion?	22
Young People Ask . . . Why Don't I Fit In?	23
A Charming Health Spa	26
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
Does It Pay to Be Honest?	31

Photo credit bottom left and page 20: Courtesy of the Ministry of Public Education - INAH - Mexico

Help for the Dying in Our Modern Age

THE woman, a doctor herself, had just been through a most painful ordeal. She had watched her 94-year-old grandmother die in the hospital intensive-care unit following cancer surgery that "she never wanted."

"My tears at her funeral were not for the fact of her death, for my grandmother had lived a long, full life," the doctor wrote. "I cried for the pain she had endured, and for the lack of fulfillment of her wishes. I cried for my mother and her siblings, for their sense of loss and frustration."

You may wonder, though, about the possibility of helping such a seriously ill person. This doctor continues:

"Mostly, I cried for myself: for the overwhelming guilt I felt at not being able to save her from pain and indignity, and for the woe-ful inadequateness I felt as a physician, un-able to heal, unable to relieve suffering. For nowhere in my training had I been taught an acceptance of death or dying. Illness was the enemy—to be fought at every turn, with every last resource. Death was a defeat, a failure; chronic disease a constant reminder of the physician's impotence. The image of my little grandmother staring at me with frightened eyes while on a ventilator in an ICU haunts me to this day."

This loving granddaughter crystallized a complex ethical, medicolegal issue that now is being debated in courtrooms and hospitals around the world: What is best for the hope-

lessly ill in our technologically advanced age?

Some have the view that everything medi-cally possible should be done for each person who is sick. This view is expressed by the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons: "The obligation of the physician to the comatose, vegetative, or developmentally dis-abled patient does not depend upon the pros-pect for recovery. The physician must always act on behalf of the patient's well-being." This means providing all the treatment or medical help that can possibly be applied. Do you feel that this is always best for a person who is gravely ill?

To many people that course certainly sounds laudable. Yet, in the past few decades, experience with technologically advanced medicine has given rise to a new and different viewpoint. In a 1984 landmark paper ent-tled "The Physician's Responsibility Toward Hopelessly Ill Patients," a panel of ten ex-peirienced physicians concluded: "A decrease in aggressive treatment of the hopelessly ill pa-tient is advisable when such treatment would only prolong a difficult and uncomfortable process of dying." Five years later the same doctors published an article of the same title that was styled "A Second Look." Consider-ing the same problem, they made an even plainer statement: "Many physicians and eth-icists . . . have concluded, therefore, that it is ethical to withdraw nutrition and hydration [fluids] from certain dying, hopelessly ill, or permanently unconscious patients."

We cannot dismiss such comments as simple theorizing or as a mere debate that has no real bearing on us. Numerous Christians have been faced with agonizing decisions in this connection. Should a hopelessly ill loved one be kept alive on a respirator? Should intravenous feeding or other artificial feeding methods be applied to a terminally ill patient? When the situation is hopeless, should all the financial means of a relative, or of an entire family, be expended to pay for treatment,

perhaps involving transportation to a distant center to receive the most advanced treatment?

You no doubt appreciate that such questions are not easy to answer. Much as you would want to help an ill friend or loved one, if you had to face these questions you might wonder: 'What guidance does the Christian have? What resources are available for help? Most important, what do the Scriptures say on the subject?'

What Care for the Terminally Ill?

IN RECENT times people's approach to death and dying has been undergoing change in many parts of the world.

In times past physicians accepted death as the inevitable end of their ministrations for some patients—an end to be eased, and often to be handled at home.

More recently, with the emphasis on technology and cure, medical personnel have come to regard death as a failure or a defeat. So the primary goal of medical practice has become that of preventing death at all costs. With this change came the development of a

whole new technology to keep people alive longer than would previously have been possible.

Medical technology has brought undeniable advances in many lands; nevertheless, it has given rise to some serious misgivings. One doctor commented: "Most physicians have lost the pearl that was once an intimate part of medicine, and that is humanism. Machinery, efficiency and precision have driven from the heart warmth, compassion, sympathy and concern for the individual. Medicine is now an icy science; its charm belongs to

Awake!

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

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

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

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

another age. The dying man can get little comfort from the mechanical doctor."

That is just one person's opinion, and it certainly is not a universal indictment of the medical profession. Yet, you have probably seen that many people have developed a fear of being kept alive on machines.

Gradually another view began to be heard. It was that in some cases people should be allowed to die naturally, with dignity, and without being subjected to the intervention of heartless technology. A poll recently conducted for *Time* magazine revealed that over three quarters of those contacted felt that a doctor should be allowed to withdraw life-sustaining treatment for a terminally ill patient. The study reached this conclusion: "Once reconciled to the inevitable, [people] want to die with dignity, not tethered to a battery of machines in an intensive-care unit like a laboratory specimen under glass." Do you agree? How does that compare with your view on the subject?

Proposed Solutions

Depending on one's culture or social background, there is great variation in approaches to the subject of death and dying. Yet, people in many countries are showing increased interest in the plight of the hopelessly ill. In the last few years, ethicists, doctors, and the public in general have promoted efforts to adjust the care for such unfortunate ones.

Among the many measures being explored

"Medicine is now an icy science; its charm belongs to another age. The dying man can get little comfort from the mechanical doctor"

to address this issue, the one most commonly implemented in some hospitals is the policy "Do Not Resuscitate," or DNR. Do you know what this involves? After extensive discussions with the patient's family, and preferably also with the patient, specific advance plans are made, and these are noted on the patient's chart. This focuses on what limitations will be imposed on efforts to revive, or resuscitate, the hopelessly ill patient should his or her condition worsen.

Nearly everyone recognizes that the overriding consideration in such difficult decisions should be "What would the patient want done?" What makes it a serious problem, though, is that often the patient is unconscious or otherwise incompetent to make informed personal decisions. This has given rise to a document that may be called a living will. It is designed to allow people to specify in advance what treatment they would desire in their last days. For example, such a will might read:

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (also cassettes*), Finnish, French, German, Greek, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Yoruba, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Chicheŵa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Igbo, Kannada, Malayalam, Myanmar, New Guinea Pidgin, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Swahili, Tahitian, Tamil, Thai, Tswana, Xhosa

* Outside the United States and Canada, write U.S. office concerning certification for the blind and visually impaired.

Average Printing: 12,980,000 Published in 64 Languages

Subscription requests should be sent to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

*America, United States of,
Wallkill, N.Y. 12589*

*New Zealand, P.O. Box 142,
Manurewa*

Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565

Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City,

*Canada L7G 4Y4, Box 4100, Halton Hills
(Georgetown), Ontario*

Bendel State

England NW7 1RN, The Ridgeway, London

*South Africa, Private Bag 2067,
Krugersdorp, 1740*

Ghana, Box 760, Accra

Zambia, Rep. of, Box 21598, Kitwe

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 1991 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

"If I should have an incurable or irreversible condition that will cause my death within a relatively short time, it is my desire that my life not be prolonged by administration of life-sustaining procedures. If my condition is terminal and I am unable to participate in decisions regarding my medical treatment, I

Hospices focus on aggressive treatment of the patient's discomfort rather than aggressive treatment of the disease itself

direct my attending physician to withhold or withdraw procedures that merely prolong the dying process and are not necessary to my comfort or freedom from pain." Such documents may even specify what sort of therapies the individual does or does not want applied in a terminal situation.

Such living wills, though not legally binding under all circumstances, are recognized in many places. An estimated five million people in the United States have drawn up medical living wills. Many authorities in that land consider this to be the best means available to ensure that one's wishes are respected and followed.

What Type of Treatment or Care?

What about the actual care of the terminally ill? Perhaps the most significant innovation has been the concept called hospice, increasingly recognized worldwide. Just what is "hospice"?

Rather than meaning a place or a building, hospice in this sense refers really to a philosophy or program of care for the terminally ill. It

is derived from a medieval French word for a place of rest for pilgrims. Hospice concentrates on a team approach (doctors, nurses, and volunteers) that works to ensure that a terminally ill patient is kept comfortable and relatively pain free, preferably in the patient's own home.

Though some hospices are based within hospitals, many are independent. Most avail themselves of community resources, such as visiting nurses, nutritionists, ministers, and chiropractors. Rather than employing heroic medical measures, hospice care emphasizes heroic compassion. Rather than aggressive treatment of the patient's disease, it focuses on aggressive treatment of the patient's discomfort. One doctor put it this way: "Hospice isn't less care or no care or cheap care. It's just a totally different kind of care."

What is your reaction to this concept? Does this approach seem like one that you feel should be discussed with any of your loved ones who might be diagnosed as facing a terminal condition, and perhaps with the physician involved?

Even though hospice care may not be available in your area now, chances are it will be in the future, as the hospice movement is growing worldwide. Originally viewed as an antiestablishment effort, hospice care has gradually entered the mainstream of medicine, and it is now considered an accepted alternative for the terminally ill. Through its techniques, especially proper use of painkillers, hospice has contributed some notable advances to health care.

In a letter to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Gloria Werth described the death of her sister in a hospice: "At no time was medication, food, or liquid forced on my sister. She was free to eat, drink, . . . or take medication as she wished . . . But the best thing about the hospice is that our memories of Virginia's death are unusually reassuring and happy. How often can this be said after death in an intensive-care unit?"

The Best Help Is Available!

FOR the Christian the choice and extent of care for the terminally ill might raise profound questions. For example:

Would it be unscriptural to do less than everything possible to preserve life? And if it is morally acceptable to allow someone to die naturally, without heroic intervention to prolong life, what about euthanasia—a deliberate, positive act to end a patient's suffering by actually shortening or ending his life?

In this day and age, these are important questions. However, we are not without help in answering them.

An inspired writer aptly said: "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses." (Psalm 46:1) That is true for us too in considering the present matter. Jehovah God is the source of the wisest, most experienced help. He has observed the lives of thousands of millions of people. He knows—better than any doctor, ethicist, or attorney—what is best. So let us see what help he makes available to us.
—Psalm 25:4, 5; Hebrews 4:16.

A Right View of Life

We do well to realize that the philosophy of preserving life at all costs is not confined to medical technologists. It is a natural product of modern secular philosophy. Why is that so? Well, if this present life is all there is, then it might seem that our personal life should be preserved under all circumstances and at all costs. But this secular philosophy has in some cases resulted in technical nightmares—un-

conscious people being kept "alive" on machines for years.

On the other hand, there are those who believe in immortality of the human soul. According to their philosophy, this life is but a way station on the path to something better. Plato, one of the originators of this philosophy, held:

"Either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. . . . If death is the journey to another place, . . . what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this?"

A person having such a belief might regard death as a friend, to be welcomed and perhaps even to be hurried. Yet, the Bible teaches that life is sacred to Jehovah. "With you is the source of life," the inspired psalmist wrote. (Psalm 36:9) Should, then, a true Christian agree to share in euthanasia?

Some feel that there is Scriptural reference to the subject when King Saul, severely wounded, begged his armor-bearer to kill him. They have viewed this as a type of euthanasia, a deliberate act to hasten death for someone who was already dying. An Amalekite later claimed to have complied with Saul's request that he be put to death. But was that Amalekite thought of as having done good in ending Saul's suffering? Far from it. David, the anointed of Jehovah, ordered that this Amalekite be slain for his bloodguilt. (1 Samuel 31:3, 4; 2 Samuel 1:2-16) This

Does the death of Saul support euthanasia?



Biblical event, then, in no way justifies a Christian's having any part in euthanasia.*

Does this mean, though, that a Christian must do everything that is technologically possible to prolong a life that is ending? Must one extend the dying process as long as possible? The Scriptures teach that death is, not a friend of man, but an enemy. (1 Corinthians 15:26) Further, the dead are neither suffering nor in bliss, but they are in a sleeplike state. (Job 3:11, 13; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; John 11:11-14; Acts 7:60) The future prospects of life for the dead are totally dependent on God's power to resurrect them through Jesus Christ. (John 6:39, 40) So we find that God has provided us with this helpful knowledge: Death is not something to be longed for, but

* For additional comments about so-called mercy killing, see *Awake!* of March 8, 1978, pages 4-7, and of May 8, 1974, pages 27-8.

neither is there an obligation to resort to desperate efforts to prolong the dying process.

Christian Guidelines

What guidelines could the Christian apply in a situation where a loved one is in a terminal state?

First, we must acknowledge that each situation involving a terminal illness is different, tragically different, and there are no universal rules. Furthermore, the Christian should be careful to consider the laws of the land in such cases. (Matthew 22:21) Keep in mind, too, that no loving Christian would advocate medical neglect.

Only when there is undeniably terminal disease (where the situation has been clearly determined to be hopeless) should consideration be given to asking that life-support technology be discontinued. In such cases there is no Scriptural reason to insist on medical technology that would simply prolong a dying process that is far advanced.

These often are very difficult situations and may involve agonizing decisions. How is one to know, for example, when a situation is hopeless? Though no one can be absolutely certain, reason needs to be exercised along with careful counsel. One medical paper advising doctors comments:

"If there is disagreement concerning the diagnosis or prognosis or both, the life-sustaining approach should be continued until reasonable agreement is reached. However, insistence on certainty beyond a reasonable point can handicap the physician dealing with

treatment options in apparently hopeless cases. The rare report of a patient with a similar condition who survived is not an overriding reason to continue aggressive treatment. Such negligible statistical possibilities do not outweigh the reasonable expectations of outcome that will guide treatment decisions."

In such a predicament, the Christian, whether patient or relative, would rightfully expect some help from his physician. This medical paper concludes: "In any case, it is unfair simply to provide a mass of medical facts and options and leave the patient adrift without any further guidance on the alternative courses of action and inaction."

Local Christian elders, being mature ministers, can also be of great value. Of course, the patient and his immediate family must make their own balanced decision in this very emotional situation.

Finally, reflect on these points. Christians very much want to stay alive so that they can

enjoy serving God. They realize, though, that in the present system, all of us are dying; in this sense all of us are terminally ill. It is only through the ransoming blood of Jesus Christ that we have any hope of reversing that situation.—Ephesians 1:7.

If death does come to a loved one, hard as this is, we are not left to agonize and grieve "just as the rest also do who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Rather, we can take comfort that we did the best we reasonably could for our sick loved one and that any medical assistance we employed was at best of temporary help. We do have, though, the happy promise of the One who will free us from all such problems when 'the last enemy, death, is to be brought to nothing.'—1 Corinthians 15:26.

Yes, ultimately the best help for the dying will come from the God who gave life to the first humans and who promises a resurrection for those who exercise faith in him and in his Son, Jesus Christ.—John 3:16; 5:28, 29.



From Invalid to Active Praise of God

TWO of Jehovah's Witnesses sharing in the house-to-house ministry in February 1984 spoke to a woman in the village of Corcovada, Añasco, Puerto Rico. They heard a noise from inside and asked the woman if someone was sick.

"Yes," she responded, "it is my husband. He has been sick for 14 years and never comes out of the room except to bathe and eat."

The two Witnesses asked if they could talk to the husband. His wife said that he didn't like to talk to anyone, but if the Witnesses wanted to go in, they could.

"We entered the room," explained one of the Witnesses, "and found the man in bed. On seeing his condition, we felt pity for him. He was so weak that he trembled. We told him about God's Kingdom and the hope of living in a world without sickness or even death. Tears rolled down his face. I asked him if he would like to live in that new world where no one would be sick."—Revelation 21:3, 4.

"Yes," he answered. "We offered to come back and study the Bible with him. With his approval we returned, and the study was held while he lay in bed."

"After a few visits, I suggested that he sit up in bed so that it

would be easier for him to study. He made the effort, although at first he could sit up for only a short time because he would get dizzy. After a few more studies, as he got stronger, I suggested that we hold the study in the living room. He agreed, and each week we would help him to walk out there.

"The man made fine progress in his studies, even though he could hardly see and his hands trembled so much that it was difficult for him to hold a magnifying glass. He told us that in the 14 years that he had been ill, he had not visited a doctor because he was unable to leave the house. So we made arrangements to take him to a doctor.

"An operation was successfully performed on his eyes, and soon he was reading the Bible without the aid of the magnifying glass. Even his hands ceased

to tremble. He began regularly walking around the house, and eventually he would go to bed only to sleep at night. Soon after that he started to attend our Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

"In time the former invalid's love for Jehovah God and His promises impelled him to talk to others about the things he had learned. Shortly, he joined us in the house-to-house ministry, which greatly surprised his neighbors and friends. His health improved so much that he even began working on his farm."

In November 1988 this experience was related at a circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the man, Pedro Martínez, appeared on the platform. Eventually, in November 1989, he symbolized his dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.



Radon

A Danger in Your Home?

AN ENGINEER who worked at the Limerick nuclear power plant in the eastern United States found that even without entering the plant power area, he set off the alarm that monitored radiation. When it became evident that he was not picking up radiation within the nuclear plant, his house was tested, and it was found to be the source of the contamination.

A 68-year-old missionary recovering from double-bypass heart surgery had difficulty overcoming anemia even though he was receiving medication to build up his blood. One of the questions the doctor asked was: "Have you ever been exposed to radiation?"

"Yes," he answered. "In my early 20's, I worked for two years as a technician in a plant where I was exposed to radon."

"That may be your problem," the doctor concluded.

Both the engineer at the nuclear power plant and the man who suffered from anemia had been exposed to an invisible danger, radon.

"Radon. What is that? And could it be a danger in *my* home?" you may ask.

What Is It?

Radon, an odorless, colorless gas, is one of six chemical elements that are known as noble, or inert, gases. Radon, however, differs from the other five noble gases in that it is radioactive. It is a product of the decay of the radioactive element radium.

Radioactive elements emit certain rays, or particles, and in the process of decay, these elements change into other substances. Thus, the radioactive metal uranium eventually becomes radium. When an atom of the metal radium emits radiation, it changes into an atom of radon. Radon, in turn, decays into radioactive products that are known as its daughters.

The rate at which a radioactive substance decays is called its half-life. The half-life of radon is a little less than four days, which means that in about four days, half of the original radon will have decayed into other substances. On the other hand, the half-life of radium is 1,660 years and that of uranium is 4,500,000,000 years! Thus, in its natural state, uranium is more abundant than radium because uranium has a much longer half-life.

Source of the Problem

In any uranium ore, there will always be a certain amount of radium, as well as small quantities of radon. This radioactive gas, which can find its way into one's home, is the source of the problem.

The quantity of uranium found in the rocks and soil will vary greatly from place to place. This means that in certain areas a significant amount of radon may seep slowly from the soil. If the radon escapes into the open air, it will soon disappear. But if the gas happens to be under a house, it may be trapped there and gradually seep into the basement of the house through cracks in the

floor or walls or through sumps and drainage pipes.

Radon is also found in underground water, so it can find its way into homes through the water system as well. The risk is not so much from drinking the water as from inhaling the gas that is released from the water as one washes, showers, or cooks.

The experience of the Limerick nuclear plant engineer mentioned in the introduction illustrates the potential danger. The foundation of his house was discovered to have been poured over an outcropping of uranium-bearing rock. The radioactivity in the living room measured 3,200 picocuries, whereas the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) recommends that measures be taken to reduce radon levels in homes that measure above 4 picocuries per liter of air.*

According to one estimate, the family received the same amount of radiation in the year that they lived in the house as they would have received from 260,000 chest X rays! Thus, their chances of developing lung cancer were greatly increased. The family wisely moved out until the situation was corrected. "I don't smoke and I never touched alcohol when I was pregnant," the wife lamented. "But then I bring my babies to live in a radioactive cloud."

High levels of radiation have also been found in places in Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Many uranium miners exposed to radon have died from lung cancer. In fact, a writer for *The New York Times* claims: "No one questions [radon's] ability to cause lung cancer, a disease that used to kill half of uranium miners, who inhaled large amounts of radon breakdown products every workday."

* Four picocuries per liter of air is viewed as the cancer-risk equivalent of smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day.

How Great the Danger?

Since radon that is breathed into the lungs is largely exhaled before it decays, it itself does not pose a significant problem to health. However, the "daughters"—the radioactive products into which radon decays—can be dangerous. These products are chemically active and adhere to tiny dust particles that may stay in the lungs. Thus, lung tissue can be affected by the radiation. As Dr. Anthony Nero, Jr., senior scientist in the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory of the University of California, explains: "Because they [the radioactive products into which radon decays] have short half-lives, once collected in the lung, it is highly probable that they will decay [there]."

The danger from exposure to radon in homes has been investigated only in recent years, and no one really knows what is a safe level of exposure. Earlier this year the EPA reduced its estimate of the danger. "We previously estimated up to 21,000 cancer deaths per year due to radon and that figure is now perhaps 16,000," says Dr. Richard J. Guimond, an EPA official. Nevertheless, he claims: "Radon is still one of the larger health risks people face." Yet, no one can point with certainty to any cancer cases due to radon exposure in the home.

Some, in fact, believe that the concern over radon is greatly exaggerated. William Mills, a former head of the EPA, says that the number of cancer deaths attributed to radon is inflated because many of these deaths should be blamed on smoking. "My view," he says, "is that the real risk from radon is between zero and some number near zero." Of a similar opinion is Roger Eaton, head of a radon group within the Canadian government's department of health and welfare. "Our experience," he says, "is that lung cancer is a rare disease when there's no smoking involved."

Smoking evidently significantly increases the danger of radon to those exposed to it. *Science* magazine says that exposure to radon multiplies the risk of lung cancer in smokers by at least ten times. It is not known why radon affects smokers more than nonsmokers, but some experts feel that smoke-damaged lungs may tend to trap radioactive products of radon decay.

Some areas are known hot spots for radon. In Clinton, New Jersey, in the United States, it was found that all homes tested in one community had high levels of radon radiation. Five homes had so much that it was estimated that living in them all their lives would give the occupants the same risk of lung cancer as would smoking 20 packs of cigarettes a day!

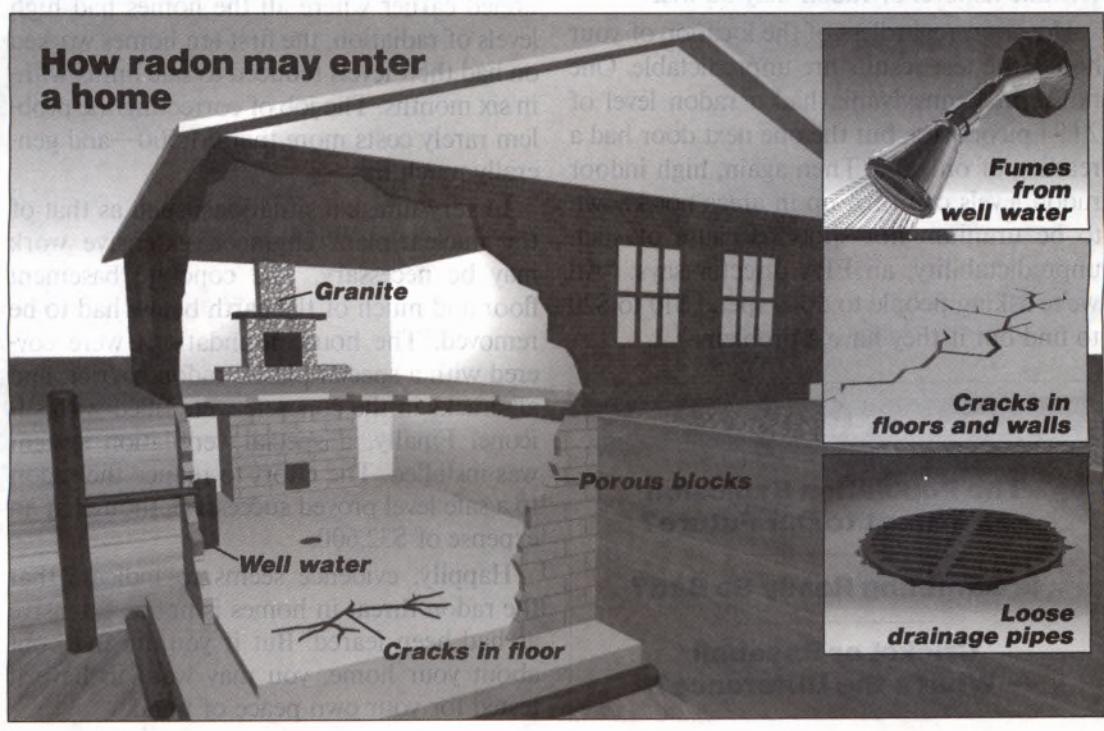
Dr. Nero explains: "Many people in these areas are living in homes with radon levels above 20 picocuries, levels greater than the

occupational limit for miners." Nero estimates: "There are about 100,000 such households, and these people really do need help."

The EPA has warned that eight million American homes have radon levels that probably exceed the federal guideline of four picocuries per liter of air. Yet, some experts believe the EPA estimate of homes at risk is exaggerated. They also question the degree of danger that low levels of radon represent. Dr. Bernard L. Cohen, professor of physics and radiation health at the University of Pittsburgh, said: "My interpretation of the data is that low-level exposure is essentially harmless; there is no effect at very low levels, as are found in most homes."

What About Your Home?

The danger that radon poses to you depends largely upon the concentration of uranium in the soil where you live. Another important factor is the type of soil beneath your



home; more permeable soils permit the entry of greater amounts of radon even if the uranium content of the soil is low.

Yet another risk factor is the way that your home is built. For example, many modern homes have been built to be virtually airtight in order to conserve energy. Thus, radon that seeps into them cannot readily escape. As an EPA official explained: "The more you try to button up a house, the higher the pollutant levels become." Thus, drafty older houses are probably safer from the potential danger of radon.

A known hot spot for uranium in the United States is an area stretching from eastern Pennsylvania across northern New Jersey and into New York. Another is the Red River valley area between Minnesota and North Dakota. If you live in such a known hot spot, having the air inside your home tested to determine its level of radon may be wise.

However, regardless of the location of your home, the test results are unpredictable. One house in Pennsylvania had a radon level of 2,694 picocuries, but the one next door had a reading of only 3.6! Then again, high indoor radon levels can turn up in areas not known to be uranium hot spots. Because of such unpredictability, an EPA director says: "All we're asking people to do is spend \$10 to \$20 to find out if they have a problem."

In Our Next Issue

**The Population Explosion
—A Threat to Our Future?**

Is Gambling Really So Bad?

**Cricket or Baseball
—What's the Difference?**

If you decide to have *your* home tested, there are different ways to do it. You may want to obtain information from local agencies on environmental control. "The guideline is for the average exposure *in the rooms where you live*," Dr. Nero notes. "But most of the EPA's screening," he says, "is done with detectors placed in basements." He also emphasizes: "Monitoring should last for months, and ideally for a year."

It would be wise to exercise care in selecting a firm for testing, since some are more reputable than others. Radon detectors can also be purchased. But reports indicate wide variation in accuracy from model to model.

If after testing you find that your home has a high level of radiation, the problem can be handled. Perhaps sealing cracks in the basement walls and floor and using fans to improve the ventilation will be sufficient. In Clinton, New Jersey, the community mentioned earlier where all the homes had high levels of radiation, the first ten homes worked on had their levels reduced to safe limits within six months. The job of correcting the problem rarely costs more than \$1,500—and generally much less.

In very unusual situations, such as that of the nuclear-plant engineer, extensive work may be necessary. The concrete basement floor and much of the earth below had to be removed. The house foundations were covered with a special plastic radon barrier, and all cracks in the concrete were filled with silicone. Finally, a special ventilation system was installed. The effort to reduce the radon to a safe level proved successful, though at an expense of \$32,600.

Happily, evidence seems to indicate that the radon threat in homes is not as extensive as had been feared. But if you are in doubt about your home, you may want to have it tested for your own peace of mind.

Daiku San Builds a Dream House

By Awake! correspondent in Japan

MANY visitors to Japan are fascinated by the graceful traditional houses they see here. The sloping roof, the upturned eaves, the enclosed garden, and the verandas all add their charm. Yet, the interesting thing is that a house of this type is usually designed, built, and decorated under the direction of just one person. He is called *Daiku san*, or the master carpenter.

Mr. Kato is a *Daiku san* with 40 years of experience. He and his crew of artisans are constructing what most Japanese would consider to be their dream house. Let us listen as he tells us something about the unique style of the house and how he is building it.

Classic Design

"The essence of a classic Japanese house," *Daiku san* tells us, "can be summed up in just two words: *wabi* and *sabi*." Among other things, both words have the meaning "refined and tasteful simplicity." "Subtle," "quiet," and "delicate" are other words that help us understand Japanese architecture and its appeal.

Because of the frequent typhoons and earthquakes in Japan and the high humidity in the summer, *Daiku san* explains, wood is the preferred material for a family house because of its resilience. Clay, bamboo, and paper are also among the basic materials used. To achieve visual harmony, house and garden are designed together.

What will the dream house and garden look like? How will it be built? *Daiku san* suggests that we take a ride to another building

site where he will give us a firsthand look at how *Daiku san* builds a dream house.

From the Ground Up

"Houses built a hundred years ago were not anchored to the ground," *Daiku san* tells us as we walk around the site. "They sat on a network of horizontal beams propped up by short posts resting on rocks." The fact that many of these buildings are still standing testifies to the skill of the *Daiku san*. "Nowadays," we are told, "footings and foundations are made of cement. But the structural principles remain the same." This applies also to the walls, which are quite different in concept and construction from those in Western-style houses.

The interior walls of a Japanese house are intended to be more like partitions than solid barriers. "Over a lattice of split bamboo like this," explains *Daiku san*, pointing to a wall under construction, "two to five layers of clay will be applied. The consistency of each layer is different, and each layer must dry thoroughly before the next one is applied. Because of this, it takes three months, on the average, to finish a house." (Of course, to build a dream house takes much longer.) The walls, finished with a coat of fine clay or sand in the natural earth tones favored by the Japanese, will breathe and not sweat as concrete walls often do in a damp climate.

Next, *Daiku san* draws our attention to the floor. The veranda, hallway, and kitchen floors will be hardwood. Most of the other rooms are carpeted with tightly woven grass

mats called tatami. This unique floor covering is warm in winter, cool in summer, and firm yet soft enough to sit or lie upon. Each mat is about three feet by six feet and two inches thick. Rooms are identified by the number of mats they will hold, and so are called eight-, six-, or four-and-a-half-mat rooms, depending on the size.

A Closely Guarded Family Secret

Where the skill of the *Daiku san* really excels is in his masterful use of joinery. Our guide shows us manuals over 70 years old, handed down by his father. They contain page after page of complex, fascinating joinery cuts. From ancient times a master carpenter would keep his joinery techniques a closely guarded secret, passing them on only to his son or successor. Although it is no longer necessary, a whole house could be built without using a single nail.

"Some of these joinery techniques are similar to those used by carpenters elsewhere. For instance, there are the interlocking dovetail, rabbet, butt, and scarf joints," explains *Daiku san*. Just what joints are used depends upon the tension and stress in that part of the building. The proper joints will also absorb earthquake tremors, allowing the house to roll with the shock.

The Crowning Glory

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the traditional Japanese house is the roof. It seems large and rather heavy compared to the rest of the house. But *Daiku san* tells us the roof is actually a stabilizer against the elements, getting its strength from the sturdy, whole-log roof beams. Though roofs come in many styles, generally they are gabled or hipped or are a combination of the two. *Daiku san* shows us some roof tiles made of baked clay. Again, earth tones prevail, with the exception of a popular sparkling azure blue.

"The slightly upturned corners and deep overhang of the eaves are important details for the comfort of future tenants," *Daiku san* points out. "They allow you to leave the floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors to the veranda open in the humid rainy season. Yet they are set at just the right angle to keep out the hot summer sun."

Our inspection of the building site comes to a close. Now our guide invites us to view a home that it took him a year and a half to build.



A Real Dream House

The moment we drive up and look at its graceful lines, we know this is a house in which anyone would feel at home. The front door is latticed woodwork, fitted together by joinery and backed by glass. It slides open easily, and we walk into the beautiful entryway. After removing our shoes, we step up into the house. The floorboards of the hall feel solid under our feet.

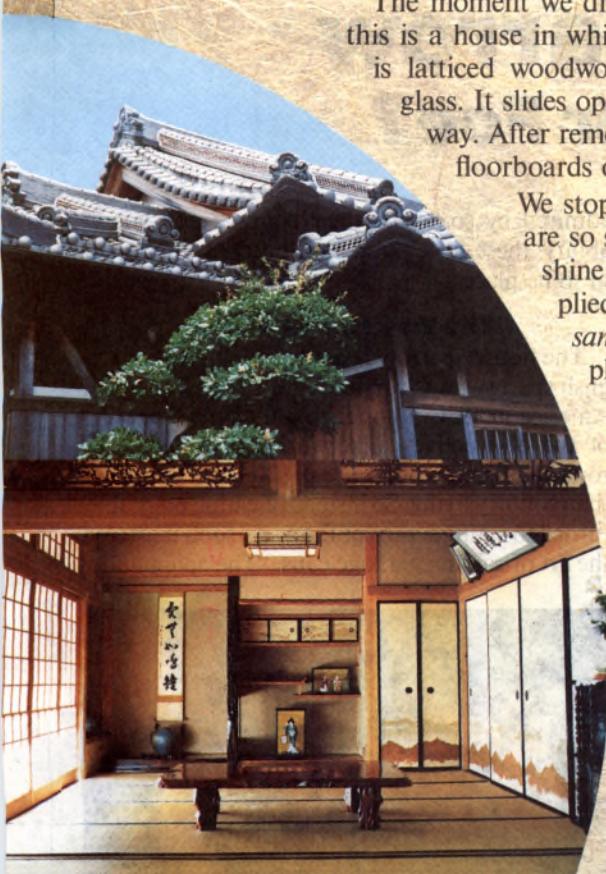
We stop to look at the exposed structural posts. They are so smooth that they feel like silk to the touch and shine as if varnished. "No stain or lacquer was applied to any of the woodwork in the house," *Daiku san* tells us, as if reading our minds. "It has been planed to the finest degree possible."

In the Japanese-style parlor, we take in the details of the room. The transom, or header, over the sliding doors, or panels, is an intricate carving of cherry blossoms. All around the room are sliding panels that are made of paper stretched over wooden frames. The sliding doors facing the veranda are latticed and covered with thin, white shoji paper. Those (called fusuma) that open to the hallway or other rooms are covered with heavier paper. Each of these panels, which serve as room dividers, is decorated with a different pattern. "These small rooms can be converted into one large room simply by removing these sliding panels," *Daiku san* explains. How practical!

The only solid wall holds the tokonoma, or picture recess, and its adjoining shelf corner. "This is the beauty spot of the house," says *Daiku san*, "and the best wood and workmanship go into it." Today, a striking calligraphy scroll hangs there.

We are shown through the rest of the house. The pleasant smell of cedar, cypress, pine, and the tatami gently permeates each room. A subtle simplicity and elegance touch everything in the house.

On our way out, the garden awaits our inspection. Though not very large, it is peaceful and serene. It has a pool full of brightly colored carp and a lovely waterfall. We come away with a feeling of satisfaction, marveling at the skill and ingenuity displayed when *Daiku san* builds a house.



The Sparrow Friend or Foe?

NEW neighbors have just moved in. Ousting the former tenants and chasing away any curious onlookers, they have settled down to the daily business of raising and feeding a family.

Their name, sparrow, is applied to several different birds, but it generally refers to members of the weaver family. Sparrows are usually small, inconspicuous birds with gray, brown, and black plumage. Many are accomplished songsters.

Perhaps, though, sparrows are not the kind of neighbors you would choose. For while they are

admired by some for their courage and adaptability, these little birds have become unpopular in some places.

Why Viewed as a Villain

The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), or English sparrow, was carried from Europe to North America in 1851 in hopes that it would free trees of the destructive cankerworm. However, sparrows soon learned that urban dwelling was easier than country living. So instead of eating bugs, they turned to eating scraps of food and soon mastered the art of raiding garbage cans. "The adaptability



and aggressiveness" of the house sparrow, notes the book *North American Birds*, "matches the character of furred immigrants like the brown rat, the black rat, and the house mouse."

Sparrows build their messy, untidy homes in every nook and cranny. Feathers, wool, and discarded cloth are among the ingredients they favor in nest construction. Often they drive away the native birds and cheekily take over their nests, turning out the eggs of the ousted tenants. Moreover, sparrows are destructive of a variety of fruits, and they eat ripening seeds and tender, young vegetables.

In Brazil, where the house sparrow was also deliberately introduced, not only did it damage crops but it also drove out the beloved *tico-tico* bird. Similar in size and coloring to the sparrow, the *tico-tico* is a sociable, useful little bird that destroys insects harmful to crops.

Redeeming Features

Yet sparrows are fun-loving birds that chirp and twitter, and many people enjoy watching them as they flutter from their perch to the ground and back up again. One bird-watcher relates: "We have about seven sparrow nests in the immediate vicinity of our house. . . . A group of the birds can be found playing in the water at the same time, bumping into one another in the pro-

cess. Some get into quite a 'tizzy.' They dive and flip, and they wiggle from side to side, fluffing out their feathers until they are just about waterlogged. Then, they hop onto the fence, wipe their beaks, shake themselves as a dog would, peer down at the water and take another dive. It can go on for maybe an hour at a time, and then they fly off only to return in an hour or two." At times sparrows can also be seen taking dust baths in dry soil along the road or in a flower bed.

Interestingly, sparrows are mentioned in the Bible. Twice, Jesus used these little-regarded birds to illustrate God's tender care. When sending out his 12 apostles to preach, Jesus asked them: "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value?" and then he explained: "Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows." Later in his ministry, Jesus repeated this illustration, thus emphasizing that since God does not forget even a single sparrow, He will not forget those who serve Him.—Matthew 10:29, 31; Luke 12:6, 7.

Obviously, Jehovah God values all of his creations, both small and great. And while the characteristics of certain creatures may not always endear them to us, the many and varied forms of living things reflect the wisdom of our Grand Creator.—Psalm 104:24.

Religion's Divided House

Of all the world's religions, Roman Catholicism, Islam, and Hinduism are the largest. Roman Catholics claim 985 million, or 18.8 percent of the total world population of 5.24 thousand million, while 912 million (17.4 percent) profess to be Muslims, and 686 million (13.1 percent) are Hindus—over twice as many as the 320 million Buddhists.

"Christianity is the most practised of all the religions," noted *Asiaweek*. "But it has been so deeply riven into historically antagonistic sects—the Protestants and Catholics of Northern Ireland being the most prominent

surviving example—that it is difficult for many people to think of it all as one religion. . . . Muslims are less divided into sects than Christians, but Sunni and Shia are two distinct streams with a history that has not always been harmonious." The largest group of Muslims are the Sunnis.

In addition, a sizable number of the world's population profess no religious faith. A major part of this population is in China, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union. Those who are nonreligious number 896 million, and atheists make up an additional 236 million.

Mexico's Past Affects Its Religion Today

By Awake! correspondent in Mexico

AVISIT to Mexico City's huge National Museum of Anthropology reveals how the Catholic religion practiced by many in Mexico today has been affected by the tribal religions of previous centuries.

Students of history are familiar with the way Hernán Cortés and fellow conquistadores introduced Catholicism to Mexico in the 1500's. By that time, established cultures with their own religious beliefs already existed there, as exhibits in the National Museum so interestingly reveal.

Mexi was the first god of the Mexica tribe, so it is easy to see where the country and its capital, Mexico City, got their names. These early Indians founded Mexico City in about 1325 on a barren island in the middle of Lake Texcoco. Various Indian tribes made up the original population. There were Olmec, Chichimec, Aztecs, Maya, and others. Each tribe had its own artistic works, and the ruins of some of their early buildings, temples, and cities remain.



A Religious Blending

Visitors to the museum, situated in beautiful Chapultepec Park, are generally surprised to learn the extent to which the ancient and the modern beliefs of the people of Mexico are blended. In addition, many are intrigued by the similarity of early tribal beliefs to those introduced by the Catholic conquistadores.

In the Aztec hall, various maps show the founding of Mexico. From the displays it is obvious that the Aztecs were quite reli-

gious. Here can be seen many sculptures of gods and goddesses that the Aztecs venerated. One large sculpture, reproduced on this page, is of the goddess Coatlicue, who was regarded as the mother of both gods and men. Notice that she has two snake heads facing each other, in place of a human head. Her skirt is made up of entwined serpents. It seems that some of these symbolisms represent life and death.

With the coming of the conquistadores, many Indians fled to rugged areas or to the forests. By thus isolating themselves, some

groups of Indians have kept many of their primitive religious ideas even until today. "For instance," one guide at the museum explained, "the Huichol believe that the sun, deer, and corn make up a triad, similar to the Catholic Trinity doctrine." She added: "The Indians of Chiapas State even now worship ancient pre-Hispanic gods, such as the rain god, the earth god, and the wind god, and have a different ceremony for each one."

You may wonder why many in Mexico today claim to be Christians when they also practice other forms of worship. Regarding this, an inscription in the hall "Introduction to Ethnography" observes: "Religion colors every aspect of Indian life. . . . The most important characteristic of the Indian's religion is the mixture of Catholic formulas with the pagan ones, remnants of the pre-Hispanic beliefs and ways of worshiping. The Huichol, Lacandon, and Otomi are the ones that preserve the most pre-Hispanic traits in their religion; [the Huichol] worship gods that represent the sun, water, and fire, and they keep them in caves. The Lacandon still worship ancient idols that are found in Maya temples." Yes, the blending of Catholicism with ancient pagan religions is common in Mexico.

This is illustrated further by exhibits in the Northeast hall. These tell of the beliefs of the Yaqui, Seri, and Tarahumara. An inscription in this hall reads: "At the present time, the Yaqui are a very religious people, and their concepts are Christian even though transformed and adapted. They believe that Christ was a Yaqui who came to earth to save them from the flood, to give them their territory, to found their eight towns, and to give them the *Comunila* (group of authorities). . . . They do not permit Protestant proselytism, nor do they allow the presence of a Catholic priest."

Nevertheless, as this inscription continues: "Along with the complicated beliefs and mag-

ical ceremonies and remnants of pre-Hispanic religion, they also accept the Catholic religion. They believe in a Christian god and frequently identify him as the sun."

What visitors see in the Tarahumara section further confirms the blending of ancient and modern religious beliefs. There can be seen a small window with wooden crosses; an inscription underneath says: "The Tarahumara religion is the product of a mixture of Christian and pagan beliefs. The former were introduced in the 17th century by Franciscan missionaries. They believe in Tata Rioshi (God the Father), in Christ Jesus, in Everuame (the Great Mother, or Virgin Mary), and in other saints that are patron saints of certain villages. All are given the status of gods. The cross is of special importance because they relate it to the sun and moon and the worship of soil fertility."

In the Seri section, another inscription explains: "The religion that the Seri practice is a mixture of ancient beliefs with Christian influences."

There is much more to see that highlights the religious beliefs of the early Indian inhabitants. For instance, in the Mesoamerica hall are beautiful murals that represent the five cultures from the regions of the Pacific, the Gulf Coast, the Maya, the Altiplano, and the Mixtec. The inhabitants are shown worshiping corn, the jaguar, the rattlesnake, and the eagle—all of which have been regarded as gods.

After a visit to the beautiful National Museum of Anthropology, one is impressed by the extent to which the ancient rites and beliefs of the country's early Indian inhabitants were mixed with those of the Catholic conquerors. As the exhibits reveal, even today many in Mexico are affected by the tribal religions of previous centuries.

The World Council of Churches Cooperation or Confusion?

By Awake! correspondent in Australia

THE assembly opened February 7, 1991, on the picturesque grounds of the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia, the nation's capital. An estimated 4,000 lay people and some 316 church leaders from over a hundred countries attended. The previous six assemblies of the WCC (World Council of Churches) had been held in various countries over a period of some 35 years, beginning in 1948 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

What is the WCC? It is not a superchurch. It is a fellowship of churches, a forum for the exchange of views. The official address of welcome for this seventh assembly was given by Australia's prime minister, Robert J. Hawke—even though he is a self-confessed agnostic. The theme chosen for this two-week assembly was in the form of a prayer: "Come Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation."

However, the unexpected turn of events on the world scene diverted the mood and expectations of the delegates away from renewal by holy spirit to politics and the morality of the Persian Gulf war. This early swing away from spiritual discussion caused Sir Paul Reeves, an Anglican archbishop and former governor-general of New Zealand, to express his bewilderment: "We tend, in assemblies like this, to quarrel about power, which has little to do with the Holy Spirit." The archbishop of Canberra attempted to rationalize on the value of disagreement: "Unity is the gift of the Holy Spirit. A healthy diversity is the gift of the same Holy Spirit."

David Gill, general secretary of the Australian Council of Churches, also expressed concern that the integrity of the WCC was itself at risk, noting that the organization was becoming increasingly subservient to cause-oriented groups that are looking for a platform from which to air their particular concerns.

Women's Ordination—More Disunity

The role of women in the contemporary church was also on the agenda, but the women were unhappy. Most of them regarded it as male dominated. Lois Wilson of Canada testily summed it up: "The politics of the WCC stink to high heaven and I don't think it is what Jesus had in mind." What brought on this frustration? The newspaper *Canberra Times* had this to say: "There had been a lot of crying in the women's wash-room because women had been intimidated to prevent them accepting nomination to the council's central committee. One woman had been told that she would be excommunicated from her church in an attempt to discourage her from accepting nomination."

What Happened to the Spiritual Theme?

Some were concerned that the assembly had not emphasized sufficiently the Biblical or theological nature of its work. This is not surprising, for most of the major items on the agenda were political in nature. In fact, in the printed reports on the assembly, the reader found only one brief reference to the Bible.

The religious magazine *National Outlook* said that David Gill "reflects the thinking of others who have attended WCC gatherings in the recent past, and who, as one individual said recently, went with high hopes but came away feeling dry and empty."

In contrast, when the spiritually hungry and thirsty came in contact with Christ Jesus, they did not go away feeling "dry and empty." They went away refreshed: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matthew 11:28-30.



Why Don't I Fit In?

"It was the toughest obstacle I've faced."—Craig.

"I was very lonely."—Jessica.

"I felt so frustrated."—Chris.

"It made me angry and upset. I cried and cried."—Sommar.

"I was left confused and definitely hurt."—Erin.

WORDS describing some catastrophic event? No, these individuals spoke of the painful feelings they suffered because they did not when they were young fit in with their peers. And if you have ever been excluded from a clique or shunned by youths you wanted as friends, you know how painful such an experience can be.

Of course, it's only natural to want to fit in with your peers. Social scientists describe humans as joiners; we naturally tend to group ourselves. This urge is particularly strong when you're a teenager. Said 14-year-old Micalah: "We feel secure and accepted when around people with the same interests as ours." Such mutual interests might include enjoying the same sports, food, school activities, clothing, or music. Or it might be a hobby or choice of entertainment that holds a group of friends together.

Problems arise when the ties that bind a group are used as narrow-minded excuses for excluding other youths. Recalls Brendan: "If you weren't wearing the right tennis shoes, you didn't fit in. You weren't part of the gang." Silly as that might seem, when everybody else is in and you are out, it can really hurt.

When Not to Fit In

Ask yourself, though, 'Do I really want to fit in with the clique in the first place?' Even in Bible times, wayward youths often tried to bring others into their circle of friends. "Do go with us," they would enticingly say to others. "Your lot you ought to cast in among us." But the Bible warned: "My son, do not go in the way with them. Hold back your foot from their roadway. For their feet are those that run to sheer badness."—Proverbs 1:11-16.

Likewise today, you may be tempted to try to get in with some popular clique. But what kind of youths belong to it? They may be fun-loving, but are they God-fearing? Will associating with them build up your relationship with God or tear it down? "Bad associations spoil useful habits," warns 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Ask yourself, too, what fitting in would cost you. 'There's a lot of pressure to conform,' says a youth named Grace. 'When I

was younger, I would do things like swearing because my friends would say, "Come on." It was really just a feeling of not wanting to be left out.' Author Mary Susan Miller tells of another youth who made compromises to fit in. He purposely let his grades slip "so he would not appear smarter than the classmates he wanted to be friends with."—*Childstress!*

Of course, there's nothing wrong with making reasonable efforts to get along with others. (Compare 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.) But when fitting in means having to smoke, take drugs or alcohol, use foul language, laugh at obscene jokes, engage in sex, or the like, it is simply not right! That is going too far! Nor is it smart to let other youths dictate every detail of your dress, speech, or grooming.

Besides, Christians are commanded *not* to fit in with those alienated from God. Jesus said of his disciples: "The world has hated them, because they are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14) Isn't it better to have God's approval than the approval of peers who do not serve God?—Compare James 4:4.

Fitting In With Fellow Christians

But what if you also have trouble fitting in with fellow Christians—youths who share your beliefs and convictions? Perhaps there are legitimate reasons.

You might, for example, be new to an area, and the youths there may be on the shy side or cautious about strangers. As others get to know you, things will likely change. Jessica had this experience when her family moved to a new congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. She recalls: "Everyone was very friendly and nice to me, but it still took about a year for me to feel that I belonged in a personal way. Looking back, I now realize time is needed to build relationships." Jessica adds that sharing in the public preaching work

with others in the new congregation was a big help in making her feel a part of it.

Stephen points to another aspect of forming friendships. He says: "For years I was left out because I was shy. Then I realized that if I wanted friends, I had to take the initiative." The result? Stephen now has a number of good friends. So can you if you put forth some effort. Instead of waiting for others to get to know you, try to get to know them. Invite some youths over to your home, or ask your parents if your new associates can join you in some family activity. This could be the start of lasting friendships.

When others do not respond to your efforts, however, it is often because of some misunderstanding. The apostle Paul was avoided by Christians in Jerusalem because of their mistaken notion that he was still a persecutor of Christians. Only after matters were straightened out was Paul accepted by the congregation there. (Acts 9:26-28) If you have likewise become the victim of some misunderstanding—perhaps due to harmful gossip—why not do what you can to straighten matters out?*

Nevertheless, not all problems have easy solutions. Sometimes even Christian youths are guilty of forming unwholesome cliques and of unfairly excluding others. This can be very painful to the one being excluded. It helps to remember, though, that like you, your peers are young and have much growing up to do before they reach maturity. In time they may outgrow their clannishness. But until those youths show a more Christian attitude, you are likely better off not being in their inner circle.—See 2 Timothy 2:20, 21.

'Widening Out'

Meanwhile, do not allow the situation to

* See the article "What Should I Do if People Gossip About Me?" in our July 22, 1989, issue.

embitter you. You might try talking to your parents or to a Christian overseer about it. Remember, too, that Christians are commanded to 'put up with one another' even when there is legitimate cause for complaint. (Colossians 3:13) Young Tiffany, who suffered rejection by a clique, recalls: "I prayed to Jehovah for strength to endure and tried to be objective. I also tried not to let it hurt my feelings too much."

The Bible also encourages Christians to "widen out" in their associations. (2 Corinthians 6:13) Researchers Jane Norman and Myron Harris note of clique members: "They are limiting their range of friendships and denying themselves the chance to learn how people different from themselves think and operate." There are many others—including older ones—whom you can enjoy as friends.

Facing Your Flaws

You may also have to face the painful possibility that you are giving some people valid reasons to avoid you. Young Dana, for example, found that she did not fit in with the Christian youths who were spiritually minded. Were they being snobs? No, she confesses: "My language and my dress were worldly," that is, inappropriate for a Christian. So while others were kind and cordial to her, they shied away from her socially.

Dana made some changes. She recalls: "I saw that it hurts to be left out

I needed to be more spiritually minded if I was going to fit in." Do you need to make similar adjustments? Doing so will not only win you the friendship of godly youths but gain you the friendship of God himself.—Compare Proverbs 27:11.

You may also have some personality traits that tend to turn people off. Wally recalls: "I had a tendency to talk too much and about things people weren't particularly interested in. Once I realized how annoying this was, I worked on my personality. I think it helped me fit in better with others." By talking things over with your parents or a trusted adult, you might discover that you have similar flaws. Perhaps matters can be improved simply by being friendlier or by talking less and listening more.

A failure to fit in, while it may be painful, is far from fatal. Be content with knowing that if you have a godly personality and really care about people, you'll never have a shortage of friends.



A Charming Health Spa

By Awake! correspondent in Czechoslovakia



MANY hundreds of years ago, the so-called Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV and those with him were wearily plodding home after an unsuccessful hunt. Suddenly, a large stag bounded up in front of them. The dogs noisily chased after it, and the hunters, their tiredness forgotten, energetically followed. The stag eventually led them to the edge of a steep cliff and then boldly jumped into the valley below.

The hunters and their hounds took a longer and safer route down, and by the time they arrived at the bottom of the cliff, the stag had disappeared. Nevertheless, the hunters found something else—the glistening waters of a hot spring welling up from the ground. Solemnly, Charles IV declared that he would build a spa bearing his name on the spot. And that, according to legend, was how Karlovy Vary in western Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, came to be founded.

Hot Springs

Where do those hot springs come from? According to recent geological research, some of the rainwater that falls on nearby

mountain slopes seeps into the ground and passes through countless fissures in the granite. As the water sinks deeper and deeper into the earth, it leaches minerals from the rocks.

Finally, at a depth of about a mile, the now mineral-rich, carbonized water is heated by warm rocks. Pressure from water vapor and carbon dioxide coming from even deeper in the earth forces the mineral water upward. At the surface, it forms the famous hot springs.

There are 12 springs altogether, ranging in temperature from 106 to 162 degrees Fahrenheit. Each spring differs from the others in mineral content. Hence, the healing properties of each of them is thought to be different. It is calculated that together the waters bring about 40,000 pounds of mineral compounds to the surface each day.

The Springs Heal

People flock to the springs in the hope of curing all kinds of sicknesses, from ulcers, gallstones, food allergies, and diabetes to obesity and gout. The springs are said to have brought relief to patients who have recently undergone stomach or intestinal surgery or

who suffer from such illnesses as infectious hepatitis.

The methods of treatment are complex, but their basis is the drinking of the water. A drink is taken of the appropriate springwater three times a day about half an hour before meals. Treatment may also include mineral baths, carbonic and oxygen baths, reflex massages, mud baths, and other procedures. A strict diet and physical exercise may also be part of the regimen.

In Czechoslovakia physicians and trade unions select patients to come to the spas for treatment. So many people want to come that there is a shortage of space. Recently a lot of spa houses were renovated, and some new ones were built. However, there is still a shortage of accommodations for all those who want to use the facilities. Visitors, therefore, wisely arrange for accommodations well ahead of time.

Touring the Town

The town of Karlovy Vary has a charming, relaxed atmosphere that visitors have long enjoyed. The white facades of the houses built into the wooded hillsides are truly delightful to see, appearing like layers of cake in a shop window.

On the riverbank, boys may be seen throwing pieces of bread to the trout in the Teplá River. A common sight in stores is that of customers lined up waiting to buy the famous spa wafers. Czech crystal glitters from shop windows. The Moser glassworks in Karlovy Vary exports cut-glass goblets to places all around the world.

As visitors to Karlovy Vary traverse the alleys of chestnut trees, rhododendrons, and white lilacs, the song of birds can be heard from the forests on the hills. This is where the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe used to walk with his notebook. He showed

these sights to Ludwig van Beethoven, the famous composer, who composed his eighth symphony here.

Yes, since the 17th century, giants in the world of music have trodden the streets of the town. Besides Beethoven, other visitors have included Carl Maria von Weber, Niccolò Paganini, Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, and Johannes Brahms. It was here that nine-year-old Robert Schumann listened enchanted to a concert by Ignaz Moscheles, an experience he never forgot.

It was Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria who ordered that the Imperial Baths be built for him and his family more than a hundred years ago. Today patients enjoy bath treatments here in brass tubs, whereas the emperor used one of gold.

Sound Health for Everyone

The vices of civilization, including environmental pollution, overcrowding, alcohol abuse, smoking, immorality, and a sedentary life-style have contributed to a number of 20th-century sicknesses. Many look to spas such as those at Karlovy Vary for relief. Sadly, however, some who come for help do not stop their smoking or immoral life-styles even while they are here. This can cause distress for their fellow visitors.

There is another problem. The region around Karlovy Vary is blessed with natural mineral riches, such as coal and kaolin. The industries, however, that have been created to obtain these mineral riches have polluted this beautiful environment.

Nevertheless, many appear to find refreshment and relief from their physical ailments by visiting Karlovy Vary. Natural healing provisions are a blessing from the Creator, and perhaps they will continue to help inhabitants of the earth until the day comes when "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'”—Isaiah 33:24.

Watching the World

Too Little, Too Late

Africa is facing famine again—perhaps its greatest famine ever, according to the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. An estimated 20 million to 29 million people are threatened with starvation. The director of the United Nations Children's Fund says that a thousand million dollars is needed to meet the demand for food. However, the appeal for aid has had little impact because it was sent out when much of the world's attention was focused on the recent hostilities of the Persian Gulf war. As a result, too little aid is arriving too late. The French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* reports that the public in general has become so accustomed to seeing images of starving people that the tragedy of famine seems to have become almost commonplace.

Evolution on Trial

Phillip Johnson, a professor of criminal law at the University of California at Berkeley in the United States, has long been fascinated by the way biologists defend the theory of evolution. They seem so defensive and dogmatic on the subject that Johnson set about finding out "what the vulnerable points were they're trying to protect." The result of his research is a book, *Darwin on Trial*, that *The Sacramento Bee* describes as "a lawyer's examination, bit by bit, of the logic of and evidence behind the theory of evolution." The newspaper summarizes: "Darwin flunks." Johnson claims he found many scholars, including

biologists, who are afraid to speak out publicly against evolution. "One of the things I've learned from this experience," he told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "is that to establish an intellectual orthodoxy and keep it beyond criticism, you don't need concentration camps and secret police. All you have to do is say that people will laugh at you and you'll lose your prestige. This has an enormous effect in academic life."

Finland's Drinking Problem

Finland has the world's greatest per capita consumption of alcoholic spirits. According to the newspaper *The European*, in Finland "alcohol-related traffic accidents are increasing and police



figures show that drunkenness is the chief cause of violent behaviour ranging from wife-beating to street-fighting." With a population of some five million people, Finland consumed 66 million gallons of alcohol during 1990. This does not include the 13 million gallons of duty-free alcohol that was purchased or consumed on Baltic cruises and ferries. *The European* stated that "heavy drinking is regarded by many Finns as a means of survival in a nation which is cold and dark for almost half the year."

The Price of Celibacy

Forcing priests to remain single "leads to paternity suits, to mistresses, to increased levels of homosexual activity among clergy and seminarians, to loneliness and in some cases to pedophilia." That, according to the *National Catholic Reporter*, is the substance of a warning that Joe Sternak, a former Catholic priest of the Chicago archdiocese in the United States, issued on the subject of celibacy at a recent annual conference. Sternak, who is currently writing a book on pedophilia, charges that dioceses in over 20 states use church donations to pay for lawsuits and out-of-court settlements in cases of priestly sexual abuse of children.

Homosexual Suicides

A new medical study has found that the suicide rate among young homosexual men is unusually high, *The Boston Globe* reported recently. The study involved 137 male homosexuals and bisexuals between the ages of 14 and 21 living in the northwestern United States. Some 30 percent of these subjects had attempted suicide—many by overdosing on drugs or by slashing their wrists. Of that 30 percent, half had tried to kill themselves more than once. According to the authors of the study, this suicide rate is some two to three times higher than that for heterosexuals. While the study's researchers gave no single reason for this level of self-destructiveness, they noted that many of the study's subjects were troubled by their own homosexuality. Others had suffered from sexual abuse as children, and still others had drug problems.

AIDS in Malawi

According to *The Daily Telegraph* of London, the World Health Organization reported recently that 37 percent of the population of Malawi is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. That amounts to nearly three million people carrying the virus; over seven thousand have already died of AIDS. A reporter for the *Telegraph* writes from Blantyre, Malawi, that 90 percent of the country's prostitutes are thought to be infected, as are almost 75 percent of the country's army and police, and some 60 percent of the mothers delivering babies in urban areas. The *Telegraph* reporter visited one hospital in southern Malawi where half of the patients are suffering from AIDS-related diseases. She writes: "With one nurse for every 100 patients, the victims are left to die as best they can."

A Sobering Lesson

In the United States, where drunk driving causes a death every 23 minutes, police have resorted to some forceful measures to impress youthful offenders with the seriousness of this crime. They take the youths to the morgue. The program has been under way for several years in Los Angeles County, California, where drug or alcohol intoxication plays a part in more than a third of the fatal traffic accidents involving youths. After visiting the morgue and the hospital trauma center and watching a grisly video on traffic accidents, many youths finally see the link between the mangled corpses of accident victims and their own conduct. Of 375 youths who have been through the program, not one has ended up in court again. There are plans to extend the program across the country.

Shopping-Cart Accidents

The latest annual report from the Consumer Product Safety Commission in the United States shows that 32,866 persons were hurt in accidents involving grocery store shopping carts. More



than 58 percent of these were children. According to *The New York Times*, "more than 19,000 children 4 years old or under required emergency room treatment for the injuries." Researchers have found that most cases of injured children occur when parents leave their children unattended with or on the shopping carts.

Ivory From Mammoths

When elephants were put on the endangered-species list, the bottom dropped out of the world's ivory market. Rather than face extinction themselves, though, those who deal in ivory have found another source of the material: the woolly mammoth. This great hairy beast abounded in northern climes until it was wiped out of existence thousands of years ago. But according to *The Wall Street Journal*, experts guess that some ten million mammoths remain frozen in the ice and permafrost of Siberia; it is not uncommon for them to roll free, still intact, from eroding river banks and shifting Arctic ice. Ivory carvers are now snapping up mammoth tusks, and the price of mammoth ivory has

skyrocketed. Conservationists, however, worry that thus keeping the ivory market alive will only further endanger the remaining live elephants.

Can Teens Decide?

Are young teenagers mature enough to make decisions about their own medical treatment? This question often arises when adolescent Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions. While some legal and medical professionals may assume that the answer is generally no, a recent study by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development suggests otherwise. According to *Science* magazine, seven studies compared how adolescents and young adults dealt with medical situations both real and hypothetical. The researchers found that there was little difference in the decision-making abilities of "adolescents as young as 14 or 15 years of age" compared to young adults (from 18 to 25 years old). They showed the same "thoroughness and 'quality' of reasoning" as their older counterparts, the study found.

Hepatitis From Blood

A recent study in Japan verified the danger of contracting Type-C hepatitis through blood transfusions. This type of virus is said to cause half of Japan's cases of liver cancer and cirrhosis of the liver. According to the study, 8.3 percent of 962 people who had received blood transfusions carried Type-C hepatitis viruses, whereas only 0.7 percent of 1,870 people who had never received transfusions did. Surprisingly, 40 percent of virus carriers went undetected when they took the blood test used by the Japanese Red Cross Society.

From Our Readers

Jews and Christians I am moved to express my appreciation for the series of articles on Jews and Christians. (June 22, 1991) As a Christian minister, I must say that I felt somewhat at a loss as to how to discuss this matter with Jews. The article showed that we are not asking them to abandon their Jewish heritage but merely to examine Jesus and the Messianic prophecies in the light of the truth, not by distorted traditions and false doctrines.

J. L., United States

The article could give the impression that the crimes of Christendom are to be regarded as worse than those of the Jews. Was it not the Jews who nailed God's Son to the stake?

N. L., Germany

The murder of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was indeed the greatest crime in human history. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that God condemns the individual descendants of the perpetrators of that crime. On the contrary, "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Whereas no single nationality stands condemned before God, Christendom must answer for its record of bloodguilt, persecution, and religious intolerance.—ED.

Gang Attack I really appreciated your article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Protect Myself From Gang Attack?" (July 22, 1991) It came just at a time when I was sighing over not knowing how to deal with this situation. From now on I will be careful about my dress, grooming, and conduct. Thank you very much for your help.

J. H., Japan

The Great Impostor Thank you for publishing the article "Out Of the Jaws—The Great Impostor." (June 22, 1991) My daughter always had headaches and was treated in various ways, but the cause was not found. I took the article to a dentist; he took X rays and found the problem. Now she is receiving the right treatment. I am not yet one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but I enjoy reading *Awake!*

S. M. S., Brazil

I am a dentist, and this article will be of enormous help to a great number of people. Few know that this disorder exists, and even we dentists sometimes take too little account of it. How right you are that only our Creator has the solution to all disorders!

E. F. G., Germany

Self-Defense Reading the article "Self-Defense—How Far Can a Christian Go?" (July 8, 1991), one could get the impression that the martial arts promote a readiness for combat and aggression. This is not the case. Most martial arts instill bodily control, self-discipline, and a sense of fairness to a higher degree than many other sports.

T. M., Germany

It may be true that the martial arts can be of some value to participants. Nevertheless, they teach one how to injure fellow humans, and this is incompatible with the Bible principles found at Isaiah 2:4 and Matthew 26:52.—ED.



Does It Pay to Be Honest?

SEEING so much dishonesty among adults, young people often copy their example. How refreshing—as well as noteworthy—it is, therefore, when someone is honest! *Sports Illustrated* introduced such an example of honesty with the comment: "Here's a story to restore one's faith."

The magazine reported on a youth baseball game in Florida, in the United States. The first baseman fielded a ground ball and tried to tag the runner going from first base to second. The umpire, Laura Benson, called the runner out, but the first baseman told her: "Ma'am, I didn't tag the runner." So Benson awarded the runner second base.

During another game two weeks later, the same youngster was involved in a similar play. Benson was again the umpire. This time she thought the boy had missed the tag, and she called the runner safe. Although the boy

did not say anything as he returned to his position, she sensed something was wrong by the way he looked at her. So she went over to him and asked: "Did you tag the runner?"

"Yes," he said.

When Benson reversed her decision and called the runner out, the opposing coaches protested. But she explained what had happened two weeks earlier and said: "If a kid is that honest, I have to give it to him."

Those who are dishonest seem to prosper in the world today. It is as a Bible psalmist once noted: "These are the wicked, who are at ease indefinitely. They have increased their means of maintenance." (Psalm 73:12) In reality, though, honesty eventually pays the finest dividends. It earns one the respect of fellow humans. But more important, it wins the favor of Jehovah God, who can reward one with everlasting life.



Does It Pay to Be Honest?

By Tom Hartman
Editor, *Business Week*
and *Entrepreneur*

What's the best way to increase your chances of getting paid? "It's simple," says James C. Johnson, president of Johnson & Associates, a consulting firm based in Atlanta. "If you want to get paid, tell the truth."

"People who do dishonest things don't get paid," he says. "People who do honest things get paid."

Johnson, 45, was once a top executive at a large corporation, "but I got tired of being part of a system that rewards people for doing things that aren't necessarily good for society," he says. "I left to start my own company, and now I'm doing what I believe in."

SEELING to myself is one of the best ways to increase your chances of getting paid, according to James C. Johnson, president of Johnson & Associates, Atlanta.

Johnson's company, which has offices in Atlanta, New York, and San Francisco, helps companies develop better ways to do business. "The most important thing we do is help our clients understand how to increase their chances of getting paid," he says. "We do this by helping them identify the key factors that influence payment decisions, such as customer satisfaction, product quality, and service levels."

Johnson's company also helps clients develop better ways to manage their cash flow, reduce costs, and increase revenue. "Our goal is to help our clients succeed in their business goals," he says.