

Awake!

April 22, 1996



A young girl with curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt and pink shorts, sits cross-legged on a paved path. She is looking up towards the right side of the frame. A vibrant rainbow arches across the scene from the left, ending over a pond filled with lily pads. In the background, there's a hillside with green bushes and a few red flowers. On the right side of the cover, a close-up portrait of an elderly man with a gentle expression is visible, partially obscured by the rainbow.

**When Wars
Will Be No
More**



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When Wars Will Be No More

3-11

Hopes for world peace seem uncertain. Despite the pessimism of many, why can we be confident that a world without war is at hand?



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What was it like to be a true Christian under Communist rule in Czechoslovakia?

You will enjoy this real-life experience.



AIDS in Africa —To What Extent Is Christendom Accountable? **19**

AIDS has hit Africa particularly hard. What responsibility do the churches bear for this?

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Back cover top right: USAF photo.

Is a World Without War Possible?

War planes: USAF photo

Anti-aircraft guns: U.S. National Archives photo

IMAGINE never seeing or experiencing again the ghastly reality of war and its aftermath. Imagine never hearing the sound of gunfire or bombs, never watching hoards of half-starved refugees in flight, never wondering if you or a loved one will die in some cruel and pointless conflict. How wonderful it would be to live in a world without war!

'Not a likely prospect,' you may say. Yet, the vision of a peaceful world burned brightly just a few years ago. In 1990 and 1991, many were saying the nations were on the threshold of a new era of security and cooperation. Reflecting the mood of the times, George Bush, who was then president of the United States, spoke on many occasions about an emerging "new world order."

Why the optimism? The Cold War had come to an end. For more than 40 years, the threat of nuclear war had hung menacingly over humankind like a sword suspended by a thin thread. But with the demise of Communism and the breakup of the Soviet Union, the threat of a nuclear holocaust seemed to evaporate. The world breathed easier.

There was another major reason why people viewed the future with confidence, and why many still

do. For four decades rivalry between the East and the West had made the United Nations little more than a debating society. But the end of the Cold War liberated the UN to do what it was designed to do—to work toward international peace and security.

The UN has in recent years intensified efforts to discourage warfare. Equipped with troops from member nations, the United Nations engaged in more peacekeeping operations in the 4 years preceding 1994 than in the previous 44 years. Some 70,000 civilian and military personnel served in 17 operations throughout the world. In just two years, peacekeeping expenditures more than doubled to \$3.3 billion in 1994.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, secretary-general of the UN, wrote recently: "There are signs that the system of collective security established in San Francisco nearly 50 years ago [at the founding of the UN] is finally beginning to work as conceived . . .

We are on the way to achieving a workable international system."

Despite these developments, the vision of a new world order rapidly fades. What has happened to darken hopes for a world without war? Is there reason to believe we will ever see global peace? The following articles will consider these questions.

Who Can Bring Lasting Peace?

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

THE above text is from Isaiah chapter 2, verse 4, in the King James version of the Bible. The *Human Development Report 1994*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), quoted these words and then added: "It appeared that the time for this prophecy had come with the end of the cold war [in 1990]. But so far this has proved to be an elusive hope."

Paring Down the Military

One factor dimming the hopes for peace is that the change in the international political climate has not been matched by large reductions in military spending. True, there have been some cuts. According to UN figures, global military spending dropped from an all-time high of \$995 billion in 1987 to \$815 billion in 1992. Still, \$815 billion is an enormous figure. It is roughly equal to the combined income of half the world's population!

Another factor that works against disarmament is the view that military might brings security. Thus, even though the Cold War is over, many in industrialized nations argue that national security spending should remain at high levels. James Woolsey, when

director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, told Congress in February 1993: "We have slain a large dragon [the U.S.S.R.], but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes."

In developing countries high military spending also is justified as a means to deter an attack from countries perceived as possible dragons and poisonous snakes. But in reality, UNDP noted, "developing countries have fought few international wars, and many have used their armed forces to repress their people." In fact, the UNDP report explained: "In developing countries, the chances of dying from social neglect (from malnutrition and preventable diseases) are 33 times greater than the chances of dying in a war from external aggression. Yet, on average, there are about 20 soldiers for every physician. If anything, the soldiers are more likely to reduce personal security than to increase it."

The International Arms Trade

During the Cold War, the two superpowers sold weapons to allies in order to cement alliances, gain military bases, and maintain

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.

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power. The armies of many nations grew mighty. Presently, for example, 33 countries own more than 1,000 battle tanks each.

Now that the Cold War is over, the political and strategic justification for the arms sales has diminished. Yet, the economic incentives remain strong. There is money to be made! So, as the domestic demand for weapons declines, arms makers persuade their governments that the way to preserve jobs and to keep the economy healthy is to sell arms abroad.

World Watch magazine comments: "Paradoxically, just as the superpowers are pulling back their big nuclear missiles, they are urgently seeking ways to sell more of their conventional bombs and guns to almost anyone who will buy." The figures? According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the value of conventional weapons sold on the international market during the years from 1988 to 1992 was \$151 billion. The biggest exporter was the United States, followed by countries of the former Soviet Union.

Nuclear Threat Remains

What of the nuclear threat? The United States and the Soviet Union (or its successor states) signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987 and the two Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START) in the years 1991 and 1993.

The START treaties banned land-based missiles having more than one warhead and

Religion

A Force for Peace?

When nations go to war, the world's religions abandon teachings of peace and brotherhood. Regarding the situation during World War I, British brigadier general Frank P. Crozier said: "The Christian Churches are the finest blood-lust creators which we have, and of them we made free use."

Religion's role in war has been the same throughout the ages. Catholic historian E. I. Watkin acknowledged: "Painful as the admission must be, we cannot in the interest of a false edification or dishonest loyalty deny or ignore the historical fact that Bishops have consistently supported all wars waged by the government of their country." And an editorial in the *Sun of Vancouver*, Canada, noted: "It is a weakness of perhaps all organized religion that the church follows the flag . . . What war was ever fought in which God wasn't claimed to be on each side?"

Clearly, instead of being a force for peace, the world's religions have promoted wars and killing—as was so powerfully illustrated by the slaughter in Rwanda.

called for the elimination, by the year 2003, of nearly three quarters of the nuclear warheads on all delivery systems. But while the threat of a nuclear World War III has faded, there remain vast arsenals of nuclear

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The Futility of War

In the book *I Found No Peace*, published in 1936, foreign correspondent Webb Miller wrote: "Strangely enough, the cataclysmic horror of [World War I] did not strike me with all its overwhelming obscenity and futility until exactly eight years after it was over." On that occasion he revisited the battlefield of Verdun, where he claimed 1,050,000 men had died.

"During the war I had been deluded, along with millions of others," Miller wrote. "The World War had succeeded only in breeding new wars. Eight and one-half million men had died in vain, tens of millions had suffered unutterable horrors, and hundreds of millions had undergone grief, deprivation, and unhappiness. And all this had happened under a stupendous delusion."

Three years after this book was published, World War II began. *The Washington Post* noted: "Our 20th-century wars have been 'total wars' against combatants and civilians alike. . . . The barbarian wars of centuries past were alley fights in comparison." According to an estimate by one authority, 197 million have died since 1914 in wars and civil insurrections.

Yet, all the wars and insurrections of humans have not brought peace or happiness. As *The Washington Post* said, "no political or economic system has so far in this century pacified or satisfied the restless millions."

weapons—enough to destroy all life on earth several times over.

Disassembling these weapons increases the opportunities for nuclear theft. Russia, for example, is dismantling and storing about 2,000 warheads a year, recovering from them fist-sized spheres of plutonium called pits. A warhead pit, which requires vast expense and technology to make, is the key ingredient in a

nuclear bomb. Since pits are usually encased in a layer of steel that blocks radioactivity, a thief could conceivably carry one off in his pocket. A terrorist who acquired a ready-made pit could then surround it with detonation gear to re-create a tremendously powerful bomb.

Another concern is the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more countries. Five nations are acknowledged nuclear powers—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and several other countries are also thought to have the ability to deploy nuclear weapons quickly.

As more and more nations acquire nuclear weapons, the possibility that someone will use them increases. Not without reason do people fear the use of these awesome weapons. As the book *The Transformation of War* puts it, "so immense is their power that they make conventional weapons look like a bad joke."

Disarmament and Peace

But what if the nations were to get rid of their sophisticated weapons of destruction? Would that guarantee a peaceful world? By no means. Military historian John Keegan observes: "Nuclear weapons have, since 9 August 1945, killed no one. The 50,000,000 who have died in war since that date have, for the most part, been killed by cheap, mass-produced weapons and small-calibre ammunition, costing little more than the transistor radios and dry-cell batteries which have flooded the world in the same period."

A recent example of the use of low-tech weapons is the slaughter in Rwanda, a country of which *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1994) says: "Most of the people are Roman Catholics. . . . The Roman Catholic and other Christian churches operate most of the elementary and high schools." Yet, in Rwanda up to a half million were killed by people armed with machetes. Clearly, to bring world

peace, something more is needed than the reduction of conventional and nuclear weapons. Also, something is needed other than the teachings provided by the world's religions.

Ethnic Rivalries Increase

Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees, stated recently: "Right after the Cold War, we thought all the problems would be solved. We didn't realize that the Cold War had another aspect to it—that the superpowers provided order or pressed order on their respective zones of influence. . . . So now, post-Cold War, we are seeing the explosion of much more traditional, dormant, maybe pre-World War I kinds of ethnic conflict."

Arthur Schlesinger, a Pulitzer prize-winning historian and writer, makes a similar point: "One set of hatreds replaces another. Lifting the iron grip of ideological repression in Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union releases pent-up ethnic, nationalist, religious, and linguistic antagonisms deeply rooted in history and in memory. . . . If the 20th century has been the century of the warfare of ideologies, the 21st century begins as the century of the warfare of ethnicities."

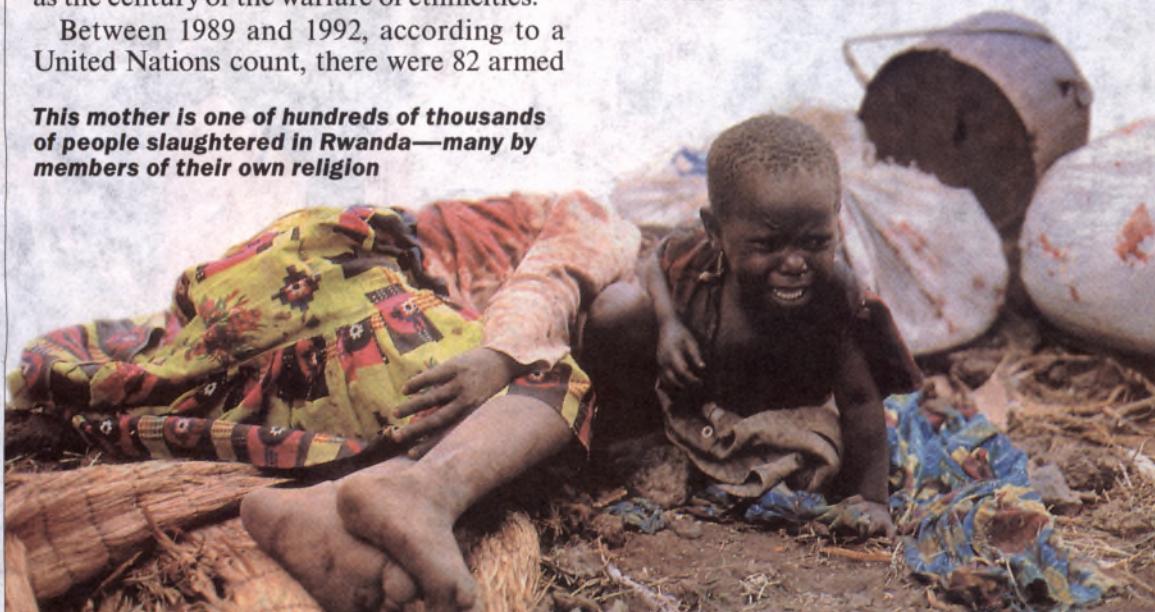
Between 1989 and 1992, according to a United Nations count, there were 82 armed

conflicts, most of which were fought within developing countries. During 1993, 42 countries had major conflicts and another 37 countries experienced political violence. Meanwhile, the United Nations—its budget strained to the limit—struggled without much success to bring peace in just 17 operations. Clearly, mankind must look somewhere else for a peaceful world.

Looming Problems

Increasingly, instead of looking to the future with optimism, many express foreboding. The cover of the February 1994 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* summarizes one forecast for the decades to come: "Nations break up under the tidal flow of refugees from environmental and social disaster. . . . Wars are fought over scarce resources, especially water, and war itself becomes continuous with crime, as armed bands of stateless marauders clash with the private security forces of the elites."

Does this mean that lasting peace is unattainable? By no means! The following article shows the reasons why we can look to the future with confidence.



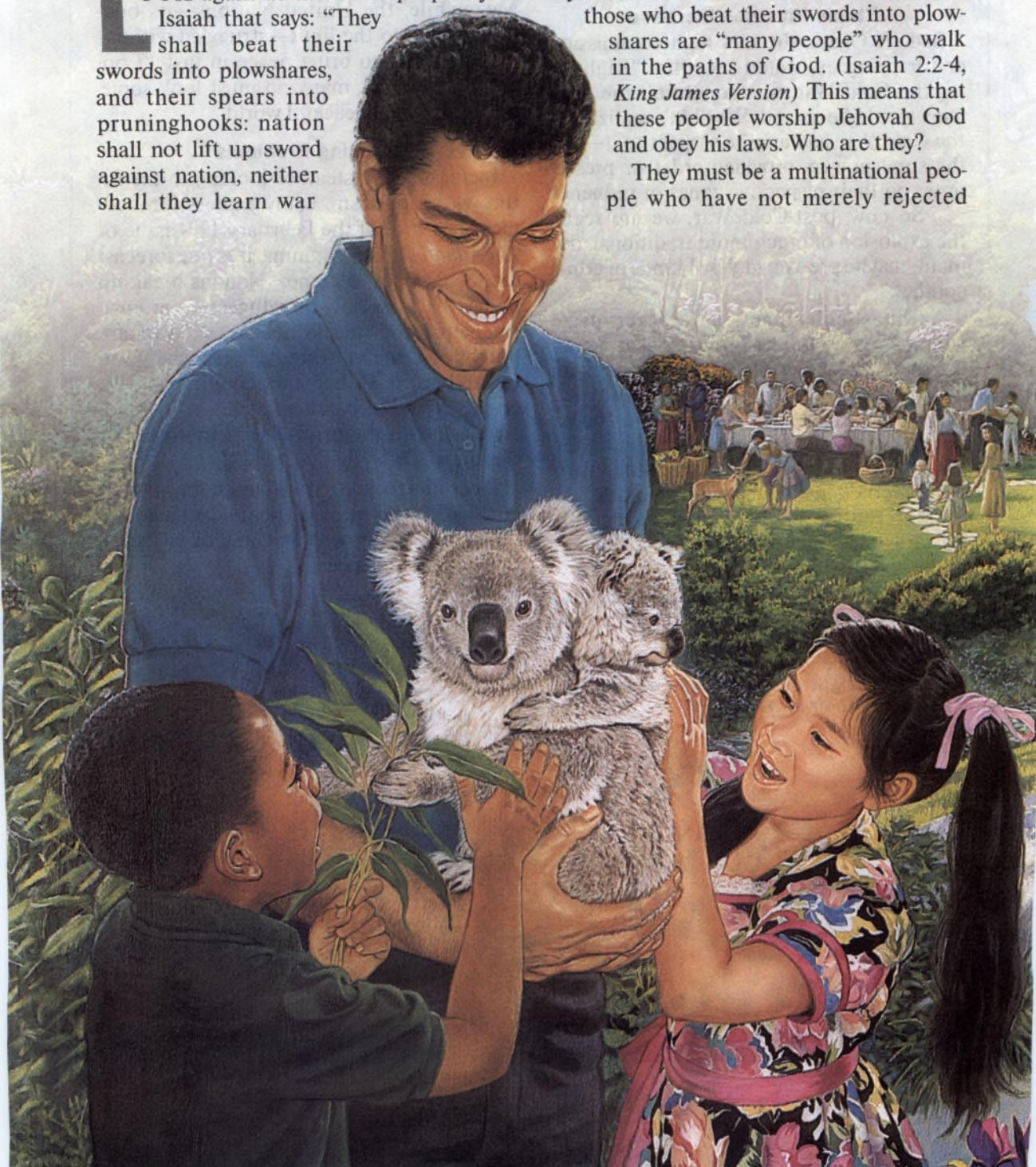
Albert Facelly/Sipa Press

A World Without War Soon

LOOK again at the Bible prophecy in Isaiah that says: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war

any more." Notice from the context that those who beat their swords into plowshares are "many people" who walk in the paths of God. (Isaiah 2:2-4, *King James Version*) This means that these people worship Jehovah God and obey his laws. Who are they?

They must be a multinational people who have not merely rejected



What the Bible Promises for That New World:

No Crime, Violence, or Wickedness

“[God] is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth.”—Psalm 46:9.

“Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more.”—Psalm 37:9, 10.

All Humankind at Peace

“There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called . . . Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end.”—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

All the Earth a Paradise

Jesus said: “You will be with me in Paradise.”
—Luke 23:43.

“The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it.”

—Psalm 37:29.

A Loving Worldwide Brotherhood

“God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.”—Acts 10:34, 35.



weapons of war but who have worked to root out of their minds and hearts the attitudes and dispositions that lead to strife and fighting. (Romans 12:2) Rather than kill their neighbor, they love him. (Matthew 22:36-39) Have you heard of a people like that?

Perhaps you have heard that Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy an international brotherhood and have renounced taking up weapons to kill others. Think about it: If everyone on earth shared that outlook, would not this planet already be a place of peace and security?

Of course, *not everyone* shares that out-

look. It is as King Solomon wrote about 3,000 years ago: "I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power."—Ecclesiastes 4:1.

Calling to Lovers of Peace

Will there ever be a world without war? Yes. Will it come through the efforts of men? No. Will it come through a mass conversion of people to true religion? No. The Bible book of Psalms answers: "Come, you peo-

A Resurrection of Dead Loved Ones

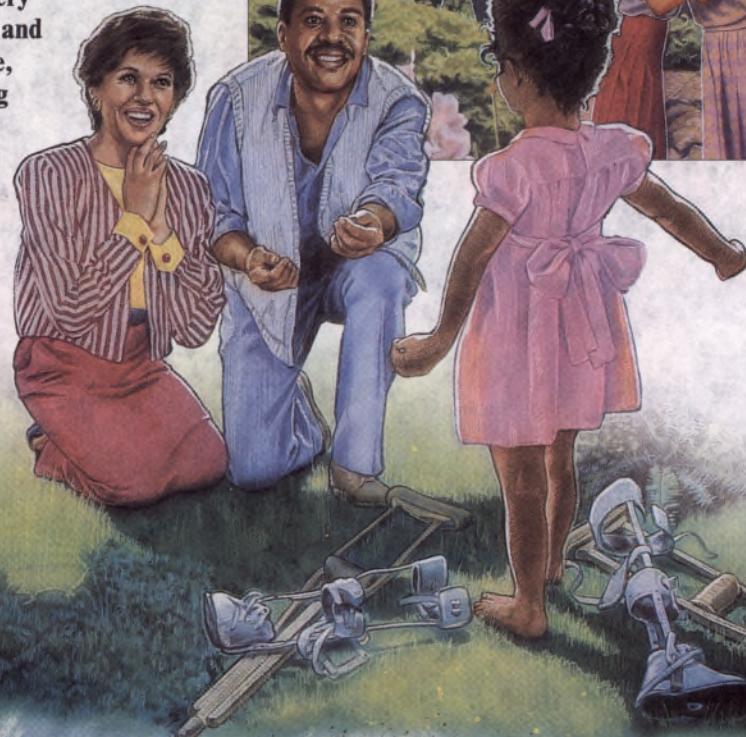
"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out."

—John 5:28, 29.

No More Sickness, Old Age, or Death

"He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

—Revelation 21:4.



ple, behold the activities of *Jehovah* . . . He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth.”—Psalm 46:8, 9.

How will Jehovah God do that? The book of Proverbs answers: “The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked [those who disregard God’s laws], they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it.”—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

A primary reason why God has not acted before now is this: He is giving people an opportunity to learn about his ways so that they can walk in his paths. The apostle Peter wrote: “Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.”(2 Peter 3:9) Thus, God’s people unselfishly help others to learn about Jehovah. As Isaiah expressed it, they call out: “Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, . . . and he will instruct us about his ways.”—Isaiah 2:3.

“The Final Part of the Days”

The scripture in Isaiah also foretold that the educating of people in the ways of peace would happen “in the final part of the days.” (Isaiah 2:2) We are living during that time right now. Ironically, the wars of this century indicate that we are.

When Jesus’ disciples asked him what would mark the end of this system of things, he foretold “great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages.” (Luke 21:11; Matthew 24:3) He also said: “When you hear of wars and disorders, do not be terrified. For these things must occur first, but the end does not occur immediately.’ Then he went on to say to them: ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.’”—Luke 21:9, 10.

Although there have been wars for thousands of years, this century alone has witnessed two world wars and, by some counts, literally hundreds of lesser wars. The fact that tens of millions of people have been killed in wars in this century is appalling. According to *World Watch* magazine, during the 2,000 years prior to the 20th century, on the average, it took 50 years for one million people to die in war. During this century, the length of time it took, on the average, for a million people to die in war was one year.

A World Without War

The terrible wars of our century, together with many other developments foretold in Bible prophecy, show that we are on the threshold of a new world of God’s making. The old world disorder will be swept away to be replaced by a “new earth,” where peace and righteousness will prevail. (2 Peter 3:13) God’s Word says: “Evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:9, 11.

Throughout the earth today, countless millions yearn for a world without war. Showing that God is certain to fulfill his promise to create such a world, a prophet of God wrote long ago: “The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late.”—Habakkuk 2:3.

Wisely, therefore, put your trust in God and enjoy the fulfillment of his promise: “God himself will be with [his people]. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

RULED BY FAITH IN GOD IN A COMMUNIST LAND

AS TOLD BY ONDREJ KADLEC

DURING the summer of 1966, I was conducting a sight-seeing tour of my hometown—Prague, Czechoslovakia. Zealous for my newfound faith, I spoke about God while I showed the group our city's impressive churches and temples.

"Are you one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" an American professor of economics asked.

"No," I replied. "I have never heard of Jehovah's Witnesses. I am a Roman Catholic."

Becoming a Believer in God

I was reared by parents who were prominent in the fields of education, politics, and medicine. Shortly after my birth in 1944 and the end of World War II the following year, my father became a Communist. In fact, he was co-founder of the Communist reformist movement, and in 1966 he became chancellor of the University of Economics located in Prague. A couple of years later, he was appointed minister of education of Czechoslovakia, which by then was both a Communist and an atheistic country.

Mother was a scrupulously honest, talented woman. She was an eye surgeon, reputedly the best in the country. Yet, she would contribute her efforts to the needy with-

out charge. She used to say: "Whatever gifts with which one is entrusted, these must be put to work for the benefit of the community and the nation." She didn't even take a maternity leave when I was born so she could be available at her clinic.

I was expected to excel scholastically. Father would ask: "Is anyone doing better than you?" I came to enjoy the competition, since I often won scholastic awards for excellence. I learned Russian, English, and German and traveled widely in the Communist world and beyond. I enjoyed refuting religious concepts as preposterous superstition. And although I fully embraced atheism, I came to hate its political expressions.

A trip to England in 1965, when I was only 21, had a profound effect on me. I met people who defended their faith in a Supreme Being with conviction and logic. After I returned to Prague, a Roman Catholic acquaintance suggested: "Don't read about Christianity. Read the Bible." That is what I did. It took me three months to finish it.

What impressed me was the way the Bible writers presented their messages. They were candid and self-critical. I came to believe that the

When I was a university student



My father, who became the minister of education of Czechoslovakia, and my mother, who was a prominent eye surgeon



magnificent future they spoke about was something that only a personal God could envision and provide.

After months of private Bible reading and meditation, I felt ready to face my father and friends. I knew they would challenge my newfound faith. After that, I became an avid proselytizer. Whoever was near me—such as that American professor mentioned at the outset—had to face my proselytizing. I even hung a crucifix on the wall above my bed to make everyone aware of my faith.

Mother, however, objected that I could hardly be a Christian, since I was so much like my father, an avid Communist. Yet, I persisted. I read the Bible a second and a third time. By then I realized that to make further progress, I needed guidance.

My Search Rewarded

I contacted the Roman Catholic Church. The main concern of a young priest was to teach me the doctrines of the church, which I fully accepted. Then, in 1966—to the shame of my father—I was baptized. After sprinkling me with water, the priest suggested that I read the Bible, but he added: “The pope has already accepted the theory of evolution, so don’t worry; we shall differentiate the wheat from the weeds.” I was shocked that the book that had supplied me with faith should be questioned.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1966, I spoke with a friend from a Catholic family and shared my beliefs with him. He was also familiar with the Bible, and he spoke to me about Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16) He said that he was in contact with Jehovah’s Witnesses, whom I had first heard about a

couple of months before when I was conducting that sight-seeing tour mentioned earlier. However, I considered his group insignificant compared with my powerful, rich, populous Roman Catholic Church.

During further discussions, we examined three burning issues. First, Is the Roman Catholic Church the heir of first-century Christianity? Second, What should be considered the ultimate authority—my church or the Bible? And third, Which is right, the Bible account of creation or the theory of evolution?

As the Bible was the source of faith for both of us, my friend had no problem convincing me that the teachings of the Catholic Church are very different from those of early Christianity. For example, I learned that even Catholic sources acknowledge that the prominent church teaching of the Trinity is not based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

That brought us to the related question of what our ultimate authority should be. I referred to the quotation of St. Augustine: "*Roma locuta est; causa finita est*," that is, "Rome has spoken; the case is concluded." But my friend held that God's Word, the Bible, should be our supreme authority. I had to agree with the words of the apostle Paul: "Let God be found true, though *every man* be found a liar."—Romans 3:4.

Finally, my friend offered me a shabby,

typewritten manuscript entitled *Evolution Versus the New World*. Because Jehovah's Witnesses had been banned in Czechoslovakia in the late 1940's, they would make copies of their publications and would exercise care as to who received them. Upon reading this booklet, I knew it contained the truth. My friend started a Bible study with me. He would lend me several pages at a time from the Bible study aid "*Let God Be True*," and we would discuss these pages together.

Shortly after we began these discussions—during the Christmas season of 1966—friends from West Germany came to Prague to see me. In one of our discussions, they ridiculed Christians as hypocritical warmongers. "As soldiers of NATO countries, we could fight against you as a professed Christian in a Communist Warsaw Pact country," they said. Their conclusion: "It's better to be cynical than hypocritical." I felt that perhaps they were right. So during my next Bible study, I asked my friend how true Christians deal with war and training for it.

Decisions I Faced

I was stunned by my friend's clear explanation. Yet, to comply with the Bible teaching to 'beat swords into plowshares' would dramatically change my life and intended career. (Isaiah 2:4) In five months I was to graduate from the medical university, after which I would be required to perform a period of compulsory military service. What should I do? I was in shock. So I prayed to God.

After days of deep, contemplative thought, I could find no excuse for not complying with the requirement for true Christians to be men of peace. After graduating from the university, I determined that until I was sentenced as a conscientious objector, I would accept a position in a hospital. But then I learned what the Bible says about abstaining from blood. Realizing that my work might involve me in giving blood transfusions, I decided to quit working in the hospital. (Acts

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Adoption—The Joys,
the Challenges**

Volcanoes—Are You at Risk?

Is Dancing for Christians?

František Vyskočil, a scientist and an atheist, who became a Witness

15:19, 20, 28, 29) The decision resulted in my suffering widespread public disrepute.

My father, after making sure that I hadn't become a willful troublemaker who sought to ruin his political career, stepped in and had my compulsory military service postponed for a year. That summer of 1967 was difficult for me. Consider my situation: I was a new Bible student whose study instructor, the only Witness with whom I had yet come in contact, was away for the summer. And he had left behind only a few chapters from the "Let God Be True" book for my personal study. These and my Bible were my only sources of spiritual guidance.

Later, I became acquainted with other Witnesses, and on March 8, 1968, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. The following year I was offered a two-year course of postgraduate studies at the University of Oxford in England. Some suggested that I accept the offer and go to England where I could progress spiritually in a land where the Witnesses were not under ban. At the same time, I could prepare for a fine professional career. Yet, a Christian elder said that my services were not needed as much in England as they were in Czechoslovakia. So I decided to decline that offer to further my secular education, and I stayed in Czechoslovakia to help in our underground preaching activity.

In 1969, I was invited to attend a Kingdom Ministry School course that featured specialized instruction for Christian overseers. That same year I won a scholarship as the best young pharmacologist in Czechoslovakia. As a result, I attended a convention of the International Union of Pharmacology in Switzerland.

A Scientist Changes His Views

During a lecture I attended in 1970, a scientist named František Vyskočil explained the



complicated subject of nerve-impulse transmission. He said that whenever a need in an organism was encountered, an outstanding solution was provided. "Nature, the Enchantress, knows how to do this," he concluded.

After the lecture I approached him. "Don't you think," I asked, "that credit for the excellent design in living things should go to God?" My question took him by surprise, as he was an atheist. He responded with questions of a different sort. He asked: "Where did evil come from?" and, "Who is to blame that so many children are orphans?"

When I gave reasonable, Bible-based answers, his interest was aroused. But he asked why the Bible does not provide specific scientific information, such as a description of the structure of a cell, so that people could easily recognize its author to be the Creator. "What is more difficult," I responded, "to describe or to create?" I lent him the book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?*

After a superficial reading of it, František branded it simple and incorrect. He also criticized what the Bible said about polygamy,

David's adultery, and David's murder of an innocent man. (Genesis 29:23-29; 2 Samuel 11:1-25) I refuted his objections, pointing out that the Bible honestly reports the shortcomings even of God's servants, as well as their outright transgressions.

Finally, in one of our discussions, I told František that if one is without good motive, if he lacks love for the truth, no form of argument or reason would convince him of God's existence. As I was about to leave, he stopped me and asked for a Bible study. He said he would read again the book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?*—this time with an open mind. Afterward, his attitude changed completely, as evidenced by the following quotation he included in one of his letters: "The haughtiness of the earthling man must bow down, and the loftiness of men must become low; and Jehovah alone must be put on high in that day."—Isaiah 2:17.

In the summer of 1973, František and his wife were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. Presently, he serves as an elder in one of Prague's congregations.

Preaching Under Ban

During the ban we were directed to carry on our field ministry with great caution. Once, a younger Witness kept after me to share in the preaching work with him. He questioned whether those who take the lead

in the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses actually go out in the ministry themselves. We enjoyed many nice conversations in our informal ministry. But eventually we met a man who, although I did not realize it at the time, recognized my face from a photograph in an album of the state secret police. Although I wasn't arrested, from then on I was subject to close official scrutiny that hindered my effectiveness in our underground preaching activity.

During the summer of 1983, as had been my custom in previous years, I organized a group of young Witnesses to spend a few days witnessing informally in a remote part of the country. Failing to heed wise counsel, I drove my car because it was more convenient than using public transportation. When we took a short break to buy a few items at a department store, I parked my car out front. While paying for the items, I pointed to some young shop assistants and remarked to an older employee: "In the future, all of us could be young." The lady smiled. "However, it is not within our human reach," I continued. "Assistance from above would be necessary."

Since there was no further response, I left. Unknown to me, the employee, suspecting that I was promoting religious views, watched me through the window as I put the parcel into my car. She then informed the

Since the fall of Communism, Jehovah's Witnesses have held many large



police. Hours later, after sharing in informal witnessing in other parts of town, my partner and I returned to the car. Suddenly, two policemen appeared and took us into custody.

At the police station, we were interrogated for many hours before we were told we could go. My first thought was regarding what to do with the addresses of interested persons we had acquired that day. So I went to the toilet to flush them away. But before I could, the strong hand of a policeman prevented me. He retrieved the papers from the toilet bowl and cleaned them off. This caused further stress for me, since people who had given me their addresses were now put in danger.

Afterward, all of us were taken to our hotel, where the police had already raided our room. But they had not found any other addresses of interested persons, although these had not been carefully hidden. Later, at my place of employment as a neuropharmacologist, I was publicly reprimanded for my involvement in illegal activity. Also, I was chastised by the overseer of the preaching work in Czechoslovakia, who earlier had warned me not to use my car when we traveled to share in the ministry.

Submitting to Discipline

In 1976, I had been assigned to serve on the committee that oversees the preaching work

conventions in Eastern Europe. Over 74,000 attended this one in Prague in 1991

of Jehovah's Witnesses in Czechoslovakia. But since my life had come under close scrutiny by the secret police due to my exercise of poor judgment in such matters as mentioned earlier, I was relieved of serving on the country committee and of various other privileges. One of these privileges that I especially treasured was that of teaching the school for traveling overseers and pioneers, as full-time ministers are called.

I accepted the discipline received, but this period in the mid-to-late 1980's was a difficult one of self-examination for me. Would I learn to work more discreetly and avoid further indiscretions? Psalm 30, verse 5, says: "In the evening weeping may take up lodging, but in the morning there is a joyful cry." That morning came for me with the fall of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia in November 1989.

Marvelous Blessings

What a change it was to share in our ministry freely and to enjoy open communication with the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York! Soon I was assigned as a traveling overseer, and I began this work in January 1990.

Then, in 1991, I was privileged to attend the Ministerial Training School in Manchester, England. What a blessing it was to spend



two months enjoying association with and instruction from mature Christian men! For a period each day, we students had a work assignment, which provided relief from our intense academic instruction. I was assigned to clean windows.

Immediately after returning from England, I began to help arrange for the momentous gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses held August 9 to 11 at the huge Strahov Stadium in Prague. On that occasion 74,587 people from many lands met freely to worship our God, Jehovah!

The following year I stopped working secularly as a neuropharmacologist. For nearly four years, I have been working at the office in Prague, where I serve again on the committee that oversees the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Czech Republic. Recently a new ten-story building, donated to Jehovah's Witnesses, was renovated and put to use as a branch office. On May 28, 1994, this fine facility was dedicated to Jehovah's service.

Among my greatest blessings has been the privilege of sharing Bible truths with others, including my relatives. As yet, my father and mother have not become Witnesses, but they are now favorable to my activity. During the past few years, they have attended some of our meetings. My ear-

**On my work assignment
when attending the
Ministerial Training
School in England**



**Our branch facilities in Prague,
dedicated May 28, 1994**



nest hope is that they, along with millions more honesthearted persons, will humbly submit to the rule of God's Kingdom and enjoy the everlasting blessings that God holds in store for those who choose to serve him.

(Publications referred to in this article are published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.)

AIDS IN AFRICA

To What Extent Is Christendom Accountable?

By Awake! correspondent in Africa

AIDS is a global epidemic. An estimated 17 million people have already been infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. And it is spreading rapidly.

While much attention has been given to the medical, political, and emotional issues connected with this epidemic, little has been said about the *religious* issues involved. Now the idea of religion being connected with the spread of AIDS may seem farfetched to some readers. But it is not absurd when you consider the situation that has developed on the continent of Africa.

AIDS has hit Africa particularly hard.* Some say that the continent is home to



67 percent of the world's AIDS cases. In Chad the number of reported cases over the last five years has multiplied by 100 times. Yet, it is estimated that only one third of all cases have been reported. According

to a report by the World Bank, AIDS has become the most common cause of death among adults in many urban African centers.

Religion—Did It Play a Role?

Certainly, Christianity—the religion taught by Jesus Christ—cannot be held responsible for this disaster. However, as shown below, the word “Christendom” encompasses those lands where people *claim* to be Christian. And Christendom is clearly implicated. Not that the churches either

* For further information, see the series “AIDS in Africa—How Will It End?” in our August 8, 1992, issue.

As used in this article, the term “Christendom” refers to professed Christianity, in contrast with the Christianity of the Bible.

Christendom

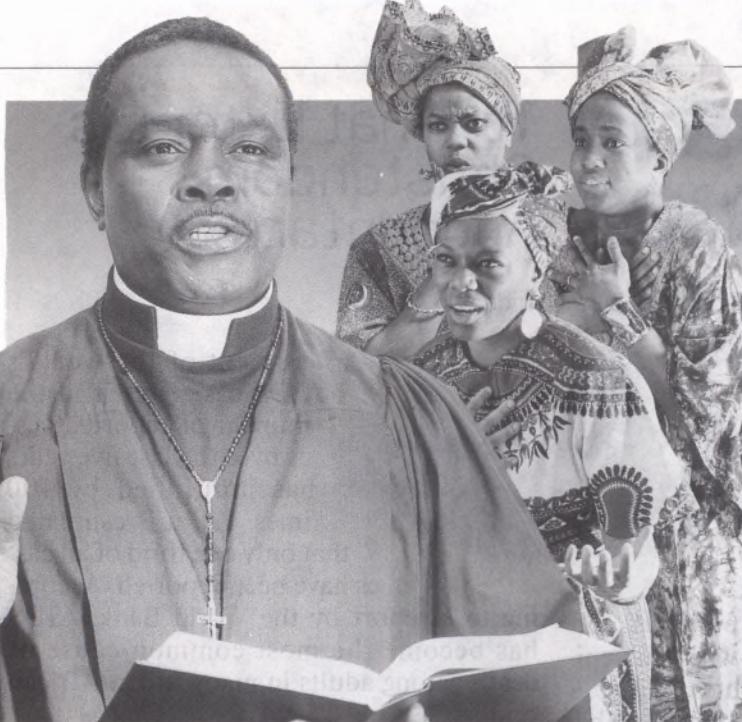
“Those parts of the world where most of the inhabitants profess the Christian faith.”

—Webster’s New World Dictionary.

AIDS

“A condition of acquired immunological deficiency associated with infection of *host* cells—*lymphocytes*—the cells of the immune system by a retrovirus.”

—Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.



**The poor example
of Christendom's clergy
has fueled the epidemic
of sexual promiscuity
in Africa**

rages! The same pattern is repeated throughout the continent. Central and southern Africa, which are nominally Christian, have a much higher rate of infection than North Africa, with its Muslim majority.

How Africa Became "Christian"

Why has this virus spread so rapidly among people who claim to be followers of Christ? In re-

ality, although many Africans call themselves Christians, relatively few actually hold to the moral standards of Christianity, which are set forth in the Bible. This appears to be a direct result of the manner

**"In many parts of
the bush, . . . priests
and bishops are
polygamists."**

—*The New York Times*

in which Christendom's missionaries went about "converting" the African population.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Christendom's traditional beliefs came under attack. Higher criticism became popular, reducing the Bible in the eyes of many to a mere piece of ancient literature. The theory of evolution also began to gain acceptance, even among

Consider, for example, the nation of Chad. Of its four major cities, three have a large "Christian" population. The other one is predominantly Muslim. Yet, it is in the three "Christian" cities that the virus now

* The disease can also be spread through blood transfusion and by sharing needles used to inject drugs intravenously. Some innocent Christians have contracted the disease from mates who have committed sexual immorality or used drugs.

the clergy. Seeds of doubt were sown. Faith in the Holy Scriptures was questioned. In this climate it is not surprising that Christendom's efforts to "convert" Africans took on a decidedly secular tone. Church missionaries preached the social gospel, placing far more emphasis on performing humanitarian deeds than on helping converts to comply with Bible standards of morality. Unwittingly perhaps, missionaries actually helped to undermine the existing moral structure.

For example, polygamy had long been the custom in many African civilizations. Sexual promiscuity, however, was rare, as most tribes had severe laws concerning adultery. Joseph Darnas, a retired schoolteacher, who is well-known in Chad, told *Awake!* that before the arrival of church missionaries, "it was felt that adultery brought bad luck." As a result, "the guilty were severely punished for having put the community at risk—often with death." Superstition? Yes, but such beliefs did curtail promiscuity.

Enter Christendom's missionaries. They preached against polygamy but did little to enforce Bible standards of morality. Al-

though the Bible says that unrepentant fornicators and adulterers are to be expelled from the Christian congregation, Christendom's churches rarely take disciplinary action against offenders. (1 Corinthians 5: 11-13) To this day, many prominent African politicians are notorious for their immoral affairs, and yet they remain church members in good standing. Marital fidelity is rare among nominal Christians in Africa.

Then there is the poor example set by members of the clergy themselves. In this family-oriented culture, it is normal to be married and have numerous children. Perhaps this is why a surprising number of Catholic priests feel justified in trampling their vows of chastity and celibacy. Reported *The New York Times* of May 3, 1980: "In many parts of the bush, . . . priests and bishops are polygamists."

Naturally, such marriages are not formalized, and the "wives," in reality, are mere concubines. Such misconduct cannot be shrugged off as insignificant. According to the *Times*, "a prominent Catholic clergyman" admits that "the African priest is the

Youngsters are exposed to immoral entertainment exported by "Christian" nations



symbol of authority, a figure of power rather than the servant of Jesus Christ." The message from these "authority figures" seems to be, "Do as I say but not as I do."

The Western Entertainment Invasion

Not to be overlooked, either, is the flood of sexually immoral entertainment that has flowed into Africa in recent years. In Chad unsupervised public video parlors offering such fare have sprung up everywhere—in private homes, in garages, and, most often, in courtyards after dark. These showings are inexpensive, costing as little as 25 francs (5 cents, U.S.). Small children attend. From where does this material originate? Much of it is from the United States—a land claiming to be predominantly Christian!

But has this invasion of Western culture had any real effect on viewers? One missionary of Jehovah's Witnesses, with 14 years of experience in Central Africa, says: "Local people often have very little contact with the Western world other than through what they see on videocassettes. They want to be like the Westerners they see in these movies. I have not discovered any documented studies to prove this, but it seems obvious to most people here that such entertainment does encourage sexual immorality."

How ironic it is that while health officials desperately try to halt the progress of a deadly sexually transmitted disease, so-called Christian nations unleash propaganda promoting immoral, high-risk behavior! While the churches have done little to stem this tide either at home or abroad, some African governments, such as Chad and Cameroon, have tried to forbid or at least limit the entry of pornographic material into their countries. But their efforts have frequently proved unsuccessful.

The end result of all this has been a widespread moral decline among African "Christians." Poor economic conditions have also

had an insidious effect. Because jobs are scarce, men are often forced to leave their families for months at a time in order to find work. Such men are obvious targets for local prostitutes. The prostitutes, though, are commonly victims of poverty themselves. Parents' demanding an exorbitant bride-price is also a factor. Many men do not marry because they cannot raise the money necessary to pay the bride-price. Some therefore end up leading a life of casual affairs. In such a moral and economic climate, AIDS has spread rapidly.

The Solution to the Crisis

Obviously, Christendom does not bear all the blame for the AIDS crisis in Africa. But that it bears much of it is painfully clear. This has serious implications for persons who want to be among those whom Jesus called "true worshipers."—John 4:23.

Blame notwithstanding, what can be done to halt the AIDS epidemic? African governments have undertaken AIDS-prevention campaigns, promoting the use of condoms. But Dr. Samuel Brew-Graves, World Health Organization representative for Nigeria, made this frank admission: "The individual must adopt a healthy lifestyle . . . , while the family must . . . avoid sexual promiscuity."

Long before AIDS became a household word, the Bible condemned promiscuity and promoted chastity, self-control, and marital fidelity. (Proverbs 5:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:18) Hundreds of thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa can offer firsthand proof that following these principles provides considerable protection from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Their adherence to Bible standards is a real indictment of Christendom. These true Christians have also put their hope in a coming new world in which "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) For men of faith, this is the ultimate solution to the AIDS crisis.

Do You Appreciate Religious Freedom?

By Awake! correspondent in Estonia

PÄRNU is a port city and holiday resort in the small Baltic country of Estonia, a former republic of the Soviet Union. The city has a population of over 50,000. The people now enjoy a freedom to practice the religion of their choice—a freedom that they did not possess a few years ago. On June 17, 1995, the *Pärnu Leht*, a local newspaper, noted that Pärnu has 11 religions and that the paper planned to publish a series of articles about them.

The first article explained: "We are starting with the congregation whose activity has apparently affected all of us—Jehovah's Witnesses—who now have their meetings in the hall of a brewery. . . . In 1931 the Bible Students started to call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses, and that's the name they have until today. There are more than five million of Jehovah's Witnesses all over the world. The headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Estonia is situated in Tallinn."

The article continued: "The congregation of Jehovah's proclaimers was established in Pärnu a year and a half ago. At the beginning there were 25 members; now it has grown to 120 . . .

"The first impression is quite positive. People—mostly young couples—are friendly, neatly dressed, and open-minded. It is astonishing that the children were so disciplined, because it is not easy for a little child to sit in one place for an hour and a half—but they did."

Describing how Jehovah's Witnesses differ from other religions, the newspaper explained: "They emphasize the Paradise that lies ahead. Also it is notable how well the congregation know the Bible, and they cite it at every possible moment." In conclusion the article said: "Those 120 people, who are Jehovah's proclaimers, have made their decision; and they are sure that it is the right one. Their faith and its proclamation is the focus of their life."

Not everyone in Pärnu was pleased with this first in a proposed series of articles on the religions of the city. On July 8, 1995, the *Pärnu Leht* reported: "We wish to publish a petition that we received from four churches in connection with the beginning of a new column." This petition, or letter, to the newspaper was signed by representatives of the Orthodox Church in Estonia, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Estonian Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, and the Estonian Methodist Church.





These four religious representatives complained: "It seems extremely strange to us that you started the series with an article about Jehovah's Witnesses." Moreover, they said: "In connection with this series, we would like to state that we consider it impossible to give an interview to *Pärnu Leht*."

The religious representatives concluded: "In a community where many are confused because of obtrusive pressure from various new religions and sects who propagate 'spirituality,' we see the need for publications to take into consideration the local religious picture and to be able to distinguish historical churches from sects and extremist movements. The members of the Estonian Council of Churches, which represents Christian churches



who enjoy ecumenical cooperation, should provide a clear enough guiding light for this."

However, following this letter, the writer for *Pärnu Leht* provided these sobering thoughts: "Everything we consider right may not be right. And God's viewpoint and opinions about various congregations may not be the same as the viewpoints of these four honorable churches, and vice versa. None of us are infallible, not even the churches with centuries-old traditions."

How do you feel about the changed attitude toward religion in former republics of the Soviet Union? We are confident that truth-seeking people everywhere appreciate the religious freedom being enjoyed there.

***The congregation of
Jehovah's Witnesses
in Pärnu***

Young
People
Ask...



Smokeless Tobacco Is It Harmless?

WHEN 13-year-old Cord moved to the midwestern United States, he quickly discovered that he was missing a standard piece of eighth-grade male equipment: a can of snuff, a type of smokeless tobacco. Most of his new friends were "dippers," or snuff users, and Cord wanted to fit in. So when one of the guys offered him a small packet of snuff, he took it and tucked some of the snuff between his lower lip and gum with the nonchalance of an old-timer.'—*Listen* magazine.

Young Cord is hardly an exception. Dr. Christopher A. Squier, a professor of oral pathology, says that a growing number of

male teenagers are taking their first pinch. Though smokeless tobacco sales were leveling off in the late 1980's, "the use of moist snuff," says Dr. Squier, "is increasing again."* Researchers report, for example, that 1 out of every 5 male high school students in the United States and 1 out of every 3 young males in Sweden—millions of young people—are now using smokeless tobacco. Why is this happening?

"It's safer than smoking." "There's no evidence that it's dangerous." "My friends use it. It's not hurting them." "A little bit now and then won't hurt me." "No one ever died from it." According to the American Cancer Society, these are some of the reasons young people often give as to why they are turning to smokeless tobacco.

What has made young people think that dipping is safer than smoking? Is that really the case?

Getting the Message

For years the powerful tobacco industry peppered youths with ads that indicated smokeless tobacco was about as harmless as chewing gum and as indispensable as the right brand of sneakers. Slogans like "Take a pouch instead of a puff," "I get real tobacco pleasure without even lighting up," and "A pinch is all it takes" cleverly implied social status.

After such TV and radio slogans were banned in the United States, the tobacco industry continued pitching its message through magazine ads. Glossy pictures of rugged fellows having a great time hunting, rock-climbing, and white-water rafting—a tobacco can conspicuously tucked in their back

* Two types of smokeless tobacco are in common use: snuff and chewing tobacco. There is dry and moist snuff. Among young people, moist snuff—finely cut tobacco treated with sweeteners, flavorings, and scents, in a can or in tea-bag-like packets—is the most popular form of smokeless tobacco. "Dipping" refers to placing a dip—the amount of tobacco picked up between the thumb and the forefinger—between the lip or the cheek and the gum.

pocket—conveyed a loud and clear message: “Smokeless tobacco is beautiful, natural, and a door to manhood!”

The 1994 report of the U.S. surgeon general, entitled *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People*, says that lots of young people now believe that “smokeless tobacco products are safe and socially acceptable.” One study among high school students showed that “about 60 percent of the junior high users and 40 percent of the senior high users believed that there was no risk or only slight risk in regular smokeless tobacco use.” And even the high school users who recognized that smokeless tobacco may be harmful “do not perceive the risk to be great.” The ads are getting their message across. But are the ads true?

A Bible proverb says: “Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one *considers* his steps.” Or as another proverb puts it, “everyone shrewd will act *with knowledge*.” (Proverbs 13:16; 14:15) What, then, do the facts show about smokeless tobacco?

The Bad News

While ads may indicate that using smokeless tobacco will improve your image and that it is safe for your body, the facts show the very opposite. For one thing, using smokeless tobacco will *not* make you look any better. If you don’t believe it, just stick your tongue in your cheek and take a look in the mirror. “Cool”? Not by a long shot. And that’s only what it does to you on the outside! What it does to you on the inside is far worse.

For example, those

who regularly chew or dip can get cracked lips, stained teeth, bad breath, and sore gums—nothing to smile about. In addition, their ability to taste and smell decreases while their heartbeat and blood pressure increase—bad news indeed. The real bad news, though, is that studies conducted in Europe, India, and the United States show that smokeless tobacco causes cancer in the cheeks, gums, and throat. These findings do not surprise experts. One study notes: “Snuff has the highest level of cancer-causing agents of any product taken into the body.” No wonder that “long-term snuff users have a 50% greater risk of developing oral cancer than nonusers.”

Chewing tobacco has begun to rise in popularity among youths. Should you try it?



When oral cancer sets in, the consequences are grave. Not only is the user's health ruined but his life is often cut short. A publication from the American Cancer Society relates this sad story: 'Sean began using smokeless tobacco at the age of 13. He figured that it was safer than smoking. After five years of dipping a can or more a day, he developed a sore on his tongue. It was mouth cancer. Doctors removed part of his tongue, but the cancer spread to his neck. More disfiguring surgery was performed but to no avail—at age 19 he died. Before his death Sean wrote a simple message on a pad of paper: "Don't dip snuff."'

Hooked!

After young Cord, mentioned earlier, read this shocking account about Sean, he finally got the message. He made up his mind to quit. Trying to quit, however, was tough. "I feel like I just have to have it," Cord told *Listen* magazine. "Even now, several months after I officially quit, I find myself feeling in my pockets for my pouch. I chew a lot of gum. That helps, but it doesn't take away the craving."

Confirms *Ca-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*: "In studies of teenagers who attempted to stop using smokeless tobacco, only a small percentage were able to do so." What, though, makes it so hard to quit using smokeless tobacco? The same drug that makes it so difficult to quit smoking: nicotine.

Nicotine, a drug found in cigarettes as well as smokeless tobacco, is a potent poison that gives the user a high feeling. Every 30 minutes or so, the user needs to take another dip to keep that feeling from ending. Nicotine gets you hooked. Some users get so addicted that they keep a pinch of snuff in their mouth day and night—even while sleeping.

Contrary to what young people may think, dipping does not lessen nicotine intake. One

can of smokeless tobacco a day delivers as much nicotine as 60 cigarettes! "Smokeless tobacco users," notes *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People*, 'absorb at least as much nicotine as smokers do—perhaps as much as *twice the amount*.' (Italics ours.) Besides nicotine, smokeless tobacco contains ten times more nitrosamines (powerful cancer-causing substances) than cigarettes.

Be Smart

"There is absolutely no question that these are harmful products," said Dr. Roy Sessions, a head-and-neck surgeon. "They produce a state of dependency that most people feel is much harder to break than smoking." Dental-cancer specialist Dr. Oscar Guerra concluded: "The body just doesn't like the stuff."

'Before his death Sean wrote a simple message: "Don't dip snuff" '

Experts around the world agree: Dipping is more than a pinch of trouble. It can snuff you out!

Christian youths have an even more compelling reason than health concerns to stay away from tobacco products—their desire to please Jehovah God. His Word commands: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear."—2 Corinthians 7:1.

The magazine *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine* sums matters up nicely, saying: "Tobacco is a nauseating plant that is consumed by only two creatures—a small green worm and man. The small green worm does not know any better."

But you do. So be smart—don't start.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Mortality Rates up in Women Smokers

A recent study published in *The Canadian Journal of Public Health* finds that smoking-related deaths among Canadian women increased from 9,009 in 1985 to 13,541 in 1991. The study projects that more women than men will die as a result of smoking by the year 2010 if current trends continue. In 1991, there were an estimated 41,408 deaths attributed to smoking (27,867 males and 13,541 females), according to *The Toronto Star*. In the United States, lung-cancer deaths among women smokers have increased sixfold between the '60's and the '80's, says Dr. Michael Thun of the American Cancer Society. Researchers conclude that "cigarette smoking remains by far the largest single preventable cause of premature mortality in the United States," reports *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada.

Drugs in German Schools

A study among more than 3,000 students in northern Germany reveals the widespread use of addictive substances in schools. According to the weekly newsmagazine *Focus*, almost half the students of 17 years of age have personally used illegal drugs, and more than a third are current users. Professor Peter Struck explained that "at many high schools in Hamburg, you find school students of 16 or 17 years of age who constantly alternate between taking stimulants and tranquilizers." But why is the use of

drugs so extensive? Professor Klaus Hurrelmann gave three reasons for drug consumption among youths: boredom with life, the feeling of receiving too little recognition for personal achievement, and peer pressure.

Remarkable Travelers

A wandering albatross flew 16,000 miles in 72 days, and a gray seal swam 3,000 miles



in three months. Conservation scientists discovered these amazing feats of endurance after fitting tiny radio transmitters to selected albatross and seals to track their movements by satellite. At one stage the albatross flew almost 2,000 miles in four days over the South Pacific Ocean. The seal swam up to 60 miles a day between Scotland and the Faeroe Islands and demonstrated an amazing ability to navigate accurately across open sea, notes *The Times* of London. What prompted both these marathon journeys? A search for food, says the report.

"A World Body Without Much Soul"

"For three days last week, leaders from every continent got together at the 50th birthday party of the United Nations to make grand speeches

about the state of the world," reported *The New York Times* last October. Apparently, however, one important ingredient was missing from a number of the "grand speeches"—honesty. "Like politicians everywhere," said the *Times*, "they made promises they won't keep and criticized somebody else for their shortcomings." After quoting eight national leaders whose words conflicted with their countries' deeds, the newspaper concluded their overriding message to be: "Forget what I do, world; listen to what I say." Little wonder that *U.S. News & World Report* called the United Nations "a world body without much soul."

High-Temperature Honeybees

Japanese honeybees defend themselves against attack from the giant hornet by killing it with their body heat, reports *Science News*. After detecting the presence of a hornet, the honeybees lure the enemy inside the nest, where hundreds of workers tackle it and form a ball around it. Then, "the bees vibrate and raise the temperature of the ball to a killer 47° C [116° F] for about 20 minutes," notes the magazine. Since Japanese honeybees can endure temperatures up to about 122 degrees Fahrenheit, this maneuver does not harm them. Not all hornets, however, fall victim to the snare of the honeybee. Since "20 to 30 hornets can kill a colony of 30,000 bees in 3 hours," giant hornets can overpower the honeybees by conducting a mass attack. "In these cases," says the *News*, "they take over the nest and col-

lect the bees' larvae and pupae."

The Cross —Symbol of Violence?

Some theologians are questioning the propriety of the cross as a symbol of Christianity because of its violent associations, reports *The Dallas Morning News*. The theologians are encouraging the use of symbols reflecting Jesus' life rather than his death. The cross "feeds a death worship," said theologian Catherine Keller of Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A. "Nobody would want an electric chair or noose as a key symbol of faith, but that's what we would be using if Jesus were put to death by the state today."

Water Fleas to the Rescue

The humble water flea may provide the solution to the problem of polluted inland waterways, reports London's *Independent* newspaper. This is indicated by a recovery project now under way. First, biologists removed 9.5 tons of fish that feed on water fleas from Ormesby Broad in Norfolk, England. This allowed the fleas to thrive and gobble up the algae that was polluting the lake. Other plants then germinated underwater from dormant seeds, and birds, such as coots and swans, returned. Eventually, fish will be reintroduced, and it is estimated that the whole ecosystem will be back to normal in five years. Conservationists in Europe are watching the outcome of the project with interest.

Sidestepping Sin

"What ever happened to sin?" asks *Newsweek* magazine. "The

urgent sense of personal sin has all but disappeared in the current upbeat style in American religion." Parishioners "do not want to hear sermons that might rattle their self-esteem," and among Catholics "regular confession to a priest has become a rite of the past." Competing clergy are afraid to alienate their flocks. Many "routinely condemn such 'systemic' social evils as racism [and] sexism," the article states. "But their voices are strangely muffled on subjects close to home—like divorce, pride, greed and overweening personal ambition."

Gem "Fingerprints"

British women own 39 million pieces of diamond jewelry worth approximately \$17.5 billion, and every year items



worth \$450 million are stolen. Most jewelry lost in this way is untraceable. The metal in which the diamonds are set is soon melted down. Then the gemstones are reset. Now, however, working through a central computer, jewelers will be able to enter into digital memory the unique flaws of every stone. These "fingerprints" are detected by a low-density laser beam that reads the imperfections of each stone—no two stones are alike. The only way thieves could get around the system of security would be to

recut stones, an expensive practice, which also reduces their value, reports *The Sunday Times* of London.

Fireworks Alert

Officials report that "approximately 12,000 persons are treated each year in U.S. emergency departments because of fireworks-related injuries," states *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*. The report, compiled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for the years 1990-1994, estimates that 20 percent of all injuries from fireworks were eye injuries. These, says *MMWR*, are "often severe and can cause permanently reduced visual acuity or blindness." It is noteworthy, too, that apparently more bystanders sustained eye injuries than fireworks operators.

A Potential Timebomb

About 45 percent of the world's population presently lives in cities, reports *Focus* magazine, and by the year 2000, it is estimated that half the population will be city dwellers. Much of northern Europe, Italy, and the eastern United States have a fairly high population density, and parts of China, Egypt, India, and South Africa have some densely populated cities in otherwise rural countryside. Satellite imaging, however, now reveals that only 3 to 4 percent of the earth is urbanized. But with 61 million people moving into cities yearly, mostly in the developing world, the population density in these urban areas increases because "the cities cannot grow as fast as their populations," notes *Focus*, adding: "The situation is a potential timebomb."

FROM OUR READERS

Holocaust I have always wondered why no one ever spoke up regarding the Holocaust. The series "The Holocaust—Who Spoke Out?" (August 22, 1995) has answered my question. Jehovah's Witnesses spoke out, and I am very proud of my fellow Witnesses!

C. B., United States

May I—a nonmember—congratulate you on the treatment of the subject the Holocaust. Your objective treatment of this evil manifestation of man's inhumanity to man is the most illuminating I have encountered. The courage of your fellow Witnesses at that time is something about which, lamentably, the world knows little.

L. B., England

My father lost his life in Sachsenhausen. My oldest brother also lost his life as a result of Nazi imprisonment. I still have vivid memories of the Nazi persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses. I am thus moved to express my appreciation for the articles. Well done!

F. D. J., Canada

I was very impressed with the articles. But I do not agree that Jehovah's Witnesses were the one and only "voice in the midst of silence." The Communists also warned people against Hitler before he came to power. Many ended up in concentration camps.

B. W., Germany

"Awake!" readily acknowledges that Hitler had many political opponents. However, the articles specifically referred to the failure of religious organizations, most of whom collaborated with the Nazi regime. The Nazis themselves identified Jehovah's Witnesses as their principal religious antagonists. The Witnesses were thus the only religious group given their own prisoner

identification symbol in the concentration camps—the infamous purple triangle.—ED.

Japan's Earthquake I cried reading the article "Japan's Sudden Disaster—How People Coped." (August 22, 1995) I lost my favorite Christian sister in that earthquake. She was very zealous. I know she will be resurrected and I will be able to see her again. I am very grateful for all the spiritual and material assistance we received from the congregation and the Society. I still cry, though, when I think about what happened that day.

T. M., Japan

The organized and swift action on the part of the Witnesses absolutely amazed me. When I read the caring message from the brothers in the congregation in Korea, I just cried and cried. I was so happy to think that I belonged to such a warm organization.

M. K., Japan

Sexual Harassment Thank you for your article "Young People Ask . . . Sexual Harassment—How Can I Protect Myself?" (August 22, 1995) I am 17 years old, and I met a non-Christian boy at school. I trusted him, but later on he and his friends harassed me with lewd suggestions and threats. I had to leave that school to get free of the situation. I learned a lot from this article. Now I know what to do when it comes to dealing with the opposite sex.

T. G., Portugal

I was sexually harassed and threatened by a coworker. Having been abused as a child, I often find it hard to stand up for myself. Still, I asked him repeatedly to leave me alone. I finally reported him to our employers, and then he left me alone. I really appreciate the article. Women need to know how to handle this problem.

V. A., United States

Christian Love Amid Disasters in Mexico

AMEXICO CITY newspaper reported: "During the last 20 days, natural phenomena—hurricanes and an earthquake—have swept over the Mexican coasts leaving behind a wake of death and destruction."—*El Financiero*, October 17, 1995.

The Mexican states of Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Tabasco were severely mauled by Hurricane Opal in early October. Almost 200 were killed, more than 150 were injured, 500,000 suffered losses, and thousands of homes were damaged or completely destroyed.

As soon as the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico heard of the damage, someone was sent to find out how the Witnesses in the affected areas were doing. It was learned that more than 2,500 of them had been forced to leave their houses. These were kindly received into the homes of fellow Witnesses.

Relief centers were organized. Food, clothing, and money were provided for those in need. After the waters of the floods receded, the Witnesses began to rebuild the homes of their Christian brothers.

On October 9, a powerful earthquake mea-

suring 7.6 on the Richter scale damaged the Mexican states of Colima and Jalisco. Eight Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses were severely damaged. Twelve of their houses collapsed, and about 65 were damaged. Again, a relief committee was organized, and assistance was provided.

Then, on October 20, another earthquake struck, shaking the state of Chiapas. The houses of an additional 88 Witnesses were destroyed, and 38 were severely damaged. Two Kingdom Halls were completely ruined, and four others were badly damaged. Almost at the same time, floods associated with Hurricane Roxanne damaged the homes of about 80 Witnesses in the state of Veracruz. Four houses were completely destroyed. A relief fund established by Jehovah's Witnesses also provided for these victims quickly.

Although some Witnesses suffered bruises and broken bones, no one died in these natural disasters. Altogether, some 24 tons of food and 4 tons of clothing were sent to those in need. Many observers expressed admiration of the relief work. A lady in Colima said: "I had only heard that Jehovah's Witnesses are very united, but now I can see it with my own eyes."

Frequently people noted regarding the Witnesses and their relief work: "These really are brothers." "They are the better organized group." Some were even heard to say: "If all the relief groups that came to help worked like Jehovah's Witnesses, the entire town would already be clean."

Now over 440,000 Witnesses are sharing the good news of God's Kingdom with their fellow Mexicans. The love they manifested for one another during these recent natural disasters provided a powerful witness.—John 13: 34, 35.



Christian love

