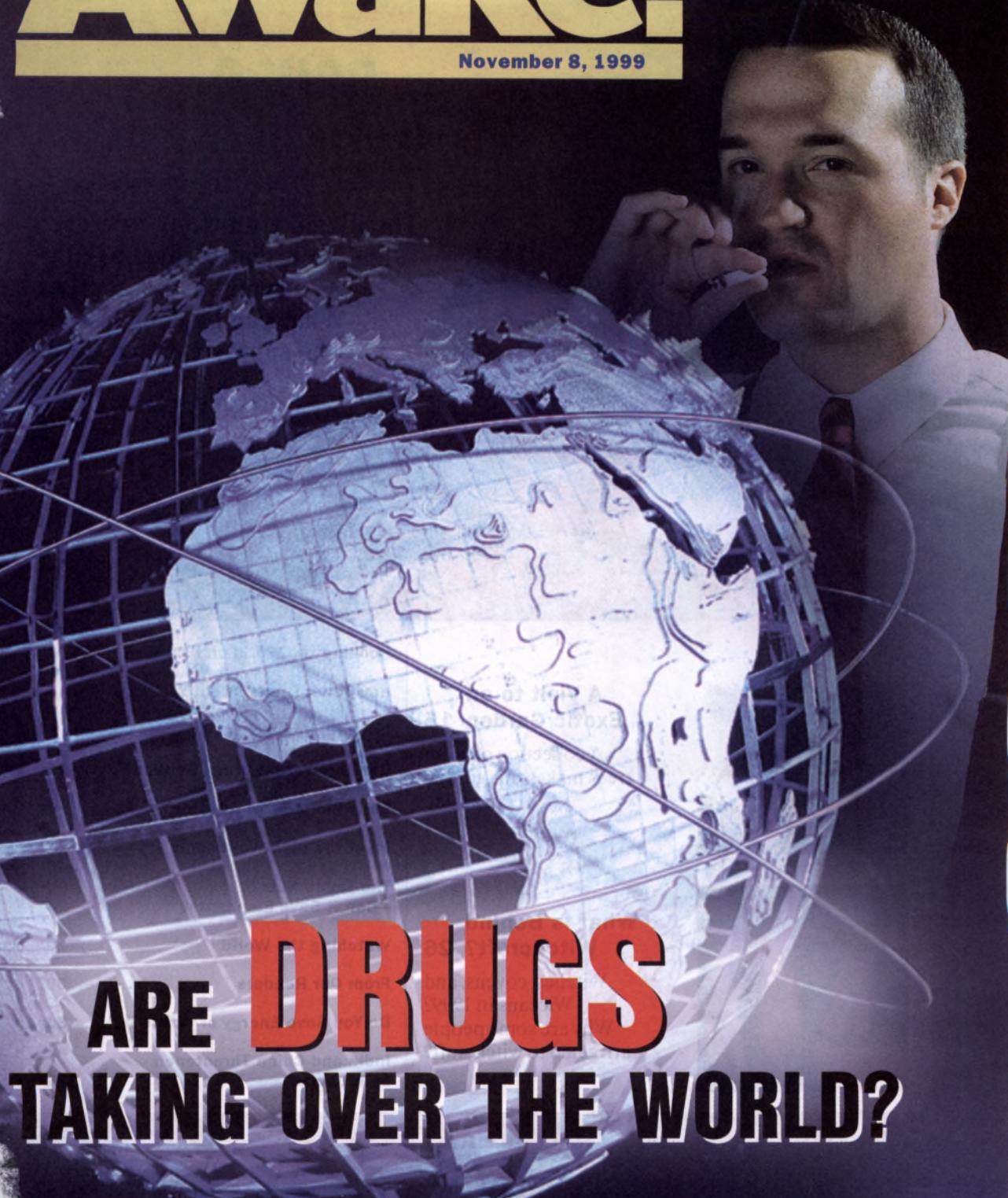


Awake!

November 8, 1999



**ARE DRUGS
TAKING OVER THE WORLD?**

Are DRUGS Taking Over the World? 3-14

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Godofoto

The illegal trafficking in drugs and their abuse affect us all, directly or indirectly. What can be done to end the supply and demand?



A Visit to an Exotic Garden 15

A collection of palm trees makes this garden very special.



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Hooking the WORLD on DRUGS

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

A NEWBORN baby shrieks in a hospital in Madrid, Spain. A nurse frantically tries to pacify him but to no avail. The baby is suffering the agony of heroin withdrawal. Worse still, he is HIV-positive. His mother was hooked on heroin.

A Los Angeles mother inadvertently drives her car onto a street controlled by a gang of drug dealers. She is greeted by a barrage of bullets, which kill her infant daughter.

Thousands of miles away, in Afghanistan, a peasant cultivates a field of poppies. It has been a good year; production is up 25 percent. Opium poppies pay well, and the peasant's family is struggling to survive. But these pretty poppies will be converted into heroin, and heroin destroys lives.

A shy teenage girl in Sydney, Australia, goes to a discotheque every Saturday night. She used to find it hard to mix with the crowd, but recently a pill called ecstasy has given her new confidence. The pills she takes were smuggled into Australia from the Netherlands, although local laboratories are also beginning to supply them. Ecstasy makes the music sound better, and she loses her inhibitions. She even feels more attractive.

For Manuel, a tough peasant who ekes out a living from his small farm in the Andes, life got a little easier when he began to cultivate coca. Manuel would like to stop harvesting the crop, but he fears that this would enrage the ruthless men who control coca production in his area.

These are just a few of the human faces behind the drug scourge that is wracking

our planet.* Whether these people are consumers, producers, or innocent bystanders, drugs are relentlessly taking over their lives.

How Big Is the Drug Problem?

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observes: "Drugs are tearing apart our societies, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as AIDS, and killing our youth and our future." He adds: "Today there are an estimated 190 million drug users around the world. No country is immune. And alone, no country can hope to stem the drug trade within its borders. The globalization of the drug trade requires an international response."

To make matters worse, in recent years designer drugs[#] have entered the scene. These synthetic chemicals are designed to give the consumer a high, or a euphoric feeling. Since designer drugs can be manufactured cheaply almost anywhere, police forces are practically powerless to control them. In 1997 the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs warned that in many countries these synthetic drugs have become part of "mainstream consumer culture" and that they must be viewed as a "formidable threat to international society in the next century."

The newer drugs are no less potent than their predecessors. Crack cocaine is even more addictive than cocaine. New strains

* In these articles, we refer to drugs that are used for nonmedical purposes and that are distributed illegally.

[#] A drug with a slightly altered chemical structure, often produced to evade restrictions on illegal narcotics or hallucinogens.

U.S. Navy photo



of cannabis* have greater hallucinogenic effects, and a new designer drug called ice may be among the most destructive of all.

Drug Money and Drug Power

Although drug users may be in the minority, their numbers are sufficient to grant immense power to the drug barons, the men who organize the production and distribution of drugs. These unscrupulous individu-

* The dried flowering tops of the cannabis plant are the source of marijuana. The resin from the same plant is hashish. Both products are smoked by drug users.

als run a racket that has become the most lucrative—and practically the biggest—business on earth. Drug deals may now account for about 8 percent of all international trade, or approximately \$400,000,000,000 annually. As drug money moves around the world, it enriches gangsters, corrupts police forces, greases palms of politicians, and even finances terrorism.

Can anything be done to curb the drug problem? To what extent does the drug trade affect your pocketbook, your security, and the lives of your children?

Worldwide Drug Production and Trafficking

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF PRODUCTION:

- Cannabis
—herbal (marijuana)
and resin (hashish)
- Heroin
- Cocaine

The arrows indicate principal trafficking routes.
Source: United Nations World Drug Report

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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How Illicit Drugs AFFECT YOUR LIFE

LIKE the dry rot that eats away the wooden beams of a house, drugs can corrode the whole structure of society. For human society to function properly, it must have stable families, healthy workers, trustworthy governments, honest police, and law-abiding citizens. Drugs corrupt every one of these fundamental elements.

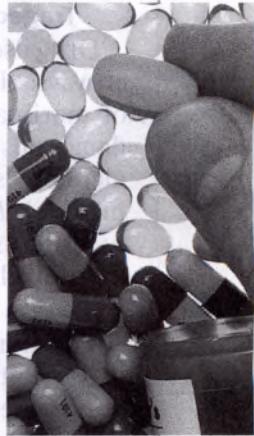
One reason governments have banned nonmedical drug use is the damage that it does to the health of their citizens. Every year thousands of drug addicts die of an overdose. Many more die of AIDS. Indeed, some 22 percent of the world's HIV-positive population are drug users who injected themselves with infected needles. With good reason, at a recent United Nations conference, Nasser Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, from Qatar, warned that "the global village is about to become a communal tomb for millions of human

beings as a result of the illicit drugs trade."

But more than the health of the user is affected. About 10 percent of all babies born in the United States are exposed to an illicit drug—in most cases, cocaine—while in the womb. Painful withdrawal symptoms are not the only problem they face, for drug exposure in the womb may cause the newborns to suffer other damaging effects—both mental and physical.

Easy Drug Money—The Irresistible Lure

Do you feel safe in your neighborhood after dark? If not, likely it is because of drug dealers. Muggings and street violence go hand in hand with drugs. Drug users often resort to crime or prostitution to finance their habit, while rival gangs fight and kill to maintain their control over drug distribution. Understandably, police in many cities consider drugs to be a factor in the majority of murders that they investigate.



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² Audiocassettes also available.

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In some lands, insurgents have also seen the advantages of muscling in on the lucrative narcotics trade. One large guerrilla group in South America now derives half its income from granting protection to drug traffickers. "Revenues from illicit drugs fund some of the world's fiercest religious and ethnic conflicts," reports the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Tragedy While Under the Influence

Drug users make the streets unsafe in other ways. "Driving a car under the influence of marijuana or LSD can be every bit as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol," states Michael Kronenwetter, in his book *Drugs in America*. Not surprisingly, drug users are also three or four times more likely to be involved in accidents at work.

The home, however, is probably where drugs do the most damage. "Dysfunctional family life and drug-taking often go together," states the *World Drug Report*. Parents who are distracted by their craving for drugs rarely provide their children with a stable home life. Infant-parent bonding—so vital during the first weeks of a child's life—can

even be inhibited. In addition, addicted parents frequently get into debt and may steal from their friends and family or may end up losing their jobs. Many children who grow up in this environment take to the streets or even get involved in drugs themselves.

Drug abuse can also lead to physical abuse—of the spouse or of the children. Cocaine, especially when combined with alcohol, can provoke violent behavior in a person who may otherwise be quite gentle. According to a Canadian survey of cocaine users, 17 percent of those questioned admitted to becoming aggressive after taking the drug. Likewise, a report on child abuse in New York City calculated that 73 percent of the children battered to death had parents who abused drugs.

Corruption and Contamination

If the home can be undermined by drugs, the same can be said of governments. In this case it is drug money, rather than drugs themselves, that poisons the system. "Drugs have corrupted government officials, the police and army," lamented an ambassador from one South American country. He adds that the amount of money floating around is "just too great a temptation" for those who earn barely enough to survive.

In country after country, judges, mayors, policemen, and even drug-enforcement officers have been caught in the net of corruption. Politicians whose election may have been financed by drug barons turn a deaf ear when there are calls for crackdowns on drug trafficking. More than a few of the honest officials who have courageously crusaded against drugs have been assassinated.



SuperStock

A baby can be affected by its mother's drug use

Even our soil, our forests, and the species that inhabit them are suffering from the global drug scourge. A large percentage of opium and cocaine production is centered in two regions that are particularly sensitive to environmental damage: the rain forests of the western Amazon and those of Southeast Asia. The devastation in these places has been considerable. Even praiseworthy attempts to eradicate illegal drug crops do serious damage because of the toxic herbicides that are used.

Who Pays?

Who pays for all the damage done by drugs? We all do. Yes, we all pay for the lost productivity, the costs of medical treatment, the stolen or damaged property, and the cost of law enforcement. A U.S. Department of Labor report calculated that "drug use in the workplace may cost American business and industry between \$75 billion and \$100 billion annually . . . in lost time, accidents and higher health-care and workers' compensation costs."

All this money ultimately comes from the pockets of taxpayers and consumers. A study conducted in Germany in 1995 calculated the overall annual cost of drug abuse in that country at \$120 for every citizen. In the United States, one estimated figure was even higher—\$300 per head.

A far greater cost, however, is the social damage drugs do to the community. Who could put a price on the disintegration of so

DRUGS AND CRIME

DRUGS ARE LINKED TO CRIME IN AT LEAST FOUR WAYS:

1. Unauthorized drug possession and drug trafficking are criminal offenses in nearly every country of the world. In the United States alone, police arrest about a million people every year on drug charges. In some countries the criminal justice system is drowning in a wave of drug offenses that the police and the courts just cannot handle.
2. Since drugs are very expensive, addicts frequently resort to crime to pay for their habit. A cocaine addict may need as much as \$1,000 a week to pay for his addiction! Not surprisingly, burglaries, muggings, and prostitution mushroom when drugs take root in a community.
3. Other crimes are committed to facilitate drug trafficking, one of the most lucrative businesses on earth. "The illicit drug economy and organized crime are more or less interdependent," explains the *World Drug Report*. In order to keep drugs flowing smoothly from one area to another, the traffickers try to corrupt or intimidate officials. Some even operate their own private armies. The huge profits made by drug barons also create problems. Their enormous cash inflow could easily incriminate them if the money were not laundered, so banks and lawyers are employed to cover the tracks of the drug money.
4. The effect of the drug itself may lead to criminal activity. Family members may be abused by chronic drug users. In some African countries plagued by civil war, horrendous crimes have been perpetrated by teenage soldiers high on drugs.



many families, the abuse of so many children, the corruption of so many officials, and the premature death of so many people? What does all of this mean in human terms? Our following article will examine how drugs affect the lives of those who use them.

Lives Ruined, LIVES LOST

DRUGS are like sledgehammers," points out Dr. Eric Nestler. Indeed, a single dose of these chemical sledgehammers can be deadly. "Crack cocaine, for example, has been known to kill people the first time they used it," explains the book *Drugs in America*.

The new wave of synthetic drugs can be just as hazardous. "Gullible youngsters buying drugs at a 'rave' party can have no idea of what chemical cocktail is about to bombard their brains," warns the United Nations *World Drug Report*. For most youngsters, however, the descent into the depths of drug ad-

diction is a gradual one, as the following examples illustrate.

"An Escape From Reality"

Pedro,* one of nine children, was born in a rough neighborhood in the city of Córdoba, Spain. His childhood was traumatic because of his father's alcoholism. When Pedro was 14, his cousin introduced him to hashish. Within a month, he was hooked.

"Taking drugs was a pastime," Pedro explains, "an escape from reality, and a way to be one of the group. At 15, I began to supplement hashish with LSD and amphetamines. LSD was my favorite drug, and to obtain the money to buy it, I became a pusher, a small-time drug dealer. I mainly trafficked in hashish. Once, after taking an overdose of LSD, I couldn't sleep for a whole night, and I felt as if I had gone mad. The experience frightened me.

I sensed that if I continued taking drugs, I would end up either in jail or dead. But the desire for drugs pushed this fear aside. I became heavily addicted to LSD and illegal drugs are worse than the old outlaws.

THEY TAKE BOTH"

"In the Old West, bandits waved guns in their victims' faces and demanded, 'Your money or your life.'

Illegal drugs are worse than the old outlaws.

needed more and more of the drug to give me a high. Despite the scary aftereffects, I couldn't stop. I didn't know how to escape.

* Some of the names in this series have been changed.



"LSD was not cheap, so I learned how to rob jewelry shops, snatch handbags from tourists, and steal watches and wallets from passersby. By the age of 17, I had become an established drug dealer in my part of town, and I sometimes participated in armed robbery. My reputation in our neighborhood as a violent criminal earned me the nickname *el torcido*, which means 'the twisted one.'

"When you combine drugs with alcohol, your personality changes, often in a violent way. And the desire to get more drugs is so strong that it totally overrides your conscience. Life becomes a roller coaster, and you live from one drug high to the next."

"Wrapped Up in the World of Drugs"

Ana, Pedro's wife, grew up in Spain in a good family environment. When she was 14, Ana met a few boys from a nearby school who smoked hashish. At first, their strange behavior repulsed her. But Rosa, one of Ana's girlfriends, was attracted to one of the boys. He convinced Rosa that smoking hashish would not be harmful and that she would enjoy it. So Rosa tried the drug and then gave the cigarette to Ana.

"It gave me a good feeling, and within a few weeks, I was smoking hashish daily," Ana says. "After a month or so, the hashish no longer gave me much of a high, so I began to take amphetamines as well as smoke hashish."

"Soon my friends and I were totally wrapped up in the world of drugs. We would talk about who could take the most drugs without any ill effects and who enjoyed the best high. Gradually, I separated myself from the normal world, and I rarely attended school. Hashish and amphetamines were no longer enough, so I began injecting myself with a morphine derivative that I obtained from different pharmacies. During the summer we would go to open-air rock concerts, where it was always easy to obtain drugs such as LSD."

Godo Foto



"One day my mother caught me smoking hashish. My parents tried their best to protect me. They told me about the dangers of drugs, and they assured me of their love and concern. But I viewed their efforts as unwanted interference in my life. When I was 16, I decided to leave home. I joined a group of youngsters who went all over Spain selling handmade necklaces and taking drugs. Two months later, the police caught up with me in Málaga.

"When the police handed me over to my parents, they received me with open arms, and I felt ashamed of what I had done. My father was crying—something I had never seen him do before. I regretted hurting them, but the remorse was not strong enough to make me quit the drug scene. I continued taking drugs on a daily basis. When sober, I sometimes thought about the risks—but not for long."

From Bricklayer to Drug Trafficker

José, a friendly family man, spent five years trafficking cannabis from Morocco to Spain. How did he get involved? "While I was working as a bricklayer, a workmate began

Courtesy of Gibraltar Police



Drugs confiscated in Gibraltar

WILL YOUR CHILD SAY NO TO DRUGS?

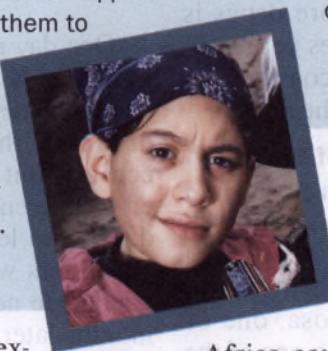
WHICH TEENAGERS MAY BE MOST AT RISK?

- a. Those who want to show that they are independent and are willing to take risks.
- b. Those who have little interest in academic or spiritual goals.
- c. Those who see themselves at odds with society.
- d. Those who have no clear concept of what is right and what is wrong.
- e. Those who perceive a lack of parental support and whose friends encourage them to take drugs. Investigators have noticed that "the quality of the adolescent's relationship with his parents seems to be the best protective factor against the use of drugs."—Italics added.

Source: United Nations World Drug Report

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN?

- a. By having a close relationship and good communication with them.
- b. By instilling in them a clear concept of right and wrong.
- c. By helping them to have definite goals.
- d. By making them feel that they are part of a loving family and a warm community.
- e. By teaching them about the dangers of drug abuse. Children clearly need to know why they should say no to drugs.



to traffic in drugs," José explains. "Since I needed the money, I thought to myself, 'Why not do the same?'

"It was easy to buy cannabis in Morocco—as much as I could handle. I had a speedboat that could easily evade the police. Once I had the drugs in Spain, I sold them in large quantities, about 1,300 pounds at a time. I just had three or four clients, and they took all the drugs I could supply them. Although there was police surveillance, the

I had a speedboat like this one, which could easily evade the police

drugs got through. We traffickers had much better equipment at our disposal than the police did.

"I made a lot of easy money. One trip from Spain to North Africa could bring between \$25,000 and \$30,000. Before long, I had 30 men working for me. I was never caught because I paid an informer to advise me when my operation was being monitored.

"Sometimes I thought about what all these drugs might do to others, but I convinced myself that cannabis was a soft drug that didn't kill anyone. Since I was making a lot of money, I didn't really think much about it. I never took drugs myself."

Your Money and Your Life!

As these examples show, drugs take over people's lives. Once hooked, escape is difficult and traumatic. As the book *Drugs in America* points out, "in the Old West, bandits waved guns in their victims' faces and demanded, 'Your money or your life.' Illegal drugs are worse than the old outlaws. They take both."

Can anything stop the drug juggernaut? The following article will examine some solutions.



Courtesy of Gibraltar Police

Can the WAR on DRUGS Be Won?

WINNING the war on drugs is a laudable goal, but it is no easy task. Two powerful engines drive the illicit drug train—supply and demand. For nearly a century, governments and police forces have concentrated on cutting back the supply. Their assumption was simple: No drugs, no drug addicts.

Attacking the Supply

Toward this end, police drug squads have confiscated large consignments of drugs, and international collaboration has led to the detention of prominent drug traffickers. But the harsh reality is that while effective policing may force some drug traffickers to move elsewhere, seek other markets, or become more ingenious, it does not stop them. "We will never be a match for the drug dealers as long as they have unlimited funds and we have to fight budget wars," admitted one narcotics expert.

Joe de la Rosa, a crime-prevention officer of the Gibraltar Police Force, spoke to *Awake!* about the difficulty of controlling drug trafficking between Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. "During 1997 we impounded nearly 400 kilos [880 pounds] of cannabis resin," he said. "Most of this wasn't actually confiscated from drug traffickers; it was found floating in the sea or washed up on the beaches. That gives you some idea of the huge quantity of drugs that cross the Strait of Gibraltar every year. What we confiscate is just the tip of the

iceberg. The haulers who do the run from Africa to Spain have speedboats that can run rings around our customs launch. And if they sense that they are in danger of being apprehended, they just throw the drugs overboard, so we have no evidence on which to charge them."

Police face similar problems in other parts of the world. Ordinary-looking travelers, light airplanes, container ships, and even submarines smuggle drugs across oceans or through porous frontiers. One United Nations report calculated that "at least 75 percent of international drug shipments would need to be intercepted in order to substantially reduce the profitability of drug trafficking." At present, the rate of interception is probably not much higher than 30 percent for cocaine—and considerably less for other drugs.

So why don't the governments attack the problem at its source and destroy all the cannabis crops, opium poppies, and coca bushes? The United Nations has recently recommended that step, but it is not an easy one. Cannabis can be grown in almost any garden. One major coca-growing area in the Andes is located in a region described as "outside state control." Similar situations exist in remote areas of Afghanistan and

K. Sklute/SuperStock



A drug arrest under way

Pedro and his wife, Ana, studying the Bible with their children

Burma, which are principal sources of opium and heroin.

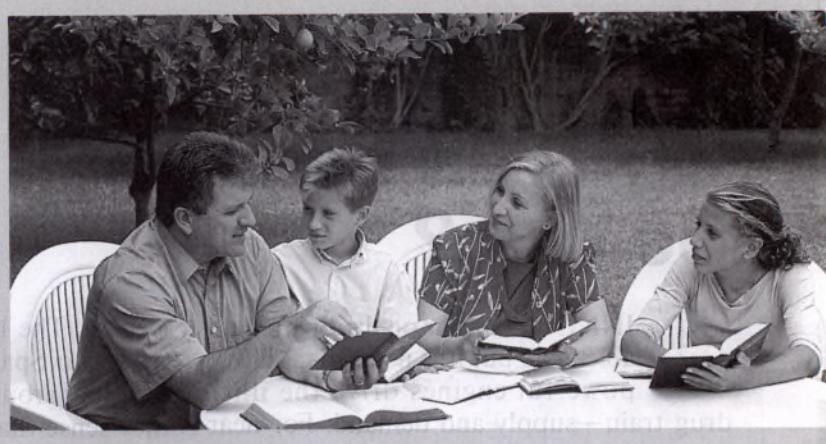
To complicate matters further, drug traffickers can easily switch to designer drugs, for which there is a growing demand. And clandestine laboratories can manufacture these synthetic drugs almost anywhere in the world.

Could more effective policing and stiffer prison sentences curtail the drug trade? There are just too many drug pushers, too many addicts, and too few policemen to make that method workable. The United States, for example, has close to two million people behind bars—many of them for drug offenses. But the threat of prison has not hindered people from taking drugs. In many developing countries where drug sales are booming, undermanned and poorly paid police forces find themselves helpless to stem the tide.

Can the Demand for Drugs Be Reduced?

If efforts to control the drug supply have proved futile, what about reducing the demand? "The war on drugs is really a battle for hearts and minds, and not merely an issue for police and courts and jails," states *Time* magazine.

Joe de la Rosa, quoted earlier, likewise believes that education is the only way to combat illegal drugs. "Drug addiction is a social problem created by society, so we have to change society or at least change people's way of thinking," he says. "We are trying to involve schools, parents, and teachers so that all will be aware that the danger is there,



that drugs are available, and that their children could fall victim."

What Jehovah's Witnesses Have Done

For many years Jehovah's Witnesses have been actively involved in educating people to avoid drugs. They have prepared information designed to help parents teach their children about the dangers of drugs.* Furthermore, their ministry has helped rehabilitate many drug users and traffickers.

Ana, mentioned in the previous article, was introduced to Jehovah's Witnesses because her sister had heard of their success in helping drug addicts. Ana was not particularly interested in the Bible, but she reluctantly went to an assembly held by the Witnesses. There she spotted a man who had been a notorious drug pusher but who had totally changed both his appearance and his life-style. "I thought that if he could change, I could too," Ana says. "His transformation convinced me that I should accept the offer of a Bible study.

"From my very first Bible study, I decided to stay at home, since I knew that if I left the house, I would meet other drug users and go back to taking drugs. I already knew that drugs were wrong and that God

* See chapter 34 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, entitled "Why Say No to Drugs?", published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Pedro installing security devices

did not approve of this habit. I had also seen the effect that drugs have on people and the harm that I had done to my own family. But I needed spiritual strength to break free from my drug-imposed prison. Detoxification was tough. For a time I just slept all day while the effects of the drugs wore off. But it was worth it."

Real Hope and Meaning

Ana's husband, Pedro, also mentioned in the previous article, had a similar escape. "One day while smoking hashish in my brother's home, I spotted a book with a title that intrigued me," Pedro recalls. "It was entitled *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. I took it home, read it, and checked the scriptures. I was sure that I had found the truth.

"Reading the Bible and speaking to others about what I was learning made me feel better and diminished my craving for drugs. I decided not to go ahead with my planned armed robbery of a gas station. A friend was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and I soon followed his example. In nine months I reformed my life-style and got baptized. During this time, many former friends offered me drugs, but I immediately began to talk to them about the Bible. Some responded favorably. One even overcame his addiction.



"To break the drug habit, you need to have hope. The Bible gave me that hope, gave meaning to my life, and showed me clearly God's view of drugs and violence. I noticed that I felt better as I learned about the Almighty—and there were no negative side effects. Later, association with clean-living people at meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses helped me to continue in this course."

From Drug Trafficker to Bricklayer

José, the drug trafficker mentioned in the previous article, is now a bricklayer once more. He did not find it easy to quit his lucrative business. "Drugs move a lot of money," he admits, "but it is not a good way to earn money. I see young kids with handguns and flashy cars. Families get broken up, crime is rampant on the streets, and many drug addicts break into cars, steal from shops, or mug people to get money for drugs. Many start with hashish, progress to ecstasy or other pills, and then try cocaine or even heroin. I realize that I was involved in getting many started in this cycle."

"As I studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, I became more and more convinced that my involvement with drugs was wrong. I wanted to have a clean conscience, and my wife, who was likewise studying, desired the same. Of course, it's difficult to stop dealing in drugs. I explained to my clients and my traffickers that I was studying the Bible and had abandoned the drug trade. At first, they just didn't believe me, and some still don't. Nevertheless, I stopped nearly two years ago, and I haven't regretted it for one moment."

"For the past year, I have been working as a bricklayer, which is my trade. Now in a month I earn a quarter of what I could earn as a drug dealer in one day. But this is a better way of life, and I feel happier."

A Global Solution That Will Work

A few courageous traffickers have abandoned the drug trade. And various forms

of rehabilitation have helped thousands of users to overcome their addiction. But, as the *World Drug Report* acknowledges, “for the long-term, heavy drug user, sustained abstinence is the exception rather than the rule.” Sadly, for each addict who is rehabilitated, several new victims are ensnared. Supply and demand keep on growing.

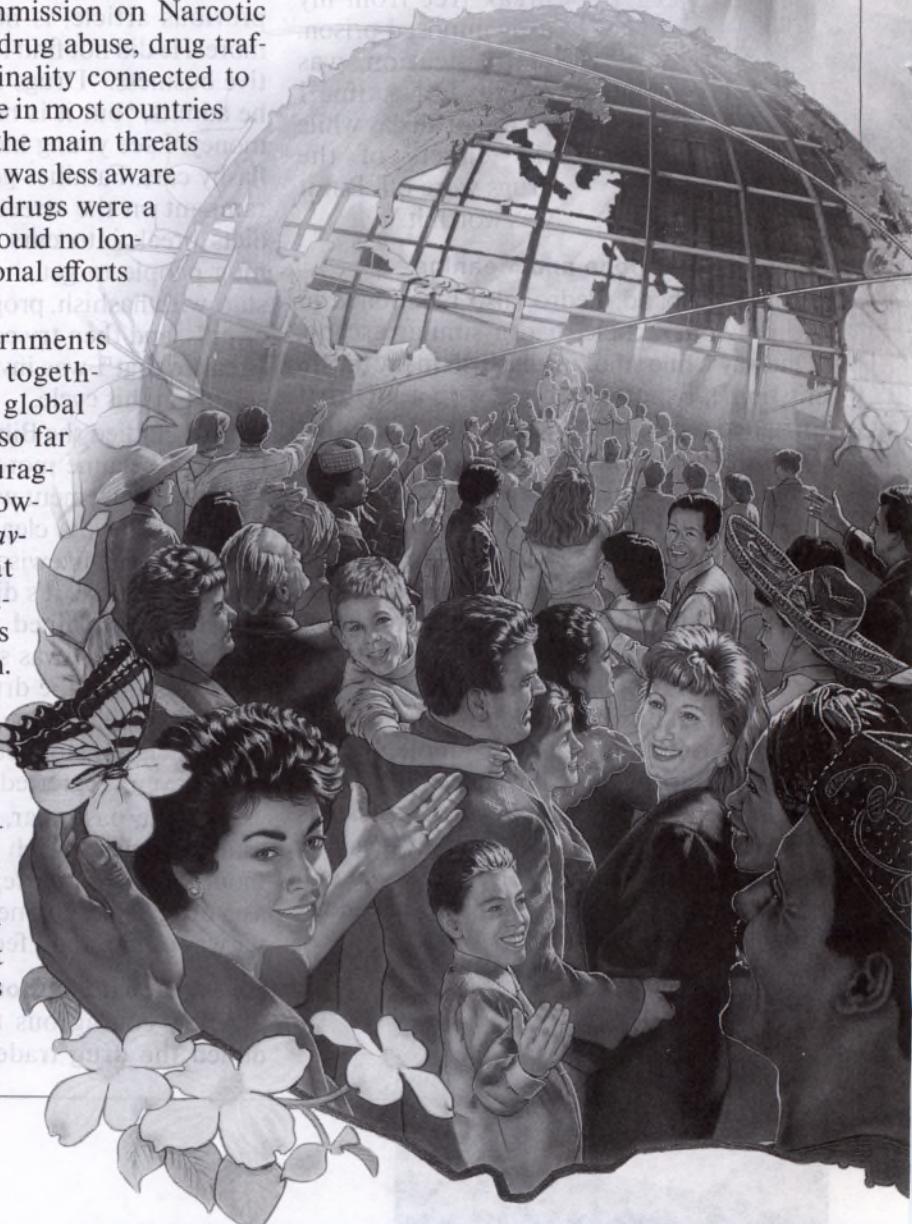
If the war on drugs is to be won, there must be a global solution because the problem is already a global one. In this regard the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs notes: “While drug abuse, drug trafficking and the criminality connected to the drug problem were in most countries perceived as one of the main threats to security, the public was less aware of the fact that illicit drugs were a global problem that could no longer be solved by national efforts alone.”

But will the governments of the world band together to eradicate this global scourge? The results so far have not been encouraging. The Bible, however, points to a *heavenly* government that will transcend national boundaries as the definitive solution. The Bible assures us that God’s Kingdom, ruled by Jesus Christ, will last “forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15) Hence, under God’s Kingdom, divine education will ensure that the demand for drugs will disappear. (Isaiah 54:13) And the so-

cial and emotional problems that now provide fertile soil for drug abuse will be gone forever.—Psalm 55:22; 72:12; Micah 4:4.

Are You in Need of Help?

Even now, hope in God’s Kingdom in the hands of Christ is motivating people to say no to drugs. If you would like more information, please contact Jehovah’s Witnesses in your area.



A Visit to an EXOTIC GARDEN

MY MOTHER loved roses. She cultivated them. As a child, I spent hours with her in the garden, weeding, pruning, cutting, and tending the plants. She showed me that gardening was fun. She sowed seeds of interest in me that have stayed with me all my life.

My gardening days were cut short when I left home to attend college at the University of California at Berkeley. While studying to be an engineer, I appreciated the lovely gardens on the college campus. War was raging in Vietnam, and a big change was in my immediate future.

I decided to sign up for the peace corps and was sent to the University of Washington for training. The campus there was like a paradise. Everywhere I looked, there were lakes, gardens, lawns, and snow-capped mountains. Then, in 1964, I left for La Paz, Bolivia, to work as a teacher at the University of San Andres. What a contrast! I went from sea level to 12,000 feet above sea level. Very little grew there, and gardening became just a memory.

After two years in Bolivia, I got a teaching job in Hawaii, at the Wahiawa Intermediate School. I lived in a small cottage right on the beach at Sunset Point, and I fell in love with palms and other tropical plants. I felt I was in a paradise. Then the thought struck me that someday in the future, I should create a garden with palms as the focus.

I returned to San Diego, and then I spent the next 18 months hitchhiking from California to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. During this period I began to read the Bible. As I traveled, I spent many long hours in jungles, gardens, and parks and meditated on what I was reading in the Bible. Finally, I returned to San Diego in 1972 and began a long and satisfying career teaching mathematics in Coronado, California. My idea of a garden of tropical plants in my own backyard began to mature.

My First Garden

In May 1973, I bought a small house near the Pacific Ocean, in Ocean Beach, California. There I was—at the top of a hill, with a small house, a big yard, and a love of





Mexican blue fan palm



Fishtail palm

gardening. The setting was perfect for what was to come, my unique garden.

At first, my gardening was haphazard. It was a hit-and-miss experiment. If I liked a plant, I bought it and planted it. I kept planting anything that caught my eye and my fancy. I watched them grow—fruit trees, pine trees, deciduous trees, evergreens, shrubs, bushes, flowers. You name it, I grew it.

Many plants were ones that I remembered from my childhood. Caring for plants was peaceful, fun, therapeutic, and rewarding. I meditated on the beauty, design, complexity, and purpose of these creations.

Not every plant pleased me or fitted into my scheme of things, so I discarded many. I was searching for a special look. Plants that were messy and overly aggressive were not welcome. They were too much work and needed too much upkeep! Also, I wanted rare plants—not your common or garden types. I needed a theme. Then it happened!

My First Palm

In 1974, I went to a local nursery, and there I saw the key to my search. It was beautiful, with its graceful crown of arching bluish-green pinnate, or feather, fronds. It was the *Butia capitata*, viewed by many as the most beautiful palm in the world. Sometimes it is called the jelly palm because of its sweet, fruity seeds. It hails from South America, is easily maintained, and grows to a height of 16 feet. At last, my garden had a focus, a theme—rare tropical palms from around

**Left to right: red pandanus, royal palm,
traveler's palm (not to scale)**





Encephalartos ferox Flower on a shaving brush palm

the world! I had chosen to grow "the Princes of the vegetable kingdom."

It wasn't long before I was picking up rare or exotic palms at different nurseries. There, in a remote corner of one nursery, was another fantastic palm tree staring me in the face—a Mexican blue fan palm. It has a stiff, blue-green fan-shaped (palmate) leaf radiating in a crown from the apex of the trunk. The flower seed spikes extend out in beautiful light-yellow arches. A mature tree grows to a height of about 40 feet.

Now I was really hooked on palms. Where could I find more of these rare plants? I started to ask around in the San Diego area but without any great success. Then I hit a gold mine of information—the Southern California Chapter of the International Palm Society. This society has thousands of members in 81 countries. It has a wealth of information about every palm known to man—over 200 genera and some 3,000 species. The Southern California Chapter publishes *The Palm Journal* for its members, and this is an invaluable source of up-to-date information.

This contact has allowed me to acquire and cultivate over 150 different palm species in my little garden. I say little because it only occupies some 7,000 square feet. My palms represent just a fraction of the species discovered so far. Which ones are my favorites?

Some of the Beauties in My Garden

Actually, I love all my plants, but a few really stand out. Some I am particularly drawn to because of their exotic look or their armor of thorns or spines; others, because of their color or their size or even the challenge of getting them to grow in the Mediterranean-type climate of southern California.



Tools for my garden work

One of my special trees comes from Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa. It is the *Bismarckia nobilis* palm. Why do I like it? Because of its unique purplish-blue color, its rarity, and its leaf configuration. Each of its fronds weighs about 20 pounds, making this

one of the larger palms in the world.

Another favorite, the fishtail palm, comes from the mountainous regions of northern India, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. Mine grows well here in San Diego in spite of the relatively cool winters. In fact, I like the challenge of growing palms here. That is why I have been so pleased to have a tree from Borneo in my garden—the *Arenga undulatifolia*. It has broad and distinctly undulate leaves.

A recent addition is the *Burretokentia halpala* palm from New Caledonia, a French overseas territory in the South Pacific. So far it is thriving. I can add to this list other trees that are special to me, such as the *Pritchardia hildebrandii*, or the loulu palm, from Hawaii, with its yellow-green fan-shaped leaves. It loves the sun and is certainly exotic.

An intimidating palm is the *Trithrinax acanthocoma*, or the spiny fiber palm. It has needle-shaped spines on the trunk, which seem to say, "Don't get too near!"

I have recently started to cultivate cycads. Although not related to the palm, a cycad is similar in appearance, though much smaller. One of my favorites is the *Encephalartos gratus*, which has an amazing frond that seems to leap into the air. This catches

everyone's eye. The seed pods, or cones, are unusually large and emerge from the side of the plant. They look like a pineapple or a pinecone.

Do my palm trees attract people? I should say so! I frequently find people stopping by to admire my plants. From the sidewalk in front of the house, they can see an exotic tropical garden that slopes down the hillside. In March 1997 my garden was one of three that the Southern California Chapter of the International Palm Society opened up for visitors. It was described as "a memorable clinic on a diversified and ornamental collection of palms." In what ways has this garden been a blessing to me and to others?

My Garden Gives a Witness

As a result of studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, I was baptized in 1991. Now I am retired from teaching, but I keep quite busy as a Christian elder and a pioneer minister. It is nice to use my garden as a springboard for talking to people about the Creator when I describe the marvelous design evidenced in my varied trees and plants. At times, I also bring up the subject by noting that palm trees are mentioned in the Bible. (Judges 4:5; Psalm 92:12) Certainly the garden has helped me to draw close to God and understand his wonderful purpose to have obedient mankind live in a paradise. After all, the original Paradise of Eden was a magnificent garden or park.—Genesis 2:8.

According to Bible prophecy, that Paradise condition will be restored when Jehovah brings to ruin those who are presently ruining the earth. (Revelation 11:18; 16:14, 16) Then we will all be able to participate in turning the earth into a wonderful paradise. In the meantime, my little plot of land continues to give praise to the Creator.
—Contributed.

Early Pioneers of AVIATION

"As an airplane pilot, I thoroughly enjoyed the March 8, 1999, issue of 'Awake!' on flying. However, I have one question. Why was there no mention of Alberto Santos-Dumont? He was among the earliest of aviators."

—C. B., United States.

THE March 8, 1999, *Awake!* cover series, entitled "Flying—How Did It Start? How Safe Is It?" provided a brief synopsis of the history of aviation. Although much of the material focused on the achievements of the Americans Wilbur and Orville Wright, these two brothers were not the only ones to experiment with heavier-than-air flying machines about the turn of the century. Consider a few other pioneers of aviation.

• **Alberto Santos-Dumont** was born on July 20, 1873, in Minas Gerais, Brazil. When he was a teenager,

his family moved to Paris. There Santos-Dumont studied physics, chemistry, mechanics, and electricity. His ambition was to fly, and between 1898 and 1905, he built and flew 11 dirigibles.

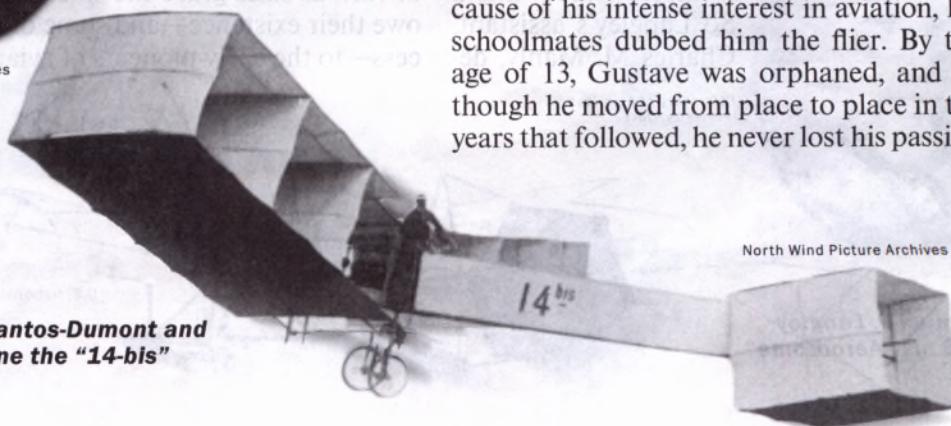
In October of 1906, Santos-Dumont at last achieved his dream of flying in a heavier-than-air craft. In contrast with some other early planes, which needed to be launched by a catapult, the aircraft of Santos-Dumont, the *14-bis*, performed its takeoff using its own means of propulsion. Santos-Dumont's 200-foot flight in the *14-bis* is regarded as the first successful motor-powered, heavier-than-air flight in Europe.

In the years that followed, Santos-Dumont was saddened to see the airplane become a tool of destruction. Indeed, it is reportedly his despondency over the use of airplanes in war that led to his suicide in 1932. In any event, Santos-Dumont has a firm place in the history of aeronautics.

• **Gustave Whitehead** was born in Leutershausen, Germany, on January 1, 1874. Because of his intense interest in aviation, his schoolmates dubbed him the flier. By the age of 13, Gustave was orphaned, and although he moved from place to place in the years that followed, he never lost his passion



Culver Pictures



North Wind Picture Archives

Alberto Santos-Dumont and his airplane the "14-bis"

for flying. For a brief time, young Gustave studied with the famous German aviator Otto Lilienthal. Then, in 1894, he settled in the United States.

As noted in the March 8, 1999, issue of *Awake!*, some claim that in 1901, Whitehead made the world's first controlled, sustained flight in a heavier-than-air flying machine. However, there are no photographs to substantiate this claim. Surprisingly, the press was not at all quick to understand the impact of early advances in aviation, even when the Wright brothers made their flight. Indeed, according to the journal *Air Enthusiast*, "it wasn't until 1910 that public interest really peaked in this 'new technology' and people began to accept that human flight was possible."

• **Samuel Pierpont Langley**, a secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., was an astronomer and a physicist. In 1896 he built a steam-powered airplane that flew unmanned for three quarters of a mile before it ran out of fuel.

Of course, steam engines are quite heavy, and they were found to be highly impractical for flight. So Langley's assistant, Charles M. Manly, de-

Samuel P. Langley and his "Aerodrome"

Dictionary of American Portraits/Dover



U.S. National Archives photo

Gustave Whitehead and a replica of his heavier-than-air flying machine

Flughistorische
Forschungsgemeinschaft
Gustav Weisskopf



signed a 125-pound, 53-horsepower engine that would be more suitable. The result was a far more efficient plane, which Langley called the *Aerodrome*. On October 7, 1903, Manly sat at the controls while Langley's plane was launched by catapult from a barge. It then plunged into the Potomac River. A subsequent effort two months later was just as unsuccessful. Disillusioned, Langley abandoned his project.

Despite his failures, however, Langley made important strides in the field of aviation. In 1914, eight years after his death, several changes were made to the *Aerodrome*, and it was successfully flown in Hammondsport, New York, by Glenn H. Curtiss.

These are just a few of the many individuals who spearheaded the field of aeronautics about the beginning of the 20th century. Today, hundreds of thousands of planes of various sizes grace the skies. All of them owe their existence—and some of their success—to the early pioneers of aviation.



Meet the Irish Wolfhound

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN IRELAND

"This gentle giant of the doggy world."

That was one description of the Irish wolfhound.

Have you ever met one? It is true that there are no wolves in Ireland now. But there used to be. There were also boars and gigantic elk. It is said that the last wolf in Ireland was killed about two hundred years ago. Before that, wolfhounds were renowned for hunting wolves as well as other large animals. There is a more recent story about one wolfhound that was sent to the Rocky Mountains, in the United States. In 1892, as the story goes, he "killed forty wolves single-handed during one winter." Don't worry, though. Wolfhounds do not hunt or kill people!

ACCORDING to some historians, the wolfhound may have been well established in Ireland by 500 B.C.E. The Celts later used wolfhounds for more than just hunting. Legend and history say that the dogs also went into battle with Irish kings and warriors.

The reputation of the wolfhound as a very special breed of dog spread all around the world. Wolfhounds were even taken to Rome to be shown in the arena. Records about a Roman consul by the name of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus tell us that he wrote a letter in 393 C.E. thanking his brother for sending seven Irish wolfhounds to Rome. It seems that the dogs really excited the Romans. "All Rome viewed them with wonder," Symmachus wrote, "and fancied they must have been brought hither in iron cages."

Maybe the dogs' great size gave people the idea that they had to be transported in iron cages. Males stand about 34 inches at the shoulder, but some are much larger. The tallest wolfhound on record was almost 40 inches to the shoulder. Females are



usually an inch or two smaller than males. Being tall can put extra food within easy reach. Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott warned one of his friends to be careful at dinnertime. Otherwise, his wolfhound, who was "about six feet long from the tip of the nose to the tail," would "eat off his plate without being at the trouble to put a paw on table or chair."

These hounds start life fairly small—weighing only about one and a half pounds at birth—but they grow quickly. One adoring owner said that as puppies they are "fascinating little creatures" but that they change "with amazing rapidity from roly-poly bundles to lanky, soft beings consisting mostly of long legs."

They do not bark a lot. They are more the strong, silent type. But when they do bark, it is a memorable sound. People tell of a man who on hearing a wolfhound bark said that it was "the deepest-toned and most melancholy bark [he had] ever heard."

The Irish wolfhound has been described as "fierce-looking, with piercing eyes, shaggy brows, and rough dark-grey coats"—the sort of dog you might, on first sight, want to avoid. But it has also been said that they are "so kind a child could play with them." As one knowledgeable owner said, they are, in fact, "exuberantly affectionate." And they are not only gray in color. Some have white, wheaten, red, or black coats.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

What Is the Truth About Angels?

How Can I Be More Outgoing?

**Is Your Home Safe?
—20 Things to Check**

Famous Irish writer Oliver Goldsmith lavished praise on them. "The great Irish wolf-dog," he said, "is extremely beautiful and majestic . . . , the greatest of the dog kind to be seen in the world." He was obviously impressed by their rugged good looks, including the brows, eyelashes, and whiskers that give them what has been called "the true Irish expression."

Why, then, did they almost die out as a breed? One reason was their popularity. Admirers considered them to be the sort of valuable present that they could send to important people like monarchs. So they were "sought after and sent abroad to all quarters of the world." As a result, they were scattered in small numbers everywhere. Besides that, once their usefulness as wolf hunters ended, they were neglected as a species in Ireland.

In 1839, one wolfhound lover recorded the sad situation this way: "It must be a subject of regret that this noble race of dogs is fast dying away, and will in the course of a few years inevitably become extinct unless some extraordinary exertions are made." There were so few around that it was not uncommon for people to claim that the wolfhound they owned was "the last of their race." But they survived.

They were saved by the "extraordinary exertions" of people like George A. Graham. In 1862 he saw their plight. He gathered as many of the remaining wolfhounds as he could find. By carefully breeding them, he provided the foundation needed to restore them to where they are today. Without him, said one historian in 1893, "this canine relic of a mighty race might even now be extinct."

One of their admirers, a respected breeder of Irish wolfhounds, Phyllis Gardner, wrote: "Nothing is certain in this world, but, barring catastrophes, it seems as though this noble race has been drawn away from the brink of extinction, and is still on the rising grade of popularity."



Wolfhound pups, about four weeks old



**The good-tempered
wolfhound,
in Newtownards,
Northern Ireland**

THE TAGUA NUT

Can It Save Elephants?

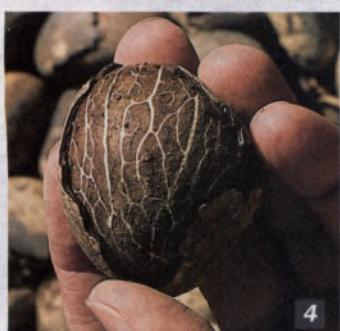
BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN ECUADOR



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THEY make unlikely friends. The one weighs several ounces; the other, several tons. One is vegetable; the other is animal. They live on separate continents. Yet, the tiny South American tagua nut could save the mighty African elephant from wanton slaughter. Just what is the tagua nut, and how has it become an elephant's friend?

A Strange Palm Tree

The tagua nut is the seed of a particular variety of palm tree found principally in northern South America. These slow-growing trees display graceful fronds that shoot forth from ground level. For many years no trunk is visible. A tagua palm whose trunk has reached a height of seven feet is at least 35 to 40 years old. Large fibrous clusters develop directly beneath the fronds. The cluster, usually weighing some 25 pounds, consists of tightly packed woody fruits. Each fruit generally contains from four to nine seeds, which are roughly the size and shape of a hen's egg. In the first stage, the seed cavities contain a thirst-quenching liquid similar to coconut water. In the second stage, the liquid congeals into an edible sweet gelatin. In the third and final phase, the gelatin matures into a hard, white substance that remarkably resembles animal ivory.

Why an Elephant's Friend

As an ivory substitute, the tagua nut can truly be called an elephant's friend. The ruthless poaching of animal ivory has endangered the survival of the African elephant. However, the tagua nut provides a practical alternative, since its vegetable ivory looks like its animal counterpart, is extremely hard, takes a high polish, and absorbs dyes readily. So great is the similarity between tagua and animal ivory that artisans often leave some of the brown shell on their products to prove that they are not using elephant ivory—an internationally banned material.



Vegetable ivory is not a recent discovery. As far back as 1750, South American friar Juan de Santa Gertrudis mentioned tagua nuts in his chronicles, comparing them to "balls of marble" that were used for carving figurines. By the early 1900's, Ecuador, the chief source of tagua, was exporting thousands of tons of the nuts each year, primarily for the production of buttons. After World War II, the advent of new and inexpensive plastics virtually ended the tagua trade. Indicative of vegetable ivory's current revival, during a recent 18-month period, 1,650 tons were exported from Ecuador to Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States, and 18 other countries.* How is tagua processed and used today?

Tagua Has Many Uses

The seeds are set out to dry under the tropical sun for between one and three months, depending on their water content. Afterward, they are peeled by machine, classified according to size, and cut into slices for use in button manufacturing. Indeed, "ivory" buttons made from tagua adorn some of the highest quality clothing in the world. However, tagua is used for more than just buttons. Jewelry, chess pieces, reeds for wind instruments, piano keys, and umbrella handles are among the varied products made from tagua.

But the tagua palm offers still more! The fine powder left after processing is used to enrich animal foods. It also serves as a combustible for making charcoal. The leaves of the palm make water-resistant roofing. Additionally, the harvesting and processing as well as the exportation of tagua provide employment for many.

Above all, vegetable ivory can make a solid contribution toward the preservation of the African elephant. So if you desire the luxury of ivory, you need not look toward the savannas of Africa. Think of South America's rain forests, where ivory is so abundant that it grows on trees! Yes, think of the tagua nut, an elephant's friend.

* Between January 1, 1994, and June 15, 1995.



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1. Tagua palm
2. Tagua fruit clusters
3. Crosscut revealing tagua seeds
4. Tagua seed dries to become a hard nut
5. Tagua buttons
6. Tagua jewelry with mother-of-pearl inlay
7. Tagua figurines



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What Is Behind Witchcraft?

WITCHES. What does that word conjure up in your mind? Images of hags casting hurtful spells or of licentious women consorting with Satan? Contrary to that stereotype, many modern self-proclaimed witches seem like ordinary people. Some are respected professionals, such as lawyers, teachers, writers, and nurses. There has been a worldwide resurgence of religious movements that seem to border on the occult, such as nature religions and neopaganism.* "You can go anywhere in Russia these days and witchcraft is a daily part of life," said a police officer in that country. The United States is home to an estimated 50,000 to 300,000 witches, or "Wiccans,"[#] as some call themselves.

Today the word "witch" is often used loosely and can mean different things to different people. The modern growth of witchcraft seems to be primarily related to a

* The term "nature religion" refers to the belief that the earth and all living things are part of the divine and share the same life-force; "neopaganism" refers to worship of pre-Christian gods.

[#] Wiccans are followers of Wicca, which is "a pagan nature religion having its roots in pre-Christian western Europe," according to *The American Heritage College Dictionary*.

strain of goddess-worshiping, nature-based religion with a strong belief in psychic powers. Some witches are solitary—they practice their rituals alone, observing the change of seasons, phases of the moon, and other natural phenomena. Others worship and cast their spells in a coven, a group usually of 13 witches.

It is true that in the West, public perception of witchcraft today is radically different from the attitudes that fostered the witch-burning of the Middle Ages. Sporadically, however, there are still outbursts of wanton violence against witches. For example, in early October 1998 in Indonesia, machete-wielding gangs lynched more than 150 people suspected of being witches. In South Africa more than 2,000 cases of violence against witches, including 577 killings, were reported between 1990 and 1998. In the face of such extremes—ranging from interest in witchcraft to hatred of witches—how should Christians view the matter?

Unfulfilled Needs

What impels people to practice modern witchcraft? They claim that one factor is

Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft/Ernst and Johanna Lenner/Dover



a reverence for nature and life. Some, in fact, are eager to explain that their worship does not include the sacrificing of animals in their rituals. Others say that they dabble in witchcraft as part of a search for people with whom they can share openness, trust, and common spiritual interests. "Everyone I know in the pagan movement is so friendly and open . . . They're wonderful people," says a modern witch. And many deny any involvement with Satan, asserting that there is no all-evil deity in their religious structure.

For many of them, the primary reason for becoming witches is a sense of spiritual emptiness and a disenchantment with mainstream religions. Speaking of her coven, Phyllis Curott, a Wiccan high priestess, says: "All of us were dissatisfied with the teachings and practices of the religions with which we had been raised." Modern witches, Curott explains, try to answer questions such as, 'How can we rediscover the sacred?' But is witchcraft the path to genuine spirituality?

True Spirituality—From Where?

The Bible clearly shows that Jehovah is the only true God and the Universal Sovereign. (Psalm 73:28; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; Revelation 4:11) He is inviting all people to seek him "and really find him." (Acts 17:27) Hence, genuine spirituality can be attained only by taking in accurate knowledge of the true God, Jehovah. This can be accomplished by studying his Word, the Holy Bible. "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you," the Bible writer James assures us.—James 4:8.

God's Word, though, warns against a malicious source of evil spirituality. (1 John 4:1) It identifies Satan the Devil, the archenemy of Jehovah, and his demons as the source of much of the misguided spirituality prevalent

today.* According to the Bible, Satan "has blinded the minds" of many. He actually is "misleading the entire inhabited earth," including those who are involved in witchcraft—whether they claim to worship the Devil or not. Why is this so?—2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9.

Many of the practices and rituals associated with modern witchcraft are strikingly similar to the uncanny aspects of Satanism. Hence, even so-called innocent curiosity can easily lead to occultism. Indeed, many have fallen prey to Satan's evil influence in this way.

Not to be ignored is the fact that occasionally practitioners of modern witchcraft are drawn to it because they are hungry for power or revenge. "There are people who can call themselves witches and use it for fiendish purposes," said Jennifer, a modern witch. In any event, both benign and vengeful witches are in danger of coming completely under the control of Satan and the demons. Some witches may deny the existence of such evil spirit beings, but this makes them even more vulnerable to their deceptions.—Compare 1 Corinthians 10:20, 21.

The Bible condemns divination, sorcery, the practice of magic, the casting of spells, and any attempts to communicate with the dead. It clearly states: "Everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) Of course, Christians are determined to "work what is good toward all," and in their ministry they have helped many to break free from all forms of spiritism. (Galatians 6:10; Acts 16:14-18) Nevertheless, true Christians shun any involvement with false worship, including any form of witchcraft.—2 Corinthians 6:15-17.

* "The Bible's Viewpoint" series in the *Awake!* has answered such questions as "Is There Really a Devil?" (January 8, 1990, pages 12-13) and "Are Demons Real?" (April 8, 1998, pages 18-19).

WATCHING THE WORLD

Canada's Teenagers and Religion

"An astounding 80 per cent of Canadian teenagers believe in God," while "only 15 per cent regularly attend a religious institution," says the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. Why such a disparity? Some opt out because of "the sheer boredom of many religious services," and "doctrinal rigidity is a turn-off for the young." The paper adds: "No doubt organized religion's image has also been scarred badly by front-page stories of Christian clergy sex abuse, Sikh riots, Jewish extremists and Hindu militants. Polls reveal only 39 per cent of Canadian teenagers have confidence in religious leaders, compared to 62 per cent in 1984." The report concludes by saying: "Either the clergy's genuine welcome isn't getting out to teenagers, mass culture is just too hostile to faith institutions or the spiritual message isn't one that clicks with most young people. Or all of the above."

Fast Roaches

Anyone who has tried to catch cockroaches knows that this is no easy task. What is their secret? For one thing, tiny hairs on each side of their abdomen register the slightest air movement caused by enemies and reveal the direction from which it comes. Also, their nervous system appears to be extremely efficient, as the roaches need only one hundredth of a second to react and run away. Now, by means of a high-speed camera, Jeffrey Camhi and his colleagues at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have learned

more, reports the newspaper *Berliner Morgenpost*. They found that roaches can run at a speed of three feet a second and at this speed can even change direction up to 25 times a second. "We know of no other orientation behaviour in any animal capable of such a high frequency of body turning," said Camhi, quoted in *New Scientist*. "If the cockroach were not such a bad house guest, it would no doubt receive the admiration it richly deserves."

The World's Largest Bacterium?



Heide Schulz, a scientist from the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology, has discovered a giant bacterium in ocean-floor sediment off the coast of Namibia, Africa. The organism measures up to three hundredths of an inch in diameter and is 100 times bigger than any other known bacterium. "If the average bacterium was the size of a newborn mouse, the new one would be the size of a blue whale," reports *The Times* of London. These organisms, called *Thiomargarita namibiensis*, are loosely attached to each other, like strings of pearls. According to *The Times*, the bacteria "live on sulphides, which they oxidize with the help of nitrates found in seawater."

Too Many Corpses in the Ganges

"For centuries, Hindus have immersed their dead in the Ganges in the belief that this ensures moksha, or freedom for the soul from the cycle of bodily existence," states the *Electronic Telegraph*. "So long as the 1,560-mile long Ganges ran deep, its swift currents carried away hundreds of decomposing bodies. But over the years the river has become slower and shallower due to the industrial effluents and rubbish dumped in it." This has resulted in the corpses' being "entangled in weeds and waste for weeks." In the late 1980's, the government tried to attack the problem by placing thousands of carnivorous turtles in the Ganges. But the project was discontinued in 1994 because there were just too many bodies for the turtles to deal with, and the turtles themselves were being taken by poachers. In a new campaign, people are being persuaded to cremate their dead relatives or to bury them in the sand alongside the river.

No More Limbo?

Limbo—the place where according to Catholic tradition the souls of dead unbaptized infants go—has disappeared from Catholic theology. Although it never became a dogma, limbo was "the fruit of the extrapolations of 12th-century theologians" who needed a place "in the Hereafter" for those not destined for heaven or hell. These included "the innocent newborn who died without arriving at the baptismal font" and "non-

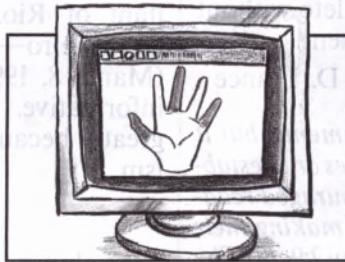
believers who had lived an upright life." "Once it was invented, Limbo became a fixed point in the doctrine taught by the church," writes Vatican commentator Marco Politi, in the newspaper *La Repubblica*. But in more recent catechisms, including the universal catechism promulgated in 1992, there is no trace of Limbo. "In reality, the whole concept of the Hereafter has been changed in the last few decades," explains Politi. Many theologians now say that infants who die without being baptized go straight to heaven. Says Italian theologian Pino Scabini: "Today, there is the tendency to give room to the essential elements of what has been revealed—eternal life, of which Jesus spoke, and the resurrection."

The Business of Kidnapping

"Kidnapping is . . . a booming business in places like Mexico, Colombia, Hong Kong, and Russia," states *U.S. News & World Report*. "Around the world, the number of abductions for ransom broke records in each of the past three years." By far, the largest number take place in Latin America, where there were 6,755 abductions between 1995 and 1998. This is followed by Asia and the Far East (617), Europe (271), Africa (211), the Middle East (118), and North America (80). While most of those abducted are local merchants and landowners, anyone—aid workers, business travelers, or tourists—can be at risk. International companies now buy kidnap and ransom insurance policies to cover the ransom as well as costs for professional negotiators and psychological counselors. The

kidnappers are organized, doing market research and risk assessment on potential victims. They usually treat their captives well, realizing that this will result in fewer attempts to escape and will give them a better chance of payoff. "Only 1 in 10 kidnappings worldwide ends in the death of the person abducted," says the magazine, but it gives this caution: "Beware of local police. They are often in cahoots with the kidnappers."

Web Site Guide to Prayer



Recently, the Church of England launched its Internet Web site. On it is a guide on how to pray. Insisting that God hears every prayer, the church urges people to be creative when praying. "Use music, a stone, a feather, a flower, or a candle to help you focus," and "use your hand. Your fingers can be used to bring [to] your mind different things to pray for." For example, it says that the thumb, being the strongest digit, can suggest prayer for things that are strong in your life, like home and family. The tall middle finger could remind you to pray for "the people who have power in the world," and the smallest finger could remind you of "prayer for yourself." Commenting on these innovations, *The Times* says: "The content of the website is an indication of how secularised the Church

feels the nation has become. It compares the discipline of praying to dieting, or weeding the garden: 'Little and often is best, but don't give up.'"

Acid and Tooth Decay

"People should stop thinking that sugar alone causes cavities, and concentrate on foods that leave their mouth acidic," says Mike Edgar, one of the authors of *Oral Health: Diet and Other Factors*. This report advises that people who drink orange juice for breakfast or eat acidic foods should not brush their teeth for at least half an hour afterward. Why? Because when the mouth's acid levels rise above a certain point, the tooth enamel softens and brushing will begin to rub away the top surface. It is recommended instead that one counteract the acid levels by eating protein-rich foods, such as cheese or peanuts, but no later than 20 minutes after eating the acidic foods, states *The Times* of London.

Japanese Doll Solution?

For grandparents who live far away from their grandchildren and seldom get to see them, a Tokyo firm has a solution: Send the firm a picture of the baby, and in six weeks you will receive a look-alike doll. "Only it doesn't end there," reports *New Scientist*. "A digital microchip recorder inside the doll records the baby's early gurgles, so it even sounds like your baby. Simply hold the doll's hand and it will play back the baby's voice—or whatever else you record. According to *The Nikkei Weekly*, the \$400 doll is mostly ordered by grandparents who rarely see their offspring's offspring."

FROM OUR READERS

Clothes I am writing to you regarding the article "The Kind of Clothes We Wear—Does It Really Matter?" (February 8, 1999) I appreciate the work you do in providing us with the "food at the proper time." (Matthew 24:45) But some of the comments in the article seemed to express personal opinions. To write that "T-shirts advertising your favorite movie or sports star . . . might nudge you toward hero worship—idolatry" is unwarranted. It is possible to like, even admire, an athlete without breaking any Bible commandment.

M. D., France

We appreciate these frank comments, but it was not our intention to make rules or to establish a dress code. Our article encouraged readers to use "soundness of mind" in making their own choices of clothing. (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) The comment regarding T-shirts was not dogmatic but acknowledged the possibility that wearing certain styles might harm the wearer himself. While there may be nothing wrong with admiring an individual's skill or talent, would it be wise for a Christian to wear something that might give others the impression that he admires the life-style and morals of someone who does not live by Bible standards?—ED.

Siberian Exile I was so moved by the breathtaking story of Lembit Toom, "Half a Century Under Totalitarian Tyranny" (February 22, 1999), that I could not wait to express my appreciation. It took great faith in Jehovah God for him to be able to survive such challenging times. The new freedom our brothers in the former Soviet Union are experiencing is well deserved.

J. D., United States

Singing Tree Heartfelt thanks for the articles you publish on nature. I particularly appreciated the article "A Tree That

Sings." (March 8, 1999) I did not know anything about the whistling thorn. After reading about the melody it produces with its long thorns and hollow galls that vibrate in the wind, I reflected on Psalm 96: 12, 13: "All the trees of the forest break out joyfully before Jehovah." In its own way, this unusual tree praises Jehovah.

M. D., Italy

Rio de Janeiro As a Carioca, an inhabitant of Rio, I found your article "Rio de Janeiro—Beautiful and Challenging" (March 8, 1999) to be both appealing and informative. Rio's image has suffered greatly because of sensationalistic journalism.

O. D. C., Brazil

As always, your information was carefully prepared. You avoided presenting a prejudiced view of the poor, who are often blamed for Rio's social problems.

V. R. L., Brazil

Letter to Parents I was very much encouraged by the article "A Special Letter to Their Parents." (March 8, 1999) It was what I should have written to my own parents. They were good examples in attending Christian meetings, being regular in the ministry, and showing hospitality. My father was a ministerial servant; he must have been very busy with congregation duties. Yet, he often planned recreation for us, and we never felt envious of our schoolmates. He died in a traffic accident on his way home from a Christian convention, and our life changed drastically. But remembering his Kingdom-first life-style and my mother's faith, I have been moved to continue serving Jehovah.

S. K., Japan

Do You Save Energy or Waste It?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRITAIN

ENERGY worth an estimated \$1 billion, enough to power a city the size of Chicago, is being wasted in the United States each year. How? Devices such as computers, fax machines, VCRs, televisions, CD players, and even coffeemakers are left in standby mode. This is done to run their clocks, maintain their memories, and display their settings—or simply so that they will be ready for instant use.

It is reckoned that in Britain the energy consumed annually by such idling devices creates half a million tons of greenhouse gases, through electric powerhouse production. These gases are poured into the atmosphere and may be adding to the effects of global warming. "However fashionable green ideology is among young consumers, few make the connection between the generation of electricity and the warming of the planet," says London's newspaper *The Times*.

It is not generally realized that many electronic gadgets use almost as much energy on standby as they do when working at full capacity. A satellite TV system, for example, may use 15 watts when in use and only 1 watt less on standby. Bad design also plays a part. One CD player tested used 28 watts on standby, but another model with similar features used only 2 watts. But now a new computer chip has been designed that, it is claimed, can cut standby consumption from 10 watts to 1 watt or even to a mere 0.1 watt. It is hoped that in the continuing fight against pollution, manufacturers around the world will eventually use this chip, costing \$2.50, as a standard component. Meantime, what can you do?

Britain's environment minister observes: "The amounts of electricity for each gadget may seem quite small. But because there are 60 million of us in these islands [Britain] it adds up to quite a lot." Household items such as refrigerators quite obviously cannot be switched off. But it is good to get into the habit of switching off lights that are not needed and switching other appliances off rather than leaving them in standby mode. This will not only save you money but also help to save our planet from unnecessary pollution.



INDIA AND CHINA THREATENED BY TOBACCO

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN INDIA

AS CURBS on the advertising of tobacco increase and education on the health hazards of cigarette smoking spreads in the Western world, the giant tobacco companies have turned to the East to peddle their wares. Studies funded by the World Bank predict that tobacco deaths in China could reach one million annually by the year 2010. The *British Medical Journal* stated that 100 million Chinese under age 29 will die as a result of smoking.

The World Health Organization projects that along with China, India—with its population of almost one billion—is in line for “the biggest and sharpest increases in tobacco-related disease.” Reports claim that about 20 million children there start smoking each year. A South Indian man was a chain-smoker for many years. He wrote to the publishers of *Awake!* in appreciation for an article in the magazine that helped him to stop smoking completely. It was the article “You Can Quit—We Did!” which appeared in the issue of December 8, 1998.