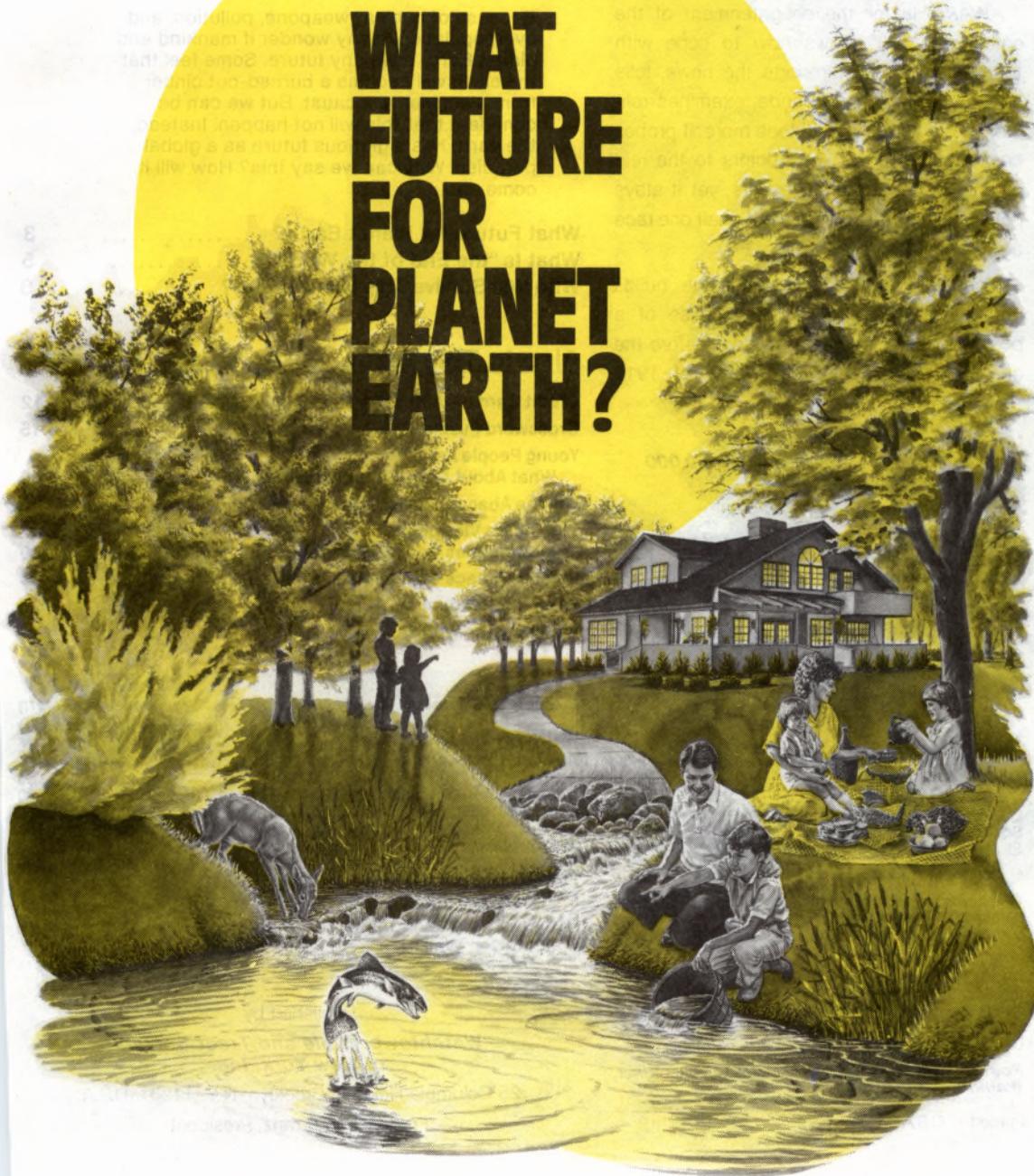


Awake!

DECEMBER 8, 1986

WHAT FUTURE FOR PLANET EARTH?



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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 stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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Because of nuclear weapons, pollution, and overpopulation, many wonder if mankind and planet Earth have any future. Some feel that the earth will become a burned-out cinder from a nuclear holocaust. But we can be confident that this will not happen. Instead, the earth has a glorious future as a global paradise. Why can we say this? How will it come about?

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Frederick W. Franz, President

What Future for Planet Earth?

IN RECENT years many thinking people have come to an alarming conclusion about the future. They feel that planet Earth may be ruined as a home for mankind. One reason that they feel this way is the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

It is easy to see why there is such concern. The major world powers are armed with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons to the point of overkill, and it is feared that someday they will be used. The leader of one large country stated that World War III is inevitable whether nuclear weapons are used or not.

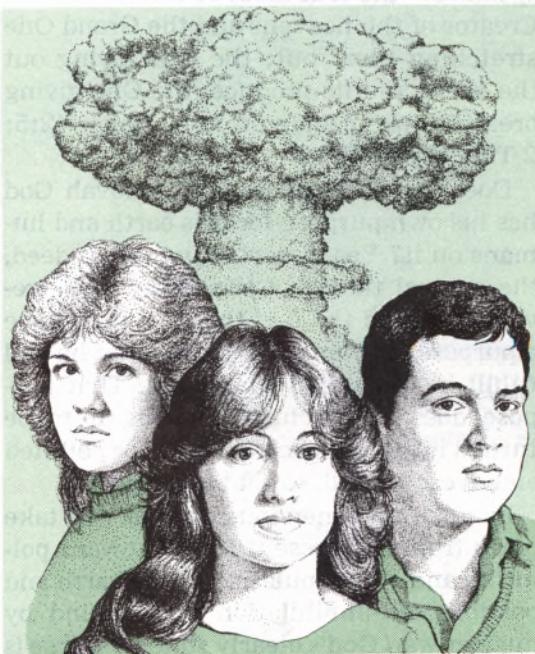
Others feel that even without a nuclear holocaust, earth's future is in danger due to global pollution and overpopulation. A three-year study by U.S. government officials concluded: "Present trends will make the world in the year 2,000 more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than it is now."

That study was done several years ago. Since then, things have continued to move steadily in the direction that it indicated.

In this regard, an Australian scientist declared: "The earth's atmosphere is becoming too polluted and unless we do something within the next decade, it may be too late." And *The Bulletin* of Sydney, Australia, observed: "The world's exploding population signals even more growing pains ahead for already crowded areas."

Because of these realities, an Australian government official said: "I ask you to keep a fundamental question in your mind: will there be a world left for you or your children in 20 years' time, or will the earth be a charred, stricken globe spinning forlornly in space?" Author Jonathan Schell also warned that unless solutions are found, the alternative is that "never again will human beings appear on the earth, and there will be no one to remember that they ever did."

There can be no question but that all the ingredients are there for a grim future if



present trends continue. If the earth is not incinerated in nuclear war, it will surely become more and more overcrowded and polluted, with its natural resources increasingly used up. The number of poverty-stricken people will grow far beyond their already tragic numbers. Crime and violence also will no doubt increase beyond what is already a frightening reality.

Who Determines the Future?

If it were true that humans alone were responsible for their future, the prospects would be dismal indeed. But what most people fail to consider is this: Humans will *not* determine the future of planet Earth! Its future has already been determined—and not by humans! But if not by humans, then by whom?

Well, who created the earth as a home for man? The truthful answer is found in the Bible, God's inspired guide for mankind. It speaks of "the true God, Jehovah," as "the Creator of the heavens and the Grand One stretching them out; the One laying out the earth and its produce, the One giving breath to the people on it."—Isaiah 42:5; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Does the Bible show that Jehovah God has his own purpose for this earth and humans on it? Yes, it certainly does. Indeed, the central theme of the entire Bible revolves around the fact that God does have a purpose for planet Earth and that he will fulfill his purpose without fail. That purpose does not include allowing it to be turned into a radioactive cinder or polluted and overcrowded, so that it is ruined.

Instead, a tremendous change will take place from the present trends toward polluting and overpopulating of the earth and possible self-annihilation of mankind by nuclear war. God's clearly stated purpose is

"to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) At the same time, God's Word shows that rulership will be ripped away from humans and placed where it safely belongs, in the Creator's hands.

—Daniel 2:44.

We have the divine guarantee that the tragedy of complete destruction or spoiling will never befall our earthly environment. By the prophet Isaiah, God assures that he "created [the earth] no empty void, but made it for a place to dwell in."—Isaiah 45:18, *The New English Bible*.

An Optimistic Future

Thankfully, the Holy Bible gives us a most optimistic view of the future. Humans will indeed be alive on earth 20, 30, and endless years from now. Never will planet Earth become "a charred, stricken globe," as the Australian official warned. And we can rely on the promises of earth's Creator that our planet and the human family will survive because not man but the Almighty Creator holds the ultimate power.

So although many 20th-century men are fearful of annihilation by their own hand or of ruining the earth by pollution and overpopulation, they will not be allowed to do so. "Many are the plans in the heart of a man, but the counsel of Jehovah is what will stand," God's own Word assures us. —Proverbs 19:21; see also Isaiah 46:10; 55:11.

But if it is true that the earth is not doomed to destruction or spoiling, what is meant by a term found in various versions of the Bible, at Matthew 24:3, "the end of the world"? What is the world that is said to be coming to an end? When is it to take place? Will there be any survivors? We invite you to consider the following article for answers to such probing questions.

What Is “the End of the World”?

THE Bible has much to say about the fact that “the world is passing away.” In many places it contains specific information about the time that it also calls “the conclusion of the system of things.” But when the Bible speaks about this “end of the world,” what does it mean? Does it mean that our home, planet Earth, is to be destroyed?—1 John 2:17; Matthew 24:3, *King James Version*.

God does not have to destroy the earth in order to eliminate the frightful conditions that are so prevalent on it. The *earth* is not causing the problems in human society today. *People* are responsible, especially people who have little or no regard for the Creator, Jehovah God, and his laws. They are the ones who are turning life on this earth into a nightmare for so many. But God does not have to destroy the earth to rid it of such ones.

Getting Rid of Offenders

For example, if you found your home infested with mice, how would you get rid of them? Would you burn down your house? No! Instead, you would likely find some other means such as traps; or perhaps you would get a cat. You would not destroy the house.

At times foxes are said to rid themselves of fleas in a manner that causes no injury to themselves. They gradually immerse themselves completely in water, with just

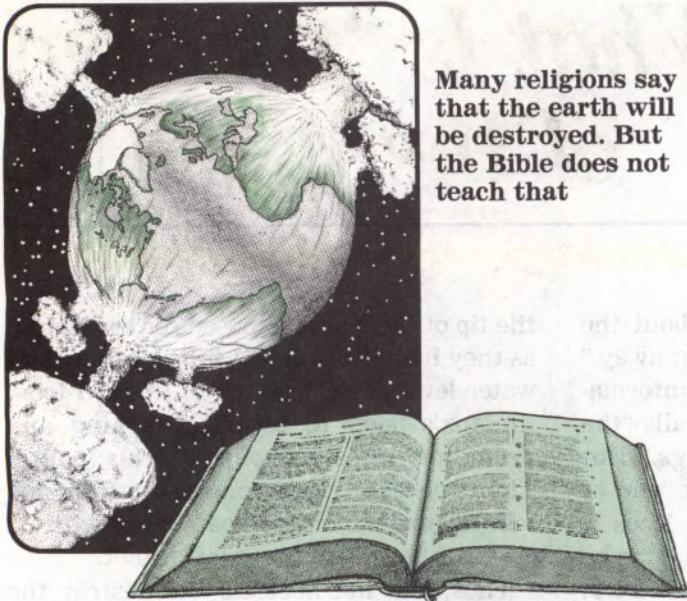
the tip of their nose exposed for breathing, as they hold some object in their mouth at water level. The fleas travel upward from the fox's body to escape drowning and eventually infest the object in his mouth. Then the canny fox releases it from his mouth, and the object floats away with its cargo of fleas. The fox is left intact.

Thus, it is not necessary to destroy the body that hosts the parasites in order to get rid of them.

Similarly, in Jesus' illustration about the end of the world, he said that a farmer had sowed his field with wheat, but during the night his enemy came and sowed weeds there. The farmer did not burn his whole wheat field just to get rid of the weeds. Instead, when his workers wanted to pull out the weeds that had started to grow, the farmer said: “No, . . . you'll hurt the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest, and I will tell the reapers to sort out the thistles and burn them, and put the wheat in the barn.”

Then Jesus concluded: “Just as in this story the thistles are separated and burned, so shall it be at the end of the world: I will send my angels and they will separate out . . . all who are evil, and throw them into the furnace and burn them.”—Matthew 13:24-26, 29, 30, 40-42, *The Living Bible*.

Jesus also likened “the end of the world” to what happened at the time of the global Flood in Noah's day. (Matthew 24:37-39)



Many religions say that the earth will be destroyed. But the Bible does not teach that

At that time it was not the earth itself that was destroyed. Rather, it was ungodly humans. Because of the shocking behavior of the people living back then, God said: "I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground." (Genesis 6:7) Likewise, the apostle Peter spoke of the ancient "world of ungodly people" that was destroyed back in Noah's time. It was not planet Earth that perished.—2 Peter 2:5.

Why, though, do many confuse the expression "the end of the world" with the destruction of planet Earth? One reason is the prevalence of such teaching in many of today's religions.

Confusing Religious Teachings

Confusion has been caused by religious spokesmen who interpret "the end of the world" to mean the destruction of the earth itself and all living things on it. Arthur S. Maxwell is one who advocates this theory. In his book *Time Running Out* he rationalizes that nuclear power makes this pos-

sible for the first time in man's history. He says: "How could the heavens disappear? How could the elements disintegrate in flames, and the whole earth be laid bare? Only now in the Nuclear Age has the full import of his dramatic message become crystal clear."

A similar holocaust, but with some variation, is described by Henry M. Morris in *Bibliotheca Sacra*: "The basic materials of the earth's structure will not be annihilated, but will undergo tremendous processes of disintegration, probably even atomic disintegration." He adds: "The earth's remaining waters will either disintegrate or instantaneously boil away.... Then, as the atoms of the former earth begin to fall together again after the holocaust, God will once more exercise His primeval creative power, and will 'create' and 'make' the new heavens and the new earth."

A Roman Catholic publication, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, under "End of the World," says: "The Catholic church believes and teaches that the present world [the material universe], which God has formed, will not last forever.... It is Scriptural, the tradition of Catholic theology, and confirmed by modern science." Also, the Catholic *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* first extols creation as "the goodness of God" and as "a true work of art" but then goes on to describe how the literal, physical elements will experience "a total reversal through a sudden return to chaos."

Many other mainline religions and evangelical groups promote similar views. But are these correct?

Which World to Be Destroyed?

It was Jesus' disciples who asked him a direct question about the end of the world. This is recorded at Matthew 24:3, according to the King James, or Authorized, Version of the Bible: "Tell us, . . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Other Bible translations help us to understand that the Greek word for "world" (*ai·on'*) used in this text does not refer to the literal earth or to the material universe. Several Bible versions translate the expression as "end of the age," or as "the final time." The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* renders the verse: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"

So rather than forecasting a nuclear holocaust or similar disintegration of the material universe, including planet Earth, the Bible teaches us that it is the *wicked system of things* on earth that will be brought to a sudden end. This includes all forms of corruption, falsehood, and hypocrisy now existing, whether it is political, commercial, or religious. All degradation and immorality, all wickedness, and all godless humans existing on earth at that time will be forcibly removed.

Two clear statements found in the Bible, which need no interpreting, should remove any fear that the earth may be destroyed when the "world" comes to its end. The



The Bible teaches that destruction will be selective, with only the ungodly destroyed

first is found at Ecclesiastes 1:4 (KJ): "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." The second appears at Isaiah 45:18 (KJ): "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."

Thus the world that the Bible so definitely says will be destroyed is the world of mankind that is not doing the will of God. "As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

(Proverbs 2:22) "There is a controversy that Jehovah has with the nations. He must personally put himself in judgment with all flesh. As regards the wicked ones, he must give them to the sword . . . And those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth."—Jeremiah 25:31, 33.

Who, though, will be the survivors? What must they do to survive? How can they tell when "the end of the world" is near?

Who Will Survive This World's End?

THE vast majority of people living on earth today will not survive this world's end. That becomes very plain from a study of God's inspired Word. As Jesus said: "Broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."

—Matthew 7:13, 14.

The idea that God might destroy millions, yes, billions of people whom he considers ungodly might be shocking to some. But keep in mind that God "does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) No, God does not enjoy destroying even wicked people: "I take delight, not in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living." (Ezekiel 33:11) However, God must be true to his Word and must fulfill his purpose for this earth. To do that, those whom he regards as lawless must go.

The Survivors

Because a world does not end every day, many do not believe that it could happen. But such persons would do well to remember that it has happened before.

When? It was at the time of the earth-wide Flood in Noah's day. God brought to an end the entire world of people who were alienated from him. Those who died in-

cluded men and women whom the Creator judged as ungodly. It also included their children, since those children were being raised to become what their parents were—ungodly. Thus, "everything in which the breath of the force of life was active in its nostrils, namely, all that were on the dry ground, died . . . , from man to beast," the Bible informs us.

Who survived the Flood? God's Word answers: "Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark kept on surviving." (Genesis 7:21-23) This included Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives, eight people, as well as representative animal kinds. Why did God look with favor upon Noah and his family? Because when God commanded them to do certain things, they obeyed. As Genesis states: "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did *just so*."—Genesis 6:22; 7:5.

We can draw meaningful lessons from what happened back there. "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction." (Romans 15:4) It is therefore instructive to note that God holds humans responsible for their actions. He gave us the gift of free moral agency and requires an accounting. We cannot ignore the Creator, his purposes, and his will, and then claim exemption from adverse judgment as though God were required to favor us regardless of what our attitude or

actions have been. "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

Also instructive is what happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of their gross immorality, God decreed their destruction. "The outcry against them has grown loud before Jehovah, so that Jehovah sent us to bring the city to ruin," his agents of destruction declared. All but three persons—Lot and his two daughters—were killed. Why were they spared? Because they listened to God's instructions and acted upon them. But Lot's wife did not—and perished. Also killed were the

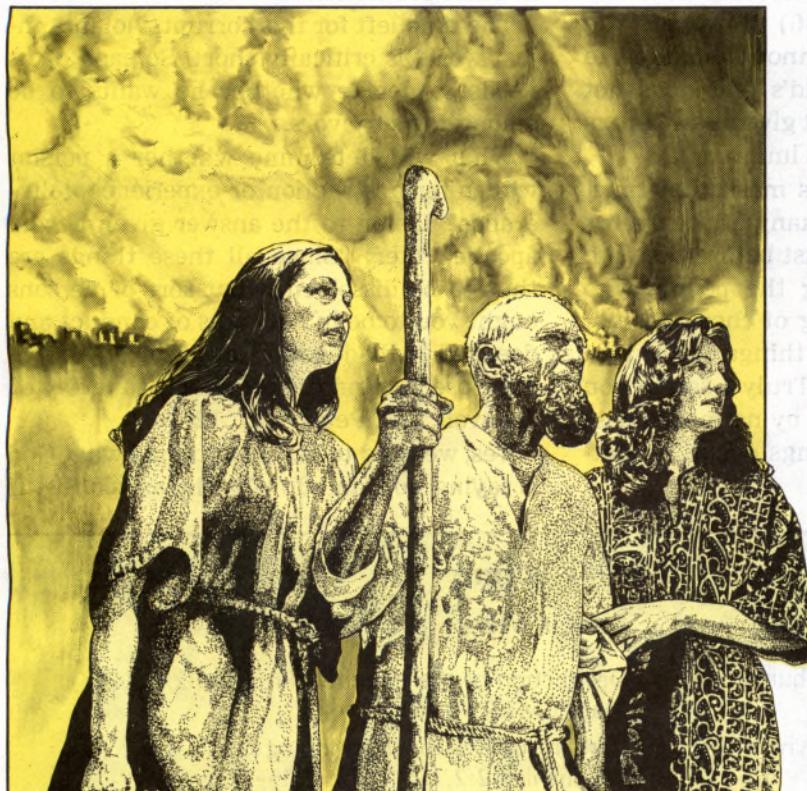
two men who were engaged to be married to Lot's daughters. Why? Because when Lot warned them of the impending destruction, "in the eyes of his [prospective] sons-in-law he seemed like a man who was joking." But it was no joke. They died.—Genesis 19:12-14.

Similarly in our time, many mock the warning about the nearness of the end of this world. But the apostle Peter foretold that in these "last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule." He said that these ignored the fact that a world had ended before—in the Flood. Jesus also said: "For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they

were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; *and they took no note* until the flood came and swept them all away." He added: "So the presence of the Son of man will be."—2 Peter 3:3-7; Matthew 24:37-39.

Thus, many will be destroyed because they choose not to pay attention to the obvious sign of these "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) However, the good news is that there will be survivors, many more than the eight humans who survived the Flood or the three who survived the end of Sodom and Gomorrah.

That there will be



The ungodly people of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but Lot and his daughters survived

many survivors was foretold by the apostle John in a divine revelation. He wrote: "I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues . . . These are the ones that come out of [survive] the great tribulation. . . . And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Revelation 7:9, 14, 17.

The World's End—When?

When will this world come to its end? The Bible does not give us a specific date. Jesus made this clear when he responded to the question his disciples asked him about it. He said that the exact time, that is, the day and hour, was not known to any human. (Matthew 24:36) However, the fact that we humans cannot calculate the exact date of this world's end does not mean that God would not give us any information as to when it was imminent.

Many Bible prophecies mark that time. Jesus himself outlined many of the events that would take place just before the end. Then he said regarding the people who would see the beginning of those events: "When you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."—Matthew 24:33, 34.

Which generation did Jesus mean? Without doubt, it is the generation that has lived since the year 1914. It has seen everything that Jesus said would happen just before the end. This means that some people who were alive in 1914 will still be here on the scene to witness this world's end.—Matthew 24:1-34.

Jesus also sounded this note of urgency: "You too prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." That "Son of man" is Jesus himself, coming as God's Chief Executioner.—Matthew 24:44; see also Revelation 19:11-21.

A Time for Decision

The time left for this corrupt, violent, unjust world is critically short. So each of us needs to decide whether he wants to be among the survivors.

What will determine whether a person will suffer destruction or experience deliverance? Listen to the answer given by the apostle Peter: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah."—2 Peter 3:11, 12.

Yes, we need to pay attention to what God is saying now and do what he asks of us. If

Earth's Future

Commonly Held Views

Total destruction of the human race

Earth obliterated; no survivors

Earth becomes useless wasteland

Bible's View

Destruction of the ungodly (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Matthew 25:31-46)

Certain survival for those doing God's will (Zephaniah 2:2, 3; 1 John 2:15-17)

Everlasting life on paradise earth for all (Psalm 37:29; Luke 23:43)

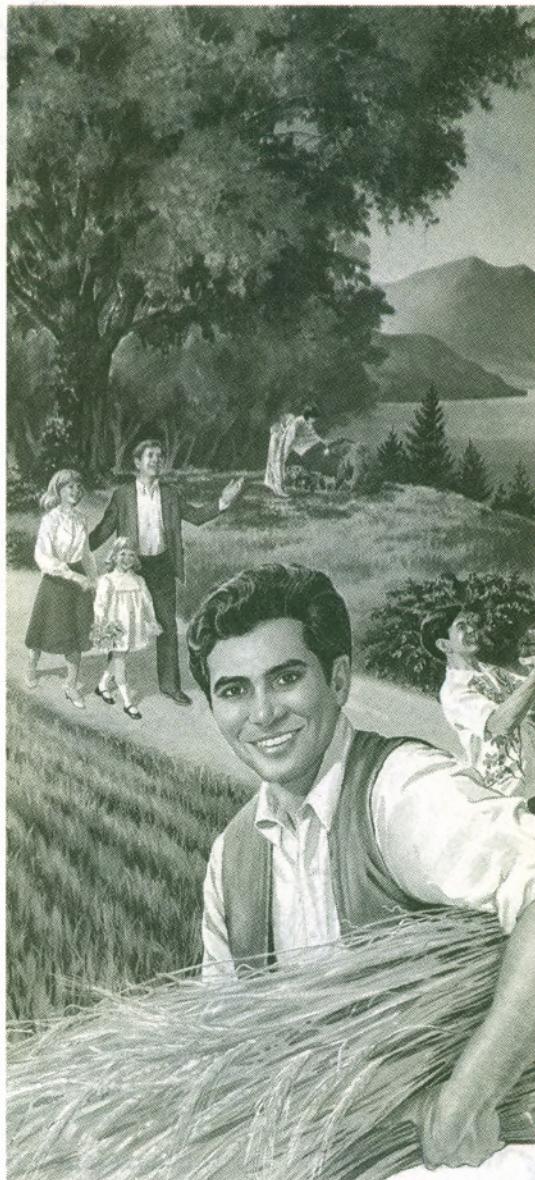
we do, then we will not go down into destruction but will be preserved alive to enter a new system of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13) This is also made clear by the inspired words of the apostle John: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

The decision to take our stand on the side of God and his truths cannot be based just on emotion. It must be the result of accurate knowledge: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

It also calls for us to "go on growing" in such knowledge. (2 Peter 3:18) This includes a thorough knowledge of God's provision for survival by means of his heavenly Kingdom, now established in the hands of his World Conqueror, Christ Jesus. (Matthew 6:9, 10) It also includes our speaking boldly to others about the wonderful hope of everlasting life on earth under God's Kingdom government. As Jesus foretold: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matthew 24:14.

What a relief it is to know that the world's end will not mean doom for this beautiful planet! And what a relief it also is to know that we can be among the millions who will survive into a cleansed earth!

Do you want to be numbered among the survivors? You can be if you do not follow those who are 'taking no note' but instead imitate Noah's example of 'doing just so' regarding God's will. If you do, God's promise is that you may live forever on an earth that Jesus promised would become a paradise. "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:29; Luke 23:43; Matthew 5:5.



Those who do God's will are to survive this world's end and live forever on earth in Paradise

Credit Cards— A “Plastic Trap”?



CREDIT CARDS! Do you have one? If not, and if you are in a developed country, it may be just a matter of time before you receive an offer of one. Banks, department stores, oil companies, and the like, are saturating the world with these little rectangular plastic cards, and you may be

reached sooner or later. Possessing one, however, can prove to be a blessing or a curse. Which will it be for you?

Increasing numbers of cardholders today end up experiencing serious financial difficulties. Why? Because of the unwise use of credit cards. Caught up in the fervor of “cash-free spending,” they have fallen into what some have referred to as the “plastic trap.” For them, credit cards are a curse. They may feel as did one person who suggested that the following be put on each card: **“WARNING: Credit cards may prove hazardous to your wealth!”**

Yet, there are many who have no complaints. For them, the availability of credit cards has proved to be a blessing. Some of the more popular advantages cardholders enjoy include: no need to carry much cash when shopping; being able to take advantage of unexpected price reductions on needed merchandise; the flexibility that credit affords by buying now and paying later; quick access to cash in case of an emergency; and the convenience of making purchases and payments over the telephone.

Although “plastic money” may cause some anguish when not used wisely, if properly utilized, it can provide the opportunity to enjoy privileges that may not otherwise be obtained quickly. In view of this,

you may ask, 'How is it that it can become a trap?'

"I Really Don't Need It, But . . ."

Propaganda and peer pressure have lured many into using credit cards. Banks are spending millions on advertising promotions in an effort to entice more people into their "plastic paradise." Even children have been targeted by such promotional schemes. Applications have been accepted from eight-, seven-, and even six-year-olds!

For the most part, advertisements are designed to attract prominence-oriented persons who have been led to believe that the mere possession of a credit card will ensure them instant recognition and importance. Some feel that a credit card is a sort of diploma that certifies their financial success and prestige. The magazine *Changing Times* recently stated: "TV commercials portray how carrying the proper card can help you win friends, influence people and, well, make you feel warm all over."

Some credit-card holders have admitted feeling a sense of well-being coming over them, a "whoosh of power" and a boost of self-image when using the card. Many give in to the enticements without really needing the card, and often this is followed by spending more than they can afford.

After studying the behavior of credit-card holders, a psychologist made the following general observation: "People who use credit cards don't keep track of their expenditures at the time." It has been observed that many, after acquiring a card, suddenly become insensitive to prices and turn into impulsive spenders. One person stated that after disposing of his credit cards, he was for the first time in a long while actually noticing the prices of things.

Hidden Costs

Banks are "putting plastic credit cards into the hands of people who really can't afford them and who don't understand the intricacies of debt," noted a recent newspaper article. Using credit cards, without understanding how credit works, has resulted in financial disaster for many.

For example, one newspaper reported that a woman obtained a loan of \$3,000 with her credit card. After her first three payments totaling \$220, she still owed \$2,956. Over a period of seven months, she had paid \$584, which reduced her debt by only \$157.19. Where did the rest of the money go? To pay interest! Until recently, some banks charged up to nearly 22-percent interest. As a result, cardholders' indebtedness has reached a historic high.

Additionally, most banks charge an annual fee for each credit card they issue. In the United States the fee may be anywhere from \$15 to \$250. Other banks charge a certain amount each time the card is used. These hidden costs have earned credit cards a worldwide reputation of being "expensive plastic."

"I Didn't Buy That!"

If you are a credit-card holder, you may get a bill for something you did not buy. It may be due to a billing error made by either the bank or the business where you used the card. However, in addition to such occasional billing errors, every cardholder runs the risk of becoming victimized by *fraud*.

The fraudulent use of your credit card simply requires access to your name, your account number, and the expiration date of your card. Stolen or lost cards, as well as the carbon copies of your transaction slips, can supply a thief with this valuable

Ways to Avoid Credit-Card Fraud

- Guard your cards carefully, as you would cash. Never leave them unattended.
- Examine your statements and reconcile your account every month. Report any questionable charges.
- Never give your card number over the phone unless you are dealing with a reputable company.
- After handing your card to clerks or waiters, make sure it is *your* card they return to you. They could unintentionally switch cards.
- Ask for your carbons and destroy them. Also, guard your copy of the transaction slip.
- Destroy expired or otherwise unwanted cards.
- Keep a complete record of credit-card account numbers in a safe place.
- Report lost or stolen cards *immediately*.

information. Some cardholders have received a phone call from an unknown company informing them that they have won a prize. Then, through some elaborate explanation, the caller tries to con the person into giving him the necessary credit-card information for his fraudulent use.

Much has been done to make fraud more difficult. Cards once were just plain pieces of plastic with numbers on them. Eventually, encoded information on a magnetic strip was added. Now holograms and more complicated printing patterns are being used. In some areas experiments are under way with the so-called smart card containing a microcomputer.

While these steps will make fraud increasingly difficult, *The New York Times* added: "Thousands of fakes abound. And most thieves are guaranteed at least a few

hours' shopping spree before transactions on a stolen card are halted." A recent report indicated that during 1985 more than \$700,000,000 was lost to credit-card fraud in the United States.

In the final analysis, who pays the price? While it would appear that banks do, *Parents* magazine supplies a more realistic answer. It observes that banks "keep the interest rates charged on . . . cards artificially high to cover losses incurred through their misuse." Additionally, when banks "are paying 7 or 8 percent to borrow money and charge the credit-card holder 16, 18, or even 20 percent, the huge difference allows them to absorb the cost of a great deal of credit-card fraud." Yes, in the final analysis, every cardholder is paying the price.

How to Avoid the Trap

You can avoid falling into the trap. How? First, determine whether you really need a credit card or not. Analyze your motives for wanting a credit card *before* you apply for one. Make a sensible decision rather than being enticed by propaganda.

If you do decide to have credit cards, use them wisely. Handle your credit cards as a business. Become acquainted with the procedures to follow when reporting a billing error or when you suspect fraud. Check local laws that protect you. Carefully check your monthly bills. The computer-generated bills you get from the credit-card company are not infallible.

You may also want to avoid keeping a debit balance in your credit-card account. Many pay for their purchases in full before the computing of interest begins. If you do need some time to pay your debt, then pay it as soon as possible.

Yes, be a *thinking* consumer, and you may never fall into the plastic trap!

crossword puzzle

Clues Across

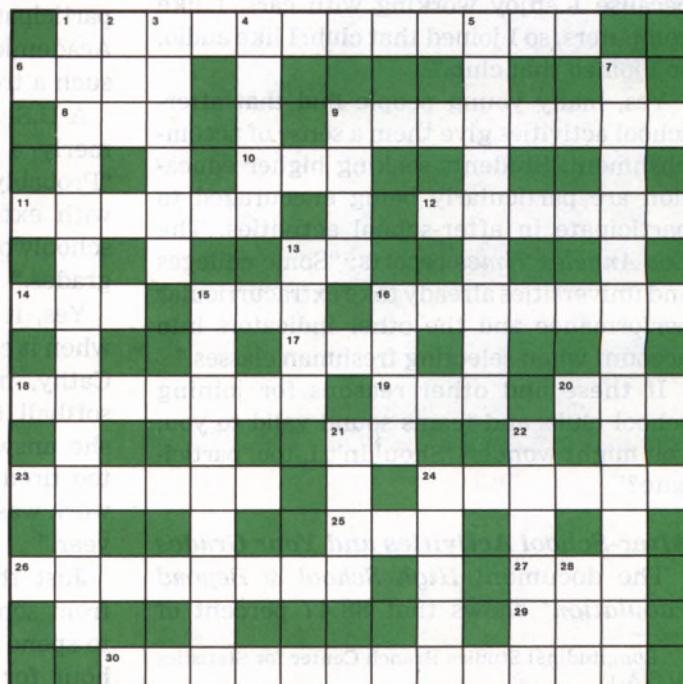
1. Matthew's profession [2 words] (Matthew 10:3)
6. You should not become this in your own eyes (Proverbs 3:7)
8. Achan stole one of gold (Joshua 7:20, 21)
9. Noah's ark had only one (Genesis 6:16)
10. Forefront (Exodus 14:19)
11. Its king was symbolized by a hairy he-goat (Daniel 8:21)
12. More complete (1 Thessalonians 4:10)
14. Flee (Job 40:23)
15. All of them in Sodom were bad except Lot (Genesis 13:13)
16. Philistine champion (1 Samuel 17:4)
17. Earlier than the present time (Psalm 102:25)
18. Rahab's house was identified by a cord of this color (Joshua 2:18)
19. Jacob likened his son Issachar to this animal (Genesis 49:14)
20. Zechariah's daughter, wife of King Ahaz of Judah and mother of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1, 2)
23. The people of Lystra mistook Paul for this Greek god (Acts 14:8-13)
24. Under Mosaic Law, any animal with a split hoof and a ----- of the cud could be eaten (Leviticus 11:3-8)
25. Expression of derision (Ezekiel 36:2)
26. Taken captive to Babylon, this wicked Judean King repented and was restored to his kingship (2 Chronicles 33:1-16)
27. "My God" (Matthew 27:46)

29. Goal (1 Thessalonians 4:11)
30. Where Jesus walked on water [3 words] (John 6: 1, 19)

Clues Down

1. Roman emperor during Jesus' ministry [2 words] (Luke 3:1)
2. One of the six faithful kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 15:17)
3. Persian king called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther
4. A dove brought back to Noah a leaf from this tree, indicating the floodwaters had receded (Genesis 8:11)
5. The public speaker who accused Paul before Governor Felix (Acts 24: 1, 2)
7. Runs concurrently with "the
- day of salvation" [2 words] (2 Corinthians 6:2)
9. His son Ahira made the final offering at the inauguration of the altar (Numbers 7: 11, 78)
13. Jesus said the Pharisees strain this out (Matthew 23:24)
15. It replaced the copper basin used with the tabernacle [2 words] (1 Kings 7:23)
16. Joseph's garment was dipped in this animal's blood to make Jacob think he was dead (Genesis 37:31)
21. Our days were prophesied to be like his days (Matthew 24:37)
22. Disclose (Proverbs 25:9)
24. Jesus said the Pharisees gulp this down (Matthew 23:24)
28. What God cannot do (Hebrews 6:13-18)

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS PAGE 27



Young People Ask...

What About After-School Activities?

PLAYING ball is fun. We had practice every day from three to six. I felt really good when I was playing softball." Cathy, a ninth grader in New York, bubbled over with a gleam in her eyes as she spoke about her after-school activities.

The reasons young people join after-school clubs vary. Some seek a career in professional sports. Others simply want to make friends or learn new hobbies. "I was into just about every club there was," recalls one boy in Baltimore. "It made me feel good to work with things I like. I was in an automotive club because I enjoy working with cars. I like computers, so I joined that club. I like audio, so I joined that club."

Yes, many young people find that after-school activities give them a sense of accomplishment. Students seeking higher education are particularly being encouraged to participate in after-school activities. The *Los Angeles Times* reports: "Some colleges and universities already take extracurricular performance and the other indicators into account when selecting freshman classes."

If these and other reasons for joining school clubs and teams sound valid to you, you might wonder, 'Shouldn't I, too, participate?'

After-School Activities and Your Grades

The document *High School & Beyond Tabulation** shows that 88.47 percent of

* Longitudinal Studies Branch Center for Statistics (U.S.A.).

the high school seniors polled participated in some form of extracurricular activities. But nothing comes without a price tag.

For example, the Los Angeles Board of Education adopted a rule that students wanting to join in after-school activities had to maintain a C average in grades and could have no flunks. The result? Twenty percent of the students later were disqualified from participation. The Texas Legislature similarly passed a "No Pass, No Play" rule. Indeed, quite a few local school boards are toughening the standard for participation in extracurricular activities. Academics must come first, they say. Why such a trend?

A U.S. federal government official—formerly a teacher himself—told *Awake!*: "Probably the students spend more time with extracurricular activities than with schoolwork, making it hard to maintain grades."

Yes, it is not easy to maintain balance when it comes to extracurricular activities. Cathy, mentioned earlier, is not on the softball team this year. Asked why not, she answered: "After the practice, I was too tired to do anything else. My schoolwork was affected. So I did not sign up this year."

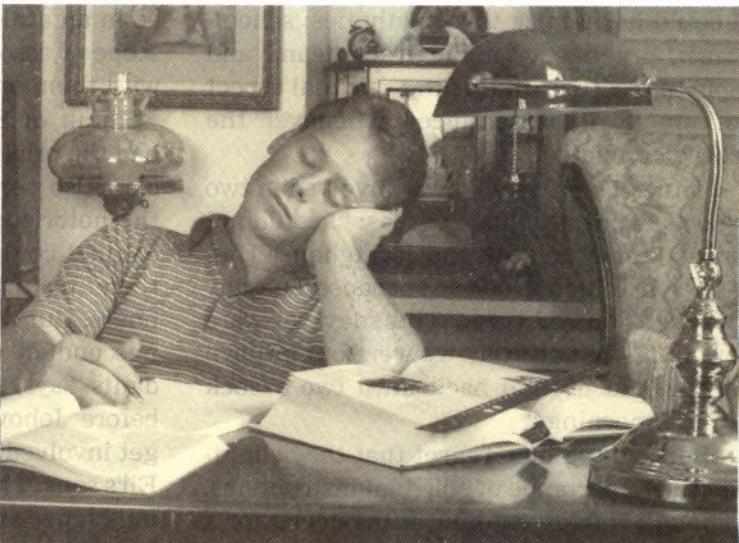
Just think: What time do you get off from school? Now add the time you are to spend on your homework. Add another hour for dinner. Can you really do your

**Balancing
after-school activities
with your homework
may not be easy**



homework, participate in after-school activities, and still have sufficient time for sleep and recreation?

The Family Handbook of Adolescence notes: "Devotion to the practice necessary to succeed [at school sports] may exclude other experiences and accomplishments." Taking this into consideration, it is good to ask yourself: Will I be too tired to do anything else after practice? How will the schedule for extracurricular activities affect the time spent with my family and in other pursuits? How do my parents feel?



Wise King Solomon recommended: "Is it honey that you have found? Eat what is sufficient for you, that you may not take

too much of it and have to vomit it up." (Proverbs 25:16) Just as eating too much honey will cause nausea, too much of any pleasurable activity can have adverse effects.

Spiritual Dangers

You may not realize that your extracurricular activities are out of hand until you are already bogged down. And when this happens, more than your grades can be affected! Says one Christian man looking back on his teenage years: "I thought

I could harmonize three activities: school-work, practice with the track team, and spiritual activities. But the spiritual aspect of my life was sacrificed whenever the three conflicted."

Young Themon, who was involved in two sports teams at school, agrees: "I could not attend meetings at the [Kingdom] Hall [for spiritual instruction] because Tuesday we were out of town, Thursday we were out of town, Saturday we were out of town and would not get back until two o'clock in the morning."

Both young men regret that they slighted the importance of spiritual instructions. Though "bodily training is beneficial for a little," it is vital to remember that "godly devotion is beneficial for all things." (1 Timothy 4:8) Keeping in mind the limited value of physical exercise and the superlative benefit of godly devotion will help you to make balanced decisions when it comes to after-school activities. The principle applies to academic-type clubs as well. Nothing can beat the benefit of godly devotion.

The spiritual danger is not restricted to the time-consuming element of the extracurricular activities. Think, too, of the moral dangers. Would you be associating with wholesome friends who will be a good moral influence? What would be the subject of conversation? Could the influence of teammates or members of a club have an adverse effect on you?

A spoonful of vinegar, which would not change the taste of a bucket of water, could change the taste of a glass of water. The same can be true of the influence of morally questionable students. Though their influence may not be felt by just being in the same school or classroom with them, their influence would be concentrat-

ed in an athletic team or a club where the scope of associates is limited and you deal with them on a social level.

Think of Samuel in ancient Israel. He had the privilege of serving at the tabernacle. Also serving at the tabernacle were the notorious sons of Eli, the high priest. Samuel could have banded together with them, making bad use of his after-service hours. But the Bible, after mentioning the misconduct of Eli's sons and their attendants, says, "And Samuel was ministering before Jehovah." Apparently, he did not get involved in the after-work activities of Eli's sons. This resulted in Samuel's "growing bigger and more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men." —1 Samuel 2:12-18, 21, 26.

Like Samuel, you can make good use of your time. How about using your time to help others spiritually? Interestingly, some young ones among Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan start to make the ministry their career while they are still in school. They buy out their time before and after school to help others to know the Creator. (Colossians 4:5) Surely you would not want to miss the joy and blessings that come from such out-of-school activities.

In Our Next Issue

- *Pornography—Why Resist It?*
 - *Should I Go In for Bodybuilding?*
 - *Are New Year's Celebrations for Christians?*
-

Will the Abacus Survive Again?

ONCE again, survival of the abacus is endangered—or so it seems. This time, it is threatened by the proliferation of the inexpensive pocket electronic calculator. In Japan the sale of calculators soared from 1.4 million in 1970 to over 68 million in 1983. In 1983 abacus sales were only two million.

Before you write off this simple calculating tool that once enjoyed wide usage, however, do you know that this is not the first time it has had to struggle for survival against new inventions?

From Abakion to Soroban

The abacus was not an exclusively Oriental invention. The Greeks had their *abakion* and the Romans their *abacus*, slabs of wood or marble marked with parallel lines or grooves. Counting was done by moving pebbles up and down these lines. Just try to picture the difficulty in calculating with Roman numerals, and you can see the need for such a tool. Thus, counting-boards became widely used in Europe until the introduction of Hindu-Arabic numbers in the late Middle Ages.

Then came the "algorists," who promoted writing out the calculations with Arabic numbers on paper. The "abacists," on the other hand, stuck to the counting board and Roman numerals. The controversy raged until the 16th century, when paper became more abundant. Finally, the algorists gained the upper hand, and the counting board became an endangered species.

While the battle was on in Europe, the counting board found a new lease on life in the

East. By the 15th century, the Chinese were using a modified form of it, with beads sliding on rods, that they called *suan pan*, or computing tray. From there it found its way across the Yellow Sea to Japan, where it changed into a simpler form—the *soroban*.

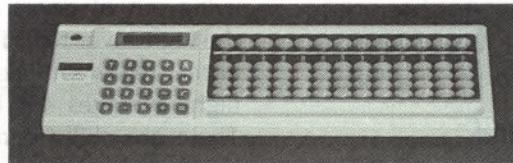
Challenge in the Electronic Age

After surviving another 500 years, the abacus faces a new challenge—the electronic calculator. Back when electronic calculators were so expensive that few people could afford them, the abacus enjoyed a secure place in small shops and offices. But as the price of calculators dropped and sales boomed, the *soroban* appeared to be doomed once again. Or was it?

Well, can you add 15 numbers of 12 digits in 20 seconds? Or how about doing 30 multiplications of 12-digit numbers by 6-digit numbers in four minutes? Masters of the abacus can. But

most calculators cannot even handle that many digits, and it often takes longer just to enter the digits, let alone perform the calculations. As for ordinary calculations, many Japanese still feel they can do better with their *soroban* than with the calculator.

This has prompted one manufacturer to put out a machine with a calculator on one side and an abacus on the other, thus having the best of both worlds. It is reported that 1.5 million of these were sold in ten years. So, are we seeing a rallying of the abacus? Perhaps. In any case, the abacus will always have one advantage over the calculator: There is no need to worry about power failure.



Is Christmas God's Gift to You?

CAN you imagine a year without Christmas? Or December 25 without gifts? Why, even soldiers in battle have stopped fighting on Christmas Day and exchanged gifts! Millions of people believe that Christmas is God's gift to us. But is it?

It is reported that more than three out of every four persons worldwide would answer no. That includes you if you are a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Jew, an agnostic, or an atheist—and then neither do you believe that Christ is God's Son, and Christmas supposedly celebrates Christ's birth, thus the Christ's mass. Yet—Christian or non-Christian—everyone's future is tied to belief in him.

God's Real Gift to Mankind

More than one billion people claim to acknowledge Jesus Christ as mankind's Savior. The Bible agrees: Jesus was a perfect man. He lived a sinless life, remaining free of any condition that could justify his death. So he had the right to live forever and father a perfect human race of his own.

But he did not claim that right. Instead, he died as "a ransom in exchange for many" of existing mankind, bequeathing human perfection and endless life to them. Therefore, Jesus is God's gift to mankind.—Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Hebrews 2:9, 10.

Your acceptance of this gift can bring you lasting benefits. The Bible says that "God

loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) So faith in Christ matters; your future life depends on it. No wonder that about a quarter of mankind celebrates his birth at Christmas. And yet, was he really born on Christmas Day?

When Was Jesus Born?

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "there were also in that same country shepherds living out of doors and keeping watches in the night over their flocks." (Luke 2:8-11) But in that region of Palestine the temperature at night averages 45° F. (7° C.) in December. There are chilly rains on some days. Those shepherds would not have been out of doors with their flocks at night. Their custom was to bring them into enclosed shelters.

Also, Jesus' parents had gone to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus had ordered an empire-wide registration, "and all people went traveling . . . each one to his own city." (Luke 2:1, 3) Would the Roman ruler have chosen a cold, rainy month for requiring his often rebellious subjects to make long, arduous journeys? Hardly!

Then, when was Jesus born? There is strong evidence that the date was early in October. The prophet Daniel had foretold that Messiah (Christ) would appear at the start of a seven-



Do you know the origin of these Christmas customs?



year "week" and would be "cut off" in the middle of it, or after 3 1/2 years, when he would die a sacrificial death. (Daniel 9:24-27) Jesus was "about thirty years old" when he began his ministry as the Christ. So he was about 33 1/2 when he died about the beginning of April, on Passover Day. (Luke 3:21-23; Matthew 26:2) He would have been 34 about six months later, in October. Evidently he was not born in December!

Does It Honor Christ?

But why quibble about the date as long as Christ is honored and the spirit of Christmas is observed? After all, the festival is sacred for devout worshipers. It is a time for carols and hymns, a time for gifts and family gatherings. It is a nostalgic time, a time to be remembered. Yet, that may be the problem.

Often the memories are of personal pleasures that do not pertain to Christ. Gifts do not always express the joy of giving—but, rather, the pleasure of receiving. Then there

is the excessive revelry and the growing commercialization of the occasion. This is the spirit that makes Christmas popular, but it does not honor Christ.

Therefore the question arises: Is Christmas even Christian?

The Roots of Christmas

A corresponding celebration was observed by polytheistic sun worshipers. According to *The Encyclopedia Americana*, such people in northern Europe "celebrated their chief festival of Yule at the winter solstice to commemorate the rebirth of the sun . . . The Roman Saturnalia . . . also took place at this time, and some Christmas customs are thought to be rooted in this ancient pagan celebration. It is held by some scholars that the birth of Christ as 'Light of the World' was made analogous to the rebirth of the sun in order to make Christianity more meaningful" to converts who had previously honored their own mythical gods by such festivals.

Jesus' followers, however, held no commemoration of Christ's birthday at all—not on December 25, not even in October. And this held true until about the middle of the fourth century. Origen, a third-century his-

Rooted in Mythology

- Birthday observance was common in many polytheistic cultures. Idolatrous rites were performed in honor of the patron gods of each particular birthday, and birthdays of mythical gods like Saturn and Apollo were also celebrated. States Dr. John C. McCollister in his book *The Christian Book of Why*: "Christians of the first century did not celebrate the festival honoring the birth of Jesus—for the same reason they honored no other birthday anniversary. It was the feeling at that time by all Christians that the celebration of all birthdays (even the Lord's) was a custom of the pagans."
- Ancient peoples thought that certain evergreen plants like the mistletoe and holly had great magical powers. They decorated their houses with these to ward off evil spirits and witches. This practice developed into the Christmas decorations.
- Trees were venerated in most polytheistic cultures. Sacred groves were believed to be inhabited by ancestral spirits, and presents were offered to them in return for favors. This is still done in West Africa.
- The European Christmas custom of burning a huge . . . log in the fireplace can be traced back to the Scandinavians who kindled enormous bonfires in honor of their god of thunder, Thor.
- Gift giving, rather than being patterned after the gifts offered by the so-called wise men, or astrologers, is really based on the pagan Roman gift giving of the Saturnalia (festival that honored the god Saturn) and of calends (New Year) celebrations.

torian, wrote that "of all the holy people in the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a . . . birthday. It is only sinners (like Pharaoh and Herod) who make great rejoicings over the day on which they were born." (Genesis 40:20-23; Mark 6:21-28) According to McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Jews of Bible times "regarded birthday celebrations as parts of idolatrous worship."

Could Christ be honored by festivals originally designed for mythical gods and idolatrous worship? The Bible answers: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For . . . what agreement does God's temple have with idols?" (2 Corinthians 6:14-16) Dressing idolatrous festivals with a Christian name does not make them acquire harmony with Christ.

Really Appreciating God's Gift

No wonder Jesus did not command a commemoration of his birth! But he did inaugurate a binding Memorial of his death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) He died that you may have life. And you can show appreciation for this and truly honor him by not going beyond his instructions. As he said: "He that has my commandments and observes them, that one is he who loves me. In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father."—John 14:21.

Such obedience is all the more vital because Jesus is now neither a babe nor a dead Savior. He was resurrected to immortal life on the third day after his death and has been given "all authority . . . in heaven and on the earth." As mankind's rightful Ruler, he will shortly remove all causes for sorrow so that those truly loving him can receive the gift of everlasting life on a paradise earth.—Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:22-36; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:1-5.

Yes, Christ, not Christmas, is God's gift.

Pursuing Peace With All People

AS A boy growing up in Denmark, I had always taken a keen interest in the sea. Since Denmark is almost surrounded by water, it is natural for some in that land to make seafaring a career. That is what I had in mind to do as my life's work.

In my youth I often thought about the seafaring Vikings of many centuries ago. Perhaps included among them were some of my own ancestors. Later, when I pursued my maritime career, I often traveled over the sea-lanes supposedly used by the Vikings.

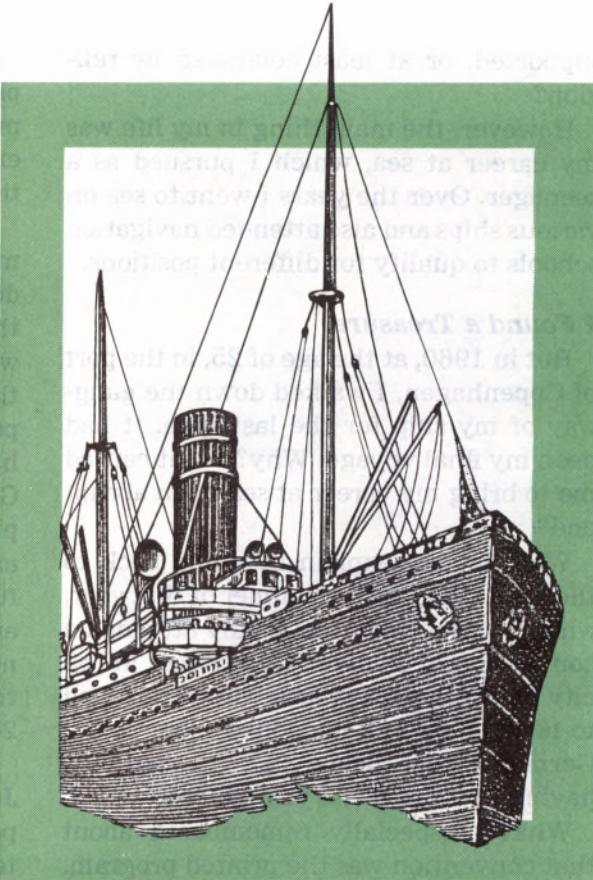
Religion's Unpeaceful Role

But Vikings believed in war and conquest. Their ferocity moved Alcuin, an English scholar of the eighth century, to lament: "Never before has such terror appeared in Britain." In the following 250 years many people in Europe prayed: "From the fury of the Northmen deliver us, O Lord!"

Religion had much to do with the war-

like nature of the Vikings. They believed that only if they died in battle could they gain entrance to Valhalla, the supposed paradise of the Vikings. It was said to be located in the home of their gods, prominent among whom was Odin, their god of battle and death. Thus the Viking religion encouraged a warlike nature. One source called it a "blood-reeking religion."

It disturbed me that religion could be such a promoter of violence. As a result, I often wondered if it would ever be possible for people of all different nationalities and religions to live in peace. Did history have to keep repeating itself so often in outbursts of hatred, war, and violent death, much of which was encouraged,



supported, or at least condoned by religion?

However, the main thing in my life was my career at sea, which I pursued as a teenager. Over the years I went to sea on various ships and also attended navigation schools to qualify for different positions.

I Found a Treasure

But in 1960, at the age of 25, in the port of Copenhagen, I walked down the gangway of my ship for the last time. It had been my final voyage. Why? What caused me to bring my career at sea to an abrupt end?

Well, let me explain by going back to the year 1941. In the summer of that year, when I was a child, our family attended a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of Odense, Denmark. Great care had to be exercised at the convention, as the Germans were occupying the country, having invaded it the year before.

What I especially remembered about that convention was the printed program.

Vikings believed that only if they died in battle could they enter Valhalla

On its back cover, there was an illustration of a woman sitting upon a ferocious-looking wild beast that had seven heads and ten horns. At the time, I did not know what the woman and the unusual beast represented. I was to find out years later.

Fourteen years passed before I attended another convention of Jehovah's Witnesses—this time in Stockholm, in 1955. The ship I was on was not scheduled to get near Stockholm until after the conven-

tion. But in Hamburg, Germany, the shipping company kindly intervened and put me on a ship that got there earlier. This enabled me to attend the entire convention.

After the convention, I returned to Denmark, eager to learn more about the wonderful things I had heard. When one of the Witnesses offered to study the Bible with me, I gladly accepted. I learned that the Bible had long ago foretold the very period of time we are living in, when peace has been taken away from the earth. Great wars, along with other evils, have plagued mankind since 1914, dwarfing anything the Vikings did. What these awful conditions of our time mean is that we are in "the last days" foretold in the Bible, near the end of this present system of things.—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; Matthew 24:3-14; Revelation 6:3-8.

But I was also delighted to learn that Jehovah God would establish lasting peace on earth in our time, after this system's end. In a new system, the Bible shows, people will be able to live forever amid Paradise conditions, without sickness, sorrow, or tears. (Psalm 37:29; 46:8, 9; Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4) What a treasure I had found in these heartwarming Bible promises!

The Woman Identified

What about the woman sitting on the unusual wild beast that I remembered from the program 14 years before? Well, Revelation 17:18 states: "The woman whom you saw means the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth." And in that "city," Revelation 18:24 explains, "was found the blood... of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."

Who was that woman? The startling answer was that she represented the world empire of false religion! But how could world religion, generally believed to be a force for good, be responsible for such ghastly misdeeds? I decided to do some research on my own. Ironically, it was statements made by religious leaders that removed all doubt from my mind. Not only had the ancient Vikings been led

Not only were the Vikings misled by false religion but the nations of our 20th century are as well

astray by false religion but so had the nations of our 20th century!

For example, during World War I the archbishop of Cologne, Germany, said to German soldiers: "We command you in the name of God, to fight to the last drop of your blood for the honor and glory of the country." On the opposite side, the bishop of London, England, urged: "Kill Germans—do kill them . . . As I have said a thousand times, I look upon it as a war for purity, I look upon everyone who died in it as a martyr."

So during wartime, Catholics killed Catholics and Protestants killed Protestants, showing that they were not genuine Christians, for Jesus Christ told his followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) The love I saw among Jehovah's Witnesses at the convention in Stockholm and that they had for one another all over the world regardless of nationality identified them as true disciples of Jesus. Never would they go to

war and take the lives of fellow Christians or anyone else. The Bible clearly shows that God's children do not slaughter one another.—1 John 3:10-12.

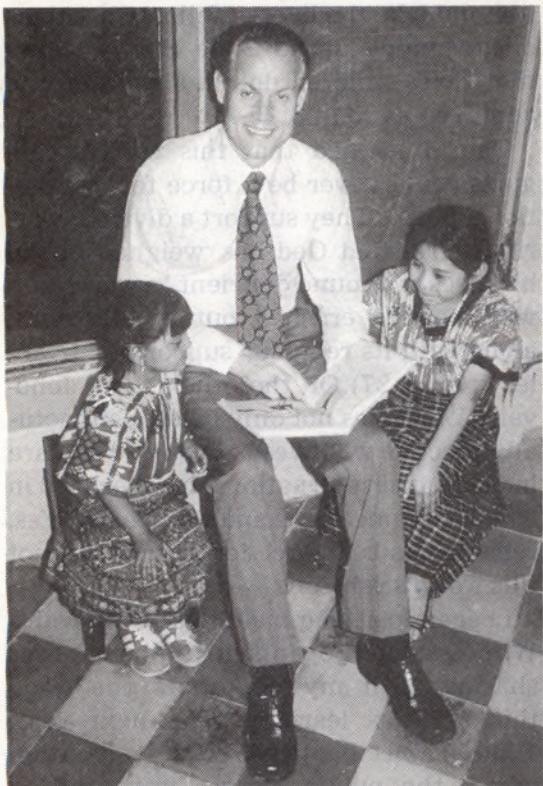
Thus I learned that this world's religions could never be a force for international peace. They support a divided, warring world that God has 'weighed in the balances and found deficient,' a world that will soon be crushed out of existence, along with its religious supporters. (Daniel 2:44; 5:27) On the other hand, Jehovah's Witnesses not only believe but actually practice what Jesus taught. They are indeed a true international brotherhood in which genuine peace and unity exist. Yes, religion can be a force for peace—but not this world's religions.

I began to attend meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses in Copenhagen. Soon I was sharing with my neighbors the good things I was learning. The next year, 1956, I was baptized at a convention where the public lecture was entitled "New World Peace in Our Time—Why?" I was thrilled to be in that peaceful audience and to be part of Jehovah's unified international organization. I had found a priceless treasure indeed!—Compare Matthew 13:44.

A Time for Decisions

On October 15, 1960, I made that final walk down the gangway. It had not been an easy decision, for I liked the sea. Also, I felt that I was too young to settle down. But I was aware that I could have a fuller share in doing what was pleasing to God by not always being on the move.

Then in 1965 I attended some of the many international conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses that were being held in Europe. After listening to information



Frede E. Bruun with young Witness friends in Guatemala

about the full-time preaching activity, I realized that an important decision was still ahead of me. The next year I made the decision to enroll as a full-time minister of the good news. (Matthew 24:14) So I embarked on a new career to help others learn about God's purpose to establish permanent peace on earth in our time.

During the next few years, I contemplated making yet another big decision. At the 1969 "Peace on Earth" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Copenhagen, several talks discussed the possibilities of increasing one's ministry by going to other areas of the world. That information helped me to make up my

mind. I applied for training as a missionary at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York.

The next year I attended the 50th class of Gilead. After five months of intensive, enjoyable study, I was assigned to Guatemala in Central America. Our diplomas of graduation stated that we were "specially qualified to engage in educational work, promoting goodwill and working in behalf of permanent peace and the law of perfect order and righteousness, among all peoples."

That is what I have worked at in Guatemala since my arrival in 1971. It has been a privilege to help many humble people in this country learn about Jehovah's message of peace and to see them respond to it. By lining up their lives with God's laws and principles, they have found peace even in this troubled world. And they also have the sure hope of lasting peace in God's new system. How true the words of Jesus: "Happy are the peaceable." That happiness will be even greater in the near future, for Jesus also said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth."—Matthew 5:5, 9.

God's Spirit—A Force for Peace

God's powerful active force enables his people to acquire and maintain true peace and unity, although they may have been from very different backgrounds. There are literally millions of examples that show the profound effect pursuing peace is having on people's lives.

One such is that of Michael Molina. Michael had been a machine gunner on aircraft in Vietnam and had been awarded 29 medals. But when he learned about God's purposes, he made his decision to do God's will and pursue peace with all people.

After a few years, Michael went to Gilead School and was assigned to Guatemala as a missionary. Today Michael and I serve in the branch in Guatemala City and also as overseers in the same congregation.

Yes, when people pursue peace in God's way, they are backed by his holy spirit, and it enables them to make striking changes in their lives.—Acts 5:32; Galatians 5:22, 23.

Nation Will Not Lift Up Sword Against Nation

Nearly 25 years have passed since I gave my first public talk in Denmark. It was entitled "Swords Into Plowshares"—In Our Time." Little did I realize that I would be talking about that peace for a quarter of a century in many places, including lands where there is little peace now.

I recall one Central American country I visited where, after I gave a Bible lecture, I passed dead bodies on the roadside. This was the result of the political violence in that land. It made me think how very much we need to see fulfilled the Bible's promise about life in God's new system, where "the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11.

My career of pursuing peace among all people has been far more satisfying to me than my career at sea. While I still find ships and the sea interesting, I have no regrets at changing my life's work. And pursuing peace in God's way means that I will not be among the figurative 'ship captains' that are mentioned in the Bible book of Revelation who 'weep and mourn' when they see the destruction of the 'woman' I first saw depicted on that convention program in 1941. (Revelation 18: 17-19) No, I will not weep and mourn at

seeing false religion destroyed at God's hand. Why not? Because Revelation 18: 20 says: "Be glad . . . because God has judicially exacted punishment for you from her!"

The removal of all false religion, as well as this world's conflicting political and economic systems, will finally bring total peace to this earth. Bible prophecy declares: "He [Jehovah] will certainly render judgment among the nations and set matters straight respecting many peoples. And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." Today, millions of people who worship Jehovah are already fulfilling that prophecy!—Isaiah 2:4.

Do you, too, want to live on a paradise earth where there will be true peace? Then you will want to be numbered among those who are pursuing it right now!—*As told by Frede E. Bruun.*

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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From Our Readers

Living Together or Marriage?

I really appreciated your articles on "Marriage—Is It Necessary?" (July 8, 1986) I could not keep those for myself. I had to tell a friend of mine who is living with her boyfriend. The testimony worked. They will get married very soon. Thank you very much.

C. D., France

Avoiding Being Raped

I have to thank you for the item entitled "Best Weapon: Screaming" that gave advice on avoiding being raped. (August 22, 1980, "Watching the World") While walking from one village to another recently, a man pursued me and made a violent attempt to rape me. I screamed and shouted aloud for help. Two men ran out from the bush to rescue me, and the rapist ran away. Thanks again.

E. A. A., Nigeria

Mystery Behind the Occult

Thank you very much for publishing the articles on "The Mystery Behind the Occult," and especially the article "The Demons Controlled Me." (August 22, 1986) At first, I felt reluctant to read the item because I myself had been under the influence of the demons, and the remembrance of it is still painful to me. However, I overcame this feeling and found the articles enlightening and also encouraging.

E. T., England

The Unborn Child

Thank you for publishing "A Letter From the Mother of an Unborn Child." (July 22, 1986) I, too, had an abortion eight years ago, and as time goes on, the pain deep-

ens. It was comforting to know that someone else understood. If I would then have read an article such as this, I would not have had the abortion. Now I await Jehovah God's new system when abortions will be done away with and I'll be free of my guilt.

K. P., United States

Artificial Eyes

I enjoyed reading the article "Peering Into the World of Artificial Eyes." (August 8, 1986) I am 15 years old, and when I was 6, I had to have my eye removed because of a tumor. I now have to wear an artificial eye. Whenever you tell people that you have an artificial eye, they always think that it's glass. But the answers the doctor gave will help others to understand. As I have got older, I have often wondered whether it has made me look different and not pretty. Most people don't realize that there is anything wrong with my eye. My parents and I are glad that we have the hope that Jehovah will put my eye right and correct all other illnesses in the new system.

C. T., Wales

Salty Drink Saves Lives

I would like to thank you for the article "A Salty Drink That Saves Lives!" (September 22, 1985) My father-in-law had a serious attack of dysentery that lasted three days. I remembered this article and applied its counsel to my father-in-law. As soon as I gave him the solution of water, sugar, and salt, he began to feel better; and the day after, he had completely recovered. I am sure it was this salty drink that did the trick.

A. Q., Italy

Watching the World



Religious Freedom Upheld in India

"The Supreme Court of India has held that no one can be forced to join in the singing of the national anthem, if the person has a genuine, conscientious religious objection," reports *India Abroad*. The court ordered that the three children of Jehovah's Witnesses who were expelled from school for not singing the anthem be readmitted. The judges observed that the children always stood and listened respectfully when the anthem was sung but did not participate in singing "because their religion does not permit them to join any rituals except it be in their prayers to Jehovah, their God." The expulsion of the children, said the court, was a violation of their constitutional right to religious freedom. The Supreme Court added: 'Our tradition, philosophy and Constitution teach and practice tolerance. Let us not dilute it.'

Inconsiderate of the Elderly

"Before the vacation trip starts, the dog is put into the public dog kennels and grandfather into the hospital." This is how Peter Breitenfellner, assistant medical director of a hospital in Linz, Austria, characterized a new trend. According to the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, hospitals registered an in-

creased number of elderly patients during vacation time this summer. In several cases, the elderly were deliberately made sick. "Sometimes a diabetic was not given his daily insulin so that he had to be hospitalized. Or we had cases when heart medication was withheld from old people to ensure hospitalization," said the doctor.

Firearms Peril

"The advisability of keeping firearms in the home for protection must be questioned," says an



article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Why? In reviewing the 743 gun-related deaths that occurred in King County, Washington, during a six-year period, it was found that 54 percent of them took place in homes where a firearm was kept. Of these 398 deaths, only 18 involved self-defense or the killing of someone who was engaged in a felony. The vast majority were suicides, homicides, or accidental deaths of someone in the household. About half of all United States homes

are said to have at least one firearm.

Burnout Syndrome

What is "burnout syndrome"? It is "a symptom that appears when dedication to a goal is not rewarded" and that shows up with feelings of exhaustion, failure, and self-hatred, says Japan's *Mainichi Daily News*. When 498 Japanese doctors and nurses were surveyed with regard to their mental health, the results showed that about 37 percent of the nurses had some sort of mental disorder and almost 32 percent were suffering from burnout. Among the doctors, psychiatrists were the most seriously affected. Almost a quarter of them "were in a state of serious burn-out," reports the paper.

Counterfeit-Proof Paper

Will counterfeit-proof paper spell the end of photocopy fraud? Bankers and businessmen are hoping so, reports *The Sunday Times* of London. According to Lloyd's shipping information services, £4 billion a year is lost worldwide through forgery. Some banks lose more money through photocopied checks and bonds than in armed robbery. Book and sheet-music publishers have also lost fortunes because of piracy. The new "Laserprint Security Paper" is forgery proof, says the article, because it

"incorporates an optical illusion that is invisible to the naked eye but which, if photocopied, shows the word COPY on the paper. Each sheet of paper also contains an elaborate watermark and a serial number." If successful in Europe, the new paper will be sold worldwide.

Airport Malaria

Over the past few years, "airport malaria" has been observed in several countries. Five customs officers in Belgium recently came down with it, and one of them died. "Plasmodium, the parasite responsible for malaria, is injected by the female of the anopheles genus," explains the French daily *Le Figaro*. A tropical mosquito from a contaminated area and carrying plasmodium may enter the airplane on arrival and bite someone at the airport. Or a European or American mosquito may bite someone who has malaria, draw off the plasmodium, and infect another person.

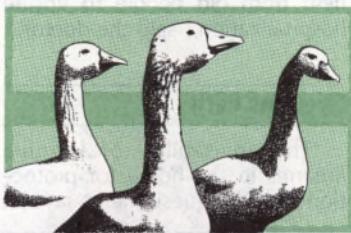
New Aspects of AIDS

Health experts attending the second international congress on AIDS, held in Paris last June, stated that various types of viruses exist for the disease, requiring a specific new vaccine for each type. Two of the specialists compared AIDS with influenza. Comments French weekly *Valeurs Actuelles*: "Influenza viruses are particularly unstable, . . . so a new 'vaccine cocktail' has to be prepared each year in a given area in order to deal with them. As AIDS viruses are much less stable than influenza viruses, an infinitely greater variety of 'cocktails' will have to be concocted at a faster pace." The World Health Organization estimates

that there are some one hundred thousand AIDS cases worldwide at present, with one to 3 million AIDS carriers in the United States and 10 to 15 million in Africa. The future looks dark considering that "four to seven percent of carriers develop AIDS annually."

Guard Geese

The U.S. Army's 32nd Air Defense Command in the Federal Republic of Germany has "recruited" a gaggle of geese for guard duty. According to the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*, eventually the Army plans to engage 900 geese to watch its communi-



cations, radar, and air-defense equipment in the Federal Republic of Germany. "They are to serve as a natural warning system," said the Command's spokesman in Darmstadt, Major Joe Padilla. "Whenever they notice something strange close by, they raise a lot of noise." Geese have an acute sense of hearing and sound the alarm by loudly hissing and honking and flapping their wings. The cost of the entire goose patrol is said to be less than that of a single trained guard dog.

Death by Passive Smoking

The family of a nonsmoking woman has been awarded compensation by Sweden's Insurance Court of Appeal after it ruled that passive smoking had been "the

probable cause" of her death. This is "a first decision of its kind," states *World Health* magazine. For almost 20 years, Mrs. Gun Palm shared an office in Stockholm with smoking colleagues. In 1980, at age 53, she developed lung cancer of a type that usually only smokers contract. She died in February 1982. The director of Sweden's National Smoking and Health Association said that the decision will "effectively contribute to strengthening the measures to create smoking-free environments."

Heading for Six Billion

Earth's population passed the five billion mark in July 1986, reports *The New York Times*. Werner Fornos, president of the Population Institute in Washington, D.C., was quoted as saying that the birth of the five billionth person was "a sobering symbol of the shocking rapidity at which the world's population is multiplying." It took until 1850 for earth's population to reach one billion. It passed the second billion in 1930, the third in 1960, the fourth in 1974, and now, just 12 years later, it stands at five billion. If the population continues to increase at the present rate, the six billionth person will be born before the 21st century.

Do You Have Trouble Sleeping?

About 30 percent of older people complain they have trouble sleeping, reports *The New York Times*. "Yet some who think they have sleep problems may simply be experiencing the normal changes in sleep patterns that accompany aging." While a child of four sleeps an average of ten hours nightly, teenagers nine hours, and

young adults seven or eight, the elderly normally sleep four to six hours, and many get along fine on just three or four hours each night. "Sleep becomes lighter and more fitful with age," the article adds. "This is neither good nor bad; it is simply normal." For persons who persistently have trouble sleeping at night, moderate exercise at least two hours before bedtime, a relaxing bath, cutting down daytime naps, watching eating habits, and avoiding caffeine are among the things suggested. Reminds sleep expert Dr. Nathaniel Kleitman: "No one ever died of insomnia."

90-Year-Old Mother

Last July "a 90-year-old woman Luxmi, wife of 92-year-old Asha Ram, gave birth to a baby girl" in the Indian village of Kalwasia, re-

ports the Bombay newspaper *Times of India*. The newborn infant died soon after birth.

Overbreathing

Overbreathing, or hyperventilation, can bring on the symptoms of heart attack, impending stroke, or stomach disorder, reports *Asia-week* magazine. It may also induce anxiety, phobias, sweating, palpitations, chest pain, visual disturbances, dizziness, asthma, gastric upsets, migraine, mental disorientation, numbness, and loss of concentration. Some people take 20 or 30 breaths a minute, while 12 to 14 is the norm. Athletes, actors, singers, wind instrumentalists, and compulsive people are most at risk. Yet, according to chest specialist Dr. Claude Lum, three out of four patients who

hyperventilate can be taught to breathe correctly. Trying breath control through yoga, though, would be "swapping one extreme for another," doctors warn.

The Earlier the Better

"By junior high, it is probably too late" to teach children effectively the dangers of smoking, says a manual prepared by Japan's Education Ministry. The ministry is trying to counteract the recent increase in minors who smoke. The manual is designed to be used in elementary school and includes facts and figures proving the dangers of smoking. The manual, however, appears to be somewhat ambiguous because it emphasizes that children should not "pass judgment on smoking as a social evil."

wayed be "swallowing one extreme for another," doctors say.

The Esther-like patient

"A young lady, 30 years old, developed a severe headache so strong she had to leave the church service early. She was a woman of normal health, but had been to a doctor recently. The physician diagnosed her condition as tension headache and prescribed mild tranquilizers. She took them but did not feel better. She began to complain of tension headaches again. Her physician prescribed stronger drugs, but she continued to complain. The physician suggested she see a specialist. After five

months of this, the doctor recommended she see a psychiatrist. Esther, however, could not afford to pay the fees.

Overprescription of tranquilizers

Overprescription of tranquilizers, too, can give rise to rebound headache. If you feel trapped in a cycle of frequent rebound headaches, it's time to seek help. Your physician may suggest alternative treatments, such as biofeedback, relaxation, massage, or hypnosis. If you feel you have a genuine dependency problem, you may need to see a psychiatrist. The physician will take 15 to 30 minutes to determine if your problem is real, rather than a rebound headache. According to the American Psychiatric Association, the best treatment for rebound headache is to stop taking tranquilizers.

Some clubs now offer support groups for people who have rebound headaches. These groups are often run by former patients who have overcome their problem. They can provide encouragement and support to others who are still struggling with the disease. Some clubs also offer educational programs, such as workshops on how to manage rebound headaches. These clubs can be found in many cities across the country. They can provide valuable information and support to those who are suffering from rebound headaches. They can also offer social activities and networking opportunities for people who share similar interests.

AWAKE-OIN Member

Paula Jones, 28, of St. Louis, Mo., is a member of the AWAKE-OIN group. She has suffered from rebound headaches since she was a child. She says, "I used to have migraines when I was younger, but they disappeared when I grew up. Now I have rebound headaches almost every day. It's very frustrating because I know what causes them, but I can't seem to control them. I've tried everything from over-the-counter medications to prescription drugs, but nothing seems to work. I'm hoping that joining a support group will help me find a way to manage my headaches without relying on medication."