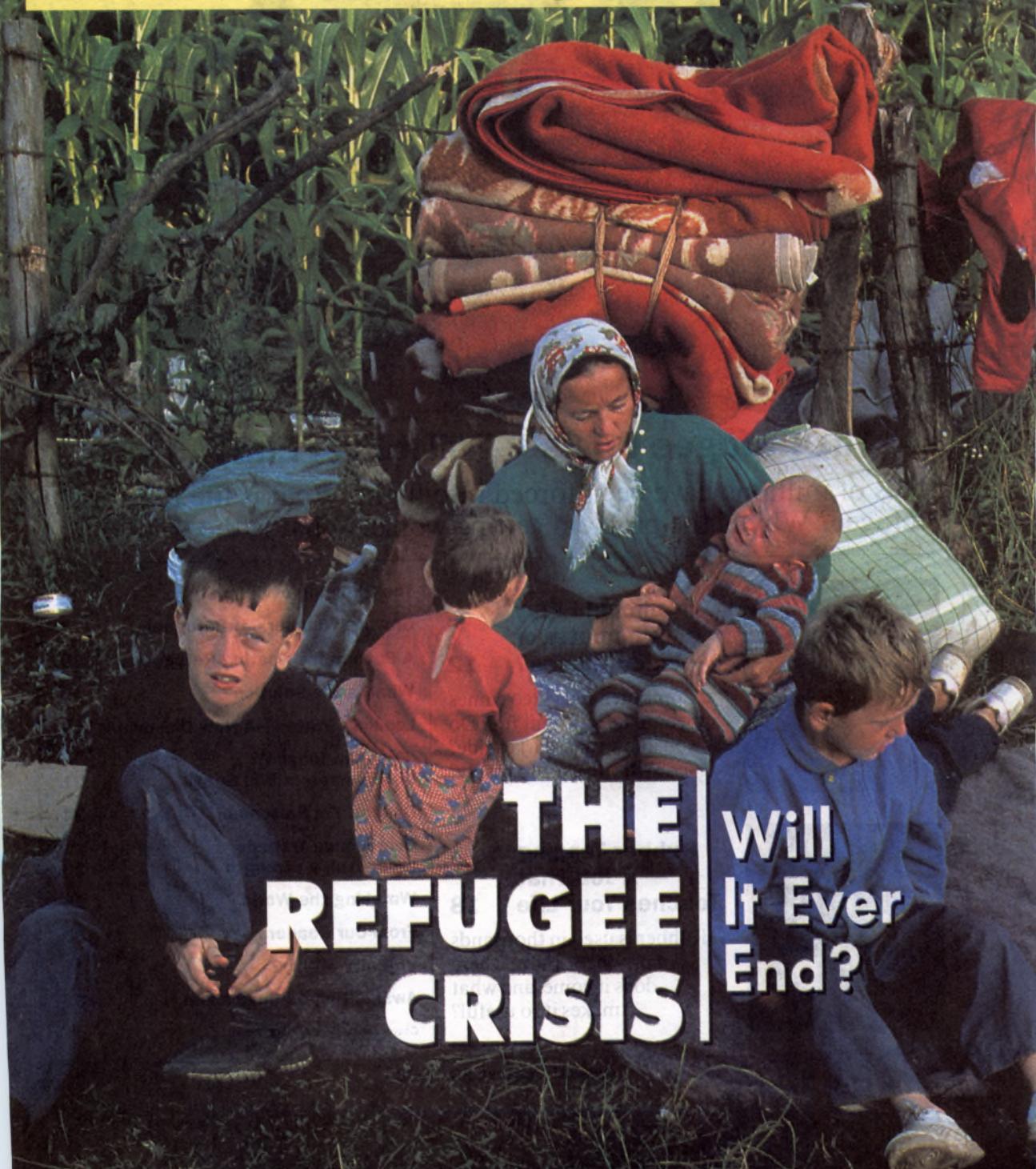


Awake!

August 22, 1996

THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Will
It Ever
End?





The Refugee Crisis—Will It Ever End? 3-11

Tens of millions have been forced into flight. What is life like for a refugee? Why is the problem getting worse? What is the solution?



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Cover: Albert Facelly/Sipa Press

The Offspring of Calamity

Boy on left: UN PHOTO 159243/J. Isaac



WHAT is it like to be a refugee? Try to imagine you are living in peace, but suddenly your whole world changes. Overnight, neighbors become enemies. Soldiers are coming who will loot and burn your home.

You have ten minutes to pack and flee for your life. You can take only one small bag, since you will have to carry it for many miles. What will you put in it?

You leave amid sounds of gunfire and artillery. You join others who are also fleeing. Days pass; you shuffle along hungry, thirsty, and unbelievably tired. To survive, you must drive your body beyond exhaustion. You sleep on the ground. You forage in a field for something to eat.

You approach a safe country, but border guards will not let you cross. They search your bag and seize everything of value. You find another checkpoint and cross the border. You are put into a squalid refugee camp, fenced with barbed wire. Although surrounded by

others who share your plight, you feel alone and bewildered.

You miss the companionship of your family and friends. You find yourself utterly dependent on outside assistance. There is no work and nothing to do. You fight feelings of hopelessness, despair, and anger. You worry about your future, knowing that your stay in the camp will likely be temporary. After all, the camp is not a home—it is like a waiting room or a warehouse of people that nobody wants. You wonder if you will be forcibly sent back to where you came from.

This is the experience of millions today. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 27 million people worldwide have fled war or persecution. An additional 23 million people are displaced within their own countries. All told, 1 out of every 115 people on earth has been forced into flight. Most are women and children. The offspring of war and calamity, refugees are set adrift in a world that does not want them, a world that rejects them, not because of who they are, but because of what they are.

Their presence is a sign of the profound upheaval around the world. States UNHCR: "Refugees are the ultimate symptom of social disintegration. They are the last, most obvious, link in a chain of causes and effects that define the extent of a country's social and political breakdown. Looked at globally, they are a barometer of the current state of human civilization."

Experts say that the problem is unprecedented in scale and is growing, with no end in sight. What has led to such a situation? Is there any solution? The following articles will examine these questions.

U.S. Navy photo

Growing Numbers of Refugees

Boy on left: UN PHOTO 159243/J. Isaac



MOST of human history has been marred by wars, famines, and persecution. As a result, there have always been people who needed asylum. Historically, nations and peoples have given asylum to those in need.

Laws providing asylum were honored by the ancient Aztecs, Assyrians, Greeks, Hebrews, Muslims, and others. Plato, the Greek philosopher, wrote more than 23 centuries ago: "The foreigner, isolated from his fellow countrymen and his family, should be the subject of greater love on the part of men and of the gods. So all precautions must be taken in order that no wrong be committed against foreigners."

During the 20th century, the number of refugees has soared. In an effort to care for the 1.5 million refugees remaining from World War II, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1951. It had a projected life span of three years, based on the idea that the existing refugees would soon become integrated into the societies in which they had found asylum. After that, it was thought, the organization could be disbanded.

Over the decades, however, the number

of refugees rose relentlessly. By 1975 their number had reached 2.4 million. In 1985 the figure was 10.5 million. By 1995 the number of people receiving protection and assistance from UNHCR had soared to 27.4 million!

Many hoped that the post-Cold War era would open the way to resolve the global refugee problem; it did not. Instead, nations have splintered along historical or ethnic lines, resulting in conflict. As wars raged, people fled, knowing that their governments could not or would not protect them. In 1991, for example, nearly two million Iraqis spilled into neighboring countries. Since then, an estimated 735,000 refugees have fled the former Yugoslavia. Then, in 1994, civil war in Rwanda forced more than half the country's 7.3 million people to flee their homes. About 2.1 million Rwandans sought refuge in nearby African countries.

Why Is the Problem Getting Worse?

There are several factors that contribute to the growing number of refugees. In some places, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, national governments have collapsed. This has left matters in the hands of armed mi-

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litias who plunder the countryside without restraint, causing panic and flight.

In other places, conflict is based on complex ethnic or religious differences, in which a primary objective of the warring parties is to rout civilian populations. Concerning the war in the former Yugoslavia, a UN representative lamented in mid-1995: "For many people it's quite difficult to understand the causes of this war: who's fighting, the reasons for fighting. There's a mass exodus from one side and then three weeks later there's a mass exodus from the other side. It's very hard to follow even for people who have to follow it."

Highly destructive modern weapons—multiple-launch rockets, missiles, artillery, and the like—add to the carnage and enlarge the arena of conflict. The result: ever more refugees. In recent times about 80 percent of the world's refugees have fled from developing countries to neighboring countries that are also developing and ill-equipped to care for those seeking asylum.

In many conflicts lack of food contributes to the problem. When people are starving, perhaps because relief convoys are blocked, they are forced to move. *The New York Times* notes: "In places like the Horn of Africa, the combination of drought and war has so savaged the land that it can no longer provide a livelihood. Whether the hundreds of thousands who leave are fleeing starvation or war is academic."

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The Unwanted Millions

While the idea of asylum is honored in principle, the huge number of refugees dismays the nations. The situation finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. When Jacob and his family sought refuge in Egypt to escape the ravages of a seven-year famine, they were welcomed. Pharaoh gave them "the very best of the land" in which to dwell.—Genesis 47:1-6.

As time passed, however, the Israelites became numerous, "so that the land got to be filled with them." The Egyptians now responded with harshness, yet "the more [the Egyptians] would oppress them, the more [the Israelites] would multiply and the more they kept spreading abroad, so that they felt a sickening dread as a result of the sons of Israel."—Exodus 1:7, 12.

Similarly, nations today feel "a sickening dread" as the number of refugees continues to multiply. A major reason for their concern is economic. It costs a lot of money to feed, clothe, house, and protect millions of refugees. Between 1984 and 1993, the yearly spending of UNHCR rose from \$444 million to \$1.3 billion. Most of the money is donated by wealthier nations, some of whom are struggling with economic problems of their own. Donor nations sometimes complain: 'We are hard-pressed to help the homeless on our own streets. How can we be responsible for the homeless of the entire

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The Plight of Refugees

"Did you know that hundreds of thousands of refugee children go to sleep hungry every night? Or that only one refugee child out of eight has ever been to school? Most of these children have never been to the movies, or the park, much less to a museum. Many grow up behind barbed wire or in isolated camps. They've never seen a cow or a dog. Too many refugee children think green grass is something to eat, not something upon which to romp and run.

Refugee children are the saddest part of my job." —Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

U.S. Navy photo



planet, especially when the problem is more likely to grow than diminish?"

What Complicates Matters?

Those refugees who do reach a rich nation frequently find that their situation has been complicated by the many thousands of people who have migrated to the same country for economic reasons. These economic migrants are not refugees fleeing war or persecution or famine. Instead, they have come seeking a better life—a life free from

poverty. Because they often pretend to be refugees, beleaguering the asylum networks with false claims, they make it harder for genuine refugees to get a fair hearing.*

The influx of refugees and immigrants has been likened to two streams that have flowed side by side into wealthy countries for years. However, increasingly strict immigration laws have blocked the stream of economic immigrants. Thus, they have become a part of the refugee stream, and this stream has overflowed to create a flood.

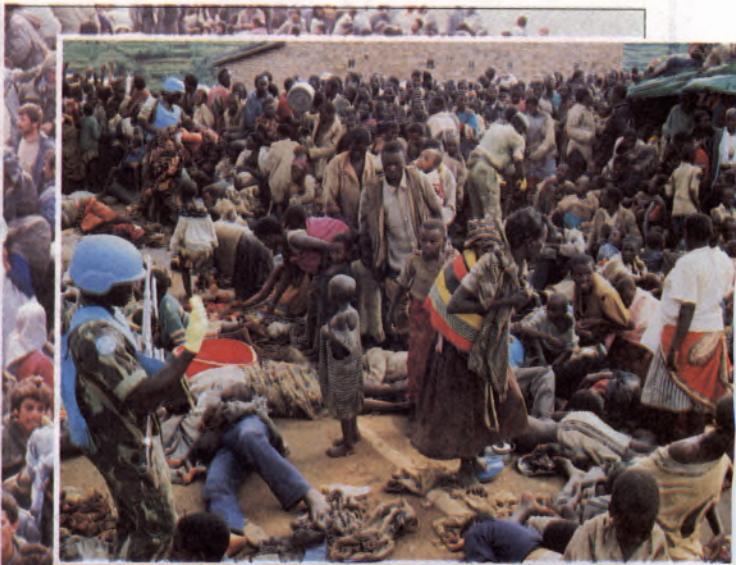
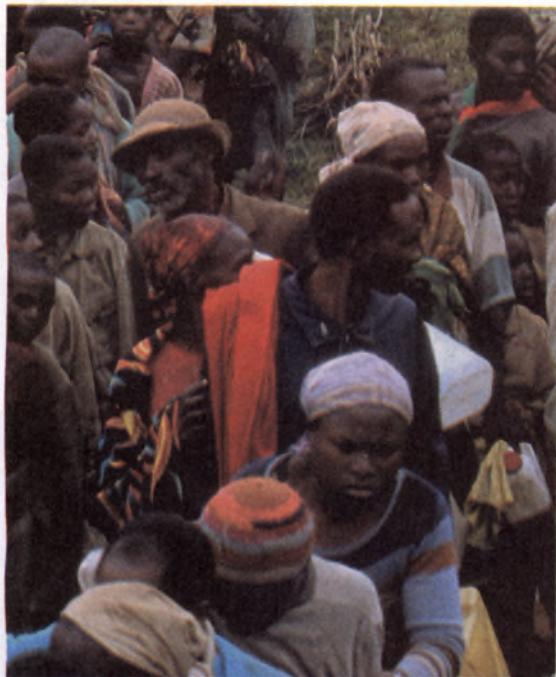
Knowing that it might take several years to examine their asylum request, economic migrants reason that they are in a win-win situation. If their request for asylum is accepted, they win, since they can remain in a healthier economic setting. If their request is rejected, they also win, since they will have earned some money and learned some skills to take home with them.

As increasing numbers of refugees, along with impostors, stream their way, many countries are pulling in the welcome mat and slamming the door. Some have closed their borders to those in flight. Other countries have introduced laws and procedures that just as effectively deny entry to the refugee. Still other countries have forcibly returned refugees to the lands from which they fled. Observes one UNHCR publication: "The relentless increase in numbers—both of genuine refugees and of economic migrants—has imposed a serious strain on the 3,500-year-old tradition of asylum, bringing it close to collapse."

Hatred and Fear

Adding to the problems of the refugee is the specter of xenophobia—fear and hatred of foreigners. In many countries people believe that outsiders threaten their

* In 1993, governments in Western Europe alone spent \$11.6 billion to process and receive those seeking asylum.



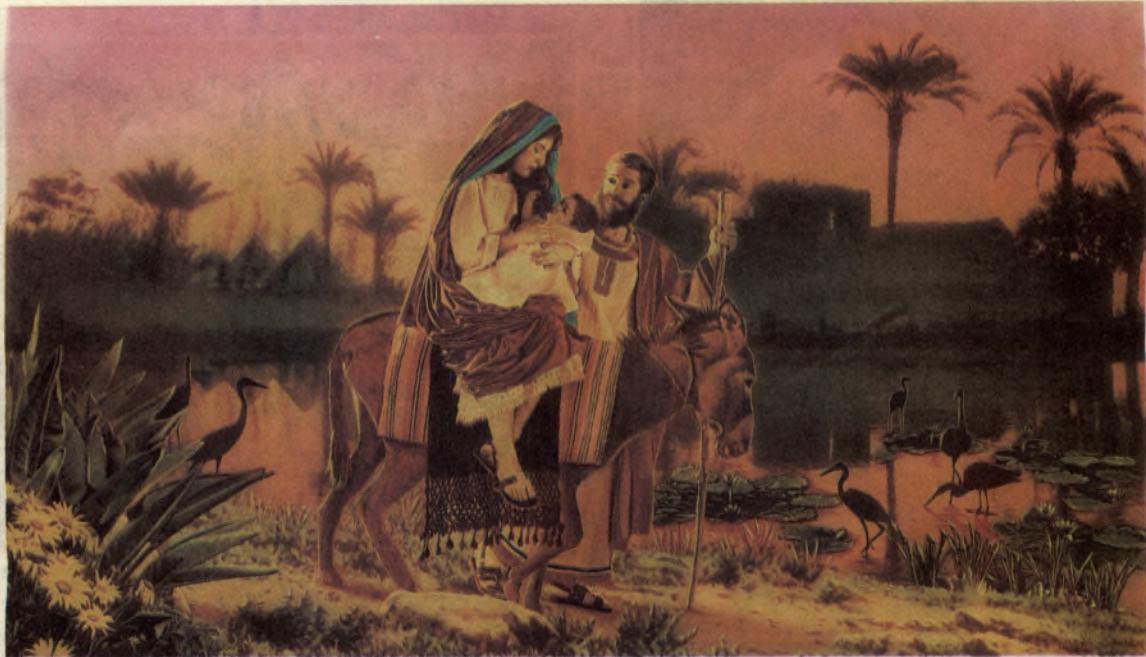
Top left: Albert Facelly/Sipa Press Top right: Charlie Brown/Sipa Press Bottom: Farnood/Sipa Press

In recent years millions of refugees have fled for their lives to other countries

national identity, culture, and jobs. Such fears sometimes express themselves in violence. *Refugees* magazine says: "The European continent sees one racist attack every

three minutes—and reception centers for asylum-seekers are all too often the target."

A poster in central Europe expresses deep hostility, a hostility that is increasingly



Jesus Was a Refugee

Joseph and Mary resided in Bethlehem with their son, Jesus. Astrologers from the East came with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. After their departure an angel appeared to Joseph, saying: "Get up, take the young child and its mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I give you word; for Herod is about to search for the young child to destroy it."—Matthew 2:13.

Quickly the three of them sought asylum in a foreign country—they became refugees. Herod was furious that the astrologers did not report to him about the location of the One foretold to become king of the Jews. In a futile attempt to kill Jesus, he ordered his men to kill all the young boys in and around Bethlehem.

Joseph and his family remained in Egypt until God's angel again appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said: "Get up, take the young child and its mother and be on your way into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the soul of the young child are dead."—Matthew 2:20.

Evidently, Joseph intended to settle in Judea, where they were living before their flight to Egypt. But he was warned in a dream that it would be dangerous to do so. Thus the threat of violence once more influenced their lives. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus traveled north to Galilee and settled in the town of Nazareth.

echoed in many lands of the earth. Its message of venom targets the foreigner: "They are a disgusting and painful abscess on the body of our nation. An ethnic group without any culture, moral or religious ideals, a nomad mob only robbing and stealing. Dirty, full of lice, they occupy the streets

and railway stations. Let them pack their dirty tatters and leave forever!"

Most refugees, of course, would like nothing better than to "leave forever." They yearn to go home. Their hearts ache to live a peaceful, normal life with family and friends. But they have no home to go to.

A Pattern for Treating Refugees

Boy on left: UN PHOTO 159243/J. Isaac



IN THE Law that Jehovah God gave to the nation of Israel, the Israelites were reminded of their situation as refugees in Egypt. (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Deuteronomy 10:19) So they were instructed to treat the alien residents among them kindly, indeed as brothers.

God's Law stated: "In case an alien resident [who often was a refugee] resides with you as an alien in your land, you must not mistreat him. The alien resident who resides as an alien with you should become to you like a native of yours; and you must love him as yourself, for you became alien residents in the land of Egypt."—Leviticus 19:33, 34.

Recognizing that alien residents were often vulnerable and insecure, Jehovah gave specific laws for their welfare and protection. Consider the following rights guaranteed to them.

THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL: "One judicial decision should hold good for you. The alien resident should prove to be the same as the native." "You must not pervert the judgment of the alien resident."—Leviticus 24:22; Deuteronomy 24:17.

THE RIGHT TO A SHARE IN THE TITHES: "At the end of three years you will bring out the entire tenth part of your produce in that year, and you must deposit it inside your gates. And the Levite, because he has no share or inheritance with you, and the alien resident and the fatherless boy

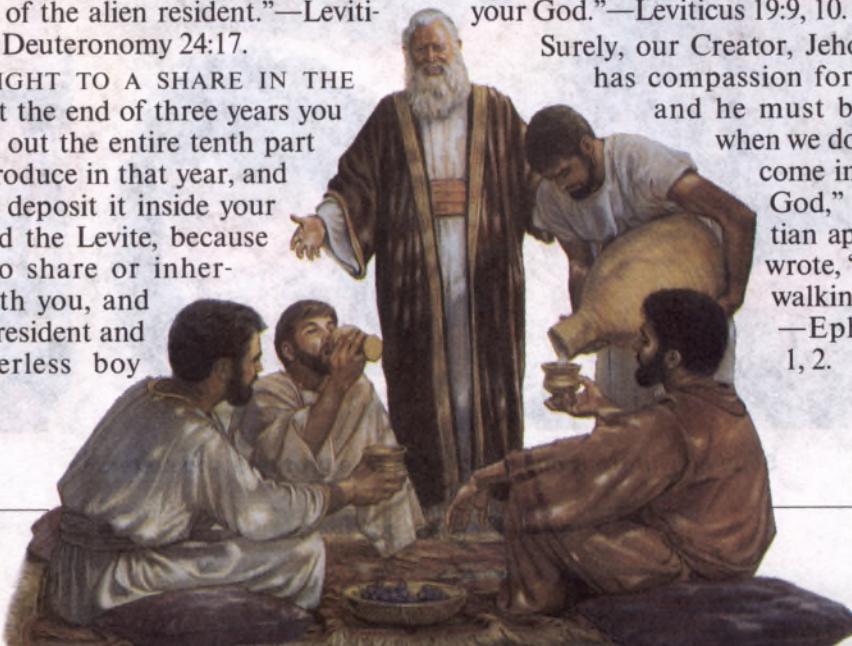
and the widow, who are inside your gates, must come, and they must eat and satisfy themselves."—Deuteronomy 14:28, 29.

THE RIGHT TO FAIR WAGES: "You must not defraud a hired laborer who is in trouble and poor, whether of your brothers or of your alien residents who are in your land, within your gates."—Deuteronomy 24:14.

THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM FOR AN UNINTENTIONAL MANSlayer: "For the sons of Israel and for the alien resident and for the settler in the midst of them these six cities will serve as a refuge, for anyone to flee there that fatally strikes a soul unintentionally."—Numbers 35:15.

THE RIGHT TO GLEAN: "When you people reap the harvest of your land, you must not reap the edge of your field completely, and the gleaning of your harvest you must not pick up. Also, you must not gather the leftovers of your vineyard, and you must not pick up the scattered grapes of your vineyard. For the afflicted one and the alien resident you should leave them. I am Jehovah your God."—Leviticus 19:9, 10.

Surely, our Creator, Jehovah God, has compassion for refugees, and he must be pleased when we do also. "Become imitators of God," the Christian apostle Paul wrote, "and go on walking in love." —Ephesians 5: 1, 2.



What Is the Solution?

THE refugee situation is not one of total gloom. Throughout the world, humanitarian organizations strive to help those displaced by war and other problems. A major way they help is by as-

sisting refugees to return to their native countries.

Refugees abandon home, community, and country because they fear they will be murdered, tortured, raped, imprisoned, en-



Soon all will treat one another as true brothers and sisters

slaved, robbed, or starved. So before refugees can safely return home, the problems that caused them to flee must be solved. Even when armed conflict finally ends, an absence of law and order often discourages people from going home. Said Agnes, a Rwandan refugee and mother of six: "Taking us [back] to Rwanda would be like taking us to our graves."

Nevertheless, since 1989, more than nine million refugees have returned to their homes. About 3.6 million of these returned from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan. Another 1.6 million refugees in six countries returned to Mozambique, a nation shattered by 16 years of civil war.

Returning is not easy. Often the countries to which the refugees return are in ruins—with villages reduced to rubble, bridges destroyed, and roads and fields sown with mines. Thus, the returning refugees must rebuild from scratch not only their lives but also their homes, schools, health clinics, and everything else.

Yet, even when the flames of conflict die out in one place, allowing refugees to return, they ignite somewhere else, creating new flows of refugees. Solving the refugee crisis, therefore, means solving the related problems of war, repression, hatred, persecution, and other factors that send people running for their lives.

The State of the World's Refugees 1995 admits: "The hard truth . . . is that solutions [to the refugee crisis] are ultimately dependent on political, military and economic factors which lie beyond the control of any humanitarian organization." According to the Bible, the solutions are likewise beyond the reach of *any* earthly organization, humanitarian or otherwise.

A World Without Refugees

There is a solution, however. The Bible shows that Jehovah God cares about those

who have been torn from their homes and families. Unlike the governments of the earth, he has the power and the wisdom to solve all the complex problems facing humankind. He will do so by means of his Kingdom—the heavenly government that will soon take control of earth's affairs.

God's Kingdom will replace all human governments. Instead of having many governments on earth, as we do now, there will be only one government, which will rule over the entire planet. The Bible foretells: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

You may be familiar with the model prayer found in the Bible at Matthew 6:9-13. Part of that prayer says: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." In harmony with that prayer, God's Kingdom will soon "come" to carry out God's purpose for the earth.

Under the loving rulership of God's Kingdom, there will be universal peace and security. No longer will there be hatred and fighting between the peoples and nations of the earth. (Psalm 46:9) Never again will there be millions of refugees fleeing for their lives or languishing in camps.

God's Word promises that the King of God's Kingdom, Christ Jesus, "will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes."—Psalm 72:12-14.

Young People Ask...



Should I Play Computer or Video Games?

They have surrounded you! But you are far from helpless. You fire your laser cannons, mowing down your enemy like wheat. The problem is, the more you shoot, the more enemies appear. You therefore have but one option if you are to survive—kill everything in sight. As you fire, the enemies perish in a cascade of blood . . .

SPINE-RIPPING, flesh-clawing, head-exploding fun!" This was the way one magazine writer enthusiastically described the latest version of a popular computer game. Actually, this is just one of a new generation of computer and video games that

allow players to act out thrilling fantasies. Previous releases seem rather tame in comparison with these bloody, often sadistically violent games.

Even so, violent video and computer games are enormously popular among young people. And with an estimated one third of all households in the United States having some sort of electronic game system, millions of youths have access to them. For youths whose homes are not so equipped, it may take little more than a walk to a friend's home or the local video arcade to play these games.

What about you? Have you been tempted to purchase—or at least to try out—some of these new games yourself? Well, after examining all the facts, you may have second thoughts about doing so.

Not All Games Are the Same!

First, let's make it clear that not all video or computer games are objectionable or violent. Many games are educational; they teach such subjects as geography, math, and typing in a lively and entertaining way. Other games challenge the reflexes by simulating such sports as basketball and hockey. There are also high-tech puzzles that intrigue and challenge the mind.

Granted, even the best of games can consume a lot of time. And the Bible urges Christians to 'buy out time,' that is, use time wisely in spiritual pursuits. (Ephesians 5: 16) However, the Bible does not require that every waking moment be spent working or studying. On the contrary, it reminds us that there is "a time to laugh . . . and a time to skip about." (Ecclesiastes 3:4) Kept in moderation, play activities can be refreshing and wholesome.

We should be aware, though, that many of these games seem designed to make players waste excessive amounts of time. In some of them, hours are spent in mastering the play

at a certain level, before the player discovers that several more levels—inevitably more intricate and more complicated—must be negotiated before the finish! There are also games that seem to give little in return for much effort. Dan and Sam, two Christian fleshly brothers, enthusiastically played a certain game that promised to help them solve math problems. However, they soon realized that it was quicker for them to do the math on paper than on the screen!

So, even with computer and video games that are reasonably wholesome, there is a need to be selective. Say Dan and Sam: "If you shop carefully enough, you can usually find a good game." It only makes sense, though, to avoid spending a lot of money on games that only result in a person quickly becoming bored. One parent encourages his sons to limit themselves to games that will help them with subjects they are studying in school.

Their Darker Side

Unfortunately, not all computer and video games are harmless fun—much less educational. A lot of today's entertainment software focuses on what the Bible calls "the works of the flesh"—unclean practices that God condemns. Among such condemned "works" is the "practice of spiritism." (Galatians 5:19-21) Indeed, to Jehovah God the practice of magic is "detestable."—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Many of today's games, however, are steeped in spiritism and magic! In one game "magic spells" must be used in order to win. Players are instructed: "When you're ready to cast the spell, click on the lightning bolt at the bottom-right corner of the menu, then click on the creature you want to fry." Could not such games cultivate an unhealthy curiosity about demonic forces?

And what about exposing oneself to large doses of hideous violence? *U.S. News & World*

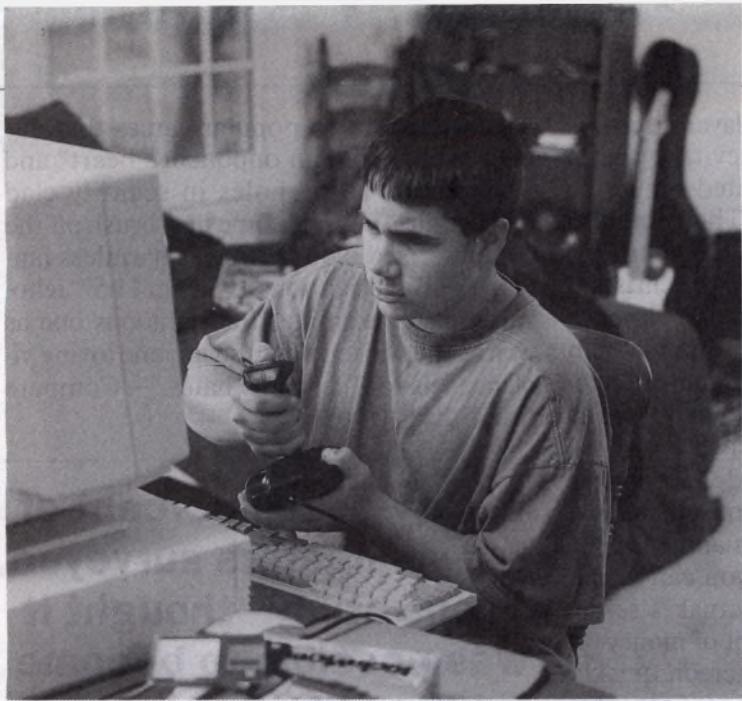
Report tells of two popular games that display "ripping out an opponent's heart" and "vampires drilling holes in scantily clad teenage girls." While some may brush off the computerized bloodletting as harmless fantasy, the Bible cautions at Psalm 11:5: "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates."—Compare Isaiah 2:4.

Ninety-seven percent of the youngsters surveyed in one study "thought it was possible to become addicted to the games"

It is also possible to call up cheap pornography on the computer screen. Nudity and graphic sex have become such common fare that U.S. game manufacturers produced a rating system to warn purchasers of offensive games. Few retailers, though, seem willing to curb sales to youngsters. "Our only obligation is to give customers what they want," says one store clerk. Yet ask yourself, "Will exposure to sexually arousing images help me keep my mind on things that are "righteous, chaste, lovable, and virtuous"?"—Philippians 4:8.

Hooked!

True, experts debate how computerized play really affects youths. One study, reported in the magazine *New Scientist*, optimistically concluded that such games "are not a root cause of bad behaviour." Nevertheless, 97 percent of the youngsters surveyed in that study "thought it was possible to become addicted to the games." The youths said that arcade games were particularly



Can playing violent video games really harm you?

harmful because "they encourage players to spend more money."

Can these games really be addictive? Apparently so, for some players. One youth told *Awake!*: "All you can think about is getting to the end and winning." A young man similarly recalls: "I spent hours trying to figure out how to kill everybody and get to the next level of the game."

You may think that you could never get so caught up in a game. But consider the way TV shows and movies manipulate people's emotions—moving them to tears, rage, or cheers of excitement. Imagine, then, a program that not only has an exciting plot, unique characters, and dazzling special effects but that lets *you* be the superhero. Would it be easy to resist getting thoroughly involved in it? So, it is not surprising that some players have difficulty separating fantasy from reality. One youth recalls: "The effect of playing violent games was so bad I even imagined that my hand was a gun and pointed it at people."

Choose Wisely

In the event parents do not restrict the use of computer or video games, youths should consider the advice at Ecclesiastes 2:14: "As regards anyone wise, his eyes are in his head." That means the wise one watches where he is going and sees what lies ahead. Really, the world of computer entertainment already contains much in opposition to the knowledge of God. (Compare 2 Corinthians 10:5.) And who knows what the software magicians will come up with next? So before any

youth purchases, plays, or rents a game, he should ask himself, 'What is it about? Does its name suggest occult leanings? Does the cover art portray gruesome violence?'

At their very best, electronic games can provide some wholesome enjoyment and learning. But are they really worth tying up a lot of your precious time? Fourteen-year-old Sam, mentioned earlier, relates: "Our dad has never said in so many words that we can't have video games. But he has asked, 'What is so interesting about pushing a button and seeing someone run or jump across a screen?'" "And now that's our way of thinking," adds his brother Dan.

Yes, don't forget that there are other—perhaps more productive—ways of enjoying yourself, such as reading, doing arts and crafts, participating in healthful sports, singing, or learning to play a musical instrument. It is so much more beneficial to spend time "training yourself with godly devotion as your aim." (1 Timothy 4:7) Doing so will be of far more value than playing any electronic game.

London's Water

A NEW DIMENSION

By Awake! correspondent in Britain

LONDON, England's capital city, now has one of the most advanced water-supply systems in the world. It was completed two years ahead of schedule at a cost of some \$375 million. The expertise gained in its construction is already being traded to other countries.

Why was such an expensive project necessary, and what has it achieved?

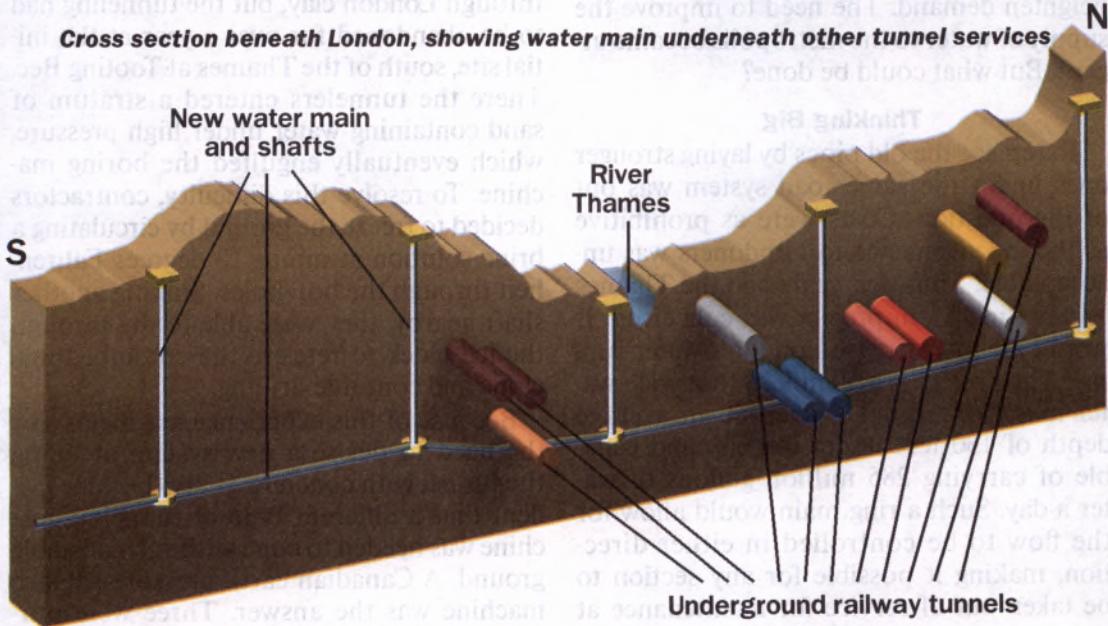
New for Old

London's oldest trunk water main was built in 1838. Forty years later water was still being carried in buckets from communal street standpipes in the poorer areas of the city. "The turning on of the tap in the early morning by a man with a key was an event of importance, . . . for once the author-

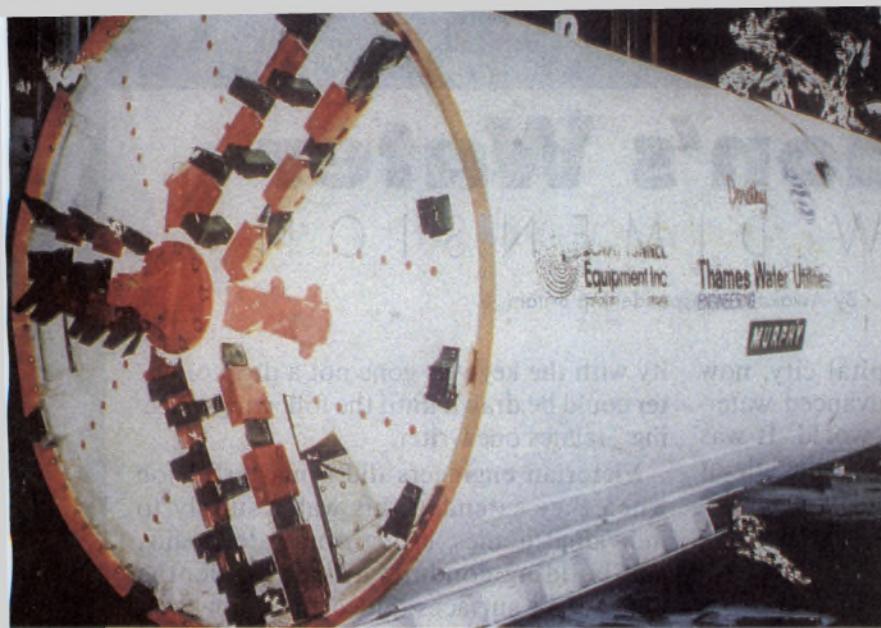
ity with the key was gone not a drop of water could be drawn until the following morning," relates one writer.

Victorian engineers did a masterful job when they extended this water supply to individual homes, laying iron water mains and building conduits at varying depths under road surfaces. Since then, however, the increasing volume, weight, and vibration of motor traffic, along with the greater pumping pressure needed to ensure an adequate flow of water over long distances—up to 18 miles in some cases—have taken their toll in ruptured mains. This results in traffic chaos when roads have to be shut off for water-main repair. It is estimated that 25 percent of all water drawn from reservoirs

Cross section beneath London, showing water main underneath other tunnel services



Based on photograph: Thames Water



Photograph: Thames Water

in England is lost through defects in delivery piping.

Additionally, London's demand for water has escalated over the past 150 years—from 88 million gallons to over 600 million gallons each day. Washing machines, dishwashers, car washing, and the watering of gardens during dry summers have all helped to heighten demand. The need to improve the supply of water to the metropolis became urgent. But what could be done?

Thinking Big

To replace the old pipes by laying stronger ones under the same road system was out of the question. Costs were as prohibitive as the inconvenience to Londoners was unacceptable. Thus, ten years ago the Thames Water Ring Main project was conceived. It would greatly increase London's water supply. The project is a 50-mile, 8-foot-wide water main, or tunnel, buried at an average depth of 130 feet under the city and capable of carrying 285 million gallons of water a day. Such a ring main would allow for the flow to be controlled in either direction, making it possible for any section to be taken out of service for maintenance at

Water-main tunneling machine

any time. Water would be gravity-fed into the tunnel from water treatment plants and then pumped directly into existing local mains supplies, or holding reservoirs.

Why did the tunnel, the longest in Britain, have to be so deep? Because underground London is honeycombed with 12 railway systems as well as the usual mass of public

service utilities, and the tunnel obviously had to clear all of them. When engineers unexpectedly encountered deep pile foundations of one building, which had been missed in the initial survey, work was delayed for over ten months.

Construction was scheduled in stages. No great problems were expected digging through London clay, but the tunneling had to be abandoned for over a year at the initial site, south of the Thames at Tooting Bec. There the tunnelers entered a stratum of sand containing water under high pressure, which eventually engulfed the boring machine. To resolve this difficulty, contractors decided to freeze the ground by circulating a brine solution at minus 18 degrees Fahrenheit through the boreholes. Sinking another shaft nearby, they were able to dig through the ice block to retrieve the entombed machine and continue drilling.

Because of this experience, engineers saw the need to devise a new system of lining the tunnel with concrete. It also became evident that a different type of tunneling machine was needed to cope with such unstable ground. A Canadian earth pressure balance machine was the answer. Three were pur-

Water-main construction work

chased, and as a result, the tunneling speed doubled to a mile a month.

Computer Construction

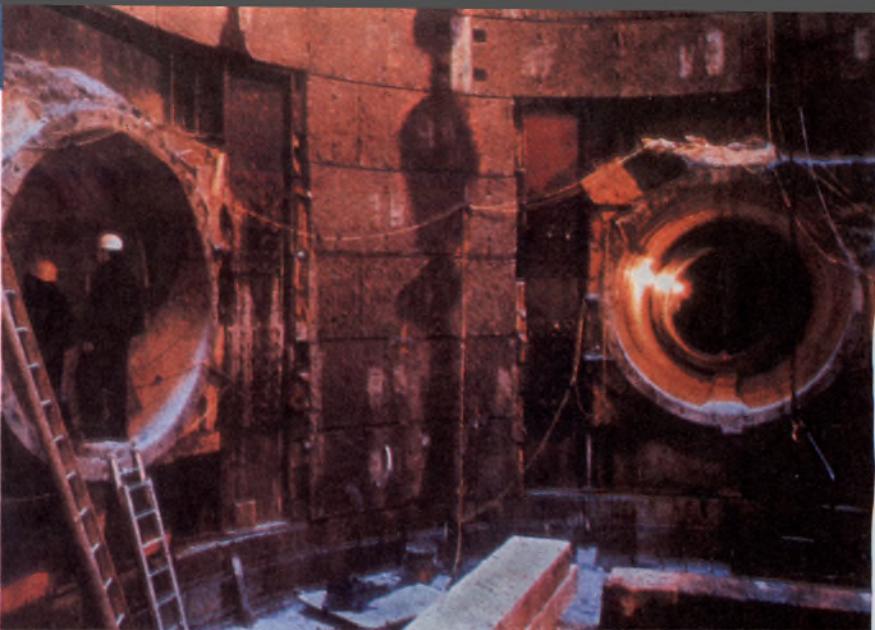
Traditional theodolite land surveys were made from rooftops to give line-of-sight measurements for shaft locations, and the results were then checked electronically. This method was adequate initially, but once tunneling began, how could exact alignment be ensured underground?

Here, modern technology took over by means of the Global Positioning System (GPS). This survey equipment consists of a satellite receiver tuned into a GPS space-craft orbiting the earth. The equipment could compare signals from a number of orbiting satellites. Once these measurements had been coordinated by computer, the positions of all 21 shafts and 580 boreholes were pinpointed along the route on Ordnance Survey maps. Armed with this data, tunnelers were guided with precision.

Computer Control

To meet the needs of six million customers is no easy task. Demand can fluctuate not just season by season but day by day. This calls for around-the-clock monitoring to ensure that correct water pressure and quality are maintained at all times. How is this vital coordination possible? By means of a computer control system that cost \$5 million.

Each shaft pump is controlled by its own computer, and cost is kept to a minimum by using inexpensive, off-peak electricity. Master computers at Hampton, in the west of London, regulate the whole network. The



Photograph: Thames Water

computers draw data from fiber-optic cables fixed to ducts in the tunnel walls and relay it via closed-circuit television monitors.

Water quality is checked at daily, weekly, and monthly intervals. "There are 60 mandatory tests for 120 substances in testing water quality. They include analyses for substances like nitrates, trace elements, pesticides and other chemical solvents," *The Times* newspaper explains. These measurements are now made automatically and are relayed to the computer headquarters for interpretation and action as the need may be. Water tasters also make periodic assessments of quality.

Thinking Ahead

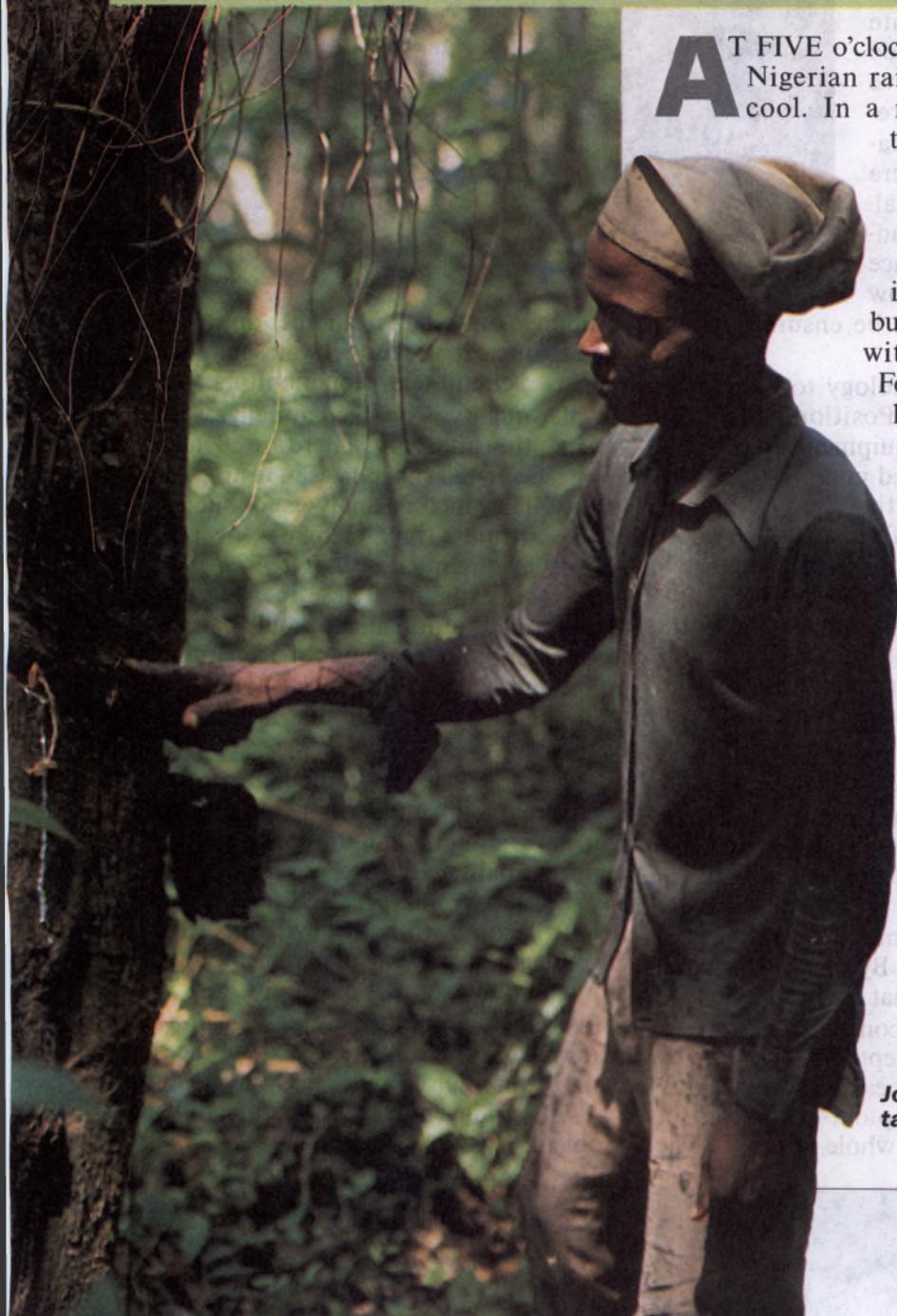
This marvel of modern engineering is already providing 154 million gallons of drinking water daily to a population spread over 580 square miles of Greater London. When it is fully operational, it will meet some 50 percent of present demand, taking the strain off other sources of supply.

Even this will not be enough. Therefore, plans are now being made to extend the ring main by another 40 miles early next century. Truly, an ingenious solution to a difficult problem!

Rubber Tapping

A Job That Touches Your Life

By Awake! correspondent in Nigeria



AT FIVE o'clock in the morning, the Nigerian rain forest is dark and cool. In a mud-block house in the middle of the forest, John awakens and slips on his clothes. Then he heads off into the night, carrying a lantern, a plastic bucket, and a short knife with a curved blade. For the next four hours, he moves from tree to tree, making surgical cuts in the bark of each tree.

This is the first in a long series of events that may eventually touch your life. How so? Because the trees that John cuts are rubber trees. And rubber, named for its ability to *rub* out pencil marks, is one of our most valuable and widely used resources.

John at his work of tapping rubber trees

Thousands of Products

Just think about the role rubber plays in your life. The soles and heels of your shoes may be made from rubber. Your carpet backing and furniture may contain foam rubber. The elastic in your clothing is likely made from rubber. When it is raining, you may reach for a raincoat and boots made from rubber. Going swimming? Wet suits, goggles, and fins contain rubber. You do not want to swim? Perhaps you would prefer to just float on a rubber raft or play with a rubber beach ball. About your home there are probably rubber bands, rubber erasers, and rubber adhesive. When you sleep tonight, you may rest on a mattress and a pillow made from rubber products. If you are cold, you may snuggle up to a hot-water bottle made of rubber.

Apart from all those things, there are many products that would certainly not work very well without rubber parts—washers, belts, gaskets, hoses, rollers, or valves. The average car, for example, has about 600 rubber parts. In all, according to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, between 40,000 and 50,000 rubber products are manufactured.

What makes rubber so useful? It is long-wearing, heat-resistant, elastic, water-resistant, airtight, and shock absorbent. Consider the tire, whether it be for a bicycle, a motor vehicle, or an airplane. Because it is rubber, a tire is not worn away quickly by constant contact with the road, neither will it burn away because of the constant friction. When you drive through puddles, you need not fear that the tire will become soggy and rot; it will not corrode either. Not only does rubber stop water from going inside the tire but it also prevents the pressurized air on the inside from leaking out. Moreover, as you move along, the shock-absorbent quality of the rubber in your tires

helps cushion you from the bumps in the road. Really, without rubber, manufacturers would be hard-pressed to produce a tire.

So you will probably agree that rubber tappers like John provide a valuable service that touches our lives in a positive way. Of course, not all rubber comes from trees. Synthetic rubber, produced from chemicals, takes up a large share of the industry. Both types of rubber have their strengths and weaknesses. Many products can use either, and the choice is often decided by the prevailing cost. Other products use a blend of synthetic and natural rubber. Most automobile tires contain more synthetic rubber than natural rubber. However, because the synthetic is less resistant to heat buildup, a higher proportion of natural rubber is used in the tires of racing cars, trucks, buses, and airplanes.

Tree Tapping

Rubber trees grow best in hot, wet climates near the equator. Much of the world's natural rubber comes from plantations in Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia and Indonesia. The rest comes from South America as well as West and Central Africa.

John does not tap a tree until it is about six years old. After that the tree will produce rubber for the next 25 to 30 years and will grow to about 65 feet in height. When the rubber tree "retires" from producing, it may continue growing, to a height of 130 feet, and it may live to the ripe old age of 100 years or more.

Rubber straight from the tree looks more like milk than like the tire of a car. This milky substance, called latex, contains tiny particles of rubber. About 35 percent of the latex is rubber. The rest is mostly water.

To tap the latex, John makes a diagonal cut in the bark. This cut extends halfway around the tree. He is careful not to make the cut too deep, since that would damage



John shares in the Christian ministry

the tree. The latex begins to flow immediately after the cut is made; it trickles along the groove formed by the cut and empties into the bamboo cup John has attached to the tree. The flow continues for two or three hours; then it stops.

A day or two later, when John next taps the tree, he will make another cut just below the first one. The next time he will cut below that one. Eventually, a panel is cut out of the bark of the tree. Now John will begin to tap another part of the tree, leaving the panel to heal completely for tapping at a future time.

John works quickly, moving alone through the quiet forest, cutting the trees to make the latex flow. Later, he revisits each tree and collects in his bucket the latex that has accumulated. Next, John adds formic acid and water to the latex. This thickens and coagulates it much like vinegar curdles milk. John then carries the bucket of latex on his head to the main road, where it is col-

lected by a truck from the nearby rubber-processing plant.

John now returns home to bathe, eat, and rest. In the late afternoon, when he leaves his house again, he is smartly dressed and carries a briefcase in his hand. This time he will be going not from tree to tree but from house to house. As a regular pioneer minister, John has a full share in the preaching and disciple-making work.

As John conducts his first Bible study of the day, the latex he collected will have reached the processing plant. There the rubber will be separated from the water, dried, and compressed into bales for shipment. Soon it will be on its way to England, Japan, or the United States. The worldwide natural rubber industry produces over five million tons of rubber each year. Although it is unlikely, there is the possibility that the rubber in the soles of your next pair of shoes will come from a tree tapped by John.

'Even the Tongue of Stammerers Will Speak'

IT WAS the afternoon session of a special assembly day of Jehovah's Witnesses in Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic), and hundreds had met to receive Bible instruction. I was standing behind the platform reviewing my part. It wasn't a major one. Two young Witnesses were to relate experiences, and I was simply to serve as chairman for the part. That morning I felt inner stress, and now it was escalating. I literally felt paralyzed, weighed down, and unable to speak.

You may be thinking that almost everyone would be nervous in such a situation. But this was more than just a case of nerves. Let me explain why.

My Speech Problem

At the age of 12, I fell and injured my head, neck, and spine. After that, I would occasionally stutter or have difficulty forming words, especially words starting with the letters *p, k, t, d*, and *m*. Sometimes I wasn't even able to speak.

The problem didn't bother me much at the time; it seemed to be a mere inconvenience. But as the years passed, I developed a real fear of any kind of public speaking. I fainted once while giving a report at school. And sometimes while I was shopping, when clerks would ask what I wanted, I could not answer them. As I stood fighting to speak, their irritation would grow: "Hurry up. I don't have all day. Other customers are wait-

ing." As a result, I could not buy the items I needed.

My school years were very difficult. When I had oral reports, schoolmates would make fun of my stammering. Yet, I graduated from high school and in 1979 went on to study at a university in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Since I enjoyed athletics, I took courses to be a gym teacher. But how could I realize my goal? Despite misgivings, I forged ahead.

Seeking Help

There had to be a way of ridding myself of my speech impediment. So after graduating from the university, I determined to get professional help. I sought out a clinic in Prague specializing in the treatment of speech problems. During the initial consultation, a nurse blurted out: "Your neurosis is something else!" It hurt me to think that she considered me neurotic, even though experts agree that stuttering is not a neurotic condition. It did not take long to realize that I faced a unique challenge: I was a young man of 24, and all the other patients were children.

Soon the whole staff, including the psychologist, got involved in helping me. They tried everything. Once, they forbade me to speak to anyone for five weeks. At another time, they allowed me to speak only in a monotone and v-e-r-y slowly. While this approach helped, it also won me the nickname

Snake Charmer because many fell asleep during my reports.

Contact With Jehovah's Witnesses

One summer day in 1984, while I was walking downtown, two young men approached me. It was not their outward appearance that astonished me but what they said. They said that God had a government, a Kingdom, that would end all of mankind's problems. They gave me their phone number, and I later phoned them.

At the time Jehovah's Witnesses were not recognized as a legal religious organization in Czechoslovakia. Yet, before long my interest grew so much that I began attending their meetings. I could just feel the love and concern the Witnesses had for one another.

The Road Toward Confidence

Help for my speech problem came in the form of what is called the Theocratic Ministry School, a school conducted weekly in every congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was urged to enroll, and I did. Based on the suggestions presented in one of the school's textbooks, the *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*, I worked on such speech qualities as fluency, pronunciation, sense stress, and modulation.*

My first student talk, which was a Bible reading, was a fiasco. I was a nervous wreck

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

American Indians—What Does Their Future Hold?

Exploring a World of Beautiful Trees

Pompeii—Where Time Stood Still

and hardly made it home. How thankful I was for the relaxing effects of a hot shower!

After that first talk, the school overseer kindly gave me personal attention. Not only did he offer me constructive counsel but he commended me. That gave me the courage to keep trying. Shortly afterward, in 1987, I became a baptized Witness. A few months later, I moved from Prague to the quiet little town of Žďár nad Sázavou. The small local group of Witnesses warmly welcomed me. They also accepted my still rather halting speech, and that boosted my self-respect.

In time, I began conducting a small Bible study group, and then I gave my first public Bible talk. Eventually, after the change of government in Czechoslovakia, I began giving such talks in neighboring congregations. In unfamiliar surroundings my speech problems returned. But I did not give up.

Meeting Special Challenges

One day a Christian elder invited me to his place of work. He said: "Petr, do I have good news for you! We would like you to participate in the upcoming circuit assembly." I felt faint and needed to sit down. To the disappointment of my friend, I declined the offer.

That refusal haunted me. I could not get it out of my mind. During Christian meetings whenever mention was made of trusting in God, that refusal came back to me with pain. Gideon, who by God's direction faced the entire Midianite army with only 300 men, was sometimes referred to at the meetings. (Judges 7:1-25) Here was a man who truly trusted in his God, Jehovah! Had I followed Gideon's example when refusing that assignment? In all honesty, I could not say that I had. I felt ashamed.

Yet, my Christian brothers refused to give up on me. They offered me another opportunity. I was invited to participate in

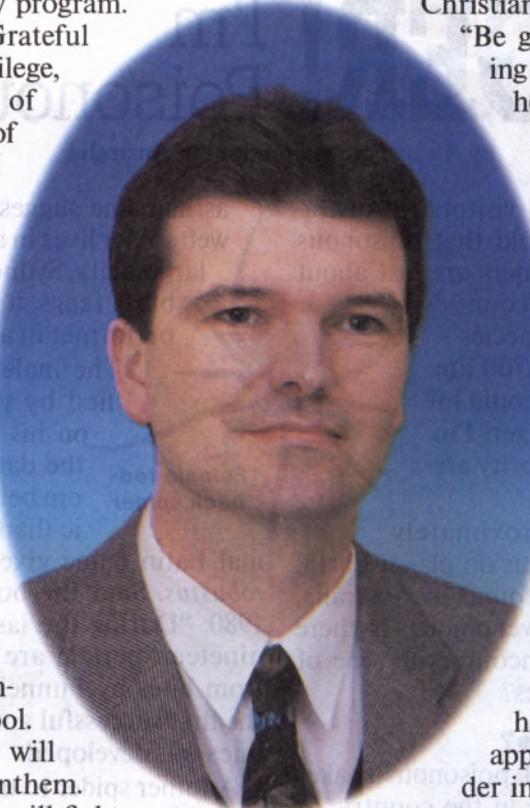
a special assembly day program. This time I agreed. Grateful as I was for this privilege, frankly, the thought of addressing a hall full of people petrified me. I really had to work at increasing my trust in Jehovah. But how?

By closely considering the faith and trust other Witnesses had in him. Doing this strengthened me. Even a letter by six-year-old Verunka, the daughter of a friend, served as a fine example for me. She wrote: "In September, I am going to school. I do not know how it will be with the national anthem. I believe that Jehovah will fight for me, as he did for Israel."

Well, those were just some of the events leading up to the afternoon session of the special assembly day that I spoke about at the outset. I had prayed fervently. Now I was not so much concerned about my fluency of speech as I was about praising God's great name in front of this large audience.

So there I stood with a microphone planted in front of me, facing hundreds of people. Then, realizing that the message is more important than the messenger, I took a deep breath and began. Afterward, I had time to assess matters. Was I nervous? Certainly, and I even stuttered a few times. Yet, without God's support I knew I would not have been able to speak at all.

Later I began musing over something a



Christian brother once told me: "Be glad you have a stuttering problem." At the time he made that statement, I was really surprised. How could he say such a thing? Looking back, I now understand what he meant. The speech problem I have has helped me to rely on God rather than on myself.

A few years have passed since the afternoon of that special assembly day. During these years other privileges that involved speaking before large audiences have come my way. I was appointed as a Christian elder in Žďár nad Sázavou and also as a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. Imagine! I then spent over a hundred hours every month talking to others about God's Kingdom, not to mention the time I spent weekly teaching at our Christian meetings. And now I serve as a circuit overseer, giving talks to a different congregation every week.

My heart simply glows with appreciation whenever I read this particular prophecy in the Bible book of Isaiah: "Even the tongue of the stammerers will be quick in speaking clear things." (Isaiah 32:4; Exodus 4:12) Jehovah has indeed proved to be with me, helping me to 'speak clear things' to his honor, praise, and glory. I am very content and happy to be able to praise our most merciful God.—*As told by Petr Kunc.*

DANGER!

I'm Poisonous

By Awake! correspondent in Australia

MIGRANTS and visitors to Australia are often told that poisonous snakes and spiders are just about everywhere in this vast country. Yet, of the known species of spiders, only about 1,700 are found here. Quite a few could indeed carry a label "Danger! I'm Poisonous," but the majority are harmless.

As for snakes, approximately 2,500 species dwell with us on planet Earth. Some 140 of these are found in Australia, and only about 20 are venomous. Is there really a possibility of encountering one of these poisonous creatures?

In Cities?

By far the majority of poisonous snakes and spiders are at home in the country, or the bush. However, some coastal city dwellers need to take reasonable care, especially when it comes to spiders. For example,



By courtesy of Ross Bennett, Canberra, Australia



Female red-back spider

as its name suggests, the Sydney funnel-web spider lives in and around Australia's largest city, Sydney. With its protruding black fangs, it could well be the star performer in anyone's nightmares.

The male funnel-web is identified by the pronounced spur on his second leg, and he is the dangerous one—his venom being five times more toxic than the female's. The formal Latin name given this spider is *Atrax robustus*. Said the book *The Funnelweb* in 1980: "During the last seventy years some nineteen people are known to have died from bites by Funnelweb spiders." In 1980 the first successful antivenin for funnel-web bites was developed.

Another spider to treat with caution is the redback, named for the orange-red stripe running across its satin-black abdomen. Sometimes the stripe is pink or even light gray. It is the female redback that is dangerous. Antivenin for its potentially fatal bite became available in 1956. The redback is found all over Australia and is related to the well-known black widow spider.

Watch Out! Snakes!

Snakes have been found on lawns or in the shrubbery of suburban homes, particularly at night. A handful are dangerous—such as the tiger snake, the death adder, and the taipan. The tiger snake is about five feet in length. It can be recognized by the dark stripes across its back. When angry it may emit a loud coughing hiss.

Northern death adder

Top: By courtesy of Australian International Public Relations

Funnel-web spider

The death adder varies in color, but has a yellowish-white appendage at the end of its tail, which it twitches to attract prey. It is often found in sandy areas, where it will lie in a horseshoe shape. The death adder is about two feet long and thick.

The taipan, on the other hand, may grow to ten feet in length! It is brown, with a light-colored nose. It has large venom glands, and some specimens have fangs almost a half inch long. One horse died within five minutes of being bitten by a taipan!

What if I Get Bitten?

Antivenin for both spider bites and snakebites is available, and poison information centers are on call around-the-clock throughout Australia. Methods of treating snakebites have improved. The idea that the wound should be cut immediately and the poison sucked out is considered by many to be not only outdated but harmful. The advice of medical authorities now is to keep the patient still and calm and to apply a tourniquet or a ligature between the bite and the heart. Then, a pressure bandage should be applied and the affected limb immobilized with a splint. After this the patient should see a doctor or be taken to a hospital as quickly as possible.

Funnel-web and redback spiders are rarely found indoors. The redback lurks in corners of garages or sheds or in any quiet, undisturbed area, such as an old car, a pile of rubbish, or an outdoor toilet. Care should be taken that they are not inadvertently carried indoors.

How Big a Risk?

Most Australians have never seen a redback or a death adder and personally



By courtesy of Australian International Public Relations

know of no one who has been bitten by one. The truth is, the risk of being bitten by a poisonous spider or snake is virtually nil if reasonable care is taken. Most poisonous creatures try to get out of your way and may only get aggressive when annoyed or cornered.

Nevertheless, it is the course of wisdom to exercise caution. An Australian scientist who is an expert on venomous creatures enjoys "gardening with gloves, fishing with boots and travelling with care." Why boots? Well, probably that is because of the poisonous varieties of octopus and jellyfish, as well as the stonefish.

Perhaps we had better tell you about them another time.



By Courtesy of J. C. Wombey, Canberra, Australia

Taipan

Overcoming Tragedy in Jehovah's Strength

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

IN February of this year, many from the Bailén Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Spain enjoyed a beautiful day together in the nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains. But just three miles from home, an oncoming car crossed into the lane in which their bus was traveling, causing a head-on collision. There was an explosion, and the bus was engulfed in flames. Some passengers were able to get out in time, but many in the back of the bus were overcome by the smoke and died.

In all, 26 Witnesses lost their lives, including four full-time ministers and several children—nearly a quarter of the Bailén Congregation. The king of Spain, Juan Carlos, echoed the sentiments of most Spaniards when he wrote in his telegram to the mayor of Bailén: "Greatly shocked by the tragic accident. Be assured of our sincere condolences. Please transmit to the families of the victims our deepest sympathies and support during these painful moments."



**Four of those
who perished**

A question on the minds of some of the thousands who attended the funeral service was, Why do such tragedies happen? Clearly, accidents caused by "time and unforeseen occurrence" can affect Jehovah's people the same as everyone else. (Ecclesiastes 9:11, 12) Nevertheless, Jehovah does promise that shortly such tragedies will be done away with. —Revelation 21:4, 5.

Many members of the branch family of Jehovah's Witnesses in Spain and thousands of Witnesses from other parts of the country traveled to Bailén to give the local brothers comfort and support. The people of Bailén, along with the local and regional authorities, also shared the grief of the Witness families. Many observers were impressed by the fortitude of the bereaved Witnesses.

"I've known the Witnesses for many years," commented Antonio Gómez, the mayor of Bailén, "and although personally I am an agnostic, I admire your faith. When the accident happened, I

thought right away that your religious and human cohesion would enable you to overcome the tragedy better than other groups. I've seen how the whole town has given its support to the grieving families. Perhaps before, people had misconceptions about what you stand for, but I am pleased to say that these have disappeared. You have an inner strength that is hard for someone who is not a Witness to understand."

José Borrell, the minister of public works who attended the funeral as the representative of the Spanish government, confessed: "What can you say to those who have practically lost all their family in one blow? Nothing that they themselves cannot find in their faith. . . . You have a wonderful faith."

"Keep Comforting One Another"

What did they "find in their faith"? Above all, they found comfort from Jehovah, "the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) Despite their grief, they found the strength to comfort one another, taking to heart Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "Keep comforting one another and building one another up."—1 Thessalonians 5:11.

It was a moving experience to see Christian brothers and sisters, some of whom had lost as many as eight relatives, making visits to other bereaving members of the congregation. "When we saw each other, we wept. But through the tears we reminded ourselves of the resurrection hope, and we felt comforted," explained Francisco Saez, the presiding overseer, who himself lost his only two children.

"We have not neglected our preaching activity, and we have made a special point of visiting relatives of the deceased who are not Witnesses, using the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*." Francisco continued: "Personally, I wanted to preach, for I knew that by preaching to others I would feel bet-

ter. And sure enough, although I went out weeping, I returned home comforted."

The people of Bailén responded very favorably to this witnessing work. A week after the accident, Encarna, who was grieving the loss of two daughters and four grandchildren, visited a lady with whom she had recently started a Bible study. Encarna had been giving Scriptural comfort to this woman, whose husband had died four months previously. "Now we have to comfort each other," she said, as they continued their consideration of the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*.

Support from the worldwide brotherhood was also immediately forthcoming. "The whole congregation feels so encouraged by the thousands of letters and telegrams we have received," explained Francisco Capilla, the congregation secretary. "The post office has to send a van directly to our house every day to deliver them all. We are very grateful for the brothers' loving concern."

Hope Out Of Tragedy

Can anything good come out of such a tragedy? "The heart of the wise ones is in the house of mourning," wrote ancient King Solomon. (Ecclesiastes 7:4) In line with this principle, the tragedy in Bailén has made some people think more seriously about their relationship with God. Faustino, an unbeliefing husband who lost two of his six children in the accident, told his wife Dolores: "I have some good news to tell you. I am going to start studying the Bible, since I want to see my children in the new world."

Although our brothers and sisters in Bailén will not quickly overcome their grief, they are comforting others and are being comforted. Jehovah is strengthening them with his spirit and with the support of many loving brothers and sisters. Our prayers continue to go up to our heavenly Father in their behalf.

WATCHING THE WORLD

India's HIV Strain

Scientists at the National AIDS Research Institute in Pune, India, in cooperation with a team of researchers led by Dr. Max Essex, of Harvard's AIDS Institute, have isolated India's most common HIV strain. It is HIV-1C, believed to be transmitted five to ten times more effectively than the HIV-1B, which is common in Europe and America. According to the *Indian Express*, Dr. Essex said that the rate of the spread of HIV in India is likely to be much higher than in many other parts of the world. Scientist Dr. V. Ramalingaswami observed that of the few vaccines showing promise as AIDS preventives, not one is effective for HIV-1C.

Zimbabwe Drought Relief

In recent years, Jehovah's Witnesses have often provided relief in disaster-stricken areas. Their Christian spirit is especially needed in developing lands such as Zimbabwe, where drought has greatly affected many regions of the country. Large quantities of food and clothing were lovingly contributed for this effort, and the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Zimbabwe successfully distributed these materials to Witnesses and their friends in remote areas of the country. In addition to food and clothing, Zimbabwean Witnesses donated \$7,500 (U.S.), and the Watch Tower Society spent another \$20,500 to carry out the relief mission. The Society and the affected Witnesses

expressed their deep gratitude for the generous love shown by their Christian brothers.

Common Roots?

According to the *International Herald Tribune* of Paris, an article in the influential Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* asserts that "God may have spoken through books as diverse as the Muslim Koran, the Hindu Vedas and Bhagavad-Gita



and the sacred texts of China's Taoism and Japan's Shintoism." The article suggests that these and other religious writings "represent not mere literature or philosophy, but rather 'revelation'—God speaking through man." Because the journal's articles are informally checked by Vatican censors, questions have been raised as to whether these views represent the pope's own mind on the matter. The *Tribune* observed that in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, John Paul II noted that the church was seeking in other religions that which forms a kind of common root with the teachings of the church.

100-Year-Old Fire Extinguished

More than 100 years ago, an untapped coal deposit in China

caught fire, and it has continued to burn until recently. The fire covered some two square miles and consumed 300,000 tons of coal annually. Efforts to extinguish the huge fire have failed for many years. However, fire fighters reportedly have finally succeeded in putting the fire out. In order to douse the blaze, fire fighters used explosives to bore holes and then poured sand, stone, and water on the flames.

High Blood Pressure and Memory Loss

"A new study shows that middle-aged men with high blood pressure are likely to suffer from impaired memory, judgment, and concentration once they reach their late 70s," reports *Psychology Today*. Researchers found that for every ten-point increase in systolic blood pressure, the likelihood of diminished brain function increased by 9 percent. "We know that high blood pressure is related to stroke and heart disease," says Lenore Laufer, Ph.D., the director of the study, adding: "This is just another reason to reduce it."

The Communication Gap

The *Courier-Mail* newspaper of Brisbane, Australia, reports that a recent survey found that teenage high-school students rarely, if ever, had serious conversations with their fathers. The survey showed that most teenagers spend less than 15 minutes a day with their fathers, yet they spend about an hour a day talking to their

mothers. Seldom did parents speak to their children about morals or check up on what television programs or videos they were watching. Any conversation between sons and fathers was likely to be about superficial things, such as cars and sports. Communication with mothers was mostly about friends, school, and social plans but seldom about more serious matters. In many cases father-daughter communication was limited to merely joking or kidding with each other.

Traffic Accidents—Why?

A study published by Brazil's ministry of transport shows that about 90 percent of traffic accidents occur because of driver error or negligence. According to the report, drivers often become overly confident when driving in good weather or on straight highways. The report also revealed that automobile accidents caused by bad road conditions and car defects result in 25,000 deaths and 350,000 injuries every year in Brazil.

Plundering the Oceans

"In a frantic race to find new and potentially lucrative drugs, 'bioprospectors' working for pharmaceutical companies are taking too many organisms from the oceans without any idea of the consequences," states *New Scientist*. According to Mary Garson, a marine biochemist at the University of Queensland, Australia, 98 percent of the collected samples are discarded without detailed analysis. For example, 990 pounds of acorn worm and 5,300 pounds of sponge yield-

ed only 35 millionths of an ounce each of an anticancer substance, 3,500 pounds of sea hare produced 350 millionths of an ounce of a peptide used for treating melanoma, and 1,900 pounds of moray eel liver were needed to isolate just 12 millionths of an ounce of ciguatoxin for study. "We cannot simply remove large volumes of an organism from the ocean—however useful—unless we know for sure that we are not wiping it out," said Garson.

Planet Discovered by Accident

A small planet was recently discovered by amateur astronomer George Sallit of Bradfield, a village in England, through a



telescope in his garden shed. "It was a complete accident," he admitted. "I took a picture and when I looked closer I realised it was a planet moving slowly across the frame." Sallit One, as the new planet is now called, is only about 20 miles in diameter and is some 400 million miles from the earth. Its orbit takes it between Mars and Jupiter. The telescope used is a 12-inch, computer-controlled model costing \$7,000 but employing software equipment designed for use on the Hubble telescope, reports *The Times* of London. There may be thousands of such minor planets, or asteroids, in our solar system.

A Surprise for Rice Farmers

For years rice farmers in Asia have sprayed their crops heavily in the early part of the season to kill off the larvae of leaf-folder moths, which decimate the rice plants' leaves. Recent experiments suggest, however, that the rice plants can afford to lose up to half of their leaves without any effect on the amount of rice they produce. Some Vietnamese farmers were convinced to go without the early spraying—which accounts for 30 to 50 percent of all the pesticide Asian farmers use—and found that crop yields were not hurt at all.

Thumbs Down on Religion and Politics

According to the newspaper *The Australian*, "the typical Australian adolescent" has no real interest in either politics or religion. This conclusion is based on a survey of students 13 and 16 years of age, which was compiled by University of Sydney lecturer Dr. Jennifer Bowes. The youths' priorities went in this descending order of importance: "having close friends, getting a good education, having a secure job, developing my talents, being close to my family, preserving the earth for future generations, protecting animals, having a nice home, travelling to other countries, earning a lot of money, doing something to stop pollution, getting married, helping those who are less fortunate, helping my country, doing something worthwhile for society, having some influence on other people." The two least important of the 18 values listed were "following the principles of my religion" and "being active in politics."

FROM OUR READERS

Threatened Planet I am writing about the series "Our Threatened Planet—Can It Be Saved?" (January 8, 1996) It is good to be able to read something encouraging. The third article in the series gives us hope for Paradise, where we won't have to worry about the ecosystem or holes in the ozone layer! I hope to live in that Paradise with my family and friends.

A. C., United States

We liked the informative box on pages 8 and 9 that dealt with such problems as deforestation, water scarcity, and endangered species. The articles made us understand the serious situation in which our planet now finds itself. We feel secure knowing that the only solution to this grave problem lies with our Creator.

O. P. and F. J. O., Spain

Jessica's Report I have just finished reading "Jessica's Report" in the January 8, 1996, issue. It was such an encouragement to me! When I see a shining youth serving Jehovah so joyfully and faithfully, it makes me proud. Jessica's story reminds me of the need to provide a witness at every opportunity.

A. H., United States

Found Purpose in Life The article "I Was Aimless but Found a Purpose in Life" (January 8, 1996) really touched my heart. As I read it, I saw myself. I too was aimlessly wandering about with a grim outlook on the future. But I was invited to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and started a study of the Bible. Now I am happily sharing in the full-time preaching work, helping others to see the wonderful hope that Jehovah has shown to me.

C. R., United States

Infertility Treatment The "Watching the World" item "New Hope for Infertile Couples?" caught my attention. (September 22,

1995) I showed it to a biologist, and she said that she has never heard of the procedure described, in which the microinjection of a single male sperm is made upon an ovum "within the woman."

E. K., Germany

Our item was based on a report by the French news agency France-Presse covering a lecture given by Danish physician Anders Nyboe Andersen. Unfortunately, some matters were not correctly reported. Dr. Andersen told "Awake!" that the microinsemination is actually done in vitro, that is, outside the woman's body. The fertilized ovum is then inserted into the woman. We did correctly state that the procedure can utilize a "husband's sperm rather than that of an anonymous donor—thus avoiding sensitive moral and religious questions." Such being the case, a Christian couple would have to make a personal decision regarding this procedure. (See "The Watchtower" of June 1, 1981, page 31.)—ED.

Wayward Friend I am writing about the article "Young People Ask . . . What Should I Do if a Friend Gets Into Trouble?" (January 22, 1996) One of my best friends was disfellowshipped a year ago. I was devastated. I felt as if I hadn't helped her enough, wasn't there for her enough, and wasn't a very good friend. When I read that it was not my fault that she left the truth, I felt as if a big weight had come off my shoulders!

L. T., United States

In my case the person close to me who began to "follow a questionable life-style" was not only my friend but my irreplaceable and gentle mother. I eventually went to the congregation elders regarding her situation, and she was disfellowshipped. I reproached myself for telling the elders. Now I want to fight my mistaken feelings of guilt by applying the suggestions in the article.

I. Y., Japan

Virginity—Why?

"THE cult of virginity"—that is what Randall Balmer, associate professor of religion at Barnard College/Columbia University, calls the seemingly growing trend among teenagers to postpone sexual activity until they are older.

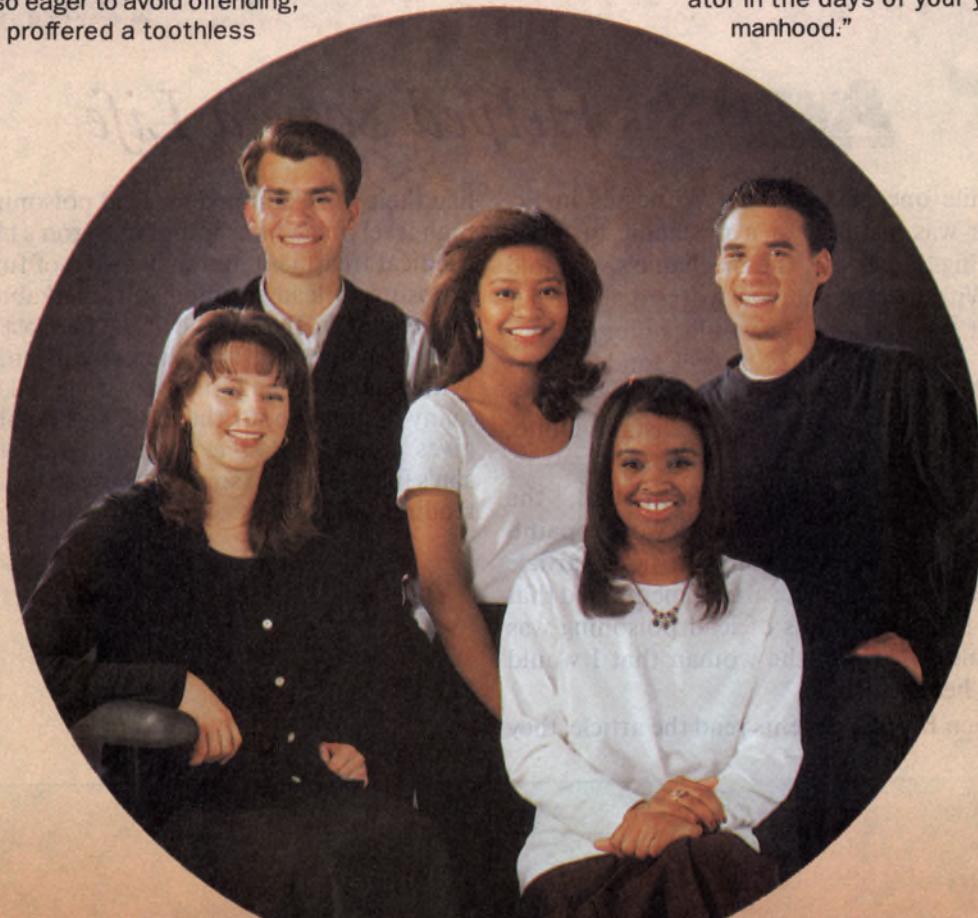
Not surprisingly, much of the urging toward sexual abstinence comes from religious organizations. "But the driving force behind the cult of virginity is secular, not religious," points out Dr. Balmer. "The real motivation for remaining a virgin is fear—not fear of divine retribution, but fear of deadly disease." Thus, he contrasts "the cult of the Virgin Mary," which portrayed abstinence as a religious ideal, with the modern-day "cult of virginity," which presents abstinence more as a health issue.

"It's a sad commentary about the state of religion in the 1990s that fear of disease drives morality," Dr. Balmer continues. "Religious leaders, so eager to avoid offending, have proffered a toothless

morality, or none at all. And so it is left to the scientists and public health officials to advise adolescents on how to conduct their sexual lives."

This is not the case, however, with genuine Christians. Consider Chad, a teenager being raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Chad was approached by a girl who struck up a conversation. But soon it became apparent that her intentions were more than just talk. "Then it hit me," Chad says. "I couldn't let Jehovah down. With the thought of always pleasing Jehovah on my mind, I told her I had to go."

Like Chad, many youths among Jehovah's Witnesses are maintaining fine morals not just for the sake of good health but primarily to please their Creator, Jehovah God. It is not fear of disease that drives their morality. Rather, such youths follow the counsel of Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember, now, your Grand Creator in the days of your young manhood."





Awake! Helped Save a Life

While one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Ecuador was waiting for a mechanic to finish working on her car, the mechanic's wife told the Witness that she was worried about her infant son, Byron. He would suffer convulsions five or six times a week, and doctors were unable to diagnose the problem. Byron had even been taken to specialists in Quito, the capital city.

"While conversing with the mother," the Witness explained, "I noticed a worker painting a car, and I remembered an *Awake!* article on lead poisoning. The article mentioned that one of the symptoms of lead poisoning was convulsions. I told the woman that I would bring her the article."

When Byron's parents read the article, they

had their son examined for lead poisoning. A high level of lead was found in Byron's blood. Medical treatment and prevention of further exposure to lead resulted in remarkable improvement in Byron's health. "The last four months he has not had one convolution," the Witness said. "The father has since talked to many doctors about the case, and he always gives credit to *Awake!* for having saved his son's life. Now even some of these doctors are reading *Awake!*"