Awake!

September 22, 1988

Millions of Children Are Dying | What Could Save Them?

"The silent emergencies"

James P. Grant, executive director of UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), thus described the unheralded deaths of millions of Third World children. He referred, though, not to casualties of the highly publicized African famine, but to victims of silent calamities: deaths by malnutrition, not starvation; deaths by dehydration, not thirst; deaths by disease, not drought.

Why does such tragedy continue? What can parents do to protect their children? *Awake!* now takes an illuminating and perhaps disturbing look at these questions.

WFP/FAO photo by B. Imevbore

WHY THE CHILDREN ARE DYING

In the time it takes you to read this sentence, three children will die needlessly.

BUT it is neither flood nor famine nor drought that is squeezing the life out of children at the astonishing rate of one every two seconds. Writes William U. Chandler in the Worldwatch Institute report *State of the World 1986:* "More children die because they are improperly weaned than because of famine. More children die because their parents do not know how to manage diarrhea than because of epidemics. . . . Analysts generally agree that about 17 million children die each year from the combined effects of poor nutrition, diarrhea, malaria, pneumonia, measles, whooping cough, and tetanus. Virtually all these deaths occur in the Third World."

The tragedy of such loss is heightened by a terrible irony. Continues Chandler: "Half to two thirds [of these deaths] *could be prevented* with relatively simple measures." (Italics ours.) Yes, parents in developing lands need not wait for grandiose governmental schemes or large-scale health projects. The know-how to help them save the lives of their children already exists! All that is needed is a willingness on their part to learn and to implement some relatively simple and inexpensive measures. We thus invite you to read the reports of *Awake!* correspondents in two African countries. It is hoped that these articles will prove not only informative but lifesaving.

HELPING THE CHILDREN STAY ALIVE!

By *Awake!* correspondent in Nigeria

POLLUTED water, limited food supplies, widespread disease and infection—these conditions are common in developing lands. However, Dr. Chizu Okudo, a Nigerian pediatrician, told *Awake!:* 'Ignorance and neglect [of proper hygiene] on the part of parents help to create conditions favorable to diseases.'

Continues Dr. Okudo: 'The older generation often advises younger parents that watery diarrhea washes out impurities and should be left to run its course.' Following such erroneous advice, parents leave their ailing children untreated. Death often results.

Life, though, is precious to all who honor "the source of life." (Psalm 36:9) God-fearing parents, therefore, do not let superstitions or local customs endanger the lives of their children. And, says the director general of health in Malaysia, "disease prevention . . . must start in the home."

Too Many Mouths to Feed?

"Food shortages" characterize our time, and the developing lands have been particularly hard hit. (Matthew 24:7) Complicating the problem is the fact that "pockets of extremely high fertility—above six children per woman—still exist throughout Africa and the Middle East," states *Planning the Global Family,* a Worldwatch Institute report.

Why, then, do not African couples limit the size of their families? The Worldwatch report explains: "A[n African] woman's economic and social standing rises with the number of children she bears, particularly since children represent extra hands to help with farming, marketing, and other tasks." The book *Africa in Crisis* adds: "The high probability that children will not live encourages African parents to have large families." In some African countries, nearly a fifth of all babies die in their first year! Ironically, though, having many children often creates a vicious circle of

WHY "AWAKE!" IS PUBLISHED

AWAKE! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

Most importantly, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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crowded, unsanitary quarters and inadequate sanitation—the very conditions that play a large part in killing children.

Doctors further say that a woman needs time to recover from pregnancy and childbirth before conceiving again. Otherwise, her ability to have healthy babies can be seriously impaired.

These facts notwithstanding, Africans tend to resist the idea of family planning.* Individuals, though, should not dismiss the matter without serious thought. Christians might consider that while the Bible does not condemn having children, it does say at 1 Timothy 5:8: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith." Having too large a family may make it impossible for parents to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter for their offspring. Although a personal matter, some couples have thus learned to practice contraception and avoid having more children than they can properly care for.

Breast-Feeding Versus Bottle-Feeding

"Malnutrition caused by poor child feeding practices claims over 10 times as many lives as actual famine," says researcher William Chandler. "Coupled with diarrheal dehydration, malnutrition is the leading killer in the world." Often, the 'poor feeding practices' begin in infancy.

Breast milk is the ideal food for most infants because it contains all the needed nutrients. It is easily and rapidly digested. It is always fresh and at the right temperature. It contains antibodies that protect and help the baby to build up resistance to infections. Breast-feeding also provides an

Some Symptoms of Malnutrition

- *Low energy—child avoids vigorous play*
- *Poor appetite—child refuses food, eats little*
- *Slow growth—child is too small for his age*
- *Reduced resistance—frequent illness from minor infections*

Some Causes of Malnutrition

- *Lack of food*
- *Plenty of food but the wrong kind*
- *Bottle-feeding with weak mixtures or unhygienic handling*
- *Infections*
- *Intestinal parasites, which cause diarrhea or vomiting*

* A survey of developing lands revealed that in Latin America, the majority of mothers want no more children. "Only in Africa did a decided minority of the women have this view."—*State of the World 1985*, Worldwatch Institute.

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infant with loving attention, essential to emotional development.

As women take on secular jobs, however, breast-feeding declines in many developing countries. Consequently, many African babies are fed powdered formulas. Such formulas are nutritious when correctly prepared under sanitary conditions. "In poor areas of the world, however," reported *Time* magazine, "that is sometimes impossible. Mothers may unknowingly mix powdered formula with contaminated water or, to save money, dilute it too much." The results can be deadly.

Queen, a Nigerian mother of seven, recalls that hospital nurses introduced her babies to bottle-feeding right from the start. Queen continued the procedure at home. However, her six children all suffered from serious and repeated diarrhea —one almost died. Her husband says: "We realized that our sixth child was being infected through the feeding bottle, so we stopped using it, and she recovered. Now Queen is breast-feeding our seventh child during its first few months."

The message? Put your baby to the breast as soon as possible! Eat a balanced diet yourself so that you can produce healthy milk. A side benefit of breast-feeding is that it tends to delay the onset of menstruation after the birth of a baby. It is thus called nature's contraceptive.

Feed Them Right!

Sometimes, though, African children are fed breast milk exclusively well into their 18th month of life. "When weaned," says William Chandler, "many children are given adult foods they cannot chew or digest, or that are unnourishing."

UNICEF's office in Côte d'Ivoire produced a poster that advises mothers: "After five months, more than the breast." Mother's milk should be supplemented by fruit, cereals, and vegetables that have been cooked and strained and that are thus soft enough to be chewed and swallowed by an infant. A Nigerian mother named Ijeoma breast-fed each of her four children during their first four months. She continued breast-feeding for up to 12 months, gradually replacing it by spoon- or bottle-fed meals of fruit juices, pap, and other preparations. She observed strict hygiene in preparing meals. The result? Her children have grown up healthy and have had few infections.

As the child grows, a balanced diet will help him stay healthy. A meal of only carbohydrates, such as yams, cassava, or polished rice, will not provide sufficient nutrition. His body also needs proteins, vitamins, and minerals, which are found in meat, eggs, milk, beans, corn, and a variety of vegetables and fruits.

Important too is how food is handled and stored. It may seem tempting to use spoilable food that has been left standing unrefrigerated for a couple of days, but *DO NOT USE IT!* "Contaminated food is frequently unsafe and may lead to repeated attacks of diarrhoea and other infectious diseases." Therefore, (1) wash your hands before touching or preparing foods. (2) Eat food immediately after it is cooked—don't let it stand for long at room temperature. (3) Keep your kitchen, your cooking utensils, your clothes, and yourself clean and tidy at all times.—*World Health* magazine.

Germs and parasites abound in polluted water. So filter or boil water before using it. Rinse eating utensils with boiling water, and wash your hands before handling food.

Indeed, perhaps the simplest health safeguard is to maintain a high standard of cleanliness. In developing lands, though, this can be a real challenge.

*Other Lifesaving Measures**

Over 2,000 children die each day from diseases such as measles, polio, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus, and tuberculosis—all of which, doctors claim, are easily preventable by immunization. Many parents have thus made a personal decision to have their children

inoculated against these diseases. Nigeria, for example, has the ***EPI*** *(Expanded Programme on Immunization). Perhaps a similar program exists in your country.—See* "Awake!" *of August 22, 1965, for further information on vaccination.*

Remember, though, that for a child to receive full protection, it may be necessary to return for booster shots. Often parents are concerned about the mild fevers and aches that may develop after a child's first inoculation. However, many parents reason that such minor discomfort is a small price to pay for a child's protection from death-dealing disease.

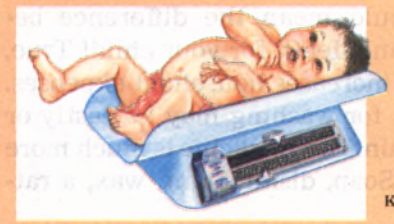
Familiarize yourself also with ***ORT*** *(Oral Rehydration Therapy).* In a recent ten-year span, some 30 million children died of the dehydration and malnutrition caused by diarrhea. A simple solution of glucose, salt, and water, however, can save your child's life if diarrhea strikes. Given as a drink, it increases the body's capacity to absorb fluid to replace what is lost through diarrhea and vomiting. If you cannot obtain the prepackaged salts, follow this simple recipe: Mix one level teaspoonful of table salt, eight level teaspoonfuls of sugar, and one quart of water. ORT "averts death in*

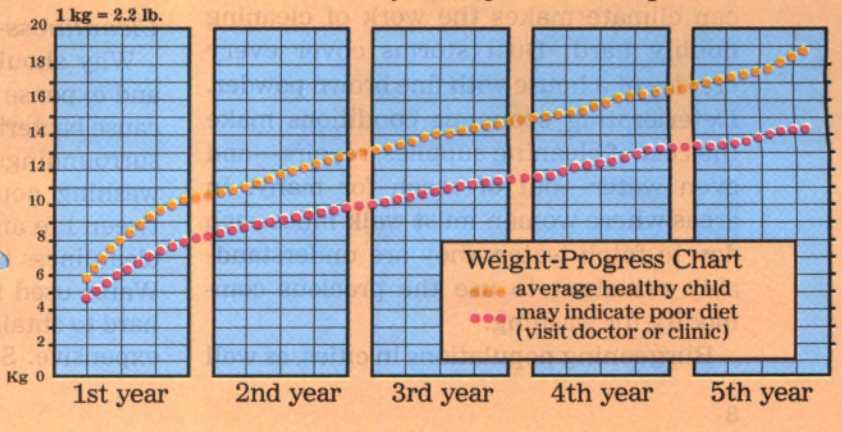
90 percent of diarrheal dehydration cases."

In spite of all precautions, children may still get infections and intestinal parasites. How can one be alerted to the presence of such dangerous conditions? ***A weight-progress chart,*** *easily obtainable in many lands, can help. Simply weigh your child each month and record the weight on a chart that shows the normal growth rate. Comparison of the two weights will indicate any faltering in his development.*

* This is provided for information only. *Awake!* does not recommend one type of medical treatment over another.

* See "A Salty Drink That Saves Lives!" in the September 22, 1985, issue of *Awake!*





MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLEANLINESS

By *Awake!* correspondent in Kenya

"*MAMAAA, nakufa!,*" the child cries. It means, "Mother, I am dying!" Attempted murder? No, a small child stands in a bowl and is being thoroughly scrubbed by his mother. In spite of vehement resistance, Mother completes her task!

Such scenes are common in Africa in even the poorest of neighborhoods. Nevertheless, maintaining hygienic standards is not always easy. The oppressively hot African climate makes the work of cleaning doubly hard. Dust storms cover every crevice of a house with fine brown powder. Deteriorating economic conditions make the cost of cleaning supplies, repairs—and even water—out of reach for many. In areas where women must walk miles each day to fetch water, they are understandably reluctant to use the precious commodity for washing.

Burgeoning populations in cities, as well as in some rural areas, also create health hazards. Open sewers, piles of uncollected garbage, filthy communal toilets, disease-carrying rats, cockroaches, and flies have become common sights.

Furthermore, a lack of knowledge of proper hygiene and sanitation is widespread. People contaminate water supplies without realizing the lethal consequences. Rats and other disease carriers are tolerated—even played with by children.

Cleanliness—The Benefits

Why should families go to the trouble and expense of keeping things clean? Because bacteria and parasites thrive in dirty surroundings. So as simple a matter as washing could mean the difference between life and death for your child! True, cleanliness increases household expenses. Water used for washing may be costly or hard to obtain. But medicine is much more expensive. Soap, disinfectant, wax, a rat-

trap, and a garbage container also cost money but not as much as doctor bills.

Interestingly, in the Bible there are over 400 occurrences of words related to "clean," "pure," and "wash." God's Law to Israel had specific regulations that encouraged physical cleanness and good sanitary habits. (Exodus 30:18-21; Deuteronomy 23:11-14) The command to "love your neighbor" also motivates Christians to keep themselves and their homes clean. —Matthew 22:39.

The box on page 10 gives a helpful checklist of things that can be done around the house. The principles are applicable in any land. Some of the suggestions listed, such as waxing the floor (thus filling tiny cracks) and keeping garbage in a closed container, will make your home much less attractive to insects and other disease carriers. Repairing holes in doors and windows will keep out not only dust but also tiny intruders. And if nothing else, cleanliness will make your home a more pleasant place to live in!

Family Cooperation

After studying this checklist, a housewife may develop a regular cleaning schedule. If all family members cooperate, the schedule need not be burdensome.

Jecinta, for example, is a mother of eight children and lives in a small apartment in an East African city. When asked how she keeps her home so presentable, she said: "All have learned to do their part. If someone spills something, he is given a rag or other equipment to clean up. They have also been taught to be neat when eating." A father can also cooperate with his wife and back up her efforts. He too can share in training young ones from a tender age to be neat and clean.

Preventive Measures

At times one can make the job of cleaning easier by taking preventive steps. For example, why not plant grass and trees near your house so as to reduce dust? Or try fencing off an area near your house so your children have a clean place to play. If your neighborhood is dangerously crowded, is it possible to find a dwelling in less crowded quarters? This may mean walking a bit farther to work, but it may be worth the effort.

Also, try discarding any useless items you have kept. This can free your home of needless clutter. And if the entranceway of your home is muddy after a rainstorm, why not cover the access to your entrance with gravel? If your home has an outside toilet, why not put a lock on it to prevent others from dirtying it?

The Right Attitude

Do not believe that only what can be seen needs to be clean. Some feel that while the front yard needs to be tidy, the backyard may as well be messy; that the

Soap, disinfectant, wax, a rattrap, and a garbage container cost money but not as much as doctor bills

A Clean and Sanitary Home
A Checklist

Toilet:

Flush toilet after use

For a 'long drop' toilet, or privy, use chemicals against insects

Wash hands with soap and water after using toilet

Wash toilet seat and bowl, sink, and other toilet-room items with disinfectant regularly

Kitchen:

Wash hands with soap and water before preparing and serving food

Keep garbage in container with lid; dispose of garbage regularly

Do not leave utensils dirty overnight

Wash vegetables and fruit thoroughly before use

If food preparation is done outside, do not let plates and utensils touch the ground. Do not allow dust to blow onto food

Clean corners of floor and cupboards weekly

Wash baby bottles in hot water

Boil drinking water where the supply is contaminated

Home:

Keep dirty clothes to be washed in a basket or other container

Wash clothes regularly with fresh laundry water

Wax wooden doors, floors, and furniture periodically

Spot-clean walls, doors, and light switches

Wash windows

Trap and kill rats; kill cockroaches and other insects

Check bed periodically for bedbugs and other pests

Keep a floor mat or moist rag at entrance for cleaning of feet

Fill holes in walls and doors, cracks in floors

Replace broken windowpanes

Repair ripped mattresses and upholstered furniture

Outside:

Bury or burn garbage

Remove or bury human or animal droppings

Divert open sewers from coursing through yard by digging a channel

sitting room has to be presentable, but the bedroom can be disorganized or the kitchen walls can be black from fingerprints and fumes. Such inconsistencies remind us of Jesus' words to the Pharisees: "You cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of plunder . . . Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside of it also may become clean." (Matthew 23:25, 26) Admittedly, it is not always possible to have every part of the house in spotless condition. But is it not at least a worthwhile goal for cleanliness to reign throughout the home—not just sections of it?

It would also not be right to blame the landlord for unclean conditions. True, a paint job may be long overdue, but this does not mean that the walls could not at least be washed. And perhaps a deal could be worked out with the landlord that you would care for some of the household repairs yourself—in exchange for a lowered rent.

Will You Meet the Challenge?

"I did not believe it at first," admits an African family head named Joseph. He refers to a Bible talk he heard on the subject of cleanliness. His family lives in a small wooden home, crowded among a dozen neighbors. It has a communal toilet and an unpaved walkway. Nevertheless, Joseph and his family tried applying these principles in their home. "My children now wear sandals, we wipe our feet, we wash our hands with soap and water and take other cleaning precautions," says Joseph. The result? "I was surprised. The children are sick much less often, and we do not have all these hospital expenses anymore."

So with relatively little expense and effort, parents in developing lands can make their homes safe, clean places for themselves and their children. Obviously, though, much more needs to be done to solve the developing world's health problems. Is there reason to believe that large-scale efforts will meet with success?

Teach Your Household

Dos and don'ts for neighborhood cleanliness

To wipe feet when entering a home or other building
To wear shoes or sandals
To flush toilet after use
To wash hands with soap and water after using toilet and before eating
To wipe a runny nose
To wear shirts, trousers, or a dress when sitting on the ground
What not to touch:
droppings
rats
cockroaches
garbage
stray dogs

WHAT HOPE FOR THE CHILDREN?

IT IS already too late for millions of children in the so-called Third World. The procedures discussed herein would save millions—if their parents could be reached and convinced to apply them. This being nothing short of impossible, millions of children will simply continue dying —slowly, quietly, inevitably.

Highly touted large-scale projects hold out little hope. The UN, for example, sponsored the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) with the goal of "clean water and adequate sanitation for all by 1990." With what result?

"Between 1980 and 1983," reports *World Health* magazine, "an additional 32 million people in Africa were provided with water supply, and an additional 12 million people received improved sanitation." Yet, there was only a very small increase in the percentage of people enjoying clean water and sanitation. Rapid population growth all but wiped out the impressive gains. Little wonder, then, that the goal of "clean water and adequate sanitation for all by 1990" has been called "a near impossible task."

At times, though, relief efforts are impeded, not by a lack of funds or manpower, but by greed, poor judgment, and petty rivalries. Developing lands spend four times as much on weaponry and military expenditures as they do on health. Of the little spent on health care, the majority goes to provide high-technology care—to the benefit of a privileged few.

Consider too the inexpensive Oral Rehydration Therapy. It is well known that this could save millions of lives. Yet, according to the *UN Chronicle,* "most doctors continue to prescribe a total of $400 million worth of anti-diarrhoeal drugs each year even though most are known to be useless, harmful or both."

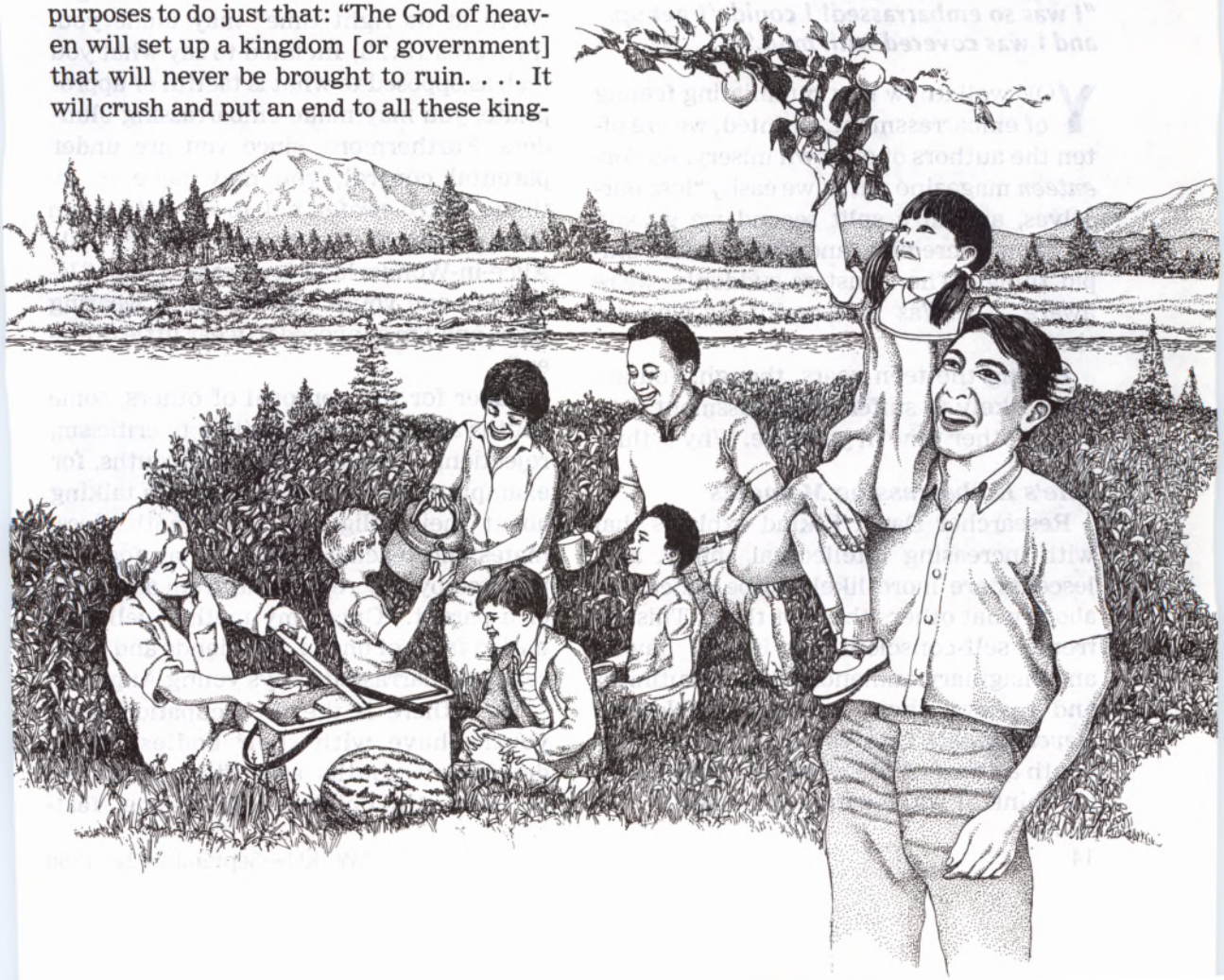
Or consider the devastating parasitic disease schistosomiasis that now affects 200 million people, especially children. "Science knows the cause of schistosomiasis, has tested the remedies in field trials, has developed an effective strategy that

could reduce this infection dramatically in the years ahead," writes June Goodfield in *Quest for the Killers*. Why, then, does the disease persist? "The problem is now political," writes Goodfield.

Yes, children die, not simply because man lacks the knowledge or the resources to keep them alive but because he values political expediency and personal gain over human life. The words of Jeremiah 10:23 *have* proved true: "To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." The only hope for the world's children—indeed for the whole human race—is for God to take over the management of planet Earth. The Bible tells us that he purposes to do just that: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom [or government] that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [contemporary governments], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

Under God's heavenly Kingdom, the children of the world will never again be threatened by disease or death. Jehovah's Witnesses therefore eagerly await this divine takeover of earth's affairs. They pray as Jesus taught them: "Let your kingdom come." (Matthew 6:9, 10) The plight of the children of the Third World makes such God-fearing ones pray this all the more fervently.*

* For further information, see the book *"Let Your Kingdom Come,"* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., or write the publishers of this magazine. They will be pleased to arrange for you to be visited by one of Jehovah's Witnesses.



Young People Ask. . .

How Can I Get Over Being Embarrassed?

It was bad enough that Angie had to wear a full-leg cast to school. But the situation got decidedly worse when she fell into a mud puddle during recess. Recalls Angie: "I was so embarrassed! I couldn't get up, and I was covered with mud."

YOU well know that humiliating feeling of embarrassment. Granted, we are often the authors of our own misery. As *Seventeen* magazine put it, we easily "lose ourselves, and in a split second we go and do some incredibly and inexplicably stupid things. Then, just as suddenly, we're aware . . . 'Was that really *me* who did that?'"

During the teen years, though, you are more likely to suffer embarrassment than at any other time in your life. Why is this?

Life's Embarrassing Moments

Researcher David Elkind explains that with increasing intellectual ability, adolescents are more likely to be concerned about what others think of them. This extreme self-consciousness is like having an "imaginary audience" that "scrutinizes and reviews their actions." (*Adolescent Development*) One young girl thus calls youth a "time of life when what other people think of you means a lot to you."

Unfortunately, your efforts to impress others may often be frustrated. Because you are still trying to master your emotions—and the social graces—the right "word at its right time" may elude you. (Proverbs 15:23) Inclined to say what you feel, as opposed to what is tactful or appropriate, you may make embarrassing blunders. Furthermore, since you are under parental control, you may have to do things you'd prefer not to do. "My mom always wanted me to wear those little Alice-in-Wonderland dresses to school," lamented one youth. "Everyone is wearing jeans and I'm supposed to wear little dresses."

Eager for the approval of others, some youths are also very sensitive to criticism, rejection, or failure. Christian youths, for example, may thus shy away from talking about their religious beliefs with classmates and teachers. Others may feel humiliated by any reprimand from a teacher or a parent. "Once [my mother yelled at me] in front of one of my friends and I was really embarrassed," says young Angela.

Then there is the preoccupation some youths have with their bodies. Slow-developing youths are often chagrined at their still childish appearance, fast-

developing youths at their adult bodies and the awkwardness accompanying such growth. "When I was in sixth grade," recalls Annie, "I was taller than *everybody*. It was embarrassing for me. I had a really tiny friend and I used to envy her."

Get Back on the Ice!

Suffering embarrassment is thus an unavoidable part of life. True, you should do your best to avoid doing things you'll later regret. For example, "the foolish one speaks many words." (Ecclesiastes 10:14) Simply thinking before you speak can thus spare you many embarrassments. (Proverbs 15:28) But in spite of your most strenuous efforts, embarrassing situations do occur from time to time. How do you react? To illustrate: Have you ever tried to ice-skate? If so, you probably slipped and fell on the ice the first time out—probably more than once. But did that keep you from going back onto the ice? Not if you wanted to become a good skater!

What, though, about your dealings with people? If you have embarrassed yourself in some way, do you 'stay down on the ice' by withdrawing, avoiding people and certain situations because you fear getting embarrassed again? If so, embarrassment is controlling you. Precious opportunities and enjoyable relationships pass while you wallow in pessimism. Says Ecclesiastes 11:4: "He that is watching the wind [fearfully contemplating life's uncertainties] will not sow seed; and he that is looking at the clouds will not reap."

To enjoy life and good relations with others, some risk is involved. As Dr. Wayne W. Dyer wrote in *Pulling Your Own Strings:* "You will never know what it feels like to get rid of a fear until you risk behavior that confronts it." So get right back on the ice after a fall!

Dealing With Embarrassing Situations

How, though, should you handle those moments when you wish you could hide yourself? A few suggestions are:

Don't take yourself too seriously. Said *Seventeen* magazine: "We all judge ourselves much too harshly." Besides, attaching too much significance to a minor error is just a form of 'thinking more of oneself than it is necessary to think.' (Romans 12:3) Imagine you have done something silly in front of friends. Says a youth named Beverly: "You might think that every time they see you, they'll think of that incident." But does your little slipup really occupy such an important place in the minds of others? Not likely. Is it not best, therefore, simply to forget about minor mishaps?

Accept discipline: As a youth, you are bound to make mistakes due to inexperience. However, being disciplined for our mistakes can 'give insight.' (Proverbs 1:3) A reprimand from a teacher or a parent is thus likely to befall you from time to time. Rather than fret over the temporary embarrassment that results, work on

Suffering embarrassment is an unavoidable part of life

benefiting from the discipline by making needed changes.—Proverbs 1:7-9.

Retain your sense of humor: Sometimes it is best to do as a 15-year-old named Frank advises: "Laugh it off." So if some clumsiness on your part excites laughter, do not be quick to take offense. (Ecclesiastes 7:9) As 18-year-old Terry recommends: "Don't be so self-conscious about what other people think." Try to see your plight through the eyes of others. Imagine how this "calamity" will look to you tomorrow —or next week. Good-naturedly laughing at oneself often alleviates embarrassment.

Take the first step: So suggests a youth named Faith. If you have embarrassed yourself in front of someone, naturally you might feel awkward being around that person again. But take the first step yourself and approach that person as soon as possible. (Compare Matthew 5:23, 24.) Faith has found that if that one "sees that you're an open person and can take a joke, he or she will feel comfortable around you."

Don't compare yourself with others: It may be awkward to be short when all your peers are tall—or vice versa. But remember, "for everything there is an appointed time." (Ecclesiastes 3:1) Your time for reaching physical maturity may simply differ from the next person's. Looking at your physical development while comparing yourself with another person is futile, for nothing can either speed up or slow down the process. (Compare Galatians 6:4.) Furthermore, there is no guarantee that you will grow to your desired height or have the ideal physique or figure, so why fret over what you cannot change? Or as Jesus asked: "Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span?" (Matthew 6:27) Much more is accomplished when you accept how you look and work at developing an attractive personality.

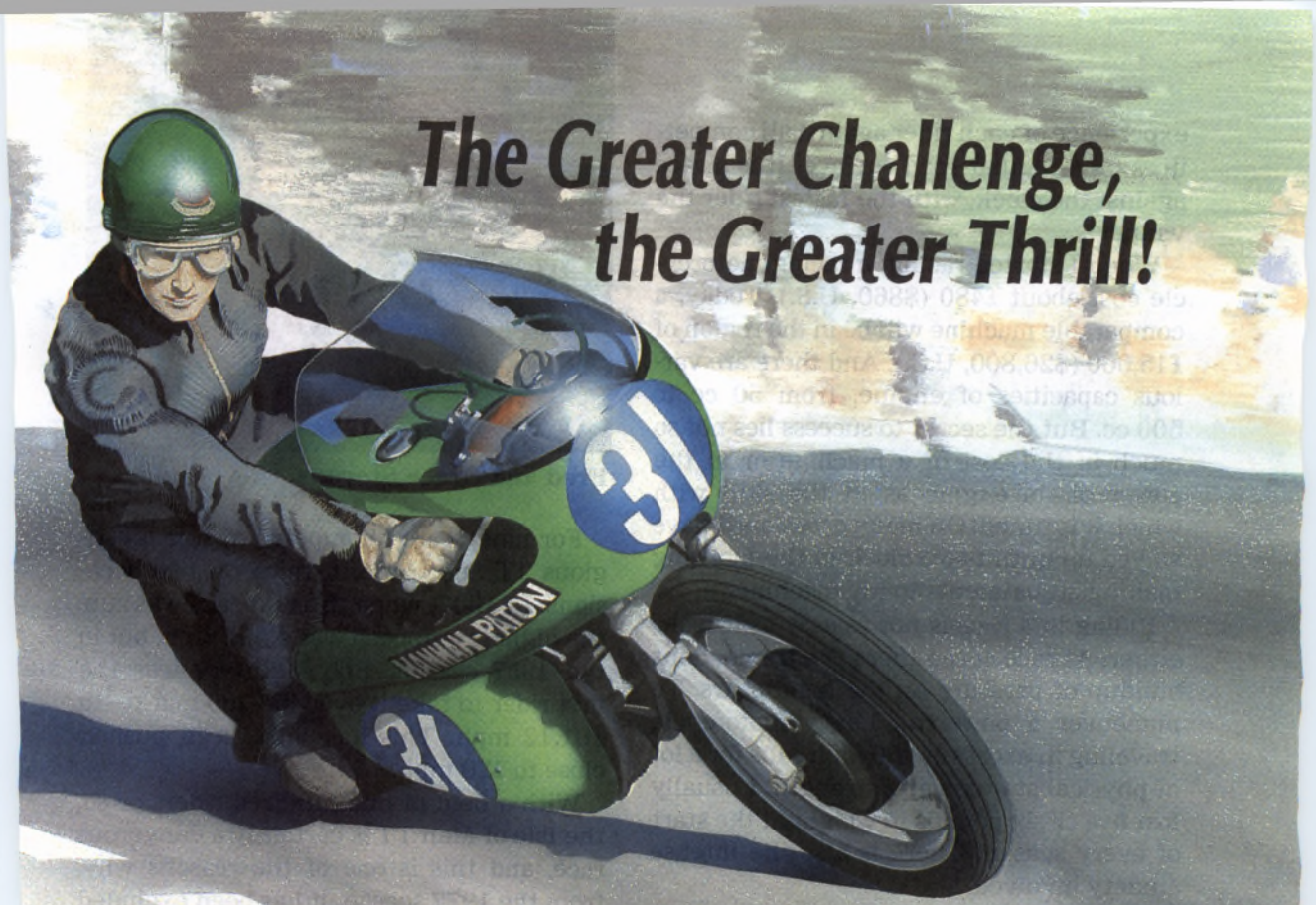
Treat others as you wish to be treated: How do you react when others embarrass themselves? If you delight in ridiculing them or broadcasting their mishap, don't complain when the tables are turned. "The one faithful in spirit is covering over a matter," says Proverbs 11:13. If you do this for others, perhaps they'll be moved to do the same for you.—Matthew 7:12.

Stand for your convictions: Never feel embarrassed to share your faith with others. Jesus' words at Mark 8:38 are sobering: "Whoever becomes ashamed of me . . . , the Son of man will also be ashamed of him." Count it a privilege to be a 'fool because of Christ.' (1 Corinthians 4:10) One youth observed: "The more you make the Bible's truths your own, the more you *want* to share them with others."

Youths mature physically at different rates

Humiliating situations do arise from time to time. But when this happens, take a realistic, balanced view of it, not expecting everything to go just right. Keep your sense of humor. Avoid taking yourself too seriously. If you apply this advice, you will find it easier to pick yourself up when you have an embarrassing fall.

The Greater Challenge, the Greater Thrill!



"WE COULD never afford it!" My father's softly spoken, yet frank, reply left me crestfallen. I wanted to be a racing motorcyclist and I had just told him so. From early childhood this had been my goal in life. But my father was being realistic, and I was just 14 years of age, young and inexperienced.

My interest in motorcycles stemmed from my father. A number of times, he had taken me to the Isle of Man to watch the TT Races.* But this year, 1950, was different. We stood there together to witness Geoff Duke win his first Senior Event, riding a Norton, with a record lap speed of 93.33 mph—and then take second place in the Junior TT!

My ambition was fired to join in the thrill of racing on the Isle of Man. I was determined to make the grade. Little did I realize then that ten years later my dream would come true. But the challenge was not easy.

Mastering the Machine

There are three basic types of motorcycle racing. *Speedway,* on an oval dirt track, calls for much skill when the machines are turned broadside to allow the back wheels to slide. *Motocross,* still referred to in Britain as *scrambling,* is over a course of rough ground, the motorcycles fitted with special deep-tread tires. *Road racing* in the Isle of Man, on the other hand, pits the skills and

* "TT" stands for "Tourist Trophy." The Isle of Man TT Races started in 1907 and have been an annual event (except in wartime) ever since. They remain among the world's leading motorcycle races.

experience of each rider against all competitors on a regular road surface. It is a race against the clock, with the fastest rider the winner.

When I started racing, a racing motorcycle cost about £480 ($860, U.S.). Today, a comparable machine will be in the region of £15,000 ($26,800, U.S.). And there are various capacities of engine, from 50 cc to 500 cc. But the secret to success lies not so much in the cost of a machine or in the power of its engine as in the skill with which it is tuned. On many occasions I have stayed up until two o'clock in the morning making adjustments to my machine.

Riding in a race is not as easy as it looks either. At race speed there is a tremendous buildup of pressure on the handlebars. To maneuver a powerful, heavy motorcycle traveling in excess of 100 mph calls for a lot of physical stamina and strength. I usually lost five or six pounds in weight at the start of every season. There is also the intense anxiety involved.

Success and Dangers

In 1963, I turned professional, taking two firsts that year in Northern Ireland, riding Nortons. In the Zolder, Belgium, International Races, I also came first in both the 500 cc and 350 cc events. In 1966 and 1967, I enjoyed a thrilling partnership with the Paton motorcycles, beautifully crafted handmade machines. Under the sponsorship of Bill Hannah of Liverpool, I first rode the 350 cc prototype and later a 500 cc model.

Some of my best results of any season were in 1967, riding these machines. I came in first in both the 350 cc and 500 cc events of the North West 200 in Ireland, second in the 500 cc Austrian Grand Prix, third in the 500 cc Belgian Grand Prix, and fifth in the 500 cc class Isle of Man TT.

Fred and Grace Stevens

For nine years I competed in this prestigious TT and came in third on two occasions. In 1907, when the first race was run, the highest lap speed was 42.91 mph, but in the 1957 season, Bob McIntyre was the first rider to take it over the 100 mark—to 101.12 mph. This has since been pushed close to 120 mph.

With a field of one hundred riders or so, the Isle of Man TT is certainly a dangerous race, and this is one of the reasons why, from the 1977 season, it has been excluded from the world motorcycling Grand Prix table. In fact, it was in 1965 on this course that I experienced my worst accident. The rider on my tail was eager to pass me, but my rear brake was giving trouble, and I had to ease up on my speed as I came into the right and left bend. He did not know this, of course, and so did not allow for it. As a result, he clipped my rear wheel and tipped me off.

I hurtled down the road a long way but suffered only bruises and abrasions. Had I hit the boundary brick wall at speed, I do not care to think what would have happened to me. I was sad to learn afterward that my motorcycle, sliding on ahead of me, had smashed into a flag marshal, breaking both his legs and putting him in the hospital for many months.

Thrills and Death

By this time I was racing in the international Motorcycle Grand Prix. This involved attending some 20 race meetings each year, competing in up to 35 races in countries as far afield as Canada and Japan. I also traveled extensively in Europe —from Sweden and Finland in the north to Spain and Italy in the south, and my itinerary often took me to Eastern European countries. What a thrill it was to compete against the East German MZ machines, the well-respected Czechoslovakian Jawas, and the Vosticks from the U.S.S.R.!

Although prize money is given up to tenth place, the main objective of the Grand Prix is to gain as many credit points as possible. Then, at the end of each 12 months of racing, the points gained from the various Grand Prix events are totaled, and a table is published giving the world's top six riders that year. My best result was in 1965 when I ranked fourth in the 500 cc World Championship.

Over the years a number of my competitors were killed in accidents. But it was part of the challenge of the sport, and all of us accepted that. There was one tragedy, however, that shook me badly. I was racing in Finland when a particularly close friend fell off his motorcycle and fractured his skull. He never regained consciousness. My wife, Grace, and I stayed with him and his wife until he died.

A Traveling Family

Grace and I were married in 1960. She liked motorcycling too and enjoyed riding pillion with me, accompanying me to race meetings until our first child was born in 1961. Then I traveled to the races alone. Looking back, it was a rather selfish life I led after Robert's birth. I used to leave them both for months on end until Grace became so lonely that I insisted that she join me. We purchased a van and after that traveled everywhere as a family. Even when two other children came along, the pattern did not change.

A Change of Thinking

At the end of 1967, I decided to pull out of motorcycle racing and purchased a garage in Southport. The lure of racing a motorcar was next, in the shape of a single-seater Lotus Formula Ford. But I soon realized that riding a racing motorcycle and driving a racing car call for the development of entirely different techniques.

All of this presented me with a stimulating, fresh challenge. Grace, however, was unhappy about my new venture and took no interest in it whatever. So eventually, lacking the measure of family unity we had enjoyed so long while I was racing, I decided to quit the sport altogether.

It is a strange thing, but only later did I see that there was also an underlying reason. A fresh interest was beginning to give us a new set of values. Grace's thinking—as well as mine—was changing, more than we realized.

Our New Interest

Grace and I were confirmed members of the Church of England, but with our doing so much traveling, religion was of necessity kept on the sidelines. So when Grace became interested in the preaching of Jehovah's Witnesses as early as 1960, our nomadic way of life worked against that too. Ten years passed before we had any meaningful discussions about the Bible and its message for our day.

After we had had time to settle, Grace met Jehovah's Witnesses again and arranged for me to sit in on a Bible discussion

of 'the sign of the times.' It was all part of a special campaign—a six-month free home Bible study course using a little blue book entitled *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. I well remember reflecting as our first appointment loomed nearer: 'What have we let ourselves in for? What a boring evening it is going to be!' But I was wrong.

The one thing that stands out in my mind from that first encounter with Jehovah's Witnesses is the Scriptural record at 2 Timothy 3:1-5. I can still recall my amazement at realizing that I did not know that such an accurate picture of 'the sign of the times' had been on record for nearly two thousand years. Grace and I were of the same mind, eager to learn, and within a year both of us were baptized.

I still had a young family of four children to care for, but Grace and I determined to put first things first. So, with her encouragement, I sold my business, took part-time employment, and started preaching full-time as a pioneer minister. (Matthew 6:33) My years of motorcycling had given me thrills beyond measure. But now, with a clearer view of the sacredness of life, I found myself facing a greater challenge. Little did I realize then that it would lead me to even greater thrills.

A Thrilling Challenge

Grace and I soon discovered that there is a different challenge each time we meet somebody in our Christian ministry. First we have to discern his or her spiritual needs and then seek to meet those needs by skillful use of the Bible. Can you imagine the thrill of seeing an avowed atheist change his thinking to become a dedicated servant of God? Grace and I have shared such an experience. It took us hours of patient reasoning and systematic Bible study with him and his wife, but what a joy it was to see both of them baptized!

When racing, so much rested on me, my experience, and my expertise. But I have had to learn that recourse to my own natural abilities in the ministry is not enough. Prayerful reliance on Jehovah's spirit for guidance is essential.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

Over the years my family has enjoyed many fine privileges of service together and has been able to help a number of friends, relatives, and neighbors accept Bible truth. For four years we accepted the challenging assignment of spending our annual vacations traveling in the remote northeast of Scotland. We left many Bible study aids with the hospitable people there and started Bible studies.

Looking back, it is evident that by taking that initial step of pioneering, I set the best example for our four children. They all chose to enter full-time service when they left school and have continued in it ever since. The three who are now married have partners who share their vocation.

Two years ago, when our youngest daughter finished her schooling, Grace was able to join me as my pioneer companion. Then I was able to accept another privilege, an assignment to serve as a substitute circuit overseer. So now, traveling from our home, we often visit nearby congregations to help and encourage them.

We have a very full life, with Grace no longer just backing me up and looking on, as was the case when I was racing. Now, together, we share in the disciple-making work, and our happiness as a family is complete. Each day, we thank Jehovah for the challenge and the thrilling privilege of being active as his Witnesses.—*As told by Fred Stevens.*

Fear of Flying

Does It Keep You Grounded?

"LADIES and gentlemen, flight number 210 is now boarding." Several hundred passengers make a last-minute scramble for carry-on luggage and newly purchased newspapers and magazines. Friends and relatives bring a lump to their throats with loving farewells and embraces as the passengers prepare to board the waiting plane.

Minutes later the purring sensation of four giant jet engines, each taller than a man, can be felt inside the plane. Spinning and coming alive, they produce over 100,000 thrust horsepower. The plane carries 311,000 pounds or 155.5 tons of fuel —enough fuel, 47,000 gallons, to fill a suburban swimming pool!

From the boarding ramp, the relatively quiet, cushioned ride to the assigned runway begins. Waiting for their turn for takeoff clearance from the control tower, the cockpit crew go through their long list of equipment checks. Finally it's all systems go! "Flight number 210, you are cleared for takeoff." The pilot pushes the throttles forward. "We're rolling." The passengers are pushed back in their seats as the plane streaks forward. Soon the pilot pulls back on the control column, lifting the aircraft's nose. The ground suddenly disappears from sight, and in a short time the plane has reached its preassigned altitude of 37,000 feet and a cruising speed of over 550 mph. In a few short hours, the hundreds of passengers will have safely reached their destination —thousands of miles away.

But alas, not all is well! There are those too frightened even to look out the window. They stare straight ahead, as if in a vise. There are those with sweaty palms and white knuckles, gripping seat arms tightly. Their heart is racing, their stomach is in knots. Some are overtaken with nausea. No need to read or look at pictures. It will do little good.

Not all flying phobias have the same root cause. What affects one may not affect another. There is fear of heights, of flying over water, of crowds, of being closed in, of death, and others.

Widespread Fear of Flying

Hundreds of people spend days driving in cars or traveling on trains because they are afraid of flying. It is estimated that in the United States alone, over 25 million people are afraid to fly—one out of every six adults. Worldwide, the number of fearful flyers soars even higher. Fear of flying is estimated to have cost the domestic air-travel industry 21.2 million one-way trips, 6 million business trips and 15.2 million personal trips, resulting in an annual revenue loss of 1.6 billion dollars.

When some fearful flyers were asked by a former airline pilot if they worry when a relative or close friend flies, they almost always said no. One fearful-flyer counselor said at a seminar: "When I ask my patients, 'Would you let me get on a plane next week?' they always say, 'Of course, sure.' And I ask, 'Why? Don't you care if I die?' They always laugh and say, 'You're not going to die.'" Another counselor said: "I have frequently asked patients, 'How many people do you know who died as a result of an airplane accident?' Usually none. 'How many people do you know who died as a result of a car accident?' Usually two or three."

Why the Fear?

Statistics and experts agree that the modern jetliner is an extraordinarily safe means of transportation. Insurance actuaries, whose job it is to calculate insurance risk and premiums, say that if you are going from coast to coast, it is about six times safer if you fly than if you drive. Aircraft crew members are quick to point out that the most dangerous part of the trip is not the flight but the trip to and from the airport.

In Our Next Issue

- *AIDS Carriers —How Many Could Die?*
- *Autumn Leaves —Why So Beautiful?*
- *Wonderfully Made to Live, Not Die*

With air travel now at its highest peak ever, what is making some people fearful of flying? (Even though many men are reluctant to admit it, it is estimated that of those afraid to fly, the split is about fifty-fifty, male to female.) They attribute their fear of flying to the excessive media coverage of aircraft accidents, with days of follow-up stories, and to the number of skyjackings taking place. Also, reports of near midair collisions, crowded skies, and fewer air-traffic controllers cause them to board an airplane with trepidation. Nevertheless, facts and figures continue to favor air travel as a relatively safe means of transportation.

What a Fearful Flyer Can Do

To begin with, in recent years a number of major airlines have tried to educate fearful flyers about the safety of air travel. Seminars have been conducted in many principal cities of the world by airline pilots, crew members, and practicing clinical psychologists. The cost for each student is about $200, U.S., plus the cost of the ticket for the graduation flight. The sessions consist of question-and-answer programs, on-site airport familiarization and desensitization, and finally the graduation flight itself.

Said one seminar instructor: "Ninety percent of the people we deal with have flown. Of these, half have stopped flying because of their fear, and half are continuing to fly, but are miserable doing it. Only 10% of the people in our seminars have never flown." According to reports, these seminars have successfully helped thousands of fearful flyers, or fearful nonflyers, to become comfortable with flying.

Since attending a seminar is not possible

Trans World Airlines photo

for everyone who must board a plane, possibly for an emergency flight, here are some suggestions offered by seminar counselors. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the airport. Last-minute arrival and rushing to board the plane can increase your anxiety. "I usually tell them not to sit in the very last seats," said one counselor. "It's more uncomfortable and the airplane sways more." The front of the plane is smoother and quieter. However, since these seats are first class, and many do not wish to pay the extra money, the second-best choice is over the wing. If looking out the window bothers you, choose a seat away from the window. "After settling into the seat, do . . . deep breathing exercises," advises *The Air Traveler's Handbook*. "This singular procedure has worked effectively even for the most sceptical. Do it with your eyes closed. Turn inward for the strength that is waiting to be tapped. . . . As soon as possible stand up and stretch. Move about the cabin."

"It's important to tell people who are frightened that alcohol doesn't help," cautions a seminar counselor. "At 5,000-foot atmospheric pressure, that drink is worth a drink and a half. Also, the alcohol desiccates [dries up] the nervous system, desiccates the mucous membranes, makes them uncomfortable, may make them more sensitive to motion, may make them sick, and may end up traumatizing them."

"Holding rigidly onto the seat," said another, "is one of the worst things to do." Instead, place a pillow at your back. It will help to relax you.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We're beginning our descent and will be landing shortly. Thank you for flying our airline." Minutes later the muffled sound of landing gear coming down can be heard. The pilot has received clearance for landing. The runway is straight ahead. We are coming in, and the pilot raises the plane's nose slightly. The concrete runway makes its appearance beneath our window—and we touch down! The engines roar as the pilot reverses the thrust to slow the plane down, and finally the giant plane comes to a halt at the terminal. Another successful flight!

A Glimpse of Nepal's Treasured Animals

By *Awake!* correspondent in India

IT WAS almost midnight. The jungle around us was pitch-black. Above our heads, the tall trees obscured the starry sky. To see where we were going, we kept our faint torch close to the ground. We were looking for a tiger! But as we stumbled along in the dark, a fearful thought kept popping into my mind—was the tiger also looking for us?

To see some of Nepal's treasured and endangered animals in their natural habitat, my wife and I had come from Calcutta, India, to Tiger Tops, a jungle lodge in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park. This is a 360-square-mile reservation of grassland and beautiful forests in the northern reaches of the Terai, among the foothills of the great Himalayas.

Getting to Tiger Tops

The journey was an adventure in itself. First we flew from Calcutta to Kathmandu, the capital of the mountainous kingdom of Nepal. The flight offered us a spectacular

view of the towering peaks of the Himalayas, including the 29,028-foot Mount Everest.

Kathmandu—the name evokes a sense of what is ancient and remote. So we were surprised to find Western-style buildings standing along traditional, narrow, winding streets. Ancient bazaars with their handcrafted goods vie with arcades selling imported perfumes, tinned goods, and stereos. It is a changing but still fascinating city.

At the Kathmandu airport, we boarded a 19-seat plane for Chitwan Valley. After a 30-minute flight through lofty mountains with terraced slopes and deep valleys, we landed in Meghauli on a grass field, apparently one of the world's smallest airfields. But the journey had not ended yet.

Via Land-Rovers and dugout canoe, we came to a small clearing. To our surprise, six huge elephants emerged from the tall grass to meet us. This was to be our transportation for the rest of our journey to the jungle lodge. Sitting on the padded platforms on the elephants, we found the gentle, steady rhythm of the elephant walk a real contrast to all the different modes of transportation we had used to get this far.

At last we arrived at Tiger Tops. It was a two-level cane structure with thatched roof, standing on 12-foot stilts. Our rooms were pleasantly furnished. Just as we were noticing a sign in the room that said: "Don't leave food out for unwanted guests," we heard a thumping sound from outside. The "guests" were several langur monkeys scrambling along our veranda, looking for handouts.

Meeting the Elephants

At the nearby elephant camp, our naturalist instructor explained the vital role the elephants had in the lodge operation. The camp maintains a herd of 12 elephants for transportation. Ten of them are females as they are more gentle than the males. Each elephant eats 500 pounds of fodder and

Photo courtesy of Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge, Nepal

Tiger Tops Lodge in the heart of the jungle

Chitwan Valley at the foothills of the Himalayas

drinks more than 50 gallons of water daily. The cost of maintaining one elephant comes to NPRs. 54,750 ($2,500, U.S.) a year, and an elephant lives 65 years, on the average. This gives real meaning to the term "white elephant." Since white elephants were considered holy, they could not be put to work but would become a liability. Thus, an ancient king could easily ruin a minister not in his favor by giving him a white elephant.

We were told that the elephant can be trained by its mahout, or keeper, to obey a number of verbal commands and other signals. To move forward, for example, the mahout sitting on its back will prod his toes behind the elephant's ears, and to make the elephant move back, he will dig his heels into the animal's shoulders. It takes five to eight years to train an elephant thoroughly; it then becomes very sensitive to such commands and responds quickly in spite of its four-and-a-half-ton frame.

In Search of Rhino

The great Indian one-horned rhinoceros is found in only one location in the world —the area between Nepal and the territory of Assam in India. To get a glimpse of this rare animal, we set out in a caravan of elephants, with two or three persons sitting atop each animal. The elephants formed a single file, each gently plodding along in the steps of the one in front.

For years the habitat of the rhino was threatened by widespread cultivation of the Terai grasslands and by government-sponsored malaria-eradication programs. Only in the last two decades or so had conservation efforts been put forth to stabilize the situation. Now, about 300 of the estimated 1,000 one-horned rhino left in the Indian subcontinent roam in the Chitwan Valley swamplands.

Soon our lead elephant headed straight into a wall of elephant grass that towered well over our heads. We began to feel the excitement of the chase. Through the grass we could hear one mahout calling excitedly to the other. Suddenly, the elephant alongside us raised its trunk and issued a piercing blast, and our animal reacted by swerving to one side. Amid all the commotion, a rhino dashed out of the grass, brushed past us, and disappeared into the grass ahead. Quickly, we rushed forward to get a further glimpse of the animal. As the grass cleared, there, in full view, was a baby rhino scurrying to keep up with its frantic mother. Together they vanished into the safety of the trees.

We were glad that the rhino chose to run away from us. For even though an elephant can usually handle a tiger, it is cautious with this third-largest land animal. When provoked, the rhino will fight furiously either with

Photo courtesy of Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge, Nepal

Searching for rhino in the tall grass

its foot-long horn or with its long, sharp lower tusk, which can cut the underside of the elephant like a scalpel. Despite its short legs, the rhino can match a horse in speed for short distances. This, coupled with its weight, makes the rhino a formidable enemy.

Tiger Call

It was after ten-thirty one evening, and nearly everyone was in bed. Suddenly the silence of the night was broken by rushing footsteps and shouting. A tiger had been sighted! Three of us along with two Gurkha escorts dashed off into the darkness.

We walked about a quarter of a mile. Then we were told to remove our shoes, for they would create a vibration that a tiger is sensitive to. Not used to being barefoot, that last part of the walk was silent agony for us. We were also not allowed to talk, whisper, cough, or sneeze. Was the tiger really in front of us, or eyeing us from behind? What had we got ourselves into?

Our guide signaled us to stop. We listened but could hear nothing in the dark, still night. By the light of our faint torch, we inched forward until we found we were moving along a seven-foot-high thatched partition. When we came to a right-hand turn, we were motioned to stop and position ourselves behind cutouts in the partition. We stood as still as we could and listened. Yes, we could hear the tiger devouring its prey, and it sounded very close —too close!

Suddenly powerful lights came on, and there it was, a Royal Bengal tiger! He was just about 40 paces from us. Instinctively, I tensed, not knowing what his reaction to our intrusion would be. But to my surprise, there was no response from the tiger. The lights did not disturb him. Yet I was told that if we were to click our cameras, he would be gone.

What a beauty! There he lay beside his kill, a young buffalo. His powerful body, over nine feet long to the tip of the tail, was full and rounded, probably weighing about 450 pounds. Markings of white, black, and golden orange stood out vividly. His obvious strength would lend support to the claims made by some that the tiger is more powerful than the lion. Using our binoculars, we were able to get a close-up look at his beautiful head and body. Truly one of the world's most magnificent animals! It was worth every bit of the effort to see the famed Royal Bengal tiger.

My impression had always been that the tiger is an inherently aggressive animal that will attack at the mere sight of man. But as I was finding out, the opposite is true. Unless provoked, it is normally shy and mild-tempered. When it comes across a human, it usually runs away after giving the situation a brief look-over. Wildlife photographers report that they have come within 10 to 15 feet of a tiger in its natural habitat, only to be stopped by a warning growl. This is also the signal to back off and slowly withdraw. The tiger may follow until the intruder has gone beyond the boundary of its territory.

Fond Memories

The next morning we had another urgent call: "Get ready quickly for takeoff!" Automatically I envisioned the hustle and bustle of getting to the airport in a taxi. Only this time our taxi was an elephant.

Soon, our lovely lodge, our gentle elephants, our feline friend, our meandering river, were all behind us. But with us we carried away memorable pictures of the way life is for these magnificent creatures of the wild.

From Our Readers

Broken Heart

The 16-year-old daughter of a woman I work with was very upset after breaking up with her boyfriend of 1 1/2 years. She would not talk to her girlfriends, and couldn't even attend school for two weeks. I took the January 22, 1988, *Awake!* to her mother, pointing out the article "How Can I Get Over a Broken Heart?" The next day she was happy to report that immediately after reading it, her daughter put on some makeup, telephoned her two girlfriends and invited them over. The three of them sat around the kitchen table and discussed the article. The next day she went to school.

C. G., United States

I want to commend you for the splendid article. I have been able to reflect on the "good side" of breaking up, being able to analyze the situation and see that it was really best for both of us, and I have learned to adjust so that it won't happen again.

S. B., Brazil

Extra Cautions Needed?

After reading the article "Earthquakes —How You Can Prepare for Survival!" (December 22, 1987), I would like to point out a mistake in the advice offered. You advise turning off both gas and electricity at their sources as quickly as possible when gas is leaking from a broken pipe. But as a gas fitter, I would like to inform you that, under the circumstances, to operate an electrical switch on or off can cause a spark with the danger of an explosion.

T. C., England

I enjoyed "Cultivate Safe Driving Habits" (January 8, 1988), listing items one should check before every auto trip. However, you omitted a very important item. Oh, if only I had been told to check the brake fluid before driving, I wouldn't have had to contend with having my brakes give out during rush hour on the turnpike. A reputable mechanic gave my car a complete safety check before the trip. I found out that most mechanics don't do this important check, as evidenced by your article.

M. L., United States

I appreciated the *Awake!* article (May 22, 1988) on water safety. One more thing—if there is a sign in the water that you can't read or that is written in a language you don't know, don't swim in that area! That is most likely a warning sign. A child drowned here because the parents couldn't read the English sign (warning of strong undertow), so they allowed the child to swim there anyway.

C. S., United States

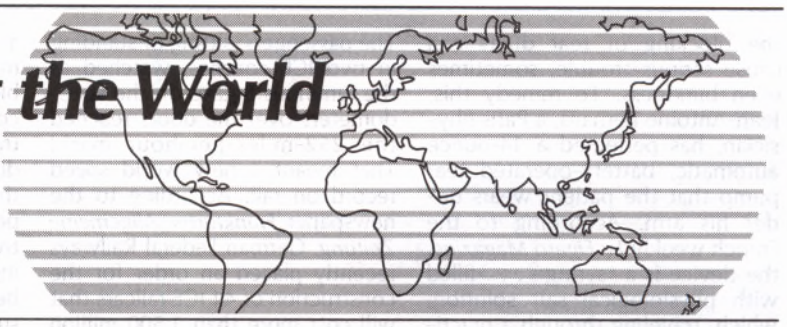
We appreciate these extra cautions from our readers.—ED.

War Memorial

Your reproduction of the inscription on the Evesham War Memorial (April 8, 1988, page 4) is of particular interest to me. In 1936 my father took a photograph of me and my mother, choosing that background deliberately to lecture me regarding the futility of all war. Only a few years later, I learned firsthand the horror, frustration and heartbreak of the second world war as a young infantryman, twice wounded and narrowly escaping death. Your publication helps redress a balance, showing people the correct alternatives to adopt, should they freely wish to do so. For that, I for one am grateful.

J. G., England

Watching the World



Forestalling Armageddon?

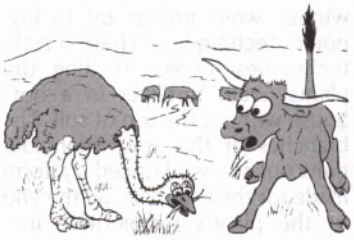
A treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States to eliminate medium- and shorter-range land-based missiles went into effect in June when Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan met in Moscow and exchanged instruments of ratification. Under the treaty, the Soviet Union will destroy 1,752 of the missiles, and the United States 859. For the first time, Western reporters were allowed to visit a Soviet rocket base to witness a demonstration of how the missiles will be dismantled. As Colonel Yevgeny A. Kozlov showed the reporters around the base, he was asked how he felt about destroying the weapons. "We never wanted Armageddon," Colonel Kozlov said. "We never wanted war."

Good Investment?

Many parents in Japan firmly believe that higher education will ensure better positions, higher incomes, and superior life-styles for their children. Some even go into debt, spending over 60 million yen ($480,000, U.S.) to put a child through the best private schools and universities. Do they reap the expected dividends? "In reality . . . the belief no longer holds true," says the *Mainichi Daily News*. "There are not enough privileged positions to accept them," and many have had to accept corporate positions formerly filled by high school graduates. While average lifetime earnings were higher for university graduates —206.55 million yen ($1,650,000, U.S.) as opposed to 192.93 million yen ($1,540,000, U.S.) for high school graduate office workers—"Japanese parents may realize some day that the gaps are too small to merit a serious burden on their household economy," says the paper.

The Valuable Ostrich

Do you know the commercial value of an ostrich? One of its eggs is equal to 24 chicken eggs,



and ostrich meat is quite tasty, with the added advantage of being lean and low in cholesterol. Ostrich feathers sell for up to $5 each, and the tough ostrich skin makes premium-quality leather. South Africans and Texans have already established flourishing ostrich farms, and now Australia is following suit. *The Weekend Australian* newspaper reports that one of the first—if not the first—ostrich farms in Australia has been set up in central New South Wales. According to the newspaper, an optimistic farmer says that ostriches are not really difficult to handle despite their large size. He grazes them in fields alongside sheep and goats. All the ostriches need for food is extra hay or barley each day to add to their grass diet.

Record Depth

In March 1988, French divers beat all previous water-diving records by working over three and a half hours at a depth of from 1,706 to 1,742 feet, where the pressure is over 700 pounds per square inch. The dive took place in the Mediterranean, off Cassis in southeast France. A week in advance six divers were placed in a hyperbaric chamber, where the pressure was gradually increased to the equivalent water pressure. French daily *Le Figaro* commented: "Under such pressure, they were able to leave the chamber and enter the water at 520 meters [1,706 ft] below the surface without danger." A possible practical application is for maintenance work on the submerged parts of off-shore oil-drilling platforms.

Artificial Tears

A lack of tears due to the destruction of the lacrimal glands or

the blocking of tear ducts can cause serious trouble, sometimes even blindness. To remedy this, Jean-Antoine Bernard, a Paris physician, has perfected a 14-ounce automatic, battery-operated tear pump that the patient wears under his arm. According to the French weekly *Le Figaro Magazine,* the device is a "syringe . . . filled with physiological salt solution, which, traveling through a practically invisible plastic tube, regularly irrigates the eye by means of a fine silicon catheter placed under the eyelid." The rate of flow may be regulated to accommodate a need for more liquid in windy weather and less during sleep.

No Laughing Matter

The old belief that laughter is good medicine is now being taken seriously. Some hospitals in the United States now provide "humor rooms" for ailing patients, therapists teach "smile therapy," and an organization known as "Nurses for Laughing" is gaining popularity, states *The Vancouver Sun.* The report notes that researchers have found that laughter could be "an antidote to stress" and "good for the immune system"; one even calls it "internal jogging." According to *The Sun,* a psychology professor claims that "laughter increases the pain threshold by releasing endorphins, the body's natural pain killers." And a Canadian therapist says that facial laugh muscles "instruct the brain to feel good, regardless of how you feel."

Record Ride

German Federal Railways invited some 80 guests to share a special test run of its train "Intercity Experimental" (ICE) back in May. The passengers, sitting or standing in two ICE coaches, watched as the luminous figures on the speedometers over the doors reached the 252-miles-per-hour mark! That meant a new world speed record on rail. According to the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* German Federal Railways recently placed an order for the construction of 41 ICE railcars that will cost more than 1,500 million German marks.

New Tomato-Plant Champion

In February 1988, a giant tomato plant grown in Tsukuba, Japan, beat the 1985 world-record holder by 3,585 tomatoes. Both the previous winner and this year's

winner were grown by hydroponic techniques. These costly techniques involve feeding the plants liquid fertilizer in a hothouse without the use of soil. The branches of the new titleholder grew out across a latticed platform made for their support. By the end of the plant's competitive life, which amounted to a little more than a year, the champion plant had produced 16,897 tomatoes!

Good Use of Radioactivity

A novel use of radioactivity has aided in the eradication of some termites in Australia's older historic buildings. *The Canberra Times* reports that a tiny amount of radioactivity is added to their food and spreads right through the termite colony, thus making it possible to determine the size of the colony as well as to trace its tracks. The radioactive substance does not kill the termites. Once they are located, conventional pesticides can be used more effectively and economically. According to the *Times,* the method has been so successful that countries such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Egypt have expressed interest in it in order to help eradicate their own termite problems. Since the amounts of radioactive material necessary are minute, there is said to be no danger of contamination for humans.

Exercise Addicts

Exercise in moderation has definite health benefits, but more and more Americans are working out to the point of harming themselves. "A national love affair with fitness—combined with the same psychological problems that cause the eating disorders of anorexia and bulimia—has spawned a growing health problem: obsessive, addictive exercise," says *The Wall Street Journal.* "Many report the same kind of withdrawal symptoms when they don't exercise as alcoholics and drug addicts do when they stop drinking and taking drugs: depression, nervousness and insomnia." Although there is a fine line between healthy and obsessive exercise, doctors say a sure sign of exercise addiction is when a person exercises in spite of injuries—often taking anti-inflammatory drugs to mask the pain. "These concerned doctors know that the stress fractures or shinsplints or tendinitis commonly incurred by obsessed joggers and aerobic dancers can persist for a lifetime," says the *Journal.*

Playtime Is Growtime

For this toddler it is a time of exploration. Powered by a lively curiosity, she pulls and tugs on everything in the house. If the house is not childproof, mother will be crying "no-no" and slapping tiny hands, and in the process curbing curiosity—the same curiosity that can make the child successful in school and in later life. Be protective but not overprotective. More freedom comes outdoors in a park, where a pipe may become a tunnel through a mountain or a cave for Mama bear and Baby bear to live in.

A few years later, imagination flourishes. A packing crate becomes a home for playing house, a chair is the driver's seat of a car, a broomstick is a fiery steed to gallop to someone's rescue. A sandbox, with pots and pans and a bucket of water, offers endless opportunities. While parental supervision of play is important, it need not always be structured or organized but can respond to the mood of the moment. On impulse, small children become cowboys, soaring airplanes, doctors and nurses, papas and mamas, astronauts, and roaring bulldozers—all in the space of half an hour.

Play is essential for the development of children. To rob a child of proper playtime and the materials for it is to limit his growth of mind and body, emotions and spirit.

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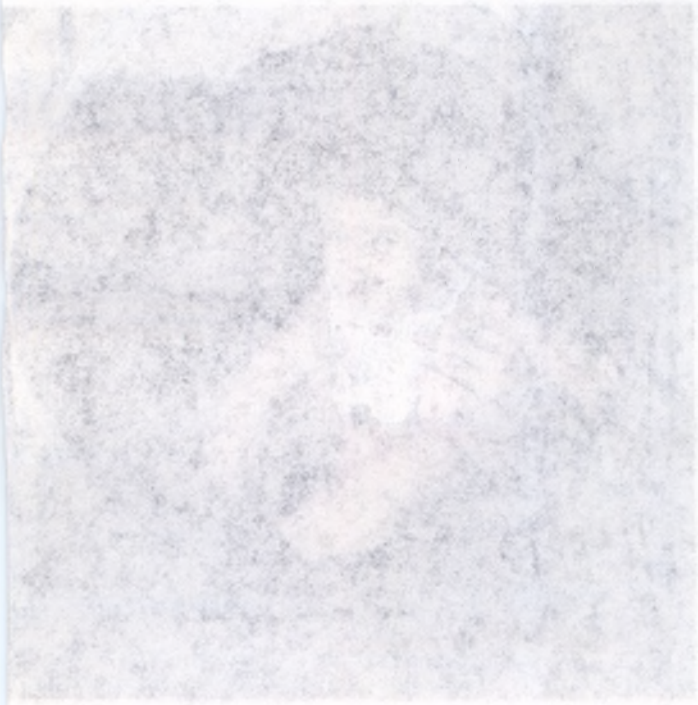

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