

Awake!

December 8, 1997

CHILD CUSTODY

WHAT IS THE BALANCED VIEW?





CHILD CUSTODY **What Is the Balanced View? 3-12**

When parents divorce, how is the custody of their children determined?
Who decides their future religious training?



Punch

Should Christians Hate Homosexuals? 13

What is the Bible's
viewpoint?



The Pygmies —People of the Deep Forest 20

Who are they?
What is their way of life?

What Is in the Child's Best Interests?	3
Child Custody—Religion and the Law	5
Child Custody—A Balanced View	9
The French Bible's Fight for Survival	16
Crossword Puzzle	19
Jehovah Smoothed Our Way	24
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
When Is a Bee Not a Bee?	31
His Skepticism Was Overcome	32



WHAT IS IN THE CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS?

TO DIVORCE or not to divorce? That is a big question on the minds of many unhappily married people. Many years ago divorce was frowned upon, if not condemned, for moral and religious reasons. And any unhappily married parents usually stayed together for the sake of the children. However, this world's standards have changed radically in more recent times. Today divorce is widely accepted.

Yet, despite the acceptance of divorce, more parents, judges, social scientists, and others are expressing concern about the bad effects of divorce on children. More voices of caution are now being heard. Growing evidence shows that divorce can have a devastating impact on a child. Parents are be-

ing urged to think of the consequences of divorce for themselves and for their children. Sociologist Sara McLanahan, of Princeton University, states that "between two-thirds and three-quarters of the families who divorce should probably give it more time and more thought about whether they're doing the right thing."

Recent studies show that children of divorce are at greater risk of teenage pregnancy, dropping out of school, depression, divorce in their own marriages, and joining the ranks of welfare recipients. In the Western world, 1 in 6 children is affected by divorce. Historian Mary Ann Mason, in her book on child custody in the United States, observed: "A child born in 1990 had about a 50 percent

chance of falling under the jurisdiction of a court in a case involving where and with whom the child would live."

Sadly, hostilities do not always end with the divorce, as parents may continue to fight in the courts over custody and visitation rights, inflicting further stress on their children. These emotionally charged encounters in the adversarial courtroom atmosphere test the children's loyalty to their parents and often leave them feeling powerless and fearful.

A family counselor said: "Divorce does not rescue children. It does sometimes rescue adults." The reality is that by divorcing, parents may resolve their own dilemmas, but at the same time, they can deliver a blow to their children, who may spend the rest of their lives trying to compensate for the damage.

Child-Custody Options

In the hostility and emotional stress of a marital split, it is extremely difficult to negotiate the future custodial placement of the children in a calm and rational way. To minimize parental confrontation and avoid adversarial litigation, some jurisdictions offer an alternative way to resolve disputes, such as out-of-court mediation.

When properly handled, mediation allows the parents to work out an agreement rather than leave the decisions for placement up to a judge. If mediation is not possible, parents may be able to work out an arrangement for

custody and visitation through their lawyers. Once the parents come to an agreement and put it in writing, the judge can sign an order that contains their wishes.

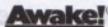
When the parents cannot agree on a custody arrangement, the legal system in most lands will provide means to try to ensure that the children's best interests are protected. The judge's paramount concern will be the children, not the parents. The judge will consider many relevant factors, such as the wishes of the parents, the relationship of the child to each parent, the preferences of the child, and each parent's ability to provide day-to-day care. Then the judge will determine where and with whom the child will live as well as how the parents will work out important decisions about the child's future.

In a sole-custody arrangement, one parent may have the authority to make decisions. In a joint-custody arrangement, both parents must agree on significant decisions, such as the child's health care and education.

Questions That May Be Faced

When faced with child-custody litigation, parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses must also consider what is in the best interests of the children's spirituality. For example, what if the non-Witness parent is against any Bible-based training for the children? Or what if the non-Witness parent has been disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation?

These scenarios can make decision-



Why Awake! Is Published Awake! is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. Publication of Awake! is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Unless otherwise indicated, New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References is used.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Awake!, c/o Watchtower, **Wallkill, NY 12589**. Printed in U.S.A.

making more complex for Christian parents. They want to act in a wise and reasonable manner, and they also want to maintain a good conscience before Jehovah as they prayerfully consider the best interests of the children.

In the following articles, we will look at

such questions as these: When awarding custody of children, how does the law view religion? How can I meet the challenge of a custody case successfully? How do I cope with losing custody of my children? How do I view a joint-custody agreement with a disfellowshipped parent?



CHILD CUSTODY RELIGION AND THE LAW

IN DIVORCE and child-custody cases, religion can be an important factor—and a complex one. For example, questions such as the following may arise.

Should a judge consider testimony claiming that one parent is unfit to have custody of a child because that parent is a member of a certain religion, especially a minority religion? Should a judge consider testimony about the religious beliefs and practices of the parents so that he can determine which

religion, in his opinion, would be best for the child? Should he then order that the child be raised in that religion and forbid the child's exposure to other religions?

Today, more and more people marry outside their own religious and ethnic backgrounds. So when these couples divorce, the children may already have ties in two religious communities. Sometimes, a parent who is involved in divorce proceedings may have recently adopted a particular religion

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail:

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish,[#] Dutch, English,[#] Finnish,[#] French, German,[#] Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,[#] Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish,[#] Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Yoruba, Zulu

Monthly Languages Available by Mail:

Chichewa, Cibemba, Estonian, Ewe, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Macedonian, Malagasy, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Papiamento, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Tahitian, Telugu, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa

[#] Audiocassettes also available.

© 1997 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

Offices of the Watch Tower Society in selected countries

America, United States of, Walkill, NY 12589	New Zealand, P.O. Box 142, Manurewa
Australia, Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	Nigeria, P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State
Canada, Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4	South Africa, Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740
England, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	Zambia, Box 33459, Lusaka 10101
Ghana, Box 760, Accra	Zimbabwe, P. Bag A-6113, Avondale

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

Three Important Qualities

A family-court judge interviewed by *Awake!* said that among the important qualities he looks for in a parent are the following three:

Reasonableness—a willingness to grant maximum access to the child by the other parent (where there is no physical or moral threat to the child)

Sensitivity—an awareness of the child's emotional needs

Self-control—a balanced homelife that would contribute to a calm atmosphere in which the child could flourish

that is different from what that parent had before. The new religious association may be a stabilizing factor in the life of that parent and very important to him but unfamiliar to the children. So another question arises, Can the court forbid the parent to take the children to the religious services of this religion

Judicial Guidelines

By setting guidelines, some judges have tried to avert needless disputes over a parent's religious values. For example:

1. A meaningful relationship should be encouraged between a child and both parents. Canada's Supreme Court Justice John Sopinka noted that each parent should be allowed "to engage in those activities which contribute to identify the parent for what he or she really is [including the practice of his or her religion]. The access parent is not expected to act out a part or assume a phony lifestyle during access periods."

2. To prohibit the access parent from teaching the child his/her religious beliefs is a violation of the parent's freedom of religion, except where there is clear, affirmative evidence of imminent and substantial harm to the child.

just because it is different from the religion that the parents practiced previously?

These are difficult questions. They require that a judge consider not only the needs of the child but the interests and rights of the parents as well.

Fundamental Rights of Parents and Children

It is true that judges may be influenced by their personal religious views. But in many lands it is not likely that the parents' or child's religious rights will be ignored. These lands may have constitutions that prohibit the judge from restricting the parents' fundamental right to direct the upbringing of a child, including the child's educational and religious instruction.

In turn, the child has the right to receive such training from his parents. Before a judge can lawfully interfere with the religious training of a child, the court must hear convincing evidence that "particular religious practices pose an *immediate and substantial threat* to a child's temporal well-being." (Italics ours.) Mere differences about religion or even hostility between the parents over religion is not sufficient to justify State intervention.

In Nebraska, U.S.A., the reasonable position taken by a mother who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses in a custody dispute illustrates how these legal provisions protect both the parents and the children. The non-Witness father did not want their daughter to attend the religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses at the Kingdom Hall. A lower court agreed with the father.

The mother then appealed to the Supreme Court of Nebraska. The mother argued that there was no evidence of immediate or substantial threat to the well-being of the child in any of the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses. The mother testified "that attendance and participation in the religious activities of both parents would . . . provide a basis for the

child to determine which religion she would prefer when she reaches a sufficient age of understanding."

The higher court reversed the lower court's decision and held that "the [lower] court abused its discretion in placing limitations on the custodial mother's right to control the religious upbringing of her minor child." There was absolutely no evidence that the child was being harmed by attending religious services at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Rights of Noncustodial Parents

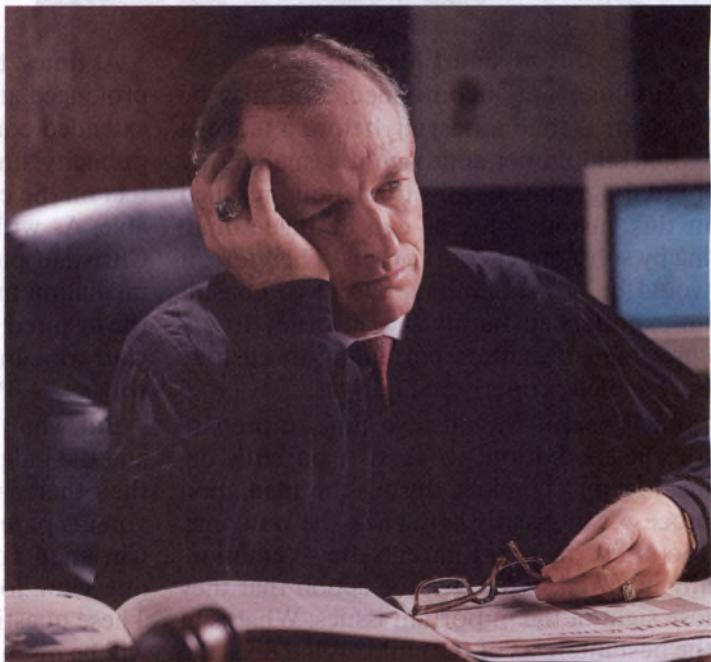
Sometimes, divorced parents try to use disputes about religious training as a means of gaining control of the children. For example, in *Khalsa v. Khalsa*, a case in the state of New Mexico, U.S.A., both parents had practiced the Sikh religion during their marriage. But shortly after they divorced, the mother converted to Catholicism and began to discourage the children from practicing Sikhism.

The father was upset and took the matter to court in an attempt to obtain more authority to direct the children's religious training toward his Sikh religion. How did the trial court respond to the father's request? It refused his request. The trial court ordered that "when the children were with [him], they could not voluntarily or involuntarily participate in any Sikh activity, including any church activity, Sikh camp or Sikh day care center."

Judges bear a heavy responsibility in custody cases

The father appealed this decision to the New Mexico Court of Appeals. This higher court agreed with the father and reversed the trial court's decision. The appeals court stated: "Courts should adhere to a policy of impartiality between religions, and should intervene in this sensitive and constitutionally protected area *only* where there is a clear and affirmative showing of harm to the children. Restrictions in this area present the danger that court-imposed limitations will unconstitutionally infringe upon a parent's freedom of worship or be perceived as having that effect."

Such a decision follows a long line of principles that are well established in many lands. A reasonable parent will consider these principles. In addition, the Christian parent will carefully reflect on the child's need for interaction with both parents, as well as the child's obligation to show honor to both mother and father.—Ephesians 6:1-3.





A mediator can help parents resolve differences without lengthy court proceedings

child need so that he can develop mentally, emotionally, and physically?

Remember that from the legal point of view, the primary issue in mediation is, not religious or other personal differences, but how the parents can find common ground and work out an agreement for the good of the children. A parent will perhaps face religious or other prejudices, unexpected questions, or manipulations designed to agitate and fluster. Each parent's shortcomings may be exposed or even exaggerated. When those involved remain reasonable, however, a resolution can be reached.

Out-of-Court Mediation

Although out-of-court mediation may be less formal than a hearing before a judge, a parent should not approach it casually. Any mutual agreements or stipulations reached in this custody process can be made binding by subsequent court orders. Therefore, it would be advisable for a parent to consult an experienced family law attorney to ensure that all matters pertaining to custody are handled properly and fairly.

Each parent should take time to prepare for the mediation process. A parent's demeanor and conduct during the mediation process can greatly influence the outcome. Too often, divorcing parents are so emotionally involved in the divorce action that they lose sight of the important issues: What is in the best interests of the child? What does the

At times, the mediation process may seem prolonged and frustrating. The alternative is extended court action with its embarrassing publicity, financial burden, and damaging effect on the child. That is certainly less desirable. As with all serious problems in life, a Christian parent will want to approach the mediation process prayerfully, remembering the inspired invitation to "roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act."—Psalm 37:5.

But what if a solution cannot be reached and the judge awards custody of the child to the other parent? Or what if one of the divorcing parents is disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation? Also, how should one view joint custody and sole custody? These questions and related Bible principles will be discussed in the following article.



CHILD CUSTODY A BALANCED VIEW

OFTEN, the real challenge comes after the divorce, in a struggle for the affection and control of the child. The saying "It takes two to fight" is not always true. It may take only one domineering parent who wants his or her own way. A family attorney in Toronto, Canada, observed: "In family law, everything is very emotionally charged and close to the heart."

Instead of thinking of the child's best interests, some parents keep the dispute going by filing motions on irrelevant issues. For example, some have tried to prove that custody should be changed because the other parent is one of Jehovah's Witnesses and will deprive the child of a 'normal way of life.'

The non-Witness may make an issue of celebrating birthdays, Christmas, or even Halloween. Some may complain that the child's association and social adjustment would be restricted if the child decided not to salute the flag. Or some may suggest that the child would be psychologically damaged by accompanying the parent in talking to others about the Bible. Some non-Witness parents have even alleged that the child's life would be endangered because the Witness parent would not give consent for the child to receive a blood transfusion.

How does a Christian meet the challenge of such emotionally charged arguments?

An emotional response—"fighting fire with fire"—will not be effective. If the matter is taken before a judge, each parent will have an opportunity to be heard. It is most important to keep in mind the Bible counsel: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Psalm 55:22) By meditating on this and by applying Bible principles, parents can, with Jehovah's help, cope with any eventuality involving child custody.—Proverbs 15:28.

Reasonableness

The best interests of the child are the key issue. If a parent is overly demanding, he may lose custody and even find his visitation privileges restricted. The wise parent conducts himself in a peaceable manner, keeping in mind the Bible counsel: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . Yield place to the wrath . . . Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good." (Romans 12:17-21) Whether in court, in a lawyer's office, or with a child-custody evaluator, parents need to "let [their] reasonableness become known to all men."—Philippians 4:5.

Sometimes an estranged spouse will try to deceive others by introducing misleading and speculative problems. It is wise to fight the human tendency to overreact to these verbal attacks. Health, religion,



A custodial parent should listen patiently when a child tells about his or her visit with the noncustodial parent

custody? What if one parent is disfellowshipped?

Joint Custody

Some judges feel that it is important to maintain contact between the child and both parents. Their reasoning is based on research studies showing that children may suffer less stress and emotional harm after divorce if the parents are able to share custody. Rather than feeling abandoned by one parent, the child would have a sense of being loved by both parents and of being involved in both households. "Joint custody is a way of keeping both parents involved,"

says a family law attorney.

However, Dr. Judith Wallerstein, executive director of the Center for the Family in Transition, in Corte Madera, California, warns that to make joint custody work, you need parents who are cooperative and a child who is flexible and gets along with people. These qualities are essential because in joint custody both parents retain the legal right to share decision-making on major issues involving the health, education, religious upbringing, and social life of their child. But this works only if both parents remain reasonable in considering what is in the best interests of their child rather than what is in their own personal interests.

Sole Custody

The court may award sole custody to the parent who, in its opinion, is better equipped

and education are favorite subjects that estranged spouses use to fabricate mischief at a custody-dispute hearing.—Proverbs 14:22.

Reasonableness includes the ability to consider the facts and negotiate a fair agreement. No parent should forget that even after divorce, the child still has *two* parents. The parents have divorced each other but have not divorced the child. Therefore, except in extreme circumstances, each parent should have the freedom to act as a parent when he or she has the child. Each should have the freedom to express his or her feelings and values and have the child share in the parent's lawful activities, religious or otherwise.

Let us consider the possible outcomes of a hearing: (1) joint custody, (2) sole custody, and (3) limits on visitation privileges. What is the difference between joint custody and sole custody? How can you cope when you lose

to provide for the needs of the child. The judge may decide that the custodial parent be the sole decision-maker regarding important issues concerning the child's well-being. Often, the court arrives at the decision after listening to the findings of assessors—these are usually psychologists, psychiatrists, or social workers.

Proponents of sole custody feel that the arrangement gives the child more stability. When parents are unable or unlikely to communicate effectively with each other, many trial judges prefer this custodial arrangement. Of course, the noncustodial parent is not cut out of the child's life. Visitation rights are generally awarded to the noncustodial parent, and both parents can continue to provide the child with needed guidance, love, and affection.

Visitation Privileges

It is unrealistic for parents to view child custody as having a "winner" and a "loser." Parents are successful and "win" when they see their children grow into mature, competent, respectable adults. Success in child rearing is not directly tied to legal custodianship. By heeding court-ordered conditions in child-custody matters, even when these appear to be unjust, a Christian shows "subjection to the superior authorities." (Romans 13:1) It is also important to remember that this is no time to vie for the affection or loyalty of your children by belittling the other parent in an attempt to destroy his or her relationship with them.

There are Bible examples of God-fearing parents who, for various reasons, were separated from their children. For example, Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, acting in the best interests of their child, placed him in a little floating ark "among the reeds by the bank of the river Nile." When the infant was retrieved by Pharaoh's daugh-

ter, they maintained their trust in Jehovah. These wise and faithful parents were rewarded with generous "visitation" privileges that they effectively used to train the boy in Jehovah's way. Moses grew up to be an outstanding servant of the true God.—Exodus 2:1-10; 6:20.

What, though, if one of the parents is disfellowshipped? Should the Christian parent make the child available for visitation? The disfellowshipping process of the

Correcting Misunderstandings

"The tongue of wise ones does good with knowledge," and a Christian parent has a fine opportunity to correct misunderstandings or half-truths. (Proverbs 15:2) For example, as to the health care of their children, "Jehovah's Witnesses accept medical and surgical treatment," but when designated as the custodial parent, a Witness reserves the right of informed consent for any procedure.*—*The Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Jehovah's Witnesses take their religion, which is based on God's Word, the Bible, seriously. This makes for better fathers, mothers, children, friends, neighbors, and citizens. Christian parents administer discipline in love, building respect for authority and equipping their children with a set of sound values for life.[#]—Proverbs 13:18.

Secular education is an important part of a child's upbringing, and Jehovah's Witnesses want their children to have the best that is available.[▲]—Proverbs 13:20.

* See the brochure *How Can Blood Save Your Life?*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

[#] See the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, chapters 5-7, 9, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

[▲] See the brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses and Education*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

congregation only alters the spiritual relationship between the individual and the Christian congregation. In fact, it severs the spiritual bonds. But the parent-child relationship remains intact. The custodial parent must respect the disfellowshipped parent's visitation rights. However, if the noncustodial parent poses an imminent and substantial threat to the child's physical or emotional welfare, then the court (not the custodial parent) may arrange to have visitation with the child supervised by a third party.

You Are Never Alone

Divorce proceedings and subsequent child-custody disputes are emotionally draining experiences. A union that started so promisingly has been shattered along with the couple's dreams, plans, and expectations. For example, infidelity or extreme abuse may force a loyal wife to seek legal protection for herself and her child. Yet, feelings of guilt and inadequacy may persist as she contemplates what went wrong or how the matter could have been handled more effectively. Many couples worry about their children's reaction to the family breakup. The court struggle for custody may become an emotional roller-coaster ride that not only tests one's integrity as a caring parent but also tests one's faith and trust in Jehovah.—Compare Psalm 34:15, 18, 19, 22.

When an innocent mate chooses to take action because of child abuse or extreme spousal abuse or to protect his or her health against the risk of sexually transmitted diseases from an unfaithful spouse, there is no need for that innocent mate to feel guilty or to feel abandoned by Jehovah. (Psalm 37:28) The unfaithful or abusive spouse is the one who has violated the sacred contract of marriage and "dealt treacherously" with his or her mate.—Malachi 2:14.

Continue to "hold a good conscience" before man and Jehovah by applying Bible prin-

ciples, treating your estranged spouse honestly, and showing flexibility in your custody agreements. "It is better to suffer because you are doing good, if the will of God wishes it, than because you are doing evil."—1 Peter 3:16, 17.

As for the children, they need reassurance that the breakup of the family was not their fault. Sometimes things just do not work out as planned. But the application of Bible principles can soften the impact of divorce by encouraging open and understanding dialogue between parents and children. For example, this can be done by letting the children have an active part in planning for postdivorce family life. By being patient and kind and by being interested in the children's feelings and listening to their expressions, you will do much to help them adjust to new schedules and living arrangements.

Others Can Help

Parents are not the only ones who can help a child who experiences the breakup of a family. Family members, teachers, and friends can do much to support and reassure children of divorce. In particular, grandparents can do much to contribute to the children's stability and emotional well-being.

Christian grandparents may offer the children spiritual instruction and wholesome activities, but they must be respectful of the parents' decisions about religious training, for it is the parents, not the grandparents, who hold the moral and legal authority to make these decisions.—Ephesians 6:2-4.

With such support, children of divorce can survive the breakup of their parents' marriage. And they can continue to look forward to the blessings of God's new world, where all families will be free from "enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:21; 2 Peter 3:13.

Should Christians Hate Homosexuals?

IN 1969 a word describing an irrational fear of or aversion to homosexuals was coined in the English language. The word is "homophobia." Many languages do not have such a specific word, yet for thousands of years, people of many nations and tongues have evinced a dislike for homosexuals.

In more recent times, though, homosexuality has been widely promoted as merely an alternative form of sexual expression. Historian Jerry Z. Muller recently wrote of a "rising demand for public recognition and respect for homosexuality as such." He explained that homosexuals "have increasingly banded together to proclaim their practice as praiseworthy, and to demand that others do so as well." This is seen especially in Western countries. However, in most parts of the world, even in so-called liberal lands, many still condemn and spurn homosexuality.

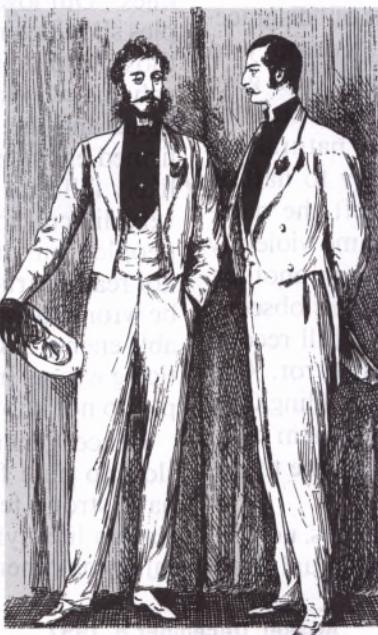
Homosexuals and those suspected of homosexuality are often singled out as targets of scornful remarks, harassment, and

violence. Even religious leaders have manifested such hatred. Some have started what may seem to be their own private wars against homosexuals. Take, for instance, the comments made by a bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church that were broadcasted recently on Greek national radio. He stated: "God will burn homosexuals forever in the fiery pitch of hell. The screams of their filthy mouths will resound to all eternity. Their perverse bodies will experience unbearable torment." Is this really true? How does God feel about homosexuals?

God's View

The Bible does not call particular attention to homosexuals as a group to be ostracized or hated by Christians. Moreover, it does not teach that God will punish homosexuals—or any of his creatures—by burning them in a fiery hell forever. —Compare Romans 6:23.

However, the Scriptures do set forth the moral standards of our Creator, which oftentimes run counter to modern-day mores. Homosexual



Punch

Christians do not water down the Bible's view of homosexuality

acts, heterosexual sex between unmarried persons, and bestiality are all condemned in the Bible. (Exodus 22:19; Ephesians 5:3-5) God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of such sexual practices.—Genesis 13:13; 18:20; 19:4, 5, 24, 25.

Regarding acts of homosexuality, God's Word pointedly says: "This is a hateful thing." (Leviticus 18:22, *The New Jerusalem Bible*) God's Law to Israel stipulated: "When a man lies down with a male the same as one lies down with a woman, both of them have done a detestable thing. They should be put to death without fail." (Leviticus 20:13) The same punishment was prescribed for those committing bestiality, incest, and adultery.—Leviticus 20:10-12, 14-17.

The apostle Paul was inspired to describe homosexual acts as expressions of "disgraceful sexual appetites" and as "contrary to nature." He writes: "That is why God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error. And just as they did not approve of holding God in accurate knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mental state, to do the things not fitting."—Romans 1:26-28.

The Scriptures offer no apologies, no concessions, no ambiguity; homosexual prac-

tices, adultery, fornication, are all repulsive in God's sight. Accordingly, true Christians do not water down the Bible's position on "disgraceful sexual appetites" merely to become more popular or more acceptable to modern culture. Nor do they agree with any movement dedicated to the promotion of homosexuality as a normal life-style.

"Hate What Is Bad"

The Bible admonishes: "O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad." (Psalm 97:10) Hence, Christians are expected to hate every practice that violates Jehovah's laws. Some people may even react with stronger feelings of aversion or disgust toward homosexuality than toward other types of immorality, viewing homosexuality as an unnatural sexual perversion. However, should Christians hate the individuals who practice such things?

The psalmist sheds some light on this issue at Psalm 139:21, 22: "Do I not hate those who are intensely hating you, O Jehovah, and do I not feel a loathing for those revolting against you? With a complete hatred I do hate them. They have become to me real enemies." Our loyalty to Jehovah and his principles should generate in us a strong dislike of those who deliberately revolt against Jehovah and who take a stand as God's enemies. Satan and the demons are among such confirmed enemies of God. Some humans also likely fall into this category. Yet, it may be very difficult for a Christian to identify such people from outward appearances. We cannot read hearts. (Jeremiah 17:9, 10) It would be wrong to assume that one is an unreformable enemy of God because he or she is practicing wrong. In many cases wrongdoers simply do not know God's standards.

Hence, generally speaking, Christians are slow to hate fellow humans. Even if they have strong feelings of abhorrence toward certain life-styles, they do not seek to inflict injury on others, nor do they harbor spite or

malice toward them. Rather, the Bible counsels Christians to "be peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:9, 17-19.

"God Is Not Partial"

Jehovah will grant forgiveness to the person who truly repents, no matter what immorality that person may have been committing. There is no evidence that Jehovah views one form of immorality as worse than another. "God is not partial." (Acts 10:34, 35) Consider, for example, the case of the first-century congregation in Corinth. The apostle Paul wrote to them: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men*, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." Then Paul acknowledged that some former fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, and thieves had been accepted into the Christian congregation in Corinth. He explained: "And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Of course, Jehovah does not tolerate any continued and persistent violation of his perfect moral standards. He definitely hates the obstinate disregard of his principles. However, he keeps the door for reconciliation open. (Psalm 86:5; Isaiah 55:7) In harmony with this, Christians do not make homosexuals, or anyone else, the target of ill will, ridicule, or harassment. True Christians view their fellow humans as potential disciples of Christ, treating them in a respectful and dignified manner. The Bible says: "This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

Christians Welcome the Repentant

Time and again, the Bible declares that God is forgiving. It describes him as "a God of acts of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness." (Nehemiah 9:17; Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9) The Bible further likens him to the father in Jesus' parable about the prodigal son who had squandered his inheritance on debauchery in a distant land. The father waited with open arms to welcome back his son when the son finally came to his senses, repented, and returned to his family home.—Luke 15:11-24.

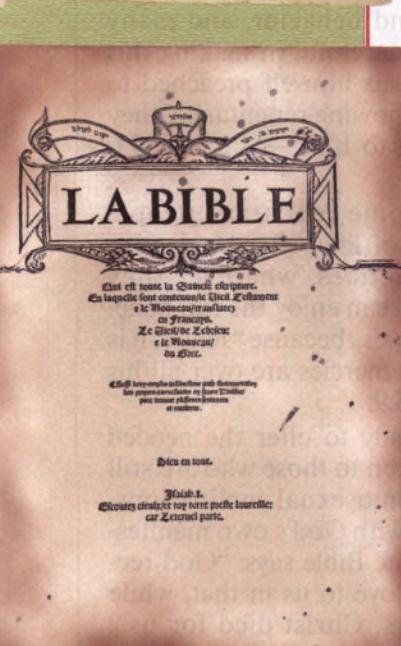
Yes, it is possible for a wrongdoer to change. The Scriptures acknowledge this by encouraging people to strip off the old personality and put on the new one and to 'be made new in the force actuating the mind.' (Ephesians 4:22-24) Those who practice what is bad, including homosexuals, can make radical changes in their pattern of thinking and behavior, and many have indeed been successful in making this transformation.* Jesus himself preached to such ones; and on showing repentance, they became acceptable to him.—Matthew 21:31, 32.

Christians welcome repentant people from diverse walks of life. After leaving behind immoral practices, whatever they might have been, all can enjoy the full benefits of God's forgiveness because "Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works."—Psalm 145:9.

Christians are ready to offer the needed spiritual support, even to those who are still struggling with homosexual inclinations. This is in harmony with God's own manifestation of love, for the Bible says: "God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans 5:8.

* See the article "How Can I Make These Feelings Go Away?," in the March 22, 1995, issue of *Awake!*

Lefèvre d'Étaples'
1530 Bible



Olivétan's
1535 Bible

The FRENCH BIBLE'S Fight for Survival

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE

OVER one hundred million people in the world speak French. Even if you are not one of them, the French Bible's fight for survival makes fascinating reading, partly because of its connection with religious freedom. Over the centuries many French Bibles met a cruel end at the hands of enemies and false friends. Against intimidating odds, translators and printers risked their lives to win the fight.

During the 12th century, translations of parts of the Bible were available in a number of vernacular tongues, including French. Groups considered to be heretics by the Catholic Church encouraged their use. But it was not until the 19th century that the Bible started to be distributed widely in French. This long lapse of centuries reflects the perilous trials that the French Bible went through to see the light of day.

One of the first books in French was a Bible dictionary published about 900 C.E. It was designed to help readers understand the Bible in Latin, the language used by the Catholic Church. But by that time Latin was no longer spoken by the common people, who used a number of dialects. Thus they were denied access to the Word of God. This remained the prerogative of the Latin-versed clergy, who could read it.

In 842 C.E., the first official state document in French made its appearance. This was tacit recognition that the majority of the people were no longer speaking Latin. Religious poems in the common tongue started to appear in France around 880 C.E. Bible translations, however, did not appear for another two centuries. Among the earliest were the Norman-French translations of parts of the Bible, produced at the beginning of the 12th century.

The Battle Begins in Earnest

The first sustained effort to make the Holy Scriptures available to the people of France in a form that they could read came from Peter Waldo, a 12th-century merchant from Lyons, in central France. Waldo commissioned the translation of parts of the Bible into Provençal, a dialect spoken in southeastern France. In 1179, at the Third Lateran Council, he had his partial Bible translation presented to Pope Alexander III.

Later on, the church condemned Waldo and his followers as heretics, and monks burned the translations he had commissioned. From then on, the church resisted every effort to put the Word of God into the hands of the common people.

The church made its strategy clear in 1211 by burning Bibles in the city of Metz, in the east of France. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse expressly forbade the use by the laity of vernacular Bibles in any language. This was followed in 1234 by the Council of Tarragona, Spain, which forbade possession of Bibles in any Romance language (language derived from Latin), even by the clergy.

Despite such relentless opposition, the first complete French-language translation of the Bible appeared in the second half of the 13th century. Translated anonymously, this Bible received only scant distribution. At this time the Bible was not available to the common people in any form. Copies were made by hand. The high price and limited availability restricted possession of the Bible almost exclusively to the nobility and the clergy.

Defense of the Bible Mobilizes

With the invention of the printing press and movable type by Johannes Gutenberg about 1450, France was swept along by the printing revolution in Europe. Three French cities—Paris, Lyons, and Rouen—became important centers of printing, bulwarks in the defense of the Bible.*

Until this stage of the struggle, French Bible translations had been based on the Latin *Vulgata*. The Latin text had become tainted with numerous errors after a thousand years of repeated copying, but the church clung to the *Vulgata*. However, French Catholic Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples decided to make the Bible accessible to the people. In 1530 he translated the *Vulgata* into French, correcting some of its errors by referring to Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that had recently become available. He also removed the confusing doctrinal explanations that the church had inserted into the text.

Lefèvre's translation quickly came under attack. Some versions had to be printed outside France. These were put on the list of books banned by the church. For a time Lefèvre had to seek refuge in Strasbourg, then a free imperial city to the east of France. Nevertheless, his translation was a success.

The first French translation of the Bible based on the original language texts was published in 1535. The translator was French Protestant Pierre-Robert Olivétan, a cousin of Reformer John Calvin. Because of the opposition of the church, it could not be printed in France, so this translation was printed in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, a fledgling Protestant community. Olivétan's French

* So successful was French printing that when the Spanish Inquisition ordered the roundup of foreign Bibles in 1552, the tribunal of Seville reported that some 90 percent of those confiscated had been printed in France!



A rare example of the
“13th-Century Bible”

Bible translation served as the standard for many subsequent revisions and Bible translations into other languages.

A Perilous Fight

In France some brave printers, like Étienne Dolet in 1546, were burned at the stake for printing the Bible. The Council of Trent, in 1546, reaffirmed the "authenticity" of the *Vulgate*, despite its errors, and from then on the church took an increasingly firm position against vernacular translations. In 1612 the Spanish Inquisition embarked on a fierce campaign to eradicate vernacular Bibles.

Persecution at times led to ingenious innovations. "Chignon," or "bun," Bibles were produced, which were small enough to be hidden in the bun of a woman's hair. And in 1754, extracts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures were printed in a book measuring only one and one quarter inches by two inches.

Counterattacks

In time, though, the tide changed. After the Bible had withstood centuries of vicious attacks, decisive blows were delivered in its favor. New ideas and freedom of worship, granted following the French Revolution, struck at the heart of the church's opposition. Thus, in 1803 a Protestant New Testament was printed in France, the first in 125 years!

Help also came from Bible societies. In 1792 the French Bible Society was formed in London, England, "to obtain, to the extent possible, French Bibles for the French who do not possess this divine treasure in a language understandable to them." Other Bible societies joined the fray. Their goal of producing and distributing the Bible in French enjoyed success.

The Coup de Grace

The Catholic Church resisted any change in its tactics, but it was fighting a losing

battle. Throughout the 19th century, popes issued a series of decrees relentlessly opposing vernacular Bibles. As late as 1897, Pope Leo XIII reaffirmed that "all versions of the Holy Books made by any non-Catholic writer whatsoever and in any common language are prohibited, especially those published by Bible societies, which have been condemned by the Pontiff of Rome on several occasions."

However, because of the availability of inexpensive Protestant Bibles published by the Bible societies, the Catholic Church allowed Catholic scholars to translate the Bible into French. Augustin Crampon's translation, first published in seven volumes (1894-1904) and then in one volume (1904), was the first French Catholic translation based on the original texts. Noteworthy were the numerous scholarly footnotes and the fact that Crampon used *Jéhovah*, the French form of God's name, extensively.

Making an about-face, the Vatican, in its encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, of 1943, finally set the rules for translation of the Bible into vernacular languages. Many Catholic translations have been published since then, including the popular *Jerusalem Bible*, first published in French and later translated into several other languages, including English.

One Bible that has helped French-speaking people the world over is the French edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. First published in its complete form in 1974, it was revised in 1995. In the many languages in which it has thus far been published, the *New World Translation* gives credit to the Bible's Author by restoring his name, Jehovah, in the Hebrew Scriptures and, where appropriate, in the Greek Scriptures. To date, over five million copies of the French edition have been printed. Undoubtedly, the Bible has won its fight to survive in French.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

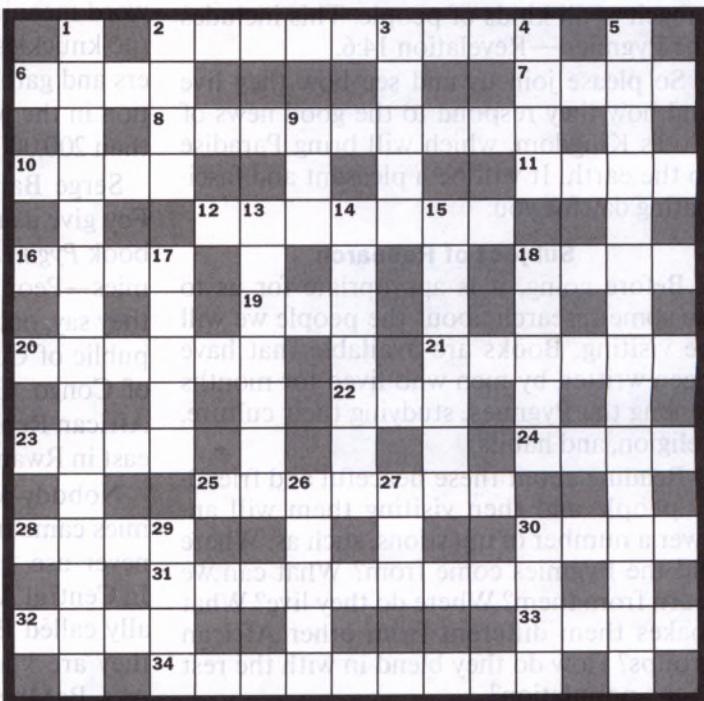
Clues Across

2. Father of Zechariah, who Jesus said was "murdered between the sanctuary and the altar" (Matthew 23:35)
6. Benjamin's firstborn son (Genesis 46:21)
7. Aaronic priest who was a noted copyist and teacher of the Law (Nehemiah 8:1, 2)
8. Relating to a line of descent (Exodus 12:3)
10. What a person must become in the eyes of the world in order to be truly wise (1 Corinthians 3:18, 19)
11. The pendant part of an ear (Leviticus 14:14)
12. One of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:32)
16. There is a time to do this as well as a time to laugh (Ecclesiastes 3:4)
18. The origin, or source (1 Timothy 6:10)
19. What the "floor" of the celestial chariot in Ezekiel's vision resembled (Ezekiel 1:22)
20. The gulf where sailors feared their ship would be run aground when taking Paul to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:17)
21. The tree from which Aaron's rod came (Numbers 17:8)
22. To protect his guests, he offered his daughters to the mob (Genesis 19:6-8)
23. A great distance (Luke 16:23)
24. The Bible name for the Egyptian city of Memphis (Isaiah 19:13)
25. Enjoyed an elaborate meal (Job 1:4, *King James Version*)
28. A female of the red deer (Proverbs 5:19)
30. Insects called "a people" because of their relatively complex social organization (Proverbs 30:25)
31. To come upon face-to-face (Mark 14:13)
32. Canaanite father of Judah's wife (Genesis 38:2)
33. If the gender of the parents were reversed, this animal would be called a hinny (2 Samuel 13:29)
34. These are "detestable to Jehovah" (Proverbs 12:22)

Clues Down

1. What blind ones could expect from Jesus [3 words] (Luke 4:18)
2. Elijah was told that 7,000 in Israel had not bowed to this false god (1 Kings 19:18)
3. Incubate (Isaiah 34:15)
4. This word has been used to translate the Hebrew and Greek words for Sheol and Hades, resulting in confusion over what happens to the dead (Acts 2:31, *KJ*)
5. Hiram, the skilled artisan who made many of the temple's furnishings, was the son of a widow of this heritage [3 words] (1 Kings 7:14)
9. He misjudged righteous Hannah as being drunk (1 Samuel 1:13)
13. A time to relax (Ecclesiastes 3:4; Acts 17:21)
14. Paul called this Christian in Rome
15. Blow softly (Song of Solomon 4:16)
17. This apostle had more of his statements recorded in the Gospels than any of the other 11 (Matthew 15:15)
18. Paul escaped being scourged by declaring that he was this (Acts 22:25-29)
26. One of two spices that Nicodemus used in preparing Jesus' body for burial (John 19:39)
27. The number of leprous men that Jesus healed, after which only one returned to thank him (Luke 17:12-19)
29. The Law proscribed calling down evil upon people with this affliction, as they could not defend themselves (Leviticus 19:14)
30. Weapons (Ezra 4:23)

Crossword Solutions Page 27



The Pygmies

People of the Deep Forest

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

COME and meet the BaBingas, the Pygmies of Central African Republic, our home. You have likely heard and read something about Pygmies, but you may never have met any of them. When you visit Bangui, the capital, a trip of less than two hours will take you right into their territory.

Jehovah's Witnesses have an important message for all nations, tribes, races, and ethnic groups. In our Christian activity, we preach to all kinds of people. This includes the Pygmies.—Revelation 14:6.

So please join us and see how they live and how they respond to the good news of God's Kingdom, which will bring Paradise to the earth. It will be a pleasant and fascinating day for you.

Subject of Research

Before going, it is appropriate for us to do some research about the people we will be visiting. Books are available that have been written by men who lived for months among the Pygmies, studying their culture, religion, and habits.

Reading about these peaceful and friendly people and then visiting them will answer a number of questions, such as: Where did the Pygmies come from? What can we learn from them? Where do they live? What makes them different from other African groups? How do they blend in with the rest of the population?

Webster's Third New International Dictionary states that Pygmies are "a small people of equatorial Africa ranging under five feet in height, . . . using the languages of their nearest neighbors." The Pygmies of Africa are thought to be independent in origin from the Negritos (meaning "Little Negroes") of Oceania and the southeastern part of Asia.

The term "pygmy" comes from a Greek word meaning "distance from the elbow to the knuckles." Pygmies are known as hunters and gatherers. The total Pygmy population in the world is estimated at little more than 200,000.

Serge Bahuchet and Guy Philippe de Foy give us more interesting details in their book *Pygmées—peuple de la forêt* (The Pygmies—People of the Forest). The Pygmies, they say, occupy the deep forests of the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, and Central African Republic and can be found even far east in Rwanda and Burundi.

Nobody knows exactly where the Pygmies came from or when they arrived. They never use "pygmy" to identify themselves. In Central African Republic, they are generally called BaBinga, but in other countries they are known as BaKola, BaBongo, Ba-Aka, BaMbènzèlè, BaTwa, and BaMbuti.

The First Visit

We leave Bangui in a Land Cruiser early in the morning, at about seven, to go south to M'Baiki/Mongoumba. The road is paved only for the first 60 miles. It is good to have a car with four-wheel drive, since the road is slippery after last night's rain.

We drive through lush green countryside with immense forests and through small villages where people offer bananas, plantains, pineapples, manioc, corn, squash, and peanuts by the roadside on little tables. Famine is unknown here. The good soil and humid climate produce a variety of foods in abundance. Then, suddenly, we are at the first BaBinga "village" or, rather, camp.

They live in surprisingly small dome-shaped huts with one opening big enough to crawl through. Using sticks and leaves from the forest nearby, women build the huts. About 10 to 15 huts are arranged in a circle. These serve only as sleeping quarters or for protection from heavy rain. Daily life is in the open.

We step out of the car to greet some women, each carrying a baby on her hip. Having heard our car, some men come running to see who we are and what we want. They are escorted by a number of dogs, each with a little bell tied around its neck.

We remember from our research that the only domestic animals the Pygmies keep are dogs. They are their companions for hunting. And, from the soil to the treetop, there is much to hunt. As the book *Pygmées—peuple de la forêt* explains, this includes birds, monkeys, elephants, buffalo, rats, antelope, wild hogs, squirrels, and many others. A faithful dog is a must for every hunter.

In talking to these people, we use the book *My Book of Bible Stories* and the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!** These illustrate that soon the earth will be a paradise with beautiful forests, where there will be no sickness or death. (Revelation 21:4, 5) Both publications are printed in Sango, the language spoken by more than 90 percent of the population, including the Pygmies. These peaceful people, wherever they live, adopt the language of their African neighbors. This is necessary because they are trading partners.

Soon, a number of men and women are standing around us, looking excitedly at one picture after another as they listen to the explanation given. From former visits over the years, they

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



know us as Jehovah's Witnesses. They are happy to obtain copies of the publications. However, the problem is that they can't read. Over the years efforts have been made by the government and other institutions to teach them reading and writing, but in vain. Schooling was arranged for their children. The schools functioned for a time, but most children dropped out sooner or later. A teacher who has worked with Pygmies stated that while in class they demonstrate remarkable learning ability, but after several months of attending school, they just disappear. However, efforts to provide formal instruction continue by the local authorities and others.

Jehovah's Witnesses are known to call back on people who show interest in God's Word. But we do not expect to meet the same BaBingas the next time we come around, as they are constantly on the move all year long. They disappear into their deep forest home for months at a time. Efforts to settle them permanently have met with very little success. Really, they are the people of the deep forest. Moving around and hunting is their way of life, and nothing holds them back.

Daily Life, Marriage, and Family

Basically, men do the hunting and women do the gathering, collecting just about everything the forest produces: mushrooms, roots, berries, leaves, nuts, insects, termites, wild honey, and, not to be forgotten, their beloved caterpillars. All these items are needed for food and for trade. The Pygmies' African neighbors, often called *les grands noirs* (the tall blacks), largely depend on them for these items. In exchange, they provide pots, pans, machetes, tools like axes and knives, salt, palm oil, manioc, plantains, and also, unfortunately, tobacco, locally

made alcohol, and cannabis. The last three items are a tremendous problem for these humble people. Often they go into debt to obtain them, and little by little their lives are ruined.

Men are usually monogamous. However, they readily divorce or separate to live with another partner. The father or the oldest in the camp is the most respected. He does not give orders, but his counsel is usually followed. You will see that Pygmies love their children. The mother and the father frequently carry their baby. These little ones are in constant contact with both parents wherever they go and whatever they do, be it working, hunting, or dancing.

At night the baby sleeps between the parents. In the daytime, parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandparents watch over the little ones, and besides that, they have the attention of the whole camp. Visits among parents and relatives are very frequent. All of this keeps family ties close. In Western civilization family ties are often loose or broken, but here things are very different.

While the Pygmies live apart from their African neighbors, they have economic relations with them. Besides having regular contact through trade, they are frequently asked to work as farmhands on the coffee and cocoa plantations. They may work for a few weeks, get paid, and then disappear into the deep forest for a long period. Who knows? The coffee you enjoyed this morning may have passed through the hands of Central African Pygmies.

Religion

BaBingas are religious people, but superstition and tradition govern their religious life. They practice their rituals accompanied by music, singing (yodeling), and danc-

ing. The book *Ethnies—droits de l'homme et peuples autochtones* (Ethnic Groups—Human Rights and the Autochthon People) gives the following explanation: "For the people of the deep forest, God created the world, meaning the forest. After creating the first human couples . . . , he retired to heaven and lost interest in human affairs. Now a supreme spirit, the god of the forest, acts for him." Of course, this is greatly at odds with the explanation of God and his purpose that is found in the Bible—Genesis, chapters 1, 2; Psalm 37:10, 11, 29.

An Intelligent People

It is not uncommon for some people to ridicule or even look down on Pygmies, considering them to be inferior and less intelligent. But Patrick Meredith, professor

of psychophysics at Leeds University, England, said: "If you see pygmies in their natural environment making bridges out of fibre and living life successfully you might ask what you mean by intelligence."

We know that all mankind are descendants of the first human pair, Adam and Eve. Acts 17:26 says: "[God] made out of one man [Adam] every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth." And Acts 10:34, 35 states that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." Therefore, we want to take Bible truths to these people so they too can have the hope of living at the time soon when the whole earth will be transformed into a beautiful paradise with many deep forests.



1. Sharing the Bible's message with the Pygmies;
2. Pygmy wood-carver;
3. typical Pygmy dwelling





JEHOVAH

Smoothed Our Way

I WAS born in 1924, near Cham, a town in the Swiss canton of Zug. My parents had 13 children—10 boys and 3 girls. I was the firstborn, a boy. Two boys died when they were very young. The rest of us received a staunch Catholic upbringing on a farm during the Great Depression.

Dad was an honest, good-natured man, but he was subject to spells of rage. On occasion, he even battered Mother when she unjustly reproached him because of her jealousy. She could not tolerate his chatting with the women of our neighborhood, although she had no reason to doubt his fidelity. This would distress me very much.

Mother was very superstitious. She would interpret even minor events as a sign from "the poor souls in purgatory." I hated such credulity. But the priests would feed her superstitious beliefs with reading material that supported her false religious thinking.

I Had Questions

From my boyhood on, questions regarding God and man's destiny occupied my mind. I tried to reach logical conclusions, but there were so many contradictions! I read Catholic publications regarding the saints, miracles, and so forth. However, these did not satisfy my sense of reason. I felt as though I were groping in the dark.

The local priest admonished me not to ponder over the questions I had. He said

that wanting to understand everything was a sign of pride and that God resists haughty ones. The teaching that was especially repugnant to me was that God would eternally torment in a burning hell any who died without confessing their sins. Since this meant that most humans on earth would be tormented forever, I often wondered, 'How could this be harmonized with God's love?'

I also questioned the Catholic practice of confession. I was scared when we were told at Catholic school that unchaste thoughts were a grave sin that required confession to a priest. I would wonder, 'Did I remember to confess *everything*? Or had I forgotten something, causing my confession to be invalid and my sins unforgiven?' Thus doubts were sown in my heart regarding God's mercy and his willingness to forgive.

For about three or four years, I fought depressing thoughts that wore me down. I considered abandoning all faith in God. But then I would think, 'If I persevere, I will doubtless find the right way.' In time, I developed confidence in the existence of God, but I was plagued by uncertainty about my religious beliefs.

As a result of my early indoctrination, I believed that Jesus Christ had the Roman Catholic Church in mind when he said to the apostle Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18, Catholic *Douay*

(Version) I came to believe that eventually the good elements in the church would triumph, and with that end in view, I wanted to co-operate with the church.

Marriage and Family

As the oldest son in the family, I worked with my father on the farm until my next younger brother was able to take my place. Then I went to a Catholic agricultural school, where I obtained a master's degree. Afterward, I began to look for a marriage partner.

Through one of my sisters, I came to know Maria. I learned that she had prayed for a husband with whom she could strive for everlasting life. We wrote on our marriage announcement: "United in love we seek happiness, our eyes on God we fix. Our way is life, and our goal eternal bliss." We were married on June 26, 1958, in the convent Fahr, near Zurich.

Maria and I had similar backgrounds. She was from a deeply religious family and was the oldest of seven children. All of them were kept busy with farm tasks, schoolwork, and church attendance, so there was little time for play. The first years of our marriage were not easy. Because of my many questions on religious matters, Maria came to doubt whether she had married the right man. She refused to question church teachings or its practice of supporting wars, Crusades, and Inquisitions. Both of us, however, put our trust in God and were convinced that as long as we were seeking to do his will as best we could, he would never leave us.

In 1959 we leased a farm near Homburg in eastern Switzerland. This was our home for 31 years. On March 6, 1960, our first son, Josef, was born. He was followed by six brothers and a sister, Rachel. Maria has proved herself to be a just and impartial mother, faithful to deep-seated principles. She has been a real blessing to the family.

Seeking Bible Truth

Gradually, our religious ignorance became more and more unbearable. In the late 1960's, we began attending lectures at the Catholic People's High School, but we would return home more confused than ever. The speakers expounded their own views, devoid of Scriptural proof. During the early part of 1970, I reflected on Jesus' words: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. . . . Ask, and you shall receive."—John 16:23, 24, *Dy.*

The above assurance from God's Word caused me to pray repeatedly: "Father, if the Catholic Church is the true religion, please show it to me unmistakably. But if it is false, show it to me just as clearly and I will proclaim it to everyone." I pleaded again and again in keeping with Jesus' instruction in the Sermon on the Mount to "keep on asking."—Matthew 7:7, 8.

My conversations with Maria—especially about changes in Catholic teachings in the 1960's regarding the worship of "saints," the eating of meat on Fridays, and so forth—finally caused her to have doubts. Once, when attending Mass in the spring of 1970, she prayed: "O God, do show us the way to eternal life. We do not know anymore which is the right way. I will submit to anything, but do show the right way for our whole family." I did not know about her prayer, neither

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Tuberculosis—The Return of a Killer

Moscow—A City That Has Prevailed

"The Customer Is Always Right"

did she know about mine, until we recognized that our prayers had been heard.

Finding Bible Truth

After we returned from church one Sunday morning early in 1970, there was a knock on the door. A man accompanied by his ten-year-old son presented himself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I agreed to a Bible discussion. I thought I could easily prove him wrong because from the things I had been told about Jehovah's Witnesses, I did not believe they were very well-informed.

Our discussion lasted two hours without positive results, and it was the same the following Sunday. I was looking forward to a third discussion, but the Witness did not show up. Maria said that he must have realized that it was not worthwhile. I was happy when he returned two weeks later. Immediately, I said: "For 35 years I have been wondering about hell. I simply cannot accept that God, who is love, should torture creatures in such a cruel way."

"You are right," replied the Witness. "The Bible does not teach that hell is a place of torment." He showed me that the Hebrew and Greek words for Sheol and Hades, often translated "hell" in the Catholic Bible, refer simply to the common grave. (Genesis 37:35; Job 14:13; Acts 2:31) Also, he read scriptures that proved that the human soul is mortal and that the punishment for sin is death, not torment. (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23) At that, I began to see clearly that I had been blinded by religious falsehoods my whole life. Now I began to wonder if other dogmas of the church were wrong.

I did not want to be deceived anymore, so I bought a Catholic Bible dictionary and a five-volume history of the popes. These publications had the imprimatur, that is, the Roman Catholic episcopal authority had approved them for printing. Reading the history of the popes made me aware that some

of them were among the world's worst criminals! And by checking the Bible dictionary, I learned that Trinity, hellfire, purgatory, and so many other teachings of the church are not based on the Bible.

Now I was ripe for a Bible study with the Witnesses. Initially, Maria sat in only to be polite, but she soon embraced what she learned. After four months I quit the Catholic Church and notified the priest that our children would no longer attend religious classes. The following Sunday the priest warned his parishioners about Jehovah's Witnesses. I offered to defend my beliefs using the Bible, but the priest would not agree to such a discussion.

After that we made rapid progress. Finally, my wife and I symbolized our dedication to Jehovah by water baptism on December 13, 1970. One year later, I had to spend two months in prison over the issue of Christian neutrality. (Isaiah 2:4) It was not easy to leave my wife with eight children, even for that short period of time. The children were only from 4 months to 12 years of age. Besides, we had a farm and livestock for which to care. But with Jehovah's help, they were able to cope without me.

Keeping Kingdom Interests First

Never would anyone in our family miss a congregation meeting unless he was ill. And we organized our work load in such a way that we never missed any of the large conventions. Soon the children's games in our attic centered on acting out what they observed at our Christian meetings. For example, they would assign student talks to each other and practice presentations. Happily, they all responded to our spiritual instruction. I cherish the memory of my wife and me being interviewed at a circuit assembly, with our eight children sitting in a row—from the oldest to the youngest—attentively listening.

The rearing of our children in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" became our main concern. (Ephesians 6:4) We decided to get rid of our television set, and we would often invite zealous fellow Christians to our home so that our children could profit from their experiences and enthusiasm. We were careful to avoid inconsiderate talk and being critical of others. If someone erred, we talked it over and looked for extenuating circumstances. We tried to help our children appraise a situation reasonably and justly. We carefully avoided comparisons with other youths. And we recognized the importance of parents not pampering or shielding children from the consequences of their actions.—Proverbs 29:21.

Yet, rearing our children was not without problems. For example, one time, schoolmates induced them to take candy from a store without paying for it. When we learned what had happened, we made our children return to the store to pay for it and to ask forgiveness. It was embarrassing for them, but they learned a lesson in honesty.

Rather than simply forcing our children to accompany us in the preaching activity, we set the example by giving such activity priority. The children saw that we put meetings and field ministry ahead of work that needed to be done around the farm. Our efforts to bring up our eight children in the way of Jehovah were certainly blessed.

Our oldest son, Josef, is a Christian elder and served for several years at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Switzerland along with his wife. Thomas is an elder, and he and his wife are pioneers, as full-time ministers are called. Daniel, who gave up his career as a champion cyclist, is an elder, and he and his wife are pioneers in another congregation. Benno and his wife are active ministers in central Switzerland. Our fifth son, Christian, serves as an elder in the con-

gregation we attend. He is married and has two children. Franz is a pioneer and an elder in a congregation in Bern, and Urs, who at one time served at the Switzerland branch office, is married and is serving as a pioneer. Our only daughter, Rachel, and her husband were also pioneers for several years.

Following the example of my children, I also became a pioneer, upon retiring from secular work in June 1990. Looking back on my life and that of my family, I can certainly say that Jehovah has smoothed our way and bestowed blessings upon us "until there is no more want."—Malachi 3:10.

My dear wife's favorite Bible text is: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Psalm 55:22) And mine is: "Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart." (Psalm 37:4) We have both experienced the truth of these beautiful expressions. Our goal is to praise our God, Jehovah, eternally, along with our children and their families.—*As told by Josef Heggli.*

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

R	B	A	R	A	C	H	I	A	H	T
B	E	L	A			A		E	Z	R
C		A	N	C	E	S	T	R	A	I
F	O	O	L		L	C		L	O	B
V		E	L	I	A	H	B	A		E
W	E	E	P	E	P	R	R	O	O	T
R	E	I	C	E	E	O		O	F	
S	Y	R	T	I	S	L	A	L	M	O
O	E	U	L	O	T	A	A		N	D
A	F	A	R	R	E	H	N	O	P	H
S		F	E	A	S	T	E	D		H
H	I	N	D		L	E		A	N	T
G	E	N	C	O	U	N	T	E	R	A
S	H	U	A		E			M	U	L
T	F	A	L	S	E	L	I	P	S	I

WATCHING THE WORLD

Dangerous Misunderstandings

In 1977 a misunderstanding involving the meaning of a small word played a part in the world's worst aircraft disaster, reports the newspaper *The European*. The Dutch pilot of a 747 radioed that he was "at take-off," which the Tenerife, Canary Islands, air-traffic controller understood to mean that the plane was stationary. However, the pilot meant that his plane was accelerating down the densely fogged runway and was about to take off. As a result, the plane crashed into another 747, killing 583 people. Likewise, poor language skills were a contributing factor in the 1996 mid-air collision near Delhi, India, in which 349 died. Although serious mistakes are rare and flight crews receive rigorous training in standard aviation English, some air crews know only specialist aviation words. When an emergency occurs, their language skills may desert them. Experts recommend incorporating cockpit computer technology to ensure correct aviation communication.

Leaning Tower of Pisa Stabilized?

After centuries of tilting toward what seemed inevitable collapse, the leaning Tower of Pisa has apparently finally been stabilized—thanks to a counterweight of a thousand tons of lead ingots placed at its base. This was announced by Professor Michele Jamicowsky, president of the international commission to ensure the tower's safety. "The problem of stabil-

ity remains serious, however," says the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, "since the five meter [16 foot] inclination from vertical that has accumulated over seven hundred years of existence is at the extremely critical limit."

Worldwide Illicit Drug Use

Illicit drugs account for as much as 8 percent of all international trade and produce revenues of some \$400 billion a year, says a UN report. The



332-page report is the first comprehensive study of the worldwide impact of illegal drugs. It shows that nearly 2.5 percent of the world's population—about 140 million people—smoke marijuana or its derivative hashish. Thirty million use amphetamine-type stimulants, 13 million use some form of cocaine, and 8 million use heroin. While law-enforcement agencies have seized thousands of tons of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and morphine, much more has evaded detection. Interception rates for cocaine are about 30 percent and only 10 to 15 percent for heroin, the report said. The international drug operations are very sophisticated. "The problem has assumed such a global nature that it cannot be dealt with by individual countries," says Giorgio Giacomel-

li, director-general of the UN drug-control program.

Infectious Diseases Advancing

"Within the last 20 years, 30 completely new and highly contagious illnesses have emerged," reports the *Nassauische Neue Presse*. For most of these diseases—such as Ebola, AIDS, and hepatitis C—there is no cure. Moreover, infectious diseases like malaria, cholera, and tuberculosis are also advancing. Why? According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "many illnesses are appearing again because more and more viruses are becoming resistant to a wider range of antibiotics. Fewer new antibiotics are being produced since the procedure is very expensive." In an effort to reverse this trend, WHO has appealed to governments and pharmaceutical companies to "invest more in the development of new antibiotics and improved methods of screening contagious diseases." The global death toll from infectious diseases in 1996 was about 55 million people.

"Mob Rule"

Under this heading, Haim Shapiro, a member of *The Jerusalem Post* editorial staff, tells of incidents last March in which Jehovah's Witnesses were attacked with stones and bricks, their hall was broken into and wrecked, and their literature was burned. He commented: "When a Catholic Church in Jaffa was attacked last year, there was an instant—and justifiable—wave of protest both

in Israel and abroad. When the hall in Lod was attacked, there was barely an echo." Although he personally 'dislikes and disapproves' of Jehovah's Witnesses, Shapiro recalls that they "were one of the groups persecuted and sent to concentration camps in Nazi Germany." He writes: "To imagine that anyone can with impunity, attack such people, wreck their place of worship, and burn their books causes nightmares, and evokes the most hideous historical parallels."

The Waning Devotion of a "Holy City"

Although it is called a holy city and has the head of the Catholic Church as its bishop, Rome is not nearly as religious as some might think. According to a national survey conducted by the Third University of Rome, about 10 percent of all Italians state that they are "not at all" interested in Christianity, but in Rome this figure rises to 19 percent. An additional 21 percent of Romans have "little" interest in the Catholic Church, states the newspaper *La Repubblica*. On the other hand, only 10 percent of them are very interested in religion. According to sociologist Roberto Cipriani, only 1 out of every 4 Romans follows closely the dictates of the church regarding attitudes and behavior.

TB Plagues India

Despite extensive efforts to bring the tuberculosis (TB) bacterium under control, the World Health Organization (WHO) claims that 1 out of every 2 adults in India is infected with it. Among India's more than 900 million people, over 2 million

develop active TB each year and up to 500,000 die from it, reports the newspaper *The Asian Age*. According to WHO, the pool of infection and the resulting risk of becoming infected with the disease is exceedingly great. Not only do those contracting TB face the problem of having to cope with the sickness it causes; they also have to live with the stigma that is usually attached to the disease. This can lead to rejection by neighbors, employers, and coworkers. Young brides who are found to have TB are often sent back to their parents as unfit to bear children.

A Good Rat?

"The rap on most rats is bad," states *The Wall Street Journal*. "They're faithless shipmates, residents of trash heaps—even candidates for public office." Enter Rattie, a laboratory rat belonging to biophysicist Judy



Reavis. Rattie has helped to string thousands of feet of computer wire in schools so that computer networks can be installed. "Clenching string in her teeth, Rattie squeezes between beams and ducts in walls, under floors and along ceiling panels," explains the *Journal*. "She's drawn to an exit point by tapping sounds and a plate of tasty catfood. When she emerges, the string she pulls is used to draw computer wire along her twisty

track." Rattie has become something of a celebrity and has a column and song "from" her on the Internet. Should she meet an untimely end, "we'll train another one," says Dr. Reavis. "After all, it's just a rat."

Mutilated Girls, Teenage Births

"Approximately 2 million girls are mutilated every year," states the 1996 edition of *The Progress of Nations*, a United Nations Children's Fund publication on the health, nutrition, and education of children. "Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, and the Sudan account for 75% of all cases. In Djibouti and Somalia, 98% of girls are mutilated." Aside from the pain, the procedures can cause infection, prolonged bleeding, infertility, and death. "Mutilation is not required by any religion. It is a tradition designed to preserve virginity, ensure marriageability, and contain sexuality," states the report. Groups and organizations concerned with women's rights and child welfare are putting pressure on governments to outlaw the practice.

A second report shows that in many lands teenage births are a persistent problem. The United States, for example, has the highest rate of the industrialized world: 64 births per year for every 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. Japan has the lowest rate at four births a year. Not only do teenage births affect a young woman's development, education, and opportunities but they may also bring problems to the infants, such as poor care, poverty, and an unstable environment.

FROM OUR READERS

Snakebites As a professional herpetologist, I am responsible for the care and handling of snakes as well as the extraction of their venom. The articles "Would You Like to Meet a Cobra?" (March 22, 1996), "Habu—A Snake to Be Respected" (July 8, 1996), and "Danger! I'm Poisonous" (August 22, 1996) all showed a positive attitude toward Jehovah's creation. I would like to point out, however, that tourniquets are not recommended for snakebites. Most people are unable to apply one correctly, and some have lost limbs as a result. I strongly advocate the use of a pressure bandage to bind the whole limb with the pressure used to wrap a sprained ankle or wrist. While the venom is kept in the vicinity of the bitten limb, the blood supply is maintained, keeping the limb "alive."

P. R., England

A number of recent medical textbooks concur on this point, and we thank our reader for this clarification.—ED.

The Raven I was sick at the time the article "The Raven—What Makes It Different?" came out. (January 8, 1997) Almost nothing could have put a smile on my face. But the ingenuity of the raven made me laugh. Later on, I prepared a school report on birds, using information from *Awake!* articles. I got a very high mark on it!

J. B., Slovakia

Learning Disabilities Thank you for the series "Help for Children With Learning Disabilities." (February 22, 1997) I run a private school and have made photocopies for my teachers. I have also based newsletters on the information in your magazine. Thank you for the balanced way you approach these subjects.

E. G., Honduras

I am the executive director of the largest national nonprofit organization actively working in behalf of children and adults with ADD. You are to be commended for your thoughtful issue on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). These are disabling and often misunderstood disorders. We appreciate your acknowledgment that a proper diagnosis and proven treatments are now benefiting many individuals who seek help. Your emphasis on parental love and understanding also sends an important message.

L. R., United States

I have an ADHD son, and it has been very difficult for me to appreciate that he's not just a trouble-making kid. Many unkind statements have been made, such as, "Why don't they discipline him?" These statements hurt a lot in view of the fact that I have spent much time trying to discipline him. I hope your explanation of this disorder will help others to realize that a problem really exists and that others could be more encouraging.

M. T., United States

You can only imagine how we, as parents of a learning-disabled child, enjoyed this issue. We especially value your mentioning how this affects the parents and that we have enough of a burden to carry without having to hear cutting remarks from others.

J. C. and B. C., Canada

God's Friend Thank you very much for the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Become a Friend of God?" (February 22, 1997) It helped me a lot. Now I feel content, for now I understand that Jehovah is my friend! I can't wait for the article on how to maintain this friendship.*

T. E., Italy

* See *Awake!* of May 22, 1997.

When Is a Bee Not a Bee?

Bees lead busy lives, visiting hundreds of flowers every day and transporting nectar back to the hive. When springtime comes, male bees look for a mate. For this, they rely on sight and smell. The attention of the short-sighted bee, however, is also solicited by an unlikely suitor—an orchid.

In southern Europe, there are several wild orchids whose fertilization depends on their mimicking female bees. These orchids need to send "parcels" of pollen to fellow orchids. Bees are the ideal carriers. But since the orchids do not have any tasty nectar to attract the bees, the orchids must resort to trickery, as it were. And the trick is that the flower looks and smells so much like a female bee that the male bee tries to mate with it! Each species of these orchids has its own disguise and aroma.

By the time the bee realizes his mistake, the orchid has deposited a sticky packet of pollen on his body. The bee then flies off, only to be fooled again by another orchid, which receives the pollen. After several such deceptions, the bee realizes that these orchids are not to be trusted. By then, he will likely have pollinated some of the flowers.

How did these unthinking orchids acquire the right smell and appearance to fool the bees? Such remarkable mechanisms testify to an intelligent Designer, whose creation never fails to astonish and fascinate.



KNOWLEDGE

That Leads to Everlasting Life



His Skepticism Was Overcome

When a young man on the Caribbean island of Jamaica was met by Jehovah's Witnesses, he was very skeptical regarding the existence of God and denied the inspiration of the Bible. However, he reluctantly accepted a copy of the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* Return visits were made on him, but he finally told the Witnesses not to come back until he invited them.

"Months later," the Witnesses reported, "he telephoned and asked many questions. But he was still critical of the Bible's answers."

In time, a copy of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* was left with the young man, and a regular study of the Bible was started with him. Shortly after that, he commented: "Now I can see why a study like this is necessary." He was so enthusiastic about what he was learning that he asked to study twice a week. Soon he began attending Christian meetings regularly.

Cover of the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*: Third-century papyrus and Hebrew scroll of Esther: The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; bust of Alexander the Great: Musei Capitolini, Roma

**THE
BIBLE**
GOD'S
WORD
OR
MAN'S?

