

Awake!

November 22, 1995



**Will Rich Nations
Always Exploit
Poor Ones?**



Average Printing 12,990,000

Published in 75 Languages

Will Rich Nations Always Exploit Poor Ones? 3-11

Ships, trucks, and trains laden with deadly waste are crisscrossing the planet in search of a place to call home. They find it in countries already ravaged by poverty, famine, and disease. But what will be the final outcome for our planet, Earth?



Will Being God's Friend Help Me? 12

Many youths have found God's friendship to be a great help during the most painful of times.



Where Eagles Fly in for Fish Dinners 15

A natural phenomenon keeps the river running and the fish available only at this small area.

Alaska Division of Tourism

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COVER: Woman working: UNITED NATIONS/UNIDO

So Many Live and Die in Crushing Poverty!

YATI leaves her shanty in a southeast Asian land for the factory where she sews bits of leather and lace for shoes. For one month's work—40-hour weeks plus 90 hours overtime—she makes less than \$80. The shoe company that employs her proudly portrays itself as a conscientious promoter of human rights in the less-developed lands. In the Western world, this company sells the shoes for more than \$60 a pair. Wages account for perhaps \$1.40 of that.

When Yati "leaves the clean, lighted factory," says a *Boston Globe* report, "she has only enough money to rent a 10-by-12-foot shack, with dirty walls alive with gecko lizards. There is no furniture, so Yati and two roommates sleep in fetal curls on a mud-and-tile floor." Her situation is sadly typical.

"Are these people better off with me or without me?" protests a trade association chief. "The small wage gives them the ability to enjoy a decent lifestyle. They may not be living in the lap of luxury, but they aren't starving." They are, however, often malnourished, and their children often go to bed hungry. They face daily the hazards of dangerous workplaces. And many are dying a slow death from handling poisons and toxic wastes. A "decent lifestyle"?

Hari, a south Asian farm laborer, saw things differently. He painted with words and poetic eloquence the grim life-and-death cycle all around him. "Between the mortar and the pestle," he said, "the chili cannot last. We poor are like chilies—each year we are

ground down, and soon there will be nothing left." Hari never saw that "decent lifestyle," nor did he have the faintest notion of the lap of luxury in which his employers probably lived. A few days later, Hari was dead—another victim of crushing poverty.

Multitudes live and die as Hari did. They languish in misery, too weak to resist, as they



U.N. Photo 156200/John Isaac

are bled dry of life. By whom? What kind of people would do this? They seem benevolent enough. They say they want to feed your baby, help your crops grow, improve your life, make you rich. In reality, they aim to make themselves rich. There are products to be sold, profits to be reaped. If the by-products of their greed are malnourished children, poisoned workers, and befouled environment, so be it. It is a price the companies are willing to pay for their greed. So as the profits mount, so do the heartbreakingly casualty figures.

Poor Nations Become Garbage Dumps for Rich Ones

LIKE an unwanted orphan, the toxic cargo had wandered from ship to ship and port to port in search of a home. Eleven thousand drums brimming with poisonous resins, pesticides, and other dangerous chemicals had been shunted from Djibouti, Africa, to Venezuela to Syria to Greece. Finally the leaking barrels began taking a toll on the crew of one of the freighters. One man died, and most of the others had skin, kidney, and respiratory illnesses from the toxic brew on board.

Ships, trucks, and trains laden with similar deadly waste are crisscrossing the planet in search of places to call home. Very often the countries already ravaged by poverty, famine, and disease become the dumping grounds for tons of poisons and contaminated trash. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster is only a matter of time.

Old paints, solvents, tires, batteries, radioactive waste, lead- and PCB-laden slag, may be unappealing to you, but they are attractive to the booming industrial-waste business. Ironically, the more environmen-

tally strict a government is, the more toxic waste its industries will dispose of abroad. "Nearly 20 million tons of poisonous chemicals are shipped annually for disposal to Third World countries by unscrupulous" companies of the industrialized nations, stated the London weekly *The Observer*. Legal loopholes and loose enforcement mean that thousands of tons of poisonous waste land on African, Asian, and Latin-American soil.

Little wonder these companies find dumping the waste tempting! The cost can be cut tremendously if the right location is used. An example of this is the cruise ship *United States*, at one time the proud flagship of the American passenger fleet. It was purchased in 1992 to be refurbished for luxury cruising. It probably contained more asbestos than any other ship afloat. Asbestos removal would have cost \$100 million in the United States. The ship was towed to Turkey, where it could be done for \$2 million. But the Turkish government declined—too dangerous to allow the more than 500,000 square feet of carcinogenic asbestos fiber to be stripped in

Awake!

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

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. Second-class 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.

their country. The ship was finally hauled to another country's port, where environmental standards are less strict.

Deadly Recycling

Western businesses in developing lands may like to think of themselves as benefactors of the poor. Harvey Alter of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce contends that "the waste export and recycling industry raises the standards of living in these countries." But a review of some of their corporate behavior abroad found that in the majority of cases, instead of raising standards of living, these firms are "more likely to be paying no better than local minimum wages, fouling the environment and selling products that in some cases are dangerous and deceptively marketed."

Pope John Paul II added his voice of concern at a recent workshop on pollution in the developing world. Said the pontiff: "It is a grave abuse when rich countries profit from the weak economies and legislation of poorer countries by exporting dirty technologies and wastes which degrade the environment and health of the population."

A classic example is found in southern Africa, home of the world's largest recycler of mercury wastes. In what was dubbed "one of the continent's worst pollution scandals," the toxic wastes killed one worker, another lapsed into a coma, and one third of the work force reportedly suffer some form of mercury poisoning. Governments in certain indus-

trial nations prohibit or greatly restrict the disposal of certain mercury wastes. Ships of corporations in at least one of these countries transport the dangerous cargo to the shores of Africa. An inspection team found 10,000 barrels of mercury wastes from three foreign companies stored at the plant.

Sending materials to developing nations for recycling sounds much better than dumping wastes on them. It can produce valuable by-products, provide jobs, and stimulate the economy. But as the above report from southern Africa shows, disastrous consequences can also result. The reclamation of valuable products from these substances can release deadly chemicals that cause pollution and sickness and sometimes death to the workers. The *New Scientist* magazine observes: "There is no doubt that recycling is sometimes used as a pretext for dumping."

The strategy is described by *U.S. News & World Report*: "False labeling, legal loopholes and lack of expertise make the developing countries easy targets for aggressive waste traders peddling toxic sewage sludge as 'organic fertilizer' or outdated pesticides as 'farm aid.'"

Foreign-owned *maquiladoras*, or factories, have sprouted in Mexico. A primary objective of the foreign companies is to escape stringent pollution standards and to cash in on the endless supply of low-paid workers. Tens of thousands of Mexicans live in hovels skirted by murky canals with polluted water. "Even the goats won't drink it," said

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Deadly Trash That Refuses to Go Away

"Deadly Nuclear Waste Piles Up With No Clear Solution at Hand." So read the headline in the science section of *The New York Times* last March. "The simplest option," the article said, "is to bury it. But that is now under fire as scientists debate, and Federal agencies study, whether a proposed underground dump in Nevada might eventually blow up in a nuclear explosion fed by waste plutonium."

Scientists have proposed many plans for ridding the world of surplus plutonium, but cost, controversies, and fears have kept the schemes in limbo. One idea distasteful to many is to bury it at sea. A more imaginative suggestion is to blast it into the sun. Another solution, use reactors to burn it up. But this was dismissed, as it would "take hundreds or thousands of years" to accomplish.

Dr. Makhijani of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research said: "Every technically good solution has political sides that are horrible, and every politically good solution tends to be technically shabby. Nobody has any good overall solutions to this mess, including us."

To supply electricity for 60 million homes—20 percent of the country's power—the 107 reactors in the nuclear power plants in the United States produce 2,000 tons of spent fuel each year, and since 1957 the spent fuel has temporarily been stored at the nuclear plants. For decades people have waited in vain for the government to find a way to dispose of it. Nine presidents have been in office, and 18 Congresses have offered plans and set deadlines to secure storage of the radioactive waste in underground facilities, but final disposition of the lethal waste that must be safeguarded for thousands of years is still on hold.

By way of contrast, the trillions of fusion furnaces Jehovah God operates in the far-off stars of the universe pose no threat, and the one he operates in our sun makes life on earth possible.

UNITED NATIONS/IAEA



one woman. An American Medical Association report called the border area "a virtual cesspool and breeding ground for infectious disease."

Not Only the Pests Are Dying

"How can a country forbid a poison at home and yet manufacture it and sell it to other countries? Where is the morality of this?" asked Arif Jamal, an agronomist and pesticide specialist from Khartoum. He displayed photographs of barrels stamped: "Not registered for use"—in the industrial land they came from. They were found in a Sudanese wildlife reserve. Nearby were piles of dead animals.

One rich country "annually exports about 500 million pounds of pesticides that are banned, restricted or not licensed for domestic use," reports *The New York Times*. Heptachlor, one cancer-causing cousin of DDT, was banned for use on food crops in 1978. But the chemical firm that invented it continues to manufacture it.

A UN survey discovered wide availability of "very toxic pesticides" in at least 85 developing nations. About one million people suffer acute poisoning each year, and perhaps 20,000 die from the chemicals.

The tobacco industry might be called the epitome of deadly greed. An article in *Scientific American* entitled "The Global Tobacco Epidemic" states: "The magnitude of tobacco-related diseases and deaths around the world cannot be overstated." The average age for beginning smokers is sinking ever lower, and the number of women smokers is increasing dramatically. Powerful tobacco companies in league with crafty advertisers are successfully conquering the immense market of less-developed countries. A trail of dead and disease-ravaged bodies litters their road to riches.*

* See *Awake!* of May 22, 1995, "Killing Millions to Make Millions."

Poisonous chemicals befoul drinking and washing water

It must be said, however, that not all companies are oblivious to the welfare of developing nations. There are some companies that endeavor to conduct fair and responsible business in developing lands. For instance, one company provides retirement and health benefits and pays its workers three times the required wage. Another company has assumed a strong stance on human rights and has canceled dozens of contracts because of abuses.

Hypocritical Backsliding

In 1989 a UN convention agreement was signed in Basel, Switzerland, to regulate the movement of hazardous waste between nations. It failed to solve the problem, and *New Scientist* reported on a later meeting of the same nations, held in March 1994:

"In response to the understandable anger of developing nations, the 65 countries party to the Basel Convention took an important step forward when they decided to extend the convention by banning the export of hazardous waste from OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] to non-OECD countries."

But this latest decision did not seem to sit very well with the developed countries. *New Scientist* voiced its concern: "So the news that the US, Britain, Germany and Australia are all now trying to undermine the decision is disturbing. Documents leaked from the US government betray its 'quiet' diplomatic efforts to 'modify' the ban before it agrees to ratify the convention."

Children play amid dangerous or deadly waste



A Day of Reckoning for the Greedy

"Now, you men of affluence, is the time for you to weep and wail because of the miseries in store for you!" warns the Bible at James 5:1. (*The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips) The reckoning will come at the hand of one who can make things right: "Jehovah is executing acts of righteousness and judicial decisions for all those being defrauded."—Psalm 103:6.

Those now living in oppressive poverty can take comfort, knowing that soon the words of Psalm 72:12, 13 will be fulfilled: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save."



The Earth God's Gift to Us

IN THE beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He also pronounced the earth to be "very good." (Genesis 1:1, 31) No piles of trash disfigured it; no garbage dumps polluted it. A beautiful gift was bequeathed to mankind: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men."—Psalm 115:16.

At Isaiah 45:18, he tells what his purpose is for the earth: "This is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the true God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited: 'I am Jehovah, and there is no one else.'"

He shows specifically what man's responsibility toward the earth is—"to cultivate it and to take care of it."—Genesis 2:15.

Jehovah sets the example. He takes care of the earth. One way is by recycling the important provisions of earth, the things on which all life on earth are dependent. A special issue of *Scientific American* had articles on several of these cycles, which included the energy cycle of the earth, the energy cycle of the biosphere, the water cycle, the oxygen cycle, the carbon cycle, the nitrogen cycle, and the mineral cycles.

United Nations Environment Programme
World Commission on Environment and Development

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

NASA photo



The Earth—Both Amazing and Beautiful

The widely published biologist Lewis Thomas, in the science magazine *Discover*, wrote this unqualified praise of the earth:

"The overwhelming astonishment, the queerest structure we know about so far in the whole universe, the greatest of all cosmological scientific puzzles, confounding all our efforts to comprehend it, is the earth. We are only now beginning to appreciate how strange and splendid it is, how it catches the breath, the loveliest object afloat around the sun, enclosed in its own blue bubble of atmosphere, manufacturing and breathing its own oxygen, fixing its own nitrogen from the air into its own soil, generating its own weather at the surface of its rain forests, constructing its own carapace from living parts: chalk cliffs, coral reefs, fossils from earlier forms of life now covered by layers of new life meshed together around the globe."



These are just a few of the provisions that Jehovah has put in place to keep the earth functioning as a beautiful gift for mankind, a home created to endure forever for people and untold millions of other living creatures. Psalm 104:5 says: "He has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to

totter to time indefinite, or forever." Another inspired witness testified to this same permanence of the earth: "A generation is going, and a generation is coming; but the earth is standing even to time indefinite." —Ecclesiastes 1:4.

Astronauts circling the earth have waxed eloquent over this beautiful, fragile sphere sailing along in its orbit around the sun and have expressed the need for humankind to appreciate its beauty and to care for it. Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, when he first glimpsed earth from space, radioed Houston: "It looks like a sparkling blue and white jewel . . . laced with slowly swirling veils of white . . . , like a small pearl in a thick black sea of mystery." Astronaut Frank Borman's comment was: "We share such a beautiful planet. . . . The overwhelming wonderment is why in the world we can't appreciate what we have." One of the astronauts of the Apollo 8 moon flight commented: "In the whole universe, wherever we looked, the only bit of color was back on the earth. There we could see the royal blue of the seas, the tans and browns of the land, and the whites of the clouds. . . . It was the most beautiful thing to see, in all the heavens. People down here don't realize what they have."

The facts show that statement to be true—people don't realize the treasure they have. Instead of taking care of this gift from God, humankind is polluting it and destroying it. Astronauts have seen this also. Paul Weitz, commander of the first flight of the space shuttle *Challenger*, said that the damage man has done to the earth's atmosphere is "appalling" when seen from space. "Unfortunately, this world is rapidly becoming a gray planet." He further added: "What's the message? We are fouling our own nest." And especially has this destructiveness escalated perilously in these "last days." Jehovah has pronounced his judgment against

those who spoil the earth, namely, that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." —Revelation 11:18.

An Ungrateful Society Unworthy of God's Gift

A materialistic society has trampled underfoot spiritual values to give free rein to the flesh. The practical guidelines Jehovah gave mankind for happy and contented living have been pushed aside by the ascendancy of the selfish me-ism that characterizes our times.

Second Timothy 3:1-5 describes perfectly the perilous times in which we are living: "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away."

Commercialism fosters consumerism, and advertising is its handmaiden. Much advertising is appropriate; much is inappropriate. The latter fits Eric Clark's observation in *The Want Makers*: "Not only does advertising help sell the wrong things to people who can't afford them, it often does so at prices that are inappropriately high." Says Alan Durning of *World Watch*: "Advertisers sell not artifacts but lifestyles, attitudes, and fantasies, hitching their wares to the infinite yearnings of the soul." Advertising aims to make us discontented with what we have and desirous of what we don't need. It creates an insatiable hunger; it leads to debilitating overconsumption; it spawns

the proliferating waste dumps that pollute the earth. Its insidious persuasion worms its way even into the weary hearts of those living in hopeless poverty. Many advertisers aggressively market goods that are known to kill or sicken people.

What matters is our standing with God, as Ecclesiastes 12:13 says: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." Those who do so will qualify for life in Jehovah's clean Paradise! Jesus promised: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment."

—John 5:28, 29.

When God's Gift Will Be Appreciated

And what an unbelievably wonderful earth that will be! Jehovah has given us this breathtaking description of it: "I [John] saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. [God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:1, 4.

Gone too will be such former things as garbage dumps, toxic wastes, and those who push their trash off on others. Then the only people alive on the earth will be those who love their neighbors as themselves, who praise Jehovah for his gift of the earth, and who delight to take care of it and keep it in paradisaic condition.—Matthew 22:37, 38; 2 Peter 3:13.

The Vanity of Materialism

Jesus spoke an incisive truth when he warned: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) It is not what we have that counts; it is what we are that matters. It is so easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life—the making of money, the accumulating of things, the frantic rush to grab all the pleasures the flesh craves—and to think we're living life to the full, missing nothing, when we may be missing the best life has to offer.

It is only as life is slipping away that we realize what we

have lost. We realize the truth of what the Bible says: Life is very short—a mist that vanishes, a puff of smoke, an exhalation, a shadow that passes, green grass that withers, a flower that fades. Where has it gone? What have we done? Why were we here? Is this all there is? Just vanity of vanities, a striving after wind?—Job 14:2; Psalm 102:3, 11; 103:15, 16; 144:4; Isaiah 40:7; James 4:14.

A man in a hospital, dying, looking out a window, seeing a hillside washed in warm sunshine, a mixture of grass and weeds, a few little struggling flowers, a sparrow scratching in the dirt for a few seeds—not much of a scene to emote over. But to

the dying man, it is beautiful. A sad yearning touches him, to think what simple joys he has missed, the little things that mean so much. All so soon gone!

The Greek Scriptures of the Bible put it plainly: "We have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:7, 8) The Hebrew Scriptures put it more bluntly: "Just as one has come forth from his mother's belly, naked will one go away again, just as one came; and nothing at all can one carry away for his hard work, which he can take along with his hand."—Ecclesiastes 5:15.

**Young
People
Ask...**



Will Being God's Friend Help Me?

MANY young people grow up today under stresses that would have been unbelievable a generation ago. The authors of a national survey of 160,000 youths explained: "Teenagers tell us that much of their turmoil comes from pressures with which they feel inadequate to deal; from discouragement and sadness that overcome their confidence; and from parents who are not sensitive to their problems." You may likewise feel that others just do not understand how painful life can be at times for a youth.

Of course, you may have a close friend you

can turn to for emotional support, and this may bring some relief. But is it not true that there are agonizing difficulties that you must face alone? How true it is that at times only your own "heart is aware of the bitterness of [your] soul." (Proverbs 14:10) But there is Someone that completely understands you, and he offers his friendship. Many youths have found that his friendship is a great help even during the most painful of times.

Friendship With God

One youth was asked what she thanked Jehovah God for the most. Her reply: "That we can come to know him and be his intimate friends." Yes, it is possible to enter into the finest friendship in the universe! The psalmist wrote: "The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him."—Psalm 25:14.

"*Intimacy with Jehovah*"—what a precious opportunity! The original Hebrew word conveys the idea of open, confidential speech with someone who is a special friend. Thus, it is a close relationship based on love, a privileged intimacy resulting from mutual trust. As a friend of God, you sense that your true worth as a person is valued by this one who genuinely understands you. But what are the benefits of this friendship?

"My Confidence From My Youth"

Many youths, despite an external bravado, lack inner confidence. "I state my opinions and somebody will come up with theirs and change mine completely," bemoaned 13-year-old Judy. "I'm not very sure of myself." Our heavenly Friend, however, provides in his written Word, the Bible, specific guidance for successful living. In fact, advice given in the Bible book of Proverbs is designed to give "a young man knowledge and thinking ability," enabling him to make his paths straight. (Proverbs 1:1-4; 3:1-6) This can give you confidence! You can *know* the best way to live.

The Bible, along with Bible aids such as this magazine, provides advice on virtually every aspect of life—from how to choose friends to the proper attitude toward your parents. (Proverbs 1:8, 9; 13:20) Those who heed such direction can thus “turn away from the snares of death.” (Proverbs 14:27) For instance, a girl named Mae saw her fleshly sister flout Bible principles. That sister tragically died a premature death because of her promiscuous life-style. Mae explained how she was able to resist such immorality: “I can reflect clearly on Jehovah’s principles of morality, and this fortifies me. These principles help me see how real Jehovah is and that his way is best.”

Having Jehovah as a friend, however, involves more than just learning his standards. You can experience his personal interest in your life. The Bible tells of King David, who was taught by God from his youth. David became a friend of God, and though he experienced “many distresses,” he actually saw God at work in his life. David spoke about God’s “wonderful works” in his behalf and about Jehovah’s “arm,” or strength, exerted in his life. On the basis of such personal experiences, David wrote: “You are my hope, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah, *my confidence* from my youth.” (Psalm 71:5, 17, 18, 20) You can have this same confidence as you sense Jehovah’s blessing in your life. As you strive to follow his guidance—despite the challenges—you will indeed be walking with God in a treasured relationship.—Compare Genesis 6:9.

God Helps Us Follow the Right Way

With all the temptations and pressures there are in life, following God’s guidance is not easy. This was especially true of Peggy, who as a youth was a drug addict and a prostitute. She was able to overcome her addiction and make moral changes by studying the Bible, and so she developed a friendship

with God. But Peggy continued to face the same pressures that had caused her to look for escape through drugs. When asked how she continued to resist, she replied: “I can only say it is by Jehovah’s spirit.”

Peggy knew that God gives his holy spirit, or active force, to his friends and that this can empower them to live by his standards. (Acts 5:32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “There are times now when I get those old feelings back, especially when I am alone,” admits Peggy,



**God can become
'the rock of your heart'**

"but I just immediately start praying. The ability to overcome these problems is more exciting to me than anything I have ever accomplished in my life." How encouraging to know that as a friend, God can help us "according to his power which is operating in us [and] do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive."

—Ephesians 3:20.

God's spirit helps us to develop qualities such as long-suffering, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Also, in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, elders, or shepherds, appointed by holy spirit, are provided by God to give practical assistance. Peggy adds: "I had a lot of support from the congregation, especially the elders. It was a tremendous help."

The Rock of My Heart

"A friend is loving at all times, and becomes a brother in times of trouble." So states Proverbs 17:17 in *The Basic Bible*. Especially is a friend needed during "times of trouble." The psalmist Asaph experienced severe emotional turmoil, yet he had drawn near to God as a friend. Thus, even though his "heart was soured" by inner pain, he said: "God is the rock of my heart." (Psalm 73:21, 26, 28) Jehovah, who truly understood what Asaph was feeling, gave him emotional support. Jehovah was a stabilizing influence on Asaph so that he would not lose hope and courage.

Our heavenly Friend can likewise be a rocklike foundation for you during adversity. One teenager found this out through personal experience. When Bonnie was 13 years old, some of the girls in her small country school started a vicious, slanderous rumor about her. To Bonnie it seemed as if everyone believed this lie. Many of her classmates gave her a cold reception, even calling her degrading names. "Lots of nights I would come home and cry," explained Bonnie. "I

even felt like killing myself because I hurt so bad inside." She turned to some of her friends for support. "I tried to talk to people, but they didn't seem to understand. They made my problem sound as if it were nothing. Sometimes I felt so alone." What kept her from losing hope in the midst of such turmoil? She continues: "If it weren't for Jehovah, I would have killed myself. I love him so much. *He is my best friend.*" Now she knows that it was her friendship with God that helped her to endure that emotionally crushing experience.

Knowing that Jehovah understands our circumstances and knows exactly what has happened is a great comfort when others do not show us the sensitivity we may anticipate. Also, knowing that our Friend is "the Father of tender mercies" is a big help when we are treated unkindly or even abused. Sometimes our own hearts may condemn us, but "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; 1 John 3:20) Having Jehovah's viewpoint of a matter can be genuinely comforting. For instance, one 13-year-old boy was brutally molested by three men. "Afterward, I was very ashamed and blamed myself for what happened to me," he admitted. "I was very depressed." Then he began to do research in Bible-based publications of the Watch Tower Society on the subject of rape. "When I read this information, I broke down and cried. I felt as if a heavy burden had been taken off my shoulders. I was a victim. By relying on Jehovah, family, and friends, I was able to make it through this turbulent time." What support those Bible-based words provided!

A friendship with God can help in many ways! We can have real confidence in life, develop the inner strength to follow God's way, and have rocklike support during adversity. But how can we build such a friendship? A future article in this series will explain.

Where Eagles Fly in for Fish Dinners

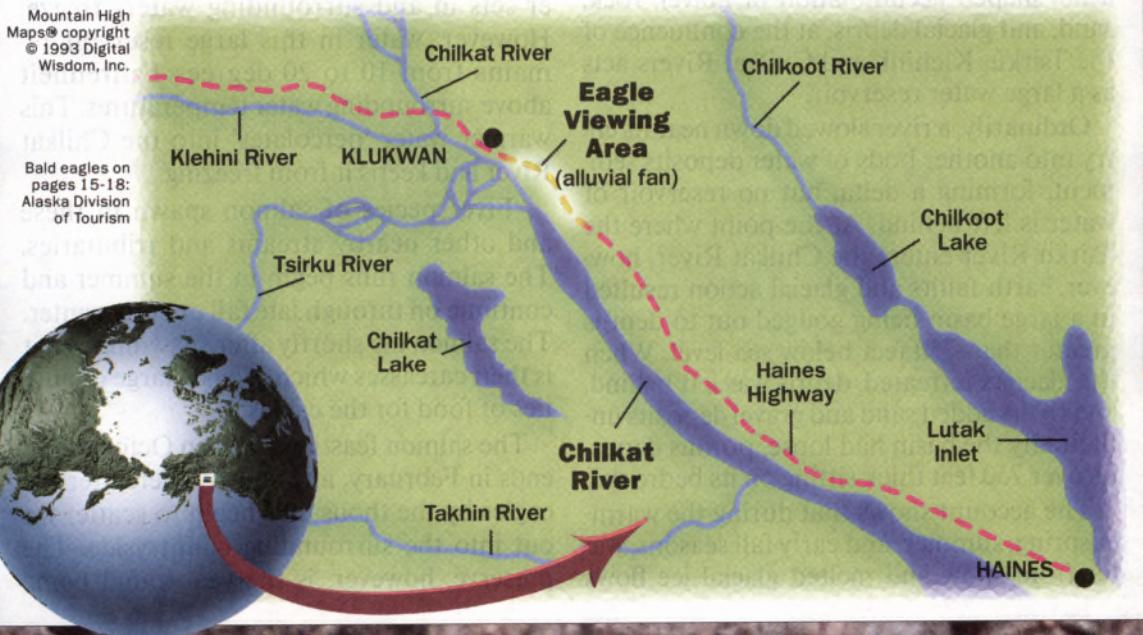
THEY come in their thousands, beautifully dressed for dinner, flying in from all over Alaska, British Columbia, and as far away as the state of Washington. Very impressive birds, very distinguished with their white heads and showy white tail feathers fanned out for braking as they land. Dark brown bodies, weighing an average of 13 pounds, females slightly larger than males, travel at 30 miles an hour, with a wing-span of 6 to 8 feet—but if their keen eyes spot a fish a mile away, they can dive down on it at 100 miles an hour and pick it off!

For their dinner party at the Chilkat River, however, such spectacular aerial stunts are not needed. Their salmon entrées are not going anywhere. They are spread out before them in abundance, just waiting to be de-

voured. All these festivities are hosted for them by the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve, created in 1982 by the state of Alaska "to protect and perpetuate the world's largest concentration of Bald Eagles and their critical habitat."

The preserve covers 48,000 acres of river-bottom land of the Chilkat, Klehini, and Tsirku rivers, and only areas important to eagle habitation are included. The special area where the thousands of eagles concentrate and the visitors flock to see them is five miles along the Chilkat River bordering the Haines Highway, between Haines and Klukwan.

A government leaflet entitled "Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve" tells why this five-mile stretch of the river is able to serve spawned-out salmon delicacies to the eagles.





"The natural phenomena responsible for five miles of open water on the Chilkat River during freezing months is called an 'alluvial fan reservoir.' The Tsirku fan, which is a fan-shaped accumulation of gravel, rock, sand, and glacial debris, at the confluence of the Tsirku, Klehini, and Chilkat Rivers acts as a large water reservoir."

Ordinarily, a river slowed down near its entry into another body of water deposits sediment, forming a delta, but no reservoir of water is left behind. At the point where the Tsirku River enters the Chilkat River, however, earth faults and glacial action resulted in a large basin being gouged out to depths greater than 750 feet below sea level. When the glaciers retreated, debris was left behind, and rivers added sand and gravel deposits until finally the basin had loose, porous deposits over 750 feet thick sitting on its bedrock.

The account shows that during the warmer spring, summer, and early fall seasons, water from snow and melted glacial ice flows

into the alluvial fan. The fan receives water faster than it can flow out, creating a huge reservoir of water. The eagle preserve leaflet continues: "When winter arrives, cold weather sets in and surrounding waters freeze. However, water in this large reservoir remains from 10 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit above surrounding water temperatures. This warmer water 'percolates' into the Chilkat River and keeps it from freezing."

"Five species of salmon spawn in these and other nearby streams and tributaries. The salmon runs begin in the summer and continue on through late fall or early winter. The salmon die shortly after spawning and it is their carcasses which provide large quantities of food for the eagles."

The salmon feasting starts in October and ends in February, and shortly thereafter the eagles by the thousands begin to scatter far out into the surrounding countryside. The preserve, however, is the year-round home

of between 200 and 400 eagles. In addition to any fish they can catch, they supplement their diet with waterfowl, small mammals, and carrion.

Exciting Courtships, Lasting "Marriages"

They mate for life—can reach the age of 40—but usually remain together only during the nesting season. Courting behavior begins in April and "can involve spectacular courtship displays of diving eagles locking talons and somersaulting through the air," according to the folder *Eagles—The Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve*. All that and holding hands too? Sounds wildly romantic!

Ninety-four nests have been observed in the preserve. From one to three eggs usually hatch between late May and early June, after an incubation period of 34 or 35 days. The young leave the nest by September, but they must be content with mottled brown and white plumage. They won't get their fancy white heads and tails until they are four or five years of age!

The folder also gives some background on the eagles' struggle to survive and advice to visitors on how to enjoy the preserve safely:

"The Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve contains 48,000 acres set aside for the protection of the eagles. But eagles haven't always been protected; they once were fair game for bounty hunters. Based on reports of the eagle's tremendous appetite for live salmon and small animals, the Alaska Territorial Legislature in 1917 created a bounty on eagles. Veterans of Ft. William H. Seward in Haines tell stories of supplementing their meager Army pay with the \$1 (later raised to \$2) paid for each pair of talons.

"Later investigations found that the eagles' harm to salmon runs had been exaggerated, and the bounty was removed in 1953. By that time, over 128,000 eagles had been shot for the bounty. The eagle population of Southeast Alaska during the 1940's, when the bounty was still in effect, was estimated to be half that of the eagle population in the 1970's.





"When Alaska became a state in 1959, the bald eagle in Alaska came under federal protection of the Bald Eagle Act of 1940. Killing an eagle is a federal offense, and possession of live or dead eagles or any parts (including feathers!), except under certain specific conditions, is also illegal.

"In 1972 the Alaska State Legislature established the Chilkat River Critical Habitat Area, managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, to ensure protection of the major eagle concentration. Extensive tracts of eagle habitat remained unprotected, and a long and often bitter battle raged between environmentalists and pro-development forces over land use issues in the Chilkat Valley. After intensive study by the National Audubon Society and the state-funded Haines/Klukwan Resource Study, loggers, fishermen, environmentalists, business people and local politicians finally reached a compromise. In 1982 the state leg-

islature enacted that compromise into a law creating the 48,000 acre Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve.

"No logging or mining is allowed in the Preserve, but traditional uses of the land, such as berry picking, fishing and hunting, can continue. The Preserve is managed by the Alaska Division of Parks with the help of a 12-member advisory board made up of local residents, state officials, and a biologist.

"How to use the valley's natural resources without damaging the environment is an ongoing question, and land-use issues can still provoke controversy in the Chilkat Valley. But local residents are proud that a local solution was found for the protection of the eagles."

The main area where visitors can view the eagles is along the Haines Highway, which parallels the Chilkat River, and there turnout areas have been provided for this purpose.

Protect Yourself From Food-Borne Illness



I COULDN'T even leave the bathroom for 12 hours," says Becky. "The cramps were incredible. And I became so dehydrated, I had to get IV fluids in the emergency room. It was two or three weeks before I felt normal again."

Becky was afflicted with food poisoning, a food-borne illness. Like most victims, she survived. But the memory of her ordeal remains vivid. "I never realized food poisoning could make you feel so sick," she says.

Experiences such as this, and worse, are disturbingly common. Dozens of bacteria, viruses, parasites, and protozoans threaten

to poison our food. And while some types of food-borne illness have decreased in industrialized countries in recent years, *World Health* magazine reports that "salmonellosis and some others have defied all efforts to control them."

The incidence of food poisoning is difficult to track because most cases go unreported. Dr. Jane Koehler of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control says: "What we know about is just the tip of the iceberg."

What causes food-borne illness? You may be surprised to learn that the problem often begins long before food reaches the market.



Farming an Epidemic

Modern farming techniques all but guarantee rapid transmission of pathogens among livestock. In the United States beef industry, for example, calves from approximately 900,000 farms are merged into fewer than a hundred plants for slaughtering. Such intermixing can cause one farm's contaminant to start an epidemic.

Furthermore, Dr. Edward L. Menning, director of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, claims that in the United States, "thirty percent or more of the animal feed is contaminated with pathogens." Sometimes animal feed is fortified with slaughterhouse waste to provide extra protein—a practice that can spread salmonella and other germs. When animals are given low doses of antibiotics to enhance growth,

**If it doesn't look fresh,
don't buy it**

germs can be rendered drug-resistant. "A good example is salmonella, which is becoming more resistant to antibiotics," says Dr. Robert V. Tauxe of the Centers for Disease Control. "We think it is because antibiotics are being given to food animals. This may be the case for other bacteria as well."

In the United States, only a small percentage of chickens have salmonella in their intestines when leaving the farm for the slaughterhouse, but microbiologist Nelson Cox claims

that "this explodes to twenty to twenty-five percent in transport." Jammed into small coops, chickens can easily become infected. High-speed slaughter and processing increases the risk. "At the end of the line the birds are no cleaner than if they had been dipped in a dirty toilet," claims microbiologist Gerald Kuester. "They may have been washed, but the germs are still there."

Likewise, large-scale meat processing can be dangerous. "Food batches in modern processing plants are so large that one or two infected lots of incoming food can contaminate tons of the finished product," says *The Encyclopedia of Common Diseases*. A single piece of tainted beef, for example, can contaminate every hamburger emerging from that same grinder. Furthermore, food prepared at a central location

and then shipped to stores and restaurants may be susceptible to contamination if the proper temperature is not maintained during shipment.

How much food arriving at the marketplace is a potential threat? "At least 60 percent of everything in the retail case," claims Dr. Menning, speaking of the United States. But you can take steps to protect yourself from food-borne illness, for *FDA Consumer* magazine notes that "30 percent of all such illness results from unsafe handling of food at home." What precautions can you take?

Before You Buy It . . .

Read the label. What are the ingredients? Be cautious if raw eggs have been used, such as in salad dressings or in mayonnaise. Milk and cheese should be labeled "pasteurized." Notice the "sell by" or "use by" date warnings. Do not assume that products claiming to be all natural are guaranteed to be safe; they may expose you to dangers that additives were designed to prevent.

Scrutinize the food and its packaging. If food doesn't look fresh, don't buy it. As for fish, whole fish should have clear eyes, red gills, and unmarred, firm flesh, and fillets and steaks should be bright and shiny, without a strong and unpleasant odor. Fish should be either on a bed of ice or in a refrigerated case. Precooked fish displayed alongside raw fish can become cross-contaminated. Furthermore, leaking, bulging, or otherwise damaged cans and jars can lead to botulism—a rare but sometimes fatal poisoning that attacks the central nervous system.

Before You Eat It . . .

Cook it thoroughly. This is one of your greatest defenses against infection. "Assume that every product of animal origin is contaminated, and handle it accordingly," advises Dr. Cohen. Eggs should be cooked

until both the yolk and the white are firm, not runny. Since bacteria can grow at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit, meat should be cooked so that the center reaches 160 degrees Fahrenheit, and poultry should reach 180 degrees Fahrenheit.

Practice clean cooking. All utensils should be thoroughly cleaned after use. While some claim that wooden cutting boards can harbor bacteria, one study suggests that they are safer than plastic boards.* Whatever type of board you use should be washed thoroughly with soap and hot water. Some suggest using bleach as well. Wash your hands after handling raw meat and poultry, for anything you touch can become contaminated.

Watch the clock. Bring home groceries as soon as possible. Furthermore, "nothing should be out of the refrigerator for more than two hours, whether it is cooked or raw," says dietician Gail A. Levey. "If the temperature outside is over 90 degrees," she adds, "cut that time to an hour."

Before You Store It . . .

Use adequate containers. Apportion hot foods into small containers so that they will cool quickly in the refrigerator. Allow room for circulation around the containers so that the temperature in your

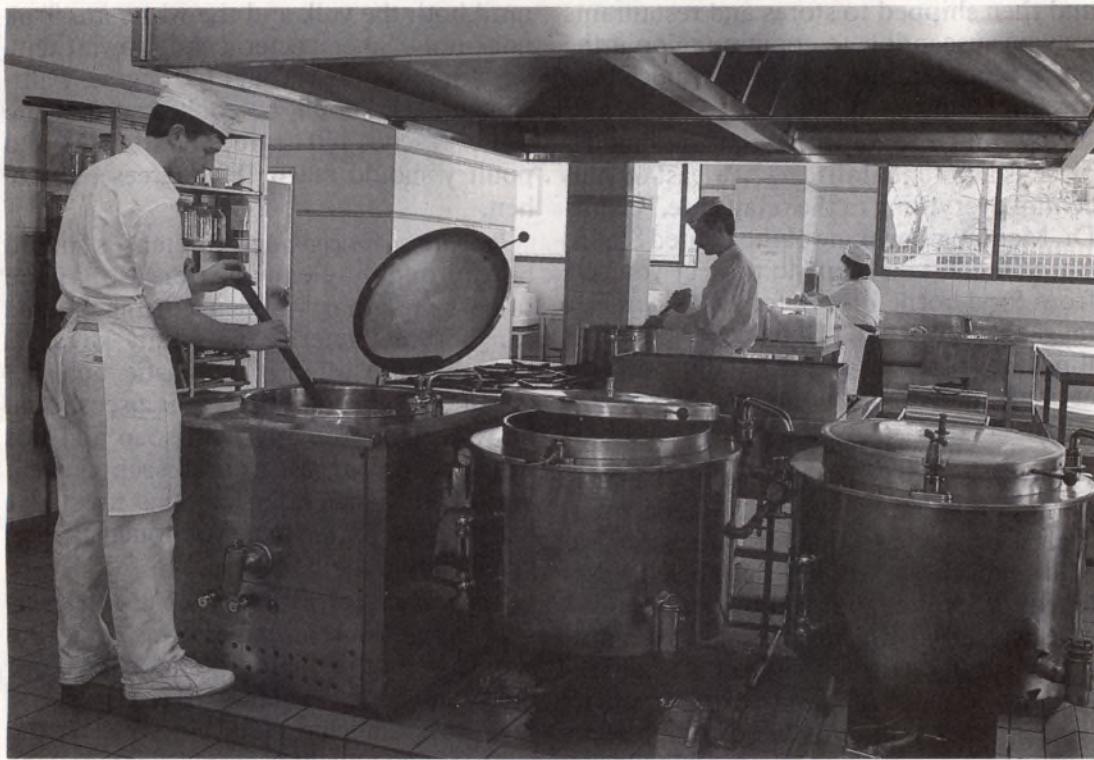
* See *Awake!* of December 8, 1993, page 28.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Science Fiction—A Glimpse
Into Our Future?**

Crystal Palaces of the Sea

Is Competition in Sports Wrong?



Is the kitchen in the restaurant where you eat clean?

refrigerator or freezer does not rise. All containers should be covered to prevent cross-contamination.

Check your refrigerator. The freezer temperature should be no higher than 0 degrees Fahrenheit, and that of the refrigerator should be below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. While meat and poultry can be stored in the freezer for months, they can begin to spoil in the refrigerator in just days. Eggs should be used within three weeks. To avoid cracking and to keep them cold enough, it is best if they are left in their original carton and stored in the main part of the refrigerator rather than in the egg tray located on the inside of the door, one of the refrigerator's warmest areas.

Despite all the above precautions, if food looks or smells suspicious, throw it out!

While food-borne illness often comes and goes without severe consequences, in some cases—especially with children, the elderly, and those with immune deficiencies—it can be fatal.*

It was millenniums ago that God told Noah: "All the animals, birds, and fish, . . . I give them all to you for food." (Genesis 9: 2, 3, *Today's English Version*) Production-line slaughtering and centralized processing coupled with large-scale distribution add an ominous commentary to those words. Therefore, do your part as a consumer. Be careful when you shop, cook, and store your food.

* If you should fall victim to a food-borne illness, get plenty of rest, and drink liquids such as juice, broth, or flat soda. If neurological symptoms develop or if fever, dizziness, vomiting, bloody stools, or severe pain persists or if you are in a high-risk group, it may be advisable to consult a doctor.



When Eating Away From Home

Picnics. Use a well-insulated cooler packed with ice. It may be best to keep it in the passenger area of your car rather than in the trunk. At the picnic the cooler should be kept in the shade with the lid shut. Keep all raw foods separate from other food items. Partially cooking food at home and then finishing up later on a grill is not recommended, for incomplete cooking encourages bacterial growth.

Restaurants. "Avoid restaurants that don't look clean," warns Dr. Jonathan Edlow. "If the dining area seems dirty, the kitchen probably is too." Send back any "hot" food that is not hot or thoroughly cooked. Poultry that is even slightly pink should not be consumed. Fried eggs should be cooked well on both sides. "The runnier the yolk, the higher the risk," cautions *FDA Consumer*.

Salad bars. Since they combine foods that require different levels of cooking and refrigeration, salad bars make what *Newsweek* magazine calls "perfect microbial playgrounds." Check the salad bar for cleanliness, and make sure that foods that should be chilled are kept on a bed of ice. Even when salad bars are maintained well, germs can be transmitted from one patron to the next. As microbiologist Michael Pariza said: "You don't know who last touched the scoop that falls in the dressing."

Social gatherings. Dr. Edlow suggests that when serving food buffet-style, the host should "place small amounts of food on the table and restock serving dishes from a refrigerated or heated supply rather than letting food sit for a long time." Keep cold foods below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and hot foods above 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Meat cooked for later use should be immediately refrigerated and should remain that way until ready for transport. Before it is eaten, the food can be thoroughly reheated.

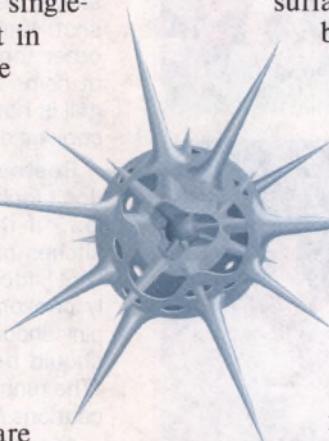
GLASS

*Its First Makers
Lived Long,
Long Ago*

DIATOMS, microscopic single-celled organisms, float in the surface waters of the seas and constitute six tenths of the organisms that make up the plankton of the oceans. The word "plankton" means "that which is made to wander," and plankton are said to be "too small and weak to do anything but drift at the mercy of the currents."

They may be small, but they are hardly weak. When storms stir up nutrients from the depths of the sea, these single-celled algae known as diatoms launch a feeding frenzy, and in two days they can double their number. And when they double, they also double their production of glass. The book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* enlarges on this:

"Diatoms, one-celled organisms, take silicon and oxygen from seawater and make glass, with which they construct tiny 'pillboxes' to contain their green chlorophyll. They are extolled by one scientist for both their importance and their beauty: 'These green leaves enclosed in jewel boxes are pastures for nine tenths of the food of everything that lives in the seas.' A large part of their food value is in the oil that diatoms make, which also helps them bob buoyantly near the



surface where their chlorophyll can bask in sunlight.

"Their beautiful glass-box coverings, this same scientist tells us, come in a 'bewildering variety of shapes—circles, squares, shields, triangles, ovals, rectangles—always exquisitely ornamented with geometric etchings. These are filigreed in pure glass with such fine skill that a human hair would have to be sliced lengthwise into four hundred slices to fit between the marks.'"—Pages 143-4.*

Another group of tiny works of art flourishing in the ocean's plankton are the radiolarians. These tiny protozoans—20 or more could sit on a pinhead without touching one another—also make glass from the silicon and oxygen in the ocean. The intricate beauty and amazing designs wrought by these creations defy description, for they surpass even the diatoms. Study closely the accompanying picture that shows one of the radiolarians with three balls nested together like Russian dolls, with spines of protoplasm reaching out through the holes of its glass skeleton to catch and digest its prey. One scientist offers

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

this comment: "One geodesic dome will not do for this superarchitect; it has to be three lacelike fretted glass domes, one inside another."

There are sponges that construct skeletons of glass—the most amazing one is Venus's-flower-basket. When it was first brought to Europe at the beginning of the 19th century, its design was so spectacularly striking that these sponges became expensive treasures placed in zoological collections—until it was discovered that they were not rare but "formed a carpet on the sea bottom in the vicinity of Cebu, Philippines, and along the Japanese coasts at depths of 200-300 m [700-1,000 feet]."

One scientist was so impressed with it, and mystified by it, that he said: "When you look at a complex sponge skeleton such as that made of silica spicules which is known as [Venus's-flower-basket], the imagination is baffled. How could quasi-independent microscopic cells collaborate to secrete a million glassy splinters and construct such an intricate and beautiful lattice? We do not know."

The sponge doesn't know either. It has no brain. It does it because it was programmed to do it. Who was the programmer? Not man. He was not there.

Man's Role in the History of Glass

But man is here now, and visibly he occupies center stage in the making and the using of glass. It is everywhere; it surrounds us. You have it in your windows, spectacles, computer screen, tableware,

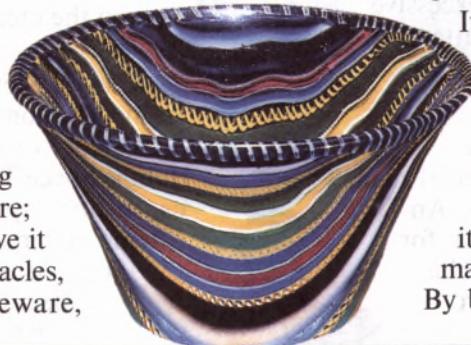


Top and Bottom: The Corning Museum of Glass and thousands of other products.

The versatility and beauty of glass have helped it to maintain its popularity. While it may break fairly easily, it has other strengths. It is still favored for storing foods. Unlike metal, for example, it does not impart a taste to the food. Some glass containers can be used for cooking. You could hardly imagine your favorite restaurant serving fine vintage wine in plastic cups.

Job compared glass to gold in value. (Job 28:17) It certainly was not as common in his day as now, but it had possibly already been in use for well over a thousand years.

The art of glassmaking eventually reached Egypt. The Egyptians used a method called core-forming. A shaped core was made of clay and dung, and molten glass was wrapped around it and shaped when it was rolled on a smooth surface. Then threads of brightly colored glass were trailed onto the surface to make various designs. Once the glass had cooled, the clay core was picked out with a sharp instrument. Considering the primitive method, some surprisingly attractive glass objects were produced.



It was much later that a new method, glassblowing, would revolutionize glass production. This art was probably discovered along the eastern Mediterranean Coast, and it is still the primary way of making glass by hand today. By blowing through a hollow

tube, the experienced glassblower can quickly produce intricate and symmetrical shapes out of the "gather" of molten glass at the end of his tube. Alternatively, he can blow the molten glass into a mold. When Jesus walked the earth, glassblowing was in its infancy.

The glassblowing innovation, along with the backing of the powerful Roman Empire, made glass products more accessible to the common people, and glass items were no longer owned exclusively by the nobility and the wealthy. As Roman influence increased, the art of glassmaking spread to many countries.

By the 15th century, Venice, which was an important trading center for Europe, had become the major producer of glassware in Europe. The Venetian glass industry was centralized at Murano. Venetian glassmakers were highly esteemed, but they were forbidden to leave the island of Murano, lest their precious trade secrets be imparted to others.

Beautiful Venetian glassware did much to enhance the popularity of glass, but glassmaking was by no means an easy task. The book *A Short History of Glass* refers to a publication of 1713 that describes what it was like. "The men stand continually half-naked in freezing winter weather near very hot furnaces . . . They shrivel because their nature and substance . . . is burnt up and destroyed by the excessive heat." In later years glass cutters polished glass using a rotating wheel and abrasive powders.

Later Innovations

England has earned special mention in the history of glass. An English glassmaker perfected a formula for lead glass in 1676. The addition of lead oxide pro-

duced a heavy glass that was strong, clear, and sparkling.

The British Empire was at its height during the Victorian age, and by this time Britain was also a major glass producer. Specially notable was the great exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851, the first world's fair, which attracted exhibitors of industrial art and handicrafts from nearly 90 countries. While glass featured prominently in the displays, it was the Crystal Palace itself, with its central 27-foot-high glass fountain, that stole the limelight. About 400 tons of sheet glass were used for this massive structure, which consisted of 300,000 hand-blown panes.

Yet, it was in the United States that the next major change in glassmaking took place. This was the perfecting of a mechanical pressing machine in the 1820's. The book *A Short History of Glass* comments on this: "At a pressing machine, two men with minimum experience could produce four times as much glass as a team of three or four trained glassblowers."

In the early 20th century, an automatic bottle blowing machine was perfected in the United States. In 1926 one plant in Pennsylvania used an automatic device to produce 2,000 light bulbs a minute.

Many artists and designers have been attracted by the artistic potential of glass. This has brought innovative design to glass products and the creation of more artwork in glass.

Glass is certainly a marvel. Apart from all its domestic uses, consider some of its many other applications—in the Hubble Space Telescope, in camera lenses, in fiber-optic communication systems, and in the chemistry laboratory.

Fragile maybe, but so versatile and beautiful.

The Corning Museum of Glass



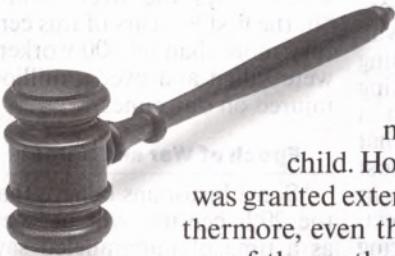
SUPREME COURT OF NORWAY UPHOLDS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

WHAT circumstances could render a parent unfit to raise a child? This question is fiercely debated in custody cases around the world. Many factors are considered, including each parent's health, living conditions, and rapport with the child.

But what about religion? Can a parent be declared unfit simply because of his or her faith? This question became the focus of a custody battle in Norway involving one of Jehovah's Witnesses. More than two years elapsed and three hearings took place before the issue was settled in Norway's Supreme Court.

It began in 1988. The parents had completely separated by March of 1989, and the mother retained custody of their daughter. The father took the matter to court, claiming that he should be given full parental responsibility for the girl. He asserted that the mother was incapable of providing a normal, healthy upbringing for the child and therefore should be given visitation rights only. The reason for his claim? She was associating with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Soliciting the "expert" testimony of opposers of Jehovah's Witnesses, the father set out to convince the court that the teachings and life-style of Jehovah's Witnesses conflict with the attitudes and values necessary for responsible parenting. The county court ruled 2 to 1 that the child should remain with her mother for daily care, awarding the father visitation rights. The father



appealed the case to the high court. Again, a 2-to-1 ruling upheld the mother's daily care of the child. However, this time the father was granted extended visitation rights. Furthermore, even the judges who ruled in favor of the mother seemed beset by doubts about the child's future. With this reinforced foothold, the father appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Norway.

Once again, the father sought to discredit the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. It would be damaging, he claimed, for his daughter to grow up under such an influence.

The Supreme Court, however, viewed the matter differently. In support of a decision handed down on August 26, 1994, the court's first judge declared: "The mother's membership of Jehovah's Witnesses is no hindrance to awarding her the daily care for the child." He also said: "I find that the child is functioning well and is a happy girl. She seems to have handled in a fair manner the problems that must arise because her father and her mother have very different views of life." His conclusion was unanimously supported by the other four judges.

Lovers of truth in Norway greatly appreciate that the Supreme Court judges saw through the false accusations made against Jehovah's Witnesses. With this decision the court confirmed each individual's freedom to worship God and to give his or her children a warm upbringing fostered by Bible principles.*

* Similar cases are reported in *Awake!* issues of April 8, 1990, page 31, and October 8, 1993, page 15.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Archaeological Find

Archaeologists have long felt that no major discoveries were left to be made in Egypt's Valley of the Kings after finding the treasure-laden tomb of King Tutankhamen in 1922. But a new tomb has come to light that may be the largest and most complex in the valley. With at least 67 chambers and a suspected lower level that may bring the total number up to more than 100, it was apparently built by Ramses II as a burial place for his sons. Ramses II ruled for 66 years in the 13th century B.C.E. and had over 100 children, including 52 sons. Tombs for two of the sons had already been found. It is thought that the rest were buried in this newly found tomb, where names of four sons, including his first-born, Amen-hir-khopshef, have been discovered. This has intrigued religious scholars because some have speculated that Ramses II was Egypt's pharaoh at the time of Israel's Exodus. Other scholarship, however, has placed the time of the Exodus at 1513 B.C.E.

"Dangerous Business"

"Mining is by its nature a dangerous business," notes Johannesburg's *WeekendStar*, "and one that is vital to the country's economy." Just how dangerous was highlighted in May when an underground 12-ton locomotive in one of South Africa's gold mines "ploughed through no fewer than three safety devices before plunging down a 2 103m [6,900 foot] shaft and squashing the lift cage," which contained 104 miners. There were no survivors. "Unfortunately,

such tragedies have long been a feature on South Africa's landscape," says the *WeekendStar*. "In the first 93 years of this century more than 69 000 workers were killed and over a million injured on our mines."

Epoch of War and Unrest

"Some historians believe that the 20th century will be seen as a time of unparalleled savagery," notes *The New York Times*. "Increasingly, the 75-year period from 1914 to 1989, covering two world wars and the cold war, is being seen by historians as a single, discrete epoch, a time apart in which much of the



world was fighting war, recovering from war or preparing for war." An article in *The Washington Post* concurs: "Our 20th-century wars have been 'total wars' against combatants and civilians alike," it says. "The casualties, including the genocide of the Jews, are measured in the tens of millions. The barbarian wars of centuries past were alley fights in comparison." Civil insurrections have added to the carnage. How many have died? "The 'megadeaths' since 1914, by an estimate of Zbigniew Brzezinski, have totaled 197 million, 'the equivalent of more than one in ten of the total world population in 1900,'" says the *Post*. It adds that it is

an "indisputable fact that terrorism and wanton killing are embedded deeply in the culture of this century" and that "no political or economic system has so far in this century pacified or satisfied the restless millions."

World Health Survey

The World Health Organization (WHO), in its first annual survey of global health, reports that about 40 percent of the world's population—over two billion people—are sick at any given time. Much of the disease and illness is needless and preventable, they say. Poverty is the greatest underlying cause, as more than half of the world's 5.6 billion people do not have access to the most essential drugs, a third of its children are undernourished, and over a fifth of the people in the world have little or no resources to prevent or treat their illnesses. The deadliest diseases—heart disease, strokes, pulmonary disease, tuberculosis, malaria, and respiratory infections, as well as diarrhea in children under five—kill millions each year. However, the report notes that in the last 25 years, life expectancy has increased to 65 years from 61. "For many millions of people for whom survival is a daily battle, the prospect of a longer life may seem more like a punishment than a prize," said Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, director-general of WHO.

Armageddon Views

Religions in Japan were prompted to express their views on Armageddon after the Aum Shinrikyo religion came to public attention in connection

with the fatal sarin gas attack in Tokyo's subways in March. "For years, cult leader Shoko Asahara . . . has prophesied that the world would witness Armageddon," reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. Although Aum is nominally Buddhist, two Buddhist organizations said that "the Armageddon concept was unknown to Buddhism," reports *Mainichi Daily News*. "Both the mainstream Christian groups surveyed . . . dismissed AUM's belief that Armageddon is imminent. The Catholic group said that the belief is not familiar to Catholics, while the Protestant organization said that the cult should not have used the word 'Armageddon' in that 'a Biblical word was taken out of context.' The Unification Church stated that 'religious propagation methods that fan general fear are undesirable,' and Shinyoen stated that if some view is pushed too hard people feel threatened." Apparently, Aum's founder doubted his own prophecy. One of the cult's top leaders was quoted as saying: "I guess the sarin project was launched so that the guru's prophecy could come true."

Religion and Healing

A study of 232 elderly patients who had open-heart surgery has shown that those patients "who were able to find strength and comfort in their religious outlook had a survival rate three times higher than those who found no balm in religious faith," says the *International Herald Tribune* of Paris. Although previous research pointed to the health benefits of having close relationships with and support from friends and family, this was the first study "to demonstrate such a

strong health advantage from religious faith among seriously ill patients," said the *Tribune*. The study's director, Dr. Thomas Oxman, observed: "It seems that being able to give meaning to a precarious, life-threatening situation—having faith there is some greater meaning or force at work—is medically helpful."

Slow Mail

Any who have ever had reason to complain about postal service inefficiency can console themselves with the case of a couple from Vicenza, Italy. While interned in a Nazi concentration camp in northern Europe in 1944, an Italian husband wrote his wife: "Don't worry if it takes a long time for



news from me to get through." "Almost a premonition," says *La Repubblica* newspaper, since the message arrived at its destination 51 years later. The couple, now in their 80's, were pleasantly surprised by the arrival of the letter and organized a small party of their friends to mark the occasion. The route taken by the letter before finally arriving at its destination remains a mystery.

Virtual Reality Impact

Virtual reality (VR) "could take over up to one-third of the home video-game market by the end of the century," claims a report in *The Globe and Mail*

newspaper of Canada. In such games players wear a helmet that includes earphones and a display screen in front of each eye. Wired gloves allow the player to transmit motion signals and interact in the computer-generated world. But along with the convincing graphics of such games have also come reports of "cybersickness," possibly due to the time lag as computer-created images react to body movements. Aftereffects include disorientation, nausea, headaches, eyestrain, coordination problems, and flashbacks. "Observers predict that because of the high incidence of cybersickness, it is only a matter of time before someone gets injured and VR is dragged into court," says *The Globe*. The report suggests that until simulations can be speeded up to keep pace with people's reactions, "less-convincing graphics, less motion, less immersive simulations and time limitations on machines may help."

Vending Machine for Religious Images

In traditionally Catholic countries, religious images are one of the most visible signs of "popular devotion to the patron saints and protectors of holy places," notes the Italian daily newspaper *La Repubblica*. Now, technology has been introduced into the flourishing trade of these religious articles. An automatic vending machine for icons, named "icomatic," dispenses religious images when fed a special token. "The self-service system will guarantee discretion in the choice, will eliminate queues, and will assure a religious image for all," says the paper.

FROM OUR READERS

Menopause Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the series "A Better Understanding of Menopause." (February 22, 1995) I am 43 years old, and you gave me satisfactory answers to my questions. Two women who work with me asked for copies, but I had to lend them my personal copy. Our congregation had run out of them!

M. H. S., Brazil

The articles opened my mind and heart to see what kind of a change my mother is going through. I hope I can continue to understand this change in her life and be more helpful.

A. K., United States

I am 47 years old, and until I received that issue of *Awake!*, I had no understanding of the subject, even after consulting doctors. You have helped me to understand that these changes are natural. I am ready now to cope with the problems.

E. M., Sierra Leone

I recently attended a three-hour seminar on this subject. It was put on by the education departments of two major hospitals. The program was very informative, but I learned more in 30 minutes by reading *Awake!* than I learned in three hours at the seminar.

J. B., United States

Missing Articles? I am an 11-year-old girl. I found out that you are no longer printing the "Young People Ask . . ." series. Why is that? I really enjoyed that section. Some of the questions applied to me, and I liked reading them! It was the first thing I looked for when we got the *Awake!* I'm sure that other kids feel the same way. Are you going to print that section in the future?

E. K., United States

"Young People Ask . . ." will continue to be published once a month. It will appear in the issue

dated the 22nd of each month. Since the series began in 1982, over 300 articles have been published in this series. We encourage our young readers to look over some of these older articles. Be assured, though, of our continued interest in the problems of young ones.—ED.

Inquisition In your article "The Inquisition in Mexico—How Did It Happen?" (October 8, 1994), you referred to "king of the Aztecs, Netzahualcóyotl." However, Netzahualcóyotl was not a king of the Aztecs but king of the Chichimec.

E. R. C. L., Mexico

Netzahualcóyotl was indeed Chichimecan, not Aztec. Interestingly, though, some reference works, such as the "Nueva Enciclopedia Cultural IEPSA," do refer to him as "king of the Aztecs." As the book "Historia de México" explains, Netzahualcóyotl ruled "in alliance with the Aztecs," who already dominated the Chichimecan people.—ED.

"Prodigal" Youths I can't begin to express to you the spiritual uplift I received upon reading the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Straighten Out My Life?" (January 8, 1995) It gave me the courage to pray to Jehovah and ask his forgiveness for the sins I have committed in the past. Before reading this article, day and night my heart grieved over these sins. Many nights I would lie in bed and feel that suicide was the only answer. I now know that Jehovah's principles are for our benefit, and I will learn from my past mistakes.

Q. B., United States

As a youth, I left Jehovah and his organization. Even though I have been back now for almost five years, I sometimes felt that Jehovah would never forgive me fully. I now know that I was wrong; the deep, nagging feeling of doubt inside has finally subsided.

R. D., Trinidad

The Rat Snake Made for Climbing

A HANDBOOK on snakes in Alabama describes the rat snake as an accomplished climber. This one is showing his skill by climbing the brick side of a building. He is apparently a young one, since he fits nicely into the grooves between the bricks. He loves to dine on rats and mice.

The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of Animal Life reveals his special skill in climbing: "Rat snakes have weakly keeled ventral plates. At least one function of the keel is to provide a sharp cor-

ner or projection that the snake can press against bark and thus obtain better purchase. It can climb up the trunk of a large tree by wedging its body between the ridges of bark and hitching upward at least partly by means of the keeled ventrals."

His presence on a tree may make him the target of a flock of screaming, dive-bombing blue jays. A trek up the side of this building will probably not end with birds or bird's eggs on the menu, but it could provide a siesta on warm bricks.



“A Word of Thanks”

That is what a young student in Japan wanted to express. She explained that she had received special prizes at school for essays that she based on articles she read in *Awake!*

“Until then,” she added, “I had been storing the magazines in my home without storing the information in my head. When I thought of how useful the magazines had been to me, I said to myself, ‘These are the magazines I haven’t been reading.’ Feelings of regret overwhelmed me. Since then, I have been reading the magazines as I should.”

In appreciation, this student wrote further: “The magazines are very useful in helping me handle all the different trials I

face in school. Thank you for always providing such wonderful articles. I will continue to look forward to receiving them.”

