

Awake!

September 22, 1989

A dramatic photograph of a seal swimming in dark, oil-slicked ocean water. The seal's head and back are above the surface, its dark fur contrasting with the bright blue of the water. The water is heavily textured with dark, viscous oil, reflecting light and appearing thick and lifeless.

**OIL
SPILL!**

Mike Mathers/Fairbanks Daily News-miner



OIL SPILL

It Will Never Happen Here

'AN OIL SPILL in Prince William Sound? Never. It will never happen. The channel is very wide and very deep. There are no navigational hazards.'

So the public were led to believe. Unfortunately, on Friday, March 24, four minutes after midnight, the *Exxon Valdez*, a supertanker carrying 53 million gallons of crude oil, strayed a mile and a half off course, ground its bottom over the jagged rocks of Bligh Reef, and ripped gaping holes in its hull. Over 11 million gallons of crude oil gushed out into the pristine waters of scenic Prince William Sound, just below Valdez, Alaska.



When the catastrophe happened, an unlicensed third mate was in command, and the Coast Guard supposed to monitor with radar the course of the *Exxon Valdez* couldn't. And when the spill did happen, both the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and the Exxon Corporation were unable to fulfill their contingency plan for controlling oil spills.

Deep-sea divers were called to inspect damage to the grounded *Exxon Valdez*. One of the divers reports:

"Going to the tanker by boat, we saw that the oil was already inches deep on the water. We couldn't even see the water in the wake of our boat. Once on the supertanker, the first concern was safety. Was the ship stable, or would it roll over on top of us? It rested on Bligh Reef, near an edge that dropped off into water several hundred feet deep. If it did shift with the incoming tide, it would go down all the way to the bottom, perhaps breaking open and releasing the remainder of its oil—42 million gallons of it."

"We inspected just about every square foot of the ship: the hull, inside the tanks, the framework. All the while the oil was gushing out. It didn't mix with the water but streamed to the surface very fast. When we entered the tanks, our air bubbles would disturb pockets of oil, force it out, and it would swirl around our faceplate. We were not there to

make repairs, only to determine the damage."

Alyeska's promise was to be at the spill with containment booms and oil skimmers within five hours. Nothing was done for ten hours and very little for the next three days. Gone were three days of calm when booms and skimmers could have limited the damage. On Monday 70-mile-per-hour winds blasted across Prince William Sound and whipped the oil into a frothy mixture of oil and water called mousse.

Everyone began blaming everyone else. Alaskan officials, residents of Valdez, and the Coast Guard blamed both Alyeska and Exxon for dawdling and letting the first three days of good weather slip by. Some blamed the Coast Guard for cost cutting that caused it "to replace its radar in Valdez with a weaker unit that failed to warn the ill-fated tanker it was heading for a reef." Exxon blamed the state and the Coast Guard for withholding permission to use dispersants to break up the oil slick.

In two months the oil slick had traveled 500 miles from Bligh Reef, washed up onto a thousand miles of coastline, and blanketed a thousand square miles of the beautiful waters of Prince William Sound. It didn't stop until it passed Kenai Fjords National Park, rounded the tip of Kenai Peninsula, and turned into Cook Inlet. It also pushed farther south to

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pollute Katmai National Park and Kodiak Island.

Thousands were hired to work on the cleanup of beaches. One man working on the cleanup was interviewed, and he described the method and the results:

"Workers start at 4:30 in the morning and work till 10 at night with high-pressure hoses, some using cold sea water and some using hot steam mixed with sea water. These powerful streams are shot into the gravelly beaches, driving the water underground. The oil that is two or three feet below floats to the surface. Then water from the hoses drives the oil into the ocean, where it is held by containment booms until skimmers come and suck it off. They get two hundred to four hundred barrels a day from a section of beach 200 yards wide.

"For a two-week period, they do this again and again, getting the same amount of oil each time. Then they have people with absorbent rags sit on the beach and wipe off each rock individually. The beach looks clean, but you stick your hand down between the rocks and into the sand three and a half inches, and your hand comes up covered with this black goo. This after two weeks of cleaning. Go back three days later, and three to six inches of oil has oozed back up. The next tide will return it to the sea."

Futile? Perhaps, but the work pays well. One worker makes \$250 a day and says: "I figure I'll pull \$10,000 out of this, easy." Another worker made nearly \$2,000 for a seven-day, 12-hour-a-day workweek. "We got two beaches clean today," he said, "but with the tide coming in, I'm sure tomorrow those beaches will be just the same." Some beach areas in Prince William Sound are buried in three feet of oily muck.

Once the *Exxon Valdez* had ripped holes in its hull and spilled 11 million gallons of its oil into Prince William Sound, what would have helped cope with the disaster? Prompt action with booms and skimmers the first three days when the sea was calm might have contained the spill enough to keep it within the sound, not letting it get into the Gulf of Alaska.

Would the use of dispersants have helped? It does not seem so. Dispersants do not work in calm water; the sea must be agitated to mix in and distribute the chemicals so they can do their work. They would have been useless on the first three calm days, and when they might have helped on the fourth day in the storm-tossed waters, the gale force winds grounded the planes needed to spray these chemicals. Their use is controversial, anyway. An article in the *Anchorage Daily News* explains:

WHY "AWAKE!" IS PUBLISHED

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

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

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Cover photo: The Picture Group, Inc./Al Grillo

"Dispersants work a lot like detergents. When sprayed onto the surface of an oil slick and agitated by the sea, the dispersants break the oil into smaller and smaller particles and cause them to diffuse in the water. Environmentalists don't like dispersants because, they say, the chemicals just spread the oil through every level of water, posing a threat to life forms from top to bottom." Even so, dispersant chemicals are less effective in cold water, "hardly work at all on Prudhoe Bay crude oil," and "are almost useless more than a day after oil has been spilled."

Moreover, the dispersants are themselves toxic. The claim is made that those used on the mammoth oil spill from the supertanker *Torrey Canyon* affecting the coast of France in 1967 caused more toxicity than the oil did. "Plant and animal life was wiped out."

Pete Wuerpel, director of emergency communications for Alaska, confirms what has

already been stated by the beach worker quoted: "Oil won't stand still. It won't go away. Even the oil now on some of the beaches will be carried off by wave and tidal action to other beaches. It is a continuing disaster. To clean beaches is a mind-boggling venture when you consider the depth that the oil has penetrated. You may clean the surface, but wave and tidal action will cause the oil below to percolate back to the top. At what point do you recognize the ineffectiveness of man's efforts?"

Wuerpel concludes that man's technology cannot yet cope with massive oil spills. He says that at this point the job must be left to nature. Others agree. Marine biologist Karen Coburn declared: "The fact is that we don't have the ability to recover more than about 10% of the oil in a large spill, even under the best of circumstances." One report says: "Nature could take a decade, maybe lon-

Supertanker, Superpolluter

Imagine a ship that is as long as a one-hundred-story building is tall. A ship whose prow crashing through the ocean waves is nearly a quarter of a mile ahead of the man steering it. A boat so vast that some have even wondered if its movements might be affected by the rotation of the planet. This is the supertanker, or ultra large crude carrier, and it is no work of the imagination; such vessels and others nearly as large ply the seas in great numbers. Why? Well, ours is an oil-hungry world. Tankers, by dint of their great size,

have proved to be an economical and lucrative method of transporting that oil.

But as recent events have made painfully clear, large tankers also have their drawbacks. For one thing, their great strength is also their weakness. Their awesome bulk and mass can work against them, making them notoriously difficult to maneuver and handle. When the ship's helmsman wants to stop the ship or turn it quickly to avoid danger, the basic laws of motion (in particular, that an object in motion tends to stay in mo-

tion unless acted on by an outside force) take on truly epic proportions.

For instance, when an 800- to 900-foot tanker is fully loaded and plowing along at its usual pace (the *Exxon Valdez*, 987 feet long, carrying 53 million gallons of oil, going 12 miles per hour), shutting off the engines does not make for a sudden stop. The ship will coast for another five miles or so. With the engines in reverse, the ship still needs two miles to come to a halt. Anchors will not help; if lowered, they would catch hold of

**Beaches cleaned one day
are covered with oil
the next**

ger, to remove the last traces of North America's largest oil spill from the waters of primeval Prince William Sound," this according to scientists who study oil spills.

Two weeks after the accident, the *Anchorage Daily News* headlined: "Oil Spill Cleanup Battle Is a Lost Cause. Crews Win Small Victories, but Experts Say Sound's Recovery Is Up to Nature." It continued: "The people from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have said all along that the war was unwinnable." They have monitored every



major spill in the last decade, including the 65-million-gallon spill by the supertanker *Amoco Cadiz* off the French coast in 1978. Their verdict: "In none of them have humans ever come close to mopping up the oil."



the seabed and then simply be torn from the decks by the tanker's momentum. Maneuvering a tanker is likewise a daunting challenge. It may take nearly half a minute for the rudder to swing after the wheel has been turned. Then the tanker may take an agonizing three minutes to lumber through the turn.

With the helm perhaps 1,000 feet behind the bow, 50 feet from the far side, and 100 feet above the sea, it is not surprising that tanker collisions do occur. Accidents, whether by

running aground or by collision, can mean sprawling oil spills. The once pristine coastlines of Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America, as well as those near the earth's poles, have all been sadly blighted.

But tankers do not foul the oceans solely by means of their catastrophic accidents. Tankers dump some two million tons of oil into the seas every year. Past studies have shown that most of this oil may come from more routine matters, such as unscrupulously flushing the oily residue from empty tanks

while out at sea. As Noël Mostert wrote in his book *Supership*, "every tanker, however well managed, drops some of its oil into the sea in some form or another; badly managed ships are ceaseless polluters and, like garden snails, can often be followed by the long iridescent trail of their waste."

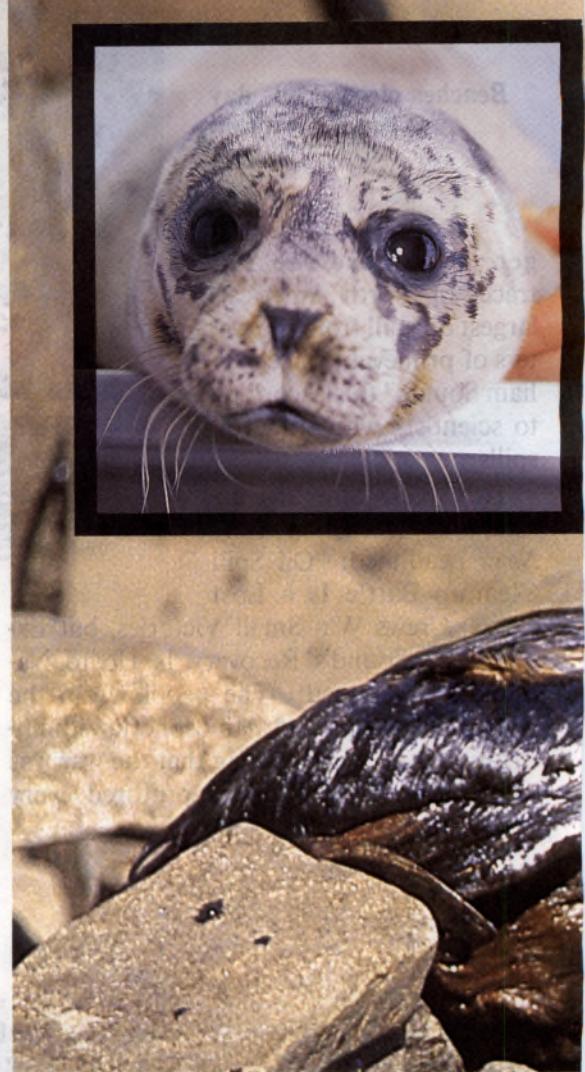
Ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau once made a powerful comment on mankind's drastic assaults on the environment. He said: "We are vandals of the earth. We are destroying everything we inherited."

OIL SPILL

What It Did to Animals

THE spill's toll on wildlife in its first few months was tragic. A special dispatch from Alaska to *The New York Times* stated: "Casualties are evident from islands close to Valdez, where thousands of seals are now giving birth to pups on contaminated beaches, to the far reaches of Katmai National Park on the Alaska peninsula 300 miles southwest of here, where bald eagles, brown bears and sea lions struggle with a toxic habitat. The ecological toll of the spill thus far includes more than 20,000 birds of 30 species, 700 Pacific sea otters and 20 bald eagles." The actual numbers may be five times higher, according to biologists making the tally. Most of the victims are never found.

In Katmai National Park is the largest concentration of brown bears in the world. Officials worry about these huge animals, some ten feet tall and weighing 1,200 pounds. They have been prowling the beaches eating oiled



Anchorage Times photo/AJ Grillo

birds and fish. "What will happen to these animals as the oil gets into their food chain?" officials wonder. Eagles feeding on the dead fish and birds are dying. They expect deaths among the bears "as the toxic oil accumulates in their systems."

Similar worries are felt in Kenai Fjords National Park, where 90 percent of its 240-mile east coast has been hit by oil. A state biologist assigned there said: "Right now I'm still finding dead sea otters on the beach. Bald eagles feed on them, so I'm also finding bald eagles.



**Far left: Harbor seal pup,
three days old**

Left: Yellow-billed loon

**Below: Sea lions
Prince William Sound**



Here I am a scientist with a Ph.D. and as I watch these oiled birds trying to take off I start to cry."

Hundreds of others may cry and thousands feel like crying. People who care labor to clean the oil off birds and otters, many of which die anyway. It is heartbreak work for those concerned with the preservation of wildlife.

The number of sea otters in Prince William Sound was estimated at from 10,000 to 15,000. One biologist feared that they faced total





Anchorage Times photo/Al Grillo

God's Concern for Animals

God is concerned:

"Sparrows . . . not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge."—Matthew 10:29.

He requires consideration:

"Six days work, on the seventh desist, that your bull and your ass may rest."—Exodus 23:12.

"You must not muzzle a bull while it is threshing."
—Deuteronomy 25:4.

"You must not plow with a bull and an ass together."
—Deuteronomy 22:10.

"Should you see the ass of someone who hates you lying down under its load, . . . you are without fail to get it loose."—Exodus 23:5.

"Who of you, if his . . . bull falls into a well, will not immediately pull him out on the sabbath day?"
—Luke 14:5.

He provides for survival of the species:

"In case a bird's nest happens to be before you . . . , you must not take the mother along with the offspring."
—Deuteronomy 22:6.

He provides food:

"The sabbath of the land must serve you people for food, . . . and for the wild beast that is in your land."
—Leviticus 25:6, 7.

"You open your hand—they get satisfied with good things."—Psalm 104:28.

"Observe intently the birds of heaven, . . . your heavenly Father feeds them."—Matthew 6:26.

He provides wisdom needed for survival:

"They are instinctively wise: . . . In the summer they prepare their food."—Proverbs 30:24, 25.

He requires showing appropriate respect:

"You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk."
—Exodus 23:19.

extinction. Another agreed that they "will be totally wiped out." These estimates may have proved to be overly pessimistic; other estimates of one third lost are bad enough. In some places untouched by oil, the otters are plentiful; in oil-polluted areas, few are seen. The truth is, no one knows how many thousands perished. When sea otters die in an oil spill, they sink to the bottom. No count is possible, only estimates based on decreased sightings.

Most people are moved by the death of thousands of birds and animals in oil spills but seldom think of the small and the microscopic victims numbering in the millions, even millions of millions. They too are important and are not forgotten by their Creator. "How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions. As for this sea so great and wide, there there are moving things without number, living creatures, small as well as great."—Psalm 104:24, 25.

The oily sludge dispersed into the water eventually sinks to the bottom. There it poisons micro-organisms, zooplankton, the beginning of the food chain for a rich variety of wildlife. Thence the toxic chemicals ascend the ladder of life, ultimately getting into man himself.

Man is not above it all. He is a part of it, and he has responsibility

toward it. It is a responsibility given him by God, his Creator. "I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals," Jehovah told the first man. Man was made in the image of God, with the attributes of God—wisdom, power, justice, love. These qualities equipped him to exercise loving dominion over the earth and its plants and ani-

mals. The earth and its fullness were put in his charge, not to be exploited and ruined, but to be cared for and guarded. (Genesis 1: 26-28; 2:15, *Today's English Version*) Jehovah God has concern for his creation. Do we? We should, for he declares that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:18.

OIL SPILL

What It Did to People

VALDEZ has undergone a population explosion since the oil spill of March 24, 1989. The town has gone from 2,800 to over 10,000. Exxon has hired thousands at high pay to clean up the environmental damage from the oil spill. The influx of thousands has brought social and economic disruptions not easily absorbed by the permanent residents of this formerly quiet little town.

Pete Wuerpel, director of emergency communications for Alaska, highlights some of

the changes brought about by the overwhelming flood of people looking for jobs at high pay. Wuerpel said during an interview:

"The long-term impact on Valdez may be more severe than can be estimated right now. The tremendous surge of people into Valdez has overtaxed its facilities. In the seven weeks following the spill, the telephone company has gone from 60 trunks to over 170. The sewers, electric power, small-boat harbor, city dump, city road system—none were designed to cope with the present demand. During

April, traffic jumped from 3,000 to 9,600. Airport volume, normally 20 flights a day, peaked at over 680. The impact is absolutely incredible in terms of the ability of the town to sustain it.

"The crisis caused by the population explosion has been overshadowed by the emphasis on spilled oil and polluted beaches, dead birds and sea otters, threatened hatcheries and shellfish losses. The economy has been disrupted, pay scales are unbalanced, businesses struggle to find reliable help. Rising prices strain the pocketbooks of those on fixed salaries.

"None of this is to downgrade the calamities of the oil spill but to put in better perspective the total tragedy and the effect it has had on people. In my opinion the disruption of the lives of the residents of Valdez has been overshadowed by the more dramatic publicity given to the destruction of thousands of birds and animals."

Some of the longtime residents of Valdez were interviewed. How has this explosion of people into their town affected them?

An employee for the telephone company gave his views, as follows:

"It is now two months after the spill, and it's total chaos in Valdez. Thousands are still flocking in to get high-paying jobs. All kinds of people. Some the law is after, and they get picked up. Prostitutes come to ply their trade. Children no longer have the run of the town. Parents keep close watch on them, and they certainly should. Some children are neglect-

"It's total chaos in Valdez"
ed, both parents working long hours for Exxon. Money mania has infected many.

"Prices have soared. They double over-

night, and in a week's time, they double again. You have a house to rent? You can get \$500 a night for it. Some bedrooms bring almost as much. You can even rent space for a couch. Houses rent for \$5,000 or \$6,000 a month—one report claimed \$13,000 for one house. Cars have been rented out for \$250 a day.

"Wages paid by Exxon have skyrocketed. Businesses can't compete. Their employees quit to work for Exxon. New workers stay for a while, then they too go to work on the spill. It's rough on restaurants. They stay open 24 hours a day, serve thousands, and some have had to change work forces four or five times in the last two months—they lose them to Exxon's inflated hourly wages. The hospital had half their employees quit."

The lure of all this money—very understandable the temptation for someone short

Threats of violence

of cash and long on bills! How easy to reason, 'Well, I can work on Sunday and make \$30 or \$50 an hour, work 12 hours, and get double time because it's Sunday. I can pay off the car, pay off all my bills!' But you are also neglecting your family, and spiritual values may go down the drain. 'But I'm only going to do it for a short time, temporarily, to get on my feet!' you tell yourself. Maybe so, maybe not.

More ominous are some of the emotions unleashed by frustrations. One person said:

"Many have focused their anger on Exxon, and radical extremes of behavior surface. You have a disruption of the value system, a distortion of it. You have people that through their frustration and anger gravitate toward conduct that would normally be abhorrent to them. They are angry at what the oil spill has done to beautiful Prince William Sound and

to the thousands of birds, otters, seals, and other wildlife that have long been their pride.

"Such anger has led some to run Alyeska

'Love of money, root of evil'

cars off the road. Bomb threats have been made. Even death threats have been made in Valdez against the president of Exxon. Hundreds of extra security police have been hired."

A substitute teacher says:

"Many children get themselves off to school. I know of a five-year-old in kindergarten who gets herself out of bed in the morning because her mommy and daddy left hours earlier to work on the oil spill. She gets her breakfast, goes to school, returns home, eats supper, and is alone until her parents return at nine or ten at night. What is this doing to her, what is it telling her? Money has blinded some parents, and their children are suffering. Children in school are too stressed to work. Teachers don't push them but read stories to them, let them play games."

A housewife finds rudeness and anger:

"Overcrowding adds stress and frustration, which open the gate to anger and outbursts of temper. When supplies were limited, some women buying groceries have had others take their bread or milk. In restaurants latecomers have pushed in and taken tables others have waited an hour for."

This man expresses his concerns about what is happening to people:

"The impact on the area has been pretty severe in that the population has almost tripled. We've gone from a town of about 2,800 people to over 9,000 people. There's a problem getting supplies and just moving around town. Traffic in this small town has added

congestion that makes just moving around a source of frustration and stress.

"Job opportunities have changed dramatically. Offers of employment paying from \$20 to \$50 an hour have made it difficult to keep a balance in your priorities. It's challenging to keep materialism from overwhelming family responsibilities and spiritual values. My wife and I have also had numerous calls from friends in the states as far away as Florida and New York and down in Texas and out in Oregon. They have called about the opportunities for work here."

"We know that the economy is difficult everywhere at this time, but we've recommended that they not come. They are Jehovah's Witnesses, as we are, and we try to keep our spiritual priorities uppermost, attending meetings and talking to others about God's Kingdom. We feel that that is best for them also, and it is not easy to do under the present stressful conditions in Valdez. Materialism smothers spirituality, and it is rampant here."

"How true are the Bible's words at 1 Timothy 6:10: 'The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains.'"

These interviews were held two months after the oil spill. It was predicted that the cleanup work on the environment would have been completed by this time—September 15 was the projected date. When the cleanup work on the oil spill ends and when the thousands of jobs fold up and when the flood of dollars dries up, the longtime residents that have kept their spiritual values intact through it all will make the necessary adjustments.

But it may be years before Valdez will ever again be the quiet little town it once was.

When “Christians” and “Heathens” Met

“Religion’s in the heart, not in the knees”

D. W. Jerrold, 19th-century English playwright

MISSIONARY activity, a distinguishing mark of early Christianity, was in keeping with Jesus' command to "make disciples of people of all the nations" and to be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth."—Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8.

In the 15th century, Christendom embarked on a global program to convert the "heathen." What kind of religion had these "heathen" peoples been practicing up until that time? And did any subsequent conversion to "Christianity" touch their heart or only cause them to drop to their knees in formal submission?

In Africa there are an estimated 700 ethnic groups south of the Sahara. Originally, each had its own tribal religion, although their similarities betray a common origin. In Australia, the Americas, and the isles of the Pacific, dozens of other indigenous religions are to be found.

Most believe in one supreme god and yet, polytheistically, still make room for any number of lesser deities—family, clan, or communal gods. One study made of the Aztec religion lists more than 60 distinct and interrelated names of deities.

In Africa and the Americas, people with the most "primitive" religions believe in a supernatural figure known as the Trickster. At times described as the cosmic creator, at other times as a rearranger of creation, he is always viewed as slyly deceptive and lustful, although not necessarily malicious. The North American Navaho Indians say that he ordained death; the Oglala Lakota tribe teaches that he is a fallen angel who caused the first humans to be banished from paradise by promising them a better life elsewhere. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* says that the Trickster often appears in "stories of creation," playing "opposite a spiritual creator-deity."

Reminiscent of Babylon and Egypt, some native religions teach a trinity. The book *The Eskimos* says that the Spirit of the Air, the Spirit of the Sea, and the Spirit of the Moon form a trinity that "ultimately controlled practically everything in the Eskimo environment."

Humans—“Spiritually Indestructible”

Ronald M. Berndt of the University of Western Australia informs us that Australian Aborigines believe that the cycle of life "continues after death, from the physical to the

wholly spiritual, returning in due course to the physical dimension." This means that "human beings are spiritually indestructible."

Certain African tribes believe that after death ordinary people become ghosts, whereas prominent persons become ancestor spirits, due to be honored and petitioned as invisible leaders of the community. According to the Manus of Melanesia, a man's ghost or that of a close kinsman continues supervising his family.

Some American Indians believed the number of souls to be limited, necessitating that they be "reincarnated alternately in first a human and then either a spirit or animal being." *The Encyclopedia of Religion* explains: "A human death freed a soul for an animal or spirit, and vice versa, linking humans, animals, and spirits in a cycle of mutual dependency."

Thus, early explorers were surprised to find Eskimo parents lax in disciplining their children, even addressing them with terms such as "mother" or "grandfather." Author Ernest S. Burch, Jr., explains that this was because the child had been named after the relative indicated by the term used, and an Eskimo father naturally "shrank from the idea of chastising his grandmother, even if she had now moved into the body of his son."

The "hereafter" was depicted by some North American Indian tribes as a happy hunting ground, where both humans and animals went at death. There they were reunited with beloved relatives but were also confronted by former foes. Some Indians scalped their enemies after killing them, apparently believing that this prevented the enemies' entry into the spirit world.

Does the prevalent belief among native religions of some form of life after death prove Christendom correct in teaching that humans have an immortal soul? Not at all. In Eden where true religion got its start, God said

nothing about life *after* death; he held out the prospect of everlasting life *in contrast to* death. The idea that death is a gateway to a better life was fostered by Satan and was later taught in Babylon.

Human Needs or Divine Interests?

The emphasis in native religions tends to be on personal safety or communal well-being. Thus, of the religion of early Australian Aborigines, Ronald Berndt writes: "[It] reflected the variable concerns of people in everyday living. It focused on social relations, on the crises of human existence, and on practical matters of survival."

Designed to deal with just such human needs are the modes of worship known as animism, fetishism, and shamanism, existing in various societies in various combinations and in differing degrees of intensity.

Animism attributes conscious life and an indwelling spirit to material objects such as plants and stones and even to natural phenomena like thunderstorms and earthquakes. It may also include the idea that disembodied spirits exist who exercise either a benignant or a malignant influence on the living.

Fetishism comes from a Portuguese word sometimes used to describe objects thought to possess supernatural powers that offer their owner protection or help. So Portuguese explorers employed the term to designate the charms and amulets they found West Africans using in their religion. Closely related to idolatry, fetishism takes many forms. Some American Indians, for example, ascribed supernatural powers to feathers, regarding them as effective vehicles in "flying" prayers or messages heavenward.

Shamanism, from a Tunguso-Manchurian word meaning "he who knows," centers on the shaman, a person supposedly able to heal and to communicate with the spirit realm.

The medicine man, witch doctor, sorceress—whichever word you wish to use—claims to ensure health or restore procreative powers. Treatment may require, as it does in some South American forest tribes, that you perforate your lips, nasal septum, or earlobes, that you paint your body, or that you wear certain adornments. Or you may be told to use stimulants and narcotics, such as tobacco and coca leaves.

Being weak on doctrine, native religions cannot convey accurate knowledge of the Creator. And by elevating human needs above divine interests, they rob him of his just due. So as Christendom began its modern-day missionary work, the question was: Will "Christians" be able to draw "heathen" hearts closer to God?

In the 15th century, Spain and Portugal began a program of exploration and colonial expansion. As these Catholic powers discovered new lands, the church set about converting the native inhabitants, conditioning them to accept their new "Christian" government. Papal bulls awarded missionary rights in Africa and Asia to Portugal. Then, after the discovery of America, an imaginary line was drawn in mid-Atlantic by Pope Alexander VI, giving Spain rights to the west and Portugal to the east.

Meanwhile, Protestants were too busy securing their own position against Catholicism to give thought to converting others, nor had Protestant reformers urged them to do so. Luther and Melanchthon apparently believed that the end of the world was so near that it was too late to reach the "heathen."

During the 17th century, however, a Protestant movement called Pietism began developing. An outgrowth of the Reformation, it stressed personal religious experience over formalism and emphasized Bible reading and religious commitment. Its "vision of a hu-

manity in need of the gospel of Christ," as one writer described it, finally helped boost Protestantism aboard the "ship" of missionary activity in the late 18th century.

From about one fifth of the world's population in 1500, the proportion of professed Christians had risen to about one fourth by 1800 and to about one in three by 1900. A third of the world was now "Christian"!

Did They Really Make Christian Disciples?

Traces of truth found in native religions are offset by many elements of Babylonish falsehood, but this is equally true of apostatized Christianity. So this common religious heritage made it quite easy for "heathens" to become "Christians." The book *The Mythology of All Races* says: "No region in America appears to have furnished so many or such striking analogies to Christian ritual and symbolism as did the Mayan." Veneration of the cross and other similarities in ritual "furthered the change of religion with a minimum of friction."

Africans—for some 450 years regularly kidnapped by "Christians" and brought to the New World to serve as slaves—were also able to change religion "with a minimum of friction." Since "Christians" venerated dead European "saints," what spoke against the worship of African ancestral spirits by "heathen Christians"? Thus, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* notes: "Voodoo . . . , a syncretistic religion pieced together from West African religions, sorcery, Christian religion, and folklore . . . , has become the real religion of many of the people of Haiti, including those who are nominally Catholic."

The *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* admits that the conversion of Latin America and the Philippines was very superficial, adding that "the Christianity of these regions today is riddled with supersti-

These real Christian missionaries in the Dominican Republic reach the heart, not just the knees

tion and ignorance." For the Aztecs, the Maya, and the Incas, "conversion" simply meant the addition of yet another deity into their pantheon."

Of the Akan peoples of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, Michelle Gilbert of the Peabody Museum of Natural History says: "Traditional religion continues because for most people it is perceived to be the most efficacious system of belief, one that continues to endow the world with meaning."

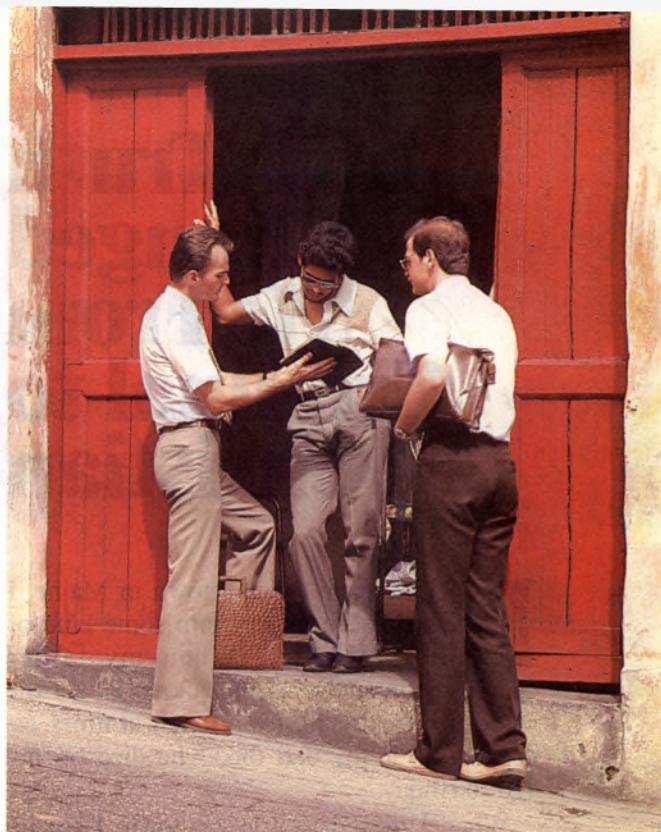
M. F. C. Bourdillon, University of Zimbabwe, speaks of "religious mobility" among members of the Shona religion, explaining: "The various forms of Christianity together with the various traditional cults all provide a pool of religious responses from which an individual can choose, depending on his or her needs of the moment."

But if "heathen Christians" are characterized by superficiality, ignorance, superstition, and polytheism, if they view traditional religions as more efficacious than Christianity, if they consider religion just a matter of convenience or expediency, permitting them to move from one to the other as circumstances dictate, would you say that Christendom has made real Christian disciples?

If Not Disciples, What Are They?

True, Christendom's missionaries have set up hundreds of schools to educate the illiterate. They have built hospitals to heal the sick. And to a degree, they have promoted respect for the Bible and its principles.

But have "heathens" been fed the solid spiritual food of God's Word or only the crumbs of apostate Christianity? Have "heathen" be-



liefs and practices been discarded or only wrapped in "Christian" clothing? In short, have Christendom's missionaries won hearts for God or only forced "heathen" knees to bow before "Christian" altars?

A convert to apostate Christianity adds to his past sins of ignorance the new sins of hypocritical Christianity, thereby doubling his burden of guilt. Thus, for Christendom, Jesus' words are appropriate: "You scour sea and land to make a single convert, and then you make him twice as ripe for destruction as you are yourselves."—Matthew 23:15, Phillips.

Christendom has clearly failed to meet the challenge of making Christian disciples. Has she fared any better in meeting the challenge of world change. In our next issue, the article "Christendom Grapples With World Change" will answer that question.

How Truth Changed Me From Criminal to Christian

I GREW up in a small town in Maine. I seemed to be always into some kind of minor mischief. When my father caught me in such misdemeanors, I'd get the woodshed treatment. I was lonely at times, especially after my dad died—he died on my 11th birthday.

When I moved to a larger town, I got involved in more than mere misdemeanors, more serious things like shoplifting as well as breaking and entering. I'd break into the hardware store just to see if I could. I didn't always take very much. It was more for the thrill of it than anything else. Now that I look back, I think a lot of it was caused by too much TV viewing—I seemed to be drawn to the violent shows.

My crimes got progressively worse. The more I got away with, the more daring I became. Then I got caught. I was 15 or 16 years old, "shopping" inside a supermarket at two in the morning—hardly the right time for that. Being a juvenile, I was put on probation for six months. I learned nothing from this experience; my petty thefts continued.

By the time I was 21, they were no longer petty. One night my career in crime culminated in murder. After robbing a combination hardware store and feedstore, I loaded my

haul into the back of one of their trucks, jump-started it, and took off. As I made my getaway, I was thinking what a great thing I had done. That store had been robbed many times, and the owner had made it into a fortress. No one could ever bust into that place again. But I did! I was really something!

But not for long. The truck got stuck, so I abandoned it and went to a house to look for some other transportation. A man in the house saw me prowling around and threatened to call the cops. I could not afford to have them come, since I had just robbed the store. I panicked, pulled out my pistol, and shot him. The confrontation ended with him dead and me on the run.

Beads of sweat popped out on me. I was terrified. I was numb. I first drove to Augusta, ditched the stolen car, and started walking across a bridge. I looked at the water below. 'Jump in?' I thought. The thought of suicide crossed my mind several times during the days that followed, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. So I continued on the run for two years.

One night my career in crime culminated in murder

Finally I took a bus to Boston. By now the police had stopped looking for me, but I was still scared. On the bus, people in uniforms would get on, and I would panic. By this time I had dumped the gun. After I killed that man, I wanted nothing to do with it. When I got to Boston, I wandered around during the day and slept in dumpsters or on construction sites at night. What little money I had was soon spent for food. I resorted to shoplifting once or twice, but I wanted no more of that now. The daring spirit, the thrill, the chal-

lence of stealing and getting away with it—that was all gone now.

I got a job, found a cheap room, used an alias, and was nervous every time I saw a policeman. If I saw one coming, I would go the other way. I was always so careful, not even jaywalking, for fear of being picked up. That was the way it was for me, the onetime thrill-seeking thief, now the guilt-ridden fugitive.

I had a small book of proverbs, and at times I read in it. Then I remembered the book of

Either I give up studying the Bible or I turn myself in

Proverbs in the Bible. I got a Bible and began to read in it. I don't know why. We were never a religious family. When I was 13, my mother went to a few meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. I wanted nothing to do with that, nor did she continue with it.

Even now, reading some in the Bible, I wasn't thinking of getting religion. But I was getting sick of running, having to look over my shoulder all the time, wondering if the authorities were waiting around the next corner to grab me. I guess deep inside I was searching for something, though I didn't know what.

I was reading things that made me curious. I wanted to understand. Questions were crowding into my mind, and I didn't know where to go for the answers. I guess because my mother had gone to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, I decided to go there. I was nervous about it. I was not sure of the reception I would get, but I went. The reception was warm. Many welcomed me; one Witness started a Bible study with me.

In the months that followed, my conscience was resurrected. The more I learned, the more

I thought, 'I can't go on like this. Something has to happen. Either I give up studying the Bible or I turn myself in.' I soon realized that I could not give up my study of the Bible, but that other option was scary. I didn't want that. I didn't want to go to prison.

It was the toughest decision I had ever had to make, but I made it. At 24 years of age, I went to one of the elders in the congregation, Willard Stargell. I told him that I'd killed a man and that I was going to give myself up.

"You're sure that's what you want to do?" he asked.

"I'm sure."

"I'll help in any way I can. Would you like me to go to the police station with you?"

"I sure would."

"Well, there is a circuit assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses this weekend," he reminded me. "We could attend that, then go to the police station Monday morning."

I liked that idea. I wanted to attend the assembly, but I also dreaded the thought of going to the police station. I jumped at the chance to postpone it. So I went with him to the assembly and enjoyed it. Monday morning we went to the police station, and I turned myself in.

The police could not believe it. Not many turn themselves in—not for murder! They called the police in Bangor, Maine, to make sure. A day and a half later, I was in the county jail in Bangor. The next day a local Witness visited me. When the trial was held, Stargell came to Maine to appear as a witness in my behalf. There I confessed to theft and murder; the headline announcing the result spoke of me as "Composed as Judge Sentences Him to Life." A month later I was in the state prison of Maine, serving 15 years to life. There Witnesses also came to visit me.

My reception by the inmates was varied. They ridiculed me for 'being stupid enough to

turn myself in,' especially since the police had given up the search for me. When they learned that I did it because of studying the Bible, they jeered at me, calling me 'a sheep among wolves.' The abuse was always verbal, never physical. For the most part, I stayed separate from the inmates.

The truth became a safeguard for me. In time they realized that 'this guy's one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He's neutral. He's not going to get involved with any of these internal squabbles.' Also, they knew enough not to come to me to sell drugs or to get me to steal something for them. The administration officials also realized that I was not going to break the rules. It kept my record unblemished and allowed me more freedom.

At one time during this period, I got sidetracked from my pursuit of Bible truth. It's not that I deliberately decided not to continue with it. It was a failure to heed Hebrews 2:1, where we are warned that we should "never drift away." However, I did. Even in prison, materialism can ensnare you! An opportunity opened up whereby I could make some novelty items for display in the prison showroom. Visitors would buy these items, and most of the money went to the prisoners that had

made them. So I got involved in making money, and my personal study suffered.

Then I started thinking to myself: 'Why did you turn yourself in? Why did you come back and go to prison? And now you're giving up your Bible studies? That doesn't make sense! You might as well not have given yourself up.' Part of my problem was that I had trouble believing that Jehovah had really forgiven me for killing a man. One of the guards was a Witness, and he saw that I was depressed about this. So he related to me some of the things that he had done when serving in Vietnam before he became a Witness.

"What makes you so special?" he asked.

The police could not believe it. Not many turn themselves in—not for murder!

"Look at all the civilian lives I'm responsible for. When my squad raided Vietnamese villages, we mowed down dozens of people, many of them innocent women and children. You think that doesn't bother me now? I can't forget it! Yet I feel that Jehovah, the God of infinite mercy, has forgiven me. What you did was not nearly as bad as what I did. You killed one man; I don't even begin to know how many I killed!"

It was what I needed. It got me thinking, reflecting on Jehovah's mercy and forgiveness for those who truly repent. So I eventually dropped my materialistic occupations and got back into my schedule of Bible study. And that's the way it's been ever since.

Eventually, a weekly Bible study was conducted with me, and once a month I was allowed to go out with the Witnesses for outside

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

*War—Coping With
the Aftermath*

*A Sour Note
in the Music Industry*

*The Fascinating Force
of Gravity*

assemblies. At one time, a couple of other prisoners and I were studying the Bible. We were trusted more and allowed more privileges. The officials knew that they did not

We were allowed to go from cell to cell giving out Bible tracts

have to keep a close watch on us. One time we were allowed to go from cell to cell giving out tracts, along with invitations to a slide show by Jehovah's Witnesses. Over 20 attended.

Jehovah, the spiritual food through his organization, and the loving help of faithful brothers have kept me going. While in prison I received many encouraging cards and letters from the Witnesses, and this was a spiritual tonic that buoyed up my spirits. All of this led to my baptism by water immersion in 1983 to symbolize my dedication to do Jehovah's will—after seven years in Maine's maximum-security state prison.

Two years later, after nine years in maximum security, I was transferred to a nearby minimum-security prison. A year and a half later, I was transferred to a work-release facility in Bangor. There prisoners are sent out on work projects, returning at the end of the day to the facility. Six months later I came up for my first parole hearing. None of the guards or inmates thought that I would make it. "Nobody makes it the first time up," they said. "Nobody!"

But I did. True, very few made it the first time. The usual inmate lies and tries to con the parole board, but they have heard all of that before. They see through that. I just went before them and said, 'This is the way I am, this is what I've done, this is how I've changed, and this is what I plan on doing.' I told them

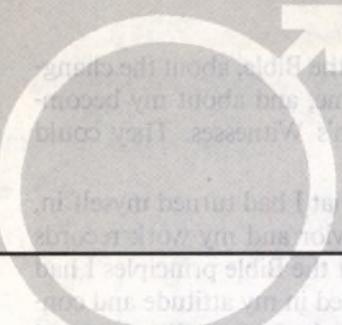
about my studying the Bible, about the changes it had made in me, and about my becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses. They could see those changes.

I guess the fact that I had turned myself in, that both my behavior and my work records were good, and that the Bible principles I had studied were reflected in my attitude and conduct—all of that spoke for me. Plus I prayed to Jehovah and leaned on him. I like to think that he may have had something to do with it, and I hope that this is not presumptuous of me. At any rate, the board granted my parole. In February 1987, after 12 years in prison, I was free to go.

On April 30, 1988, I got married to one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She has three children from a previous marriage. As a family, we have our weekly Bible study. We attend all the meetings at the Kingdom Hall. We preach the good news of God's Kingdom from house to house. We make return visits on all who are interested, and we conduct home Bible studies with those who desire it. After several years of limited preaching in prison and with hardly any meeting attendance, how wonderful it is to share "with the greatest freeness of speech" in the Christian activities of Jehovah's Witnesses!—Acts 28:31.

All of this was possible because the accurate knowledge of God's Word enabled me to strip off my old criminal personality and put on a new Christian one patterned after the image and likeness of Jehovah God.—Colossians 3:9, 10.

Certainly, in my case 'the word of God was sharp and exerted the power' to sever me from my past and rehabilitate me as a law-abiding member of society and a preacher of the good news of God's Kingdom. (Hebrews 4:12) All praise to Jehovah, "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort."—2 Corinthians 1:3.—Name withheld by request.



Birth Control

A CHILD is an angel provided by God. The more children you have, the more proof there is that God is blessing you and using you for his glory."

These words of the local parish priest weighed heavily on Joaquim. He was out of work. He and his wife, Lourdes, already had six children. How could they cope with any more? His objections were silenced by the warning: "To avoid conception is a sin. You will be excommunicated if you do that!" Dutifully, Lourdes gave birth to ten more children, despite the economic hardship this impoverished Portuguese family had to endure.

The priest was merely reiterating a fundamental Catholic teaching, that marriage should be fertile and that each couple should be "magnanimously willing to welcome the children" that might come along. However, in recent years many Catholics are expressing doubts about official church guidelines on this matter.

A French Catholic mother of ten exclaimed: "For me, Ro-

man Catholic teaching is impracticable today for normal young couples who wish to live their married lives in the sight of God!" Kitty Parker from California expressed similar sentiments: "My husband and I decided to opt for birth control after a long time talking, reading and praying. It was our first major break with the church." Judy Ford of Paignton, England, feels that "the decision should be with the family concerned, without fear of reprimand from the Church."

Many sincere Catholics are asking themselves: 'In this age of overpopulation, widespread poverty, and mushrooming shantytowns, should it be the church that decides whether specific birth control methods are right or wrong?' Whom should a Catholic listen to? The pope, the parish priest, or his own conscience?

Not Just a 20th-Century Issue

Parents have long sought practical ways to limit the number of children. Over two thousand years ago, Aristotle spoke of the value of controlling population growth in order to alleviate the spread of poverty. He refers to some birth control methods that were popular in his day. In many lands the practice of delaying weaning for several years also contributed to lowering the birthrate. However, one of the most common forms of population control, still practiced in some countries today, was that of infanticide. The unwanted child, often a girl, was mercilessly killed.

In recent years, because of improved health care, the average mother in some African countries has as many as eight children. If the birthrate in India (nearly five children to each mother) continues at its present level, that country will have a population of nearly a thousand million at the turn of the century.

Many of these growing families are flocking to the hopelessly overcrowded megacities of the Third World, such as

Who Should Decide? You or the Church?

By *Awake!* correspondent in Spain

Calcutta and Mexico City. The latter could have anywhere from 26 million to 36 million people by the year 2000. Consequently, the majority of these poorer nations practice some form of family planning.

Meanwhile, in many Western countries, where family planning clinics are widespread, the birthrate has fallen considerably. Contraceptive methods are used by the majority of married couples, irrespective of their religion. Protestant churches generally leave the question of contraception to the conscience of the couple concerned. However, in 1930, Pope Pius XI formalized the current official Catholic position, which was reinforced by Pope Paul VI and has been emphasized by the present pope, John Paul II.

A Dilemma for Sincere Catholics

How is the official Catholic ruling on birth control defined? Put simply, it declares that only "natural" methods of birth control are morally acceptable. The "natural" method was described by Pope John Paul II as "discerning the rhythms of human fertility and guiding . . . parenthood according to these rhythms." Other forms of contraception are forbidden.

Clearly, many Catholics find the rhythm method impractical. Thus, they are obliged to follow either the dictates of their own conscience or the doctrine of their church. In most Western countries, pragmatic Catholics tend to ignore papal pronouncements, although not without some soul-searching. This is true even in predominantly Catholic countries.

A French priest explains: 'Setting very high standards, not as directives, but in an absolute sense, leads to the existence of parallel churches: On the one side are those who lay down the law and a minority who obey. On the other side, a majority who do what they can or even decide to ride roughshod over these very complicated principles.' In Spain over

60 percent ignore church teachings on birth control even though well over half of these consider themselves practicing Catholics. In Italy a recent poll indicated that less than 2 percent definitely align themselves with the official church position.

This enormous discrepancy between what the church teaches and what Catholics generally practice is not surprising in view of the conflicting opinions expressed by bishops, priests, and theologians on this question. While papal statements have been unequivocal, many high-ranking churchmen do not see the matter as clear-cut, some even speaking out openly against official dogma. Meanwhile, local priests, who have to counsel married couples, are often unwilling to make moral judgments in this regard. So the basic question is, Are there definite divine instructions relating to birth control?

What Is the Bible's Viewpoint?

Those who argue against contraception often cite the Biblical command given to

Adam and Eve: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:28, *Douay*) However, as Spanish writer Ricardo Lezcano rightly observed: "It seems somewhat contradictory to apply to 4,000 million human beings the same formula that was applied to the only two inhabitants of the planet." This command was clearly related to the special circumstances existing at that time.

Nowhere in the Bible is birth control or family planning discussed. Although the Bible condemns sexual immorality, it does not teach that only procreation can legitimize sexual relations between husband and wife. (Compare Proverbs 5:15-20; 1 Corinthians 7:

Conflicting Voices

- **Humanae Vitae (Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, 1968).** The conjugal act ought to be "completely human, totally and exclusively open to the new life."
- **Pope John Paul II.** "Contraception, judged objectively, is so profoundly illicit that it can never, for any reason, be justified. To think or to speak otherwise is tantamount to saying that there can be situations in which it is lawful not to recognize God as God."
- **Spanish cardinal Narciso Jubany Arnau.** "[It is] a grave sin to avoid fertility deliberately."
- **French Catholic bishops in a pastoral letter (1968).** "Traditional wisdom dictates determining which is the most important duty before God in this particular case. The couple must make their decision after a long period of mutual reflection."
- **Catholic theologian Charles Curran.** After the 1968 papal encyclical on birth control, Curran and some 600 other Catholic academics and church professionals issued a statement declaring that couples "were justified in following their own conscience."
- **An elderly French priest.** "The church insists on speaking in terms that make it lose all its credibility.... It continues to lay down the law to the moon."

2, 3.) In this matter, therefore, as in others where direct Scriptural guidance is absent, each couple must decide in harmony with their conscience. Establishing arbitrary standards of right and wrong would be going "beyond what is set down."—1 Corinthians 4:6, *The New American Bible*, a Catholic translation.

This does not mean that every form of birth control is acceptable in God's sight. The Bible makes clear that God esteems the life of the unborn child and takes note of its embryonic development. (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5) Under the Mosaic Law, someone who even unwittingly caused the death of an unborn child was liable to severe punishment. (Exodus 21:22, 23) Therefore, from God's viewpoint, abortion is reprehensible, and so is any other device or medication that terminates life *after* conception has occurred.*

Thus, what many sincere Catholics believe intuitively—that family planning is a matter best left to each married couple—is precisely what the Bible indicates.

Joaquim, the Portuguese father mentioned earlier, came to that conclusion after personally experiencing the difficulties and heartaches of adhering to Catholic doctrine regarding birth control. He began to investigate the Bible to determine whether other dogmas of the church might not also be mere "commandments of men" rather than "the commandment of God."—Matthew 15:3, 9, *Dy.*

Now, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he strives to follow not the dictates of men but, rather, those of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16) Why don't you make a similar investigation? Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be pleased to help you.

* On rare occasions a drastic medical procedure might be indicated to save the mother's life.—See *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1975, pages 191-2.



Why Is It So Hard to Stay Friends?

ONE girl quit talking to Sabina simply because she failed to hit a home run at a school baseball game. Another girl broke off their friendship because Sabina refused to help her cheat on a test. A third girl constantly criticized and insulted Sabina in front of others. Sabina thus learned an often painful truth: Maintaining a friendship is not always easy.

'She didn't keep my secret!' 'He ignores me!' 'She made fun of me behind my back!' 'I feel smothered.' Many a tight friendship has been crushed under a barrage of similar complaints.

Fragile Friendships

Why do friendships often prove fragile? The Bible says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Because of imperfection, not only are we error prone but we are out of harmony with both God and our fellowman. We are plagued with feelings of guilt and insecurity, quick to take offense, quick to feel threatened. Since we are also disposed to anger, short-temperedness, impatience, and jealousy—other trademarks of imperfection—we are more prone to "break one another to pieces" than to maintain the bonds of friendship.

—Proverbs 18:24.

So teen friendships can be fragile. For one thing, such relationships (particularly among young girls) are often intensely intimate. And while having a friend to share every thought and every feeling with may have its advantages, it also has its drawbacks. Note what Soviet researchers Kon and Losenkov observed: "The intense need for shared confidences can be a potential source of misunderstandings and conflicts."

The emotional growth that takes place during your teen years can also work against friendship. As one writer puts it, before adolescence "our personalities are less distinct, our interests and goals less well defined; we don't have a very strong sense of who we are yet." But as we approach our late teens, "we begin to become more like adults, individuals with our own goals and ideals and interests. This . . . may make it hard to remain close to old friends who are developing differently than we are. Some growing apart is therefore inevitable."

Finally, some friendships are founded more on selfishness than on mutual love, more on a desire to receive than on a willingness to give. Sabina's experience (mentioned at the outset) illustrates how easily such so-called friendships may evaporate when selfish expectations are not met. What, then, can you do if a cherished friendship runs into a snag?



Be Loyal

Joanna trusted one of her friends with a secret—a personal matter that she specifically asked her not to tell to anyone. A few days later, she discovered that several others knew all about the matter. Realizing that her friend had betrayed her, Joanna said: "I forgave her, but I could never trust her again. Our friendship will never be the same." Loyalty certainly is an important part of friendship. The Bible tells us that David and Jonathan even made an oath of loyalty to each other! (1 Samuel 20:15-17) But if a friend betrays a confidence, is that friendship over?

Not necessarily. True, betraying a trust cannot be condoned. But could it be that it was unwise on your part to burden your

The possessive person treats a friend like a piece of personal property

friend with the information in the first place? "A gossip can never keep a secret," warns the proverb. "Stay away from people who talk too much." (Proverbs 20:19, *Today's English Version*) Youths often do not have the maturity to maintain a confidence. Dr. Jane Anderson, psychiatrist for adolescents, further reminds us: "Even a good friend may occasionally be tempted to reveal a confidence if it will give [him or her] some attention and status. This doesn't make [him or her] a bad person—just immature." The solution may be for you to confide in a mature adult when you have a serious problem.

What if you are the one entrusted with a private matter? Be loyal and "do not reveal another man's secrets, or he will reproach you when he hears of it and your indiscretion will then be beyond recall."—Proverbs 25:9, 10, *The New English Bible*.

I Feel Smothered'

Whenever Joe wanted to be with someone else—or simply enjoy solitude—Joe's friend would become upset. As a result, Joe began to feel pressured and frustrated.

Treating a friend as if he or she is your exclusive property can smother the friendship. True, it is only natural to feel hurt and insecure when a close friend starts associating with others. But does becoming oppressively possessive improve the situation? Not according to Proverbs 25:17 (*NEB*), which says: "Be sparing in visits to your neighbour's house, if he sees too much of you, he will dislike you."

Jesus Christ was especially close to his disciple John. (John 13:23) Yet, Jesus did not exclude others but declared regarding all his disciples: "You are my friends." (John 15:14) Similarly, there is room in even the closest of friendships for other relationships. Indeed, the Bible urges Christians to "widen out" in their friendships.—2 Corinthians 6:13.

What if you are the one being smothered by a possessive friend? Then "plead your own cause with your fellowman," and let your friend know how you feel. (Proverbs 25:9) Your taking an interest in other people and in other things may be quite painful for your friend. He or she may fear that this signals the end of your friendship. Assure your friend that this is not the case and that you simply desire more breathing room in your relationship.

Disrespect

Researchers Youniss and Smollar found that "disrespectful acts" are among the most common causes of conflicts in teenage friendships. Complaints that 'he called me names!' or that 'she puts me down in front of others!' are common. Granted, it hurts to be treated unkindly by someone we love. The way we are treated, however, often reflects the way we treat others. Jesus said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." Could it be that you need to apply the Golden Rule a bit more in your friendships?—Matthew 7:2, 12.

Another question you might consider is whether you may have set yourself up as a target for ridicule—perhaps by excessive or foolish talking. (Proverbs 15:2) If so, you may need to make changes. When Jesus was on earth, he had the respect of even his enemies. But that was not because Jesus went around demanding that people treat him that way. No, he conducted himself in a way that invited respectful

treatment from others. By setting a mature Christian example 'in speaking and in conduct,' you can accomplish the same thing yourself.—1 Timothy 4:12.

What, though, if the disrespectful treatment is entirely unwarranted? Once again, it is time to speak up. 'Turning the other cheek' does not necessarily mean enduring unjust treatment in silence. (Matthew 5:39; compare 2 Corinthians 11:20.) So why not "speak truth" with your friend, and let him or her know how his actions affect you? (Ephesians 4:25) Approach the matter calmly, with the motive of repairing your friendship—not for revenge.

"Try to avoid saying something like: 'You treat me like dirt!'" recommended an article in *'Teen'* magazine. "Instead, focus on how *you* feel: 'I feel hurt and embarrassed when I'm teased or ignored in front of the other girls. It makes me feel like you don't care about me. Can we talk about it?'"

Samantha was forced to have such a serious talk with a friend. She discovered that her friend was talking against her behind her back. Samantha decided to speak to her about it. "I was nervous at first," she recalls, "but it was worth it." Samantha learned that some misunderstandings were involved and that her friend's comments were not as bad as they were reported to be. (Proverbs 15:22) "Now we are better friends," reports Samantha.

Admittedly, not all clashes between friends have such a happy resolution. And if your friend is unwilling to make changes or proves himself to be selfish, inconsiderate, or uninterested in your feelings, then it may be time to seek companionship elsewhere. (Proverbs 17:17) Usually, though, with determination and work on the part of both of you, the friendship can be salvaged. And when you contemplate the deep joy and satisfaction a good friendship brings, isn't such effort worth it?—Proverbs 27:9.

WATCHING THE WORLD

HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGES LEGALIZED

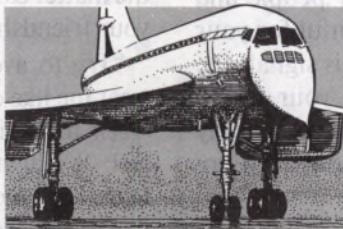
Denmark has become "the first country in the European Community to legalize homosexual marriages," reports *The Times* of London. "Registered partnerships" between males or females can now enjoy the same advantages as heterosexual marriages, including social benefits, taxation, and divorce. The bill, passed by the Danish Parliament by 71 votes to 47, allows for civil ceremonies; and if priests are willing to perform the necessary rites, they may legally do so. Medical experts hope that the new legislation will stabilize homosexual relationships and thus contribute to the containing of the present AIDS epidemic.

AIDS PREDICTION

The World Health Organization has predicted that AIDS cases worldwide will jump tenfold by the year 2000, raising the total to 5,000,000 from the present 450,000. The number of those infected with the virus that causes AIDS is expected to rise three-fold. From five to ten million people are said to be infected now. "These projections suggest very strongly that the HIV/AIDS situation during the decade of the 1990's will be much worse than we have experienced during the 1980's," said Dr. Jonathan Mann, director of the agency's AIDS program. Even if a vaccine were soon developed, it would not help most of those who will develop AIDS between now and the mid-1990's, as they have already been infected.

CONCORDE AT AGE 20

The Concorde, the SST (supersonic transport) built by Britain and France, is 20 years old. Its maiden flight was on March 2, 1969, and its passenger service began in January 1976. The French daily *La Croix* reported: "Some loved it, some dragged it



through the mire, others laughed at its foolish nose." Yet the "ugly duckling" that carries 128 passengers at Mach 2 (twice the speed of sound) has satisfied its users, British Airways and Air France. The 13 SSTs now in service have totaled more than 130,000 flight hours.

THE LAST WORD

In the year 1879, Scottish lexicographer James Murray began work on *The Oxford English Dictionary*. It took 49 years to complete, instead of the expected 10, and filled 15,500 pages, some 9,000 more than planned. A hundred years later, it was updated by a Supplement consisting of four volumes. Combining them with a further update has been the culmination of a five-year computer project costing £10 million (\$15.5 million, U.S.). The 20 volumes contain 600,000 cross-references and 2.5 million

quotations in 59 million words of text. The longest entry, the length of a short novel, is for the word "set," which has 430 senses and subsenses. New words include *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and AIDS. The work is now on sale for £1,500 (\$2,300, U.S.).

AIRLINE SECURITY

"There are few defenses against sophisticated terrorists determined to plant a bomb on a plane," notes an article in *The Wall Street Journal*. "Worse, even those procedures that exist can collapse through human failings, when harried airport workers are overwhelmed by hordes of passengers and mountains of luggage." Most airport security systems were designed to detect only guns or knives that may be carried by hijackers—not bombs. While machines to detect plastic explosives have recently been designed, most large airports will not have them for a year or more, and the greater part of the baggage checked on carriers worldwide today is neither X-rayed nor searched. "However, all X-ray machines depend on interpretations by operators, some of whom may be ill-trained or poorly motivated," says the *Journal*. And at times, watching suitcase after suitcase go by, an operator is bound to become tired and inattentive.

NEW TRANSFUSION FEAR

"A parasite usually found in South and Central America, where it is a major cause of heart

disease, has been detected after blood transfusions in the United States," reports *The New York Times*. "The infection, Chagas' disease, has been diagnosed in two patients in three years, and one of those died." However, it is feared that additional cases may have passed undetected, as the disease is unfamiliar to American physicians, who may be unaware that it can be spread by blood transfusions. No effective treatment has been found for the disease, which in the acute stage affects the lymph nodes, the liver, and the spleen, while the chronic form damages the heart and the bowel and may be fatal. Still, many who harbor the parasite are unaware that they are infected, as symptoms may be mild and pass unnoticed, or it may be years before the parasite does its damage.

POPE REBUFFED

Pope John Paul II's recent visit to Scandinavia was the first by a pope to that region, where Catholics make up less than 1 percent of the population. The visit drew small crowds and little enthusiasm compared to most of his other 41 trips abroad. Stressing a desire for closer ties to the dominant Lutheran Church, the pope cited his hope "that unity can one day be restored to the followers of Christ." However, Lutheran bishop Andreas Aarflot of Oslo expressed unhappiness with this position, saying: "We look forward to the day when Your Holiness clearly and unequivocally expresses the recognition of the ecclesiastical character of the Lutheran and other Protestant churches." A significant number of the Lutheran bishops opted

for boycotting the ecumenical meetings with the pope.

BARBED-WIRE CURTAIN LIFTS

The entire 150-mile barbed-wire fence between Hungary and Austria is being removed. "It makes Hungarians feel much bet-



ter that we no longer have such an old-fashioned border with the West," said the head of Hungary's border guards. Hungary hopes to have the total length of the fence dismantled by the end of next year.

MAP CHANGE

You may not have noticed it, but the world has changed shape. That is because the National Geographic Society, whose maps are so widely used, has veered away from the traditional projection that shows the Soviet Union 223 percent larger than it is, Canada 258 percent larger, and Greenland 554 percent larger. In the new projection by Professor Arthur Robinson, the Soviet Union is only 18 percent larger than it really is, Greenland 60 percent larger, and the United States 3 percent smaller. The problem comes from trying to flatten the globe onto a page. On most projections, the farther away a country is from the equator, the more it is distorted. However, Britain's principal mapmaker is not following suit. Their

map places Britain near the center, while the projection used in the Soviet Union places the Soviets at the center of the world.

LEARNING FROM THE WITNESSES

The U.S. government is gearing up for a new census to be taken beginning April 1, 1990. "Ten years ago, when the latest national census was taken, gangs didn't pose much of a threat to conducting the head count," states *The Orange County Register* of Santa Ana, California. "Times have changed." Now they have hired a gang specialist to advise census takers on how to act in high-risk areas. Additionally, the paper reports, "census officials are examining how postal carriers and Jehovah's Witnesses perform their tasks unharmed in such areas."

SOVIET CRIME

Crime has mushroomed in the Soviet Union. According to the government's economic report for the first quarter of 1989, crime increased 31 percent overall compared with the same period last year. Serious crimes were up by 40 percent, and thefts and burglaries up by 69 percent. Teen crimes also rose, those by adolescent girls increasing by 44 percent. Fear reigns in some cities, as many criminals are now armed with stolen weapons and while engaged in burglary do not seem to care whether people are home or not. "Lawmaking is lagging behind the realities of the day," states an article in *Pravda*. "The underworld is adapting to present conditions and laws, and regrouping much faster than law-enforcement agencies."

FROM OUR READERS

Driving I appreciated the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Convince My Parents That I'm Ready to Drive?" (March 22, 1989) I am 14 years old and have been talking to my mother about driving, but she has been very skeptical about the whole thing. I was beginning to think that I wasn't going to drive until I was 30! Now I know that I can start doing things to build my mother's confidence in me so that when the time comes, she will know I can handle the responsibility. Thank you so much!

J. D., United States

Pets I managed a pet store for several years and feel I am qualified to express an 'educated opinion.' Your article on pets (June 8, 1989) had many good points. But when it came to hygiene, you backed off on the whole point of responsible ownership. A responsible pet owner will see to it that the animal is kept clean, healthy, and parasite free so that the pet can be welcomed into the home. Regular visits to the veterinarian should be routine and should be allowed for in the family budget. The article ought to have mentioned the importance of daily cleaning feces from the yard, litter box, or cage. You cannot blame an animal for being dirty, parasite ridden, or unhealthy if that's the condition the owners allow it to live in.

L. T., United States

These points are well-taken. The article, though, was not intended to be an in-depth discussion of pet care. Rather, it served to help readers decide if they are prepared to take on the weighty responsibility of pet ownership.—ED.

Verbal Abuse Your article (June 8, 1989) helped me appreciate that parents are under intense pressure. Today I was spoken to hurtfully and felt extremely miserable. I was very angry with my parents. But it truly helped that I had read this article thoroughly just the

day before. When I thought about their good side instead of dwelling only on my parents' bad points, my heart and my thinking became much, much happier. Thank you very much.

E. T., Japan

I am 15 years old and have been so down-hearted and depressed lately because of the verbal abuse I was receiving from my father. This article was spiritual food at the proper time. It has really been a source of encouragement to me and my mother.

H. T., United States

Crime The April 22, 1989, issue contained advice that alarmed me. Regarding coping with muggers, the statement was made: "Look the person in the eye, and try to hold his gaze." I lived for many years in high crime areas and was taught not to look assaultive persons in the eye, since they might feel you were trying to identify them for future criminal charges.

R. L., United States

We agree that, under certain circumstances, staring at a potentially hostile individual could provoke violence. Nevertheless, some authorities believe that maintaining eye contact during a mugging is preferable to looking about wildly or gazing down at the ground—behavior that might indicate fear or panic.—ED.

Worse Than AIDS I was raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. But I wanted to be liked and got in with the wrong company. I have been helped to get back on the right road before it was too late. The article about the AIDS victim (April 22, 1989) will help me stay on that road. He was brave to change, as so many would have given up. His experience shows that the world has nothing to offer us and that without Jehovah's love and favor, we are dead.

D. C., New Zealand

IF THE oceans of earth should die—that is, if life in the oceans were suddenly, somehow to come to an end—it would be the final as well as the greatest catastrophe in the troubrous story of man and the other animals and plants with whom man shares this planet." So wrote Jacques Cousteau in the introduction to Volume 1 of his book *The Ocean World of Jacques Cousteau*.

He continues the scenario: "With no life in the seas the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere would set forth on an inexorable climb. When this CO₂ level passed a certain point the 'greenhouse effect' would come into operation: heat radiating outwards from earth to space would be trapped beneath the stratosphere,

If the Oceans Should Die'

shooting up sea-level temperatures. At both North and South Poles the icecaps would melt. The oceans would rise perhaps 100 feet in a small number of years. All earth's major cities would be inundated. To avoid drowning one third of the world's

population would be compelled to flee to hills and mountains, hills and mountains unready to receive these people, unable to produce enough food for them."

Cousteau then proceeds to the grim finale: "Packed together on various highlands, starving, subject to bizarre storms and diseases, with families and societies totally disrupted, what is left of mankind begins to suffer from anoxia—lack of oxygen—caused by the extinction of plankton algae and the reduction of land vegetation. Pinned in the narrow belt between dead seas and sterile mountain-slopes man coughs out his last moments in unutterable agony. Maybe thirty to fifty years after the ocean has died the last man on earth takes his own last breath. Organic life on the planet is reduced to bacteria and a few scavenger insects."

Man being what he is, however, this warning and other similar ones being sounded today will go unheeded as money-mad humans continue their headlong dash to disaster. As Jehovah said long ago: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step," and it will take Jehovah himself to step in and stop "those ruining the earth."—Jeremiah 10: 23; Revelation 11:18.

