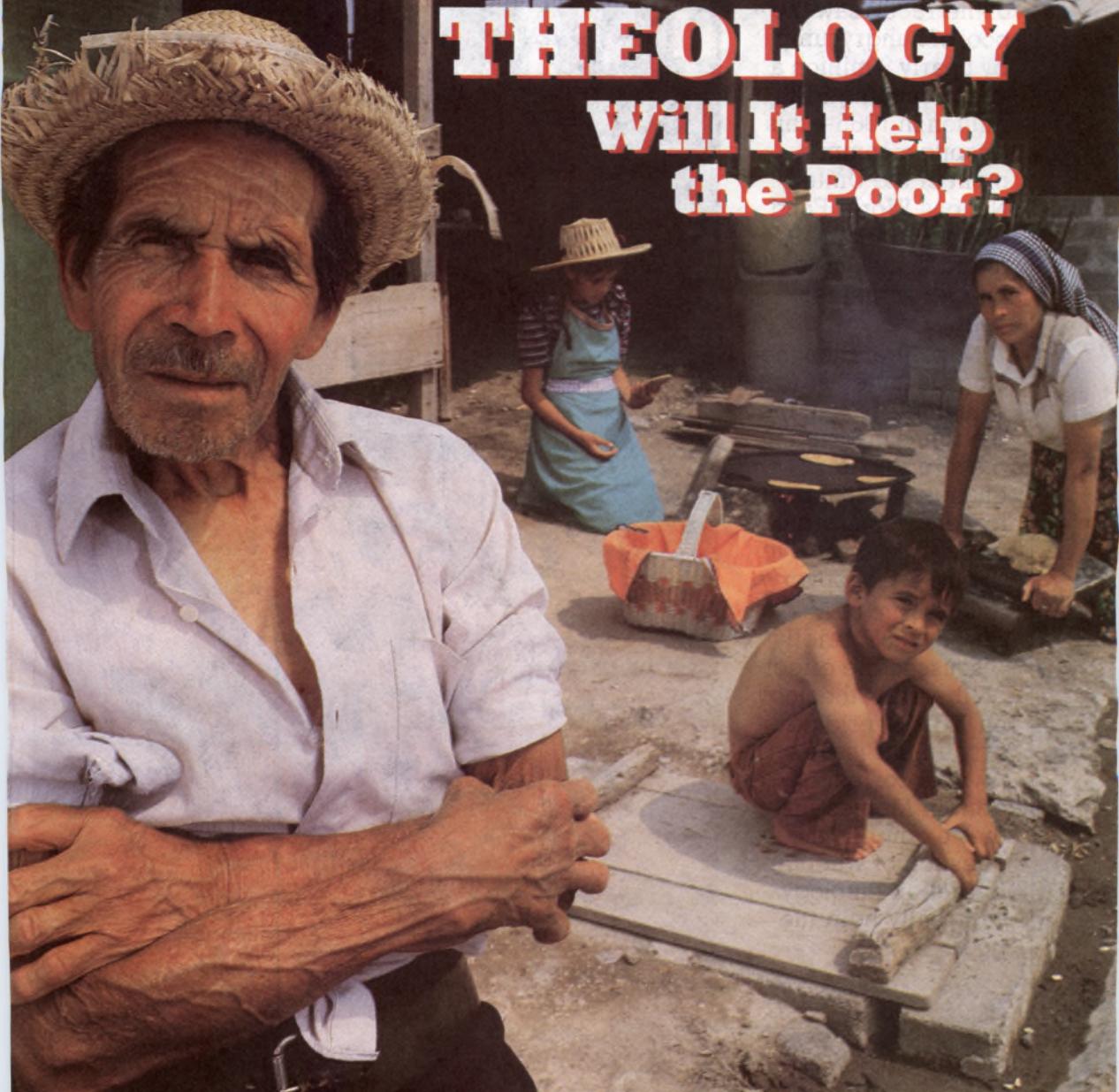


# **Awake!**

November 8, 1987

## **LIBERATION THEOLOGY**

### **Will It Help the Poor?**



It has been calculated that from 1970 to 1980 the number of hungry people in the world increased by about 1.5 million a year. But the first half of the 1980's saw the pool of hungry jump by nearly 8 million a year, reaching 512 million in 1985—this despite a commitment of the United Nations World Food Council back in 1974 to eradicate world hunger within ten years.

Now, liberation theology is touted as a solution—getting the churches involved in the struggle to change national political and social structures so as to remove the causes of poverty.

Our issue of August 8, 1987, briefly discussed the effect of liberation theology on Third World poverty. In this issue, *Awake!* correspondent in Mexico further examines the question of whether liberation theology can really help the poor.



# Third World Catholicism

## How Stable?



By *Awake!* correspondent in Mexico

**A**LL CHRISTIANS are disciples of a political prisoner who had been assassinated on the cross." "Pope John Paul II is the most political pope we've ever seen!" "It is impossible to live our faith in isolation from politics." These are but a few of the many controversial statements that were made by Catholic theologians at a forum held in Mexico City in December 1986.

At the same meeting, there were those in the audience who did not agree with the speakers. Some began shouting in defense of the Catholic Church, while others supported the visiting theologians. Still others were speechless—confused by the lack of unity. Interrupting this disturbance, South African priest Bonganjalo Goba cried out: "Brothers, it looks as if we have a struggle of Catholics against Catholics!"

Why had such a scene taken place? What was the quarrel about?

### The Issue

The subject under discussion was the practice of *liberation theology*—a struggle, backed by priests and theologians worldwide, to free the poor and oppressed people of Third World nations from "the socio-economical mechanisms that produce wealth at the expense of the poor."

Although some call it radical or revolutionary, others refer to it as a 'new expression of the Roman Catholic Church.' At the second Latin American Bishops' Conference, in Medellín, Colombia (1968), it was declared that the suffering of the people in Third World nations is caused by "structural sin" and that, to follow Christ, the church must exercise "a preferential option for the poor." But what may this entail?

Brazilian Catholic priest Leonardo Boff warns, as reported by a Mexico City newspaper, that "if an undivided society is not reached, the alternative is violence" and that it is "justifiable when fundamental rights are violated." Yes, Boff, along with other advocates of liberation theology throughout Third World nations, believes that terrorism, revolutions, and war may be necessary to relieve the poor of their "misery."

However, as *Newsweek* magazine reports, "liberation theology has a powerful ability to pit Roman Catholics against one another." This was evident at the meeting held in Mexico City. But what do you believe? Is liberation theology the answer? And whether you are a sincere Catholic or of another faith, how can knowledge of Third World trends in the Catholic Church benefit you?

# Liberation Theology

## Will It Help the Poor?



Millions 'living in dirt-floored stick houses work incredibly hard for just the necessities of life: they carry water; they travel by foot, by horse, by oxcart; they eat rice, beans and bananas. Although the land around them is rich, they know that they will probably always be poor. And so out of poverty, out of struggle, out of the worst kind of oppression, a new form of "the ancient church" is being born.'—*The Christian Century*.

**T**HE future of the church seems to lie with the poor." So reports *Newsweek* magazine. Some believe that this "new church" working for liberation may be "the single best hope" for the poor and for bringing a peaceful change to their countries. Is it?

First, let's examine liberation theology from the supporter's viewpoint. Why is armed struggle at times deemed necessary

to liberate the poor? What conditions are said to justify liberation theology?

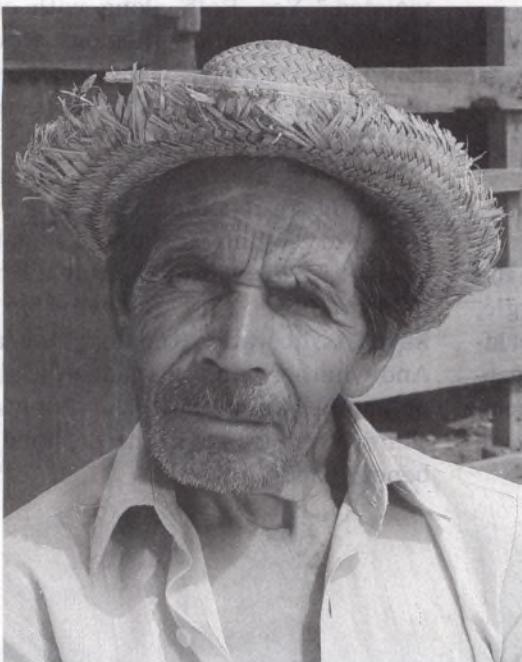
### **Poverty and Oppression**

Two thirds of the world's population—mostly in Latin America, Africa, and Asia—live in degrading poverty, and reports of political violence from these continents are common. For "this downtrodden people," poverty, suffering, and captivity have always been a way of life. Here are some reports:

□ Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff says that in his country "a peasant is murdered every 22 hours."

□ "Nicaragua is attempting to organize a nation in the interest of those who have been held down for generations—80 per cent of the people." Yet, more than 40 percent of the country's economy is reportedly used for military defense.

□ According to Mexico City's daily *El Universal*, 40 million people are said to live in poverty due to



"social injustice." Forty percent of the population is said to be capable of reaching "minimum levels of subsistence," while only 18 percent has a "balanced diet."

□ One report states that in Guatemala 80 percent of the cultivable land belongs to just 2 percent of the population. Of children under five years of age, 81 percent suffer from malnutrition. During the past 30 years, there have been 100,000 acts of political violence and 38,000 kidnappings.

□ In the Philippines, 2 percent of the population possesses 75 percent of the riches. "If we are not going to solve that," says Filipino nun Mary John Mananzan, "we are not going to solve anything!"

People in many lands are said to live in constant fear of the authorities, unofficial armies, and vigilante groups. Thousands have taken refuge in nearby countries.

This is why some Catholic prelates are "taking the part of the poor." "We have heard a lot about confessors, virgins and prophets," says Boff, but "what about the peasants and laborers?" Yet, what do liberation theologians prescribe to remedy this situation? What does 'taking sides with the poor' mean?

### The Third-World Struggle

"Poverty is an injustice" plead liberation theologians. So the "preferential option for the poor" is to "help them search for a dignified life that they have a right to." In his book *The Power of the Poor in History*, Peruvian Gustavo Gutiérrez, considered to be the father of liberation theology, says that "today more than ever before, it is important to belong to those who resist, who fight, who believe and hope." But according to liberation theologians, this is possible only through "the realization of social justice through deep structural

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transformations of society." How is this being done in some areas of the world?

□ In Haiti, the Catholic Church is said to have helped topple the Duvalier "tyranny."

□ Manila's Jaime Cardinal Sin is reported to have done "more than anyone else in the Philippines to bring down the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos."

□ Explains Bonganjalo Goba of South Africa: 'Our experience is that of a people arriving with the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other, promising to build God a church if he gives us the land.'

But poverty is just one of the problems. Illiteracy, unemployment, hunger, and sickness are also the results of a poor socioeconomic system in many lands. Consequently, the poor and oppressed are fighting back.

Yet, how do liberation theologians, such as Gutiérrez and Boff, reason on the matter using *the Bible*?

### **Liberation Theologians and the Bible**

"Liberation is an essential part of the Bible," explains South Korean Catholic priest Augustine Ham Sei Ung. But in order to explain it, Gutiérrez says that "history . . .

**"It is important to belong to those who resist, who fight, who believe and hope."**  
—Gustavo Gutiérrez



must be *reread from the side of the poor.*"

Thus, liberation theologians claim that certain Bible accounts, such as that of "the liberation of Israel," are political actions. "God . . . reveals himself through . . . 'the poor' and 'the least,'" says Gutiérrez. "If the church wishes to be faithful to . . . God . . . , it must become aware of itself from beneath, from among the poor of this world." So "God's love for his people," they reason, "could be manifested politically" today as well.

How do liberation theologians feel about the relationship between the Bible and politics? Leonardo Boff explained to *Awake!* that "it is not the Bible's function to be a book of inspirations of political methods and political alternatives; rather, the Bible is a source of inspiration in the search for more righteous human relationships." Yet, what are the results of the clergy's participation in social reform?

Violence often leads to death. Not to be overlooked is the fact that the clergy have had a free hand in world politics for centuries. They have aligned themselves with the kings of the earth and dictators or elite ruling classes who have crushed the poor people. As a result, many lives have been lost.

### **A "Preferential Option"?**

Modern "liberation movements" are no exception. They too have led to many deaths. As Gustavo Gutiérrez admits: "Today, worsening hunger and exploitation, as well as exile and imprisonment . . . , torture and death . . . , make up the price to be paid for having rebelled against a secular oppression."

So, really, no human theology can remove mankind's anguish. As long as greed and hatred exist, there will be a need for something better. But is there a better option for the poor?

# A Dilemma for Sincere Catholics



In 1984 the Vatican sent out an instruction condemning liberation theology, and Leonardo Boff, one of the "most controversial" Catholic theologians, was sentenced to one year of "penitential silence"—a punishment imposed by the church that forbade him to publish or give interviews or promulgate in any way his suspect theology.

But in 1986, one month before the 'year of silence' was up, Boff was granted amnesty. *Instrucción Sobre Libertad Cristiana y Liberación* (Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation) was sent out, stating that it is "fully legitimate that those who suffer oppression from the holders of wealth or of political power should act with morally acceptable means . . ." "Armed struggle" was approved of as a "last resort." Was the church correcting itself?

Not according to the author of the new instruction, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "The first instruction loses none of its value," he stated. "The second document is a continuation." But others, such as the press, define the second instruction as a "new stand on 'liberation theology.'" Why the inconsistency?

The careful wording of the new instruction can be interpreted in various ways. For exam-

ple, it states that "it is not for the pastors of the church to intervene directly in the political construction and organization of social life." As *Newsweek* magazine keenly observes: "That kind of language leaves a lot of room in which canny prelates . . . can maneuver."

One report says that 'virtually everyone in the church can find something he can agree with.' A liberationist like Gutiérrez could now say that "liberation theology is a sign of the times in Latin America, and the church recognizes it as such," while a conservative Catholic could rejoice that his church still "strongly opposes Marxist collectivism for negating the liberty of man." Nevertheless, the various concepts of liberation theology conflict with church tradition and continue to pit Roman Catholics against one another.

However, the apostle Paul admonishes true Christians: "Make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, . . . be united . . . in your belief and practice." "Be united in your convictions . . . with a common purpose and a common mind." (1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:2)\* What do you believe? Are Roman Catholics 'united in their convictions'?

\* Scriptures quoted are from the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*.



Is the church  
'united in its  
convictions'?

# Liberation Theology, the Bible, and You



**"All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy."—2 Timothy 3:16.\***

**D**O YOU believe that? Which is more important to you: Serving God the way *he* wants you to serve him or serving him the way *you* think best? 'Of course,' you say, 'the only way is God's way!' Do you really feel that God's way is best? If so, then you will agree with the above statement made by the apostle Paul.

Yes, God has spoken, and you can read his Word. We invite you to consider liberation theology from the Bible's viewpoint. Is liberation theology Bible-based?

## ***You Do Not Belong to the World***

Jesus once told his disciples: "You do not belong to the world." That same evening, the night before his death, he said in prayer to his Father: "I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world." Then, almost immediately, he repeated: "They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world."—John 15:19; 17:14, 16.

Most religions of Christendom make no effort to be separate from the world. Perhaps you have read about it in the news. Wherever you look—in the Americas, Asia,

Europe, or Africa—the story is the same. The clergy of virtually every religious stripe are in the political arena. But their involvement in world politics is just one of the conflicts with God's Word.

## ***Is Violence Justified?***

Liberation theologians say that violence is justified when it is employed to help the poor. Even the Vatican now officially says that violence is justified as "a last resort." Pope John Paul II, in a letter to all the bishops in Brazil, has declared that "Liberation Theology is not only opportune but also useful and necessary for Latin America." Is this what the Bible says?

While on earth, Jesus Christ did not get involved in the world's social movements. On the contrary, when the apostle Peter resorted to "the sword" to defend God's Son, Jesus rebuked him by saying: "Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."—Matthew 26:52.

But what about the wars that Israel fought? According to the Bible, Israel had

\* All scriptures quoted in this article are from the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*.

not known warfare prior to their deliverance from Egypt. (Exodus 13:17, 18) When the time came, they were directed by God. However, Jehovah strictly commanded Israel that they were to conquer only the land he had promised to their forefathers.—Genesis 17:7, 8; Deuteronomy 2:5, 9, 19.

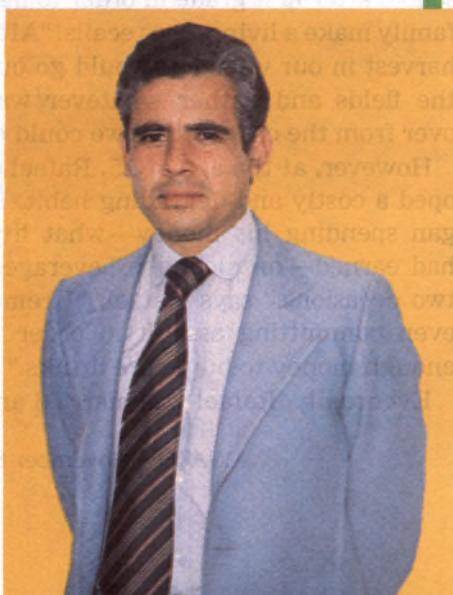
While Christians do not engage in a physical war against blood and flesh, they are engaged in warfare nonetheless, a spiritual fight. As the apostle Paul clearly stated: “It is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against . . . the spiritual army of evil in the heavens.”—Ephesians 6:12.

So how does Christendom’s clergy justify today’s violence?

#### ***God’s Word in Third Place!***

Liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez told *Awake!* that a teaching, such as liberation theology, comes from ‘the Christian community’s discernment and acceptance of it.’ Yes, popular opinion and human wis-

**“I was dedicated to serving God with the . . . goal of becoming a good priest”—Carlos**



**“It was then that I truly began understanding the Bible—as if a blindfold had been removed”—Maria**

dom are put ahead of God’s Word. Do you agree with this?

Carlos D.— was a staunch Catholic who had spent 11 years in a Catholic seminary. “I was dedicated to serving God with the . . . goal of becoming a good priest,” says Carlos. Yet, over the years, something began to bother him.

‘Among other things,’ he says, ‘I realized that the Bible was left in the background. The tradition of the fathers of the church came first. Then came the authority of the pope when he spoke ex cathedra, and finally—in third place—the Bible.’\*

After leaving the Catholic Church, Carlos spent years looking for the truth in several other religions. Dissatisfied, he became an atheist until he was contacted by Jehovah’s Witnesses and accepted a home Bible study. Carlos is now a dedicated witness of Jehovah.

Maria V.— was also a practicing

\* Ex cathedra: When the pope speaks out officially on matters of “doctrine of Christian faith or rule of morals to be held by the Church.”

Catholic. "I would go to Mass almost every day," she says. "I also belonged to a group called *La Acción Católica de Señoritas* [Catholic Action for Young Women]." Maria taught catechism for several years. What did her training consist of? 'Each Saturday the priest would talk to us about philosophies of Plato and others. Most of us understood nothing. I knew there was something wrong. What I was learning didn't fill my spiritual needs.' What changed her life?

"My boyfriend regularly received the *Awake!*, and he would pass the magazines on to me." Then Maria obtained the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* and began reading it on her own. "It was then that I truly began understanding the Bible—as if a blindfold had been removed."

Maria and her boyfriend both became dedicated Witnesses of Jehovah and then were married. Instead of teaching catechism, Maria now conducts 12 home Bible studies with others who are interested in learning Bible truth.

Knowledge of God's Word has also benefited many sincere people who come from a materially poor background.

#### ***The Bible's Alternative —God's Kingdom***

In one of the best-known prayers of all times, Jesus Christ highlighted mankind's only hope for better world conditions. "Our Father in heaven," he petitioned, "may



**'We may not be rich, but we have the necessities of life, and we are happy'—Rafael**

your name be held holy, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven." (Italics ours.)—Matthew 6:9, 10.

Do you favor government by God, or do you prefer human rulership? This is an issue that all of us must face. In view of present world conditions, you too may feel that we need something other than what man has accomplished. But what can the Kingdom of God do for the poor today?

Rafael R—— comes from a poverty-stricken family of nine children. "I quit school after first grade in order to help my family make a living," he recalls. "After the harvest in our village, I would go out into the fields and gather whatever was left over from the crop so that we could eat."

However, at the age of 15, Rafael developed a costly and degrading habit. He began spending his money—what little he had earned—on alcoholic beverages. "On two occasions," says Rafael, "I remember even committing assault in order to get enough money to buy more drinks."

Eventually, Rafael was married and had

ten children of his own to support. Still his drinking habit only grew worse. Says his wife, Carmen: "Materially, we had absolutely nothing. I tried to earn some money washing clothes in order to put food on the table. Our breakfast and dinner usually consisted of a cup of tea and a piece of bread. Lunch was nothing more than a little soup and perhaps some potatoes or squash. We were fortunate enough to eat meat once a week sometimes." So Rafael's drinking habit affected others as well. But was there hope for this family?

"Definitely," says Carmen, "though it wasn't until we began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses that my husband began to change. We learned of the Kingdom promise—that Jehovah will soon rid the world of poverty and oppression. My prayers to God were finally answered!" Rafael quit his drinking and began putting God's Kingdom in first place. Bible knowledge helped him put on "the new personality." (Ephesians 4:22-24) As a result, he and his family no longer struggle with extreme poverty. Says Rafael: "We may not be rich, and we do not own our own home, but we have the necessities of life, and we are happy."

A Christian education also helps develop latent abilities. Because of discontinuing his schooling at an early age, Rafael could hardly read or write. However, by attending and participating in Christian meetings, he not only became fluent in these areas but also gives talks in his congregation and regularly conducts a home Bible study with his family. That is not all.

Rafael and his family have discovered another benefit in putting Kingdom interests first. "When my husband was sick from his drinking problem," recalls Carmen, "we received the loving support of the congre-

gation." What kind of support was this? As Carmen explains: "The brothers and sisters came to our aid spiritually as well as financially." Yes, there is loving congregational support within this worldwide brotherhood of Jehovah's people.

So the Bible does provide a practical hope for the poor. Jesus once stated: "Set your hearts on [God's] kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things [the necessities of life] will be given you as well." (Matthew 6:33) And as seen in Rafael's case, there are more advantages than just material benefits.

Can accurate Bible knowledge help you as well?

### **How You Are Involved**

The apostle Paul once admonished true Christians of his day: "Examine yourselves to make sure you are in the faith; test yourselves." (2 Corinthians 13:5) And Jesus, in speaking to his Father, said that "eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."—John 17:3.

Is your faith based on knowing "the only true God"? Are you like the people of Berea, who the Bible says were "more open-minded"? They "welcomed the word very readily; every day they studied the scriptures to check whether it was true."—Acts 17:11.

Are you "open-minded" as to God's Word? Do you study the Bible regularly? This is the only way to "discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do." (Romans 12:2) In the Bible, you will find God's promise to rid the earth not just of poverty, oppression, and international struggle but of 'tears, death, mourning, and sadness.' (Revelation 21:4) This will certainly be true liberation!

# **DEFEATING DEPRESSION**

## *How Others Can Help*

## *How Others Can Help*

**I**T WAS the third time within just a few days that Ann had phoned long distance for no apparent reason. Her mother, Kay, noticed that her voice seemed lifeless. "It was like a voice of depression," explained Kay. "Though she didn't complain, the tone of her voice was saying out loud, 'I need help!'" Kay's heart raced as she sensed trouble.

"I told my daughter that I would be there the next day!" recalls Kay. "Ann started crying, muttered 'OK,' and then hung up." Upon arriving, the mother was shocked to learn that Ann had revealed to her friends that she felt totally hopeless and worthless. She had even seriously talked about suicide! Nevertheless, the support Kay gave during her five-day visit helped her daughter recover. It was the turning point. "This

taught me a lesson about listening," reflected the mother. "She could have killed herself, and how awful we would have felt if we had not helped in her time of need."

Help from others can often mean the difference between life and death to a severely depressed person. Would you have been as alert as Kay? Since each year a hundred million persons worldwide develop a severe depression, the chances are that someone who is your friend or relative may be affected. But helping someone who is severely depressed can be exasperating.

Dr. Leonard Cammer in his book *Up From Depression* tells of one mother who was at her wit's end with a depressed son. As she and her son conferred with the doctor, she bemoaned: "He just moves away from us and acts as if we're not there. He

knows we love him. Why does he have to hurt us this way? You don't know what I've been going through, Doctor." Dr. Cammer remarks: "If only she knew the suffering *he* has been going through! . . . The depressed person senses that he is a burden to the family. But he is a burden to himself too, because he is helpless to rectify his condition and is ashamed and humiliated by it. His only recourse then is to drift farther away." The mother's lack of sensitivity made the situation worse. To help, therefore, the first essential is . . .

### **Empathy**

Empathy, or "fellow feeling," is an effort to identify emotionally with another. (1 Peter 3:8) Realize that the depressed person really hurts. His distress is real and not feigned. "Weep with people who weep," advised the apostle Paul. (Romans 12:15) In other words, try to understand the pain the depressed one feels.

Though you cannot know exactly what he feels, you can show a genuine interest in *wanting* to know. Encourage that one to talk, and when he vents his feelings, try to see things through his eyes, putting yourself in his place. Avoid judgmental statements such as, 'You shouldn't feel like that' or, 'That's the wrong attitude.' The depressed person's emotions are especially fragile, and such critical comments only make him feel worse about himself. Usually his self-esteem has evaporated.

### **Rebuilding Self-Esteem**

To restore his self-esteem, you must appeal to the person's reason. Ever so gently, help him see that his low assessment of himself is incorrect. But simply giving him a stirring speech, telling him that he is 'a great person,' is not the answer. "He that is removing a garment on a cold day is as vinegar

### **Reasoning in a Way That Builds Self-Esteem**

One woman, whose marriage was shattered by her husband's infidelity, became depressed and suicidal. She later confided to a skilled counselor: "Without Raymond, I am nothing . . . I can't be happy without Raymond."

The counselor asked: "Have you found yourself happy when you are with Raymond?" Her reply: "No, we fight all the time and I feel worse." He continued: "You say you are nothing without Raymond. Before you met Raymond, did you feel you were nothing?"

"No, I felt I was somebody," blurted the depressed woman. The counselor then replied: "If you were somebody before you knew Raymond, why do you need him to be somebody now?" Discussing this case in his book "Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders," Dr. Aaron Beck stated: "In a subsequent interview, she stated that the point that really struck home was: How could she be 'nothing' without Raymond—when she had lived happily and was an adequate person before she ever knew him?" She overcame her depression.

upon alkali and as a singer with songs upon a gloomy heart," observes Proverbs 25:20. Such shallow efforts leave a depressed one emotionally cold and irritated, since they rarely address the reasons why that one feels worthless.

For instance, a depressed person may say: 'I feel that I'm just no good and that I'll never be worth anything.' You could in a nonchallenging manner ask: 'Can you tell me why you feel that way?' As he begins to explain, listen carefully. Such close attention assures him that what he is saying is worth while. As he opens up, you will be able to ask further questions to help him identify and correct the reasonings that can cause depression.\*

\* See "Winning the Fight Against Depression" in our October 22 issue of this year.

Use simple, direct questions, not in a scolding way, but in an effort to get the person to reason. (See box, page 13.) If you see that the person is doing things that are contributing to his problem, then in a non-accusing way, you could kindly ask: 'Is what you're doing up to this point helping you? Do you need to do something different?' Getting him to offer suggestions may restore some of his self-confidence.

A depressed person tends to ignore all his good qualities; so focus his attention on his personal assets and capabilities. She may have a knack with plants or be a good cook. He may have reared happy, stable children. Look for areas where the depressed one has succeeded and draw these to his attention. You may even have him write down some of these to review later. It helps also when that one can use his talent to help you.

For instance, Maria, who was an excellent seamstress, became severely depressed. One of her friends asked: "Would you like to help me pick out some fabric and a pattern? I want to make a suit." Maria offered to make it for her. "Oh, would you?" responded her friend. Later, she warmly thanked Maria for the suit and by mail told her of all the fine compliments she had received on it. "This increased my confidence and brightened my days," said Maria. "I later found out that she had gone through a depression and knew this task would be a big help. It was. She did more for me than I did for her."

So help depressed ones to develop a few specific short-term goals that are within their ability and circumstances. These may be simple household duties, a handicraft project, or even wholesome words. As one severely depressed woman said: "I would try each day to say something upbuilding to either my family or a friend." Reaching these small goals builds self-esteem.

### **When It's Your Spouse**

The first assumption of many whose mates become severely depressed is that they are somehow responsible for the other's low mood. This produces guilt that, in turn, creates friction. Yet, depression is not necessarily a sign that one has had a bad marriage.

After studying the lives of 40 depressed women, Myrna Weissman and Eugene Paykel in their book *The Depressed Woman* concluded: "Not all the depressed women had poor marriages prior to their illnesses. We found a number of marriages where free and easy communications, mutual sensitivity to each other's needs, . . . had existed prior to the depression. The *illness* put considerable strain on the relationship." —Italics ours.

Sometimes, however, though not always causing the depression, a strained or detached relationship with a mate can create an environment that makes depression much more likely. Some factors that induce depression are listed in the box on page 15. One husband whose depressed wife became suicidal admitted: "I was not serious about watching over her emotional and spiritual needs. To me she was a roommate rather than a wife. I was too busy helping others to give the reassurance and warmth she wanted and needed. I had to work at communication as well as sharing myself and my life with her." Are there areas that you might see in your family that need improvement? But what else will help a spouse?

□ **Patience, Patience, Patience!** Because a depressed person is in emotional pain, he or she may lash out at a mate. Victoria, who suffered major depression, confessed: "I hated myself and felt miserable. I'm sure that my husband and kids would have liked to lock me in the closet and throw away the key. Yet, I heard hun-

dreds of times, 'We love you; we know you don't mean it' or, 'You're just tired.'" Yes, realize that the person will say many things that he doesn't mean. Even Job, a man of faith, admitted that because of his vexation "my own words have been wild talk." (Job 6:3) Having the insight to know that you are not the target will enable you to respond with mild, kindly replies that will usually defuse the situation. (Proverbs 15:1; 19:11) Don't expect a spouse to get well overnight.

**□ Give Spiritual and Emotional Support.** Many depressed persons have found that the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses provided the spiritual encouragement to endure. (Hebrews 10:25) But Irene, whose depression lasted 18 months, admitted: "One evening before the meeting, I cried because I could hardly bear to think of facing everyone." She added: "But my husband encouraged me, and after saying a prayer, our family did go. Though I had to fight back tears during the meeting, I was so thankful to Jehovah God for giving me the strength to be there."

In addition to the spiritual help, a depressed mate needs the reassurance that he or she has your emotional support. Irene describes how her husband did this: "At home after the children were asleep, my husband and I would talk, and sometimes I would cry for close to an hour. His supportive understanding was so helpful. He prayed with me, listened to me, or gave me a shoulder to cry on—whatever I needed at the time." Since a Christian is concerned about pleasing his or her spouse, frequently reassure the depressed one that he or she is doing this.—1 Corinthians 7:33, 34.

**□ Provide Physical Help.** Household chores and care of the children may suddenly seem overwhelming to a depressed wife. The husband (as well as the children)

### Could Your Home Environment Cause Depression?

- Is self-esteem undermined by thoughtless comments such as 'Why aren't you a better wife?' 'I love you in spite of the kind of person you are,' or 'Why are you always so thoughtless?'
- Is guilt repeatedly provoked by making the spouse always feel responsible, regardless of the facts?
- Does the atmosphere in the home discourage the open show of emotions, making whoever displays such seem to be a weakling?
- Is one made to feel that he or she must be nearly perfect to measure up to the expectations of a spouse?
- Is open and direct communication blocked?

can help with cleaning and cooking. Try to avoid asking her what to do, as this can add pressure. "My husband, Bob, didn't let anyone pile anything on me at that time. He was sort of a buffer," explained Elizabeth, a mother who became severely depressed. "All I really had to concentrate on was just getting better." She added: "The doctor not only prescribed medication but also told me to exercise every day. Bob encouraged me to follow the doctor's orders. We walked every day." A well-planned outing with the depressed one also helps. All of this takes much initiative on the part of the husband.

### Help From Others

"A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress," states Proverbs 17:17. The genuineness of a friendship is evident during a time of distress, such as depression. How can a friend help?

"When I was depressed, a friend wrote to me several times and always included encouraging Scriptures," reported Maria. "I would read the letter over and over, crying as I read it. *Such letters were like gold to*



**One depressed person said that 'letters from a friend were like gold'**

me." Encouraging letters, cards, and phone calls are deeply appreciated. Warm visits also help. "If no one comes, it reinforces the idea that we're all alone," adds Elizabeth. "Pray with the person, tell some upbuilding experiences, even cook a meal and bring it over as a family. One friend made me a box of little odds and ends. Unwrapping each item provided such a pleasant surprise."

Of course, when it comes to things like running errands and doing housework for a

depressed person, be discerning. Listen to him. Don't insist on doing something if he does not want it done. At times, knowing that someone is doing work that he should be doing may add guilt. The depressed one may prefer that it be left undone.

The elders, or spiritual shepherds, in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses have also provided invaluable help. Irene explains: "I talked with a couple of the elders about my problem. (My husband came along for support.) This was a big step and helped me a great deal. I found that these men really do care." By carefully listening and by being well prepared, these men will be able to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls."<sup>\*</sup>—1 Thessalonians 5:14; Proverbs 12:18.

Knowing when to seek professional help is vital—in fact, it may save a life! At times the condition becomes so severe that arrangements should be made to see that the depressed one gets needed professional care. Don't count on the depressed one to decide. Often it means making the necessary appointment for him. You can reassure him by saying: 'I'm sure your illness is not serious, but it should be checked to relieve everyone's doubts. Though I love you very much, I'm not a doctor.' Be kind but firm!

Helping a friend or mate defeat depression is not an easy task, but perseverance may be lifesaving. Often, your caring makes the difference. For instance, Margaret, when she reached her deepest low, told her husband that she wanted to give up and die. He warmly said: "I'll help you not to give up." Overwhelmed to see his care, Margaret explained: "I knew then I could go on." She did and eventually defeated her depression.

\* See "An Educated Tongue—'To Encourage the Weary'" in the June 1, 1982, issue of our companion magazine, *The Watchtower*.

**Y**OU push the play button, sit back, and prepare to be entertained. But suddenly, the clear, distinct sound speeds up to a high-pitched whine. You leap up, but too late. The cassette tape that was giving you such pleasure is now hopelessly tangled in a horrible mish-mash. Your recording is ruined.

Incidents like this happen quite often, but there is something you can do that might avert them. At the same time, it will enable you to get the most out of your recordings. Here are a few tips for your cassette tapes:

■ Store your cassettes in their own boxes or albums. These will keep dust out and lock the reels of the cassette so that the tape does not loosen. This reduces the risk of the tape's tangling up in the mechanism of the recorder.

■ Never leave cassettes near a heat source or in the sun, such as the ledge in front of the rear window of your car.

■ Do not leave your cassettes near a loudspeaker, on a television, close to a telephone, or next to some other item having a magnetic field. They may be partially or even totally erased.

■ Regularly clean the magnetic heads, pinch rollers, capstans, and all the metallic parts in the path of the tape. You can usually reach these parts quite easily by opening the door of the tape compartment. Unless the instruction manual states otherwise, you may do this cleaning job with cotton swabs and isopropyl alcohol. Avoid pressing on the heads, since their position has

been carefully adjusted. Of course, you should not leave any cotton in the machine.

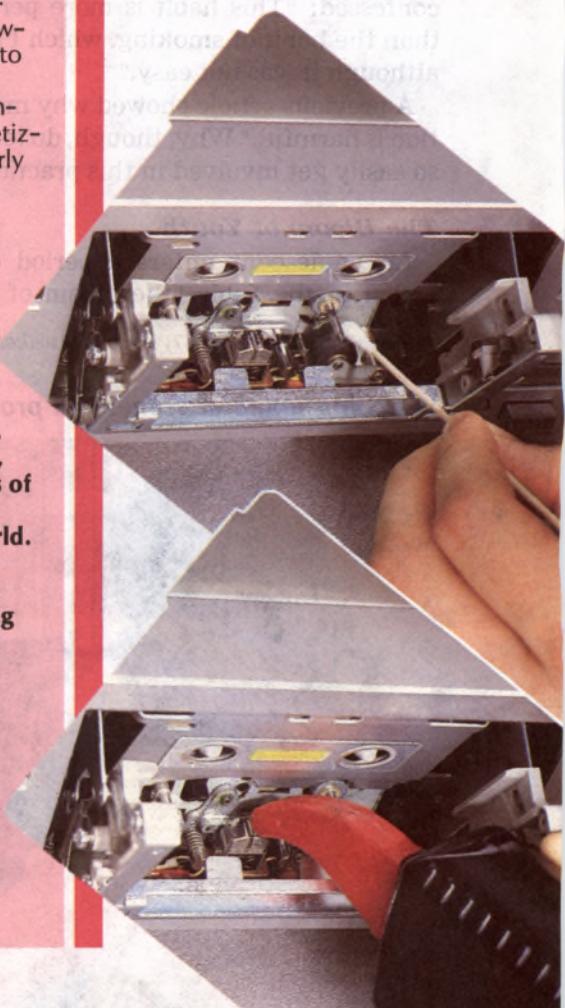
■ A demagnetizer is very useful in eliminating the residual magnetism that is detrimental to the performance of the recorder. But be sure to switch off the tape deck and place the cassettes a good distance away from the path of the demagnetizer. And be careful not to bump or scratch the heads. To make the job easier, there are ready-made cleaning or demagnetizing cassettes that you can purchase.

If these maintenance procedures seem too complicated to you, ask someone to help you. Cassette tapes and recorders are so common nowadays that it is not difficult to find a friend who can show you what to do. But remember, cleaning and demagnetizing your equipment regularly and storing your cassettes properly will enable you to enjoy your recordings for a long time.

**Currently, the Watchtower Society produces about 500,000 cassettes each month. These include recordings of Bible books, dramas with Bible themes, and musical arrangements of songs used by Jehovah's Witnesses all over the world. This modern means of communication has an important role in spreading the good news of the Kingdom earth wide.**  
—Matthew 24:14.

**Cleaning and demagnetizing: two easy operations to get the most out of your cassettes**

## Tips for Your Cassette Tapes



# Young People Ask. . .



## Why Is It So Hard to Avoid Masturbation?

**H**ABITS are like a soft bed—easy to get into but hard to get out of.” So goes one saying. And how true this is of masturbation! One man who practiced it from the age of 10 till he was 43 years old confessed: “This habit is more perturbing than the habit of smoking, which I gave up although it was not easy.”

A previous article showed why masturbation is harmful.\* Why, though, do teenagers so easily get involved in this practice?

### ***The Bloom of Youth***

An adolescent enters a period of time called in the Bible “the bloom of youth,”

\* See September 8, 1987, issue of *Awake!*

when sexual desires become strong. (1 Corinthians 7:36) Since the body is beginning to prepare itself for parenthood, powerful hormones are released that affect the reproductive organs. During this period, a youth becomes aware that these organs are capable of producing pleasurable sensations. At times, curiosity and the novelty of these new, exciting sensations lead some youths to experimenting by deliberately manipulating these organs for additional pleasure or to relieve a high level of arousal.

Because of the changes taking place within his or her body, a youth can become sexually excited even when he or she is not necessarily thinking about sex. Among

***Watching immoral scenes can provide “mental fuel” for masturbation***



boys, for instance, the tensions produced by various worries, fears, or frustrations can affect their sensitive nervous systems and cause sexual arousal. A buildup of semen may in turn produce a nocturnal emission (wet dream), usually accompanied by an erotic dream, or cause a boy to awaken sexually excited. Similarly, some young girls may find themselves stimulated accidentally. And a young woman may have a heightened sexual desire just before or after her menstrual period.

If you have experienced such unwanted arousal, there is nothing wrong with you. This is a normal response of a youthful body. Such sensations, even if very intense, are not the same as masturbation, since they are largely involuntary. And as you grow older and pass on through this "bloom of youth," the intensity of these new sensations will subside.

### **"Mental Fuel"**

At times, though, the arousal results from more than just the action of one's hormones. For instance, the Bible describes a young man who meets a promiscuous woman. She kisses him and says: "Do come, . . . let us enjoy each other with love expressions." Then what happens? "*All of a sudden* he is going after her, like a bull that comes even to the slaughter." (Proverbs 7: 7-22) Obviously, this youth's passions were aroused by what he saw, heard, and experienced—not merely by his hormones! Similarly, one young man admits: "The root of my whole problem with masturbation boiled down to what I put in my mind. I would watch TV programs that included immorality and in some cases watch programs on cable TV that would show nudity. Such scenes are so shocking that they stay with you. They would surface again in my

mind, providing the mental fuel needed to engage in masturbation."

So, often it is what one reads, watches, or listens to for entertainment, talks about, or meditates on, that makes it hard to avoid masturbation. Therefore, being careful about what you take into your mind is essential to break this habit. As a 25-year-old woman confessed: "I just couldn't seem to stop the habit. However, I used to read romance novels, and this contributed to the problem." Interestingly, it was not simply sexually unclean thoughts that led to her practice of masturbation. Indeed, her experience reveals perhaps the greatest reason why the habit is so hard to break.

### ***An Emotional "Tranquilizer"***

The young woman continues: "Usually I masturbated to release pressure, tension, or anxiety. That fleeting pleasure was like the drink the alcoholic takes to calm his nerves." She is by no means unique. Researchers Suzanne and Irving Sarnoff write: "For some people masturbation may become a habit to which they turn for solace whenever they are rebuffed or feel apprehensive about something. Others, however, may withdraw in this way only occasionally, when they are under the most acute emotional stress."

Dr. Sherwyn Woods adds: "A high proportion of masturbatory experiences are motivated less by erotic needs than by general anxiety, tension, and boredom for which it becomes a sought-for tranquilizer." So when one is upset, depressed, lonely, or under much stress this habit becomes a convenient "tranquilizer" to blot out one's troubles. (Compare Proverbs 31:6, 7.) Therefore, to avoid masturbation, you must recognize this as an immature way to deal with problems and be willing to . . .

### **'Put Away the Traits of a Babe'**

The apostle Paul wrote: "When I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe." (1 Corinthians 13:11) Masturbation is a childish way to react to problems. Once ingrained, these "traits of a babe" can persist in adulthood. As an example, at the age of nine, a boy on one occasion was confronted with a very difficult mathematical problem at school. He first resorted to masturbation to soothe his mind. After that he turned to the habit whenever he could when facing a knotty problem. Now, as an adult, he admits: "To this day, a very hard piece of brain work calls up in me the strongest impulse to masturbate. Without this, I can hardly work."

While the previous case may be extreme, there is real danger in using this "tranquillizer" to try to sidestep emotionally difficult situations. But rather than mentally escaping through masturbation, show "thinking ability" and attack the problem itself. (Proverbs 1:4) When problems and frustrations seem overwhelming, learn to "throw all your anxiety upon [God], because he cares for you" and understands your plight, even if you feel that no other human does. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) Allow God to help you "to be made mighty in the man [or woman] you are inside with power through his spirit." (Ephesians 3:16) Rather than weakly resorting to masturbation as a "tranquillizer," "carry on as men [and women, not as babes], grow mighty."—1 Corinthians 16:13.

The Sarnoffs in their book *Masturbation and Adult Sexuality* state: "Regardless of why or how people feel deficient, their decision to masturbate means they are *not* trying to repair the deficiency through purposeful social activity.... True, a person

could adopt the general policy of trying both to resolve his problems and to masturbate whenever he experiences their tensions. But the temptation to favor the latter 'solution' is very great, since you always carry your body around with you. So it is best to focus on figuring out and implementing real solutions to your problems." If one masturbates when faced with problems rather than working these out, the habit can become a real compulsion.

### **"A Very Strong Addiction"**

After struggling with masturbation for over 15 years from the time he was 11 years old, one man confessed: "It is a very strong addiction—it is not something to take lightly. It can be just as habit forming as any drug or alcoholic beverage." The book *Your Growing Child* by Penelope Leach explains: "The pleasure and relaxation he can get from masturbation has become compulsive because other aspects of his life are intolerable to him. Like a true addict, he must masturbate more and more, and by doing so he increasingly cuts himself off from alternative pleasures."

The urge to resort to masturbation for sheer pleasure when things are not going well in one's life can easily cause one to become a 'senseless slave to various desires and pleasures.' (Titus 3:3) Yet, the apostle Paul states: "I will not let myself be brought under authority by anything." (1 Corinthians 6:12) He was not going to let his desires become like a harsh master. On the contrary, Paul wrote: "I pummel my body [fleshly desires] and lead it as a slave." (1 Corinthians 9:27) He got tough with himself! A similar effort will enable *anyone* to break free from masturbation—regardless of how hard that is to do.\*

\* A future article will discuss just how a person can fight to get free from this habit.

**I**T WAS October 10, 1986. I was getting ready to close my cosmetics shop in San Salvador to return home for the noon meal. Suddenly, the entire five-story Rubén Darío Building rumbled furiously.

Later, I learned it was the worst earthquake in El Salvador's history —7.5 on the Richter scale. It killed 1,200 persons, about 400 in the Rubén Darío Building alone, and left 300,000 homeless. President Duarte said it caused 'more losses than the seven years of civil war.'

When the quake struck, I was hit on the head and knocked out. When I came to, I was lying face down, in total darkness. People were calling out in pain and fear: "Lord, save me!" "Why did you bring down this punishment on us?" "Help me!"

I touched my face. Thankfully, I wasn't cut, but my feet were trapped under the debris. The air was so thick I could hardly breathe. Nearby I heard a voice. The building office clerk, Mr. Quijano, was calling out to me, "You're the lady from the cosmetics stand! Are you all right?"

"Yes, but my feet are trapped," I answered. "How are you?"

"I think my arms and legs are broken—I can't move. Help me, please."

I stretched out my hands and arms as far as I could but only felt broken glass. "I'm sorry, I can't do anything. My feet are trapped."

The lack of oxygen was oppressive, and I prayed to God: "Please help me!" I recalled his words to Joshua: 'Be courageous and strong, for Jehovah your God is with you.'



# FOUR HUNDRED DIED, **I SURVIVED**

## The Rubén Darío Building

The five-story Rubén Darío Building, located in the center of downtown San Salvador, housed coffee shops, barber and beauty shops, dental offices and laboratories, shoe stores, and business offices. Closely pressed around the outside of the building was a group of vendors selling everything from snacks to lottery tickets. Television news reported that as many as 400 persons died inside, either crushed to death, asphyxiated, or burned; several of Jehovah's Witnesses were among them. At least 92 of the trapped victims were rescued alive, although some of these died afterward from injuries sustained within the building.

(Joshua 1:9) But I *must* do my part, I reminded myself.

After that I began to feel stronger and greatly encouraged. I decided I had to get my feet free before they became numb and swollen. I began trying to wriggle one of my feet loose. Meanwhile, the ground continued to tremble, and the building creaked and heaved. My shop had been on the first floor.

Finally, my right foot was free. I thanked Jehovah aloud for this. Mr. Quijano, his breathing now labored, must have heard. He said: "Keep praying to Jehovah, and pray for me too, please!"

My feet felt cold and moist. 'I'm bleeding!' I thought. When I touched the lower part of my left leg, I realized that the sticky, moist substance I felt was either shampoo or moisturizing lotion from the showcase. Now lubricated, my left foot slipped out of its trap.

"Has Jehovah helped you?" Mr. Quijano asked.

"Yes!" I answered. "My feet are free now."

"Please help me!" he cried.

I used all my might to inch forward to Mr. Quijano. With every movement I cut myself with broken glass. Then I felt a mass of twisted metal between us.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Quijano. I can't come any closer."

"That's all right," he answered. "Let's just stay put."

From nearby came voices of at least two men and a young boy. These were people from the second floor, now less than a meter above. I was able to stick my head up through a gap but immediately reeled back. The atmosphere was thick with a fine dust that left me gasping for air. Suddenly, I felt exhausted and wanted only to sleep.

I awoke to an eerie silence. 'Has everyone been rescued, or have they all died?' was my first thought. I quickly called out to Mr. Quijano three times, but he only groaned softly. I continued to pray.

After a while I heard a picking sound. "Mr. Quijano," I cried out, "God has sent someone to save us! They'll be here soon,

## In Our Next Issue

● *Christmas Giving—A Time of Joy or Depression?*

● *Watch Out! Spies About!*

● *I Sought a Simpler Life Through Drugs*

and I'll tell them to get you out!" His only response was a faint moan and then silence.

Not long afterward, a voice called from the dark recesses ahead of me, "Is there anyone there?"

"Yes, yes!" I cried.

"How many?"

"There are several of us, some badly injured," I answered. More picking. Then, "Do you see a light?"

"Yes!" I shouted back, "I see the light!" Our rescuers kept picking at the opening, and soon the light almost illuminated the area I was lying in.

"Can you see a way out following the light?" the rescuers called. "Yes, I'll try!" I answered.

I shouted to the others on the second floor: "Over here, try to get yourselves over here! We can get out! Send the boy first!"

I began to drag myself forward over pieces of twisted iron, brick, glass, and concrete. 'I must keep moving ahead,' I thought. 'I can't stay here.' I was close enough to the opening to reach a hose with an oxygen mask attached that was passed through the hole. I continued to inch along until I reached the narrow opening.

The rescuers pulled me out, one arm first, then the rest of my body. My clothing was torn, my body scraped. "How do you feel?" they asked. "Happy," I answered.

When I reached the street, there was a maze of people, some assisting injured ones, some digging in the ruins of the building. Anguished onlookers converged on me, wanting to know in what part of the building I had been.

"Have you seen my wife?" "Have you seen my father?" "Did you see my sister?" they asked desperately. I could only an-



**The Rubén  
Darío Building  
before and after  
the quake  
struck.**  
**Antonieta de  
Urbina was  
rescued alive  
early in the  
evening of the  
first day of  
the quake**



swer: "There are many more trapped and alive down there, so keep trying."

Others were rescued from the same opening as I, some severely injured. Many others, though, died from asphyxiation. On the street just outside the building was a pitiful sight—a row of corpses. Mr. Quijano and the young boy from the second floor were among these unfortunate ones.  
—As told by Antonieta de Urbina.



# Why Giraffes Do Not Have Blood-Pressure Problems!

**M**R. Giraffe is the tallest animal on earth! His circulatory system is a marvel. Why? Because his heart pumps blood way up his long neck, and that takes a lot of pressure. Yet, when he lowers his neck, the blood vessels in his brain and eyes do not burst. "Why does the high pressure not rupture those delicate vessels or at least force leakage from them?" asked a scientific journal.

The answer appears to be due, in part, to a marvelous network of fine blood vessels appropriately called the "wonderful net." Blood from the neck arteries passes through this "wonderful net" before reaching the brain. This protects the brain from any sudden surge of blood.

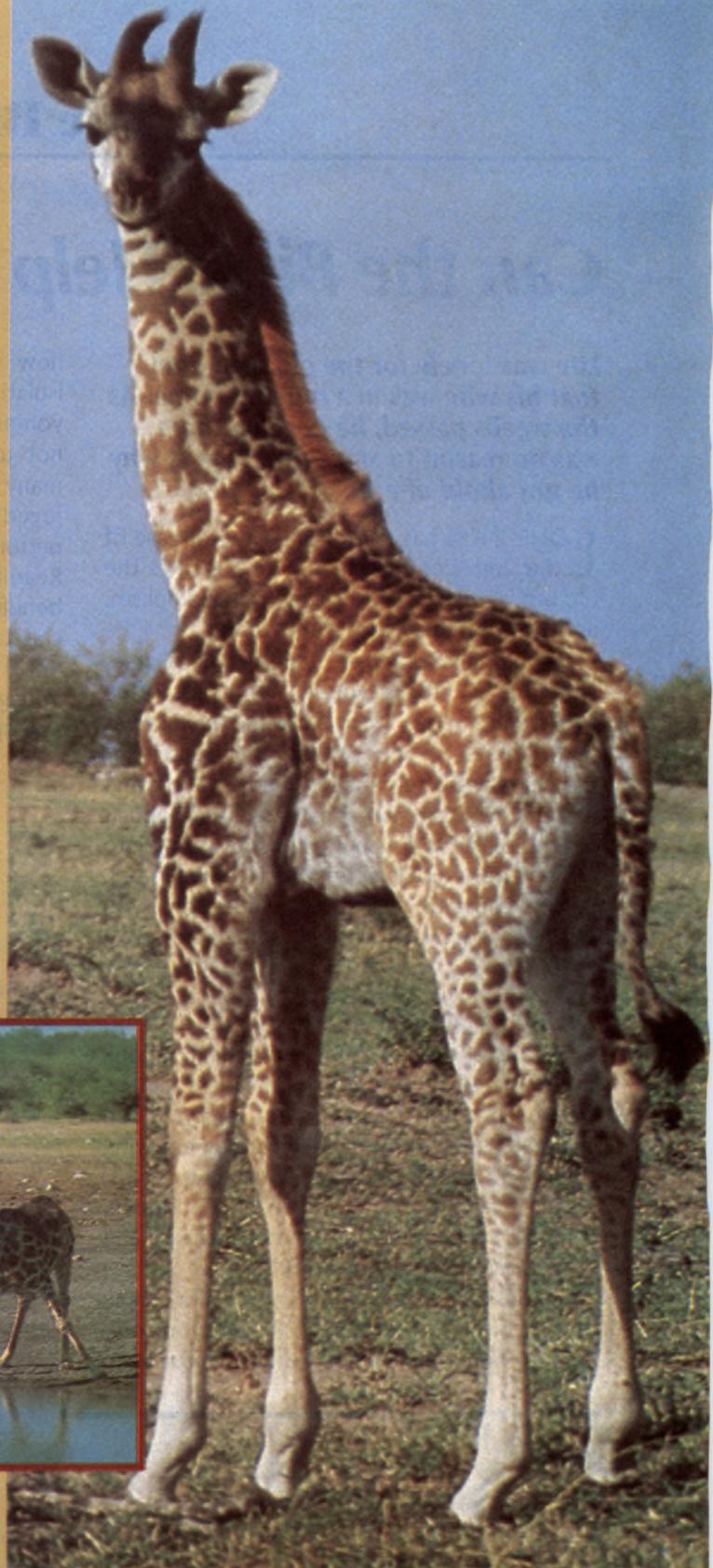
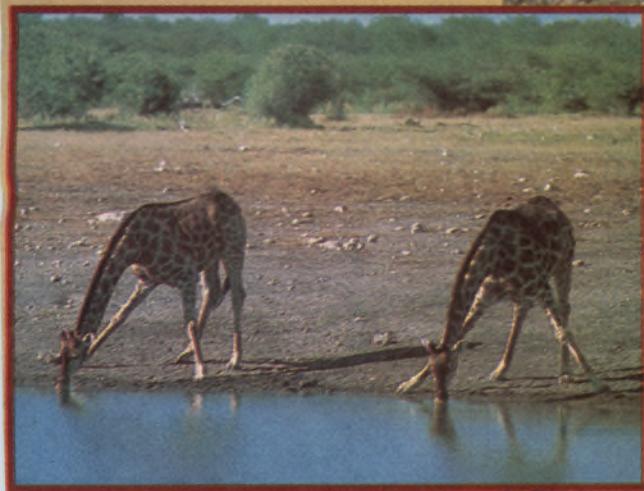
To watch these graceful creatures stoop for a drink is fascinating. For their heads to reach the water, they must first spread or bend their front legs. If, while in this awkward position, a giraffe senses danger, it can quickly straighten up and raise its head. Such action should cause giddiness due to a sudden lowering of blood pressure. Yet, in less than two seconds, Mr. Giraffe can gallop away. An article in the *South African Journal of Science* attributed this to "the phenomenon of blood flow regulation in the giraffe head" and claimed that more research was needed to understand it.

Another phenomenon, which has long puzzled scientists, concerns the giraffe's legs. "The effect of gravity," states *Scientific American*, "should be expected to make the blood pressure in the legs so high that it would force fluid out of the capillaries." But there is no evidence of this. Giraffes do not suffer from varicose veins and edema (tissue swelling). Why is this?

Not too long ago, an international team of scientists took a fresh look at

the giraffe and discovered more details about its amazing design. They measured the arteries and found that those traveling from the heart down the legs increased in diameter and in wall thickness. This, according to the *South African Panorama*, prevents the "accumulation of blood in the vessels and varicose veins . . . in the giraffe's legs. Moreover, the thickened walls of the arteries and the thick, muscular skin around the giraffe's legs help it to sustain the pressure."

Africa is the only continent where giraffes still live in the wild. If you visit a game park there, you might observe these gentle giants galloping gracefully across grasslands or quietly nibbling leaves from treetops. If so, remember Mr. Giraffe's amazing system of blood circulation that reaches 18 feet above the ground. And if you have the rare pleasure of watching Mr. Giraffe stoop for a drink, remember that man is still trying to unravel his secret of coping with extreme changes of gravity. Why do giraffes not suffer from high or low blood pressure? Only Jehovah God their Maker knows! They are his marvelously designed creatures.—Job 37: 14, 16.



# Can the Bible Help the Lonely?

***Life was lonely for the old man now that his wife was in a nursing home. As the weeks passed, he decided there was no reason to stay alive. That is why he got ahold of a gun . . .***

**L**ONELINESS has been called "the disease of the 20th century." It not only strikes the old but is the cause of drug abuse, alcoholism, and even suicide among the young.

Yes, loneliness is a modern-day plague. Attempts to fill the void of loneliness often prove vain. Some try to surround themselves with "friends"—only to find that such relationships are often shallow and unsatisfying. Others rush into marriages. Observed popular psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers: "Rushing into a marriage is not the answer [to loneliness]. Before you can enjoy any relationship, you need to get more insights into your own problems."

### ***The Right Outlook***

The Bible, though, offers a practical outlook on loneliness. Admittedly, loneliness can be painful, but being alone is not always a bad thing. Jesus Christ is spoken of as enjoying brief periods of solitude. (Matthew 14:13) Rather than becoming lonely or withdrawn, he used such occasions for needed rest and prayer.—Mark 6:31; Luke 9:18.

The lesson? If you find yourself alone, you do not have to feel lonely! Really, your *outlook* on being alone is more of a factor as to

how you feel than is the fact of physical isolation. So how do you use your time when you are alone? Do you simply kill time? Why not use such time productively? There are many worthwhile activities that can be enjoyed alone, such as listening to music or performing long-delayed household chores. Reading the Word of God can be particularly beneficial. It is "alive and exerts power" and can take our minds off ourselves. (Hebrews 4:12) Used properly, moments alone can help you get recharged—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.



## **Good Relations With Others**

There are times, though, when you *want* and *need* the company of others. Not surprisingly, then, the Bible also has advice on cultivating satisfying relationships with other people. Proverbs 18:24, for example, says: "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." It is therefore not always necessary to have a large circle of friends in order to quell loneliness. You can nurture a few close friendships.

Lonely people, though, often find it hard to make friends. But observes a Canadian family counselor: "Lonely people, particularly those in their 20's, expect a lot, but don't want to give anything." The Bible similarly notes that 'one isolating himself seeks his own selfish longing.'—Proverbs 18:1.

So if you suffer from loneliness, you may need to demonstrate more interest in others. When meeting potential new friends, do you show an interest in *their* concerns or do you steer the conversation toward yourself? To break the cycle of loneliness, one must be a giver.

At Philippians 2:4 the apostle Paul urges us to 'keep an eye, not in personal interest upon just our own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.' How can that advice cure loneliness? In the original Bible language, the verb rendered "keeping an eye" implies making a 'mental consideration' or 'surveying' for the purpose of pinpointing the most favorable time to act. So look around and see who needs help, who needs a friend. Once you have spotted such a person—act! Many people look out only for themselves; everyone else comes last, if at all. The Bible recommends the opposite: Look out for others first.

Thus, in order to have friends, you must first *act as a friend!* The Bible says: "Practice

giving, and people will give to you." (Luke 6:38) Besides, "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

## **"I Am Not Alone"**

Human relationships, however, can never entirely satisfy all our needs. This is because man was created with a need to be close to his Creator. (Compare Matthew 5:3.) A friendship with God can prove secure, even when human friendships fail. Jesus Christ once said to his disciples: "Look! The hour is coming, indeed, it has come, when you will be scattered each one to his own house and you will leave me alone." How devastating! But Jesus could say: "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."—John 16:32.

A friendship with God is thus the best cure for loneliness. So take the time to get to know him. "Taste and see that Jehovah is good" by beginning a study of the Bible. (Psalm 34:8; John 17:3) But you need not do so alone.

God has taken out "a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) Over three million people today proudly bear that name as Jehovah's Witnesses. They are pleased to help you learn about this God. Remember the lonely old man mentioned at the outset? Before he could kill himself, Jehovah's Witnesses called on him. They helped him appreciate that there was a living God who *cared about him*. (1 Peter 5:7) Despair gave way to joy as he began a study of the Bible.

Interestingly, associating with true Christians also opens up opportunities to make new friends. Because such friendships are based on a mutual love of God, these are bound to be lasting, enduring relationships. So seek out Jehovah's people. With their help and the help of God's Word, you can learn to dispel the pangs of loneliness.—Matthew 12:48-50; John 15:14.

# From Our Readers

## Our Dying Forests

I was very pleased to see that you had reserved so much space for discussing the forest and the dangers it faces. (June 22, 1987) Our forests can be saved only if as many citizens as possible realize the danger and do their part in combating it. The purpose of our foundation is to instruct the population as to just how severely our forests are endangered and to tell them what each individual can do.—Managing Director, Endangered Forests Foundation.

C. A., Federal Republic of Germany

## Getting Along With Brothers and Sisters

I am very grateful for the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Is It So Hard to Get Along With My Brother and Sister?" (July 22, 1987) I live in a family of nine, and naturally we share rooms. I'm 12, and the brother I share with is 5. I used to find it hard to put up with him dumping toys and clothes on my side of the room. Your article helped me to understand him better. We still argue, but we've talked and realize that it takes two to make a friendship. We are both untidy kids, and we tend to blame each other. But now I look for his advantage and have found that it's easy to overcome frictions if you stick by Bible principles.

E. H., England

## College Education

Very disappointed in your printing the letter on your "From Our Readers" page

on college education. (August 22, 1987) Even you must admit that the article "College Education—A Preparation for What?" (January 8, 1987) was unfair and biased, and that finally the decision to go to college or not must be made on a personal, responsible, individual basis. I am sure you received letters disagreeing with that article. I know of many who read it and thought it was a narrow and unfair viewpoint, but you never printed a word of differing opinion. Now, six months later, a letter equally narrow agrees with the article and is printed.

T. B., U.S.C., United States

*Actually, until your letter arrived, no letters disagreeing with the item on college education were brought to our attention. We agree that the question of whether to get a college education or not is a personal and individual matter. Nevertheless, we felt that the half-page item, based on comments from a respected news columnist, presented some very discerning and sobering thoughts. As valuable as some knowledge acquired in college can be, it cannot be equated with wisdom gained through experience. The item questioned the practical value of some things that are learned in college and gave a realistic view of the possibility of college students' realizing their hopes for the future. Also, caution was given against seeking materialistic goals. Obviously, the columnist quoted did not cover all aspects of the subject, but we think that in a few choice words, he made some very valid points that are worth serious consideration.—ED.*

# Watching the World

## Tobacco-Using Toddlers

The addiction to smokeless tobacco by many students in junior and senior high school has long been known by researchers. Until recently, however, no information was available on the tobacco habits of elementary school students and preschoolers. A survey of 5,000 children by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control has revealed that children as young as three years of age are addicted to tobacco products. Seventeen percent of the five-year-old girls surveyed and 10 percent of the boys within the same age bracket were found to have been using products like snuff for a year or more. According to *Health Letter*, published in Washington, D.C., "extensive advertising and distribution of free samples have made smokeless tobacco products" attractive and available to young users, many of whom cannot read warning labels required on all packaging. Smaller children have likely been introduced to such products by friends, older siblings, or even their parents.

## Unemployed Graduates

"A university degree does not guarantee a job." That was the conclusion drawn from a survey of the 1985 spring graduates from more than 15 universities in Ontario, Canada. These graduates

had a 7.3-percent unemployment rate, essentially the same as the rest of the labor force in the province. They fared only slightly better than other workers in the same 20- to 24-year age group, whose rate of unemployment was 10.6 percent. Additionally, the survey showed that a degree is also no guarantee of equal pay for work.

## Mountain Gorillas in Peril

"Unless we come to the aid of the mountain gorillas now," warns the WWF (World Wildlife Fund), "these defenseless crea-



tures may actually be wiped out within the very century they were discovered." Why? Miners and loggers, reports the WWF, continue to destroy the Impenetrable Forest of southwestern Uganda—home of almost one third of all mountain gorillas in the world. Furthermore, poachers are killing gorillas to supply the black market in live infants "and grotesque products like gorilla-hand paperweights." During the last 20 years,

almost half the entire mountain gorilla population has disappeared. Today, only about 400 of these shy and gentle African apes survive in the wild.

## Alcohol Use Costly

Although some politicians believe that taxation on the sale of alcoholic products provides a net gain in government revenue, information now available argues otherwise. Barbara Coulter of the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, Canada, says that in Canada in one year "alcohol caused an extra \$2-billion in health-care costs, . . . raised social welfare costs by \$1.4-billion, [and] cost an extra \$652-million in law enforcement." It also "cut productivity on the job by an estimated \$1.2-billion," an aspect of costs not to be overlooked. Is all of that cost covered by alcohol tax revenues? In just the province of Ontario, costs (\$1.6 billion) outstripped revenues (\$678 million) by almost \$1 billion in a recent year.

## Solution Found

In Bethlehem, the annual general cleaning of the Church of the Nativity, which is said to stand over the site of Jesus' birth, has finally been accomplished peacefully. In past years, fistfights and

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PS Form 3529, July 1984

violent arguments erupted between the rival groups of priests, as the right to clean is regarded as a sign of ownership. How was it resolved? The press service of the World Council of Churches reports: "Following delicate negotiations by Israeli officials that lasted late into the night the two major parties in the dispute—Greek (Eastern Orthodox) and Armenian (Oriental Orthodox) agreed to leave a disputed section high above the entrance to the Grotto of the Nativity uncleared by either side."

## Name Choice

A new law on family names went into effect in Finland at the beginning of 1986. A wife was allowed to keep her maiden name when marrying, or both could adopt the wife's surname. The results? According to the Population Register Center, almost 24,000 of the 26,000 couples wed last year chose the traditional way of using the husband's last name. In almost 1,950 marriages, each partner kept his or her own surname. Only 116 couples chose

the wife's maiden name as their common name.

## "Internal Jogging"

"Mirth and laughter affect most of the major physical systems of the body," claims Dr. William Fry, an authority on the physiology of laughter. He told the New York



Daily News that the muscle activity involved in laughing is the same as in exercising. Fry labeled laughing "internal jogging" that is beneficial even when faked. He explained that it doubles the heart rate for three to five minutes and works out the chest, neck, face, shoulder, abdomen, and scalp muscles. Fry claims that a hearty laugh reduces muscle tension and helps the body get rid of greater amounts of accumulated carbon

dioxide. Other beneficial side effects are said to include the stimulation of the nervous system, the deadening of pain through the secretion of endorphins (the body's natural analgesics), and the sharpening of the mental processes. "You can get really a good workout from it," says Fry.

## Coffee the Culprit?

The claim that coffee drinking increases the chances of getting heart disease is being challenged by Dr. Katsuhiko Yano of the Honolulu Heart Program. The research involved a 15-year study of 7,194 Japanese men, 6,055 of whom were coffee drinkers. According to Yano, increased coffee intake should have raised the risk of heart trouble. However, researchers in the program found that when other risk factors, such as tobacco smoking, were taken into consideration, the link between heart disorders and coffee consumption disappeared. The researchers conclude that heart disease among some coffee lovers could very well be the result of their tobacco use, not their coffee drinking.

**S**OME thought it was a mild earthquake! But no, it was the effect of the wind plus the weight and movement of an estimated 250,000 people who packed the deck of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge for its 50th anniversary on May 24, 1987. Another 500,000 crowded the bridge approaches. Engineers hastily calculated that the bridge could support the weight.

With a main span of 4,200 feet, the Golden Gate was the world's longest suspension bridge at its completion in 1937. The tallest ships in the world can pass safely under the elevated highway arching 19 stories above the water.

A total of 80,000 miles of wire compose the two cables from which the bridge is suspended. Each one is 3 feet in diameter and 7,650 feet long, and has an estimated ultimate tensile strength of 200 million pounds.

Because of the excellent design and continuing maintenance, it is estimated that the bridge will have a life of 200 years.



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