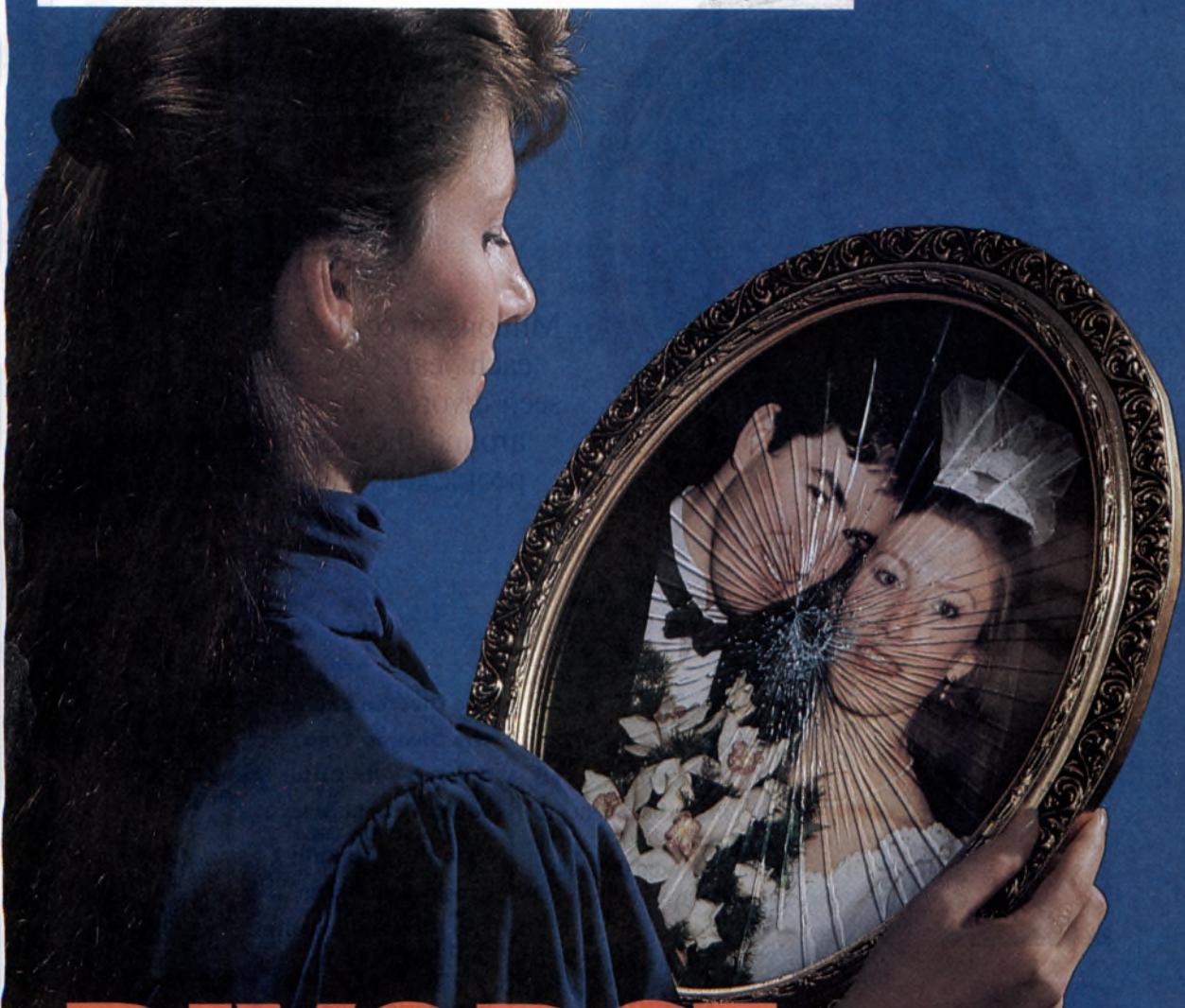


Awake!

February 8, 1992



DIVORCE

The Human Cost



Divorce —The Human Cost 3-10

Millions of couples get divorced each year. Our generation has seen divorce rates spiral upward around the world. What lures people into divorce, and what price do they pay?



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The Divorce Explosion



DIVORCE JEWELRY." That unusual headline appeared recently in a popular women's magazine. The article urged: "So your marriage has exploded and you're feeling burned. Why not melt down those memories still cluttering your jewelry box." For a fee a local jeweler lets divorced people turn his blowtorch onto their engagement and wedding rings. He then molds their trinkets into shapes that won't remind them of their failed marriages.

These days, marriage, like pens, plates, diapers, and razors, seems to be more popular in disposable form. "When you tire of it, just junk it"—so goes the prevailing attitude.

"Marriage as such doesn't exist any more," said Lorenz Wachinger, a popular author,

psychologist, and therapist in Munich, Germany. An overstatement? Perhaps; but it is not hard to see why he might feel that way. According to the newspaper *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, some 130,000 marriages break up in Germany every year. But divorce is hardly unique to Germany.

A Global Phenomenon

A similar trend is emerging in countries all over the world. The United States, for example, might well be called the divorce capital of the world. The annual divorce rate is over 1,160,000, or nearly half the number of weddings. That works out to over two divorces every minute of every day!

When viewed against the broad backdrop

of history, these numbers amount to a divorce explosion. Just a century ago, there was only 1 divorce for every 18 marriages in the United States. Except for a sudden surge after World War II, the rate increased only gradually until the 1960's. Then, in just 25 years, it tripled!

In the mid-1980's (the most recent years for which reliable statistics are available), countries around the world saw such peaks in divorce rates as these: Soviet Union, 940,000 a year; Japan, 178,000; United Kingdom, 159,000; France, 107,000; Canada, 61,000; Australia, 43,000. Even in places where religion and laws have kept the divorce rate low, the winds of change are blowing. For instance, in Hong Kong there is still only 1 divorce for every 17 marriages; but the number of divorces there doubled between 1981 and 1987. *India Today* magazine reported that the stigma attached to divorce is fading among India's middle class. New courts have been created in various Indian states to cope with an increase in divorce cases of from 100 percent to 328 percent in a single decade.

Of course, statistics cannot begin to convey the heartbreak behind these vast numbers. Sadly, divorce touches nearly all of us simply because marriage is universal. Likely, either we are married or we are the product of married parents, or we are close to married people. So even if divorce hasn't hurt us yet, the threat of it may still alarm us.

What is behind all these divorces? Political changes may be part of the answer. In many countries the walls of State prohibition against divorce—long supported by influential religious groups—have collapsed in recent years. For instance, in the 1980's, Argentina declared unconstitutional a law that allowed no legal divorce. Spain and Italy likewise instituted legal divorce. But such changes in law are not always accompanied by a leap in divorce rates.

So something much deeper than the legal system must be at work behind the global divorce epidemic. Author Joseph Epstein touched on it when he wrote that not long ago, "to have been divorced was to have had legally certified, as it were, one's own lack of character." But today, he writes, "in some circles, not to have gone through a divorce seems more exceptional than having gone through one; here living out one's days within the confines of a single marriage might even be thought to show an insufficiency of imagination."—*Divorced in America*.

In other words, the fundamental attitudes that people hold toward marriage have changed. Respect and reverence for an institution long held sacred is eroding. So around the world, divorce is becoming more acceptable. Why? What could make people accept something that was once widely frowned upon? Could it be that divorce is not so bad after all?

Awake!

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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This is part of a worldwide Bible educational work that is supported by voluntary donations.**

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

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

The Divorce Trap

ANDREW and Ann made a wonderful couple. Ann was the quieter and more thoughtful of the two, but her cheerful calm seemed the ideal counterpoint to Andrew's more outgoing personality, his irrepressible energy and humor. Her eyes lighted up in his presence. And anyone could see that he doted on her.

After seven years, though, their marriage began to unravel. Andrew got a new job that consumed much of his time. Ann grew to resent his new preoccupation with work and his frequent late nights. She tried "filling all the empty space," as she put it, by immersing herself in her own career. But before long Andrew was coming home with alcohol on his breath, explaining that he'd been out with business associates. His drinking problem worsened, and Ann finally moved out of their apartment. Andrew spiraled down into depression. Within months, they were divorced.

To many this story may sound much too familiar. As we have seen, divorce rates have soared all over the world. And to be sure, some divorces are inevitable or necessary. The Bible does not categorically forbid divorce, as many assume. Its standards are fair and reasonable, allowing divorce on the grounds of adultery (Matthew 19:9); its principles also allow for

marital separation under certain extreme circumstances, such as physical abuse.* (See Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11.) But these were not the principles behind the divorce of Andrew and Ann.

Andrew and Ann were Christians and had once revered marriage as sacred. But like all of us, they live in a world that preaches a very different ethic—that marriage is disposable and divorce a means of disposal. Every year this kind of thinking influences thousands of couples to divorce for reasons that are less than solid, less than Scriptural. And many come to realize—too late—that their "modern," "enlightened" attitude toward divorce has lured them into a trap.

Trap? 'A rather dire word,' some might say. You might feel, as so many do today, that divorce is simply a civilized way to get out of a miserable marriage. But are you aware of the darker side of divorce? And have you seen how subtly the world of today can shape our notions about divorce—without our realizing it?

The Lure of Self-Fulfillment

With Andrew and Ann, part of the bait that lured them into divorce was the

* See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 1989, pages 8-9; May 15, 1988, pages 4-7; November 1, 1988, pages 22-3.

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seductive promise of self-fulfillment through a successful career. Their marriage fell victim to the 'career first' mentality. It was hardly the first such victim. The journal *Family Relations* noted back in 1983: "Individual self-fulfillment has become the watchword. Consequently, close ties to most family members are quickly cut and even the marriage bond is under increasing pressure." Andrew was very impressed with his new job and its promise of advancement. He took on extra projects and socialized with his colleagues after hours in order to gain more respect and acceptance. Meanwhile, Ann's career dazzled her with visions of success through further education.

Chasing the lure of success had a two-fold effect. First, it meant that Andrew and Ann had less time for each other. As Ann put it: "We were being pulled in different directions. So we didn't have our ten o'clock conferences at night as we used to, sitting down and talking things out. He was getting ready for his next day at work, and so was I. Communication stopped."

The second effect was spiritual. By putting their careers first, they were shifting their relationship with God into the background just when they needed him the most. A concerted program of applying Bible principles could have helped Andrew to tackle his drinking problem and given Ann the strength to stick with her husband through this difficult ordeal.

So instead of working on their marriage problems, they began to see divorce as a viable option, perhaps even as a release from all the pressure. After the divorce, their guilt and shame made them drop their spiritual life altogether. They no longer professed to be Christians.

The "Experts" Help to Bait the Trap

Many couples, when faced with marital problems, turn to marriage counselors and

therapists or to books written by such authorities. But sadly, some modern marriage "experts" have proved more adept at promoting divorce than at preserving marriage. In recent decades "expert" opinions against marriage have swarmed like hungry locusts.

For instance, psychotherapists Susan Gettleman and Janet Markowitz lament in *The Courage to Divorce*: "The irrational belief persists that divorced people have deviated from some benign entity called 'normal family life.'" They rail at the "legal barriers and moral values" against divorce that are "based on religious principles that originated centuries ago." Divorce, they argue, will be around until the "gradual obsolescence of marriage" makes divorce "unnecessary." They recommend their book to lawyers, judges—and ministers!

'Divorce isn't bad. Divorce is liberating. The prevalence of divorce is not a sign that something is wrong with society; it's a sign that something is wrong with the institution of marriage.' More than a few "experts" have taught that viewpoint, especially during the heyday of the sexual revolution of the 1960's and 1970's. More recently, some pop psychologists and anthropologists have even speculated that man is "programmed"—by evolution, of all things—to switch mates every few years. In other words, extramarital affairs and divorces are only natural.

It is hard to imagine how many marriages have been damaged by such notions. But many other experts encourage divorce in more subtle ways. As Diane Medved researched her book *The Case Against Divorce*, she found some 50 books in her local library that if they did not promote divorce outright, at least served to 'cheer readers on through divorce.' She warns: "These books ease you like silk into the singles game and tout your 'new freedom' as if it . . . is the ultimate means toward fulfillment."

Other Influences

Of course, there are many other divorce-promoting influences besides misguided "experts." The media—TV, movies, magazines, romance novels—often add up to an ongoing storm of propaganda against marriage. At times the media purvey the message that endless excitement, titillation, and fulfillment lie outside the boring humdrum of married life and that at the end of this glittering rainbow of singleness and freedom waits another mate, vastly superior to the one at home.

Simply being skeptical of such subversive ideas may not be a protection against them. As Medved puts it: "You see a film, and even in your sophistication you are subject to its power. You can't avoid it—the plot and the interaction are rigged to draw sympathy to the main character (the philandering husband?) and antipathy to the villain (the shrewish wife?). . . . You personally may not condone what you see, but the mere knowledge that others do, reinforced in myriad other ways throughout our culture, rips your own resolve and certainty."

The conduct of our fellow humans does influence us. If that is true of media messages, how much more so of the friends we choose! Wisely, the Bible warns: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) A good marriage is one of the most useful of habits. We can spoil it if we befriend

**Some marriage "experts"
are more adept at
promoting divorce than at
preserving marriage**

those who do not respect the institution. Many couples have found themselves eased down the road to divorce because they confided their marital problems to such "friends"—sometimes even to those who themselves had chosen divorce without real justification.

Others prematurely seek legal advice when their marriage is under strain. They forget that the legal system in many lands is a well-oiled machine *designed to facilitate* divorce. After all, lawyers profit from handling divorces, not reconciliations.

Still, you might wonder, 'If all those lawyers, therapists, media personalities, and even friends and acquaintances have adopted and effectively promote a more lenient attitude toward divorce, might there not be something to what they say? Could so many people be wrong about something so important? A look at some of the aftereffects of divorce will help us see the answer.'



Divorce Its Bitter Harvest

IT IS neither the lawyers nor the friends nor the media nor the "experts" who have to pay the price of divorce. It is the divorcing couples—and their children—who pay the final bill.* Far from being a liberating experience, divorce may come at a staggeringly high price.

In *The Case Against Divorce*, Diane Medved admits that she originally intended to write a book that would be "morally neutral" toward divorce. She felt compelled, though, to change her mind. Why? She writes: "Quite simply, I discovered in my research that the process and aftermath of divorce is so pervasively disastrous—to body, mind, and spirit—that in an overwhelming number of cases, the 'cure' that it brings is surely worse than the marriage's 'disease.'"

Ann, mentioned in the previous article, concurs: "I thought divorce would be a release. I thought if I could just get out of this marriage, then I'd be OK. But before the divorce, at least my pain made me feel I was alive. After I got divorced, I didn't even feel alive. There was such a void that I felt nonexistent. It was just terrible. I can't describe how empty I felt." After divorce, vague promises of freedom and excitement evaporate into the grim realities of day-to-day living and survival.

The hard truth is, even when there are legitimate grounds for divorce, its consequences can be painful and long lasting. So anyone contemplating such a drastic move

would be wise to heed Jesus' counsel first: 'Count the cost.' (Luke 14:28) Specifically, what are some of the costs, some of the painful aftereffects of divorce?

Emotional and Moral Effects

A recent study published in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* indicated that divorce is linked to unhappiness and depression. The divorced were more likely to be depressed, and those who had divorced more than once were likely to be depressed more frequently. Sociologist Lenore Weitzman, in her book *The Divorce Revolution*, notes that divorced and separated people have the highest rates of admission to psychiatric facilities; they also suffer higher rates of illness, premature death, and suicide.

In her study of some 200 people, Medved found that divorce left men and women emotionally distraught for an average of seven years, others for decades. The one thing that divorce did *not* affect, she found, was the unhealthy pattern of behavior that led the couple to divorce in the first place. Little wonder, then, that second marriages are even more likely to fail than first marriages!

Far from improving behavior, divorce often has a drastically negative effect on morality. Researchers have found that after divorce, most men and women briefly enter a sort of second adolescence. They taste their newfound freedom by pursuing a succession of new romantic attachments in order to boost sagging self-esteem or to alleviate loneliness. But dating for such self-serving rea-

* For information on the effects of divorce on children, see the April 22, 1991, issue of *Awake!*

sons can lead to sexual immorality, which carries its own litany of tragic consequences. And it can be particularly traumatic and harmful for children to see their parents act this way.

All too often, though, divorcing couples have already subscribed to the world's propaganda that their own needs and concerns come first. Thus, they harden themselves to the pain they will be causing in the lives around them—their children's, their parents', their friends'. Some forget that God too can feel hurt in his heart when we ignore his standards. (Compare Psalm 78:40, 41; Malachi 2:16.) Divorce can also be a very mean business, especially when it degenerates into legal battles over custody and property.

Financial Catastrophe

Lenore Weitzman further concluded that divorce is also a "financial catastrophe" for women in the United States. On an average, it cuts in half their funds for such essentials as food, housing, and heat. Their standard of living, she found, dropped by an appalling 73 percent after divorce!

She had expected to find that modern, "enlightened" divorce laws would serve as a protection for women. Instead, she found that women reported feeling desperate and destitute after divorce. They spoke of suddenly having to resort to welfare programs, food stamps, shelters, and soup kitchens. Fully 70 percent of the women she interviewed reported that they were perpetually worried about making ends meet. Some felt terror, frustration, and even locked in with their children, with no time for themselves.

A young man we'll call Tom, whose parents divorced when he was eight years old, recalls: "After Dad left, well, we always had food, but all of a sudden, a can of soda was a luxury. We couldn't afford new clothes. Mom had to make all our shirts for us. When I look at

pictures of us kids at that time, it's a sad picture of sick-looking people."

Since most women get custody of the children and many fathers fail to pay the court-ordered child support—which is often less than minimal anyway—divorce is more likely to impoverish women than men. Still, divorce may not exactly enrich men either. The book *Divorced Fathers* notes that the legal expenses alone can absorb half a man's yearly net income. Divorce is also emotionally devastating for husbands and fathers. Many agonize over being reduced to mere visitors in their children's lives.

Guard Your Marriage!

It is hardly surprising, then, to learn that in a study of people who had been divorced for one year, 81 percent of the husbands/fathers and 97 percent of the wives/mothers conceded that divorce may have been a mistake and that they should have tried harder to make their marriage work. More and more "experts" too are frantically backpedaling from the cavalier attitudes toward marriage that they once espoused. The *Los Angeles Times* noted recently: "With more than 25 years to observe the outcomes, many therapists . . . are working harder to save marriages."

Backpedaling, of course, is fairly easy for the "experts." All they have to do, in effect, is say, "Oops! Sorry!" and start singing a different tune. It is not so easy for the thousands of people who followed their advice. Still, victims of divorce can learn crucial lessons from their bitter experience, such as the one epitomized at Psalm 146:3, 4: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs. His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."

Friends, therapists, lawyers, or media personalities are nothing more than imperfect humans. So when we need advice on

marriage, why rely solely on them? Wouldn't it make more sense to turn first to Jehovah God, the Designer of marriage? His principles don't change with the shifting winds of "expert" opinions. They have held true for millenniums, and they work today.

Andrew and Ann began to realize this some time after they were divorced. They saw that their divorce had been a dreadful mistake. Remarkably, though, it was not too late for them. They found each other and remarried. And they began to change their thinking. "I realized," recalls Andrew, "that I was morally bankrupt, and I needed help. For the first time in years, I prayed about it. I wanted to do what was right; so I had to stop what I was doing and reject all the values I had picked up in the world. I didn't want them anymore."

Ann echoes: "The reason we can be together now, with that horrible past behind us, is that both of us really wanted to be right with Jehovah. And we really wanted it to work." That doesn't mean it has been easy ever since. "We constantly watch our relationship now, like a guard dog. And if one of us feels that it is drifting, we'll talk about it."

Andrew and Ann are now raising two delightful children. He serves as a ministerial servant in a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Of course, things are not entirely perfect. No marriage is ever perfect in this old world. How could it be, when it unites two imperfect people? That is why the Bible cautions us that from the time sin entered the world, marriage has brought a degree of 'tribulation in the flesh.' (1 Corinthians 7:28) Thus, marriage is not to be entered into lightly; anyone contemplating marriage would do well to spend ample time getting to know the prospective mate. And once entered into, marriage is usually only as good as the effort that goes into it.

Clearly, though, divorce is not to be taken lightly either. When divorce is deemed necessary or unavoidable, certainly God can give us the help we need to endure the hard times that may follow. But if we follow the world's trend in adopting a cheapened view of the sacred institution of marriage, who will shield us from the consequences of such folly? So guard your marriage. Instead of being ready to throw it all away when things aren't going well, be solution oriented. Try to repair bridges rather than burn them. Look to God's Word for practical answers to marital problems.* Solutions are there. And they work.

* See *Making Your Family Life Happy*, published by the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Guard your marriage by taking time to do things together as a family

**Young
People
Ask . . .**



Should We Go to the Pep Rally?

FIGHT, team, fight! 'Win, win, win!' The slogans are chanted over and over with mounting enthusiasm and near-religious fervor. The gymnasium rocks to the steady beat of music and pounding drums. Colorfully costumed girls and boys lead the cheers and victory songs, at the same time dazzling their peers with acrobatic stunts and frenetic dancing. Team coaches and athletic directors give boastful assurances of victory. Then, to the

deafening cheers of their fans, the home team appears. The crowd is whipped into a virtual frenzy, and the excitement reaches a crescendo. Victory will be theirs!

In many schools, pep rallies are eagerly anticipated events. And while from time to time, rallies of sorts are held to generate enthusiasm for various school projects, pep rallies are held in connection with upcoming school sporting events: football, soccer, baseball, basketball. For many youths a pep rally is more than a break from the school routine. It is a chance to give the school team needed support, to cheer on their sports heroes, to spur the team on to victory! Pep rallies also serve to kindle school spirit and a sense of solidarity among students.

Granted, not everybody cares about sports. Some students simply enjoy the energy, fun, and excitement of the rallies. "It's a time to hang loose and act crazy," says one youth. For others, sports rallies are a chance to miss class—or to mix freely with the opposite sex. "It's a time for boyfriends and girlfriends to get together," says one teenage boy.

At any rate, many educators believe that supporting school sporting events is a vital part of the educational process. In her book *The High School Survival Guide—An Insider's Guide to Success*, Barbara Mayer writes: "Any student who walks away from high school without . . . sitting in the stands and cheering for the home team . . . has passed up some of the happiest times and greatest opportunities for growth he may see for some time." Little wonder that in some schools, pep rallies are allowed to replace regularly scheduled classes.

If such events take place in your school, perhaps you have thought about attending. Indeed, you may be under some pressure to do so. Failure to attend may well cause others to look down on you as snobbish or disloyal.



Does the spirit aroused at pep rallies harmonize with Christian principles?

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for Christian youths not to attend.

Enthusiasm or Fanaticism?

Not that the Bible is anti sports. The Bible acknowledges that "physical exercise has some value." (1 Timothy 4:8, *Today's English Version*) Many Christians—young and old—enjoy both watching and participating in various sports. Kept in moderation, sports can be enjoyable, beneficial.*

Pep rallies, however, can transform healthy enthusiasm for sports into deadly fanaticism. In ancient Rome, according to the book *Sports and Games in the Ancient World*, "frantic applause, shouting and cheering would fill the air" at Roman sporting events. Not surprisingly, then, "fanaticism inevitably flourished." During gladiatorial fights, "spectators added their shouts of 'Kill! Hit! Strike!'" hardening themselves to the fact that they were urging the cold-blooded murder of another human.

Sports fanaticism is also alive and un-

* See the series of articles on the subject "Sports—What Place Do They Have?" in the August 22, 1991, issue of *Awake!*

healthy today. After a European soccer match in which fan violence resulted in the death of 38 people, *Discover* magazine suggested that the reason was the "sense of anonymity" that results from being in a crowd. Thus, the person feels less responsibility for his actions. However, the Bible warns at Exodus 23:2: "You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends." But can simply cheering and yelling for one's team really be that evil? Yes. *Discover* magazine noted that "the cheering and shouting at a sports event represents a sort of verbal aggression that, for some people, can easily slip over into physical aggression."

Could it possibly be beneficial, then, to chant slogans and rhymes that urge athletes to smash their opponents? Young Gerald recalls the pep rallies he used to attend: "They were loud with boisterous yelling. The crowd sometimes got too rowdy. The rallies were more like war rituals that incited us to riot. Words like 'kill,' 'stomp,' and 'whip' were constantly used." At times words become action. Young Perry recalls a rally where "everybody took sticks and began beating up a replica of the opposing team's mascot. When it was over, they had mutilated the mascot."

Who is immune to such a contagious spirit of violence? With good reason, then, the Bible warns: "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) As one young student admits: "You can't help but be in-

fluenced to do what everybody else is doing." And if you did become a party to violence, there could be serious consequences. Recall that the ancient Edomites cheered on the Babylonians when they plundered Jerusalem. "Lay it bare! Lay it bare to the foundation!" the Edomites cried. (Psalm 137:7) However, God roundly condemned their vengeful, violent spirit. (Obadiah 1:1, 8, 12) Could one carry on similarly today and not incur God's displeasure?

True, not all pep rallies—and not all sports events—are violent. But even when a measure of sobriety prevails, is it appropriate for a Christian to mouth chants that express a fanatically loyal or perhaps even worshipful attitude toward a school or a sports team? (Compare Exodus 20:5.) Does screaming out provocative slogans harmonize with the counsel at Ephesians 4:29, 31? We read: "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth . . . Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness." Will attending an emotion-charged rally help you cultivate the fruitage of God's spirit, which includes "mildness" and "self-control"? (Galatians 5:22, 23) Or will it simply stir up an ungodly spirit of fierce competition?—Compare Philippians 2:3.

Of course, circumstances vary. Sometimes attendance at school assemblies is mandatory, and a pep rally may be a part of the program. Pep rallies themselves may vary in style and content. And while no hard-and-fast rule can be made as to attendance, a Christian youth is wise to discuss such matters with his parents and weigh the various factors involved. (See Proverbs 24:6.) If you decide not to get involved in pep rallies, you may have to stand up to powerful peer pressure. But always remember that your first loyalty is to God—not to some school or team.

'I Want to Be a Cheerleader!'

Many young girls—and boys—yearn for the prestige, recognition, and popularity that comes with being a cheerleader. "It boosts your spirits to get people up and excited," says Lisa, a girl quoted in *Seventeen* magazine. "And it feels great to have everyone watching you!" Other youths are attracted to the social possibilities cheerleading offers. When recruiters tried to get young Hannah to sign up for tryouts, she was told: "It is going to make you popular and get you in with the boys." Some girls claim that cheerleading has boosted their self-esteem.

Nevertheless, life for a cheerleader is not all pom-poms and acrobatic leaps. There is often fierce competition at tryouts; rejection can be traumatic. Outright animosity may exist between squads from rival schools. Furthermore, some of today's intricate cheerleading routines require virtually the skill of Olympic gymnasts. Injuries are common. Cheerleaders must thus spend long hours each week practicing. As a manual on cheerleading says, one must "be dedicated to cheerleading and song-leading as a way of life."

Could a Christian really be "dedicated" to something as vain as promoting school spirit? Hardly; nor would it be appropriate for a Christian youth to urge a crowd to chant slogans or to sing songs that glorify violence or idolize teams and sports heroes. And, as mentioned previously, the danger of "bad associations" is a valid concern. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Too, let us not forget the obvious problems that could result from parading around—and dancing—in the immodest attire cheerleaders are often required to wear.—1 Timothy 2:9.

All things considered, it is clear that cheerleading is inappropriate for a Christian youth. His or her dedication to Jehovah is far more important.

Crossword Puzzle

Clues Across

1. It is active in all human and animal souls [3 words] (Genesis 7:22)
8. Locking device for a door (Nahum 3:13)
10. It must be displayed to both neighbors and enemies (Matthew 5:43, 44)
12. A symbol of royalty (2 Chronicles 23:11)
13. Level land (Daniel 3:1)
14. This fifth king of Israel ruled for only seven days (1 Kings 16:15)
16. A stretch of land (Amos 4:7)
18. Goal (1 Thessalonians 4:11)
19. Persian gold coin (See Ezra 8:27.)
20. The son of Ephraim's son Shuthelah (Numbers 26:36)
21. The dishonesty of this firstborn son of Samuel gave the people an excuse to ask for a human king (1 Samuel 8:1-5)
22. The catalog of inspired books
23. When translated, this word uttered by Jesus just before he died means "my God" (Mark 15:34)
24. What John the Baptizer felt unworthy to do to Jesus' sandal (Acts 13:25)
25. A son of Jehallelel of the tribe of Judah (1 Chronicles 4:16)
27. Each pair of foxes dispatched by Samson carried one to set the Philistine fields ablaze (Judges 15:4, 5)
29. Meritorious value (Luke 6:32)
30. "Righteous and true are your ---" (Revelation 15:3)
32. Canaanite father of Judah's wife (Genesis 38:2)
34. Original human home [3 words] (Genesis 2:15)

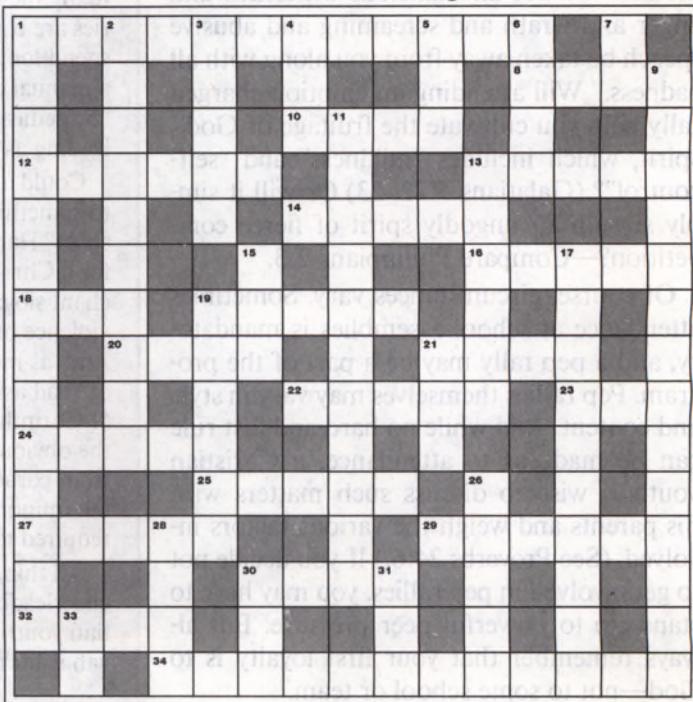
Clues Down

1. The group of soldiers from which came Julius, who escorted Paul to Rome [3 words] (Acts 27:1)
2. Hostile encounter between military forces (1 Kings 20:29)

3. What Judas had become even before he betrayed Jesus (John 12:6)
4. It was due to Judas' contention over this that his being a thief was mentioned (John 12:5)
5. What the expanse over the cherubs' heads in Ezekiel's vision resembled (Ezekiel 1:22)
6. The mountain from which the maledictions for breaking God's Law were recited to Israel (Deuteronomy 27:13)
7. This city was possibly the capital of Moab (Isaiah 15:1)
9. The state of being holy (1 Timothy 2:15)
11. Jesus said: "I do not speak of my own -----" (John 14:10)
13. A descendant of Saul through Jonathan (1 Chronicles 9:39-41)

15. Created in God's image (Genesis 1:26)
17. Physically sound [two words, hyphenated] (Job 3:3)
19. Fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet
21. Example of endurance (James 5:11)
26. What a stupid child brings to its parents (Proverbs 10:1; 17:21)
28. Source of the water miraculously provided for the Israelites in the wilderness of Zin (Numbers 20:8-11)
30. Only one took place in heaven (Revelation 12:7)
31. The wilderness where manna first appeared and the Sabbath law was put into effect (Exodus 16)
33. "— will bruise you in the head" (Genesis 3:15)

Crossword Solutions Page 27



The Day It Rained Sand

By Awake! correspondent in the Philippines



SATURDAY, June 15, 1991, will be a day hard to forget for most residents of central Luzon. Incredible as it may seem, this was the day when sand fell like rain on the lush green hills and paddy fields of Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales provinces in the Philippines. What actually happened on that day and how it affected the more than two million residents of this area, including some

2,900 Jehovah's Witnesses, is both heart-breaking and intriguing.

Few lives were lost, since early warnings were given by volcanologists monitoring the seismic activities of Mount Pinatubo. Thousands of aboriginal Aeta tribespeople had left the mountainside before the main eruptions of the volcano occurred, and all residents within a 12-mile radius of Mount Pinatubo were urged to seek safety in other areas. Just two days before the first large eruption on June 12, the U.S. Air Force evacuated the ma-



jority of their personnel from Clark Air Base at the foot of Mount Pinatubo to the naval base near Olongapo City, the largest such operation since World War II. High marks for the warnings were given by professional geologist Richard J. Purser when he wrote an open letter to the Filipino people, saying: "You have been well served by

Phivolcs [Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology] so far

and their advice has been clear and rational and scientifically correct."

Eyewitness Account

Esther Manrique, a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses living in Subic, Zambales, about 20 miles from Mount Pinatubo, gives her account of what it was like to live through the days when it rained sand. She states: "It all began on Wednesday morning, June 12. As we went out in the ministry, most people were gazing at an amazing sight. A cloud,



Kingdom Hall roofs collapsed under the weight of ash, sand, and rain

Isanada night to vinyl

mushroom-shaped, like an atom-bomb explosion, formed above Mount Pinatubo. After a few minutes, it began to rain—but not water; instead, grains of sand fell.

"Thursday it again rained sand. On Friday afternoon at about two, a sudden darkness fell, and sand and mud rained all over the area. Employees and schoolchildren were immediately sent home. Those who walked without an umbrella looked like walking rocks because of the sand and the mud."

Saturday morning at about seven, the sky became dark for about an hour. Celestino Layug of Porac, Pampanga, spoke of an unusual phenomenon he observed that night: "The lightning on Saturday night was like nothing I had ever seen before. Red and rose colors were seen besides the usual white and bluish shades. At the same time, earthquakes were repeatedly felt."

What Had Happened

Geologist Richard Purser wrote: "If Hollywood was writing the script no one would accept the scenario of 10 large eruptions, 3 tectonic earthquakes and a strong typhoon in the same night as being plausible. Truth can in-

deed be stranger than fiction." In a television interview, the director of Phivolcs, Raymundo Punongbayan, estimated that based on the size of the crater, about half a cubic mile of volcanic material had been spewed into the atmosphere.

What was the force needed to move this huge amount of material? Geologist Purser said: "The energy required to move 2 billion cubic meters [70 billion cubic feet] (5 billion tonnes) an average of 17.5 km [11 miles] straight up is equivalent to a 25 megaton nuclear weapon (1,500 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb)."

Of course, not all the ash and sand fell in the Philippines. Light ash-falls were reported across the South China Sea in Vietnam and Cambodia as well as in Singapore and Malaysia. Even in China, weather conditions were affected. "Meteorologists quoted in the official [Chinese] press on Wednesday said smoke, ash and atmospheric gasses had disrupted normal weather patterns, leaving lush southern provinces facing drought while torrential rains lashed the north."

In Hawaii, July 11 was to bring a long anticipated solar eclipse. However, the fine dust

accumulating in the earth's atmosphere as a result of Mount Pinatubo's eruption led to disappointment on the part of some scientists. Donald Hall, director of the Institute for Astronomy at the University of Hawaii, said: "It's just heartbreaking that after being dormant for 600 or 700 years, the volcano didn't wait another week or two before erupting."

The Effects and Relief Given

At least 18 towns and 2 cities close to Mount Pinatubo suffered sustained ash and sand fallout. Thousands of buildings, including eight Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses, were extensively damaged when roofs collapsed under the weight of sand, as well as water from a typhoon.* The president of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino, in her state-of-the-nation address on July 22, explained: "The eruption of Mount Pinatubo is the biggest in this century. . . . It is so devastating it knocked off 80,000 productive hectares from our agriculture, and destroyed the commerce of at least three provinces. . . . It was an event so powerful it wiped out the largest military base in the Pacific."

Thousands, including hundreds of Jehovah's Witnesses, had to flee their homes and livelihoods. As the first calls for help came into the branch office of the Watch Tower Society late on June 15, refugee centers were set up in nearby Kingdom Halls and two Assembly Halls. Monday morning, June 17, saw two teams of Witnesses from the branch office begin an inspection tour of the devastated areas. When their reports were received the following day, traveling ministers were instructed to make more extensive visits to the affected Witnesses, bringing them additional supplies of food, water, and medicine. At the same time, relief funds were being received at the branch

office from Witnesses in the Metro Manila area as well as other parts of the country not affected by the eruption. Individuals who were not Jehovah's Witnesses noticed the aid given. One person was heard saying: "You Witnesses are really thoughtful, responding at once."

Lahars—A Constant Danger

The population of central Luzon quickly added a new word to their vocabulary, lahar, meaning a mudflow containing much volcanic debris. Mount Pinatubo embraces the headwaters of no fewer than 13 streams and rivers. Even though it is not a very high mountain, only 5,770 feet, the accumulation of some 70 billion cubic feet of sand and ash on its slopes would prove to be devastating to the areas located along the rivers. Actually, on Saturday, June 15, the day of the largest eruption, mudflows had already swept through Porac, Guagua, Bacolor, and Angeles City. The lahar coming down the Abacan River in Angeles City knocked out three bridges and closed the vehicle expressway, while in Bacolor the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses as well as hundreds of residences were filled with mud. As of the end of July, over 36,000 homes had been destroyed and another 61,000 damaged, with no end in view.

While the devastation to the area affected is tremendous and the potential threat of further destruction great, the remarkable spirit of the Filipino people in facing such adversity with composure is commendable. The *Manila Bulletin*, in its editorial of June 29, 1991, commented: "Despite the fact that no one expected the Pinatubo eruption, the people in the area, the government agencies and the public seem equal to the challenge. As in the last earthquake, what we are witnessing is the ability of our people to face adversity. We can only admire their courage and fortitude."

* In the Philippines, this typhoon was named Diding and had 80 mile-per-hour winds when it crossed central Luzon on June 15, 1991.

Disasters Punishments From God?

IN THE Philippines, a land repeatedly struck by natural disasters, many people have wondered, 'Does God test man with such calamities?' In 1991, after the most devastating volcanic eruption in this century, the headline of one Philippine newspaper asked: "Eruption: Punishment from God?"

Columnist Nelly Favis-Villafuerte expressed such a view when she wrote: "To Bible-believing Christians however—there is just one explanation: Mt. Pinatubo's volcanic eruption is a divine visitation to remind us once again that there is an awesome and sovereign God with overruling power in the affairs and destinies of men and nations." In view of this assertion, we ask:

Does Almighty God Judge Communities Today?

That God has done so in the past cannot be denied. The examples recorded in the Scriptures of the Flood of Noah's day, the destruction of Sodom and

Gomorrah, and on two occasions the razing of Jerusalem, the city associated with his great name, show that Almighty God can bring deliberate judgment on those who repeatedly fail to uphold his standards.—Genesis 7:11, 17-24; 19:24, 25; 2 Chronicles 36:17-21; Matthew 24:1, 2.

But what about today? That there would be a time of worldwide calamity was foretold by Christ Jesus in Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13, and Luke chapter 21. In these chapters,

he gave prophetic warning of events and conditions that would be associated with the conclusion of this system of things so that reasoning persons could realize that he was invisibly ruling from heaven. These prophecies are being fulfilled today. It should be noted, though, that with each of the above-mentioned judgments, Jehovah God gave clear, repeated warnings before destruction came. (Amos 3:7) However, in the case of natural disas-



ters occurring in our time, warnings usually come from secular authorities, based on scientific observations.

Furthermore, the disciple James informs us in the first chapter of his letter, verse 13: "With evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone." With the increasing worldwide population, man has come to live near many potential dangers. The demands for space to live and to grow food result in clearing of previously forested areas, at times even contributing to the intensity of some natural calamities from excessive rainfall and fast runoff.

Therefore, it would not be correct to say that natural disasters are directly sent by Almighty God as a punishment on the people living in the areas affected. In fact, it is easy to see that many innocent ones, such as young children, suffer the most in times of distress. However, even though Almighty God does not cause such calamities, we may still ask:

Are There Lessons We Can Learn?

Yes. For those living in the areas affected, there is the test of how much value they place on their material possessions as compared to life itself. People have taken unnecessary, life-threatening risks at such times just to save a few belongings. We need to remember that Jesus stated: "Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) Material things can be replaced, but no human can replace his life.—Matthew 6:19, 20, 25-34.

Natural disasters also cause individuals to reflect on how they live their lives. The apostle Paul urged Christians to be careful in the way they conduct themselves: "So look to it carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best you can of the crisis, because the days are wicked." (Ephesians 5:

15, 16, *Byington*) Each trial a person faces in his life is a reminder of how important it is to have strong faith.

A third lesson we learn from natural calamities is that we need to develop greater fellow feeling, or empathy, for others. Within the disaster zone, loving concern needs to be shown for one's fellow sufferers rather than adopting the attitude that each one has to fend for himself. Particularly is this true of those entrusted with responsibility for caring for others. The prophet Isaiah described ones he called "princes" as being "like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land."—Isaiah 32:1, 2.

In showing empathy during disasters, there are many occasions to share what one has with others, both in word and in deed. For instance, the Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption and its ensuing catastrophes gave countless opportunities to share in helping those who had to flee from the disaster. Many were without the means to have even their daily food. Thus, individuals were able to show their selflessness by giving help to others. However, many have still wondered:

Will There Be a Final Judgment of Mankind?

Yes, there will be, as is clearly shown in God's Word. (Matthew 24:37-42; 2 Peter 3:5-7) Before that judgment comes, a worldwide warning work must be done, as Jesus further prophesied: "Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first."—Mark 13:10.

Thus, each of us needs to ask himself, 'What will I do?' We urge you to take the time to investigate what the Bible exhorts each of us to do in order to survive that global calamity.

Greedy Commerce Shows Its True Colors



AS THE 16th century dawned, European commerce was dominated in the north by the Hanseatic League, a mercantile association of North German towns; in the west by England and the Netherlands; and in the south by Venice.

For centuries, Venice monopolized the spice trade. Agreements made with the Arabs, and later with the Ottoman Turks, successfully closed the Eastern trade routes to possible rivals. If others were to challenge this monopoly, they must find new routes to the Far East. The search began. One result of this search was the discovery and subjugation of the Americas.

During the 1490's the pope gave Portugal and Spain a papal go-ahead for a campaign of conquest of the then unknown world. But it was more than just religious persuasion that motivated these two Catholic powers. Professor Shepard Clough comments: "As soon as claims to the newly discovered parts of the world had been staked, the claimants made a mad rush to get what economic benefits they could from their finds." He adds: "There was an almost unnatural lust in the haste with which the pioneers expected to get rich. Here was an interesting commentary both on the motives behind exploration and on the prevailing ideologies in the Western world." The lust for gold and converts drove on the Spanish

conquistadores in their plundering of the New World.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands was growing into a dominant commercial power, a trend that none of the other commercial giants could stem. In fact, during the course of the 17th century, it was apparent that only England was sufficiently strong to challenge the Dutch. Economic competition intensified. Within 30 years, by 1618, the English doubled the size of their fleet; by the middle of the 17th century, the Dutch merchant marine was some four times the size of the combined fleets of Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

The commercial center of Europe thus shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seaboard. Calling it a "commercial revolution" and "one of the great locational changes of history," Clough says it created an "economic well-being that made possible Western Europe's political and cultural leadership in Western culture."

Empires Built on More Than Just Sugar and Spice

In 1602 the Dutch amalgamated a number of trading companies directed by their merchants and formed the Dutch East India Company. In the decades that followed, besides having a measure of commercial success in Japan and Java, it evicted the Portuguese from what is now West Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and the Moluccas (Spice Islands). "Like the Portuguese and the

Spanish," says Clough, "[the Dutch] wanted to keep the benefits of Eastern trade exclusively for themselves." And no wonder! Trade was so profitable that by the 17th century, the Netherlands had become the wealthiest state per capita in Western Europe. Amsterdam became the financial and trade center of the Western world.

—See box, page 23.

Denmark and France formed similar companies. But the first, and the one that subsequently was most influential, was founded in 1600, the English East India Company. It supplanted the French and the Portuguese in India. Later the English gained commercial supremacy in China as well.

Meanwhile, in the Western Hemisphere, the Dutch West India Company was doing business in sugar, tobacco, and furs. And the English, after incorporating the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada in 1670, were busy trying to find a northwest passage to the Pacific as they traded with the lands adjacent to Hudson Bay.

Journalist Peter Newman says the struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and one of its rivals, the North West Company, "was a corporate contest for markets and furs, but it quickly turned into a quest for power and territory.... Both sides settled their accounts in blood." The real victims were the Indians with whom both companies traded. "Liquor became the currency of the fur trade," he says, adding that this "trade in

liquor debauched families and decimated Indian culture."*

So came into existence two powerful and influential empires, both built on more than just sugar and spice—also on blood! Greedy commerce was showing its true colors. As *The Columbia History of the World* says: "The Dutch and English sailed the oceans of the world as agents for *commercial* concerns . . . For these companies the *profit motive was preeminent*."

—Italics ours.

Profit at the Expense of Others

From the 16th to the 18th century, an economic system known as mercantilism strongly influenced European thought. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: "[Mercantilism] insisted that the acquisition of wealth, particularly wealth in the form of gold, was of paramount importance for national policy.... The trade policy dictated by mercantilist philosophy was accordingly simple: encourage exports, discourage imports, and take the

* Another innocent victim of greedy commercialism in the New World was the North American herd of 60 million buffalo that, to all intents and purposes, was simply annihilated, often only for the skins and the tongues.



The Indians, often paid in liquor, were victims of commerce with the white man

Harper's Encyclopædia of United States History

proceeds of the resulting export surplus in gold."

Implementing this policy often resulted in grave injustices. Colonies were exploited as tons of gold were confiscated to benefit the mother country. Simply put, mercantilism mirrored the self-centered, greedy attitude that the world of commerce has fostered from its very start, a spirit that still exists.

Mercantilism had its critics, not the least of whom was a Scotsman named Adam Smith. A noted social philosopher and political economist, Smith published a study on economics in 1776 entitled *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Though opposed to mercantilism, Smith did not speak out against pursuing profit as motivated by self-interest. On the contrary, he contended that humans are led by an "invisible hand" that motivates them to engage in economic competition in the pursuit of individual self-interest; but that same self-interest, he contended, can be beneficial to society as a whole.

Smith advocated the theory of *laissez-faire* (French: "allow to do"), the idea that governments should interfere as little as possible in the economic affairs of individuals. He thus clearly expressed the ideology of classical capitalism.

Capitalism, today's predominant and, as some claim, most successful economic system, is characterized by private ownership of property, with free trade between individuals or companies that compete with one another for

profits. Capitalism's modern history began in the 16th century in the towns of central and northern Italy, but its roots reach back much further. Professor Emeritus of History Elias J. Bickerman explains that "the economic use of our word 'capital,' from the Latin *caput*, meaning 'head,' goes back to a Babylonian term which also meant 'head' and had the same economic significance."

Commerce reveals its true colors in the pursuit of individual or national self-interest. For example, it has not shrunk back from suppressing truth. Says *The Collins Atlas of World History*: "The cartographer has also been an actor in, and on occasion a hostage to, commercial strategies. Discoveries reveal untold sources of wealth. Can the map-maker be permitted to reveal this information to the world? Must he not rather conceal it from potential competitors? . . . In the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company did not publish documents which could give its competitors information."

Commerce has done far worse. From the 17th to the 19th century, it made a business out of selling an estimated ten million Africans into slavery, thousands of whom died in transit to the Americas. The book *Roots*, by Alex Haley, and its 1977 television dramatization, painted a graphic picture of this ugly tragedy.

Building Blocks

—How Would They Be Used?

From the beginning of human history, imperfect men have learned by trial and error. Not by divine revelation, but by tireless research or perhaps by accident, they discovered basic scientific truths, which were harnessed by new inventions. In 1750, as Great Britain began moving from an agrarian economy to one dominated by industry and the use of machines, some of these inventions—like building blocks—were available for use in constructing a new world.

The windmill, known in Iran and Afghanistan as early as the sixth or seventh centu-

In Our Next Issue

Sex Education —Who Should Give It?

Helping Those With Eating Disorders

How Can I Cope With Poverty?

ry C.E., prepared the way for the discovery and development of other energy sources. But would greedy commerce be willing to forgo exorbitant profits in order to ensure that these sources would be safe, pollution free, and reliable? Or would it take advantage of energy crises—possibly even creating them—for the sake of personal gain?

Gunpowder, invented in China in the tenth century, was a boon for mining and construction work. But would greedy commerce have the moral courage to refrain from exploiting it to make weapons to enrich arms dealers at the expense of human lives?

The Business of Banking

B.C.E.: Ancient Babylonian and Greek temples held the coins of depositors for safekeeping; since not everyone demanded his coins at the same time, some of them could be borrowed by others.

Middle Ages: Modern banking begins, developed by Italian merchants who used traveling clerics as agents to transmit letters of credit from one country to another; in England goldsmiths began lending at interest the sums deposited with them for safekeeping.

1408: An institution that some call the forerunner of modern banks was founded in Genoa, Italy, followed by similar ones in Venice (1587) and Amsterdam (1609). One historian says that "the efficient services rendered by the Bank of Amsterdam contributed their share toward making Amsterdam the financial center of the world."

1661: The Bank of Stockholm, an offshoot of the Bank of Amsterdam, began issuing bank notes (promises by the bank to pay the bearer), a practice the English later perfected.

1670: The first clearinghouse, opened in London, was a banking establishment for settling mutual claims and accounts; the birth of

Cast iron, probably available in China as early as the sixth century C.E., was a forerunner of the steel upon which a modern world was to be built. But would greedy commerce be willing to reduce its profits in order to prevent the pollution, the accidents, and the congestion that an industrial age would bring?

Time would tell. At any rate, these and other building blocks were destined to help bring about a world revolution that, in turn, would help lead to something the world had never seen before. Read in our next issue: "The Industrial Revolution—To What Did It Lead?"

the modern check, also in this year, allowed a bank customer to transfer deposit receipts to other banks or part of his credit balance to other individuals.

1694: Founding of the Bank of England, which became a leading note-issuing bank (creator of paper money).

1944: Creation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, also called the World Bank, a specialized agency closely related to the United Nations and designed to offer financial assistance to member countries for reconstruction and development projects.

1946: International Monetary Fund established to "promote monetary cooperation, currency stabilization, trade expansion; meet balance-of-payments difficulties."—*The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*.

1989: The Delors Plan proposes that the European Community adopt a common currency and set up a European Central Bank during the 1990's.

1991: Opening of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, an agency formed in 1990 by over 40 nations to provide financial help in restoring the weakened economies of Eastern Europe.

Equatorial Guinea

A Treasure-House of Surprises

By Awake! correspondent in Equatorial Guinea

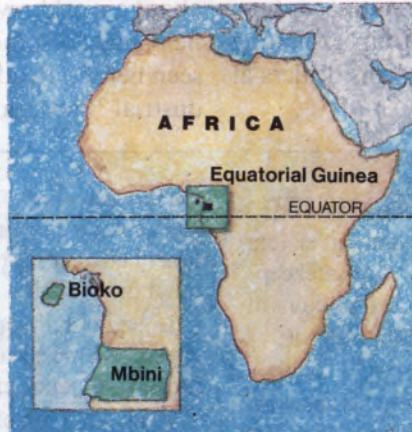
IN AFRICA there is a country where elephants and gorillas still roam the jungle, where commercialism passes almost unnoticed, where children still wave at passersby. And outside of Africa, few have ever heard of it.

Its name—Equatorial Guinea—is no misnomer. The country, which is roughly the size of Belgium, nearly straddles the equator. In December 1990, I visited the two main regions: the island of Bioko and Mbini, a small slice of Africa.

My first surprise was to learn that most of its 350,000 inhabitants speak fluent Spanish in addition to their tribal languages. I discovered that it had become the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa because of one of those quirks of colonial history.

The European Connection

Some 20 years before Columbus discovered America, Portuguese navigator Fernão do Pó was exploring the Gulf of Guinea when he spotted the lush volcanic island of Bioko. He was so charmed by its beauty that he called it Formosa (Beautiful). Years later another famous explorer, Sir Henry Stanley, described



it as "the jewel of the ocean."

But for centuries the pristine beauty of the region was marred by the ugly slave trade. The strategic location of Bioko and Corisco (another Guinean island just off the coast of Mbini) made them ideal staging posts for the shipping of African slaves to the Americas. From the 16th to the 19th century, hundreds of thousands of slaves passed through these two islands.

The Portuguese claim to Bioko and the adjacent coast was ceded to the Spanish in 1778 in order to resolve a dispute between the two countries involving their territorial claims in far-off South America. Spain thus gained its own source of slaves in Africa and in turn relinquished its claims on Portuguese territory in Brazil.

But the borders were ill-defined, and Spanish colonizers were few in number. In the 19th century, during the European scramble for African colonies, France and Germany encroached on the mainland territory, while Britain coveted the island of Bioko. It was not until 1900 that the boundaries of Equatorial Guinea were finally settled, after which it re-

mained a Spanish colony until it gained independence in 1968.

"Smiles Are Returned"

I found the people of Equatorial Guinea to be a fascinating ethnic mixture. There are the Bube on the island of Bioko, while in the two main cities, the tall Hausa stand out. They are immigrants from the north and are the principal tradesmen of Guinea. The Fang tribe is the largest tribe on the continental part of the country, and they form the bulk of the civil service. Guineans smile easily, lending truth to a Fang proverb that says, "Smiles are returned."

Traditional crafts and customs are very much alive. I was intrigued to see how the Guineans build their own homes, albeit simple ones, from materials found in the forest. Fishermen still hew out their own dugout canoes, and they fish by this time-honored method.

Every day thousands of Guineans throng the open-air markets of Bata and Malabo, the main cities of the country. A visit to a market gave me an insight into the people and their lives. The markets sell everything imaginable—from secondhand wrenches to monkeys (monkey

meat makes a good stew). Assorted bottles of potent homemade detergent vie for space with neat piles of beans and garlic cloves. In Guinea time is not at a premium, and I noticed that the stalls never seemed to shut down, at least not until nightfall or until everything had been sold.

In many Fang villages, I saw a large communal hut. I was told that it is called a *Casa de la Palabra* (House of the Word). This is where the villagers meet and resolve their disputes, after both sides have aired their grievances, or "words." It has open windows so that anyone who wishes can listen to the proceedings.

The Tropical Forest —A Treasure to Preserve

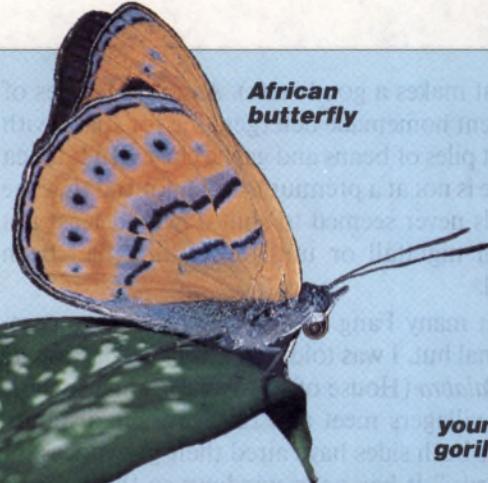
But to me it is the equatorial forest that above all epitomizes Guinea. Once we were outside the towns, the exuberant growth of the jungle made it appear that we were driving through a green tunnel. Green is the color of Guinea, green in all its hues, green that glitters anew after each tropical shower. Sprawling creepers, massive clumps of bamboo, and hundreds of species of trees crowd together to



Fishermen still hew out their canoes

**Communal hut ("Casa de la Palabra") where
villagers meet and resolve their disputes**





African
butterfly



greater
bush baby



young
gorilla



Pel's
fishing
owl

form a green mantle over the land. The tropical forest—disorderly yet harmonious—is something worth treasuring on our denuded planet.

Large tracts of Equatorial Guinea still harbor virgin tropical forests, and some of these have been selected as future national parks. And the forest is not just decorative. It provides food, fuel, and even medicine for the Guineans. Not surprisingly, it is a massive tropical tree, the ceiba, that is the main feature of the Guinean coat of arms.

I could not fail to be impressed by the beauty of Bioko, a beauty that likewise impressed the early European explorers five centuries ago. It is a mountainous island dotted by volcanic craters, some of which have become lakes, thus adding to the variety of the scenery. The tallest volcanic peak on the island towers nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, and its forested slopes are home to a variety of exotic birds and butterflies, which add a splash of color to the lush vegetation.

High up on the mountain, I was enthralled

to watch the tiny sunbirds darting about the shrubs and flowers of the mountain slopes. The green and red plumage of the males glistened like jewels in the afternoon sun. Not unlike the American hummingbirds, they feed daintily on the nectar of large flowers or on the insects they find among the petals.

Unique Fauna of the Forest

The equatorial forest is host to an incredible variety of wildlife, especially on the mainland. Buffalo and elephants, varieties smaller than their counterparts in the African savanna, inhabit the dense jungle, but perhaps the most outstanding animal of the forest is the gorilla, whose numbers are dwindling throughout Africa. I played with a tame young gorilla whose mother had been killed by hunters. His wistful expression reminded me of the gorilla's uncertain future at the hands of man.

Twenty-five years ago, naturalists from all over the world were surprised to hear of the discovery of an albino gorilla in Guinea. It was the first known case of albinism in gorillas. His hair was completely white, and he had pink skin and blue eyes. He was named *Copito de Nieve* (Little Snowflake) and was finally taken to the Barcelona Zoo in Spain, where he still delights the public.

The first thing I noticed about the forest was that few animals are actually to be seen. Many are asleep during the day, and it is only during the night that the forest really comes alive. As dusk falls, fruit bats in the thousands leave their roosts to scour the upper canopy of the forest, and fish owls begin their nightly patrol of the streams and rivers. Wide-eyed bush babies scamper from branch to branch as if it were broad daylight.

During daylight hours, it is mainly birds and butterflies that add life and color to the forest. Enormous swallowtail butterflies, with their vivid black and green wings and erratic flight, are the most eye-catching. Overhead the muted chuckling of the green fruit doves con-

trasts with the raucous calls of the ungainly hornbills.

On the forest floor, I spotted a blue and orange agama lizard mounting watch on a fallen tree trunk. It crouched motionless apart from the flicking of its tongue, which deftly spooned up any ant that came within reach.

I was not fortunate enough to see one of Guinea's unique river dwellers. Along the banks and the waterfalls of the Mbía River lives the world's largest frog, *Conraua goliath*. These frogs may weigh seven pounds or more and measure three feet from head to toe. According to researcher Paul Zahl of *National Geographic*, their powerful legs can propel them ten feet in one gigantic leap.

In Equatorial Guinea the setting sun is orange rather than red, a reminder that the atmosphere is not so polluted as in other parts of the world. The consumer society has made few inroads, and the trees of the forest work daily to replenish the oxygen. Such unspoiled areas of the world are few and far between. Hopefully, this equatorial treasure will remain one of them.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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Watching the World

Bad News on TV

"Bad news for Brazilians who watch television: The amount of bad news in TV news is increasing," claims the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. The paper reports that during a period of ten days, 15 journalists watched all the news on the TV channels. Only 18 percent of what they saw was classified as good news. The director of the institute making the survey is quoted as having said: "It was a 95-hour marathon of tragedies." News about the economy and ecology was considered the most negative. The few optimistic items dealt with entertainment and sports. One psychoanalyst warns that such massive doses of violence and misfortune broadcast on the news can change people's behavior, possibly causing some to view the tragedies of others as trivial.

"Morally Illiterate"

Educators agree that a growing number of "morally illiterate" children are showing up in today's society. "The fast track, the quick promotion, gaining control, gaining the edge," are held before children as important values, according to Burle Summers, president of the Ontario Morals/Values Education Association. "Serving others, respecting others, caring for others isn't considered as important," he said.

Church Bells Jangle Nerves

"Church bells are ringing too often and too loudly" for some residents of west Toronto, reports *The Toronto Star*. The

householders view church-bell ringing as "noise pollution" and have petitioned city hall about the matter. The city services committee recommended that the churches involved play the bells for one minute twice a day during the week and three times on Sunday—but never before 9:00 a.m. Church bells could ring on other occasions, such as weddings, funerals, and evening services during Lent. Church bells are rung to call parishioners to prayers and church services. However, local city dwellers say that alarm clocks can do the same thing without disturbing and waking up the whole neighborhood.

Sleeping Position Related to SIDS

Each year, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) takes the lives of thousands of babies worldwide. It remains one of the primary causes of death among children during the first few months of life. The real cause of SIDS is still not known. However,



the *International Herald Tribune* of Paris reports that medical experts from around the world recently met in Australia to discuss the problem. They advise parents: "Don't let infants sleep on their stomachs." Research seems

to indicate that the risk of dying from the syndrome is at least three times higher for infants placed on their stomachs than for those who are placed either on their backs or on their sides. The doctors suggest that if parents were informed about the risks, thousands of lives could be saved.

Popular Blasphemy

An Australian clergyman has spoken out strongly about the escalating use and apparent acceptance of blasphemous expressions. He shows particular concern for the effect this has on young people, and he has called for a campaign to help eliminate blasphemy in contemporary speech. Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* newspaper quotes the cleric as saying: "Such phrases as 'Good God', 'Oh God', 'By God', 'By Christ' and 'Oh Christ' are used more and more as expletives rather than as phrases of reverence. This is obvious in novels, on the stage, on the cinema screen, TV, radio and press. So long as we condone this irreverence, we cannot expect our young people to hold a sensitive respect for God and Christ." He continued that he had noticed that the use of blasphemy had steadily increased over the years and that such speech is now considered by many to be a form of acceptable swearing.

Pesticide Poisoning

Every year, throughout developing countries, pesticides poison about 25 million people and kill 20,000, according to *New African* magazine. Chemical companies unload dangerous pesticides in poor countries where

farmers are ignorant of the dangers and where governments are unable to check imports adequately. *New African* reports that one Swiss chemical company recently admitted selling to Tanzania 476,000 quarts of an insecticide containing DDT, an extremely dangerous chemical banned or severely restricted in 45 countries. In rural Ghana, DDT is sometimes used to catch fish. The chemical is poured into rivers, killing the fish and making them an easy catch. The fish, still containing the active poison, end up in African meals.

Dangerous Tan

Skin cancer among Canadians "has increased by 235 per cent in the past eight years," reports *The Toronto Star*. New statistics reveal that 1 in 7 Canadians will develop skin cancer during his lifetime. What is the primary cause? Sun exposure, according to the Canadian Dermatology Association. Dr. Gary Sibbald, a dermatologist, claims that just "one blistering sunburn doubles your risk of developing skin cancer." He adds: "A tan is not healthy. It represents skin damage." According to *The Globe and Mail*, it can lead to "wrinkles, furrows, blotches, lesions and skin cancers." Wearing a good sunscreen, protective clothing, and avoiding direct exposure between ten o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon was recommended as a safeguard.

Homosexual Theologians

The Faculty of Theology of the Helsinki University in Finland has an organization representing homosexual students. Some 20 students have shared in the activity of this group called the Gay Theologians, reports *Kotimaa*, a

major church journal. A representative of Gay Theologians explained that in Finland there are as many homosexuals among theologians and church officials as among the rest of the population. The exact figure is not known, but estimates vary from 4 to 10 percent. These students of theology are protesting that the church in Finland has not agreed to ordain those publicly acknowledging their homosexuality.

Help in the Home

Traditionally, Japanese men have not been known for helping with housework, but times are changing. A recent survey taken in Tokyo revealed that while men there generally still regard cooking, raising children, and washing dishes as women's work, almost 60 percent believe that men should help with household chores. Some 70 percent claim that they often do such jobs as



cleaning, shopping, and taking out garbage. Young husbands are the most willing to help; 60 percent of them agree that "men should share housework as much as they can," and 29 percent claim that they "don't mind helping." "This helpful attitude among young husbands, however, does not last long," said *Mainichi Daily News*, adding that "among the families whose first child is in elementary school, husbands who said they are will-

ing to share housekeeping chores as much as possible decreased to 47 percent." Moreover, the number of husbands in such families who asserted that it is unnecessary to help in the home rose to 13 percent.

TV and Cholesterol

Children who spend too much time in front of the television are damaging not only their minds but also their arteries. A recent study of 1,000 youths under 20 years of age revealed that children who watch between two and four hours of television a day are likely to have a much higher level of cholesterol than those who watch less. According to *Prevention*, a health magazine, Dr. Kurt V. Gold of the University of California-Irvine explains that "having high cholesterol at such a young age can increase chances for premature heart disease." Dr. Gold says that "TV pulls many known risk factors together. You may end up sitting around all day eating too much junk food and not getting enough exercise."

Single Mothers

A recent report revealed that more than one third of the women giving birth in Costa Rica during 1990 were single. Almost 16 percent were under 19 years of age. The total number of babies born in Costa Rica that year was 81,939. Of these, 30,119 had single mothers, while 50,411 were born to married women. The rest were born to widows, divorcees, or women who were separated from their husbands. According to the San José, Costa Rica, newspaper *La Nación*, 360 babies had mothers under 15 years of age, and 12,578 had mothers between the ages of 15 and 19.

From Our Readers

Help for the Dying Thank you for the articles on "Help for the Dying." (October 22, 1991) My sister had a brain tumor and the doctor told us they could either prolong her life [by extraordinary medical means] or let the illness run its course. It was a difficult decision, but we finally decided on the latter option. After her death, though, I began to feel as if we had sinned. I therefore felt so relieved after reading the articles. Thank you so much for providing us with comfort and help at the right time!

A. L. M. A., Brazil

Families Draw Close We just wanted to express our appreciation for the beautifully written series "Families—Draw Close Before It's Too Late." (September 22, 1991) Having recently become parents to a wonderful baby boy, we enjoyed the personal comments on childrearing related by parents from around the world. We hope and pray that we too can bring our son up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.

R. S. and J. L. S., United States

For some time now, I have been wanting to tell you just how much I appreciate your articles. But after having read the issue on strengthening family ties, I just had to write to thank you. I gave birth a few months ago, and my husband and I will make every effort to apply these suggestions.

S. D., Italy

Reading I'm a youth and enjoy reading very much. However, I do not always understand what I read, and I tend to overlook difficult words. The article "Read to Expand Your Horizons" (July 22, 1991) helped me to improve in this regard.

A. R. B., Brazil

For years I have tried to read all issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* but failed, even though I had a schedule that included reading

them. Your article helped me realize that my problem was poor reading habits. I appreciate the suggestions on improving my reading.

A. K. F. M., Brazil

Hospitals Allow me to comment on the series "Hospitals—How Can You Cope?" (March 8, 1991) Last year I was hospitalized four times. I felt defenseless and unprotected. If I asked questions about my condition, method of treatment, and side effects of medicines, my doctors took it as a no-confidence vote. They would even say, 'You don't have to be here. You can go home.'

R. A., Czechoslovakia

The concept of patients' rights is not universally accepted, though such rights are rapidly gaining recognition. Hospital Liaison Committees sponsored by Jehovah's Witnesses have already gained a measure of success in winning the cooperation of doctors. But where patients' rights are not yet respected, individuals may be able to improve their situation by developing a cooperative, understanding relationship with their physician before hospitalization becomes necessary. It is always wise for a Christian to deal with medical personnel in a kind and respectful way.—ED.

Avoiding Harassment I appreciated the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Make Him Leave Me Alone?" (May 22, 1991). Although the article was published mainly for girls, we boys can learn something from it. Recently I faced a similar problem from a girl who tempted me to risk my friendship with God! Your article came just in time and helped me deal with the situation.

E. K. O., Ghana

See our October 8, 1991, issue for specific suggestions directed to boys who are facing such situations.—ED.

Climbing Mountains the Easy Way



OUR cable car must have resembled a tiny spider inching its way along a single silken strand. Actually, we were climbing a mountain the easy way—riding one of the longest aerial tramways in the world.

The 2.7-mile tramway ascends Sandia Peak, which towers majestically above the desert city of Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A. At the tram's base, at an elevation of 6,500 feet, we boarded a sturdy cabin that holds up to 60 persons. As the cabin surged upward, we seemed to shrink against the magnificent backdrop of jagged granite slopes. In some places we were suspended 1,500 feet above the floor of the canyon below.

Less than 20 minutes later we arrived at the observation deck, 10,378 feet above sea level, and the view was dizzying. A vast area of 11,000 square miles stretched before our eyes. Was it the high altitude that made our hearts beat so rapidly, or was it the thrilling panorama? It was hard to tell.

The construction of the Sandia Peak Tramway, we later learned, was an engineering feat. The mountain terrain was almost impossible to traverse in many places. So the builders opted to use helicopters as packhorses. They airlifted everything from steel girders to concrete. Two towers were erected for the cables, one 232 feet tall and the other 80 feet. Building secure foundations for these towers and then aligning them properly required painstaking precision. Elaborate braking systems were installed to ensure safety. The project, 24 months in the making, was finished in the spring of 1966.

When our trip was over, we looked up again at the towering peak we had just climbed and descended. How awesome those mountains are! How exhilarating and how humbling to think of their Creator, the One who weighs mountains in his scales! (Isaiah 40:12)—*Contributed*.

Valentine Day

Where Did It Come From?

DID you ever send or receive a valentine, a card or a gift? In many countries it is the custom to send them out for February 14, Valentine Day. It is supposed to be a day celebrated by lovers. But how did the custom start?

Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable says: "Valentine, St. A priest of Rome who was imprisoned for succouring persecuted Christians. He became a convert and . . . he was clubbed to death. His day is 14 February . . .

"The ancient custom of choosing *Valentines* has only accidental relation to [the] saint, being essentially a relic of the old Roman *Lupercalia* . . . or from association with the mating season of birds. It was marked by the giving of presents and nowadays by the sending of a card on which cupids, transfixing hearts, etc., are depicted."

And what does Cupid have to do with Valentine Day? The same source says: "Cupid (Lat[in] *cupido*, desire, love). The Roman

god of love, identified with the Greek Eros. He is usually represented as a beautiful winged boy, blindfolded, and carrying a bow and arrows."

The World Book Encyclopedia gives further information, offering various theories on the origin of Valentine Day practices. "According to one story, the Roman Emperor Claudius II in the A.D. 200's forbade young men to marry. The emperor thought single men made better soldiers. A priest named Valentine disobeyed the emperor's order and secretly married young couples. . . . Many stories say that Valentine was executed on February 14 about A.D. 269. In A.D. 496, Saint Pope Gelasius I named February 14 as St. Valentine's Day."

Regardless of the true origin of the practice, it is evident that it is rooted in ancient pagan beliefs and in Christendom's listing of so-called "saints." Valentine Day is also another excuse for commercial exploitation of an often uninformed public.—2 Corinthians 6: 14-18.

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