Awake!

ATROCITIES AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN MALAWI

WHEN WILL THEY STOP?

DECEMBER 8, 1975

Awake!

December 8, 1975
Vol. 56, Num. 23

Average Printing Each Issue:
9,800,000

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Five cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£1.50
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	$1.50
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	$1.50
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Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	₱8
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, 1406	R1,10

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn. **Notice of expiration** is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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The Bible translation used in "Awake!" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

Printed in U.S.A.

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PUBLISHED BY
WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF NEW YORK, INC.
117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, *President* GRANT SUITER, *Secretary*

ATROCITIES AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN MALAWI

YET another chapter of shocking inhumanity against a defenseless minority is being written in the East African country of Malawi. It is a record that reeks of beastliness, of insensibility to any standards of decency or of human compassion. It presents a sad commentary, indeed, on the way humans can treat their fellow humans—persons of their own race and nation. It is a record that should deeply affect all persons who have a love for justice and fairness, yes, of freedom for all, regardless of race, color or religion.

Today, when just one person is made captive by terrorists, that event is widely publicized. People follow with interest the efforts to free the hostage. But in Malawi, since September of 1975, tens of thousands of Jehovah's witnesses, native Malawians, have been subjected to a rule of terror. Three years ago they fled to Mozambique and Zambia to escape Malawi's reign of terror. Now they have been forced to return. In their own homeland they have been made the target of verbal abuse, of physical violence and all manner of indignities. They have been robbed of their few possessions and left without the means of sustaining life for themselves and their children.

In all of this they find no relief coming from law-enforcement agencies. There is not one single person among all the Malawian officials to whom they can turn and appeal successfully for protection against vicious attackers who beat, rob and rape at will. They are captives in their own land, the land where they were born and raised. Its borders have become to them like the walls of a large prison. The similarity to conditions that prevailed in Nazi Germany, where thousands of Jehovah's witnesses suffered imprisonment and death, cannot be ignored. And that similarity becomes greater now, for Malawi has begun to set up its own concentration camps for Jehovah's witnesses. It has also gone to the incredible point of tearing Christian fathers and mothers away from their children, even though these be but mere infants.

And why all of this? Are these people a dangerous element to the country—subversive, treasonous, plotters of revolution? Exactly to the contrary. They are undeniably among the most peaceable, hard-working, law-abiding citizens in the whole land. The brutality and indignities heaped upon them are for one reason, and one reason only. That is because they are nonpolitical. This is due to their conscientious beliefs in the Bible and the teachings of Christ Jesus, who said that his followers were "no part of the world." (John 15:17-19) And so, their conscience does not allow them to purchase a card declaring them members of Malawi's ruling political party —the Malawi Congress Party. Because of this, they are treated as if they merited less consideration than humans normally grant to animals.

A 'small thing,' some may be inclined to say. 'Why not buy such a card and avoid the trouble?' That would certainly be the easier course. And if it were simply a matter of paying some tax or paying for an identification document or *cedula* (such as Jehovah's witnesses in many lands pay for and carry in obedience to the laws of their respective countries), this would bring no objection whatsoever from them. But the issue here reaches the very heart of their Christian belief and position. Christ Jesus told the Roman governor Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought." (John 18:36) For Jehovah's witnesses to begin joining political parties of this world would be an open denial of what they claim to believe and stand for. Though they have no desire to undergo suffering, they will accept this or even death itself in preference to being unfaithful to God and his Son.

That is the way Christians in the early centuries felt. You can read in history books of the efforts made by Roman officials to get early Christians to make sacrifices to the "genius" of the emperor, even by such a small act as putting a pinch of incense on the altar as a sacrifice. Of Christians brought into Roman arenas to die, one history says: "Very few of the Christians recanted, although an altar with a fire burning on it was generally kept in the arena for their convenience. All a prisoner had to do was scatter a pinch of incense on the flame and he was given a Certificate of Sacrifice and turned free. . . . Still, almost no Christians availed themselves of the chance to escape." —*Those About to Die,* Daniel P. Mannix, pp. 135, 137.

Ask yourself, Which is greater evidence of a good citizen, to buy a political party card and carry it around—something that any criminal or even a traitor could and would do—or to live in obedience to the laws of the land and prove oneself to be hardworking, decent, honest and respectful, loving one's neighbor as oneself? Even the Malawian officials must realize how ridiculous it is to make the holding of a political card the all-important test of good citizenship. Otherwise they would not frequently deny that this is at issue, or deny that anyone is actually trying to force persons to buy such cards.

But the facts speak for themselves, and those facts are brutal, shocking, sickening. Consider briefly now what Jehovah's witnesses have had to endure in Malawi during the past decade and right up until today.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARD

(Below is a translation of the Cinyanja expressions.)

Kwacha! = It is dawn, i.e., Freedom has been achieved.

Khadi la Umembala = Membership Card.

Chopereka 22t = Contribution 22 tambalas [25 cents].

Vicious Elements MAKE A MOCKERY of MALAWI'S CONSTITUTION

THE Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, adopted in 1966, contains this provision in its first chapter:

"(iii) The Government and the people of Malawi shall continue to recognize the sanctity of the personal liberties enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of adherence to the Law of Nations."

What are some of those personal liberties, the sanctity of which would be recognized? The next articles say:

"(iv) No person should be deprived of his property without payment of fair compensation, and only where the public interest so requires.

"(v) All persons regardless of colour, race or creed should enjoy equal rights and freedoms."

But almost since the constitution's adoption, criminal elements in the country have made a mockery of those words.

Even before the writing of this latest constitution, there had been a violent outbreak of attacks on Jehovah's witnesses in Malawi in the year 1964. A total of 1,081 of their homes and more than one hundred of their meeting places, called Kingdom Halls, were burned or otherwise ruined. Hundreds of their fields of crops were destroyed, to deprive them of needed food. But at least in 1964 there was some recourse to law.

An example showing that justice still functioned then is seen in that eight men who shared in murdering a Malawian Witness named Elton Mwachande were brought to trial and convicted. Refuting the charge that the Witness had 'provoked' his assailants, or that Jehovah's witnesses in Malawi were delinquent in their civic duties, acting judge Mr. L. M. E. Emejulu then said:

"I see no evidence of provocation. It is true that Jehovah's witnesses determinedly propagated their faith and sought to win converts, but they were alive to their civic duties and they did all they were asked to do, including community development. They only refused to join any political party. . . . There is no evidence that they ever forced or tried to force anyone to accept their religion. The evidence is to the contrary. The Constitution guarantees them the right to belong or not to belong to any political party. I find no evidence of provocation."

Justice Disappears

That was in 1964. Since 1967, however, any semblance of justice as regards this defenseless minority has disappeared.

Despite the provisions of equal rights and freedom for all persons guaranteed by the constitution, on October 23, 1967, as announced in *The Times* of Malawi, the government officially banned Jehovah's witnesses as an "unlawful society." This served as a signal for a countrywide attack on Jehovah's witnesses, who then numbered some 18,000. Again they saw their humble homes ransacked and burned. In the one city of Lilongwe in Central Malawi, 170 homes were burned in just three nights. The total reached 1,095, with 115 Kingdom Halls wrecked. Thousands of Jehovah's witnesses were beaten and thrown into prison. Other thousands sought temporary refuge by crossing the borders into the neighboring countries of Zambia and Mozambique.

And from the government, the source of 'law and order,' the 'official protector' of the rights of all the people of Malawi, what? No condemnation whatsoever of all this criminal activity! Nonetheless, seeing the tremendous proportions the violence was taking, the government did call on its political party members to pull back in

their vicious persecution. Thereafter, for a time, a measure of peace and calm prevailed and those Witnesses who had sought refuge outside the country returned. Their work of preaching the good news of God's kingdom to their fellow Malawians went on and, though it could not be done openly due to the ban, their work prospered.

About two years later, on October 6, 1969, the president of Malawi, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, publicly stated that no one in the country should be forced to buy a political card. Would the future show that these words had meaning and strength and would be held in respect? Or would later events also make a mockery of that statement?

Third Wave of Violence Triggered

In 1972 the answer came. At the annual convention of the Malawi Congress Party a resolution was adopted. It made the false claim that Jehovah's witnesses 'hindered the political and economic development of Malawi' and presented these almost unbelievable statements:

> "(b) Resolved that all the members of these fanatical religious sects employed in commerce and industry should be dismissed forthwith, and that any commercial or industrial concern that does not comply with this resolution should have its license cancelled.
>
> "(c) Resolved that all the members of these fanatical religious sects employed by the Government should be dismissed forthwith and that any member of these sects who is self-employed, either in business or farming, have his business or farming activities discouraged.
>
> "(d) Resolved that all the members of these sects who live in the villages should be chased away from there, and appealed to the Government to give maximum possible protection to members of the party who deal with the adherents to these sects."

What was the effect of these cruel and inflammatory resolutions that, in so many words, called for Jehovah's witnesses to be cast out of human society? Almost immediately a spirit of mob violence was whipped up throughout the entire country. Beginning in July of that year (1972), members of the party's militant Youth League and its Young Pioneer movement took the lead in a virtual war against Jehovah's witnesses.

In their savage attacks the party members spared none, not even the aged or the pregnant women. Young girls were raped repeatedly; men were beaten to a state of unconsciousness. Forms of torture that could come only from sick minds, such as driving six-inch nails through men's feet and forcing them to walk, were used to try to force these people to violate their religious convictions and conscience and buy a party membership card. This time the number of homes destroyed ran into the thousands. In harmony with the Malawi Congress Party's resolution, the Witnesses were forced from their villages and fields into the forests and bush. Their livestock was stolen or killed.*

In all of this, *not one person engaging in these criminal attacks was arrested or brought to justice!* How empty all of this made the constitutional provisions appear! The promise of the president that people would not be forced to buy party cards was made worthless, just empty words with no strength requiring respect or obedience. Members of the Youth League often boasted, "We are the police." By their actions such Youth League members, in effect, spit upon the nation's constitution and its provisions for freedom for "all persons regardless of colour, race or creed."

A mass exodus of Jehovah's witnesses from Malawi resulted. In course of time some thirty-six thousand persons (includ-

* For documented evidence giving names and places of these actions, see *Awake!* of December 8, 1972, pages 9-28.

ing children) came to live in ten different refugee camps in the neighboring country of Mozambique. There they were given some land to farm and thus were helped to keep themselves alive. Within these refugee camps they built scores of Kingdom Halls in which to continue their study of God's Word. They had lost practically all their material possessions but they had not lost their faith.

Forced Back into the Hands of Persecutors

In 1975, however, as a result of a successful revolution against Portugal, the country of Mozambique began undergoing a transition from being a Portuguese colony to becoming an independent nation. Certain radical political elements used the occasion to whip up sentiment against the Malawian Witnesses in the refugee camps and to insist that they join in shouting political slogans, such as *"Viva Frelimo* [the name of the principal political party in Mozambique]." The Witnesses' refusal to become politically involved brought their forced evacuation from the Mozambique refugee camps. They were compelled to cross the border back into Malawi.

At the Malawi border, the returning refugees were met by the Minister for the Central Region of Malawi, Mr. Kumbweza Banda. He told them: "You left Malawi of your own accord and now you have returned of your own accord. Go back to your villages and cooperate with the party chairmen and other local party officials." Referring to the members of the Malawi Youth League, he added: "My boys are here to see that you do cooperate with the Party."

This gave little hope of improved conditions for the refugees, many of whom were returning without even having funds to travel by bus to their villages. Large numbers walked on foot more than one hundred miles, with their young children. One group walked more than three hundred miles, the women arriving with swollen legs and feet. What awaited them?

On August 27, 1975, shortly after their return began, the District Secretary of the Malawi Congress Party's headquarters of Nkhotakota sent out a circular making these statements (translated from Cinyanja), the first of which flatly contradicts the claim of Mr. Kumbweza Banda that Jehovah's witnesses were returning to Malawi of their own accord:

> "I am informing you that we have received a message from the party office on this Central Region in Lilongwe. The message says that those people of that banned church of 'Jehovah's Witnesses' have been chased away from the place to which they fled in Mozambique. These people are now returning to their homes.
>
> "We want to state clearly that if these people arrive at their homes you Area and Branch leaders should make sure, along with your village headmen, that you see to it that each one of them buys a *PARTY CARD.* As you know, it is a very essential work that every person in your villages should buy a Malawi Congress Party card. This is the one way in which we people of this country can show appreciation to our Life Leader, the Ngwazi [Dr. Banda] for developing this country of Malawi.
>
> "I am yours in the work of the party,
> "[Signed] P. Kamsuli Chirwa
> District Secretary"

Now the violent attacks began again and became so intense that over 4,000 returned refugees crossed Malawi's border again, this time to Sinda Misale in Zambia, hoping to find refuge there. But by October the Zambian government had forced them to leave, sending them back into Malawi, where the other thousands of Witnesses were undergoing brutal treatment.

Just what are Jehovah's witnesses actually enduring in Malawi? Is the picture really as tragic as it is presented? Read now the account coming from sources within Malawi itself.

A BEASTLY RECORD

When Will It End?

THEIR refuge in Mozambique taken away, thousands of Jehovah's witnesses began filling the main roads of north and central Malawi as they made their way back to their home villages. For many it was like running a gauntlet.

One group of forty Witnesses, men and women, reached the market square of Mzimba, on their way to their homes in the north of the country. People gathered to jeer at the weary travelers, and then members of the Malawi Youth League attacked them. They were subjected to severe beatings from 8:30 in the morning until 2:00 in the afternoon. Policemen stood by and watched. One of those beaten was a man over eighty years of age. They had seventy miles yet to walk and were without food, for what little money they had was taken from them by the Youth Leaguers.

On arriving at their villages, at times the Witnesses were initially allowed to reoccupy their homes. But generally it was not long before the Youth Leaguers came to demand that they buy membership cards for the political party. Refusal brought all manner of inhuman treatment. Consider a few cases:

Sosola village, Central Region; August 26, 1975: A group of men and women, including the local Member of Parliament, Mr. Elson Muluzi, and the local Party Chairman, Stuart Maere, surround the homes of Jehovah's witnesses and ask if they are prepared to buy party membership cards. When the Witnesses reply that they cannot do this, the party members ransack their homes and chase them from the village, saying: "Get away from here! Go away to a country where there aren't any cards!"

Kasonjola region; September 4, 5, 1975: Youths of the Malawi Congress Party go to the homes of Witnesses in Nsambe, Kampini, Tanga, Mbalame I, Mbuziyamwana and Mselela villages. They demand that party cards be bought. Upon the refusal of the Witnesses, the party members come into their homes and steal all their possessions: money, bicycles, wristwatches, plates, cups and other domestic utensils. The brothers are subjected to terrible beatings, one becoming unconscious for an hour and a half as a result. In two places, Youth Leaguers (whose chairman is called Mozangwila) urinate over the maize flour in the homes, to make it unfit for food. When one of the Witnesses goes to the police to report the attacks and returns, he is beaten again.

Makambale village, Central Region: Five Witnesses, men and women, are stripped, subjected to beatings and chased for seven miles. Those responsible: Member of Parliament for Mangochi area, Mr. Abidabilu, and members of the Youth League and the Young Pioneers.

Mazonda, Muso and Mingola; September 2, 3, 1975: More than twenty men and women Witnesses are attacked and severely beaten by members of the Malawi Congress Party from Ncheu district. One Witness is unconscious for two hours from the beating. The attackers then rub itching beans into the wounds of both men and women. *September 4, 1975:* Young Pioneers Maduka and Samora lead a group of youths in attacking Witnesses in Beni

Chauya village. Men and women are beaten into unconsciousness.

Lingadzi, Lilongwe area; September 29, 1975: At 6 a.m. a crowd of Malawi Congress Party officials and Youth Leaguers take fourteen Witnesses, men and women, to the Party branch headquarters at Tsoka village. There they are subjected to severe beatings. The attackers strip the clothing from one Witness, already bleeding from his mouth and ears, tie his hands behind his back and then rub mud into his hair and eyes. Those responsible: Area Chairman Ng'ambe, Vice-Chairman Syawa, and Youth League Branch Chairman Mchezo and Vice-Chairman Mchenga.

Depraved Sexual Abuse

Many of the reports tell of sexual abuse of a most depraved kind. Among them are these:

Mponela area, northern Malawi: Witnesses are taken by their village headman, Mr. Kwindanguwo, to the Mponela police station. They are kept for five days without food. They are then given a letter to the police station in Dowa, the principal area. On reaching the Dowa police station, the officer in charge takes them to the area office of the Malawi Congress Party. They find other Witnesses already there. All are subjected to severe beatings. Before the attack begins, the Dowa area chairman for the Malawi Congress Party, Mr. Kamtepa, shouts, "Let Jesus Christ come down right now to prevent us from beating you all, before we start beating you!" The chairman and his Youth League aides then begin beating men and women. They take off all their clothes and rub a mixture of pepper and the hairs from the pods of itching beans* all over their naked bodies. They press this same mixture *onto* the genitals of the men and into the genitals of the women. Then they push the men on top of the women in an effort to force them to commit immorality, beating them all the while. Not one of the Witnesses gives in under the torture.

Bunda, Nyanga and Phatha villages, south of Lilongwe; September 4 to 9: All Witnesses are chased from their homes and stripped and beaten by mobs led by the local chairmen of the Malawi Congress Party, one of whom is named Jeke. One group of attackers consists of over a hundred persons who come prepared with an assortment of weapons to use on the Witnesses. They try to persuade the Witness men to commit immorality with the Witness women. Those from Bunda are taken to the police and these join in beating them. The police tell the Witnesses: "The government is ours. You go to God, if there is one, and ask him to come and help you." When the other atrocities are reported to the police, their reply is: "Go and tell God. Let him help you. If he doesn't do so, you will be finished this year."

Surely these words take one's mind back far beyond the time of the sadistic Nazi regime in Germany—back all the way to the first century of our Common Era when Christ Jesus was falsely charged with sedition against the government and was nailed to a torture stake. Read in your own Bible how the chief priests and scribes and elders of the nation "began making fun of him and saying: 'Others he saved; himself he cannot save! He is King of Israel; let him now come down off the torture stake and we will believe on him. He has put his trust in God; let Him now rescue him if He wants him, for he said, "I am God's Son." '"—Matt. 27:41-43.

* These "itching beans" are called *chitedze* in the Cinyanja language. The *Scott and Hetherwick Chinyanja Dictionary* says: "A kind of bean, curved S-shaped, velvety-brown pods, which when ripe and shaken cause the most intense itching; it is almost maddening to get the hairs down one's neck, with a curious electrical sensation."

Today, almost the identical mocking words are being spoken to Jehovah's witnesses in Malawi because they, too, insist on remaining loyal to God as did his Son Jesus Christ, who earlier had told Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world."—John 18:36.

Kanchenche, northwest of Lilongwe; August 31, 1975: Members of the Youth League attack Jehovah's witnesses. The men are knocked to the ground and the Youth Leaguers trample on their necks. The women are stripped and beaten and the Youth Leaguers use torches to burn the hair of their genital areas. Local women share in beating them. Five married Witness women are raped. One young girl of seventeen is raped by three different men. Those taking the lead in this persecution: Malawi Congress Party Area Chairman Yowase Kapulula of Lundu village; Kanjaye, the son of Biliyati of Thandaza village; Asedi Chavesi, the son of Magadi of Chilomba village, and Benala Mtsukwa of Msanda village.

Chimasongwe village, Lilongwe area; September 7, 1975: A group of Witnesses are taken to the area branch of the Malawi Congress Party, where their assailants strip both men and women. Then they bind them together to try to force them to have copulation and thereby commit adultery. One sixty-year-old Witness is bound in this way to a young Witness girl; another young man is bound to his own sister; even a menstruating woman is thus bound to one of the male Witnesses. The local chairman of the Youth League, Chipukupuku, also takes a torch and burns the hair from the private parts, chests and armpits of ten of the male Witnesses. The attackers, urged on by local women members of the League of Malawi Women, take one female Witness—stripped naked—and jump up and down on her legs and stomach while beating her with sisal leaves until she faints. The woman who is menstruating is beaten till she bleeds from mouth and nostrils.

Chilinde, in Lilongwe; September 8: Members of the Youth League at night severely beat the Witnesses. One of the women is raped by four men; another is locked in her home, and three men rape her. When the Witnesses report these incidents to the police, the answer they receive is: "Tell your God. He is causing you to be robbed. Is he dead, so that his eyes don't see?"

Lumbadzi, north of Lilongwe; September 24: Refugee Witnesses return to their homes, and the village headman allows them to enter the village. That night, however, the Malawi Congress Party area chairman and a crowd of Youth Leaguers come and take the Witnesses to the party office at Dowa. Their attackers beat them and then take two Witness men and tie their genitals together. They beat them on the genitals so that if one tries to pull away from the beating he will injure the other. They tie heavy bricks onto the genitals of other Witnesses and make them walk with these. Among those responsible is a man named Chilunje, from Lumbadzi. When these atrocities are reported to the police, they reply: "Even though you may be killed, there is no help for you."

Chindamba village, west of Zomba; October 2: Fifteen Witnesses are arrested by Zomba police and tortured. Besides depriving them of food and severely beating them, their tormentors use wooden tongs on the genitals of men and women in an effort to force them to buy political party cards.

Yet other reports relate about Party youths poking sticks into the genitals of Witness women. Surely the picture as a whole is at one and the same time both tragic and nauseating. And yet this is not all.

Herded into Detention Camps

At the beginning of October the Malawi government issued a circular to all police stations—not to put a stop to the criminal attacks and to restore law and order —but to round up Jehovah's witnesses and put them in detention camps, as at Dzaleka, Kanjedza and Malaku. In some areas these are large detention camps; in others, they are barbed-wire areas around the police stations.

But for the Witnesses, the worst of it is that the orders call for only adults to be put there. This has meant the separating of parents from their children, even including suckling babies. The government order seems to be designed to keep the Witnesses from attempting to escape to any other country, since they could not take their children along; or perhaps to subject the Witness mothers to such anguish that they will violate their Christian conscience and join the political party. Entire congregations of Jehovah's witnesses have now been rounded up and put into such detention camps. The experience of Jehovah's witnesses in Nazi Germany is being repeated—this time in Africa.

The Witnesses are thus left with no appeal to any governmental source for justice or protection against violence. They and not their attackers are arrested. When seeking police protection, they have repeatedly been met with statements such as, "We have no time to waste on you people, since you do not cooperate with the Party. Even though you may be given trouble, there is no point in your coming to us to report, since we are not here for you. Only if you show us a card for the Party will we assist you, and not otherwise. You can report to us only if someone is dead, and then we will only write a statement."

In some areas the only place of safety the Malawian Witnesses can find is in the bush and forests—where literal animals and not beastly men live. From the Lilongwe area comes a list of fifteen congregations of Jehovah's witnesses who have fled into the Dzalanyama Forest on the border between Malawi and Mozambique. Members of many other congregations spend their days in the town but go into the bush each night to sleep, either because of having been made homeless or to avoid a nighttime attack.

When Will the Barbarities Cease?

Though distressed by such barbaric persecution, Jehovah's witnesses in Malawi and in the rest of the world are not shaken in their faith nor in their determination to hold firm for Christian principles. They recall the words of the apostle Peter in a time when Christians of the first century were undergoing similar persecution because they too were "no part of the world" but maintained undivided loyalty to God's kingdom by Christ Jesus. To them, the apostle wrote: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ."—John 17:16; 1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

These words, however, in no way lessen the grave responsibility that rests on those inflicting such persecution upon innocent persons. If not before, then at the time of his execution of judgment upon an enemy world, Jehovah God promises to bring liberation and relief to all of those who have put trust in him and have remained faithful to him under severe trial. Then, and to all future time, this earth will

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never again be disgraced by scenes of barbarism, brutality and depravity practiced upon the defenseless. Then, on a global scale, "the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ps. 37:11.

But could the atrocities in Malawi be made to cease before then? Yes, they could. If those in authority respected the Malawian constitution, such inexcusable attacks could be brought to a halt right now. Why should such Malawian officials let criminal elements, even though found within the ranks of their own party, make a mockery of the Malawian constitution and disgrace the nation in the eyes of the world?

Is there within Malawi not even one man of authority with the wisdom and courage of a Gamaliel? If there is, then certainly now is the time for a man of that caliber to counsel his fellows, saying, as did Gamaliel with regard to the Christian apostles who had been arrested: "Keep clear of these men, I tell you; leave them alone. For if this idea of theirs or its execution is of human origin, it will collapse; but if it is from God, you will never be able to put them down, and you risk finding yourselves at war with God."—Acts 5:38, 39, *New English Bible.*

Surely those now persecuted in Malawi merit the earnest prayers of all those having faith in God and in righteousness. (Compare Acts 12:5.) In addition to this, if the suffering of these innocent people is of heartfelt concern to you, why not write now to the Malawi representative in your country, or to any of the officials of the Malawi government whose name and address are listed with this article? Urge them to do what they can to bring a halt to the atrocities going on within their land.

A POLYGAMIST Chooses A Better Heritage

As told to "Awake!" correspondent in Zaïre

EVER since my youth I have been interested in preparing a worthwhile heritage to pass on to my children. Over the years, however, my outlook on life has changed greatly, and yet my desire to prepare something of value for my family is still strong. Because I was born in a small village in the heart of tropical Africa, my way of life is probably quite different from yours.

Village life for a child in Africa affords much opportunity to meditate on one's future. When night had enveloped the last glimmer of day, we youngsters would sit outside our huts with our parents. The night was full of sounds, but it was not the chirping of crickets or the croaking of frogs that held our attention. Grouped around a wood fire awaiting the invitation of slumber, the older folk would be talking. This was not the time for youths to speak, but, rather, to listen. What a wealth of knowledge we acquired in this way! The older ones would relate incidents that took place while they were hunting, recite folklore and expound innumerable proverbs, appropriate to all sorts of situations in life. At moments like these I would ask myself, "What will I do with my life?"

My Projects for the Future

For my people, although money is important, a name or reputation is of far greater value. A man who makes a name for himself is respected, even after his death. I too desired to acquire for myself a name that would be remembered, and this seemed to me to be a worthwhile heritage to pass on to my children. For one to gain fame and prestige in the community, children are of paramount importance among the Bantu people. It is hoped that in future generations people will point to one's offspring and say: "Ah! These are the children of So-and-So." In fact, in our tribe, a man who has no children is asked this somewhat contemptuous question: *"Neushiye tshinyi?"* which means, in effect, "Who will perpetuate your name?" (Literally, "What will you leave?") A man who has no children to carry on his name, even though he might be very rich, is considered valueless in the eyes of the community. To the way of thinking of the Bantu people, such a man has been cursed. That my name should never be obliterated, even after my death, I decided to have many children. I wanted to make sure of my "heritage."

My own father was a polygamist, although he had not chosen this kind of marriage for himself. How, then, did it come about? Our tribal rules require the brothers of a dead man to take the widow (or widows) of their brother. Since the brothers of my father died, he inherited three wives.

In general, the Bantus consider women to be a source of financial enrichment to the family, and so a man with several wives gains prominence in the community. Knowing something about the work of an industrious wife can help you to appreciate how she brings material benefits to the household. Her work begins at daybreak, when she must assure herself that

the family's needs for water are met. She may have to make several trips to a water source at the bottom of a steep ravine, each time returning with a basin of water balanced on her head. With the water drawn, the village women set about cultivating their fields, working with crude hand hoes in the already hot morning sun. Their industriousness will be rewarded by a harvest of manioc (cassava), groundnuts, maize, sweet potatoes, beans, yams, plantains, bananas and pineapples. With nine months of rainy weather and a dry season of only three months, the growing season for many of the fruits and vegetables extends for most of the year. A wife who works diligently will have a surplus of food that she can sell at the market, in this way adding to the revenue of the family.

It is not only the wife or wives who contribute to the wealth of the family; the children also do so. How? As in many parts of the world, the parents of a young woman ask a bride price or dowry of the man who is going to take their daughter in marriage. In my tribe this bride price usually comprises a sum of money, a goat, chickens and clothing, depending on the financial means of the family. The money, which is for the father of the girl, is considered to be a contribution toward the expenses of the family in the upbringing of their daughter. The articles of clothing are a gift to the mother of the girl for having guarded the virginity of the daughter up until her marriage. What about the goat and chickens? They are kept as an investment. They can always be slaughtered or sold later if the family has the need to raise some money quickly. From the Bantu point of view, now that the daughter has left her own family, she will be enriching the family of her husband by bearing children to his name. So why not ask a bride price? The Bantus feel that she is worth it.

Despite the evident material advantages of a large family from a polygamous marriage, my interest in having many children was kindled chiefly by that desire, acquired from childhood, to assure a name and a worthwhile heritage for myself and my family. With such a project in mind I decided to marry several wives, but not all at the same time. My idea was to marry a wife, and then when she had ceased to give birth to any more children I would send her away and marry another, and so forth. However, little did I know that my plans would not be realized as I had envisioned.

My Life as a Polygamist Begins

When I became a young man, I left the village where I had been raised and I started out in the trade of carpentry. Sometime later I took my first wife in marriage, and within a year she had borne my first child. I felt satisfied as I saw my projects for the future begin to crystallize. Though my wife continued to bear me children, about two years later I decided to marry a second wife.

My first wife was not at all in agreement with this intrusion affecting her hitherto unchallenged status in the household. Needless to say, the first wife never is happy about the newcomer who now shares her husband's affection. Only in the case where the first wife has proved to be barren will she accede resignedly to a second wife's arrival. Whatever the case may be, however, the mother of the second wife will not have failed to prepare her daughter for life as a secondary wife. For example, she will have taught her daughter that she must consider the first wife as her "mother." Henceforth it will be from her new "mother" that she will have to learn the household chores, and so forth. The

first wife will give her washing to do, send her to the market to buy food and assign her to perform many other tasks.

Although they are reluctant partners, it is considered essential that peace should reign between the two wives so that their husband will enjoy good health and a long life. If there are conflicts between the wives, it is feared, evil spirits will take advantage of the situation in order to take away the husband's life.

Unfortunately there was no such peace in my marriage. Jealousy and squabbles were the order of the day. Because of continual tension between myself and the two women my health declined and I fell seriously ill. My first wife now became convinced that it was the second wife who was responsible for my sickness, and from that time onward she considered her to be a sorceress. Of course, neither one of my wives wished to be blamed for my sickness, so each one of them wanted to go to the fetish priest in order to absolve herself of responsibility for my condition. This resulted in an amusing episode, for neither one dared to visit the fetish priest for fear of being seen by others who would conclude that she had had a spell cast on me!

In time, however, I recovered, and, later, after eight years of marriage to my second wife, I introduced a third woman into my marriage. My desire was still that I might ensure a lasting heritage for myself, a name that would never be blotted out. But contrary to my initial plans, instead of sending away my first and second wives, I allowed them to remain. Do you think that this decision contributed to peace in the household? It did just the opposite! If there were troubles when there were just two women in the house, you can imagine what happened when I introduced the latest rival into the home, she being the youngest of them all. Understandably, my first wife felt just about completely neglected when the third wife appeared on the scene. On the other hand, the latest wife, confident in her youthful attractiveness, put pressure on me to send the first and second wives away so that she might occupy the number one position! As for me, deep in my heart, it was neither the third nor the first wife that I favored most, but the second.

At the time when my third wife came into the household my first two wives had already ceased to give birth, and this factor seemed to add weight to the pleadings of the latest wife to send the other two away. However, the second wife, in the knowledge that she was the favorite, would not yield in this struggle. In the meantime, my first wife took a back-seat position, as if a stranger in her own household.

A Turning Point in My Life

With the renewed and reinforced conflicts in the family, I fell sick again and, to make matters worse, one of my children died. As a result, I concluded that to regain my health and to bring peace back to the household I would have to remain with just one wife. Have you guessed which wife I planned to keep? Despite the fact that the third wife was still young and fruitful, my decision was that I should stay with my second wife. As it happened, though, when the members of my family learned of my resolve, they opposed me vigorously, and so, under their pressure, I suspended my decision. But, of course, the unsettled conditions in my marital life did not cease.

Then, in 1970, something happened that was to cause an even more profound change in my life, one of which I had never dreamed. I came in contact with one of Jehovah's witnesses. As a Catholic my first reaction was one of wariness. Had not my church warned me of false proph-

ets who would make their appearance in the last days? However, this encounter did encourage me to start reading the Bible, and, as a result, I began to learn things that I had never known before. One outstanding thing that impressed me was that, to please the Founder of marriage, a man should have but one wife. I read for myself in the first book of the Bible the following words: "That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh." To find peace and, more importantly, to please God, I knew that sooner or later I would have to make up my mind to become *one flesh* with *one woman*.—Gen. 2:24.

By this time I had started to attend the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses each week along with my three wives. However, when my wives realized that the time was rapidly approaching when I would be making a decision to send two of them away, they became increasingly uneasy. My first and third wives were resigned to the fact that my choice would be to remain with my second wife. The second wife herself had little doubt that she would occupy the cherished position as my only wife. As for me, I had not yet announced my decision.

Imagine my consternation when I learned that, to please the Creator, it was not simply a question of keeping any one of my three wives. In the eyes of the law and in the eyes of God, I was legally married to my first wife, the wife of my youth. It was my duty to remain with this woman. (Prov. 5:18) Imagine my dilemma now! I really loved my second wife. Even before learning of the Bible's requirements I had already decided to stay with her and to send the other two away. Now I was faced with the decision to remain with "the wife of my youth," who was now by no means young. How could I bring myself to send away my second wife, who had borne me three children and whom I loved the most? My study of God's Word during the past few months had convinced me that I must do the right thing. But would I have the strength to carry it out? I prayed frequently, and finally my love for God helped me to make the decision. Despite my explanations, there were many tears shed by the departing wives. For me it was as if my heart was torn in two. On the one hand, I experienced deep sorrow over the departure of the women I had lived with for so long, but, on the other hand, I had profound joy in the knowledge that my decision had gained the approval of the One who inaugurated the first marriage.

The sorrow that I felt was moderated also by the happiness that my decision brought to my first wife. I cannot describe her joy when she found herself restored to her former position. In her eyes my decision was just unbelievable.

Of course, not everyone was as happy as my first wife. After the initial tears my estranged wives did all in their power to embitter the minds of their children against their father. Their hostility continued despite the fact that I supported them financially. As for the other members of the family, some were very happy for me, because they knew of my sickness, which had been aggravated by the constant strife and unhappiness in my household. Others, however, regretted that I had decided to stay with an older woman, relatively speaking, and one who could no longer bear me any children. How did my other friends and acquaintances view my situation? There were those who thought that I had lost my mind. Still others admired what I had done, perhaps secretly in their hearts wishing that they had the courage to do the same.

What are my feelings? I have no regrets at all. To the contrary, I have every rea-

son to be happy. At last my household is calm again. And to add to my contentment, my wife has joined me in serving the true God, Jehovah.

Changed Aspirations

When I think back to those childhood dreams of mine as I sat around the wood fire in our village, I cannot help but marvel at the way in which my outlook on life has changed. Formerly, my one goal in life was to make a name and fame for myself as a heritage to pass on to my children after my death.

Now my hopes and aspirations are quite different. Instead of my own name, it is the name of the Creator of all the peoples of the earth, Jehovah, that I desire to be made known. And if I remain faithful to God, I am confident that I will inherit life in a new order on this planet earth, where not only my name but also my life will endure to all eternity. My one consuming aim in life now is that I should aid others, including my own wife and children, to learn to honor God's name so that they may share with me in this better heritage of eternal life.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
—"Known" Once Again in Greece

By "Awake!" correspondent in Greece

JULY 1975 will long be remembered by Jehovah's witnesses in Greece. On the eighth day of that month, leading newspapers of Athens announced: "MARRIAGES BETWEEN JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES PRONOUNCED LAWFUL." Thousands of Greek families were thrilled at this turn of events.

The ruling came as the result of a judgment by the Supreme Court of State on July 3. The decree stated:

> "The religious doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses or Millennialists meets the requirements of a 'known religion' according to the Constitution and is therefore an 'approved' doctrine . . . Thus, any marriage performed between adherents to the said doctrine and in conformity with the rituals provided for thereby is not a nonexistent one, and any child conceived in pursuance of such a marriage is legitimate."

But why the need for such a Supreme Court judgment?

For more than four years prior to this, the government of Greece had viewed marriages of Jehovah's witnesses as "nonexistent" and their children as "illegitimate." Why? Because a circular issued on November 13, 1970, by the then Vice-President and Minister of Interior, Stylianos Pattacos, declared that "the religion of Jehovah's witnesses is an unknown one."

Does that sound surprising to you? Perhaps you realize that Jehovah's witnesses are active with full legal recognition in scores of lands and islands of the sea. In fact, the Witnesses have carried on Bible educational work in Greece since the beginning of the twentieth century. Why, after some seven decades, did the government of Greece declare Jehovah's witnesses to be an "unknown" religion?

Incessant Pressure Tactics

It was because of constant pressuring of the government by an influential group that hated the Bible-based message proclaimed by Jehovah's witnesses. A peculiar expression of this hatred began in 1927. In that year, for the first time, clergymen of the Greek Orthodox Church questioned the then Attorney of the Supreme Court of Greece as to whether marriages between "Bible Students" (as the Witnesses were then called) were lawful and belonged in official Registrar Books. The Attorney replied:

> "One of the most fundamental principles of Modern Public Law with regard to religious tolerance—deriving from our Greek traditional virtue—is undoubtedly the performance of . . . any religious service. Therefore, a marriage solemnized according to any religious sect whatever between persons of the same religious beliefs, is in principle absolutely respectable and therefore admissible of registration on the State's Registrar Books."

Twenty years later religious leaders of Greece again attempted to pressure the government into withdrawing its legal recognition of Jehovah's witnesses. Thus in 1947 the Greek clergy questioned the validity of Witness marriages. But they were in for another disappointment, for the Attorney of the Supreme Court stated:

> "Seeing that their sect is a 'known' one in Greece, namely open, not having any secret doctrines and worship rites and not opposed to the common morality and public order . . . they are entitled to the religious tolerance acknowledged by the Constitution . . . Consequently, a marriage between Millennialists [Jehovah's witnesses], solemnized in conformity with their beliefs, is contracted with legal validity . . . and is recordable in the Registrar Books."

The Greek clergy, however, refused to accept defeat. They kept looking for another opportunity to raise this issue. It came in 1959. But once again, a fair-minded jurist refused to bend to such pressure tactics. Mr. Andrew Tussis, Assistant Attorney of the Supreme Court, handed down a well-documented opinion in which he gave assurance that Jehovah's witnesses were a "known" religion and that their marriages were lawful.

From "Known" to "Unknown"

In time, however, the political situation in Greece deteriorated. Suddenly, on the night of April 21, 1967, a military group seized control of the country. They appointed as archbishop a favorite clergyman named Ieronymous.

It seemed a perfect opportunity for the clergy to take another stab at Jehovah's witnesses. But, instead of approaching the Attorney of the Supreme Court, this time the Athens Archiepiscopate asked a Mr. C. Muratidis, professor of canonical law at Athens University, to make a pronouncement as to whether Jehovah's witnesses were a "known" religion.

Professor Muratidis issued his opinion on September 5, 1967. Ignoring all previous decisions of Supreme Court Attorneys, he declared that Jehovah's witnesses were *not* a "known" religion and that their marriages should be considered nonexistent.

Archbishop Ieronymous brought the matter to Vice-President Pattacos. From there the case went, not to the Supreme Court, but to the Legal Council of the State, made up of lawyers who were subservient to the governmental Ministers. What was the outcome?

Fortified with the opinion of Professor Muratidis, on November 13, 1970, this body stated that Jehovah's witnesses were not a "known" religion. Thereafter the Ministry of Interior sent out circulars to

the country's Registrar Offices ordering them not to register any marriages of Jehovah's witnesses, since "such marriages are of no subsistence." Further, the circular declared that children of Witness couples were to be recorded in their mother's family name, which is the same as declaring them illegitimate.

Appalling Consequences

Can you imagine the tragic consequences of such legislation? Overnight thousands of Greek married couples were viewed as cohabiting unlawfully. Widows of Jehovah's witnesses could no longer draw pensions, since the law now insisted that they had not really been married. The Social Security Institution denied payments for childbirth and funeral expenses.

Government agents began removing Witness families from the Registrar Books. Data for wives was removed from their husbands' names and relisted under those of their fathers. Children of such women were entered as extramarital. Some officials went so far as to snatch away any lot of land belonging to couples whom they no longer considered married and entitled to the land.

Of course, not all officials acted so harshly. Some even acknowledged that Pattacos' circular was "preposterous." Nevertheless, they lamented that "regrettably we feel unable to ignore it." Sympathetic officials urged Jehovah's witnesses to appeal their cases to the tribunals.

Many Witnesses did this. They even received some favorable judgments from lower tribunals. But when they would present these decisions to the Registrars, the latter would refuse to comply. Obviously they feared the consequences of disobedience to Vice-President Pattacos. The Vice-President was unyielding in his opposition to Jehovah's witnesses. To one protest of the deplorable results of his circular, he replied:

> "(a) Millennialism is not a 'known' religion in the Constitutional sense.
>
> "(b) Marriages said to have been performed according to this religion are nonexistent and not to be recorded in the registrar books. In view of the foregoing facts, please stop invoking emotional or philanthropic reasons on matters governed by Logic and Law."

The dire consequences of such "Logic and Law" are evident in a case that involved the death of a baby. When the father, Demetrius Kazanis, sought a permit for burial, the Registrar refused. He declared himself unable to record an "exit" where there was no corresponding "entry" in his books. As far as that official was concerned, the baby had not been born.

Shamefully, while the father groped for a way to correct the situation, it was necessary to keep the dead baby in a refrigerator. Word quickly spread to newsmen. A magazine carried the headline: "IN THE NAME OF FANATICISM A BABY'S CORPSE IN REFRIGERATOR!"—*Epikaira,* Jan. 26, 1973, p. 20.

At length, a public prosecutor intervened and ordered that the child be recorded in its father's name and buried. This, however, did not rectify matters for most of Jehovah's witnesses in Greece. Neither judgments of lower tribunals,

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which were ignored, nor assistance from a portion of the press could annul the circular of the Minister of Interior. What could be done?

An Unexpected Change

After lengthy discussions with legal advisers, it was decided to introduce two cases to the Council of State. One was that of Prokopius A. Delis, whose marriage had been legally registered in 1957. In spite of this, though, the Registrar of the community of Vuniatades, Corfu Island, denied Delis' request for having his wife and child registered there.

The old royal palace building, where the Supreme Court of State handed down a momentous decision on July 3, 1975

The second was the case of Stamatius Kallinderis, a bailiff for the municipality of Peristeri-Athens. Government officials had discontinued the monthly subsidy for his family because "the marriage between him and Mary Hormova, both belonging to the religion of Jehovah's witnesses, which is not a 'known' and 'approved' religion, and was performed according to the rituals of the said religion, is nonexistent."

In view of the importance of these cases, the Supreme Court of State decided to hear both of them on one day, April 22, 1975. In anticipation of the hearings, Jehovah's witnesses pondered many questions. Would the Supreme Court of State proceed without religious bias? How would the clergy react? Would Archbishop Ieronymous interfere?

But some months before the April hearing something unexpected happened. The military group dismissed the acting government and appointed a new one. Though even more oppressive than the previous one, this rulership ingloriously collapsed just a few weeks after taking power. Then the military men called on politicians to take over. They assigned the presidency to former premier Constantine Karamanlis, who had been in self-exile at Paris, France, for ten years. Would matters improve for Jehovah's witnesses now?

Karamanlis' government sponsored elections and a referendum whereby a democratic regime came about. The new Greek Parliament voted for a liberal Constitution. It guaranteed personal freedom to Greek people and equal rights for citizens, regardless of religious beliefs. Interestingly, these developments occurred just before the date set for hearing the cases of Jehovah's witnesses.

The new Minister of Interior, Mr. Stefanopulos, was asked about the possibility of issuing a new circular that would supersede the former one by Pattacos. In his reply, Stefanopulos suggested going ahead with the two cases. He expressed his expectation that the law "will give a right solution," adding: "In the contrary case, we shall see what may be done. As you understand, it is not merely a matter of revoking a previous circular, but is a legal matter in suspense before the Supreme Court of Justice."

"Known" Legally Once Again

The hearings went very well. The Reporter for the Court, Mr. M. S. Muzurakis,

gave a fine presentation of the entire matter concerning Jehovah's witnesses. He then suggested annulment of the administration's previous order. Paradoxically, one of the government's solicitors agreed, while another feebly tried to defend the former circular that denied legal recognition to the Witnesses. What was the outcome?

On July 3, 1975, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of State announced favorable judgments in both cases. Showing agreement with this, the Minister of Interior issued a new circular to all the country's municipalities and communities and to the Greek Consulates abroad. It ordered registration of marriages between Jehovah's witnesses and of any children resulting therefrom.

How pleasant this was for Jehovah's witnesses in Greece! With serious legal obstacles removed, they can once again concentrate their full energy to sharing with their neighbors the most important of all messages—the good news of God's established kingdom.—Matt. 24:14.

Scientists Create Life?

FREQUENTLY over the years scientists have made various discoveries or developed certain theories that give rise to expectations that life will be or has already been created in the laboratory.

Note some of these newspaper headlines: "Day Hailed When Men Build Virus" (Vancouver *Sun*, August 16, 1962); "U.S. Scientists Are Urged to Recreate Life" (New York *Times*, September 14, 1965); "Creation of Life in 5 Years Seen" (New York *Times*, January 18, 1966); "Laboratory Creation of Any Life No Longer Dream" (Buffalo *Evening News*, December 7, 1970); "Chemical Basis to Life Found Plentiful in Space" (New York *Times*, November 23, 1973).

But have scientists in their work with viruses and chemical molecules actually created life in a test tube, as it were?

In the 1974 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, French microbiologist Rene Dubos takes up the matter in the essay "The Mysteries of Life." Note what he says regarding claims that scientists have produced life *de novo*, or anew:

"A fully developed virus, which had been naturally produced by a living organism, was separated into its component parts by chemical procedures. When these separate parts were tested for biological activity, they were found to be inert, that is, they were unable to multiply in a susceptible organism. This biological activity was restored, however, when the parts of the virus were chemically reassembled in the test tube under the proper conditions. Spectacular as this achievement is from the chemical point of view, it does not constitute—as has been claimed—the production of life *de novo*. Since the virus first had to be produced by a living organism, and since its reassembled parts showed activity only when introduced into a living susceptible organism, all the biological machinery essential for its reproduction had to be provided by preexisting life.

"In a completely unrelated kind of experiment, several complex molecules similar to those found in living things have been produced in the laboratory by exposing simple chemicals to the kind of radiation that probably existed in the primitive atmosphere. But this chemical feat does not constitute production of life *de novo* because the molecules so produced have not been assembled—*organized*—in a way enabling them to duplicate themselves and to develop. An organic molecule, however complex and similar to the kind found in living things, still belongs to the realm of inanimate matter if it cannot reproduce and evolve."

Thus, despite many sensational newspaper and magazine articles, the fact remains that man has not created life! And, interestingly, the *Encyclopædia* also observes: "As far as we know now, life exists nowhere else in the solar system, its origin is still a mystery, and its effects on our planet have been little short of miraculous."

YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR READING

YOU can see the sights of ancient Rome. You can "walk" with patriarchs of old —men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You can ascend a lofty Himalayan mountain peak, or stand before thundering waterfalls in Africa. You can watch a stealthy jungle cat, or gaze at distant stars and planets. Yet, while doing so, you need not travel farther than your favorite easy chair. A whole world of adventure, mystery, romance, humor and instruction can be yours—if you are a good reader.

Unfortunately, though, about a third of earth's inhabitants above the age of fifteen years are unable to read and write. Doubtless, for this reason many of them feel severely limited. After all, there are many things to read—books, magazines, newspapers and street signs, to name a few. But even those who are literate should be able to read relatively fast, with ease and good comprehension. Otherwise, how can they learn things in school, follow written instructions at work or read at home with pleasure and benefit? So, we may well ask, How can one improve reading ability?

The road to adventures in reading actually starts at home. Naturally, slang, incorrect grammar, poor word choice and slovenly speech will not build up a person's command of language. And you must know a language well if you are to read it skillfully.

In some homes, little or no reading is done. But, if you are a parent who wants your children to develop interest in reading, you may desire to gather the family together regularly to read aloud. The Bible is the best book for such oral reading, for it is rich, not only in language, but in story content and instructive principles. Incidentally, the Bible's first book—Genesis—contains the absorbing story of creation and also tells about the lives and faith of such men as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

A recent item in the Chattanooga *News —Free Press* discussed the remarks by an Ohio school superintendent to the effect that "Jehovah's Witnesses' children . . . are the best readers in the school." Explaining the reason for this, the article pointed out that "the Witnesses attach great significance to Bible-reading." The Witnesses believe that their hope for future life is tied in with reading and applying God's Word. The writer concluded that, with such motivation, "you're very apt to be one of 'the best readers in the school.' "

What and Where to Read?

Publications abound today and it is not likely that you could or would want to read everything published in your language. "To the making of many books there is no end," says the Bible, "and much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh." (Eccl. 12:12) Not all literature will upbuild a reader and refresh his mind. Just as the food you eat affects your physical state, so the mental food you take in

will influence your thinking. Therefore, be selective. You might ask, Is this book worthy of my time and consideration? Will that article be upbuilding morally or spiritually? You may be able to tell at a glance that, for your own good, your attention should be turned elsewhere.

What you are reading can have a bearing on where you will read it. A newspaper, novel or relatively light material might be read while you are traveling on a train or plane. More weighty information may require the solitude of a private room or study.

By all means, cultivate interest in what you are reading. Concentrate on it. Of course, if you are to do that, you may find it inadvisable to sit in the most comfortable chair that can be found, with music playing softly in the background. After all, you want to read, not sleep. Silence and an upright chair, with the book or magazine resting on a table, will probably be much better. In his study, Emperor Franz Joseph reportedly had two desks. He sat at one of normal height, but when too tired to work while sitting, he worked at a high stand-up desk. This does not mean that *you* need two desks. To concentrate, however, you should assume a posture conducive to reading, not sleeping.

Reading Efficiency and Eye Movements

If you feel that your reading can stand improvement, there are some points that may help you. For one thing, you might consider your eye movements. When you are reading, your eyes do not move smoothly across the page. Rather, they stop several times to focus or fix on a line. Then they sweep back, to the beginning of the next line. A slow reader's eyes stop often on every line, perhaps seeing only one word, or merely a syllable, each time. Obviously, the messages sent to his brain are disjointed.

A person can read faster, with greater comprehension and pleasure, if he reduces the number of visual stops or fixations per line. Why not practice a little? Endeavor to read phrases or word groupings. See if this does not increase your reading speed and comprehension of the thoughts expressed by the writer.

Regression merits consideration too. This is the bad habit of rereading many words, instead of making one's eyes move forward steadily. Regressions slow you down, fatigue your eyes and hinder comprehension. If you miss something, do not backtrack. It is better (and probably will take no more time) to read an article again. If you have a sense of urgency, a desire to make the best use of your time, regression will be discouraged.

Occasionally, the most skillful readers regress because a writer's line of reasoning eludes them, or the message received by the brain seems garbled or unrealistic. "Once, on a plane trip, I was reading a magazine article by Pearl Buck," wrote Cornelia Otis Skinner. "In a moment, one of those enchanted sentences caught my eye. It went: 'At dawn we set forth in sedan chairs whose poles rested on the shoulders of barebacked Chinese beavers.' How extraordinary! I thought. The Chinese beaver must be a good deal larger than ours, and is obviously capable of being domesticated. At that point, the plane went into one of those inexplicable shudders, which jolted me into losing my place. When I found it again, I realized that Mrs. Buck and her party had been carried by Chinese *bearers.*"—*The Reader's Digest,* May 1972.

Vocalization—Good or Bad?

Generally, you will not want to regress. But there is something else to avoid, if you are trying to read rapidly. Certain persons read to themselves rather slowly because

they vocalize. They may whisper or move their lips, tongue, vocal cords or throat muscles, actually saying every word to themselves. Others do not make these audible sounds or physical movements, but they still say every word to themselves, "hearing" each word individually in the mind. With persistent effort and by reading word groups, one can eliminate vocalization and thus increase reading speed.

Yet, vocalization is not always amiss when reading privately. Joshua of ancient Israel was commanded: "This book of the law [of God] should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely." (Josh. 1:8) Reading in an undertone means saying the words to yourself in a low voice. This impresses more indelibly on the mind the material being read, for you *see* and *hear* the words.

What About a Course in Rapid Reading?

At this point, you may be wondering whether to study a book on rapid reading. That is a personal matter. Likely, such a publication would urge you to eliminate regressions and vocalization and take in several words with each fixation of the eyes. It might also suggest that you not permit your eyes to rest on the endings of long words (such as "-ly" in "fundamentally"). You might be told that words like "and," "in" and "she" hardly exist for skillful readers. Such readers just speed along, surmising certain words and word endings.

In silent reading, do not let the idea of speed dominate you, however. It is not always vital or fitting. If you have planned to spend an evening reading a good book, you may want to take your time. You may be studying, with the object of remembering significant points. And you should not try to read everything with lightning speed. A novel might be read rapidly, but a lengthy memorandum at work may require concentration and a different pace.

When You Read, Think Actively

In any case, remember that reading should not be a passive activity. Author W. Somerset Maugham, basically a slow reader, wrote disparagingly of persons who "read with their eyes and not with their sensibility. It is a mechanical exercise like the Tibetans' turning of a prayer wheel."

Think actively while reading. Analyze the author's statements, agreeing or disagreeing. Ask yourself, What is the writer's theme? How does this paragraph support it? Am I expected to do something with this information? What should I do?

Take time to pause and meditate on the material being read. Dedicated Christians appropriately do this while reading the Holy Scriptures. Why? Because they wish to remember Bible accounts. They desire to apply Scriptural principles in life. And they want to be able to answer sincere inquirers. Says a divinely inspired proverb: "The heart of the righteous one meditates so as to answer."—Prov. 15:28.

When possible, visualize what is taking place. Mentally see the terrain, the roads, the people. Note how men and women are attired. Hear the voices of happy children at play. Smell the bread baking in an oven. Relive the scenes. Then your reading will be an adventure, for you will be able to see an ancient city, ascend a lofty mountain, marvel at the wonders of creation or associate with men of great faith in God. In fact, why not open your Bible soon and begin reading its first book, Genesis? Therein you will witness Jehovah God's mighty acts of creation and can walk with godly patriarchs of ages past.

WHAT ABOUT Fevers?

FEVERS are among the things that often cause loving mothers of infants and small children great concern. But, as we shall see, mothers are likely to be more worried than the condition warrants.

According to medical history, "fever has been known as a sign of illness since . . . observations of Hippocrates," the so-called "father of medicine." But the Bible shows that more than a thousand years earlier, Moses had something to say about "burning fever" in the divine legislation that he was inspired to give to the nation of Israel. (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:22) Many centuries after Moses, the Gospel writers tell of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, curing the mother-in-law of the apostle Peter of a "high fever," and of the shipwrecked apostle Paul curing the fever of the father of Publius, "the principal man" of the island of Malta.—Luke 4:38, 39; Acts 28:7, 8.

Progress in Understanding Fever

Since the time of Hippocrates men have learned more and more about fevers. Quite a step forward was made in 1714 when Fahrenheit invented the first thermometer. Then about a hundred years ago it was discovered that a fever was directly related to a rise in the body's thermostat. Even today fever is such a sensitive and reliable indicator of the presence of disease that thermometry is probably the commonest clinical procedure in use.

Only within the past twenty years have men gained a meaningful understanding as to just how a fever comes about. It had been known that the tiny gland in the brain known as the hypothalamus, which lies just back and above the bridge of the nose, regulates the body's temperature. But how?

It was discovered that the white corpuscles in the blood, when combating an infection, produce pyrogens, literally "fire producers." This substance acts on the cells in the forepart of the hypothalamus, causing it to raise its "thermostat." For this reason it has been said that a fever is an elevated temperature, the result of a disturbance of the central temperature-regulating mechanism in the brain. One result of this changing of the "thermostat" is that the body feels as if it were actually cold and so the individual has chills and shivers, even though his body temperature is above normal.

Recent research has also shown that the constancy of the temperature of the body is related to the balance of sodium and calcium in the hypothalamus. Calcium appears to act as a kind of brake that keeps the sodium ions from raising the temperature of the body too high. It appears that the pyrogen of the white corpuscles or leukocytes removes the calcium brake.

Among the questions raised at an international fever symposium held in London (1970) were: Why a fever? Of what do those pyrogens consist? Are they hormones? Why is the average normal

body temperature 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit and not 90 degrees or 108 degrees? Also, some have asked, Why does aspirin have no effect upon the body's temperature if it is normal, but is increasingly effective as the temperature gets higher and higher?*

Normal Temperature Relative

It is indeed of interest that, even though the environment may vary as much as two hundred degrees, yet 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit is ordinarily considered "normal" temperature. Such things as race, diet, climate and sex have very little bearing on one's temperature; still there are other factors that do cause variations. For example, one's temperature varies throughout the day. It is the lowest between three and six o'clock in the morning and the highest between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. Then again, the temperature varies in different parts of the body. The rectal temperature is one degree higher than that of the mouth; the hands and feet are lower in temperature and the tips of the nose and ears have the lowest temperature.

Such things as exercise or emotional upsets will raise the body's temperature. But such a condition could not be a true fever, for the body returns to its normal temperature as soon as exercise stops, no pyrogen having acted upon the hypothalamus.

So it follows that anything between 97 degrees and 100 degrees Fahrenheit may be normal and that even 101 degrees for children may be simply due to exercise or emotional upset. For children a high fever usually is from 103 degrees to 105 degrees Fahrenheit, and anything above is usually considered dangerous. The highest fever from which a person recovered without brain damage was reportedly 114.8 degrees Fahrenheit.

* Aspirin does seem to reduce the yield of pyrogens, but that does not account for all of its effect.

What causes the hypothalamus to raise its thermostat, as it were? The most common cause, without a doubt, is infection. However, there are also other causes of fever. Among these are drugs, poisons, severe accidents, especially to the central nervous system, and various malfunctions of the brain. Then again, simply overheating the body to an extreme degree can bring on a fever, as in the case of sunstroke or heatstroke, where the body's central mechanism for cooling seems suddenly to fail. Such an individual ceases to sweat despite his rising temperature.

Why a Fever?

Does a fever serve any good purpose? Does it result in any benefit to the body? This is a somewhat controversial question. There are modern authorities that will answer Yes, while others say No. Thus a 1973 textbook on human physiology written by an English professor flatly states: "The function of fever is unknown; it does not appear to enhance the body's ability to cope with disease." And an American authority states that demonstrations to show that fevers have a positive value "have not been convincing."

However, the chairman of that international symposium on fever favors an opposing view, for he stated: "It seems unlikely that this universal response of warm-blooded animals would have survived . . . if it did not confer an essential defence against disease." And another authority states: "A fever of moderate degree is a provision of Nature by which the infection is combatted and the recovery encouraged." Experiments have shown that animals inoculated with bacteria and then kept at 105 degrees Fahrenheit resisted infection better than those not subjected to higher temperature.

Thus in times past, before notable strides were made in chemotherapy, that is, in the

use of drugs, such diseases as syphilis, asthma and arthritis were treated by induced fevers. Episodes of acute diseases (such as measles) with their fevers have been noted to have a beneficial effect on other preexisting diseases. In fact, it is a matter of record that Pasteur challenged the members of the French Academy of Medicine to inoculate a chicken with a fatal dose of anthrax. They could not do it because a chicken has a normal temperature of 107 degrees, which will not permit anthrax bacteria to live.

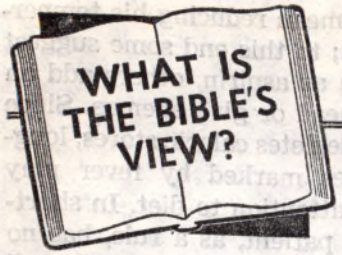
Among other reasons that some give in support of the position that fevers serve a useful purpose are these: Fevers cause the body to produce a recently discovered substance, inferon, helping it to combat viruses. Fevers also stimulate the production of enzymes and white corpuscles. Nevertheless, fever has its detrimental aspects too. The heartbeat is increased and there is a loss of weight, body fluids and salt, accompanied by headaches and other discomforts.

What to Do About a Fever

There was a time when nearly everybody considered fever to be an unmitigated evil and therefore a condition that should be lowered at once by aspirin, cold water, ice cubes or cold towels. This may still be recommended in certain instances, but more and more the consensus is to let the fever run its course unless it is very high or is accompanied by complications such as vomiting, diarrhea or difficulty in breathing. In this regard, some liken a fever to a fire alarm. The important thing is not to silence the alarm but to put out the fire. And so merely taking measures to reduce the fever without searching for and treating the cause usually is pointless.

Still, it is reasonable to try to make a feverish individual comfortable. Sometimes this may mean reducing his temperature somewhat; to this end some suggest medication such as aspirin, others add an ice bag to the head or give enemas. Since a fever rapidly depletes caloric stores, long-standing diseases marked by fever may require careful attention to diet. In short-term fevers the patient, as a rule, has no appetite for food and is usually better off to limit his intake of solids. Although there may be differences of opinion on whether to feed or to starve a fever, it has been well established that feverish patients need plenty of liquids. For every degree of fever metabolic activity is increased about 7 percent and an adult is said to lose a quart of water by evaporation, and so extra fluids not only make him comfortable but are most important. Some recommend that such liquids include fruit juices and vegetable broths. Of course, any extremely high or long-lasting fever logically should have the attention of a doctor.

Perhaps the most concerned of all as regards fevers are mothers of small children or babies. Temperature changes can occur suddenly and be accompanied by alarming symptoms, and so mothers do tend to be easily concerned and worried if their pediatrician does not do something about it. But, more and more, authorities are urging mothers to calm down. As one of them put it: "I consider the thermometer often a source of undue parental anxiety. Physicians frequently are asked to 'treat' a fever, but this pressure to 'do something' should be tempered by the realization that, in most cases, fever is merely the body's defense against a self-limited disease." (Incidentally, this argues that fevers are beneficial!) In the same vein, another noted pediatrician urges "treat the child, not the thermometer." And that is also good advice for grown-ups!



Should One Train in Judo or Karate?

IN MANY parts of the earth there has been a real surge of interest in judo and karate. What accounts for this? And what does the Bible say that has a bearing on training in such arts?

In some places judo and karate are viewed as just a "sport" that provides healthful exercise. So some persons who are interested in physical fitness might feel that such training is comparable to swimming or general calisthenics.

Yet there is no question but that a prime reason for the interest in judo and karate is the hope that they can be used for self-defense if necessary. In many countries people are concerned about the dangers of being mugged or otherwise assaulted. Many men and women believe that having skill in judo or karate is a safeguard.

In order to evaluate the matter in a balanced way, it is good to have in mind just what judo and karate are, what their background is, and what proficiency in them might involve.

Basically, judo and karate are methods of unarmed combat that originated in Japan. As forms of combat or self-defense they are classed as *bushido,* which means "The Way of the Warrior." One encyclopedia pointed out that bushido "had its sources in Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism." Ancient Japanese warriors trained in these techniques so they could bare-handedly fight armed or unarmed enemies.

Thus both judo and karate are rooted in offensive or defensive violence. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1971) describes jujutsu, from which the modern form called judo developed, as: "A system of fighting without weapons. The object is to cripple or possibly kill the antagonist." And the *Illustrated World Encyclopedia* says: "The object of judo is to kill or so injure an attacker as to make him completely defenseless."

Karate is even more violent and dangerous. As E. J. Harrison points out:

> "Karate resembles both jujutsu and judo. But as a purely 'fighting art', designed to dispose of an enemy in the shortest possible time with no means barred, I think we must admit that it transcends them both in its deadly efficacy. And why this should be so will appear from the fact that a single karate technique, if executed in earnest, is capable of inflicting fatal injury upon its victim more surely and speedily than either jujutsu or judo."—*The Fighting Spirit of Japan,* p. 74.

Unquestionably violence is on the increase world wide; we cannot and should not ignore that fact. But does a person who wants to align his thinking and actions with the Bible feel compelled to resort to training of this sort? And even if a person's interest is mainly physical fitness, is this sort of training an advisable way to keep in good condition?

The Bible does not categorically condemn self-protection, even the use of force if necessary. But authorities in the field of protection from crime often stress that reliance on a weapon—whether a gun, a knife or techniques such as judo or karate—is not the wisest course. In most cases what are primarily needed are reasonable precautions to avoid dangerous situations. Good sense usually provides far more protection than physical prowess or weapons. Rather than urge that

someone 'trust in the arm of flesh,' the Bible recommends that a Christian place confidence in Jehovah, realizing that He is able to provide a spirit of wisdom even at times of crisis.—Jer. 17:5; Phil. 4:6, 7.

Proverbs 3:31 says: "Do not become envious of the man of violence, nor choose any of his ways." Christ's counsel and example prove that he agreed with and applied what the proverb said. (John 8:59; 10:39; Matt. 10:23) Accordingly, Christians seek to avoid violent encounters. When faced with threat of violence, they resort to flight when practical. They show thereby that they are not trying to "return evil for evil" or to rectify this system's injustices, but are waiting on Jehovah to express wrath against evildoers. —Rom. 12:17, 19.

A related principle that Jehovah intentionally included in his Word is: "As far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men." (Rom. 12:18; 1 Pet. 3:11) A person responsive to that advice would certainly consider how it applies in connection with training in "The Way of the Warrior." Also, he or she would not disregard this consideration: What conclusion would neighbors and other observers reach if they see a Christian who espouses 'not learning war anymore' choosing to learn the military or martial arts of unarmed combat? (Isa. 2:4) True, some have reasoned that such training is solely for self-defense. But even in the military many of the weapons and training procedures (including judo and karate) that are "for self-defense" are also employed offensively.

In Japan *judo* and *kendo* (swordsmanship) have in recent years become required training for youngsters in school. However, in the Japanese mind there is an unmistakable link between these techniques and the military arts. So young dedicated Christian witnesses of Jehovah there decline participation in this training. And some school authorities have taken a reasonable position, not forcing these students to share in what is viewed there as conflicting with the advice to 'beat swords into plowshares and not learn war anymore.'—Mic. 4:3.

Whether a person considers training in judo or karate as for self-defense or merely for exercise, another aspect should not be overlooked. One Japanese writer pointed out: "The art of jujutsu is an important ally on the field of battle. Even in practice one should try to imagine one's opponent an actual enemy." Jesus Christ, however, counseled: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you."—Matt. 5:44, 45.

Hence, no matter what a person's motive in considering training in judo or karate might be, he should have in mind how that training would affect his outlook. Would it be aiding him to apply Jesus' words "love your enemies" or, rather, stimulating just the opposite attitude?

As to special exercise for the sake of keeping fit, each person has to decide for himself whether such is necessary and, if so, what form it will take. The apostle Paul's counsel to Timothy was: "Bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come."—1 Tim. 4:8.

So, if exercise or bodily training is engaged in, it should not be allowed to encroach upon or overshadow your interest in spiritual matters. Physical recreation should not become the 'big thing' in life. The Christian knows that it is not bodily training that holds promise of eternal life. Nor is it the contents of your wallet or purse. What contribute to everlasting life are things such as sincere application of Bible principles, pursuit of godly devotion and being at peace with God.—1 Tim. 6:6-8, 11, 12.

Declining Confidence

◈ Confidence in the leadership of major American institutions continues to drop. A Harris Survey late in 1975 asked a cross section of adults how much confidence they had in twelve major institutions, and it was found to be significantly lower for all but one—television news coverage. For instance, ten years ago 55 percent of the people interviewed said that they had confidence in major business corporations, but now only 19 percent did. The medical field showed a drop from 72 percent to only 43 percent in the same period. The military establishment experienced a decline of confidence from 62 to 24 percent, and the executive branch of government plunged from 41 to only 13 percent, with Congress almost identical. The results show that people feel that there is a leadership vacuum in the country.

No Evolution

◈ Evolutionists claim that God did not create living things "according to their kinds," as the Bible says. They claim, instead, that these various life forms gradually evolved, changing over millions of years of time. Yet, scientists who believe this are repeatedly confounded by finding fossils of ancient living things that are identical to living things today. Another such find has recently been reported, this time fossils of blue-green algae. *Science News* relates: "New evidence now reported by a team of Harvard University paleontologists shows that one blue-green alga fossil is almost a perfect match for its modern counterpart. The fossil they have identified is also the most complex yet discovered." After all that time, this form of living thing has not changed into something different. There has been no "evolution." But, then, there never was, as living things only reproduce "according to their kinds."—Gen. 1:11, 21, 24.

Gleaning Corn

◈ College students in Illinois gleaned hundreds of bushels of corn by hand after mechanical harvesters finished the regular harvest. With corn selling for about $3 a bushel at the time, they were making money to donate to private agencies that help feed the world's hungry. One student, observing that if the corn was not picked by hand it would be left to rot until it was plowed under, said: "What you see here is just a small sample of the appalling waste in modern, mechanized farming." Agricultural experts estimate that about 5 percent of the country's 5.7-billion-bushel corn crop is missed by the combines.

Large Companies Collapse

◈ When W. T. Grant Company filed for reorganization under the nation's bankruptcy laws, it became the largest retailing failure in United States history. The chain, with over 1,000 stores in 40 states and sales of $1.76 billion last year, became insolvent as its liabilities exceeded its assets. In Japan, the giant Kohjin Company, a leading textile manufacturer, also failed due to financial troubles. It was the largest Japanese company to collapse since the end of World War II. These two join a number of other large American and European firms that have gone under in recent years. Many others are not far behind.

Japanese Cities Broke

◈ The financial problems of cities are not confined to the Western world. Tokyo's *Daily Yomiuri* reports that 643 Japanese cities are "on the verge of bankruptcy," mainly because of sharp rises in the salaries of city employees and increasing expenditures for social services. Twice as many cities were added to the crisis list this past fiscal year as were added the year before.

Questionable Counselors

◈ Presbyterian clergyman Thomas Kirkman of Michigan notes the increasing number of clergy who are experiencing broken marriages and divorce. Often they leave their pastorates to take up other work. "In nine cases out of 10," says Kirkman, "these former clergymen have found employment as 'marriage counselors,' conflict-resolution counselors or in social services." How does he view their working at trying to resolve the problems of others when they have not been able to resolve their own? He states: "It has always appeared to me that hav-

ing 'flunked the course,' they have been elevated to teaching it. . . . The 'sinner' has become the 'teacher.' I like to see the teacher as one who can do the thing he teaches. This is not to deny Christian forgiveness. It is rather that I do not want the accident-prone to be directing the 'driving school.'"

Protecting Unborn Babies

◈ Pregnant women have long been counseled to avoid excesses in food and drink, and not to smoke, so as to protect their unborn babies. Recently two Johns Hopkins Hospital researchers, after more than a year of experimentation, claimed that pregnant women who smoke may be partially asphyxiating their unborn babies. They declared that harmful carbon monoxide from cigarette smoking can displace oxygen moving from the mother's bloodstream, through the placenta, and into the fetus. In other research from the University of Illinois, it was claimed that there is some evidence, though incomplete, that pregnant women who drink more than six cups of coffee a day apparently tend to have higher rates of miscarriages, fetal deaths and stillbirths.

Car Sales Boom

◈ While most Western nations have experienced a slump in new-car sales in the past year, the oil-rich Arab sheikdom of Abu Dhabi on the Persian Gulf cannot get them fast enough. Dealers there complain that the demand exceeds the supply. The country has a population of less than 60,000 people, but takes in an estimated $30 million a day in oil revenues. Now new cars are registered at the rate of about 1,200 a month. However, because of a shortage of spare parts, when cars break down they are often junked in the desert. One reporter said that the highway from Abu Dhabi to Dubai was littered with abandoned cars, left after wrecks or scrapped because spare parts were lacking. One problem that does not exist is concern over how much gasoline a car uses.

"Dime-Store" Hospital Costs

◈ Hospital costs in the Western world have soared. But visitors to China who have gotten medical treatment and surgery there have reported extremely low costs for excellent service. The Seattle *Times* reported that an American had an eye operation that would have cost about $2,000 in New York, plus $100-a-day room charges. But the operation was performed in China for under $15, which included surgery, anesthetic and a semiprivate room. Food was extra, but cost under 50 cents a day for three meals.