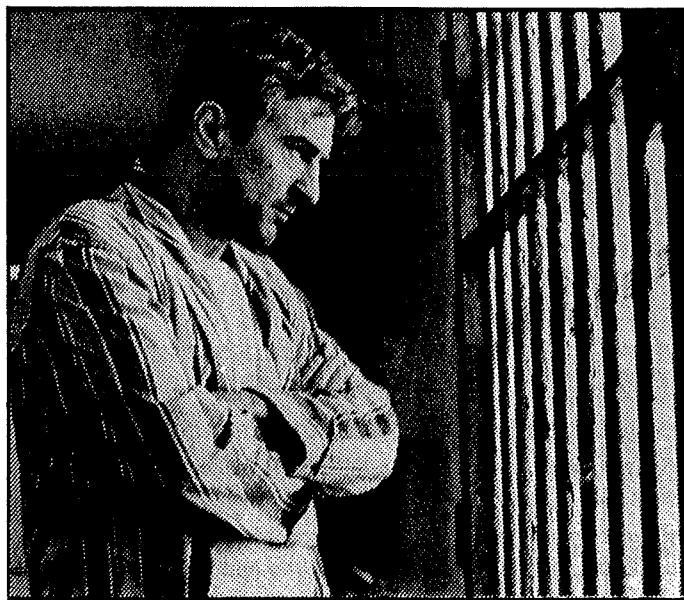


Life after limbo



Awakenings,
directed by
Penny
Marshall.

Robert de
Niro as
Leonard
Lowe in
Awakenings.

Christians talk a lot about 'new life' or being 'born again'. By this we mean we are 'awakened' to spiritual understanding.

The theme of spiritual renewal is at the centre of *Awakenings*, though there is an emphasis on a 'this worldly', rather than 'other worldly', being. There are several resurrections. People who have been looked upon as 'living dead' are 'awakened' to a new life.

In the 1920s a viral sleeping sickness swept through various Western countries. It left some people seemingly permanently cocooned. These people were later termed 'post-encephalitic'. Most of them ended up in institutions like Bainbridge Hospital (the fictionalised hospital of the film), a chronic-care facility for people with neurological disease. Little was done for them and they remained in a type of limbo for 20 or more years.

The film follows the story of a group of surviving 'post-encephalitic' people at a hospital in the Bronx, USA, in 1969. A new doctor decides to administer to these

patients a new drug, L-DOPA, which has recently come onto the market for sufferers of Parkinson's Disease. The result is acclaimed as a miracle: the 'post-encephalitic' patients are 'awakened'.

The film does not dwell on the extraordinary events; they happen, and then people have to cope with their happening. Like Rip Van Winkle, they find that life has proceeded without them. Families and people they knew are dead. They have aged beyond comprehension. The questions of identity and being become a preoccupation and the emotional surroundings of their 'awakening' are dampened by confusion and unpredictability.

The film brings together extraordinary performances from Robin Williams, as the doctor, and Robert De Niro as Leonard Lowe, the first patient to be 'awakened'. It is a film that will challenge most viewers and leave them pondering about a different 'new life' and the possibilities of living life to the full.

— Peter Bentley ■



Fellowship Tours for 1991

March

4 days - Easter - Qld - Golden West

April

8 days - Cairns Reef adventure

8 days - Sydney - Canberra

May

3 days - Fraser Island long weekend

14 days - New Zealand

12 days - Fiji with Ernie Gerhke

16 days - Darwin - Alice Springs

June

7 days - Roylen Cruise

12 days - Singapore & Bangkok

3 days - Long Weekend - O'Reillys, Lamington Nat. Park

July

14 days - Cairns - Pt Douglas - Kuranda

22 days - Honolulu - 3 islands

16 days - Burke & Wills western NSW

August

6 days - Longreach Hall of Fame

21 days - USA west coast & Canada

24 days - Darwin to Perth

10 days - Pacific cruise

September

3 days - Phantom of the Opera

21 days - New Zealand

10 days - Bowral tulips & Blue Mts

30 days - UK & Europe

3 days - Hervey Bay whale watch

October

18 days - Tasmania

4 days - O'Reillys, Lamington NP

10 days - Norfolk & Lord Howe Is.

November

8 days - Cherry Harvest - Dubbo

7 days - Hong Kong

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