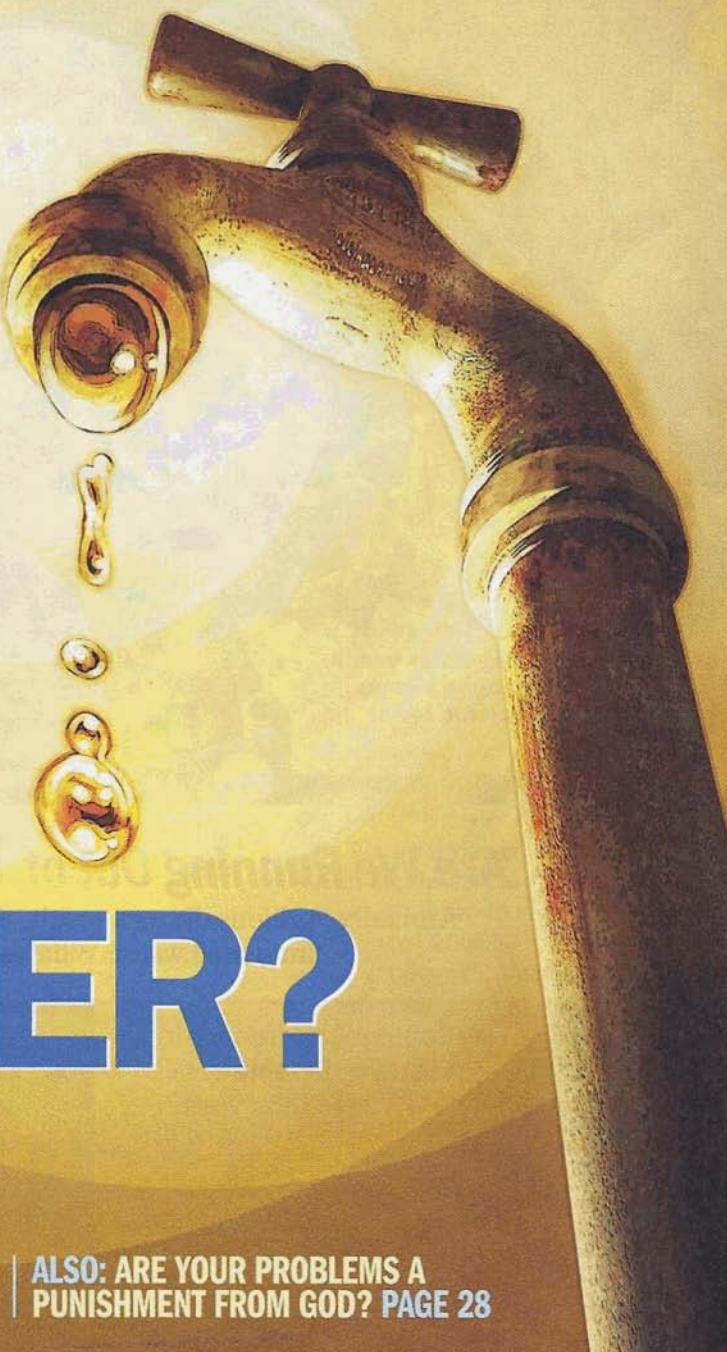


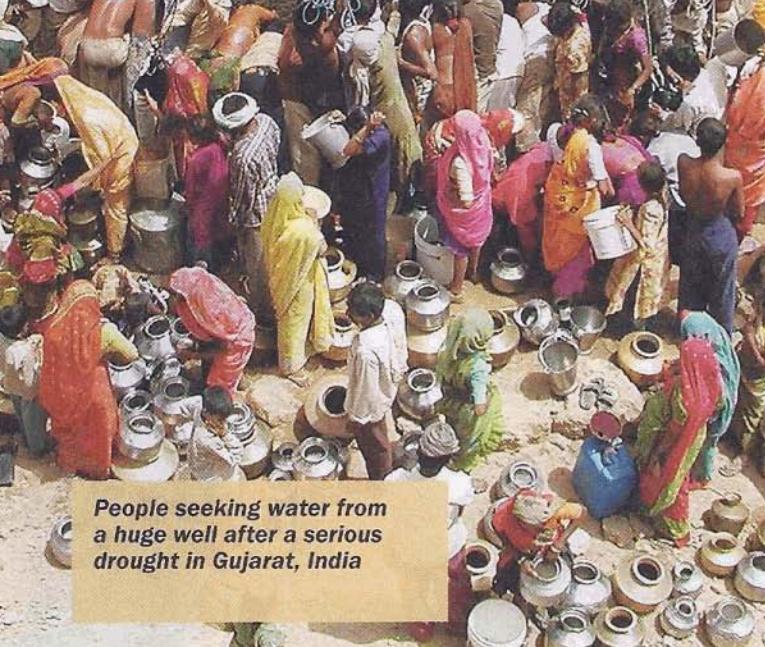
# Awake!

JANUARY 2009

**Are We  
Running  
Out of  
WATER?**



| ALSO: ARE YOUR PROBLEMS A  
PUNISHMENT FROM GOD? PAGE 28



People seeking water from a huge well after a serious drought in Gujarat, India

- 17 Was It Designed?  
The Toucan's Beak
- 18 Young People Ask  
Should We Break Up?
- 21 Salt Seekers of the Sahara
- 24 Forgotten Slaves  
of the South Seas
- 26 A Penchant for Pizza
- 30 Watching the World
- 31 How Would You Answer?
- 32 'The Best Book on the  
World's Religions'

REUTERS/Amit Dave

## Are We Running Out of WATER? 3-9

Annually, millions die as a result of poor sanitation and contaminated water. What is the solution?



10

### Helping Children With Learning Disabilities

What can you do if your child has dyslexia or another learning disability?



28

### Are Your Problems a Punishment From God?

Are your problems an indication of God's disapproval?

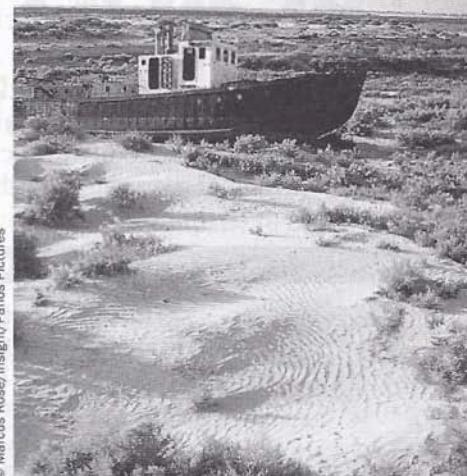
**A boat left high and dry on the Aral Sea**

# Are We Running Out of WATER?

*According to an Uzbek saying, "if you run out of water, you run out of life." Some experts would say that those words seem more prophetic than proverbial. Each year about two million people die as a result of poor sanitation and contaminated water, and 90 percent of the victims are children.*

**H**OW do you get water? Do you just turn on a faucet and out it pours? Or, as is common in some lands, do you have to walk a long distance, wait in line, and then carry a heavy bucket of the precious liquid back to your home? Does it take you several hours each day just to get enough water for washing and cooking? In many lands, water is that scarce and that difficult to obtain! In her book *Water Wars—Drought, Flood, Folly, and the Politics of Thirst*, Diane Raines Ward notes that 40 percent of the world's population "carry their water from wells, rivers, ponds, or puddles outside of their homes." In some countries, women may spend up to six hours fetching water for their families, lugging it home in containers that, when full, weigh more than 40 pounds.

The fact is that over a third of the world's population is seriously affected by a water and sanitation crisis. The problem is particularly severe in Africa, where 6 out of 10 people do not even have a proper toilet—a factor that, according to a World Health Organization report, contributes to "the transfer of bacteria, viruses and parasites found in human excreta which . . . contaminate water resources, soil and food." Such contamination, the report notes, "is a major



© Marcus Rose/InSight/Panos Pictures

## **WATER UNDER THREAT**

■ "The Aral Sea in Central Asia was the fourth-largest lake on the planet in 1960. By 2007 it had shrunk to 10 percent of its original size."—*Scientific American*.

■ The five Great Lakes of the United States and Canada—Lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario, and Superior—are shrinking "at an alarming pace."—*The Globe and Mail*.

■ At one time, Australia's Deniliquin mill processed enough grain to meet the needs of 20 million people. Now, however, the rice crop has been reduced by 98 percent, and the mill closed in December 2007. The cause? "Six long years of drought."—*The New York Times*.

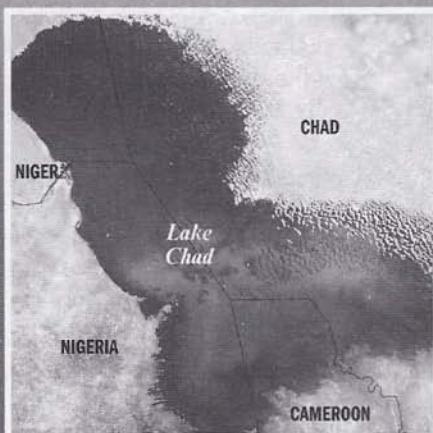
cause of diarrhoea, the second biggest killer of children in developing countries, and leads to other major diseases such as cholera, schistosomiasis, and trachoma."

Water has been called liquid gold, the oil of the 21st century. Yet, nations are squandering the precious commodity to such a degree that their principal rivers have hardly anything left

to pour into the sea. As irrigation and evaporation take their toll, prominent rivers are drying up, including the Colorado River in the western United States, the Yangtze in China, the Indus in Pakistan, the Ganges in India, and the Nile in Egypt. What has been done to alleviate the crisis? What is the ultimate solution?

#### "DRAINING DRY THE RIVERS AND STREAMS"

"Africa's Lake Chad, once a landmark for astronauts circling the earth, is now difficult for them to locate. Surrounded by [Cameroon,] Chad, Niger, and Nigeria . . . , the lake has shrunk by 95 percent since the 1960s. The soaring demand for irrigation water in that area is draining dry the rivers and streams the lake depends on for its existence. As a result, Lake Chad may soon disappear entirely, its whereabouts a mystery to future generations."—*Plan B 2.0—Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*, by Lester R. Brown.



1963



2007

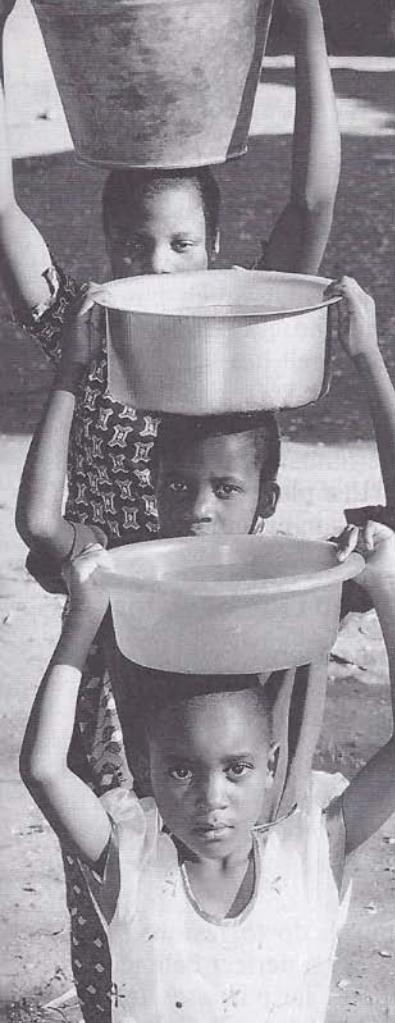
- Water
- Vegetation
- Land

## Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

*Awake!* (ISSN 0005-237X) is published monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2009 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.



**"Where there is no water, there is no life.  
... We live by the grace of water."**

—Michael Parfit, writer for National Geographic

**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bis-lama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Chitonga, Ciembba, Croatian, Czech,<sup>+</sup> Danish,<sup>+</sup> Dutch,<sup>+</sup> English,<sup>++</sup> Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,<sup>++</sup> French,<sup>++</sup> Georgian, German,<sup>++</sup> Greek, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>++</sup> Japanese,<sup>+</sup> Kannada, Kirghiz, Korean,<sup>++</sup> Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,<sup>+</sup> Polish,<sup>++</sup> Portuguese,<sup>++</sup> Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,<sup>++</sup> Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>++</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>+</sup> Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

\* Audiocassettes also available.

<sup>+</sup> CD also available.

<sup>○</sup> MP3 CD-ROM also available.

<sup>◊</sup> Audio recordings also available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).

# THE WATER CRISIS *What Is Being Done?*

*The water crisis is global. It poses health risks to billions of earth's inhabitants. What steps have been taken to bring water supply and water use back into balance?*

**S**OUTH AFRICA: "Durban's Poor Get Water Services Long Denied," announces a headline in *Science* magazine. The article reports that poor people living there have not had an adequate supply of water for decades as a result of the now-defunct apartheid policy of previous governments. In 1994, the article says, "a quarter of a million households in the Durban area had no access to clean water or sanitation."

To remedy the situation, in 1996 an engineer instituted a program that would supply some 50 gallons of water daily to each household. The result? "All but 120,000 of Durban's 3.5 million residents have access to clean water," *Science* reports. Now, at the very least, water is just a short walk away—a vast improvement over bygone days when many had to carry water for over half a mile.

*Science* magazine explains that to address the sanitation issue, "old 'pit toilet' outhouses" are being replaced with "urine-diversion (UD) double-pit toilets, which separate urine from feces to allow the latter to dry and decompose faster." By early 2008 some 60,000 UD toilets had been installed, although it was projected at that time that it would be another two years before all homes would be equipped with a proper toilet.

**Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see [www.watchtower.org/address](http://www.watchtower.org/address).** **America, United States of:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. **Australia:** PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** PO Box N-1247, Nassau, NP. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** 65617 Selters. **Guam:** 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St, Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii:** 2055 Kamehameha IV Road, Honolulu, HI 96819-2619. **Jamaica:** PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. **Puerto Rico:** PO Box 3980, Guayanabo, PR 00970. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

**Brazil:** In the city of Salvador, hundreds of children were suffering diarrheal diseases because of the lack of a sewage system and toilets.\* To correct the situation, the city laid 1,200 miles of sewer pipes for more than 300,000 homes. The result? The diarrhea rate fell by 22 percent citywide and by 43 percent in areas that previously had a higher prevalence.

**India:** In some parts of the world, there is a seasonal excess of good water; but it is not always captured so that it can be put to good use. However, in 1985 a group of Indian women in the district of Dholera, in the northwest state of Gujarat, came up with an ingenious method for saving water. They organized a group to build a retaining pond, which, when completed, was the size of a football field. They then lined the pond with heavy plastic to avoid leakage. Their initiative was successful. In fact, months after the next monsoon season ended, they still had water—despite the fact that they had “welcomed their neighbors to drink.”

**Chile:** This South American country stretches for 2,650 miles, hugging the Pacific Coast to the west and the Andes Mountains to the east. The State controls all water rights and authorizes the building of dams and canals. The result? Now 99 percent of city dwellers and 94 percent of those who live in the country receive adequate water.

### The Ultimate Solution

Each country seems to have its own method of dealing with the water crisis. In some lands where favorable winds regularly blow, windmills raise water to the surface and also serve to generate electricity. In wealthier nations, desalinization of seawater is also viewed as a viable solution. In many places huge dams retain river water and rainwater—a measure that has proved somewhat effective, even though reservoirs in arid areas may lose

about 10 percent of their water through evaporation.

Jehovah's Witnesses, the publishers of this magazine, believe that the ultimate solution to the water crisis rests in God's hands, not man's. The Bible states: “To Jehovah [God] belong the earth and that which fills it, the productive land and those dwelling in it. For upon the seas he himself has solidly fixed it, and upon the rivers he keeps it firmly established.”—Psalm 24:1, 2.

True, God gave humans the responsibility of taking care of this planet. (Genesis 1:28) However, man's mismanagement of earth's

**To produce one ton of grain requires 1,000 tons of water**

**“70 percent of world water use is devoted to irrigation.”**

—*Plan B 2.0*, by Lester R. Brown

resources—along with the devastating consequences that have ensued—provides further evidence that “it does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.”—Jeremiah 10:23.

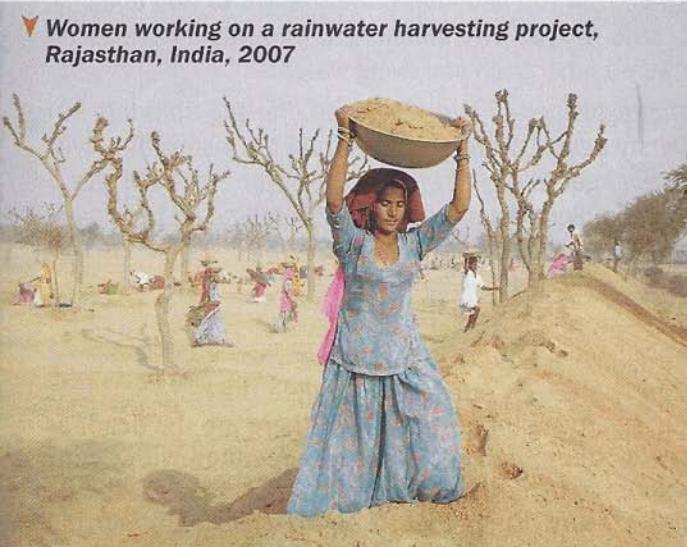
What will Jehovah do to restore the elements of our earth to a perfect balance? The Bible assures us that he purposed to ‘make all things new.’ (Revelation 21:5) Imagine a world with no poverty, no droughts, and no water shortages. Imagine a world without monsoon flooding, which today sweeps away thousands of lives each year. Under the rule of his Kingdom, God will fulfill his many promises! Jehovah himself has stated: “So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.”—Isaiah 55:11.

Would you like to learn more about God's purpose to restore our earth, as outlined in his Word, the Bible? The following article will explain how you can do so.

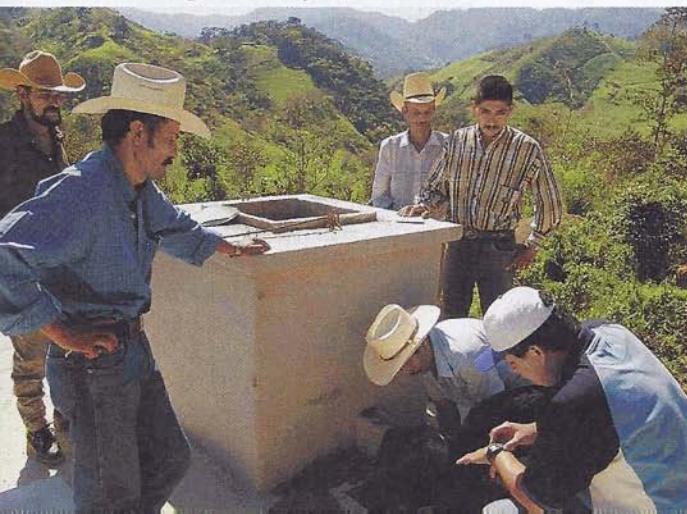
\* Each year across the globe, some 1.6 million children die from diarrheal diseases. That is more than the number of fatalities from AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined.



▲ **Installing pipes for access to clean water, Durban, South Africa**



▼ **Local people working on a new water system for their village near Copán, Honduras**



Courtesy eThekweni Water and Sanitation Programme

© Robert Wallis/Panos Pictures

## How much freshwater is available?



**1%**  
Available to  
nearly seven  
billion humans  
and countless  
billions of other  
life forms

# WATER

## That Leads to Life



Jesus had been traveling through Samaria, north of Jerusalem. He was tired and thirsty. As he sat by a well, he asked a Samaritan woman to draw up water for him. She was shocked that a Jew would ask her for water, since in the first century, there was little love between Jews and Samaritans.

The perplexed woman asked Jesus: "How is it that you, despite being a Jew, ask me for a drink, when I am a Samaritan woman?"

Jesus answered: "If you had known the free gift of God and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

Jesus further explained to her: "Everyone drinking from this water will get thirsty again. Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life."—John 4:1-15.

To what water did Jesus refer?

**T**HE Bible calls the Creator, Jehovah God, "the source of living water." (Jeremiah 2:13) Life is a gift from God, and our existence depends upon availing ourselves of the water he provides, both in a physical sense and a spiritual sense.

There has never been more of a need for spiritual guidance than there is today. Indeed, it could be said that a spiritual drought

plagues our planet. People thirst for answers to such questions as: Where are the dead? Is there hope of ever being reunited with them? Why does God permit suffering? Will the future bring relief from war, crime, famine, and sickness? Jehovah's Witnesses believe that satisfying answers to these questions can be found in the refreshing "waters" of God's Word, the Bible.

### HAS RELIGION QUENCHED MAN'S THIRST?

Simply going to church or claiming to be religious does not bring a person into contact with refreshing waters of truth. The fact is, many of today's mainstream religions have added to man's problems rather than solved

them. Consider one example: In times of war, Catholics have killed Catholics, Protestants have killed Protestants—with both sides imploring God for victory!

Added to that are numerous reports of church scan-

dals involving clergymen who have embezzled funds or sexually abused minors. Truly, the waters dispensed by most religions are polluted. (Revelation 17:4-6; 18:1-5) The situation is as described in the Bible at Titus 1:16: "They pub-



You can find the  
'waters of truth'  
at your local  
Kingdom Hall

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, as described earlier, he alluded to the life-giving waters of truth that we can find flowing from God's Word. Jehovah's Witnesses invite you to taste the pure waters of truth. This invitation is expressed in the last book of the Bible: "Let anyone thirsting

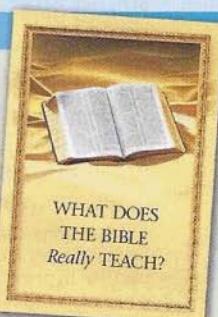
come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free."—Revelation 22:17.

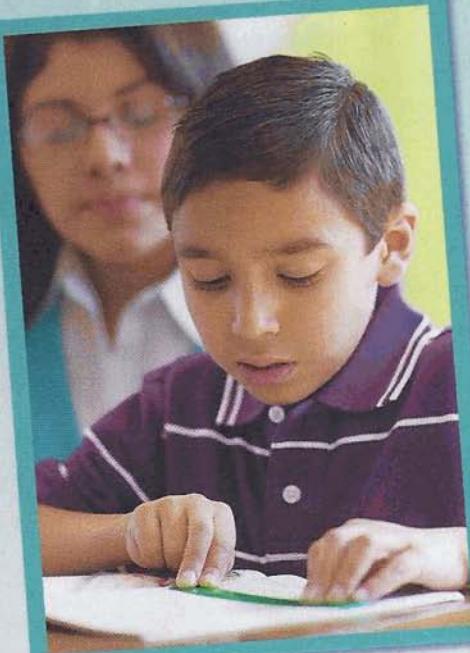
To learn more about how God's Kingdom will benefit mankind, contact Jehovah's Witnesses at the nearest Kingdom Hall or write to the appropriate address listed on page 5 of this magazine. You may also consult the Web site [www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org).

likely declare they know God, but they disown him by their works." For the most part, religion has done little to quench man's thirst in these times of spiritual drought.

In 19 chapters, the 224-page publication *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* explains the Bible's answers to such basic questions as:

- “What is God's purpose for the earth?”
- “Where are the dead?”
- “Are we living in 'the last days'?”
- “Why does God allow suffering?”





# Helping Children WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN MEXICO

**S**TEVEN has difficulty reading. Every time he knows that he will be asked to read aloud in class, he develops a stomachache.

Despite her teacher's urgings, **Maria** has problems writing legibly. It takes her hours to complete her homework.

**Noah** reads the same school assignments repeatedly. Still, he forgets the material and struggles with his grades.

**S**TEVEN, Maria, and Noah suffer from learning disabilities, the most common of which involve reading disabilities. Dyslexics, for example, often confuse letters that have a similar appearance. Other learning disabilities are dysgraphia (a disorder that affects handwriting) and dyscalculia (difficulty with math skills). Yet, most of those with learning disabilities have average or above-average intelligence.

Symptoms of learning disabilities include delayed language skills, trouble rhyming words, habitual mispronunciation, persistent baby talk, difficulty in learning letters and numbers, inability to sound out letters in simple words, confusion involving words that sound alike, and difficulty following instructions.\*

## Helping Your Child to Cope

What can you do if your child seems to have a learning disability? First, have his hearing and vision tested to rule out those causes.

\* Learning disabilities are often accompanied by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is characterized by hyperactivity, impulsive behavior, and an inability to concentrate. See *Awake!* of February 22, 1997, pages 5-10.

es.\* Then obtain a medical evaluation. If your child is learning-disabled, he will need your emotional support. Remember, a learn-

\* The masculine gender is used in this article because boys are three times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with dyslexia and hyperactivity.

*Children can be very adept at taking "picture notes" while listening attentively*



ing disability is not related to a child's intelligence.

Take advantage of any special program your child's school might have, such as tutoring. Enlist his teacher's cooperation. Perhaps your child could be allowed to sit at the front of the classroom and have more time to complete his assignments. His teacher could give him both written and oral instructions and let him take exams orally. As learning-disabled children are often forgetful and disorganized, a second set of textbooks could be provided for use at home. A computer with a spell-checker could be made available for use in class or for homework.

Have short daily reading sessions. It is best for a dyslexic child to read aloud so that you, the parent, have an opportunity to offer feedback and correction. First read aloud yourself, having your child follow along. Next, read the same text aloud together. Then have your child read it by himself. Have him use a ruler under each line as he reads, and a highlighter on difficult words. This exercise may take only 15 minutes a day.

Math skills can be taught in practical ways, such as when measuring quantities in recipes, using a ruler in carpentry, or going shopping.

Graph paper and diagrams may be of help in doing math problems. For handwriting difficulties, try wide-ruled paper and thick pencils. Magnetic letters arranged on a metallic surface may help your child to spell.

There are also useful strategies for dealing with ADHD. Before speaking to a child with an attention disorder, make eye contact. Provide a quiet area for homework, and allow your child to take frequent breaks. Channel his hyperactivity by assigning chores that involve being active, such as walking the dog.

### Success Is Possible

Build on your child's strengths, encouraging any ability or talent that he may have. Praise and reward any accomplishment, however small. Break projects down into smaller, more manageable tasks so that he can experience the pride of succeeding. Use pictures or diagrams of the steps he must take in order to complete a project.

In the end, mastering basic reading, writing, and math skills is important for a youth. Be assured that given the proper motivation and assistance, your child *can* learn—he may just do it differently from others and take a little longer.

### A LEARNING DISABILITY BECOMES AN ASSET

"When I looked at words on a page, they were merely a jumbled mess of squiggly lines. They may just as well have been in a foreign language. Words did not mean anything to me until someone else read them aloud. Teachers thought I was lazy or disrespectful or that I was not trying or not listening to lessons. Nothing could have been further from the truth. I was listening and trying very hard, but I was just not able to

grasp the concept of reading and writing. Other subjects, such as math, were not difficult for me. As a child, I quickly learned to focus on things like sports, trade skills, art, and anything that involved using my hands, as long as it was not related to reading and writing.

"Later on, I chose to work with my hands, so I became a tradesman. This has led to the privilege of working on five international construction proj-

ects of Jehovah's Witnesses. Because more effort is needed for me to read, I tend to be able to remember much of what I have read. As a student of the Bible, I have found this to be very helpful, particularly in my Christian ministry. So, instead of viewing this disability as a weakness, I view it as an asset."—Peter, a dyslexic who is a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses.

# We Found What We Were Looking For

AS TOLD BY BERT TALLMAN

*I fondly remember my life as a young boy on the Blood Reserve, a Native community that is part of the Blackfoot Nation in Alberta, Canada. We lived not far from the Canadian Rockies and beautiful Lake Louise.*

I COME from a family of seven boys and two girls. My brothers and sisters and I were often at my grandmother's home. She worked hard and taught us the traditional way of life practiced by many generations of Blackfoot people before us. We learned how to gather wild berries, prepare traditional foods, and plant a garden. My grandfather and my father used to take me hunting and fishing. We hunted elk, deer, and moose for food and for their skins. Our parents were hard workers and did their best to provide a good home for us. My life on the reserve was enjoyable.

Everything changed, however, when my grandmother died in 1963. As a five-year-old boy, I was confused by this event. Nothing I heard brought me any real comfort. Even at that young age, I asked myself, 'If there is a Creator, where is he? Why do people die?' Sometimes I would begin to whimper in frustration. When my parents asked me what was wrong, I simply told them I had an ache of some sort.

## Contact With White People

Before my grandmother died, we had little contact with white people. Whenever we

did see them, I would hear comments such as: "He is just another evil, greedy white man, devoid of emotion. They are not real people." I was warned that very few white people are genuine and that they could not be trusted. Although I was curious about meeting them, I remained cautious because white people in our area often made fun of us and made disparaging remarks.

Soon after my grandmother passed away, my parents began to abuse alcohol, making those years some of the saddest of my life. When I was eight years old, two Mormons began to visit our home. They seemed to be good people. My parents agreed with their proposal that I participate in a placement program. The program, as I understood it, was to change Native children by having them live with white people. Evidently, because of their circumstances, my parents thought it was best for me to stay with another family. I was shocked and disappointed, for I had heard my parents say that white people could not be trusted. I didn't want to go, and I tried to get out of it. Finally, I agreed when my parents assured me that my older brother would come along.



*My grandmother taught me traditional Blackfoot culture*

However, when we arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia, my brother and I were separated, and I was taken some 60 miles away! I was devastated. Although the family that hosted me were good people, it was a traumatic experience, and I was terrified. I returned home about ten months later.

### **Back Home With My Parents**

Even though the situation at home had not changed much, I was glad to be back. When I was about 12 years old, my parents quit using alcohol. That was a relief, but I already had a negative lifestyle of my own, since I had begun experimenting with drugs and alcohol. My parents encouraged me to take up alternative activities, including rodeo, something I really enjoyed. Rodeo riding was not for the fainthearted. I learned to ride wild bucking bulls for a minimum of eight seconds without being thrown off, while holding on with just one hand to a rope looped around the bull's belly.

When I was a teenager, tribal elders introduced me to Native religion. I took a real interest in it, since I had little respect for the so-called white man's religions. I reasoned that Blackfoot customs seemed to promote the kindness and justice that were missing from many "Christian" religions. I was comfortable among Native people, enjoying the humor and closeness that existed among families and friends.

About this time, I also learned about the injustices that Native people had experienced for centuries. I was told that the white man had spread disease among us and eradicated our primary means of life, the buffalo. In fact, Colonel R. I. Dodge, of the U.S. Army, is reported to have said: "Kill every buffalo you can. Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone." This attitude, I learned, demoralized the Blackfoot people and led to a feeling of helplessness.

Furthermore, some government leaders, along with their religious allies, had made de-

termined efforts to assimilate and transform the Native people, whom they viewed as savages. They believed that everything about the Native people needed to change—including their culture, beliefs, behavior, and language—in order for them to adapt to the white man's ways. In Canada, some Native children were abused at religious residential schools. Others turned to substance abuse, violence, and suicide—problems that persist on reserves even to this day.

To escape these problems, some Natives decided to abandon Blackfoot culture. They chose to speak English to their children rather than the Blackfoot language, and they tried to adopt some of the white man's ways. Instead of being accepted, however, many were

### **'If there is a Creator, where is he? Why do people die?'**

ridiculed, not only by some in the white population but also by other Native people, who called them "apple Indians"—red on the outside but white on the inside.

It was sad to see Native people suffer in so many ways. I longed to see better conditions for the people on our reserve and others across Canada and the United States.

### **I Longed for Answers**

As a teenager, I thought that I could never be accepted. My feelings of inferiority often turned into resentment. I even developed a hatred for white people. However, my parents and aunt cautioned me about harboring negative feelings of hate and revenge; instead, they encouraged me to show forgiveness and love and to overlook those who were prejudiced. I later learned that this advice was consistent with Bible principles. In addition, I still longed to find the answers to the questions that had plagued me as a child. I also began to wonder why we are on the earth and why

injustice continues. Living for only a short time and then dying did not make sense to me. I was confused.

Whenever Jehovah's Witnesses came to our home, I was sent to the door. I always respected them because they did not seem to be prejudiced. Although I found it difficult to formulate my questions in the right way, we always had interesting conversations. I recall one visit from John Brewster and Harry Callihoo, a Blackfoot Witness. We had a long discussion as we walked through the prairie grass. I obtained a book and read about half of it before it somehow got lost.

### I Became a Rodeo Rider

I asked older ones on my reserve for advice. While I appreciated their well-thought-out counsel, I never received satisfactory answers to the questions I had about life. When I was about 16 years old, I left home and became absorbed in rodeo riding competitions. The parties I attended after rodeos usually featured overdrinking and drug abuse. My conscience plagued me because I knew such conduct was wrong and sensed that God did not approve of my lifestyle. I often prayed to the Creator for help to do what is right and to find answers to the questions that still bothered me.

In 1978, while I was in Calgary, I met a young Native woman named Rose. She was part Blackfoot and part Cree. We shared similar interests, and I could communicate openly and freely with her. We fell in love and were married in 1979. Our family grew to include our daughter Carma and our son, Jared. Rose has proved to be a loyal, supportive wife and a good mother. One day when my family and I were visiting my older brother, I found a book entitled *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.<sup>\*</sup> What I read intrigued me and seemed very reasonable. But just as I felt that I was beginning to understand the Bible's message, I came to a part of the book where pages had

been torn out. Rose and I made a determined effort to locate the missing pages, but without success. Even so, I continued to pray for help.

### A Visit to the Priest

In the spring of 1984, Rose gave birth to our third child, our beautiful daughter Kayla. Only two months later, however, Kayla died from a congenital heart disease. We were devastated, and I did not know how to comfort Rose. She convinced me to go with her to the Catholic priest on our reserve to find comfort and answers to our questions.

We asked him why our little girl had to die and where she had gone. He told us that God took Kayla because he needed another angel. I thought, 'Why would God need to take our daughter to be an angel if he is the Almighty Creator? What good would a helpless baby be?' The priest never opened the Bible. We left feeling empty.

### Prayer Was Our Mainstay

One Monday morning in late November 1984, I lingered in prayer, desperately begging God to help me to be a better person, to make sense of what was going on, and to understand the purpose of life. That very morning, Diana Bellemey and Karen Scott, two of Jehovah's Witnesses, knocked at the door. They were very sincere and kind and were eager to present their message. I listened, accepted a Bible and the book entitled *Survival Into a New Earth*,<sup>\*</sup> and agreed to have Diana return with her husband, Darryl, later that week.

Only after they left did it occur to me that this must have been the answer to my prayer. I was so excited that I eagerly paced back and forth in the house, waiting for Rose to return from work so I could tell her what had happened. To my surprise, Rose revealed that she too had been praying the night before, and she had asked God to help her to find the right religion. That Friday, we had our first

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Now out of print.

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Now out of print.



I became completely absorbed in rodeo

The special tract "You Can Trust the Creator" is available in the Blackfoot language and others



I now have the joy of sharing Bible knowledge with others

Today, with my family



KITĀĀHKOHTSTĀKĀTAWA  
Á'PISTOTOKIWA!

...the special tract "You Can Trust the Creator" is available in the Blackfoot language and others.

...the special tract "You Can Trust the Creator" is available in the Blackfoot language and others.

...the special tract "You Can Trust the Creator" is available in the Blackfoot language and others.

Bible study. We later learned that the day Karen and Diana visited us, they had been unable to find the houses where they intended to preach. Nevertheless, when they saw our house, they felt motivated to call on us.

### **Answers to My Questions—At Last!**

Our family and friends were puzzled and initially gave us the cold shoulder when we started to study the Bible. Then they pressured us by saying that we were throwing our lives away and not using our talents and abilities to the full. However, we resolved not to turn our backs on our newfound Friend, our Creator, Jehovah. After all, we had found

### **'Many Native people are known for the qualities of kindness and humility'**

something precious—the awesome truths and sacred secrets in God's Word, the Bible. (Matthew 13:52) Both Rose and I were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses in December 1985. Our relatives now have great respect for Jehovah's Witnesses, as they have seen positive changes in our lives since our baptism.

Yes, I found what I was looking for! The Bible answers important questions simply and logically. I was satisfied when I learned the purpose of life, why we die, and God's promise that we can be reunited with our daughter Kayla to see her grow up in perfect surroundings. (John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:4) In time, I also learned that we should not abuse our bodies, show disrespect for life, or stir up competition. (Galatians 5:26) It was a difficult decision, but I chose to leave bull riding and the rodeo in order to please God.

Accurate knowledge from the Bible has freed us from superstitions that plague many Native people, such as belief that a visiting owl or a howling dog can lead to the death of a family member. We no longer fear that invis-

ble spirits in animate creatures or inanimate objects will harm us. (Psalm 56:4; John 8:32) We now appreciate Jehovah's marvelous creations. I have friends of many nationalities whom I call my brothers and sisters, and they accept us as equals and fellow servants of God. (Acts 10:34, 35) Many of them are putting forth effort to learn about our Native culture and beliefs and to speak the Blackfoot language so that they can effectively share the Bible's message in an appealing way.

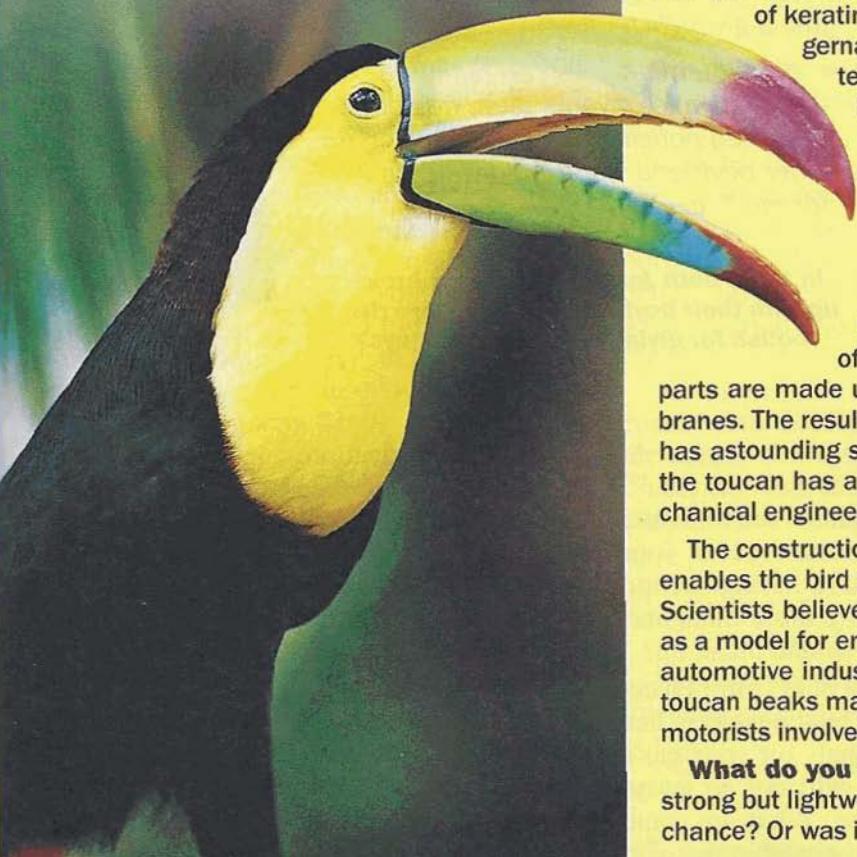
Our family lives on the Blood Reserve, in southern Alberta, where we have a small ranch. We still enjoy Native culture—including our traditional foods, music, and dance. We do not actively participate in traditional social dances, sometimes called powwows, but we enjoy watching them when appropriate. I have also tried to teach our children about their heritage and some of the Blackfoot language. Many Native people are known for the wonderful qualities of kindness, humility, and loving concern for family and friends. They are also known for showing hospitality and having respect for other people, including those from different backgrounds. I still appreciate and admire these things.

Our greatest happiness comes from using our time and resources to help others learn about and love Jehovah. Our son, Jared, serves as a volunteer at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses near Toronto. I have the privilege of serving as an elder in our local Macleod Congregation, and Rose, Carma, and I are all regular pioneers, or full-time evangelizers. It is a joy to preach in our native Blackfoot language. It is heartwarming to see others respond to the truth about the Creator and his purposes.

The Bible says about Jehovah: "If you search for him, he will let himself be found by you." (1 Chronicles 28:9) I am grateful that he has fulfilled his promise by helping me, as well as my family, to find what we were looking for.

WAS IT DESIGNED?

# The Toucan's Beak



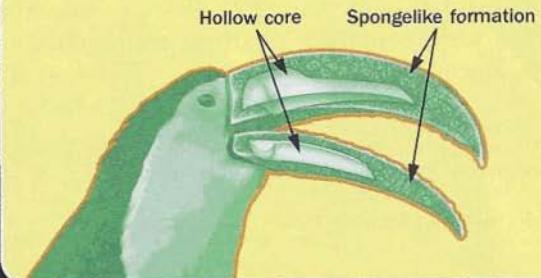
■ A poor flier, the toucan of Central and South America moves about primarily by hopping. The sound produced by some species is similar to that of a frog, but it is louder. In fact, it can be heard up to half a mile away in the jungle. Perhaps what amazes scientists most about the toucan, though, is its beak.

**Consider:** The beak on some toucans is over a third of the bird's length. It looks heavy, but it is not. "The surface is made of keratin, the same material in fingernails and hair," explains materials scientist Marc André Meyers. "It's actually many layers of tiny hexagonal plates, overlapping like shingles on a roof."

The consistency of the toucan's beak has been compared to that of a hard sponge. Some parts of it are hollow, while other parts are made up of beams and membranes. The result is a lightweight beak that has astounding strength. "It's almost as if the toucan has a deep knowledge of mechanical engineering," says Meyers.

The construction of the toucan's beak enables the bird to absorb high impacts. Scientists believe that the beak can serve as a model for engineers in the aviation and automotive industries. "Panels that mimic toucan beaks may offer better protection to motorists involved in crashes," says Meyers.

**What do you think?** Did the toucan's strong but lightweight beak come about by chance? Or was it designed?



# Should we break up?

*"Three months into the relationship, both of us were saying that it felt so right. We talked about spending the rest of our lives together as if it were just a given."—Jessica.\**

*"I had a huge crush on him, and then a couple of years later, he actually started noticing me! I liked having an older boyfriend who would watch out for me."—Carol.*

**In time, both Jessica and Carol broke up with their boyfriends. Why? Were they foolish for giving up such great guys?**

**Y**OU'VE been dating for nearly a year. At first, you were sure that he was "the one." At times, you can even rekindle the romantic feelings that characterized the onset of your relationship. But now you're having second thoughts. Should you ignore those thoughts? How can you know if you should break up?

First, you need to face a cold truth: Disregarding danger signs in a relationship is like ignoring the warning signals on your car's dashboard. The problem will not go away; likely it will only get worse. What are some of the danger signs in a relationship that you would do well to heed?

**Things are moving too fast.** Problems can arise when a romance moves too quickly. "We were e-mailing, chatting online, talking on the phone," Carol recalls. "Those meth-

ods of communication can be more powerful than face-to-face because you can get way more personal, way too fast!" Don't rob yourselves of the chance to get to know each other. A relationship should not be like a weed that sprouts up fast and then withers. Rather, it should be like a precious plant that takes time to grow.

**He's critical and demeaning.** "My boyfriend was always putting me down," says a girl named Ana, "but I wanted to be with him so badly." She adds, "I tolerated situations that I never dreamed I would have allowed!" The Bible condemns "abusive speech." (Ephesians 4:31) Demeaning words—even if they are delivered calmly and quietly—have no place in a loving relationship.—Proverbs 12:18.

**He's got a volatile temper.** "A man of discernment is cool of spirit," says Proverbs 17:27. Erin found that her boyfriend had

\* Names in this article have been changed.

\*\* Although this article presents matters from a girl's perspective, the principles herein apply to both genders.

problems in this regard. "When we had disagreements, he would shove me," she says, "and at times I ended up with bruises." The Bible tells Christians: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath . . . be taken away from you." (Ephesians 4:31) A person with little self-control is hardly ready for dating.  
—2 Timothy 3:1, 3, 5.

**He's secretive about our relationship.** "My boyfriend didn't want others to know that we were dating," recalls Angela. "He was even upset when my dad found out!" Of course, there may be valid reasons for a couple to maintain a measure of privacy. But secrecy—a deliberate attempt to keep the relationship hidden from those who have a right to know about it—spells trouble.

**He has no intention of marriage.** Among Christians, dating has an honorable purpose—to help a young man and woman determine if they want to get married to each other. Of course, this doesn't mean that you need to make wedding plans the moment you start dating. In fact, many people do *not* end up marrying the first person they date. At the same time, a person shouldn't date if he or she isn't ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage.

**Our relationship is on-again, off-again.** Proverbs 17:17 states: "A true companion is loving *all the time*." Not that the two of you will always agree. But a relationship that constantly seesaws between breaking up and making up could indicate that something deeper needs to be addressed, as Ana came to realize. "The many times I broke up with my boyfriend brought me so much heartache!" she says. "I kept going

back to fix a relationship that I would have done better without."

**He pressures me for sex.** "If you love me, you'll do it." "We need to take our relationship to the next level." "It's not really sex if there's no intercourse." These are all manipulative lines that boys have used to pressure girls into sex. Says James 3:17: "The wisdom from above is first of all chaste." You deserve a boyfriend who is morally clean and who respects your chaste sexual boundaries. Don't settle for anything less!

**Others have warned me about him.** The Bible says: "Get all the advice you can, and you will succeed; without it you will fail." (Proverbs 15:22, *Today's English Version*) "You can't ignore what your family and long-time friends think, any more than you can ignore those little alarm bells that ring in your head," says Jessica. "The more you ignore what others are saying, the harder you're making it on yourself."

Above are just a few danger signs that could mean trouble in a relationship.\* If you are dating, how does your boyfriend measure up in the areas discussed? Write below any personal concerns you may have.

### How to Break Up

Suppose you determine that it's best to end a relationship. How will you do so? There are

\* For more information see *Awake!* of May 2007, pages 18-20.

**Disregarding danger signs in a relationship is like ignoring the warning signals on your car's dashboard**



a number of ways, but keep the following in mind.

**Be courageous.** “I had become so reliant on my boyfriend that I was afraid to leave him,” says a girl named Trina. It takes courage to speak up when a relationship needs to end. But standing up for yourself is healthy. (Proverbs 22:3) It enables you to establish firm boundaries as to what you will and what you will not tolerate in a dating relationship—and, later, in a marriage.

**Be fair.** If *you* were on the other end of the breakup, how would you want to be treated? (Matthew 7:12) Surely, your boyfriend deserves more than a brief e-mail, text message, or voice mail saying “We’re through!”

**Choose the right setting.** Should you talk face-to-face or over the phone? Should you write a letter or have a discussion? Much depends upon the circumstances. You should not meet in any setting where your safety would be put in jeopardy, nor would it be wise to be in an isolated area where wrong desires could be stirred.—1 Thessalonians 4:3.

**Speak truthfully.** Talk honestly about why you feel the relationship cannot continue. If you feel that your boyfriend has not treated you properly, say so. Stick to viewpoint statements. For example, instead of saying, “You’re always putting me down,” say, “I feel put down when you . . .”

**Be willing to listen too.** Is there something you’ve misunderstood about the situation? Do not allow yourself to be manipulated by clever words, but at the same time, be rea-

## THE PERSON YOU CHOOSE TO DATE SHOULD . . .

- share your spiritual convictions.  
—1 Corinthians 7:39.
- respect your moral boundaries.  
—1 Corinthians 6:18.
- be considerate of you and of others.  
—Philippians 2:4.
- have a good reputation.  
—Philippians 2:20.

## BEWARE IF YOUR BOYFRIEND . . .

- always insists on getting his way.
- constantly makes you feel guilty, stupid, or worthless.
- tries to keep you away from your friends and family.
- constantly checks up on your whereabouts.
- accuses you of flirting with others when there is no basis for his doing so.
- makes threats or gives ultimatums.

sonable and consider all the facts. The Bible wisely admonishes Christians to “be swift about hearing, slow about speaking.”—James 1:19.

More articles from the “Young People Ask” series can be found at the Web site  
[www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)

### TO THINK ABOUT

■ List below the traits you view as essential in someone you would date.

■ Which traits would you consider to be unacceptable?

# Salt Seekers OF THE SAHARA

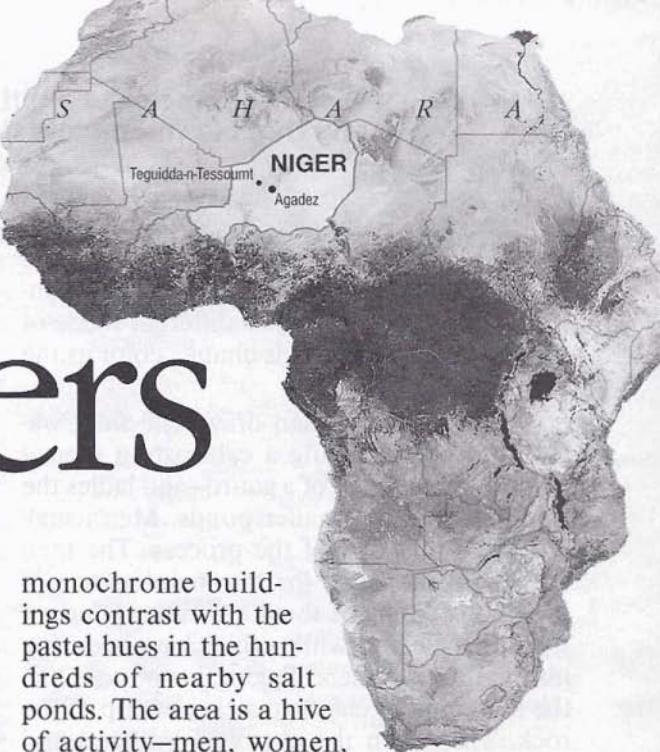
**S**TAKES flash past the window of our four-wheel-drive vehicle. These posts mark the way when sandstorms obscure the road. Indeed, such storms are likely here in the Sahara Desert.

The road we are speeding along follows an ancient camel route that links the city of Agadez, in northern Niger, to the Algerian border and beyond. Our destination is the tiny village of Teguidda-n-Tessoumt—an outpost of humanity 120 miles northwest of Agadez. There, 50 families follow time-honored methods of extracting precious salt from the clay of the Sahara.

## Man-Made Hills and Pastel Ponds

Ahead of us small hills appear on the desert plain, marking our destination. Our guide parks our vehicle near a 30-foot hill and invites us to get out and climb to the top for a view of the village. As we trudge up the slope, he explains that this mound and the others like it are man-made from the residue of many years of salt extraction in the area.

From the summit the view is captivating. Virtually everything in the village below is the color of baked clay—the ground, the walls, the roofs. The only variation is the green of the leaves of the two trees that stand as sentinels at each end of the township. The fences and houses are, in fact, made of clay. The



monochrome buildings contrast with the pastel hues in the hundreds of nearby salt ponds. The area is a hive of activity—men, women, and children all hard at work.

## An Unusual Extraction Process

As we descend from our vantage point, our guide explains the ancient salt-extracting process used by the villagers. "There are actually only two types of ponds," he says. "The larger ponds, some six feet in diameter, are used to decant the salt-laden water. The smaller ones are evaporation ponds. The water from the 20 springs in the area is itself quite briny. However, the principal source of the salt is, not the water, but the earth, and that is what makes these salt works unusual." How, exactly, is the salt extracted from the earth?

We observe a man dumping earth into a large pond full of water from the spring. He stomps the mixture with his feet, as if treading

- shut. 5. Urijah—Jeremiah 26:20. 6. Micah—  
receptacles, while the other five had only lamps.  
virgins entered the feast. 3. Five virgins had lamps and  
1. The account does not mention a bride. 2. Five

ANSWERS TO PAGE 31

**"The principal source of the salt is, not the water, but the earth,  
and that is what makes these salt works unusual"**

a winepress. When satisfied with his work, he leaves the briny mix to settle for several hours. Large ponds brimming with the same muddy concoction surround him. The contents of each one displays a different shade of brown because the ponds change color as the mud settles.

Nearby, another man draws the salty water from a pond using a calabash—a utensil made from the shell of a gourd—and ladles the solution into the smaller ponds. Men usually handle this part of the process. The men are also responsible for the maintenance of the ponds. Some of them are natural depressions in the earth, while others have been dug into the rock. Where digging is not possible, the men mound clay into a ring on top of the rock. They form the clay wall by hand and then beat the barrier with a stick until it is solid. These ponds must be repaired or reconstructed every year.

What part do the women play? They do the heavy lifting, ensuring that a good supply of the salty earth is always ready for processing. They also remove the salt crystals from the evaporating ponds. They then thoroughly clean the ponds in readiness for the next batch.

Meanwhile, children scamper about among the smaller ponds. Their job is to monitor the drying process. As the water evaporates from the ponds, crystals form on the surface. If left unchecked, this salty crust would block further evaporation. So the children sprinkle the surface with drops of water

to break the crust and cause the crystals to sink to the bottom of the pond. Evaporation continues until finally only the precious salt remains.

Why are the ponds such a variety of beautiful colors? Our guide explains: "There are basically three kinds of clay, or mud, found in this area, and each adds its own color to the water. In addition, the color varies depending on the salinity of the solution. Also, algae grows in some of the ponds and colors the water." We notice, too, that the ponds change hue and tone as the sun's burning rays shift their angle of reflection.

**Salt as Money**

Back in the village, the women form the moist raw salt into loaves or cakes, which they dry in the searing sun. They do not refine the salt, so the cakes stay a brownish color. We observe that the women form the cakes in three shapes—oval, round, and triangular. One of the women explains that the oval and round cakes are sold, while the triangular ones are reserved as gifts.

Who buys the salt? Nomads and salt merchants. They trek through Teguidda-n-Tessoumt, trading food and other goods in exchange for the salt. Most of the salt will be sold in the markets of the larger towns on the fringe of the desert. The raw salt from this village will likely not be used by humans. Rather, it will supplement the diet of domestic animals.

Heading back to our vehicle, we see a man digging the residual clay from an empty decanting pond. He hauls the load toward the dumping grounds and adds his small contribution to the man-made mounds. As we drive away, we reflect on how these hills bear testimony to the generations of salt seekers who have lived, worked, and died in Teguidda-n-Tessoumt.—Contributed.

**IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

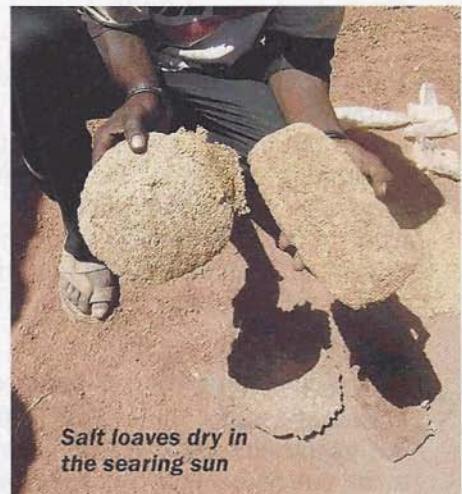
- Earth—Designed for Life
- When Birds Crash Into Buildings
- How Can I Get Over a Breakup?



*Extracting precious salt from the clay of the Sahara*



*Evaporation ponds  
come in many colors*



*Salt loaves dry in  
the searing sun*

# FORGOTTEN SLAVES OF THE SOUTH SEAS

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN FIJI



**A**RIPPLE of excitement seizes the crowd as two ships slip into the lagoon of the remote Pacific atoll. Years earlier, a castaway had given each family there a few pages torn from his Bible. These humble people eagerly read those pages and since then had anxiously awaited the arrival of a Christian teacher.

Now these visiting seamen are promising to take them to a place where they can learn more about God. Some 250 trusting men and women board the ships, many of them clutching their treasured Bible pages.

They were, however, victims of a clever deception. Once on board, they were bound, thrown below deck, and sent on a long journey to the port of Callao in South America. Unsanitary conditions led to many deaths in transit. Sexual exploitation was rife. Those who survived the voyage were sold as slaves to work on plantations and in mines or as domestic servants, never to return to their island home.

## Development of "Blackbirding"

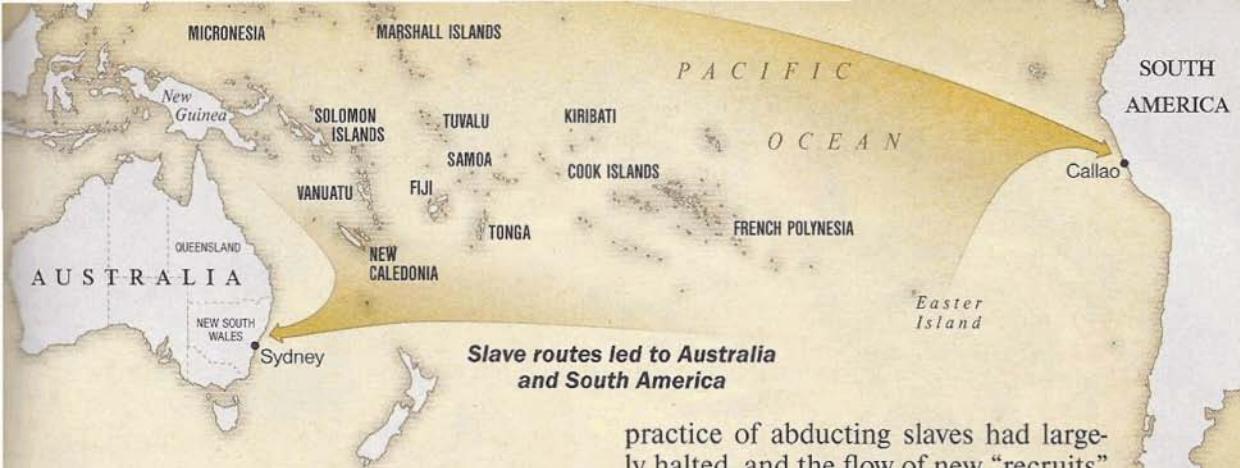
The abduction of South Pacific islanders during the 19th and early 20th centuries came to be called blackbirding. During the early

1860's, the practice brought thousands of the islanders to South America. During the decade that followed, the focus moved to the west as islanders were taken to Australia. In 1867, Ross Lewin, formerly of the Royal Navy, offered sugar growers and cotton planters the "best and most serviceable natives to be had in the islands at 7 [pounds] a head."

Efforts of the British Colonial Office to combat blackbirding were unsuccessful. For one thing, it was difficult to apply British law to subjects of foreign powers. For another, English law did not have a comprehensive definition of slavery. Thus, in court, blackbirders successfully argued that these islanders—although deceived and taken forcibly—were not really slaves but were indentured laborers who would be paid and, in time, sent home. Some went so far as to assert that they were doing these former heathens a favor by bringing them under British law and teaching them to work! Blackbirding thus proliferated, at least for a time.

## The Tide Turns

As fair-minded citizens spoke out against blackbirding, the tide began to turn. While



**Slave routes led to Australia and South America**

some islanders were recruited willingly, forcible capture could no longer be tolerated. Neither could abuses, such as whipping and branding, or the shocking conditions under which some laborers lived and worked.

The situation further intensified when the Anglican bishop J. C. Patteson—an outspoken opponent of blackbirding—was murdered by the very islanders he sought to protect. Employing an often-used form of deception, blackbirders had arrived at an island ahead of Patteson in a ship deliberately made to resemble his. In this case, the local people were invited on board to meet the bishop. They were never seen again. When the real Patteson arrived, he was met by an understandably hostile crowd, and he was killed in a mistaken act of retaliation. In response to this incident—and to the growing public outcry—British and French navy ships were stationed in the Pacific with orders to stop the abuses.

The New South Wales and Queensland governments in Australia joined forces with the Colonial Office by passing various acts to halt abuses and to regulate the indentured-labor trade. Inspectors were appointed, and government representatives were placed aboard recruiting ships. These zealous efforts paid off, as convictions were obtained on the grounds of kidnapping and murder, rather than on the ineffectual antislavery provisions. The last decade of the 19th century saw a changing situation in the South Seas. The

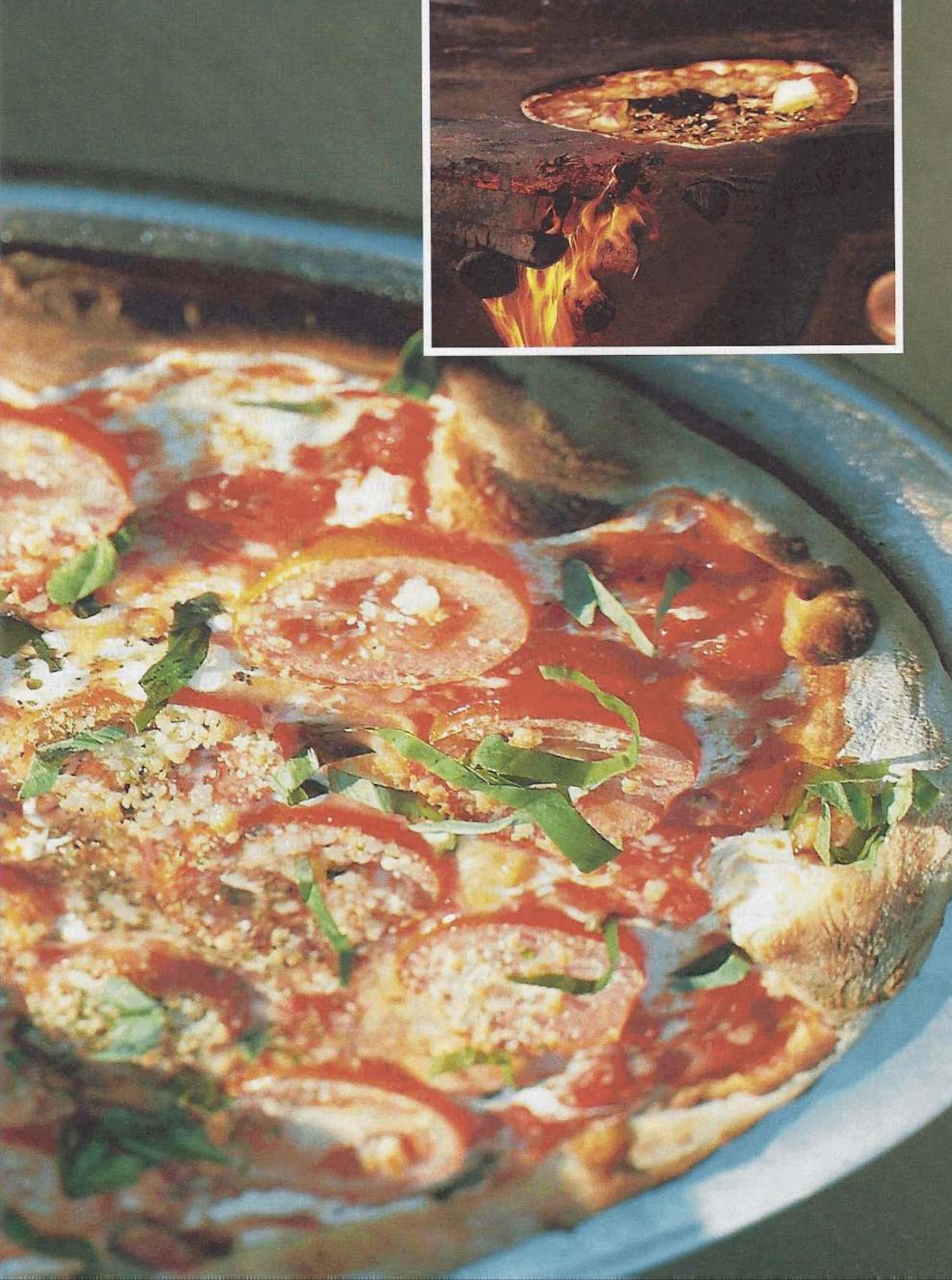
practice of abducting slaves had largely halted, and the flow of new “recruits” ebbed to a trickle by the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1901, a new national parliament, the Commonwealth of Australia, gained control over immigration for the entire country. Its policies reflected public opinion, which by then had started to resent outside labor, as many feared it would undermine local workers. Indentured laborers or not, South Sea islanders were no longer welcome. Thousands were forcibly repatriated, leading to more tragedy, as some who were now taken from where they had settled were separated from loved ones.

### **Forgotten Slaves Remembered**

In September 2000, the government of the state of Queensland issued a statement that is on permanent display. It acknowledges the role that the islanders of the South Seas played in the economic, cultural, and regional development of Queensland. At the same time, it expresses regret over the harsh treatment to which they were subjected.

Throughout history, many individuals have seized opportunities to enrich themselves at the expense of the life and liberty of others. The Bible promises that under the rule of God's Kingdom, no such injustices will take place. Indeed, those living as earthly subjects under that heavenly government “will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble.”—Micah 4:4.



# A PENCHANT FOR Pizza

BY AWAKE!  
WRITER IN ITALY

KING Ferdinand I (1751–1825) is said to have disguised himself as a commoner and, in clandestine fashion, visited a poor neighborhood in Naples. Why the secrecy? One story has it that he wanted to sink his teeth into a food that the queen had banned from the royal court—pizza.

If Ferdinand were alive today, he would have no trouble indulging his appetite. Currently, there are some 30,000 pizzerias in Italy, and each year they produce enough pizzas to serve 45 to each inhabitant!

## Humble Origins

Pizza may have originated in Naples about 1720. Back then, pizza was primarily for the poor, a “fast food” that was sold and consumed outdoors. Vendors would traverse the streets loudly calling out to advertise their tasty delicacies. The pizzas were kept warm in a *scudo*, a copper receptacle that was carried on the vendor’s head.

King Ferdinand I eventually made his penchant for pizza known to the royal court. Before long, this street delicacy won such favor that even members of the wealthy elite and the royal class began flocking to pizzerias. Ferdinand’s grandson, King Ferdinand II, went so far as to have a wood-burning oven built in the gardens of Capodimonte Palace in 1832. Thus, he was able to keep his aristocratic guests happy.

## Pizza—Nutritious?

Today, pizza is a favorite food of young people, but a word of caution is in order. To be considered nutritious, pizza should be made from healthful ingredients that are balanced in carbohydrates, proteins, and fats and that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and amino acids. Olive oil is a recommended ingredient in pizza. It promotes the formation of HDL, described as “the good type of cholesterol that helps clean the arteries.”

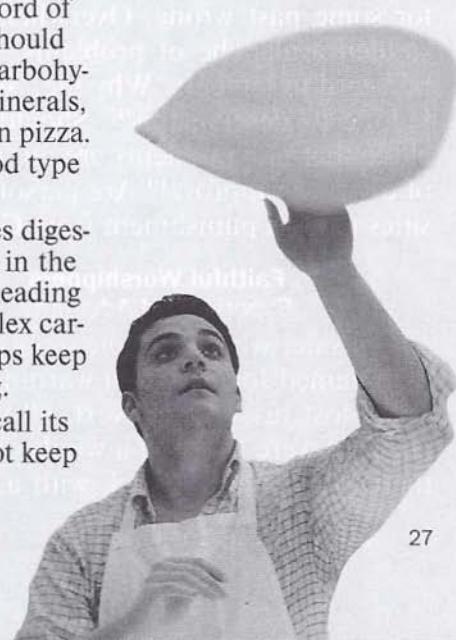
Furthermore, when pizza is cooked well, it rarely causes digestive problems. In part, this is because the carbohydrates in the flour receive an ample amount of hydration during the kneading and leavening process. Meanwhile, the presence of complex carbohydrates contributes to a full feeling, which usually helps keep even the most enthusiastic pizza lover from overindulging.

The next time you indulge *your* penchant for pizza, recall its humble origins. And be glad that King Ferdinand I did not keep his love for pizza a secret.

■ Pizza is best cooked in a wood-burning oven. The smoke that is released during cooking gives the pizza a delicate aroma, while the thin layer of ash on the bottom of the pizza gives it a delicious taste.

■ The world’s largest circular pizza was made in 1990. Its diameter measured more than 122 feet, and it weighed more than 12 tons!

■ The age-old custom of throwing pizza dough into the air and rotating it is not just for show. The centrifugal force that is created flattens the dough into a disk with a slightly raised border—a perfect base for a pizza!



## Are Your Problems a Punishment From God?

*"I feel like I'm being punished," says a woman in her mid-50's after learning that she has cancer. Reflecting on a wrong she committed years earlier, she concludes, "This must be God's way of telling me I sinned."*

**W**HEN faced with adversity, many people feel that God is punishing them for some past wrong. Overwhelmed by a sudden avalanche of problems, they may be heard to lament: "Why me? What have I done to deserve this?" Should we conclude that our problems are an indication of divine disapproval? Are personal adversities really a punishment from God?

### Faithful Worshippers Experienced Adversity

Consider what the Bible reports about a man named Job. Without warning, he suddenly lost his wealth. Next, all ten of his children were killed in a windstorm. Soon thereafter, he was struck with a debilitat-

ing, loathsome disease. (Job 1:13-19; 2:7, 8) Such adversities led Job to cry out: "The hand of God has struck me down." (Job 19:21, *Today's English Version*) Evidently, like many today, Job felt that God was punishing him.

However, the Bible reveals that before Job's trials began, God himself had described Job as "a man *blameless and upright*, fearing God and turning aside from bad." (Job 1:8) In view of this expression of divine approval, it is clear that Job's adversities were not a punishment from God.

The fact is, the Bible is filled with accounts of upright individuals who faced personal adversities. Although he was a

## "Time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all."—Ecclesiastes 9:11

loyal servant of God, Joseph endured years of unjust imprisonment. (Genesis 39:10-20; 40:15) The faithful Christian Timothy suffered from "frequent cases of sickness." (1 Timothy 5:23) Even Jesus Christ, who never did wrong, was cruelly mistreated before suffering an agonizing death. (1 Peter 2:21-24) Hence, it is a mistake to conclude that adversity must be an expression of God's displeasure. But if God is not responsible for adversity, who, if anyone, is?

### The Causes of Our Problems

The Bible shows that Satan the Devil was the cause of Job's tragedies. (Job 1:7-12; 2:3-8) Furthermore, it identifies Satan as the chief source of our problems today when it states: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:12) As "the ruler of this world," Satan has influenced many to engage in evil acts that have resulted in untold misery and heartache.—John 12:31; Psalm 37:12, 14.\*

We should not, however, be quick to blame the Devil for every adversity we experience. As a result of inherited sin and imperfection, we are prone to make unwise decisions that can cause us problems. (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) For example, imagine a man who by choice neither eats properly nor gets sufficient rest. If this eventually leads to serious

\* See the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Who Is Satan? Is He Real?" in the February 2007 issue of *Awake!*

health problems, should he blame the Devil? No, the man has merely reaped the bitter consequences of his own poor judgment. (Galatians 6:7) In such an instance, it is just as a Bible proverb puts it: "A man's own folly wrecks his life."—Proverbs 19:3, *The New English Bible*.

Finally, it must be realized that many unpleasant experiences are simply the result of "time and unforeseen occurrence." (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Consider the person who is unexpectedly caught in a rainstorm. Whether he will get a little wet or completely drenched may just depend on where he happens to be standing when the rain begins to fall. Similarly, in these "critical times hard to deal with," negative conditions can quickly turn into a downpour of adversity. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) To what extent we are personally affected is often a matter of timing and circumstances, over which we may have little or no control. Does this mean, then, that we will always be plagued with adversity?

### All Adversity Soon to End

Happily, Jehovah God will bring an end to all adversity very soon. (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 1:3; 21:3, 4) In the meantime, he shows that he really cares for us by providing "instruction" and "comfort from the Scriptures" so that we can cope with trials now as we look forward to that wonderful future just ahead. (Romans 15:4; 1 Peter 5:7) At that time, those who are upright in God's eyes will enjoy unending life in a new world, free from every form of adversity.—Psalm 37:29, 37.

### HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Is it only wrongdoers who experience adversity?—Job 1:8.
- Is the Devil to blame for all our problems?—Galatians 6:7.
- Will adversity always exist?—Revelation 21:3, 4.

## A Time of Peace?

"Christmas is one of our greatest festivals," but it is also "a time of conflicts," states *Vi Föräldrar*, a Swedish magazine for parents. In fact, at Christmastime, families "quarrel and wrangle more than at any other time of the year." The magazine asked over 1,100 parents of small children about their experiences during the holiday season. Some 88 percent answered that the family quarrels over "how and where to celebrate Christmas." Many are irritated because grandparents spoil their grandchildren with candy and unneeded gifts.

## More Happiness In Giving

"Money makes you happy—if you give it away," reads a headline in *The Globe and Mail* of Canada. Although most people surveyed predicted that spending on themselves would make them happier, those who used their money to help others—regardless of the amount spent—actually reported greater happiness. "Wealth is not a predictor of happiness, study after study has shown," says the newspaper. "Once people have enough money to meet their basic needs, getting more of it doesn't give them much of a boost."

■ "100 million deaths were caused by tobacco in the 20th century."—WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, SWITZERLAND.

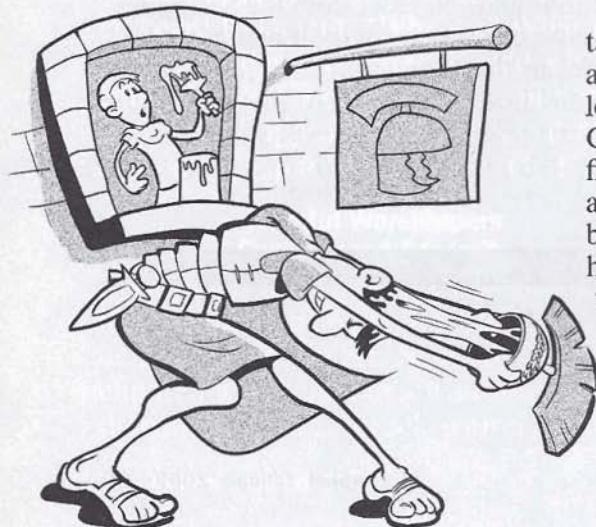
■ "For almost 9000 patients who had heart surgery in the [United Kingdom] between 1996 and 2003, receiving a red cell transfusion was associated with three times the risk of dying in the following year and an almost sixfold risk of dying within 30 days of surgery compared with not receiving one."—NEW SCIENTIST, BRITAIN.

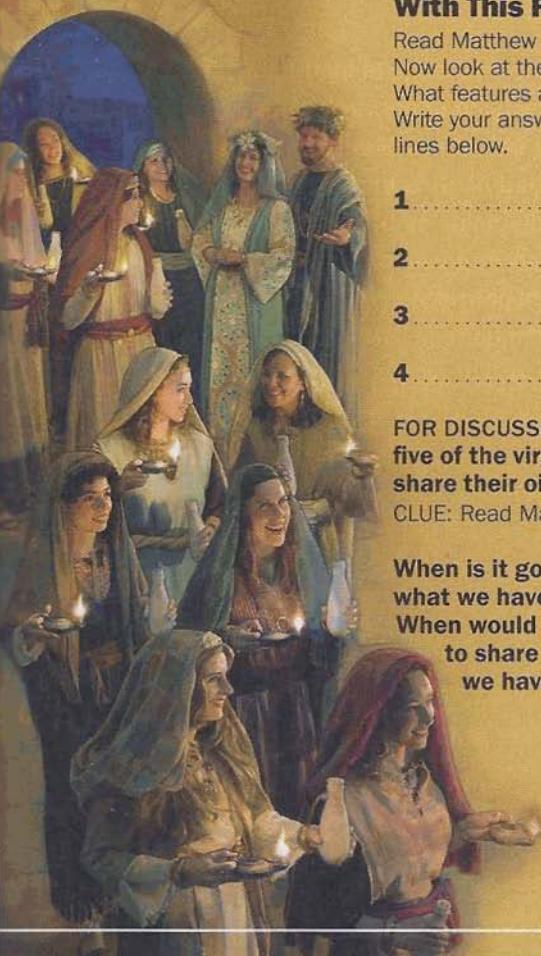
## You Can Get It on the Web!

U.S. government officials decided to check whether it would be possible for their potential enemies to "obtain sensitive items of military equipment" through the Internet, says *New Scientist* magazine. "They were astonished to discover how easy it was." Using well-known online trading sites, they had no difficulty purchasing "pieces of US military body armour," a "used nuclear-biological-chemical protective suit," parts for jet fighter planes, and "several other sensitive items." It is unknown how the sellers obtained such equipment, but several "now face criminal investigations," says the magazine.

## Ancient Superglue

In antiquity, decorative silver laurel leaves were attached to a Roman official's parade helmet with an adhesive that has superglue properties. Frank Wille, chief restorer at the Rhineland Museum in Bonn, Germany, made the discovery accidentally. Using a fine saw, he was removing a small metal sample from a first-century-B.C.E. iron helmet that had lain on the bed of the Rhine River for at least 1,500 years. "The heat from the tool caused the silver laurel leaves on the helmet to peel off, leaving thread-like traces of the glue behind," he explains. Analysis revealed that the tenacious adhesive was made of bitumen, bark pitch, and beef fat.





### What Is Wrong With This Picture?

Read Matthew 25:1-12. Now look at the picture. What features are incorrect? Write your answers on the lines below.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

**FOR DISCUSSION:** Why did five of the virgins not share their oil?

CLUE: Read Matthew 25:8, 9.

**When is it good to share what we have with others? When would it be best not to share something we have?**

### From This Issue

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

**PAGE 6 Who owns the earth and that which fills it?**

Psalm 24:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 9 What can anyone thirsting receive?**

Revelation 22:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 18 A man of discernment is what?**

Proverbs 17:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 29 A man's own folly can do what?** Proverbs 19:\_\_\_\_\_



### Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

### What Do You Know About the Prophets?

5. ....
6. ....

**Who was the prophet that ran away from King Jehoiakim?**

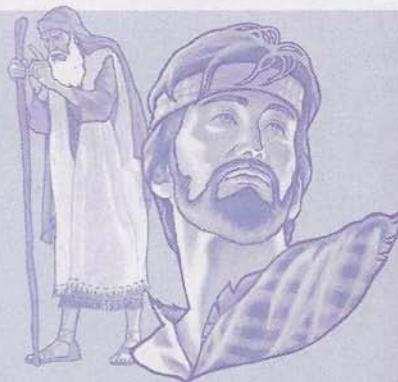
CLUE: Read Jeremiah 26:17-23.

5. ....
6. ....

**When Hezekiah was king, who prophesied that Jerusalem would become "heaps of ruins"?**

CLUE: Read Jeremiah 26:18.

**FOR DISCUSSION:** Why, after reading about these two prophets, should you not be afraid to talk about God? CLUE: Read Proverbs 29:25.



# 'The Best Book on the World's Religions'

■ A high-school teacher in Canada faced the challenge of instructing students in the beliefs of several different religions practiced in her area. After reading the

book *Mankind's Search for God*, she exclaimed: "This is the best book describing the world's religions that I have ever read!" She was so impressed that she sought and received permission from the school board to use the book in class.

The teacher offered to travel over 300 miles to pick up 40 copies of the book from the Canada branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses in her area, however, were happy to deliver the books to her. A number of students in her class enjoyed the book so much that they asked to have their own copies.

You too may find that this book will help you to understand the beliefs of people in your community. It explains the origins, history, and teachings of the major religions of the world—including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

