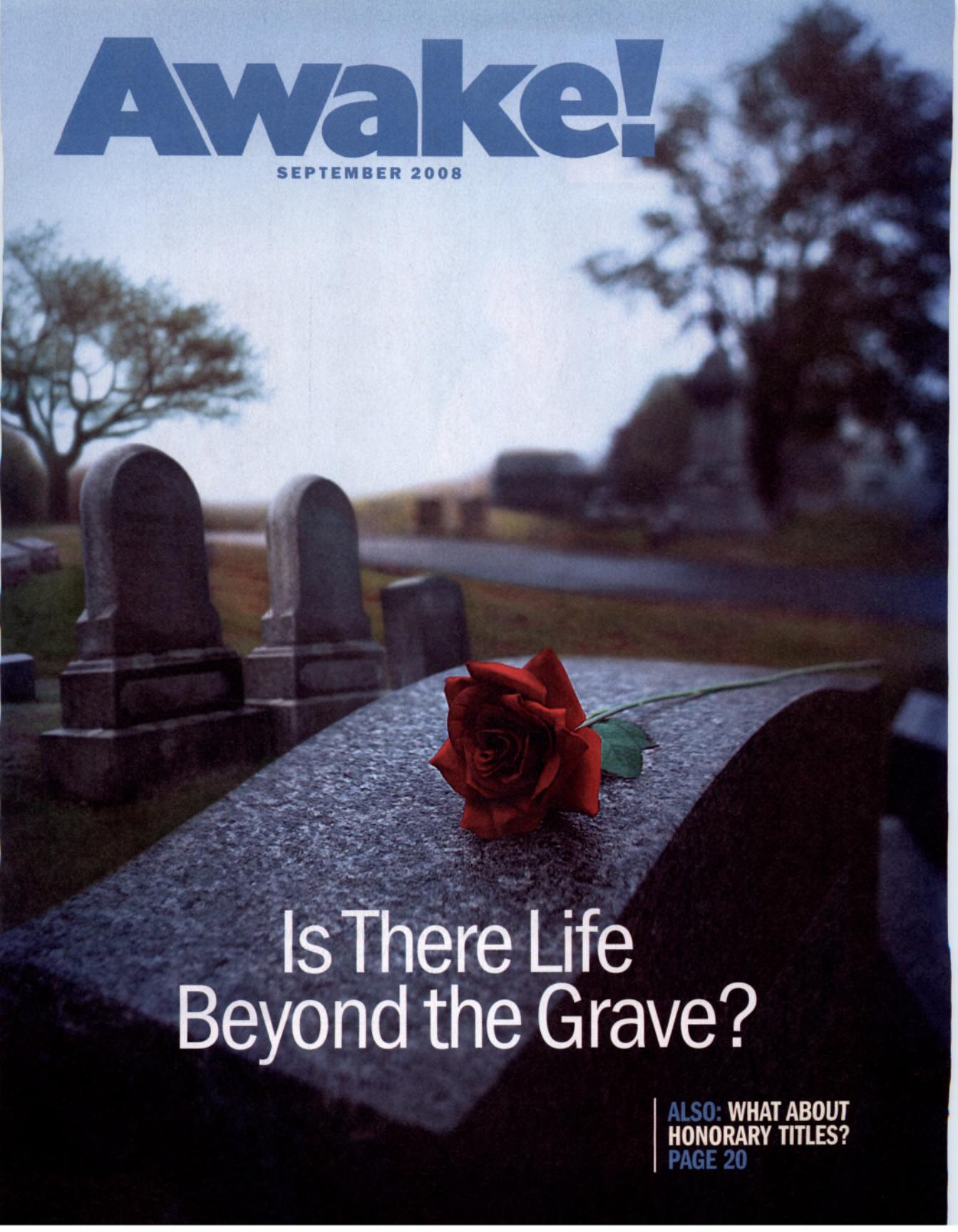


Awake!

SEPTEMBER 2008

A photograph of a red rose resting on a dark, polished granite headstone. In the background, other headstones are visible in a row, set against a backdrop of trees and a cloudy sky.

Is There Life
Beyond the Grave?

ALSO: WHAT ABOUT
HONORARY TITLES?
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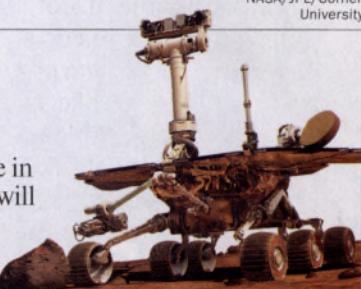
Is There Life Beyond the Grave? 3-10

Consider evidence for belief that there is life beyond the grave. Note, too, the means by which such life is possible and the Bible's description of what life will be like.

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University

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Robots, so-called intelligent machines, play a prominent role in many industries. What impact will they have on your future?



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Learn about major stress factors that youths face at school and the steps they can take to relieve them.



Death Is It Really the End?

In February 1987, an 85-year-old man chose to discontinue the regular kidney dialysis that had been keeping him alive. His death came peacefully at home two weeks later, with his only son at his side.

That final time together provided an opportunity for the two to reflect on a subject they had discussed before: Is life possible beyond the grave? The father, a college-educated man, was a skeptic. He had been influenced by the teaching of evolution and was repelled by the hypocrisy of religion. He called himself an agnostic—believing that the existence of God is unknowable.

The son, desiring to provide comfort and hope, showed his father why life beyond the grave is a real possibility. As death approached, the father acknowledged that living again, enjoying another life with renewed vigor and health, would be desirable.

Comfort in the Face of Death

Most people, if not all, would want to live again if they could do so with restored health and vigor in a world where peace prevails. Humans are unlike animals, which are described in the Bible as “unreasoning,” or as “creatures of instinct.” (2 Peter 2:12; *New International Version*) We bury our dead. We contemplate the future. We do not want to grow old, get sick, and die. Yet, these are realities of human experience.

We are sobered by death’s approach, whether our own or that of a loved one. The Bible, however, encourages us to face death courageously, saying: “Better is it to go to the

house of mourning than to go to the banquet house.” It adds: “The one alive should take it to his heart.” (Ecclesiastes 7:2) Why take death to heart, or reflect deeply on the matter?

For one reason, we have an inborn desire to live and enjoy life in peace and security. Death—nonexistence—is inherently repulsive. It is difficult, if not almost impossible, to accept. The Bible explains why: “[God] has put eternity into man’s mind,” or “in their heart.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11; *Revised Standard Version*) We *want* to live—not die. Think about it: Would that desire be *so strong* if it were not our Creator’s original purpose for us to live forever? Is another life in endless health and happiness possible?

Reason to Believe

Last year, *AARP The Magazine*, published by the American Association of Retired Persons, featured the article “Life After Death.” Interviews of scores of people who were over 50 years of age revealed that “nearly three quarters (73 percent) agree with the statement ‘I believe in life after death.’” On the other hand, the magazine reported that nearly one quarter agreed with the statement “I believe that when I die, that’s the end.” But is that what people really *want* to believe?

In the same article, Tom, a Catholic from New York, was reported to have said: “They preach life after death, you know? I just say, hey, people preach a lot of stuff. You just gotta make up your own mind about things. I go to Mass. I live my life like there’s life after

death, but I don't believe there is. If it's true, well, hey, it's a plus."

Like Tom, many are skeptical—as was the father mentioned at the outset, who would often say to his son, "Belief in religion is OK for those who can't handle the reality of death." Yet, as he and other skeptics have had to acknowledge, belief in an all-powerful Creator provides an answer to otherwise incomprehensible miracles.

For example, just three weeks after conception, the human embryo begins to form brain cells. These cells multiply in spurts, at times up to a quarter of a million of them a minute! Nine months later a baby is born with a brain that has a miraculous capacity to learn. Mo-

lecular biologist James Watson called the human brain "the most complex thing we have yet discovered in our universe."

When considering marvels like this, are you—as most are—filled with awe? Have such reflections helped you arrive at an answer to the question raised by a man long ago: "If an able-bodied man dies can he live again?" That man answered God confidently: "You will call, and I myself shall answer you. For the work of your hands you will have a yearning."—Job 14:14, 15.

Surely we would do well to consider evidence that provides reason for us to believe that life after death is possible.

Life Beyond the Grave It Is Possible!

In a movie several years ago, a young man was shown standing at a dear one's grave.

"Momma always said dyin' was a part of life," he said. Then, as the camera focused briefly on the grave marker, he added: "I sure wish it wasn't."

This sentiment expresses the feeling of billions who have lost a loved one in death. What a horrible enemy! Yet, God promises:

"As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:26) But why, in spite of an apparent capacity to live indefinitely, do we die? How is death to be removed?

Why We Grow Old and Die

Regarding Jehovah God, our Creator, the Bible says: "Perfect is his activity." (Deu-

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.

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teronomy 32:4; Psalm 83:18) The first man, Adam, was created perfect, and he had the potential of living forever in Eden, the earthly Paradise garden in which God placed him. (Genesis 2:7-9) Why did Adam lose that Paradise home and grow old and die?

Simply stated: Adam failed to obey the command not to eat fruit from a particular tree. God had clearly warned Adam of the penalty for doing so, saying: “*You will positively die.*” (Genesis 2:16, 17) Adam joined his wife, Eve, in disobeying that command, so God evicted them from Eden. The reason for God’s prompt action is significant. The Bible states: “That [Adam] may not put his hand out and actually take fruit also from the [garden’s] tree of life and eat and live [forever].”—Genesis 3:1-6, 22.

Adam and Eve died for their disobedience, but why do all their descendants grow old and die? Because they inherited sin from Adam, and sin has resulted in the imperfection and death of every one of his offspring. The Bible explains: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Romans 5:12.

Future Life Made Possible

As we read earlier, “*death is to be brought to nothing*”—yes, removed forever! (1 Corinthians 15:26) But how? The Bible explains this, saying: “Through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life.” (Romans 5:18) What is it

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

^{*} Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

[○] MP3 CD-ROM also available.

[♦] Audio recordings also available at www.jw.org.

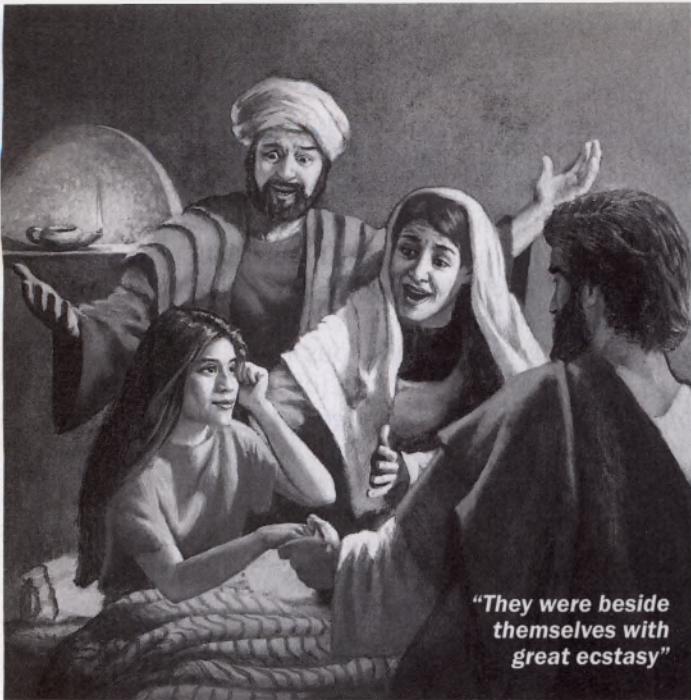
that makes possible a righteous standing with God and the enjoying of everlasting life?

It is the provision for canceling the sin that all humans inherited from the first man, Adam. The Bible explains: “The gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) Of this provision for declaring people righteous for life, Jesus said: “God loved the world [of mankind] *so much* that *he gave his only-begotten Son*, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

Think about the depth of God’s love for us, as well as that of his Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered so greatly in our behalf. The apostle Paul wrote: “The Son of God . . . loved me and handed himself over for me.” (Galatians 2:20) Why, though, is Jesus the only human who could “give his soul [as] a ransom” for us and thereby save us from the deadly consequences of sin?—Matthew 20:28.

Jesus is the only one who could give his soul as a ransom because he is the only human who did not inherit sin from the first man, Adam. Why so? Because the life of Jesus was miraculously transferred from heaven to the womb of Mary, who was a virgin. So, as an angel told Mary, her son was “holy, God’s Son.” (Luke 1:34, 35) That is why Jesus is called “the last Adam” and why he did not inherit sin from “the first man Adam.” (1 Corinthians 15:45) As a sinless human, Jesus could thus give himself as “a corresponding ransom”—his life corresponded to or was the

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equivalent of the once perfect, sinless, first man.—1 Timothy 2:6.

By this provision of the ransom, God made it possible for us to receive what the first Adam lost, namely, *everlasting life in an earthly paradise*. To receive this blessing, however, the vast majority of mankind will have to live again. What a marvelous prospect! But is that just too good to be true?

Basis for Belief

Should it be too difficult to believe that Jehovah God, who created life, has the power to re-create a person who had once been alive? Consider the ability to conceive—or become pregnant—which God made possible for the first woman. “Adam had intercourse with Eve,” and about nine months later, a fully-formed small replica of them was delivered into the world. (Genesis 4:1) What went on inside Eve’s womb to create all the parts of the baby and assemble them is still described as a miracle, beyond full human comprehension!—Psalm 139:13-16.

Birth is commonly taken for granted, since it is repeated hundreds of thousands of times a day. However, bringing back to life one who

has lived before is by many still considered to be unbelievable. When Jesus told people who were mourning the death of a young girl to stop weeping, “they began to laugh scornfully at him” because they knew she had died. But Jesus spoke to the dead girl, saying: “Get up!” And immediately the maiden rose and began walking.” We are told: “At once [those present] were beside themselves with great ecstasy.” —Mark 5:39-43; Luke 8:51-56.

When Jesus asked that the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus be unsealed, Martha, a sister of Lazarus, protested: “By now he must smell, for it is four days.” What rejoicing there was, however, when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life! (John 11:38-44) Many became acquainted with Jesus’ miracles. When John the Baptist was in prison, John’s disciples reported to him about Jesus’ activity, saying: “The dead are being raised up.” —Luke 7:22.

Another Life by Resurrection

Why did Jesus perform such miracles, in view of the fact that later those resurrected got sick and died again? He did so because it proved that what the first Adam had lost—*everlasting life on a paradise earth*—can and will be restored. The resurrections Jesus performed demonstrated how millions of humans will eventually “possess the earth” and “will reside forever upon it.”—Psalm 37:29.

Happily, we can be among those with that grand prospect of living forever if we practice “godly devotion.” Such devotion, the Bible says, “holds promise not only for this life but for the life to come.” That “life to come” is also called “the life which is life indeed” and “the real life.”—1 Timothy 4:8; 6:19; *The New English Bible*.

Let us consider just what this real life, the life to come in a righteous new world, will be like.

Life In a Restored Paradise

JESUS confidently spoke of living again, and he told his disciples that this was a certainty. “*In the re-creation,*” he said, “[you] will inherit everlasting life.” What did Jesus mean by “in the re-creation”?—Matthew 19:25-29.

According to the parallel account by the Bible writer Luke, Jesus said that “*in the coming system of things,*” his disciples would receive “everlasting life.” (Luke 18:28-30) Why does the Bible speak of “the coming system of things” as being the same as “the re-creation”?

Evidently it was to emphasize that Jehovah God will see to it that his original purpose for mankind to enjoy eternal life in an earthly paradise will be realized. Humans will be restored to the perfection enjoyed by Adam and Eve prior to their sin. So “in the coming system of things,” there will be “the re-creation” of the Paradise conditions that existed in the garden of Eden.

How Paradise Will Be Restored

While on earth, Jesus taught his followers to pray for the very means that God will use to restore righteous conditions earth wide. Jesus said we should pray: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven,

en, also upon earth.” (Matthew 6:10) God appointed his Son to be the Ruler of this Kingdom, which will carry out God’s purpose that Paradise conditions be enjoyed everywhere on earth.

Regarding the One whom God has appointed as Ruler, the Bible said: “There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the *princely rule* will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called . . . *Prince of Peace.* To the abundance of the *princely rule* and to peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:6, 7) Yet, how will this government under such “princely rule” carry out the will of God?

The Bible answers, saying: “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [the princely rule] that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”—Daniel 2:44.

Let us consider the conditions that will prevail on earth in the restored Paradise, yes, “in the re-creation,” when God’s Son exercises his power as the ‘princely Ruler’ in his Father’s Kingdom.

Paradise, which was lost through the disobedience of the first human pair, will be restored



What Life in Paradise Will Be Like

Resurrection of the dead

"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

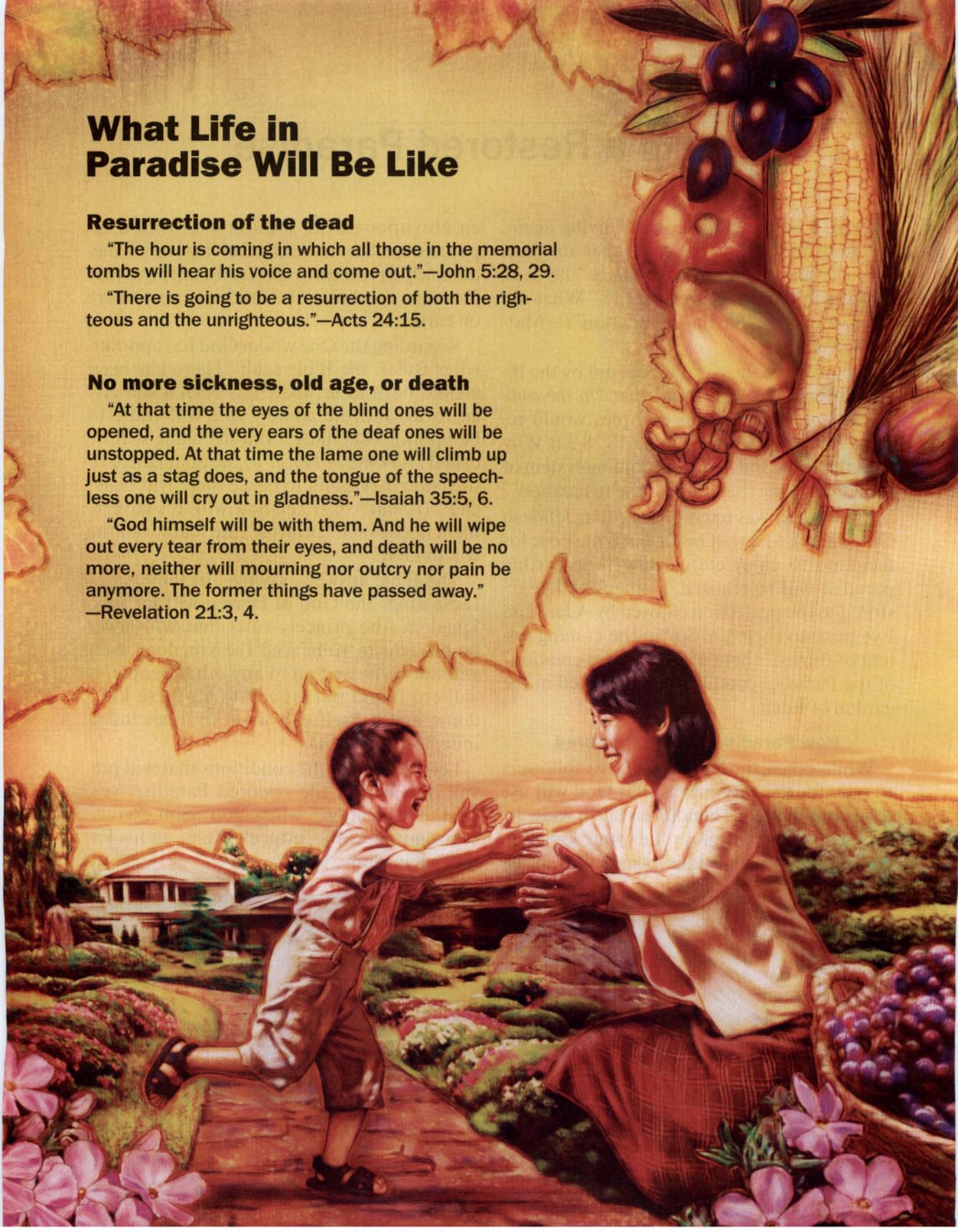
"There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24:15.

No more sickness, old age, or death

"At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

"God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

—Revelation 21:3, 4.



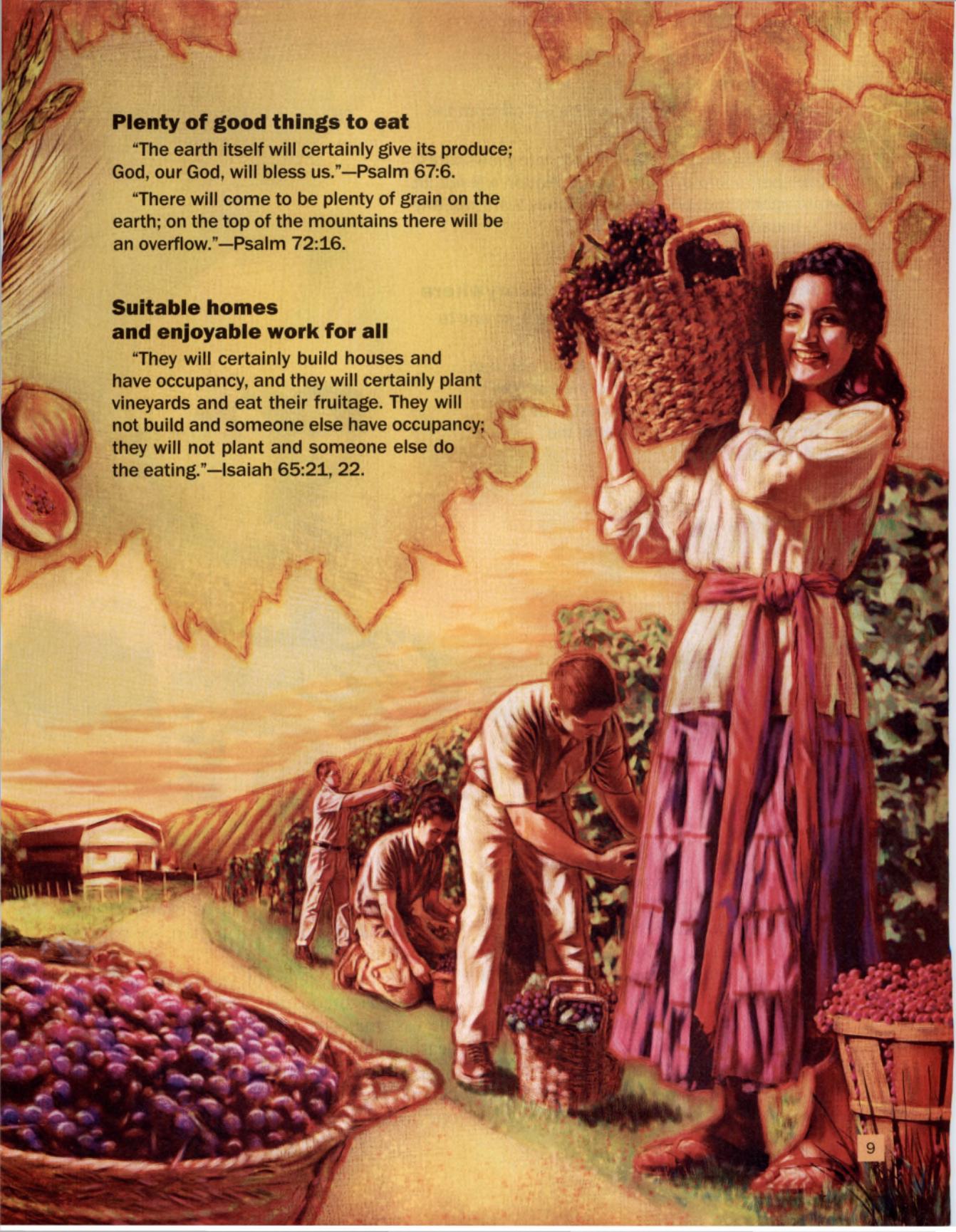
Plenty of good things to eat

"The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us."—Psalm 67:6.

"There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."—Psalm 72:16.

Suitable homes and enjoyable work for all

"They will certainly build houses and have occupancy, and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating."—Isaiah 65:21, 22.



No more crime, violence, or war

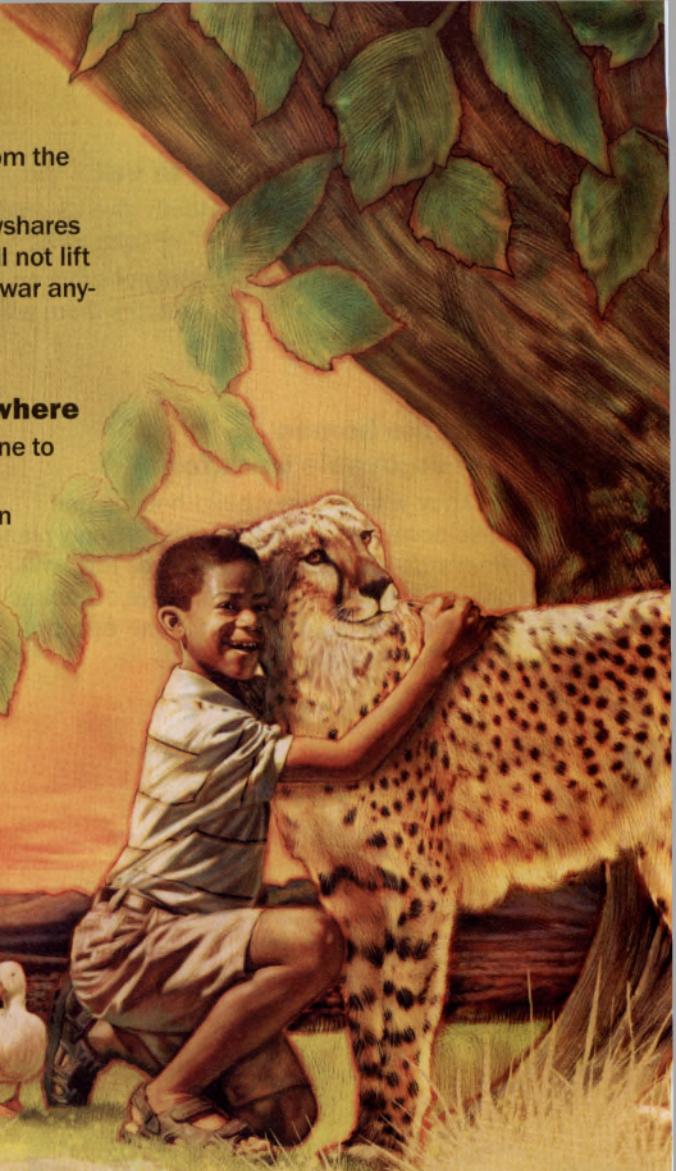
"As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth."—Proverbs 2:22.

"They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."—Isaiah 2:4.

Freedom from fear, and peace everywhere

"They will actually dwell in security, with no one to make them tremble."—Ezekiel 34:28.

"They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isaiah 11:9.



What a pleasure it will be to live when such conditions prevail everywhere on earth, when everyone loves God and shows love for fellow humans! (Matthew 22:37-39) You can be sure that all the promises of God will then be fulfilled. "I have even spoken it," God says, "I shall also do it."—Isaiah 46:11.

There are many things you may yet need to learn about Jehovah God and his promised new world. For example, what evidence is there that this new world is near at hand? How will God's Kingdom replace all the gov-

ernments of the earth? And what events will lead up to its doing so? Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you to examine such questions. For more information, see page 32 of this magazine.

Man's many years of yearning for a new world of righteousness are almost over. For the vast majority of humans who have died, death is not the end. Another life is not merely possible—it is God's will. There truly is life beyond the grave! Yes, it is "the real life," the one "which is to come."—1 Timothy 4:8; 6:19.

UNEXPECTED HELP FROM **Awake!**

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BENIN

■ When 23-year-old Noël decided to terminate his secular schooling and become a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, his relatives doubted if he would survive financially. Indeed, he had difficulty finding suitable part-time work. So when the *Awake!* magazine featured the timely article "Five Keys to Finding a Job," Noël read it carefully several times.* Did it help him? Yes, but not in the way he expected.

The director of a private school saw Noël preaching from house to house and asked if he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The director needed another teacher, and having observed that Jehovah's Witnesses teach effectively, he asked Noël if he knew anyone who would be interested. When Noël said no, the director countered, "How about you?"

Noël had never taught school, and he sometimes stuttered. In Benin this posed a problem because the board of education requires teachers to take an exam confirming that they do not stutter. "Get the certificate," promised the director, "and you can have the job."

Noël had progressed well in the Theocratic Ministry School, which is a school designed to improve public speaking ability and



is held weekly in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. He even gave public talks in his home congregation. Nevertheless, he was apprehensive when he appeared for the exam.

The examiner handed him a magazine and requested that he read aloud a paragraph outlined in red. Noël's eyes widened when he saw the article "Five Keys to Finding a Job." He read the paragraph fluently and received the certificate.

The examiner later stated that he regularly reads the magazines of Jehovah's Witnesses. "These magazines are informative and so well written that I often use them for examinations," he explained.

Noël began teaching, and the director wanted to sign him up for the following year, but Noël had other plans. He had been invited to work at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, where he is now serving.

* See the July 8, 2005, issue of *Awake!* pages 4-9.

God Helped Me to Overcome Trials

AS TOLD BY VAZIR ASANOV

Springing from bed, I tied a Bible around my waist and dressed quickly. Before I jumped out the window, I wadded up some clothes, placed them in the bed, and pulled the blanket over them to make it look as though I was still sleeping. Then I ran to the Kingdom Hall, praying to God for support. That occurred in 1991 when I was 14.

I WAS born into a Kurdish family in a city in the southern part of what is now Kazakhstan, which at the time formed one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union. My parents and relatives brought me up to believe that I could become a future leader and liberator of my people. I nurtured such a hatred of enemies of the Kurdish people that I was ready to kill to free our people from oppression.

In the late 1980's, my mother, younger brother, and I began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Father, however, forbade us to associate with Christians. Still, I continued to study. In a Kurdish family, disobedience to the family head is virtually unknown. I loved my father, yet I also loved the Bible truths I was learning.

Opposition at Home and at School

One time, a teacher saw a copy of the *Watchtower* magazine in my schoolbag and told my parents about it. In a rage, Father struck me so hard that blood spurted from my nose. "Are you still with that religion?" he shouted.

After that, Father announced that he no longer considered me his son. How it hurt me to hear that! At the same time, many of my classmates began to avoid me, and some openly reviled me. My teachers lowered my grades and often mocked my faith during class, trying to convert me to their atheistic views.

Despite such opposition, I still tried to attend Christian meetings and to share my newfound faith with others. A while later, Father learned that I was continuing to associate with the Witnesses and to read the Bible. One Sunday, I began looking for an excuse to leave the house to attend the meeting. Immediately, Father made me go to bed. He said firmly, "Now, every Sunday at this time you must be in bed." He threatened me with dire consequences if I disobeyed, and I was convinced that he meant it.

With tears, I supplicated Jehovah, the true God, to soften Father's heart, but he remained unmoved. I recalled the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt. My father's actions reminded me of Pharaoh, who refused to let

the Israelites go to worship Jehovah.—Exodus 5:1, 2.

Making Decisions

One Sunday, I decided to go to the meeting. My heart pounded with anxiety as I lay in bed praying silently to Jehovah. When my parents came into my room, I pretended to be asleep. Father proudly said, “See what an obedient son I have.” He kissed me, and they quietly left. I continued to pray earnestly.

Shortly after my parents left the room, as related in the introduction, I leaped up, got my shoes from under the bed, and jumped out of the window. Two hours at the meeting sped by quickly, and I wondered what would happen when I returned home. Happily, although Mother had seen that it was my clothes in the bed and not I, she said nothing to Father. However, she warned me that she would no longer conceal such actions from him.

In 1992, I told my parents that a friend had a special celebration to attend and that I had been invited to go along. Actually, the special event that I planned to attend was an assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the city of Taraz, which was about 65 miles from our home in Karatau. There, I was to be baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah. I asked Mother if I could have a bucket of sunflower seeds from the barn. I fried those seeds and sold them at the market, and that was how I was able to earn enough money to attend the assembly.

When I returned, Father asked if I had a good time with my friend. I assured him that I did. I felt that Jehovah supported me, because Father did not inquire any further about the matter. I really liked the words of Proverbs 3:5, 6: “Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own

understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.”

I Weaken Spiritually

Opposition from Father did not stop with my baptism. As I continued to associate with the Witnesses, Father would beat me severely, both when others were present and when we were alone. Almost every day I was subject to humiliation and pressure, and I often wept. Kazakhstan was then gaining independence

Mother warned me that she would no longer conceal such actions from Father

from the Soviet Union, and my parents and relatives tried to persuade me to achieve positive goals as a politician. They thought that I was missing out on my chance.

My older brother had realized achievements in sports, and Father often held him up to me as an example. Well, toward the end of 1994, I too became involved in sports. Blessed with natural ability, I was soon winning awards and praise for my skills in soccer and gymnastics. I also began to study law so that I would be in a position to help protect the interests of the Kurds. I even became interested in politics and thought about founding a Kurdish youth party. Now Father began to praise me.

“You Won, Papa”

I had become spiritually weak and had discontinued reading the Bible and attending the meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses. I comforted myself with the thought that I would serve Jehovah again when I became of age. Once, Father asked whether I was associating with Jehovah’s Witnesses. “No. You won, Papa,” I replied. “Are you happy now?” Upon hearing this, Father was very happy. “Now, finally, you are my son!” he said proudly.

1. One head and neck. 2. Ten horns. 3. Seven diadems. 4. Ase—Matthew 1:7. 5. Jehovahshaphat—Matthew 1:8. 6. Jehovah—Matthew 1:8.

For two years I did not attend meetings, although at times I wanted to go. But feelings of shame kept me from following through on my intentions. I thought that those in the congregation would not understand my situation.

At the same time, I was convinced that there was nothing better than serving Jehovah. ‘After all, I love Jehovah!’ I would often tell myself. Then Father began pressuring me to pursue a university education. I gave in and even promised to finish school with honors. In my heart, though, I hoped that once I got to the university in Almaty, a large, modern city in southern Kazakhstan, I would find the Witnesses.

Happy Changes of Circumstances

Not long after I began studying at the university, I met two Witnesses as they were sharing in the ministry on a street in Almaty. They approached me with the question, “Who do you think rules the world?”

“Satan the Devil,” I replied, “the enemy of Jehovah and of all mankind.” (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) I explained that I was a baptized Witness but had become inactive.

Toward the end of 1996, I again began to study the Bible with the Witnesses. After I had several studies, my desire to serve Jehovah returned in full force, and I started to take part in all the activities of the Witnesses in Almaty. In September 1997, I began serving as a pioneer, or full-time minister.

A year later, Father came to visit me. I ran to him, and we hugged. He asked for my forgiveness for his actions all those years. He said that he had misunderstood both me and my faith. “Papa,” I said, “I love you very much.”

How happy I felt when Father accepted Bible literature and requested a Bible, saying that he wanted to read it from cover to cover! A year later, he came to visit me again, this time with Mother. At the Kingdom Hall,

people of various nationalities warmly greeted them by coming up and introducing themselves. This made a profound impression on Father, and he began to read the literature of the Witnesses with great interest.

Rich Blessings

In September 2001, I married a wonderful Russian girl named Yelena. She has been a baptized Witness since 1997 and began to pioneer in May 2003. To our great joy, we learned that my parents had started to study the Bible with the Witnesses and were making spiritual progress. Actually, I could not believe the news until I heard it from Father’s own lips. Over the phone, he told me that Jehovah is the one true God!

I am so happy that here in Almaty I have had the opportunity to conduct Bible studies with people from many places, including China, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, and Turkey. Not long ago, an Iranian priest asked me to study the Bible with him in his native language, Persian. A former general from Afghanistan was greatly impressed with what he learned about Jehovah. It was also a joy to study with a person from Syria in my native Kurdish tongue as well as to study with people in Kazakh and Russian, other languages of my childhood.

Now, along with Yelena, I serve in a Kazakh-speaking congregation—one of the more than 35 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Almaty. Last year, Yelena and I were privileged to serve temporarily at the recently completed branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses located near Almaty.

At one time I was taught to hate, but Jehovah taught me to love. I am convinced that we should never be influenced to do otherwise, even when pressured by well-meaning relatives and friends. (Galatians 6:9) Now I am so glad that my wife and I have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Corinthians 15:58.

*The Kingdom Hall in Karatau,
where I attended as a youth*



*My parents, who are now
favorable toward our work*

*Yelena and me on
our wedding day*



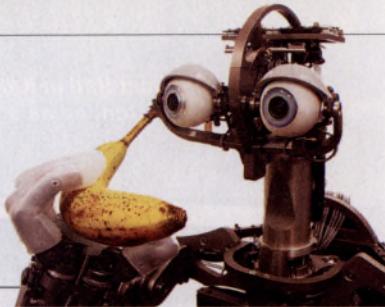
*With Yelena, at the new
branch facilities near Almaty*



robots

how far have they come?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN JAPAN



▲ Courtesy Aaron Edsinger

ROBOTS. What images does that word conjure up in your mind? Some people view robots as friendly—as benevolent partners or helpmates. Others view them as a threat—machines with superior intelligence, perhaps one day replacing humans. Still, to many others, robots are more the fare of science fiction than of real life.

What about today? According to estimates from a study released in 2006 by the International Federation of Robotics, there are almost one million industrial robots in service worldwide, and of these almost half exist in Asia. Why is there such a demand?

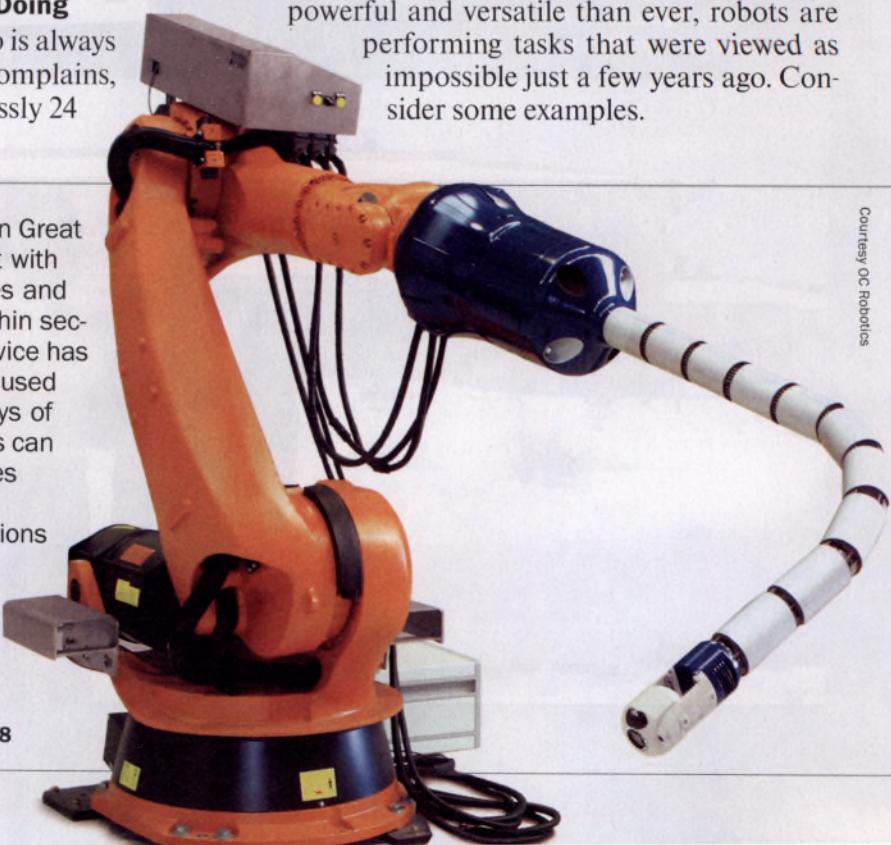
What Robots Are Doing

Imagine a worker who is always on the job, who never complains, and who can work tirelessly 24

hours a day, seven days a week. Well, industrial robots are doing just that as they churn out a host of automotive, electrical, and household items. Robots live up to their name, which comes from the Czech word *robota*, meaning “forced labor.” It is estimated that in the car-manufacturing industry in 2005, there was 1 robot for every 10 workers!

Robots, though, are no longer confined to the factory. They now come equipped with such things as voice-recognition software, gyroscopes, wireless data communication, Global Positioning Systems, and a range of sensors including those for heat, force, ultrasound, chemicals, and radiation. More powerful and versatile than ever, robots are performing tasks that were viewed as impossible just a few years ago. Consider some examples.

■ Service. In a hospital in Great Britain, a pharmacy robot with mechanical arms retrieves and dispenses medication within seconds. The U.S. Postal Service has a host of robots that are used to sort, lift, and stack trays of parcels. Snake-arm robots can reach into confined spaces—such as inside airplane wings—to perform inspections or repairs.



Courtesy OC Robotics

■ Companion. In a nursing home in Japan, elderly patients take turns stroking a cute, furry robotic baby seal. The robot seal is sensitive to touch, light, sound, and temperature, as well as even to the way it is held. It can mimic animal behavior and respond by cooing, blinking its eyes, and wiggling its fins. The robot seal is said to fill a basic human need for companionship and is used as a form of therapy.



Courtesy AIST



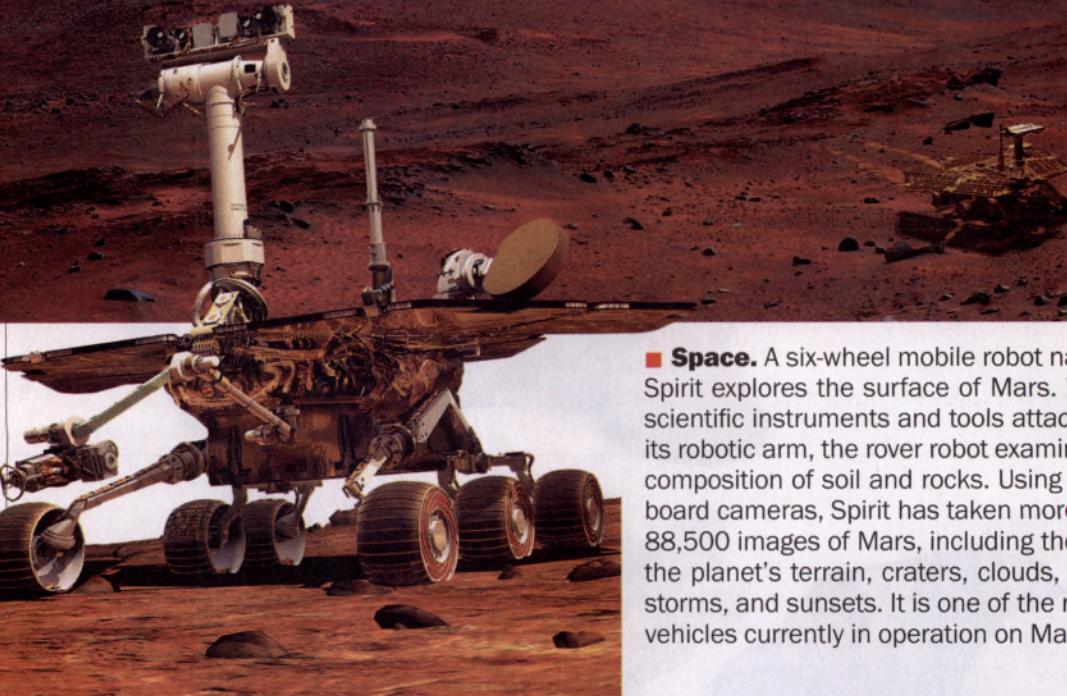
© 2008 Intuitive Surgical, Inc.

■ Medical. A robot with three arms stands over a patient. Several feet away, a surgeon buries his head in the viewfinder of a giant console to peer at a 3-D image of his patient's heart. The surgeon controls the robot's arms as it snips and sews to repair a faulty heart valve. This system allows for minimally invasive surgery because of the robot's extreme precision of movement, resulting in reduced trauma to the body, reduced blood loss, and quicker recovery.

■ Household. Just press a button, and a disk-shaped robot goes to work vacuuming your floors. The robot covers open areas in a widening spiral motion and navigates along walls, eventually "learning" the room layout. It detects stairs and avoids them. The robot automatically stops when finished and heads to its recharging station. Over two million of these vacuum robots are now in use.



Courtesy iRobot Corp.



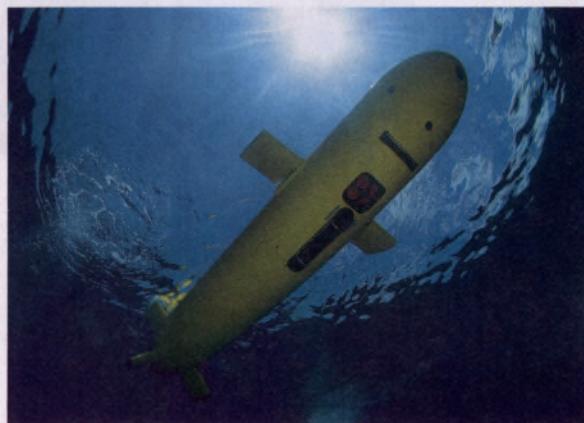
Space. A six-wheel mobile robot named Spirit explores the surface of Mars. With scientific instruments and tools attached to its robotic arm, the rover robot examines the composition of soil and rocks. Using its on-board cameras, Spirit has taken more than 88,500 images of Mars, including those of the planet's terrain, craters, clouds, dust storms, and sunsets. It is one of the robotic vehicles currently in operation on Mars.

■ Search and Rescue.

Beneath the smoking debris of a superheated pile of twisted steel beams and shattered concrete of the collapsed World Trade Towers, 17 basketball-size search-and-rescue robots went to work, looking for survivors. Since then, more-advanced models have been developed, such as the one shown below.



© The RoboCup Federation



Greg McFall/NOAA/Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Underwater. Autonomous underwater vehicles are being used by scientists to explore earth's final frontier—the ocean. These robotic vehicles are unmanned and self-powered. Other applications underwater include search-and-recovery operations, inspection of telecommunication cables, tracking whales, and minesweeping the ocean.

How Much Like Humans?

For centuries, man has dreamed of building a humanoid—a robot resembling a human. But how technically elusive that dream has been! “The complexity of building supercomputers, erecting skyscrapers, or even designing whole cities pales beside the task of imbuing machines with humanlike motor skills, synthetic sight, smell, hearing, and touch, plus something that approximates human intelligence,” observed the journal *Business Week*.

Take, for example, the seemingly simple task of making a humanoid robot that can walk. Following 11 long years of painstaking research and development—and after spending untold millions of dollars—Japanese engineers achieved that amazing technical feat in September 1997. Since then, humanoids have been developed to the point that they can climb stairs, run, dance, carry items on a tray, push a cart, and even pick themselves up off the floor when they fall!

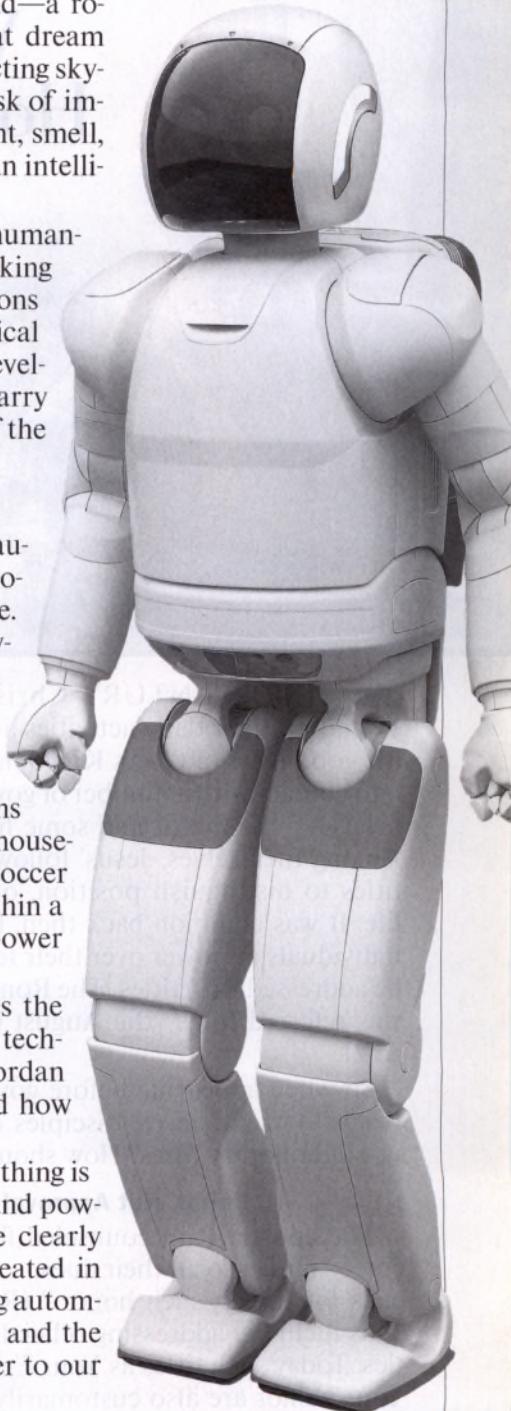
What About the Future?

What is the future of robots? The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration is currently developing a “robonaut,” a humanoid capable of doing dangerous tasks in space. Bill Gates, a well-known leader of the personal computer revolution, says that likely “robots will play an important role in providing physical assistance and even companionship for the elderly.”

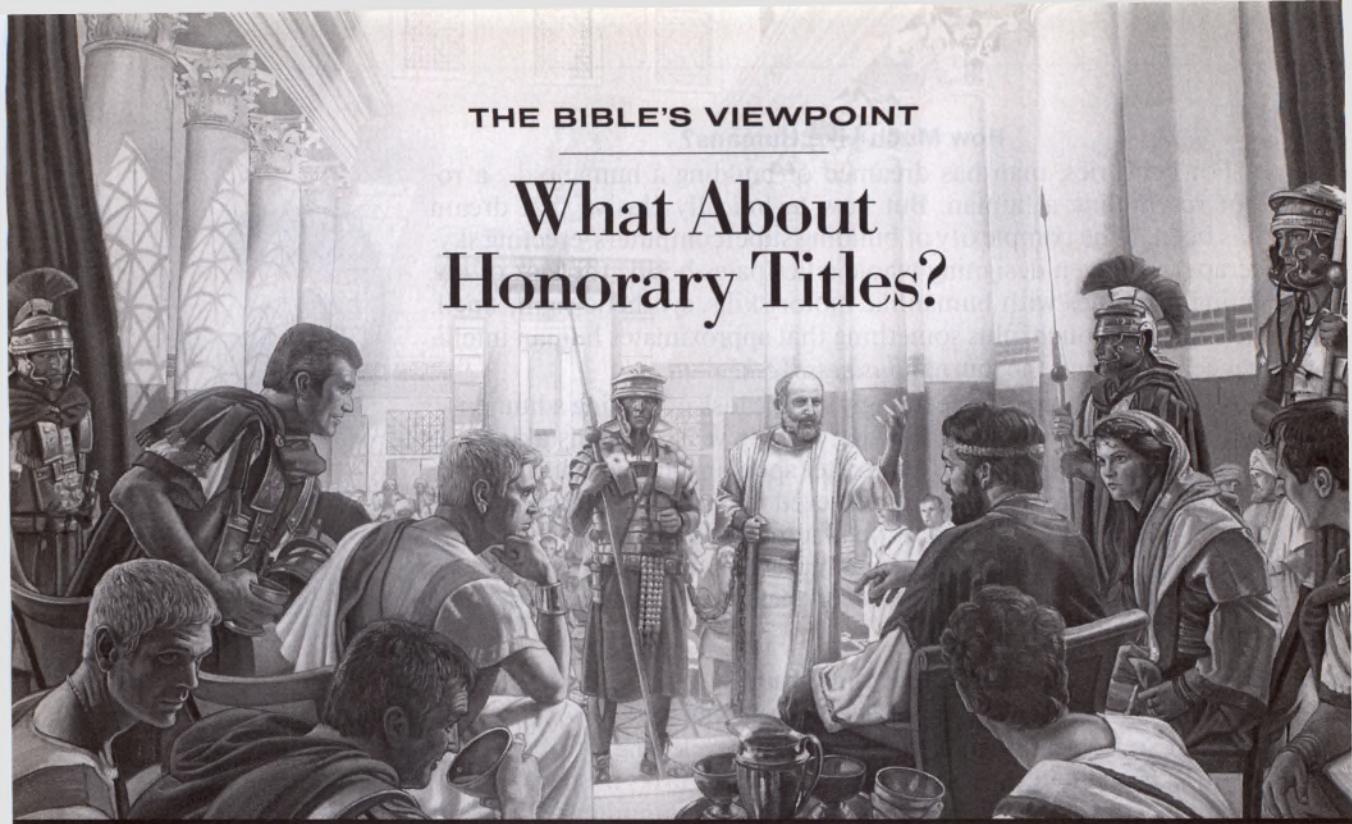
Similarly, a report released by the Japanese government envisions a society in 2025 where robots coexist with humans and serve as caregivers, assist in childrearing, and perform household chores. By 2050, researchers hope to see an all-robot soccer team defeat a team of humans. And it is also hoped that within a few decades, machines capable of exceeding human brain power will be developed.

As bold as such predictions may be, not everyone shares the same optimism regarding their fulfillment. Concerning the technical challenges faced, artificial-intelligence researcher Jordan B. Pollack observed: “We’ve fundamentally underestimated how good a programmer Mother Nature is.”

How far robots progress remains to be seen. However, one thing is certain: The ability to love and to exercise wisdom, justice, and power will always remain unique to humans. Why? The Bible clearly states that unlike other living creatures, only man was created in God’s image. (Genesis 1:27) Humans are not cold, calculating automatons. They are free moral agents, who have consciousness and the ability to worship God. May this fact move us to draw closer to our Creator, Jehovah God!—James 4:8.



What About Honorary Titles?



AS FIRST-CENTURY Christians went about their daily activities and preached the good news of God's Kingdom, they came into contact with a number of government officials—some minor and some high-ranking. Among themselves, Jesus' followers used no titles to distinguish position, or station, in life. It was common back then, however, for individuals in power over their fellow men to be addressed with titles. The Roman emperor was referred to as "the August One."—Acts 25:21.

So when appearing before government officials, how did Jesus' disciples consider the use of honorary titles? How should we?

Honor, Not Approval

The apostle Paul counseled fellow believers to "render to all their dues, . . . to him who calls for honor, such honor." (Romans 13:7) This included addressing officials by their titles. Today such titles as Your Excellency and Your Honor are also customarily used to ad-

dress those holding public office. But some may ask, 'How can I address a person in such a way when I suspect that his conduct is neither honorable nor excellent?'

Many public officials discharge their duties conscientiously, yet not all of them inspire confidence. Even so, the Bible urges us to subject ourselves to kings and governors "for the Lord's sake." (1 Peter 2:13, 14) Hence, acknowledging the position of authority that an official occupies with God's permission would move us to show respect and render the required honor.—Romans 13:1.

An official's personal conduct is not at issue in this context. That is not the reason for rendering honor. Addressing an official by his honorary title does not indicate tacit approval of his conduct. This is shown by an episode in the life of the apostle Paul.

Paul's Use of Titles

The apostle Paul was arrested in Jerusalem on trumped-up charges and was led before

Felix, governor of Judea. Felix was hardly an exemplary public official. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote that Felix “thought that he could do any evil act with impunity.” He was more interested in receiving a bribe than in rendering justice. Even so, during his two years in custody, Paul showed respect for the governor, and the two men conversed often—Felix hoping for money, which never came, and Paul using the opportunity to preach.—Acts 24:26.

When Festus succeeded Felix, the new governor heard Paul’s case in Caesarea. To win favor with the Jewish leaders,

How did Paul address Agrippa? Festus suggested that Paul be tried in Jerusalem. But Paul knew that he could not get a fair trial there, so he took advantage of his Roman citizenship, declaring: “I appeal to Caesar!”—Acts 25:11.

Festus was unsure of how to explain the accusations against Paul to Caesar, but help came when King Agrippa II paid Festus a courtesy visit and expressed interest in the case. The next day, with great pageantry, military commanders and local dignitaries accompanied the king into the audience chamber.—Acts 25:13-23.

When invited to speak, Paul used the title “King” in his opening comments and acknowledged Agrippa’s expertise in customs and controversies among the Jews. (Acts 26: 2, 3) At the time, Agrippa was widely reputed to be involved in a scandalous, incestuous relationship with his sister. Surely Paul was aware of Agrippa’s tarnished reputation for

being morally bankrupt. Still, Paul accorded him the honor due a king.

During Paul’s defense, Festus exclaimed: “You are going mad, Paul!” Instead of being provoked, Paul responded calmly, addressing the governor as “Your Excellency.” (Acts 26: 24, 25) Paul showed him the respect that was due his position. These examples, however, raise the question, Is there a limit to the honor that should be shown?

Relative Honor

Governmental authority is relative, as indicated at Romans 13:1, which says: “The existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.” Thus, the honor due governmental representatives is also relative. Jesus established the limit to the honor that ought to be rendered to others when he told his disciples: “Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called ‘leaders,’ for your Leader is one, the Christ.”—Matthew 23:8-10.

The contrast between the religious and the secular thus sets the limit when it comes to according appropriate honor. In the event that secular officials adopt titles of a religious nature, Paul’s counsel to render them honor would not extend to the use of such titles. A person who follows Scriptural counsel would treat such officials respectfully. However, his Bible-trained conscience would motivate him to refrain from using any religious titles, since he is obliged to “pay back . . . God’s things to God.”—Matthew 22:21.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- How did Jesus’ followers view the secular authorities?—Romans 13:7.
- Did the apostle Paul use honorary titles for government officials?
—Acts 25:11; 26:2, 25.
- What kind of titles did Jesus disapprove of?—Matthew 23:8-10.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF Asperger's Syndrome

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BRITAIN

YOU want to have friends, but making conversation is not easy. Yet, you can talk for hours on your favorite subject. Your life is governed by routine; change disturbs you. You often feel anxious and frustrated and sometimes depressed.

People misunderstand you. They call you strange, difficult, or even rude. You find it hard to understand others' thoughts and feelings, especially as you cannot read their facial expressions or body language. Many with Asperger's syndrome, also called Asperger's disorder, regularly face such situations.

Those with Asperger's syndrome look the same as anyone else, and they are often very intelligent. However, they have a neurologically based developmental disorder that affects the way they communicate with and relate to other people. The syndrome comprises a variety of characteristics, and each person is affected in a different way. Yet, it is possible to meet the challenge of living with Asperger's syndrome. Consider Claire's story.

ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

The condition is named after Dr. Hans Asperger, who first described it in 1944. However, only in recent years has considerable research been done to understand and help the increasing numbers who are being diagnosed with the syndrome. Medical researchers are undecided as to whether it is a less severe form of autism or a separate disorder. As yet, no one knows what causes Asperger's syndrome. However, it is not due to emotional deprivation nor to the way a child has been brought up.

At Last, a Diagnosis!

As a child, Claire was very quiet and withdrawn. She avoided eye contact with people and was fearful of crowds. She mastered speech at an early age, but she used as few words as possible and spoke in a monotone. She liked a rigid routine, and she became anxious if it was altered.

At school, teachers were impatient with Claire because they thought she was being willfully difficult, and she was bullied by other children. Her mother suffered too, as others unfairly blamed her for Claire's behavior. In the end, she taught Claire at home for the last years of her education.

Afterward, Claire had several jobs but lost them all because she could not cope with the changes in routine and with what was expected of her. At her last job, which was in a nursing home, the matron realized that something was seriously wrong. Finally, when Claire was 16, her condition was diagnosed as Asperger's syndrome.

At last, Claire's mother knew why her daughter's behavior was so different from others'. A friend found some information on the syndrome, and when Claire read it, she asked in amazement: "Do I really do that? Is that what I'm like?" The local social services department advised Claire to have occupational therapy. Chris, one of Jehovah's Wit-

nesses who had experience in helping children with special needs, arranged for Claire, also a Witness, to volunteer and help with the maintenance and upkeep of a building used by the Witnesses for Christian worship.

Learning to “Live in the Real World”

Initially, Claire hardly spoke to her fellow volunteers. When she encountered a problem, she wrote Chris a note, since that was easier than translating her thoughts into speech. Gradually, Chris encouraged her to sit down with him and talk things through. He patiently taught her, as he put it, to “live in the real world.” It was not “the real world,” he explained, to avoid contact with others and to do only what she wanted. With help, Claire began to learn to cooperate with others in accomplishing a task.

Claire’s unhappy past experiences had resulted in a lack of self-confidence, so her immediate response to any task she was given was, “I can’t do that.” How did Chris tackle this problem? He would give her a small task and explain, “This is how it’s done,” adding, “You *can* do it.” Once she had achieved it, she felt happy. Chris warmly commend-

ed her and gave her another job. Remembering a series of spoken instructions was difficult for Claire, but a written list presented no problem. Little by little, she gained confidence.

Because Claire disliked crowds, talking to others at meetings for Christian worship was a big challenge. She used to remain seated by herself at the front of the Kingdom Hall. However, she gave herself the goal of getting up immediately after the meeting, walking toward the back of the hall, and making herself talk to one person.

In time, Claire found herself talking to more people. “But it’s not easy,” she observes. Even though her condition makes conversation very difficult, she regularly gives talks in the Theocratic Ministry School, a program that is designed to help all of Jehovah’s Witnesses express themselves more effectively.

Meeting a Bigger Challenge

As Claire’s confidence increased, Chris suggested that she try to serve as an auxiliary pioneer, a term Jehovah’s Witnesses use for baptized Witnesses who spend 50 hours or more each month sharing their Bible-based



▲ Chris explains to Claire how to cooperate with others to accomplish a task

◀ Claire learned to take the initiative to befriend others

HELPING THOSE WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Take an interest in those with Asperger's syndrome, and try to get to know them. Although they may find it difficult to initiate a conversation, recognize that such ones do want and need friends. They are not being difficult or awkward on purpose.

Be patient, and try to understand their problems. Also, be aware of your need to explain things precisely and unambiguously, since they may take what you say very literally. If a set routine needs to be changed, explain the details clearly, possibly even demonstrating the new course of action expected of them.

If you find that they are worrying obsessively about something they have seen or heard that has distressed them, encourage them to focus instead on a beautiful picture or listen to soothing music.

beliefs with others. "I can't do that," Claire responded.

However, Chris encouraged her by saying that even if she didn't achieve her goal of 50 hours that month, at least she could be happy that she had tried. So Claire tried, and she really loved the experience. She did it again and again, enjoying it all the more. This built up her confidence, especially when she found many people who wanted to learn more about the Bible.

Claire took to heart the encouragement she heard at Christian meetings to consider whether there was anything stopping her from becoming a regular pioneer, or full-time evangelizer. She decided to become one. The result? In Claire's words, "It's the best thing to do!" She has become much closer to those in her congregation and has devel-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Your Child and the Internet
- A Silent Voice That Can Be Heard
- How Should I View My Curfew?

oped many friendships. Children love being in her company, and she gladly helps them as they preach together.

Providing Support

True, not everyone with Asperger's syndrome will be able to serve as a full-time minister. Yet, Claire's experience provides evidence that such ones can accomplish much more than they may realize. Claire's regular schedule complements her need for a routine, and her conscientiousness and dependability help her to do well in her chosen career.

Claire feels that it is important for people to know she has Asperger's syndrome so that they will realize why she is different in the way she sees the world and copes with it. She explains, "Because you don't always express

Claire feels that it is important for people to know she has Asperger's syndrome

yourself well, people consider you incapable of thinking." Having someone with whom you can talk things through is helpful.

For people with a condition like this, both Chris and Claire suggest setting *little* goals, taking one step at a time. It can be important to have help from someone who understands the syndrome. As a result, self-worth can be enhanced and challenges overcome.

Claire's story shows that with patience and encouragement, much can be done to help those with Asperger's syndrome. Claire confirms this, saying: "A few years ago, I would never have dreamed that I'd be doing all these things today."



WAS IT DESIGNED?

The Seagull's Leg

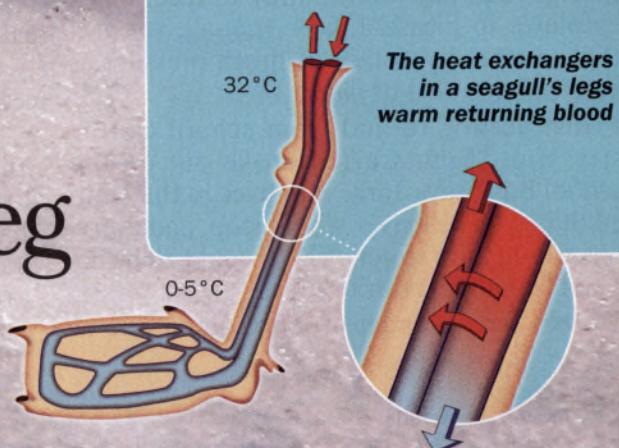
■ A seagull does not freeze even while standing on ice with bare feet. How does this creature conserve its body heat? Part of the secret is in what are called countercurrent heat exchangers.

Consider: A countercurrent heat exchanger consists of a tube carrying a warm fluid that runs in close proximity to a tube carrying a cool fluid. If the fluids run in the same direction, only half of the heat is transmitted, at best. But if the fluids run in opposite directions, nearly 100 percent of the heat is transmitted.

The heat exchangers in a seagull's legs cool the blood on its way to the feet to near freezing and then re-warm the blood as it returns. Concerning birds in cold environments, ornithologist Gary Ritchison writes: "The principle of countercurrent heat exchange is so effective and ingenious that it has also been adapted in human engineering projects to avoid energy waste."

What do you think? Did the countercurrent heat exchange system in the seagull's legs get there by chance? Or was it designed?*

* Countercurrent heat exchangers are also present in humans, a number of fish, and many other animals.



How can I cope with stress at school?



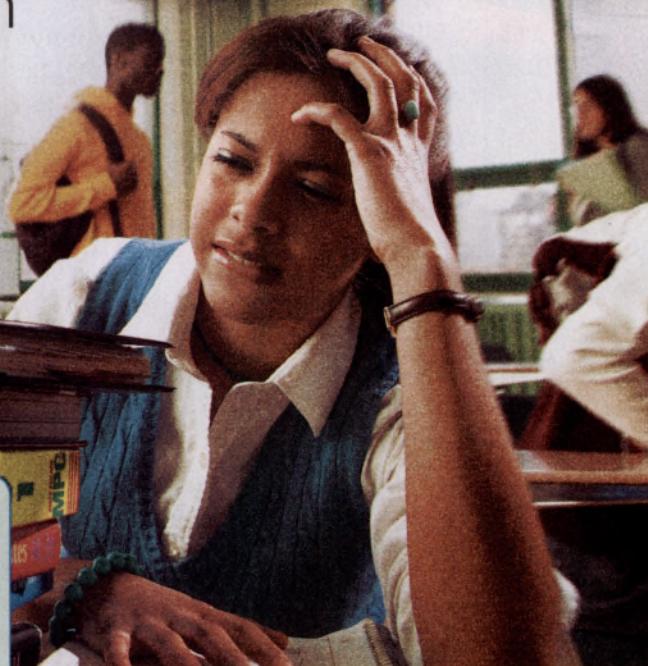
*"Stress at school doesn't let up when you get older—the reasons for it just change."—James, New Zealand.**

"I felt so much pressure at school that I often felt like crying and screaming at the same time."—Sharon, United States.

DO YOU feel that your parents just don't understand how much stress you're under at school? True, they might tell you that you don't have a mortgage to pay off, a family to feed, or an employer to please. Likely, though, you feel that at school you face as much pressure as your parents do—or more.

Just getting to and from school can be stressful. "Fights often broke out on the school bus," says Tara, who lives in the United States. "The driver would stop, and everyone would have to get off. We would all be delayed by half an hour or more."

Does the stress let up once you arrive at



school? Hardly! Perhaps you can relate to the comments below.

■ Teacher-induced stress.

"My teachers want me to excel and get the best grades possible, and I feel pressure to gain their approval."—Sandra, Fiji.

"Teachers push students to excel academically, especially if the student has some ability. The teachers pour on the pressure to succeed."—April, United States.

"Even if you have worthwhile goals for your life, some teachers make you feel like dirt if you don't pursue the academic goals that *they* think you should."—Naomi, United States.

How are you affected by teacher-induced stress?

* Some names in this article have been changed.

■ Peer-induced stress.

"In high school, kids have more freedom and they're more rebellious. If you don't join them, they think you're not cool."—Kevin, United States.

"On a daily basis, I face the temptation to become involved in drinking and sex. Sometimes it's hard to resist the desire to join in."—Aaron, New Zealand.

"Now that I'm 12, the biggest stress for me is the pressure to date. Everyone at school says, 'How long are you going to stay single?'"—Alexandria, United States.

"I was pressured to go out with a boy. When I refused, I was labeled a lesbian. And that was when I was just ten years old!"—Christa, Australia.

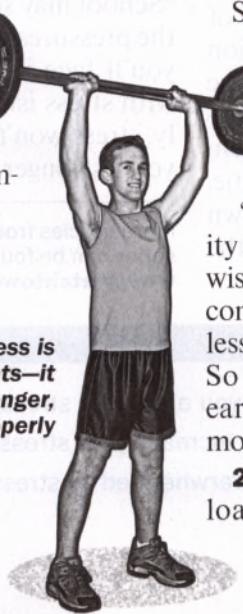
How are you affected by peer-induced stress?

■ Stress over how your classmates will react to your religious beliefs.

"It's hard telling your classmates about your religious beliefs because you're not sure how they'll view you afterward. You worry that they'll think you're odd."—Carol, Hawaii.

"In middle school and high school, kids are into drugs, sex, and alcohol. It's really stressful because you don't want kids making fun of you for being different because you live by Bible standards."—Susan, United States.

Coping with stress is like lifting weights—it will make you stronger, if done properly



How are you affected by issues involving your religious beliefs?

■ Other stress factors. Check the one that affects you most—or write in the one that does.

- Upcoming tests
- Homework
- Parents' high expectations
- Living up to your own high expectations
- Bullies or sexual harassers
- Other _____

Five Steps Toward Less Stress

Realistically, you can't expect to make it through school without having to deal with some kind of stress. Granted, too much stress can be oppressive. Wise King Solomon wrote: "Mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy." (Ecclesiastes 7:7) But you need not let stress drive you crazy. The key is learning how to manage stress effectively.

Coping with stress is like lifting weights. To be successful, a weight lifter must prepare properly beforehand. He lifts the weights correctly and avoids lifting too much weight. If he takes such steps, he builds strong muscles without damaging his body. On the other hand, if he fails to take these steps, he can tear a muscle or even break a bone.

Similarly, you can manage the stresses that you encounter and successfully accomplish the work you need to do without causing damage to yourself. How? Take the following steps:

1. Identify the specific causes.

"Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself," states a wise proverb. (Proverbs 22:3) But you can't conceal yourself from oppressive stress unless you first identify the most likely cause. So look back at the comments you wrote earlier. Which stress factor affects you the most?

2. Do research. For example, if a heavy load of homework is stressing you out,

research the suggestions found in the article "Young People Ask—How Can I Find Time to Do My Homework?" published in the January 22, 2004, issue of *Awake!* If you feel pressured to engage in sexual misconduct with a classmate, you'll find helpful advice in the article "Young People Ask—What if I'm Invited to 'Hook Up?'" published in the March 2007 issue of *Awake!*

3. Plan your response. If you're stressed over how your classmates will react to learning about your religious beliefs, don't wait until a crisis arises to think of what you'll say or how you'll react. (Proverbs 29:25) "What helped me to cope," says Kelsey, 18, "was that I prepared before the situation arose. I had already decided how I was going to explain my beliefs." Aaron, an 18-year-old in Belgium, did the same. "I thought ahead about what questions I'd face, and then I prepared answers to those questions," he says. "If I hadn't done that, I wouldn't have dared to talk about what I believe."

4. Don't procrastinate. Few problems will disappear if you ignore them. Instead, they usually become worse, thus increasing your stress. For instance, if you're one of Jehovah's Witnesses, identifying yourself as such as soon as possible can be a real safeguard. Marchet, now 20, says: "Right at the start of each school year, I initiated a conversation about some subject that I knew would give me a chance to explain my Bible-based standards. I found that the longer I waited to identify myself as a Witness, the harder it became. It really helped when I made my stand known and then lived up to my ideals throughout the year."

5. Ask for help. Even the strongest weight lifter has his limits. You do too. But you don't have to carry the burden by yourself. (Galatians 6:2) Why not talk to your parents or other mature Christians? Show them the answers that you wrote earlier in this article. Discuss with them how they might be able to help you cope with some of these pressures. Liz, in Ireland, told her father about her fear of being ridiculed because of her religious beliefs. "Every day," Liz says, "my dad would say a prayer with me before he dropped me off at school. It always made me feel safe."

Good Stress?

You might find it hard to believe, but the fact that you feel some stress is actually a good thing. Why? It may be an indication that you're diligent and that your conscience hasn't become lazy. Note how the Bible describes an individual who seemed to feel no stress at all: "How long will you lie there doing nothing at all? When are you going to get up and stop sleeping? Sleep a little. Doze a little. Fold your hands and twiddle your thumbs. Suddenly, everything is gone, as though it had been taken by an armed robber."—Proverbs 6:9-11, *Contemporary English Version*.

Heidi, 16, sums up the matter well. She says, "School may seem like a really bad place, but the pressures you face there are the same ones you'll face in the workforce." True, coping with stress isn't easy, but if managed properly, stress won't harm you. In fact, it can make you a stronger person.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

TO THINK ABOUT

- What symptoms might indicate that you are under stress?
- Why would being a perfectionist only increase your stress?
- To whom might you talk if you feel overwhelmed by stress?

Bibles Published in China

"China has become one of the countries publishing the largest number of Bibles in the world," says Ye Xiaowen, head of the State Administration for Religious Affairs. A Chinese printing company based in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, reached the milestone of publishing the country's 50 millionth complete Bible. According to *People's Daily Online*, "about 3 million copies of [the] Bible have been rolling off the [company's] press annually in recent years." The number of those professing to be Christians in China is reported to be growing.

Icons Targeted

"Over the last five years in Russia, more than 1,000 churches have been robbed," reports *Russky Newsweek*. Thefts of some 40,000 icons have been reported to Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs. Now, by agreement between the Ministry and the Russian Orthodox Church, all church icons will receive a special identification mark, visible only when subjected to ultraviolet light. This will help investigators to identify the legitimate owners of recovered icons. The Moscow Patriarchate welcomes this measure, says *Russky Newsweek*, "since the 'earthly' identification mark will not affect the miraculous properties of the icon."

■ In the last 20 years, the number of natural disasters worldwide has quadrupled. Over 250 million people are affected every year.—*EL UNIVERSAL*, MEXICO.

■ "Trade winds, the dominant winds in the Pacific, have over the years gathered a huge mass of drifting garbage." The area covered by this garbage has now reached the size of Australia.

—*LA DÉPÈCHE DE TAHITI*, TAHITI.

■ To produce 50 liters [53 quarts] of biofuel for a passenger car requires 200 kilograms [440 pounds] of corn—"enough to feed one person for a whole year!"—*GAZETA WYBORCZA*, POLAND.

Wars Drain Africa's Resources

"Between 1990 and 2005, 23 African nations were involved in conflicts, and the total cost was about US\$300 billion," says the *International Herald Tribune*. "The price that Africa is paying could cover the cost of solving the HIV and AIDS crisis in Africa, or provide education, water and prevention and treatment for tuberculosis and malaria," says Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. "Literally thousands of hospitals, schools, and roads could have been built." The newspaper concludes that, without war, Africa "might have been a continent of growth instead of the world's poorest."

A Nap Might Do You Good

A study of over 23,000 Greek men and women concluded that taking at least three daytime naps a week may reduce the risk of death from heart attack by 37 percent. "There is considerable evidence that both acute and chronic stress are related to heart disease," explains Dimitrios Trichopoulos, a researcher and an epidemiologist at the Harvard School of Public Health, U.S.A. "An afternoon siesta," he says, "may act as a stress-releasing process [and] reduce coronary mortality."





Seven Steps to Better Parenting (August 2007) This magazine was an answer to my prayers. I have a four-year-old daughter who loves Jehovah, yet I cannot help but feel afraid of making a mistake as a parent. So I ask Jehovah every day to help me to train her. Thank you very much for being concerned about us parents.

Y.M.A., Mexico

This series was like getting a guidebook personalized for our family, discussing many of the very issues that have been weighing heavily on my mind! It just further reinforced to me how much Jehovah cares for his people. He has heard my prayers and seen my tears and knows just how much I needed this information.

J. M., United States

In only a few pages, you managed to include valuable guidance and instruction that really works. Now we just need to follow these guidelines!

E. L., Finland

Can Optimism Improve Your Health? (September 2007) This article helped me greatly, since on many occasions I have blamed myself for personal problems that arose. Thus, I came to think that I was not a good mother and I lived with a lot of stress. Although it's not easy for me to be optimistic, this information helped alleviate my concerns. I'm very grateful for the interest shown in us through this kind of article.

A. S., Ecuador

Toothache—A History of Agony (September 2007) I am a dentist and teacher of dentistry. I was favorably impressed by your excellent and well-written article. It was a wonderful summary of the history of dentistry. I've shared it with many of my friends and colleagues.

C. R., United States

Is God Responsible? (September 2007) Some friends and I have got together socially to discuss practical ways we can prepare for an emergency. We enjoy light refreshments, review the good points in the box

"Are You Equipped to Flee?" in the above-mentioned article, and look over emergency kits that a few of us have prepared. We also discuss the importance of having a balanced view of emergency preparations. We appreciate that assembling disaster supplies is not our primary vocation as servants of God. Rather, it is to preach the good news of God's Kingdom and share with others God's wonderful promise of an earth in which there will be *no* threat from *any* disaster—natural or man-made.

R. G., United States

Keep Your Children Safe! (October 2007) I was molested when I was very young. I am still unable to tell my parents what happened. So I was comforted greatly by these articles. I hope from the bottom of my heart that parents will read this magazine and protect their children. I am very thankful to Jehovah for giving us this necessary information. It was a real comfort to those of us who have experienced sexual abuse.

R. I., Japan



What Is Missing From This Picture?

Read Revelation 12:3. Now look at the picture. What elements are missing? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by drawing the missing items.

1.
2.
3.

FOR DISCUSSION: Whom does this dragon represent? What influence does this one have over the entire inhabited earth? CLUE: Read Revelation 12:9.

Who Is Part of Jesus' Family Tree?

Consider the clues. Look up the scriptures. Then write the correct names in the spaces provided.

4.
CLUE: Zerah the Ethiopian came against me with a million men, but Jehovah defeated them before me.
Read 2 Chronicles 14:9-12.



■ Answers on page 13

From This Issue

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

PAGE 3 What has God put into man's mind and heart?
Ecclesiastes 3:_____

PAGE 5 What is the gift that God gives? Romans 6:_____

PAGE 21 What religious titles did Jesus say we should not use? Matthew 23:_____

PAGE 27 What does a shrewd person do?
Proverbs 22:_____



Children's Picture Search

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

5.
CLUE: I organized the teaching of Jehovah's Law in the cities of Judah.
Read 2 Chronicles 17:1, 7-9.

6.
CLUE: I was buried in the City of David but not in the burial places of the kings.
Read 2 Chronicles 21:16-20.



“I never knew that God had a name”

■ A woman said these words after reading the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* “But it makes sense,” she added. “When I looked up God’s name in my Bible, it was right there!” She explained: “I have never read a book about the Bible that was so helpful and easy to understand!”

The *Bible Teach* book not only shows that it was God’s original purpose for earth to be a paradise but also makes clear how that purpose will be fulfilled. The book reveals the vital role that God’s Son, Jesus Christ, has in accomplishing this purpose.

It provides the Bible’s explanation of why we grow old and die, why God has allowed suffering, and how God’s Kingdom will provide relief from all suffering.

