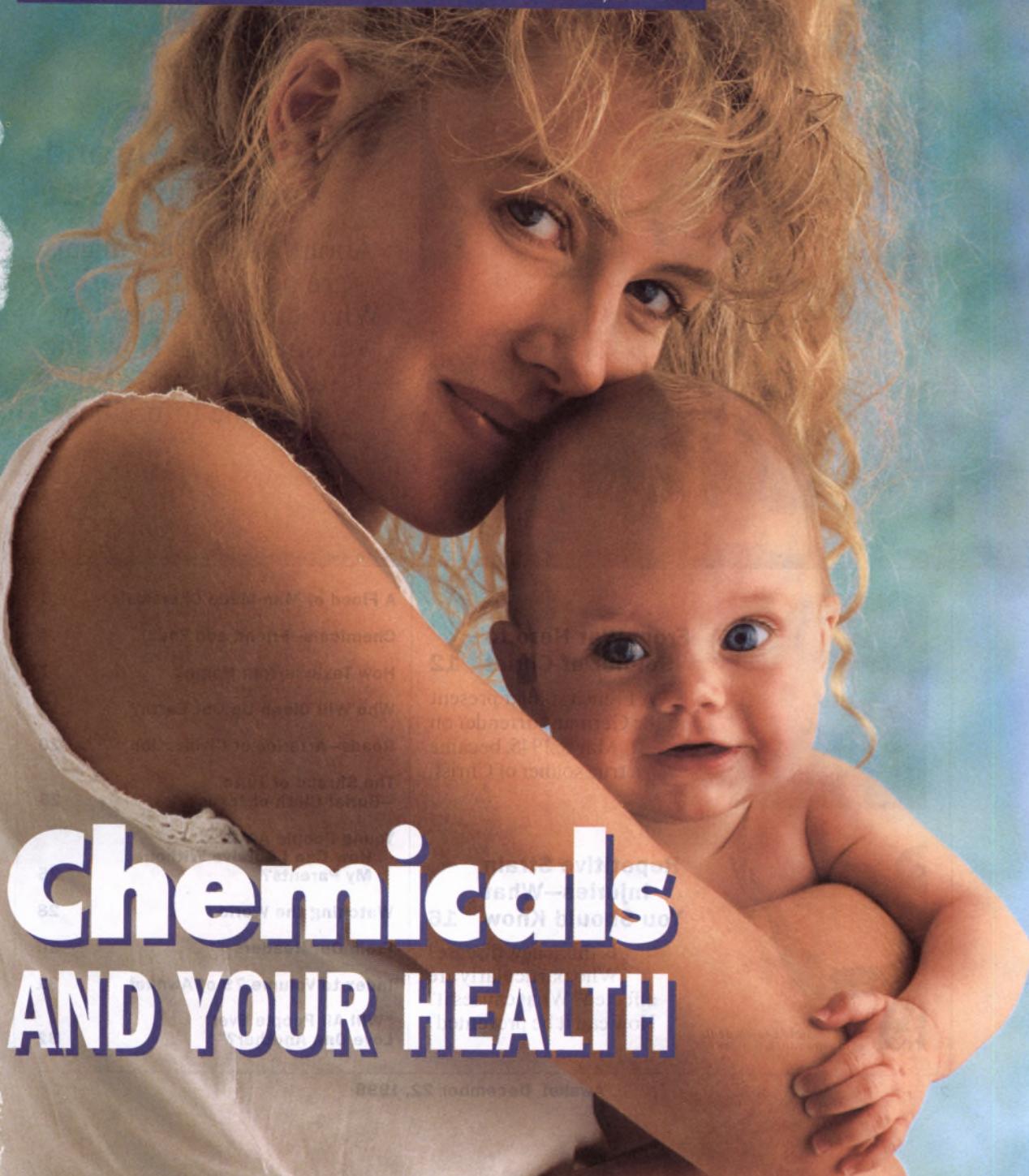


Awake!

December 22, 1998



chemicals AND YOUR HEALTH



Chemicals and Your Health 3-11

About 100,000 chemicals are now on the market. What effects do they have on our health? How safe are our homes? What does the future hold?

COVER: Andy Cox/Tony Stone Worldwide



From War Hero to Soldier of Christ 12

A French soldier present at the German surrender on May 8, 1945, became a true soldier of Christ.



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Is this a new disease? Who particularly are affected? What causes it? How can it be prevented?

The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration/J. G. Heck

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A Flood of Man-Made Chemicals

THIS century could well be called the age of chemistry. Man-made chemical compounds have changed our lives. Our homes, offices, and factories are filled with aerosols, artificial sweeteners, cosmetics, dyes, inks, paints, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, plastics, refrigerants, synthetic fabrics—the list could fill volumes.

To satisfy the world's demand for these products, the annual global production of chemicals, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), amounts to about \$1.5 trillion. WHO reports that some 100,000 chemicals are now on the market and that from 1,000 to 2,000 new ones are added each year.

However, this flood of chemicals invites questions regarding how they affect the environment as well as our own health. Clearly, we are sailing into uncharted waters. "We are all part of an experimental generation, and the full effects will not be known for decades to come," said one doctor.



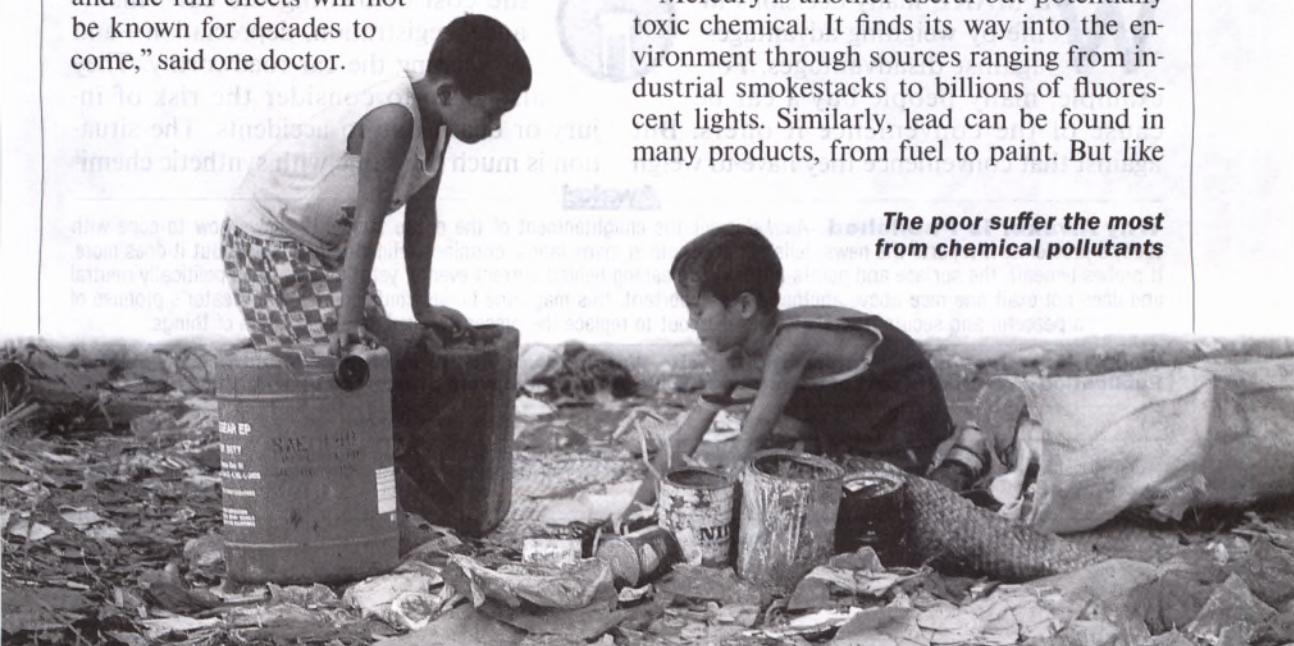
More Chemicals, More Risks?

The people most often affected by chemical pollutants, observes WHO, are "poor, illiterate people with little or no access to appropriate training or basic information on the risks posed by chemicals to which they are exposed directly or indirectly every day." This is especially true of pesticides. But we are all affected by chemicals.

Some 20 percent of California's water wells, says the book *A Green History of the World*, have pollution levels, including pesticides, above official safety limits. "In Florida," the book adds, "1,000 wells have been closed because of contamination; in Hungary 773 towns and villages have water that is unfit for consumption, in Britain ten per cent of aquifers are polluted above World Health Organisation safety limits and in parts of both Britain and the United States tap water cannot be given to new born babies because of high nitrate levels."

Mercury is another useful but potentially toxic chemical. It finds its way into the environment through sources ranging from industrial smokestacks to billions of fluorescent lights. Similarly, lead can be found in many products, from fuel to paint. But like

The poor suffer the most from chemical pollutants



mercury, it can be toxic, especially to children. Exposure to leaded emissions may shave up to "four points from the I.Q." of the average child, says one report from Cairo, Egypt.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, each year some 100 tons of mercury, 3,800 tons of lead, 3,600 tons of phosphates, and 60,000 tons of detergents enter the Mediterranean Sea as a result of human activities. Understandably, the sea is in crisis. But it is not alone. In fact, the United Nations declared 1998 the International Year of the Ocean. Worldwide, all oceans are in trouble, particularly because of pollution.

While chemical technology has given us many helpful products, we use and dispose of many of them at considerable cost to the environment. Have we, as one newspaper columnist recently said, made ourselves "hostages to progress"?

Chemicals and Chemical Reactions

The term "chemical" applies to all the basic substances that make up the world around us, including the more than one hundred fundamental elements, such as iron, lead, mercury, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen. Chemical compounds, or combinations of different elements, include such things as water, acids, salts, and alcohol. Many of these compounds occur naturally.

A "chemical reaction" has been defined as "a process in which one substance is chemically converted to another." Fire is a chemical reaction; it converts one combustible substance—paper, gasoline, hydrogen, and so forth—into a totally different substance or substances. Many chemical reactions occur unceasingly, both around us and inside us.

Chemicals—Friend and Foe?

WE MAKE many decisions in life by weighing advantages against disadvantages. For example, many people buy a car because of the convenience it offers. But against that convenience they have to weigh



the cost of owning the car—insurance, registration, depreciation—and of keeping the car roadworthy. They also have to consider the risk of injury or death due to accidents. The situation is much the same with synthetic chemi-

Awake!

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Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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cals—their advantages have to be weighed against their disadvantages. Take as an example the chemical called MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether), a fuel additive that enhances combustion and cuts vehicle emissions.

Thanks in part to MTBE, the air in many cities in the United States is the cleanest it has been in years. But cleaner air "has come at a price," reports *New Scientist*. This is because MTBE is a potential carcinogen, and it has leaked from tens of thousands of underground gasoline storage tanks, often contaminating groundwater. As a result, one town now has to bring in 82 percent of its water from outside, at a cost of \$3.5 million a year! *New Scientist* says that this disaster "could become one of the US's most serious groundwater pollution crises for years."

Some chemicals have been banned and taken off the market altogether because of the damage they cause to the environment and to health. 'But why,' you may ask, 'does this happen? Are not all new chemicals thoroughly tested for toxicity prior to release?'

Problems With Tests for Toxicity

Actually, testing chemicals for toxicity is a blend of science and guesswork. "Risk assessors do not know how to draw a sharp line between 'safe' and 'unsafe' exposures to any chemical," says Joseph V. Rodricks in his book *Calculated Risks*. That is true even of drugs, many of which are produced synthetically. "Even the most careful testing," says

The World Book Encyclopedia, "cannot always reveal the possibility that a drug might produce an unexpected harmful effect."

Laboratories have certain built-in limitations. They cannot, for example, fully simulate a chemical's behavior in the diverse and complex outside world. The world outside the laboratory abounds with hundreds, even thousands, of different synthetic chemicals, many of which can interact with one another as well as with living things. Some of these chemicals are innocuous on their own, but if they join together, outside or inside our bodies, they can produce new, toxic compounds. Certain chemicals become toxic, even carcinogenic, only after the body's metabolism processes them.

How do risk assessors try to determine a chemical's safety in the light of such challenges? The standard method has been to give laboratory animals a measured dose of the chemical and then try to apply the results to humans. Is this method always reliable?

Are Tests on Animals Reliable?

Besides raising ethical questions regarding cruelty to animals, testing toxins on animals raises other questions. For instance, different animals often react quite differently to chemicals. A small dose of highly toxic dioxin will kill a female guinea pig, but that dose has to be increased 5,000 times to kill a hamster! Even closely related species like rats and mice react differently to many chemicals.

So if the reaction of one animal species is

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no sure predictor of the reaction of another species, how certain can researchers be that a particular chemical will be safely tolerated by humans? The fact is, they cannot really be certain.

Chemists surely have a difficult task. They have to please the people who want their creations, appease those concerned about animal welfare, and satisfy their own consciences that their products are safe. For these reasons, some laboratories are now experimenting with testing chemicals on human cells in culture. Time will tell, however, if this makes reliable guarantees of safety possible.

When Laboratory Tests Fail

The pesticide DDT, still widely found in the environment, is one example of a chemical that was wrongly declared safe when first released. Scientists later learned that DDT tends to remain in organisms a long time, which is also the case with other potential toxins. What are the tragic consequences of this? Well, the food chain, made up of millions of tiny creatures, then fish, and finally birds, bears, otters, and so on, becomes a living funnel, concentrating toxins in the final consumers. In one case, a population of grebes, a species of water bird, was unable to hatch a single chick for over ten years!

These biological funnels are so efficient that some chemicals, though barely detectable in the water, become concentrated in astounding amounts in the final consumers. Beluga whales in North America's St. Lawrence River are a good example. They have toxin levels so high that they must be treated as hazardous waste when they die!

Certain chemicals present in many animals have been found to masquerade as hormones. And it is only recently that scientists began to uncover the insidious toxic effect these chemicals can have.

Chemicals That Mimic Hormones

Hormones are important chemical messengers in the body. They travel through our bloodstream to other parts of our body, where they either stimulate or suppress a certain function, such as body growth or reproductive cycles. Interestingly, a recent press release by the World Health Organization (WHO) said that "a rapidly growing body of scientific evidence" indicates that certain synthetic chemicals, when taken into the body, interfere with hormones by either imitating them in a harmful way or blocking them.

The chemicals involved include PCBs,* dioxins, furans, and some pesticides, including DDT residues. Called endocrine disrupters, these chemicals have the potential to disrupt the normal workings of the body's endocrine system, the source of hormones.

One hormone that these chemicals mimic is the female sex hormone estrogen. A study published in the medical journal *Pediatrics* suggests that an increased prevalence of early puberty among many girls could be linked to estrogen-containing hair products as well as environmental chemicals that mimic estrogen.

Exposing a male to certain chemicals at a critical time in his development can have adverse effects. "Experiments have shown," says a report in *Discover* magazine, "that PCBs applied at just the right time during development can change male turtles and alligators into females or 'intersex' individuals."

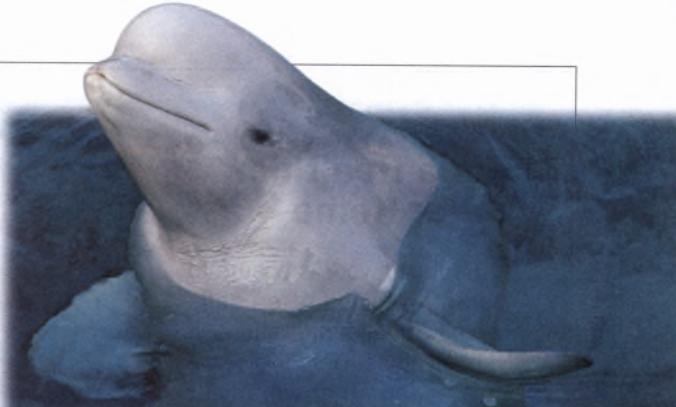
In addition, chemical toxins weaken immune systems, leaving animals more prone

* PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), in widespread use since the 1930's, are a family of over 200 oily compounds used in lubricants, plastics, electrical insulation, pesticides, dishwashing liquids, and other products. Though PCB production is now banned in many countries, between one and two million tons have been manufactured. Toxic effects have resulted from discarded PCBs that have found their way into the environment.

to viral infections. Indeed, viral infections seem to be spreading farther and faster than ever, especially among animals high on the food chain, such as dolphins and seabirds.

In humans, children are the ones who are affected the most by chemicals that mimic hormones. Children born to women who ingested PCB-contaminated rice oil in Japan some years ago "suffered from physical and mental developmental delays, behavioral problems including hypoactivity and hyperactivity, abnormally small penises, and IQ scores five points below average," *Discover* magazine reports. Tests performed on children exposed to a high level of PCBs in the Netherlands and in North America revealed similar adverse effects upon their physical and mental development.

Also linked to these chemicals, reports WHO, may be the increase in "hormonally sensitive" cancers among men and women, such as breast, testicular, and prostate cancer. In addition, in a number of countries, the evidently ongoing decrease in the average sperm count in men, as well as the quality of the sperm, may be linked to the increase in the use of chemicals. In some lands,



These whales are so toxic that they are considered hazardous waste when they die

the average sperm count has almost halved in 50 years!

In the previous article, one doctor was quoted as saying that we are "an experimental generation." It seems that she is right. True, many of our chemical creations have paid us back well, but others have not. We are wise, therefore, to avoid unnecessary exposure to chemicals that have the potential to hurt us. Surprisingly, many of these can be found in our homes. Our next article will discuss what we can do to protect ourselves from potentially dangerous chemicals.

©George Holton, The National Audubon Society Collection/PR

How Toxic Is Your Home?

A RECENT study of over 3,000 people in the United States and Canada, according to *Scientific American* magazine, showed that "most citizens were very likely to have the greatest contact with potentially toxic pollutants . . . inside the places they usually consider to be essentially unpolluted, such as homes, offices and automobiles." The chief



sources of air pollution in homes were the fumes originating from ordinary products such as cleaning compounds, moth repellents, building materials, fuels, deodorizers, and disinfectants, as well as chemicals from dry-cleaned clothes and new synthetic upholstery.

"Space flu," an illness experienced by astronauts until the cause was found, was due

For a Healthier, Safer Home

Reducing your exposure to potential toxins often calls for only modest alterations in your life-style. Here are some suggestions that you might find helpful. (For additional, more specific details, we suggest that you check with your local library.)

1. Try to store most chemicals that give off vapors where they will not contaminate the air in your home. These chemicals include formaldehyde and products containing volatile solvents, such as paint, varnish, adhesives, pesticides, and cleaning solutions. Volatile petroleum products give off toxic vapors. This group includes benzene, which in high concentrations for extended periods is known to cause cancer, birth defects, and other reproductive harm.

2. Have good ventilation in all rooms, including the bathroom. Showering volatilizes certain additives such as chlorine that may be in the water. This may lead to a buildup of chlorine and even chloroform.

3. Wipe your feet before you step indoors. This simple act, says *Scientific American*, can reduce the amount of lead in a typical carpet by a factor of six. It also cuts



down on pesticides, some of which break down quickly outdoors in the sunlight but may last for years in carpets. Another option, which is a standard custom in some parts of the world, is to remove your shoes. A good vacuum cleaner, preferably one with a rotating brush, can also reduce pollution in carpets.

4. If you treat a room with a pesticide, keep toys out of that room for at least two weeks, even though the product label may say the room is safe hours after treatment. Scientists have recently found that certain plastics and foam found in toys literally soak up pesticide residues like a sponge. Children will absorb the toxins through the skin and mouth.

5. Minimize your use of pesticides. In his book *Silent Spring*, Frank Graham, Jr., writes that pesticides "have their place in home and garden, but sales campaigns have convinced the average suburban homeowner that he must keep at hand an arsenal of chemicals sufficient to stave off an African locust assault."

6. Have flaking leaded paint removed from all surfaces, and repaint with unleaded paint. Do not allow children to play in dirt contaminated with leaded paint. If lead in plumbing is suspected, the cold-water tap should be flushed briefly until there is a noticeable change in water temperature, and water from the hot-water tap should not be used for drinking.—*Environmental Poisons in Our Food*.

to such fumes, or "off-gassing." You detect off-gassing when you sit in a new car or walk by shelves of cleaning products in a supermarket, even though they are in sealed containers. So when a house is shut tight to keep out, say, winter's cold, off-gassing of various chemicals can contribute to a level of indoor pollution that is far in excess of pollution outside.

Children, especially toddlers, are the most vulnerable to indoor pollutants, says Canada's *Medical Post*. They are closer to the floor than older people; they breathe more rapidly than adults do; they spend as much as 90 percent of their time indoors; and because their organs have not yet matured, their bodies are more susceptible to toxins. They absorb some 40 percent of ingested lead, whereas adults absorb about 10 percent.

Maintaining a Balanced Attitude

Because the present generation of humans has experienced a level of exposure to chemicals that is without precedent, there is still much to learn about the effects, so scientists remain cautious. Chemical exposure does not automatically raise the specter of cancer or death. Indeed, most people seem to cope fairly well, to the credit of the Creator of the wonderful human body. (Psalm 139:14) Still, reasonable precautions must be taken, especially if we have regular contact with potentially toxic chemicals.

The book *Chemical Alert!* says that "some chemicals are toxic in the sense that they interfere with the balance of [the body's] processes and thereby produce vague symptoms that can best be described as just not feeling well." Reducing our exposure to potentially harmful chemicals does not neces-

sarily require major changes in life-style but only modest alterations in our daily routine. Please note the suggestions in the box on page 8. Some of them might be of help to you.

In addition to taking reasonable precautions with chemicals, we help ourselves when we avoid being unduly anxious, especially in regard to things over which we have no control. "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism," says the Bible at Proverbs 14:30.

Still, many people do suffer and become ill, sometimes even terminally ill, because of chemical toxins.* Like the millions of people suffering from so many other causes nowadays, those afflicted with chemical-related sicknesses have every reason to look to the future, for soon the earth will be free of toxins that harm its inhabitants. Even toxic thoughts, along with those who harbor them, will be things of the past, as the concluding article in this series will show.

* In recent years a growing number of people have been suffering from a condition called multiple chemical sensitivity. This condition will be discussed in a future issue of *Awake!*

Toddlers are the most vulnerable to Indoor pollutants



Who Will Clean Up Our Earth?

“PREDICT that by the year 2025 the word ‘pollution’ will have largely disappeared from our nation’s vocabulary as far as our industry is concerned.” That was the recent prediction made by a chemical corporation president. Do you believe that it will happen? If so, how will it be accomplished?

It is the desire for profits that often pushes unsafe products onto store shelves. For example, trade secrecy laws allow pesticide companies to keep certain profitable formulas secret by labeling their ingredients as “inert,” a term easily interpreted as “harmless.” Yet, “at least 394 inert ingredients have been used as active pesticides,” reports the magazine *Chemical Week*. Of these ingredients, 209 are hazardous pollutants, 21 are officially classified as carcinogens, and 127 are occupational hazards!

True, safety controls by governments have often been beneficial. But the prime concerns of governments, says one writer, are “economic growth and industrial profitability.” Thus, they are constantly faced with a trade-off—risks versus benefits. Essentially, the result is ‘regulated pollution.’

So where do we turn for answers? One of Jehovah’s Witnesses posed this question



to a friendly householder. Expressing trust in human leaders and scientists, the person replied: “They will fix things up one day.”

“But who are *they*?” asked the Witness. “Are they not people like you and me? They may be more educated, but they have their limitations, their weaknesses. They make mistakes.” Add to this the enormity of the problems that confront them as well as the greed and corruption in human society.

Do you also believe that *they* will fix things up? The long history of human failure to do so does not inspire confidence. The magazine *Outdoor Life* said: “Scientists and their agencies are infinitely better at studying pollution problems than curing them.” What prospects are there that humans can solve this serious problem?

Can Humans Do It by Themselves?

Controlling chemical pollution is not simply a problem for local authorities. This is because chemicals used in one country

**A cleansed earth
—will you live
to see it?**



affect people in neighboring countries, even people earth wide! And humans have been unsuccessful in cooperating to solve such world problems. The Bible indicates why when it states: "Man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Why are humans unsuccessful in governing themselves? Again, the Bible explains: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) What does that mean?

It means that humans were never meant to rule themselves independent of God's direction. True, humans have done remarkable things—they have built marvelous residences, made ingenious gadgets, even traveled to the moon—yet they are incapable of governing themselves without divine guidance. That is what the Bible teaches, and history proves the Bible's accuracy.

A Cleansed Earth—By What Means?

Our Creator, Jehovah God, has always been concerned about humankind and this earth, which he prepared for man. After he created humans, he directed that they care for the earth and life upon it. (Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:15) Later, after the first couple disobeyed his directions, he gave instructions to the nation of ancient Israel about caring for the land, including the requirement that it lie fallow for a full year every seven years. This allowed it to rejuvenate. (Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 25:4-6) But the people got greedy and disobeyed God. They and the land suffered.

Of course, chemical pollution such as we have today was not possible back then. Yet, the land became ruined because the Israelites failed to let it rest according to God's purpose, and innocent people suffered. So God permitted the Babylonians to conquer Israel and take the nation into exile to Babylon for 70 years. This punishment also allowed the land to rest so that it could

recuperate.—Leviticus 26:27, 28, 34, 35, 43; 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21.

This history teaches us that God holds humans accountable for what they do to the earth. (Romans 15:4) In fact, God promises that he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) Significantly, the Bible paints a portrait of the kind of people who are contributing to this "ruining." Their predominant traits, as listed in the Bible at 2 Timothy 3:1-5, include a preoccupation with money and self to the point of caring little for God and, by extension, for his creation, including fellow humans.

So these two Bible texts—2 Timothy 3:1-5 and Revelation 11:18—point to two solid conclusions. First, polluted minds lead to a polluted earth. And second, God will intervene to save this planet and God-fearing humans when both forms of pollution become full-blown. How will God intervene?

Through his prophet Daniel, God foretold: "In the days of those kings [evidently referring to governments today] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that . . . will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) That Kingdom is a real world government. Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray for that government when he said: "You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, . . . let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.'”—Matthew 6:9, 10.

Under the loving oversight of God's Kingdom, earth's tenants will enjoy the exquisite privilege of making the whole planet a paradise. The air will be sweet, streams will run pure, and the soil will burst with uncontaminated life. (Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 23:43) Thereafter, the Bible promises: "The former things [today's sicknesses, suffering, pollution, and the many other woes] will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart."—Isaiah 65:17.



From WAR HERO to SOLDIER OF CHRIST

AS TOLD BY LOUIS LOLLIOT

On August 16, 1944, I was with the Allied forces that landed on the beaches in the south of France during World War II. After a week of combat on the Mediterranean Coast, my squadron of tanks entered the seaport of Marseilles and fought its way up the hill toward the Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde Basilica.

Our mission was to take the German fortifications there.

THE fighting was intense. A tank in my group was hit, and three of my comrades in it were killed. Then a mine tore off one of the tracks of my tank, disabling it. Determined to hold our ground, we fought on for the next several hours.

Holding a machine gun in one hand and the French flag in the other, I took advantage of a lull in the fighting and moved forward on foot along with a Free French fight-

er. Exhausted and blackened by gunpowder, I planted the French flag at the entrance to the basilica.

The Liberation

During the weeks that followed, we advanced north in pursuit of the retreating German troops. Snipers as well as cables that were strung head-high across the road forced us to advance with the hatches of our tanks fastened down.

In October our detachment reached Ramonchamp, a small town in the Vosges Mountains in northeastern France. The town seemed abandoned. As I stood in the turret of my tank examining the surroundings, suddenly a rocket fired from a window entered the tank, instantly killing three of my men when it exploded. Another soldier and I were seriously injured, and the tank was immobilized. Despite having 17 pieces of shrapnel in my leg, I took the controls of the tank while another one towed us.

For this episode I received a commendation in dispatches. A few days later, when General de Lattre de Tassigny, commander of the French 1st Army, decorated me for what I had accomplished at Marseilles, he remarked: "We will see each other again soon."

Not long afterward, I was assigned to be the general's personal attaché. In time, I accompanied him to Berlin, where he represented France at the German surrender on May 8, 1945. For the next four years, I served at his beck and call.

Yet, how had I become so involved in major events of World War II?

Trained in Religion and War

I grew up as a devout Roman Catholic with the desire to serve my God and country. On August 29, 1939, just a few days before France entered World War II, I signed up for the motorized cavalry. I was only 18 years old. After five months of training at the École Militaire in Paris, I was sent as a young noncommissioned officer to France's eastern front.

This was the period known as the phony war, called that because all we did was wait for the German troops that were busy on other fronts. Then, when the Germans finally attacked, I was taken prisoner, in June 1940. Two months later I escaped, and

eventually I was able to join the French forces in North Africa.

In the campaign in Tunisia against German troops under General Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, I suffered burns to more than 70 percent of my body and was in a coma for nine days. I spent three months in a hospital in Sidi-bel-Abbès, in northwest Algeria, where the headquarters of the French Foreign Legion was located. While in North Africa, I received the Croix de Guerre, the Military Cross.

The Catholic chaplains urged us to do our "Christian" duty. In keeping with their exhortations, I was ready to sacrifice my life for France. Whenever I could, I took Communion before battle. And when in the thick of combat, I prayed to God and to the Virgin Mary.

I respected enemy soldiers, many of whom were also devout Roman Catholics. Some wore a belt with a buckle on which was inscribed *Gott mit uns* (God is with us). Does it not seem strange to think that God would answer the prayers of soldiers who were fighting on opposite sides and who were of the same religion?

Postwar Changes

After the war, on April 10, 1947, I married Reine, a girl from General de Lattre

*Our wedding, attended by
General de Lattre de Tassigny*



de Tassigny's hometown of Mouilleron-en-Parets, in Vendée. The general served as my witness at the wedding. Following his death, in January 1952, I carried his pennant at his state funeral.

Then, one Sunday morning late in 1952, when my wife and I were getting ready to go to Mass with our little daughter, two of Jehovah's Witnesses rang our doorbell. What they said about the Bible aroused our curiosity. Although my wife and I were deeply religious, we had little knowledge of the Bible, since we had been discouraged by the church from reading it. The Witness who offered to study the Bible with us was Léopold Jontès, then overseer of the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in France. From our Bible study, I was at last able to find the answers to questions that had gone unanswered since childhood.

For example, I had always been intrigued by the Our Father, or Lord's Prayer. As a Catholic, I believed that all good people go to heaven when they die, so I could not understand why we prayed to God: "Thy will be done on earth." (Matthew 6:9, 10, *Douay Version*; italics ours.) The priests with whom I had spoken either avoided my question about this or said that this prayer would be answered when everybody became Roman Catholic. But the answer did not satisfy me.

Nor could the priests provide satisfactory answers to my questions regarding the Trinity. This Catholic teaching says, according to the words of a church creed, that 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet they are not three Gods but one God.' So the discovery of the Bible's clear teaching that Jesus is the Son of God and not Almighty God himself was a great source of joy to my wife and me.—Mark 12:30, 32; Luke 22:42; John 14:28; Acts 2:32; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

We both felt that our eyes had been opened for the first time and that we had found a pearl of inestimable value, worth any sacrifice. (Matthew 13:46) We realized that we would have to make a choice to lay hold of this treasure. We soon adopted a viewpoint like that of the apostle Paul, who said that he considered "all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." We thus made adjustments in our lives to serve God.—Philippians 3:8.

Taking My Stand

In April 1953, only a few months after we began to study the Bible with the Witnesses, I received orders to join the French expeditionary corps that was being sent to fight in Indochina. At the time, I was serving as adjutant to the commanding officer at the Senate in Paris. Since by then I had come to understand the Bible principle of neutrality, I realized that I needed to make a decision. (John 17:16) I informed my superiors of my refusal to comply with orders to fight in Indochina, citing my desire not to participate in war anymore.—Isaiah 2:4.

"Do you realize that you will have a black mark against you and that all doors will be closed to you?" my superiors asked. From that moment on, I was put on the sidelines, so to speak. But this was a protection, since I was no longer called for military exercises. Many of our family and friends could not understand how I could throw away what they considered a privileged position in society.

As a result of my military record, I was given preferential treatment by the authorities, who respected me despite my beliefs. Over the next two years, I was given an extended health leave, and I did not have to resume any of my functions. In the meantime, my wife and I attended meetings with the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

and even shared our newfound beliefs with others.

At Last—A Soldier of Christ!

Finally, early in 1955, I was freed from any military obligations. Fifteen days later, on March 12, my wife and I symbolized our dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism at an assembly in Versailles. My professional situation having changed, I had to find different employment to take care of the needs of my family. For the next four years, I worked as a porter at the Halles (the central market), in Paris. While making such an adjustment was not easy, Jehovah blessed my efforts.

Over the years, my wife and I have been able to help many people accept the Bible's message. I have had opportunity to explain the Christian viewpoint on neutrality to various military and civil authorities. My former career as a soldier has often proved useful in overcoming the prejudices of many regarding Jehovah's Witnesses. It has given me opportunity to explain our Christian position of neutrality in connection with the wars of the nations, showing that this was the same position taken by Christ's early followers. For example, Professor C. J. Cadoux wrote in his book *The Early Church and the World*: "Up to the reign of Marcus Aurelius at least [161-180 C.E.], no Christian would become a soldier after his baptism."

One of the most difficult trials I faced was the death of my wife in 1977. She died after a year-long illness, courageously expressing her faith right up to the time of her death. The wonderful hope of the resurrection sustained me. (John 5:28, 29) A further help in overcoming my grief was enrolling as a regular pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. I did this in 1982 after retiring from secular work. Later, in 1988, how happy I was to serve as an instructor at the school for training pioneers!

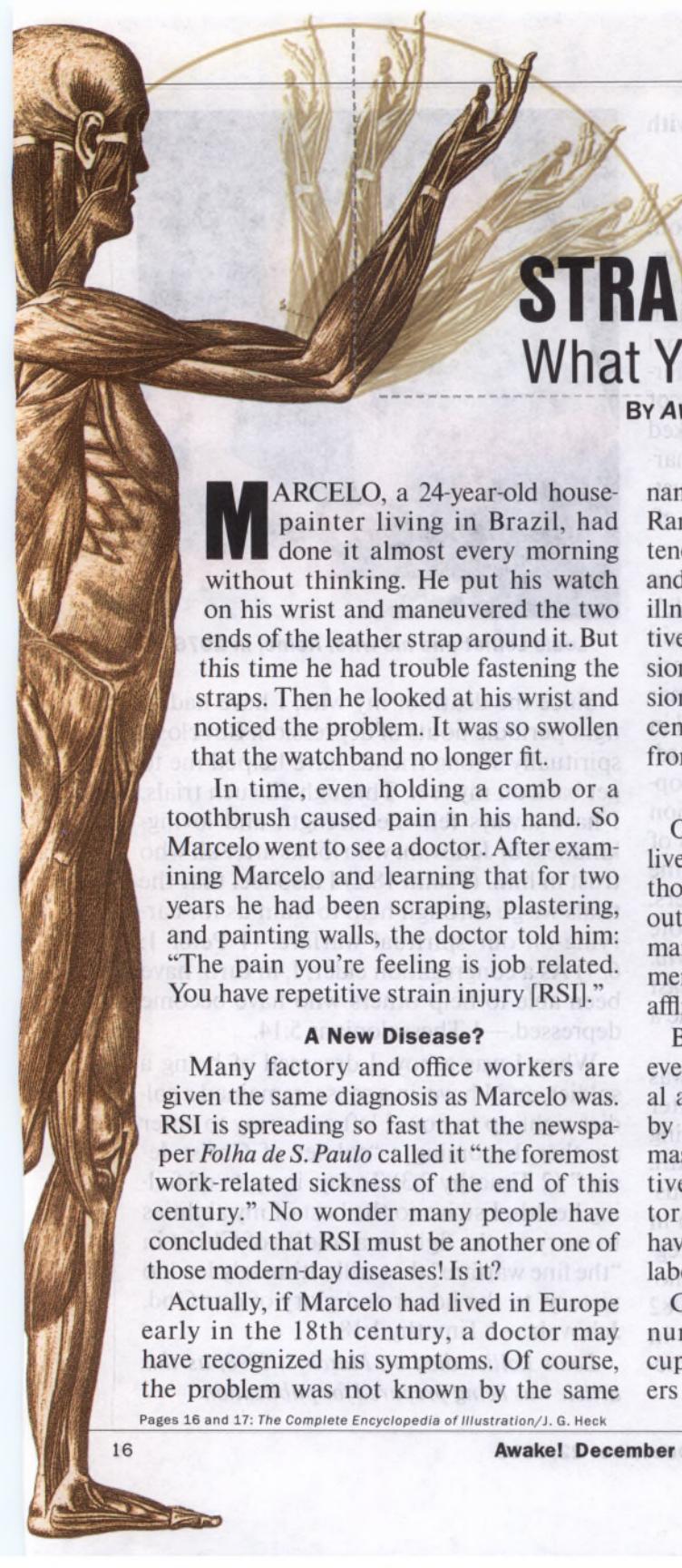


Louis Lolliot and his wife, Reine, in 1976

Since the death of my wife, I have had to fight periodic bouts of depression. But close, spiritually strong friends have helped me to get back on my feet. Through all such trials, I have always felt the strength and loving-kindness of Jehovah, who looks after all who trust in him. (Psalm 18:2) I also feel that the trials we go through help to train us for carrying on our spiritual warfare. (1 Peter 1:6, 7) As a congregation elder, I, in turn, have been able to help others who have become depressed.—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

When I was a boy, I dreamed of being a soldier, and I have, in a sense, remained a soldier right up to now. I left one army to enter another, becoming a "soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2:3) Today, in spite of failing health, I strive to the best of my abilities to carry on the fight as a soldier of Christ in "the fine warfare" that will ultimately lead to victory, to the honor and glory of our God, Jehovah.—1 Timothy 1:18.

Louis Lolliot died on March 1, 1998, as this article was being prepared for publication.



REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES

What You Should Know

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRAZIL

MARCELO, a 24-year-old house painter living in Brazil, had done it almost every morning without thinking. He put his watch on his wrist and maneuvered the two ends of the leather strap around it. But this time he had trouble fastening the straps. Then he looked at his wrist and noticed the problem. It was so swollen that the watchband no longer fit.

In time, even holding a comb or a toothbrush caused pain in his hand. So Marcelo went to see a doctor. After examining Marcelo and learning that for two years he had been scraping, plastering, and painting walls, the doctor told him: "The pain you're feeling is job related. You have repetitive strain injury [RSI]."

A New Disease?

Many factory and office workers are given the same diagnosis as Marcelo was. RSI is spreading so fast that the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* called it "the foremost work-related sickness of the end of this century." No wonder many people have concluded that RSI must be another one of those modern-day diseases! Is it?

Actually, if Marcelo had lived in Europe early in the 18th century, a doctor may have recognized his symptoms. Of course, the problem was not known by the same

name then. The Italian doctor Bernardino Ramazzini described the problem as wrist tenosynovitis (inflammation of the tendons and surrounding sheaths) and called it the illness "of scribes and notaries." The repetitive movements required in those professions had given clerks the 18th-century version of RSI. But by the end of that same century, the number of workers suffering from RSI had gone down. Why?

The Fall and Rise of RSI

Office clerks in the days of Ramazzini lived in the so-called preindustrial age. In those days, people worked long hours without the help of machines. Their work demanded repetitive movements and constant mental attention. This resulted in RSI-type afflictions.

By the end of the 18th century, however, Europe had moved into the industrial age and man power was being replaced by machine power. Man now became the master who let the machine do the repetitive jobs. That change, concludes a doctor who studied the history of RSI, may have reduced the occurrence of RSI among laborers.

Granted, during the industrial age, the number of work accidents rose and occupational illnesses among factory workers increased. Nevertheless, medical litera-

ture covering that period makes mention of RSI cases only among specific groups. For instance, 19th-century pianists and violinists suffered from tendinitis in the upper arms, and tennis players contracted tennis elbow, or inflammation of the tendons in the elbow.

In our century, however, job-related RSI has returned. Why? For one thing, increasingly efficient machines often tell man what to do and how fast to do it. This turnabout has led to workers' dissatisfaction and to health problems. Workers put in long hours at jobs that often force them to make repetitive movements and that demand constant mental attention. The result? RSI has become a health problem that now accounts for more than 50 percent of all work-related illnesses among workers in the United States and in Brazil—to name just two countries.

The Causes, and the Professions Affected

The major cause of RSI is the rapid repetitive movements required in many work assignments. Sadly, workers are often left with little choice but to cling to jobs that may damage their health. Many workers can sympathize with the Brazilian woman who worked in an automobile plant and had to assemble radios in less than one minute each. Another worker, reports the newspaper

RSI in Musicians

Repetitive strain injury (RSI) is common among professional musicians. According to a study published in 1986, half of all musicians in eight symphony orchestras in Europe suffered from RSI. In the 19th century, the illness was called musician's cramp. One of the first reported cases was that of Robert Schumann. RSI forced him to give up piano playing and to concentrate on composing.

Factors Contributing to RSI

1. Wrong posture
2. Working long hours
3. Stress at work
4. Previous injuries in muscles and tendons
5. Dissatisfaction with your job
6. Exposure to cold

per *Folha de S. Paulo*, had to perform tests that required her to hit 63 appliances with a rubber hammer each hour. Both women began to suffer pains in their upper arms and were later laid off their jobs because of disability caused by RSI.

Efforts that overtax one's muscles and joints (such as carrying heavy sacks) and static efforts (that is, efforts by the muscles to keep parts of the body in a fixed position) are also causes of RSI. Such actions may especially cause injuries when one works in an uncomfortable position.

Some whom researchers list as particularly RSI-prone are metallurgists, bank clerks, keyboard operators, telephone operators, supermarket cashiers, waiters, housepainters, toy assemblers, seamstresses, hairdressers, knitters, sugarcane cutters, and other manual laborers.

More Than Movements

Although most people think that RSI is solely caused by work that requires

repetitive movements, experts attending the First National Seminar on RSI, held in Brasília, Brazil's capital, stressed that more than repetitive movement is involved.

Dr. Wanderley Codo, a mental-health and work consultant at the University of Brasília, explained: "The way work is organized—the tasks, the management-worker relationships, the actual climate of the business, the level of worker participation, and the work routine—is one of the factors strongly linked to the illness."

Other medical experts at the RSI seminar also underlined the link between the illness and the organization of the workplace. One downside of new technologies, they said, is that these have led to forms of work organization in which the worker loses all control over his job—a contributing factor in getting RSI.

Since the way work is organized and carried out is closely linked to RSI, certain workers in previous decades were able to perform repetitive movements without contracting RSI. Such is the conclusion of some experts.

Identifying the Affliction

Keep in mind that RSI does not refer to one illness but to a group of illnesses. All ailments of this group affect muscles, tendons, joints, and ligaments, especially those of the upper limbs. Since RSI identifies a group of illnesses, it follows that various signs and symptoms are produced. The symptoms may be vague, and the connection between the causes and symptoms may not be immediately determined. Consider the following principal signs.

One sign is a feeling of heaviness and discomfort in the affected body part (the shoulder and/or the arm, for example) that develops into persistent pain and a tingling sensation. Also, nodules, or small lumps, may appear under the skin. In the more

advanced stages of RSI, swelling and pain may become so severe that a person is unable to do such simple tasks as combing his hair and brushing his teeth. If left untreated, RSI may even result in deformities and disability.

Combating RSI

If your present work requires repetitive movements and you already notice signs of RSI, you might want to seek help from the medical service of your company. If that is not possible, you may be able to go to a health service where an orthopedist can assess your problem and take the necessary measures to help you. The chances of getting well will be much greater if you pay attention to RSI in the early stages of the illness.

Another important way to combat RSI is to give consideration to ergonomics. What is ergonomics? The term is defined as "an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely."

Thus, ergonomics has to do with adapting the workplace to man as well as man to

Preventing RSI

THINGS TO AVOID

1. Holding weighty objects for prolonged periods
2. Putting too great a burden on the joints
3. Using arms above heart level for prolonged periods
4. Working in uncomfortable positions

THINGS TO DO

1. Alternate arms when performing tasks—even light ones
2. Distribute various types of tasks throughout the day

the workplace. However, it goes beyond improving the shape of a keyboard or a hammer. It also includes considering the worker's mental and emotional needs. To achieve that, says ergonomist Dr. Ingeborg Sell, ergonomics "utilizes data, information, and knowledge from all participating disciplines [and] endeavors to arrive at new and comprehensive knowledge about man and his work."

True, changing the ergonomics of the workplace may be beyond most workers' sphere of influence. But medical experts at the RSI seminar in Brasilia explained that "participative ergonomics" is not. What is meant by participative ergonomics?

An employer who encourages participative ergonomics in the workplace takes the worker's opinion into consideration. He invites the worker to share in figuring out how to improve his workstation. Such an employer will also favor the presence of an in-house RSI committee made up of workers and management. This group will keep an attentive eye on maintaining a safe and comfortable work environment within the workplace. They tackle the causes of RSI, promote prevention, and define what the employer's and employees' responsibilities are in controlling or even abolishing cases of RSI within the firm.

Prevention at Home and at Work

Prevention of RSI starts at home. What can you do? When you wake up, imitate your dog or cat. Notice how your pet stretches its muscles before getting on with a new day. Do the same. And, while you're at it, repeat those stretches a few times during the day. This is essential for keeping your bones and muscles healthy. Do some exercises to warm up your muscles. This will accelerate blood circulation and increase the amount of oxygen available for your muscles to do their work. Of course, during cold

weather and also before participating in sports, taking this step is even more important. Do some exercises that will strengthen the specific muscles that you use most. Stronger muscles will help you to perform the necessary tasks at work.

Besides these measures at home, there is also need for a prevention program at your workplace. The employer may prevent RSI problems among workers by arranging for a work schedule that provides breaks or changes and that rotates the different types of jobs among the workers.

Another aspect of RSI prevention is providing the right type of tools for the worker. This might include, among other things, desks and chairs of the correct height, pads for elbows, drills and pliers that do not require excessive force applied by hand, user-friendly computer keyboards, or heavy equipment with shock absorbers to prevent excessive vibration.

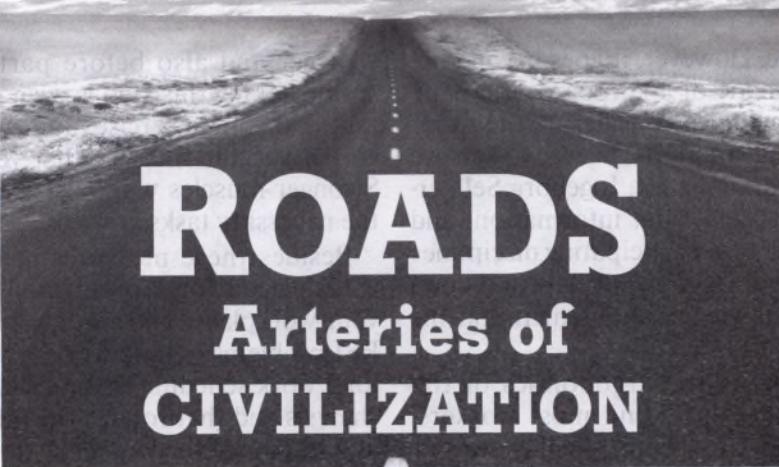
Marcelo, mentioned in the introduction, put many of these suggestions into practice. This together with the medical treatment that he received has eliminated the RSI symptoms that he had. A complete cure is within his reach. Without a doubt, it takes personal effort and organizational changes to combat RSI, but since the number of RSI patients in the workplace is growing, the benefits of these changes may prove greater than the costs.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

The Mediterranean—A Closed Sea With Open Wounds

Facial Marks—Nigeria's Fading 'Identity Card'

What Is God's Holy Spirit?



ROADS

Arteries of CIVILIZATION

FROM time immemorial, people have kept in touch with one another by means of a vast web of trails, roads, and highways. These testify to man's desire to travel and trade—and also to make war and build empires. Yes, roads reveal a darker side of human nature as well.

The history of roads, from the time that foot and hoof pounded out the earliest trails to our modern multilane expressways, is more than a tour into the past. It is also a study of the human spirit.

Early Roads

"The first serious road builders," says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, "probably were the Mesopotamians." These people dwelt in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Their processional roads, this source adds, "were paved roadways in which burnt brick and stone were lain in bituminous mortar." The description is reminiscent of what the Bible says of early construction materials: "Brick served as stone for them, but bitumen served as mortar."—Genesis 11:3.

For the ancient Israelites to fulfill their religious obligations, roads were vital. Nearly 1,500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the Israelites were commanded: "Three

times in the year every male of yours should appear before Jehovah your God [to celebrate a spiritual festival] in the place that he will choose." (Deuteronomy 16:16) That place came to be Jerusalem, and often whole families would attend these joyous occasions. Good roads were a necessity!

Evidently, the major arteries were well built. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus said of Solomon, who reigned a thousand years before the birth of Christ: "He did not neglect the care of the ways, but he laid a causeway of black stone along the roads that led to Jerusalem."

Israel had six cities of refuge that gave asylum to accidental manslayers. The roads to these cities were also kept in good repair. And Jewish tradition indicates that well-maintained signposts pointing to the nearest city of refuge were set at every intersection.—Numbers 35:6, 11-34.

Roads became vital to the spread of commerce, and one of the most desired commodities of ancient times was silk. It is said that long before the Israelites became a nation, the Chinese discovered how to make silk from the thread spun by a worm, but they kept the manufacture of it a secret until after the birth of Christ. Even before then, silk had become so popular in the

Western world that according to the book *A History of Roads*, by Geoffrey Hindley, edicts were issued "to restrain its use by men," since such use "was considered effeminate."

The trade route by which silk was transported from China was known as the Silk Road. By the time Marco Polo traveled that road to China toward the end of the 13th century C.E., it had been in existence for 1,400 years. For more than 2,000 years, the Silk Road was the longest in the world. The route stretched some 8,000 miles from Shanghai, China, the home of silk, to Gades (modern Cádiz), Spain.

Military Importance

The greatest strides in road building grew from an appetite for empire. The road system of the Roman Empire under the Caesars, for example, spread throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East to an estimated total of 53,000 miles. When Roman soldiers were not engaged in wars, they were sometimes put to work building and repairing roads.

The importance of roads in conquest was also illustrated in recent times. Adolf Hitler's quest for domination of other peoples was rapidly accelerated by his program, begun in 1934, of building the autobahn. According to historian Hindley, this program gave Germany "the world's first network of motor expressways."

Road Building—A Science

Roman surveyors, using an instrument called a *groma*, laid out roads that were as straight as arrows. Masons chiseled out highly artistic milestones, and engineers set a weight limit on freight. The roads had a foundation and a durable surface. But the key ingredient in their longevity was a brilliant system of

drainage that was enhanced by a slight curvature as well as by the road's elevation above the surrounding countryside. Thus the term "highway" was coined. Shops even sold road maps.

"Confronted with the achievement of the Romans as road-builders," says a historian, "a writer is bound to find himself fighting off superlatives, and it is doubtful whether any other single monument from Man's past has been of more lasting service than the roads of Italy."

The Appian Way, which runs south from Rome, is, according to the book *A History of Roads*, "the first stretch of paved road of any length in the history of Western man." This famous highway averaged 20 feet in width and was paved with large lava blocks. While en route to Rome as a prisoner, the apostle Paul traveled over this road, parts of which are still used today.—Acts 28:15, 16.

Many may find the road-building skills of early South American Indians equally amazing. From the 1200's to the 1500's, the Incas built a network of 10,000 miles of roads, which united a nation of nearly

The Appian Way, traveled by the apostle Paul, is still in use





About 500,000 die in road accidents worldwide each year

10,000,000 people. These roads cut through some of the most inhospitable and rugged terrain imaginable, traversing desert and rain forest and even crossing the mighty Peruvian Andes!

Regarding one road, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* reports: "The Andes route was remarkable. The roadway was 25 feet (7.5 metres) wide and traversed the loftiest ranges with cutbacks and easy gradients. It included galleries cut into solid rock and retaining walls built up for hundreds of feet to support the roadway. Ravines and chasms were filled with solid masonry and suspension bridges with wool or fibre cables crossed the wider mountain streams. The surface was of stone in most areas and asphaltic materials were used extensively."

The horse was unknown to the Incas, but their network of roads provided them with what has been called "a veritable running track for the royal messengers." One historian noted: "Along the whole length were staging posts, about a mile and a half apart, each housing a small garrison and a relay of professional runners. Each stage was sufficiently short for a rapid relay and, operating day and night, the service could carry a mes-

sage from the capital at Cuzco to the city of Quito, 1,250 miles away, in a matter of five days. This meant averaging ten miles an hour along a road never less than 15,000 feet above sea level—a speed never achieved by the regular Roman imperial post!"

Source of Tragedies

Arteries of the human body can become clogged, and this can result in tragic consequences. So, too, roads that have served to improve the quality of life can become clogged and contribute to lowering it. Roads through rain forest, wilderness, bush, and national parks take their toll on wildlife. And often native peoples and their forest homes suffer too. Says the book *How We Build Roads*: "The Trans-Amazonian Highway, though undertaken in the name of progress, destroyed large areas of rainforest and was a disaster for many of the people living in the forest, as it destroyed their whole way of life."

Cities too are experiencing a savage backlash as each year more vehicles clog urban arteries. Eventually, if funds are available, an expressway is built. But in the long term, these roadways encourage more traffic, which increases the pollution that is sickening millions. What is more, some 500,000 people worldwide are killed in road accidents *annually*, and another 15 million are injured, some horribly. By comparison, World War I took the lives of about nine million combatants. But then that war stopped. Death on the roads, on the other hand, is death by installment—more than 1,000 deaths a day, day after day after day!

Yes, in many ways our roads are a statement about us—a character reference spelling out our strengths and our weaknesses. They also tell what we think of this magnificent planet that has been entrusted to our care.

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN ITALY

THE SHROUD OF TURIN

Burial Cloth of Jesus?

**From April 18 to June 14, 1998,
the shroud, or cloth, said to have
wrapped the body of Jesus of Nazareth
following his death was exhibited in Italy
at the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista,
in Turin. It was kept in an airtight,
bulletproof glass case filled with an inert
gas. There it was maintained under
stable climatic conditions.**

VISITORS passed before the well-protected shroud on three raised walkways at slightly different levels. This enabled all to get the best view. Visits were limited to two minutes and were on a strictly reservations-only basis. Emotions ranged from ecstatic, tearful meditation to simple curiosity. There were reportedly about 2.5 million visitors.

"What is the shroud to you?" was the oft-asked question. For anyone fond of discussing religion, the occasion provided opportunity to examine the subject more closely and to reread the pages of the Bible that refer to Jesus' burial.—See the box on the following page.

The shroud is a linen cloth 14 feet 3 inches long and 3 feet 7 inches wide that bears the superficial imprint of the body of a man who, it is

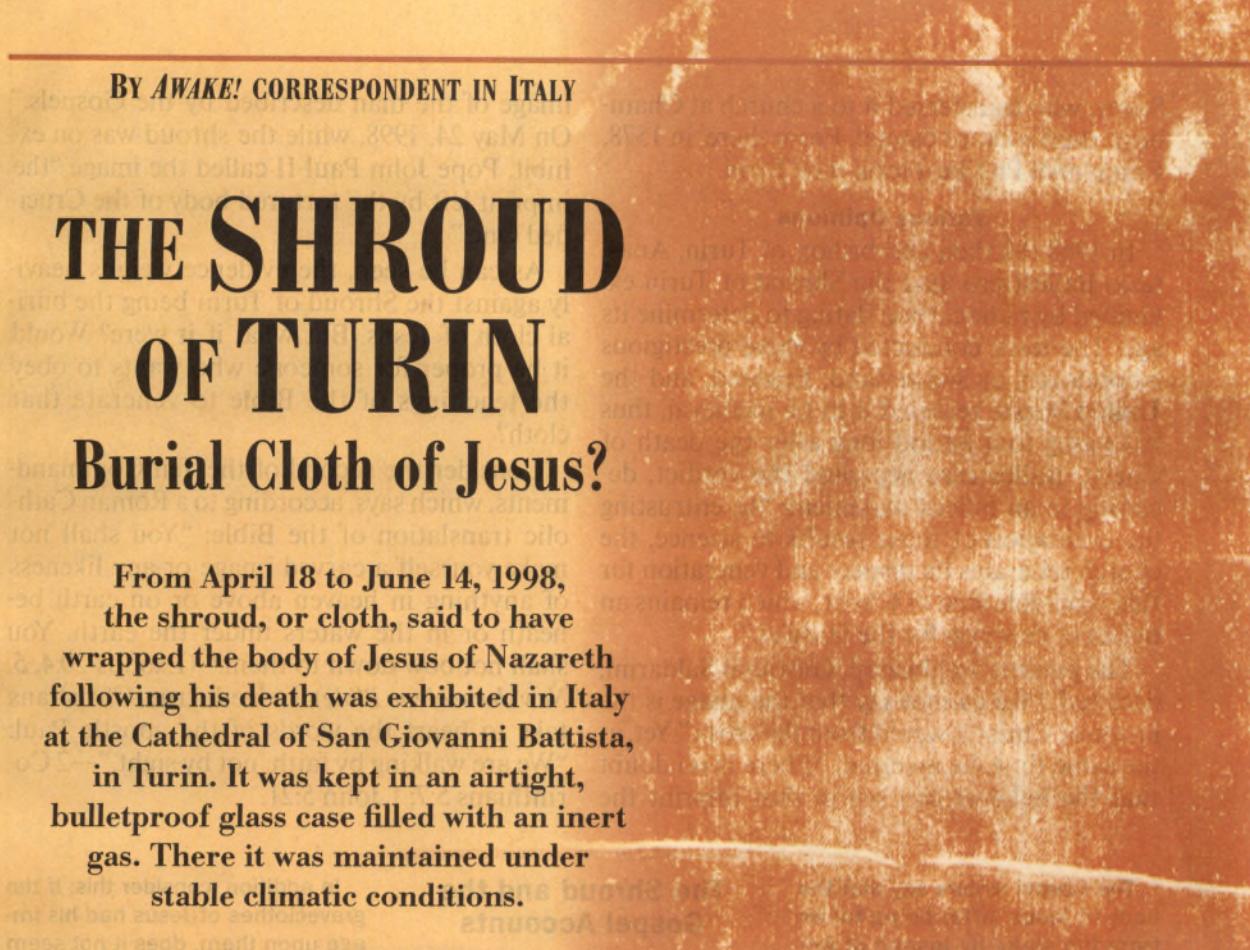
claimed, met a violent death. But the question is, Was this Shroud of Turin the one used to wrap the body of Jesus over 19 centuries ago?

Historical Developments

"There is no evidence of a shroud during the first centuries of the Christian era," says the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. In 544 C.E., an image reputedly not made with human hands turned up at Edessa, a location in modern-day Turkey. The image was said to depict the face of Jesus. In 944 C.E., it was claimed that the image was in Constantinople. Most historians, however, don't believe this was what is now known as the Shroud of Turin.

In France, during the 14th century, a shroud was possessed by Geoffroi de Charny. In 1453, possession of it passed to Louis, Duke of

David Lees/©Corbis



Savoy, who transferred it to a church at Chambéry, the Savoyard capital. From there, in 1578, Emmanuel Philibert took it to Turin.

Various Opinions

In 1988 the then archbishop of Turin, Anastasio Ballestrero, had the Shroud of Turin examined by radiocarbon dating to determine its age. The tests, conducted by three prestigious laboratories in Switzerland, England, and the United States, revealed it to be medieval, thus belonging to a period long after the death of Christ. Ballestrero accepted the verdict, declaring in an official statement: "In entrusting the evaluation of these results to science, the church reiterates its respect and veneration for this venerable icon of Christ, which remains an object of devotion for the faithful."

The present archbishop, Giovanni Saldarini, declared: "We cannot say that the image is the image of Christ lowered from the cross." Yet, at the same time, he asserted: "There is no doubt that the believer can see in that imprint the

The Gospel writers say that the body of Jesus, after being taken from the stake by Joseph of Arimathea, was wrapped "in clean fine linen." (Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56) The apostle John adds: "Nicodemus also . . . came bringing a roll of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds of it. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it up with bandages with the spices, just the way the Jews have the custom of preparing for burial."—John 19:39-42.

The Jews customarily washed the dead and then used oils and spices to anoint the body. (Matthew 26:12; Acts 9:37) On the morning following the Sabbath, women friends of Jesus intended to complete the preparation of his body, which had already been laid in a tomb. However, when they ar-

image of the man described by the Gospels." On May 24, 1998, while the shroud was on exhibit, Pope John Paul II called the image "the imprint left by the tortured body of the Crucified One."

As can be seen, the evidence weighs heavily against the Shroud of Turin being the burial cloth of Jesus. But what if it were? Would it be proper for someone who wants to obey the teachings of the Bible to venerate that cloth?

Consider the second of the Ten Commandments, which says, according to a Roman Catholic translation of the Bible: "You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them." (Exodus 20:4, 5, *New Jerusalem Bible*) Indeed, true Christians take to heart the words of the apostle Paul: "We are walking by faith, not by sight."—2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 John 5:21.

The Shroud and the Gospel Accounts

rived with their 'spices to grease him,' the body of Jesus was not in the tomb!—Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-3.

What did Peter find when he came shortly afterward and entered the tomb? The eyewitness John reported: "He viewed the bandages lying, also the cloth that had been upon his head not lying with the bandages but separately rolled up in one place." (John 20:6, 7) Notice that there is no mention of the fine linen—only of bandages and the headcloth. Since John specifies the bandages and the headcloth, would it not seem likely that he would have mentioned the fine linen, or shroud, if it had been there?

In addition, consider this: If the graveclothes of Jesus had his image upon them, does it not seem that it would have been noticed and would have become a subject for discussion? Yet, beyond what is in the Gospels, there is complete silence in the Bible about the graveclothes.

Even the professed Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries, many of whom wrote about a host of so-called miracles in connection with numerous relics, did not mention the existence of a shroud containing the image of Jesus. This is hard to understand, since 15th- and 16th-century viewers, according to Jesuit scholar Herbert Thurston, "describe the impressions on the shroud as so vivid in detail and colouring that they might have been quite freshly made."

Young People Ask...



How Can I Survive Without My Parents?

"When I was three years old and my sister four, my parents were divorced. They fought in court for custody of us, and we ended up with my mother. However, when I was seven, my sister and I decided to go live with my father."—Horacio.

SOME years later, Horacio's father and live-in girlfriend took off—abandoning Horacio and his sister. Recalls Horacio: "That is how at the age of 18, I became head of a household consisting of my 19-year-old

sister, my 12-year-old half sister—who decided to stay with us—and me."

As a previous article showed, millions of young people around the world find themselves without parents.* Like Horacio, some youths have been abandoned. Yet others have lost their parents in death or have been separated from them by wars or natural disasters. Whatever the situation, being without parents can be difficult and traumatic. And it can leave you with overwhelming responsibilities.

'Who Will Take Care of Me?'

How well you can cope depends a lot upon your age and circumstances. Obviously, the situation is far more difficult if you are still in your childhood or early teens. Even then, it may be that you have not been left entirely alone. Perhaps an uncle, an aunt, or an older brother or sister is willing to take you in.

Among Jehovah's Witnesses, care for orphans and widows is viewed as part of their worship. (James 1:27; 2:15-17) And oftentimes, individuals within the congregation will help. Horacio and his sisters, for example, had studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and were attending their meetings. There they met a Christian family who began helping them out. "How grateful I am to Jehovah for his guidance and loving care day after day!" Horacio says. "We had the blessing of being helped by a very spiritual family in the congregation that had young ones our age. They practically adopted us, and so, like never before, we felt that we were part of a family, one that we could count on."

Not all youths are so fortunate, however. A United Nations Children's Fund report says: "Sometimes unaccompanied children

* See the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Must I Live Without My Parents?," in the November 22, 1998, issue of *Awake!*

are taken into families that physically abuse them, force them to work without remuneration or opportunity for advancement, use them in prostitution or even enslave them." So if you have someone who is taking reasonably good care of you, be grateful.

Granted, to be without your parents is a terrible loss. And you may naturally resent not having them to care for you. Being told what to do by a relative or an older sibling can aggravate your feelings of indignation. But don't take out your resentment on those who are trying to care for you. The Bible says: "Take care that rage does not allure you into spiteful [actions]... Be on your guard that you do not turn to what is hurtful." (Job 36:18, 21) Recall the young woman in the Bible named Esther. As an orphan, she was reared by her older cousin Mordecai. Though he was not her natural parent, Mordecai 'laid commands on her,' which she obeyed, even when she became an adult! (Esther 2:7, 15, 20) Try being obedient and cooperative yourself. It will do much to ease tensions and make life easier for everyone concerned.

Family Responsibility

If you have an older sibling—or if you are old enough yourself—perhaps it may be possible for you and your siblings to live on your own. It may even fall on you to take the role of family head—a seemingly overwhelming responsibility! However, in such circumstances many young ones have done an admirable job of raising their siblings.

Understandably, you may have to deal with some feelings of resent-

ment. Reflecting on the fact that you love and care for your brothers and sisters may help you to have a more positive viewpoint. It may also help if you view taking care of them as a God-assigned duty. After all, Christians are commanded to take care of their own. (1 Timothy 5:8) But try as you may to be a father or mother to your siblings, you can never really be their parent.

It is not realistic to expect your siblings to respond to you the way they did to your parents. In fact, it may take considerable time before they settle down and take you seriously at all. So in the meantime, try not to get frustrated. Avoid "malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech." By your example, teach your siblings to "become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another."—Ephesians 4:31, 32.

Horacio admits that he made mistakes: "At times I was very strict with my siblings.

You can find support from Christian elders



But to a certain extent, that was a protection, and we maintained right conduct in the eyes of Jehovah."

Providing for Yourself

If your parents are unavailable to care for you, providing for yourself materially is no doubt a major concern. Perhaps some adult members of the Christian congregation can help you and your siblings, if you have any, to learn how to cook, clean, and care for other household chores that you must now take care of. But what will you do for money? Perhaps you have little choice but to try to find work.

Jobs, however, are scarce for youths who possess little in the way of education, experience, or job skills. So if it is at all possible for you to complete your basic education—or even to get some supplementary job training—by all means do so. Horacio recalls: "My older sister and I worked and supported my schooling and that of my half sister." If you live in a developing land, you may have to use your ingenuity to find work.—See "Creating Jobs in Developing Countries," in the October 22, 1994, issue of *Awake!*

In more economically developed lands, it may even be possible to obtain financial aid from the government. Oftentimes, there are governmental or private agencies that are devoted to assisting parentless or abandoned children. Some agencies, for example, may assist you in obtaining food or in finding a place to live. Of course, any financial help you receive should be used wisely. "Money is for a protection," says the Bible. (*Ecclesiastes 7:12*) And unless you are careful in budgeting and spending it, money can quickly 'make wings for itself and fly away.'—*Proverbs 23:4, 5*.

Providing for yourself materially may be less of an issue if an adult is caring for you. In the future, however, the time will come

when you will need to provide for yourself. Since you no longer have parents to spur you on academically, it may take real effort to concentrate on your studies. The Christian apostle Paul's advice to Timothy regarding spiritual advancement might also be applied to your school studies: "Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest." (1 Timothy 4:15) In doing so, you will set a good example for those around you as well as benefit yourself.

Most important of all is the need for you to provide for yourself spiritually. Try to establish a balanced routine of spiritual activities. (*Philippians 3:16*) For example, among Jehovah's Witnesses it is customary for families to discuss a Bible text every day. Why not make this part of your routine? A routine of Bible study and regular attendance at Christian meetings will also help you to stay strong spiritually.—*Hebrews 10:24, 25*.

Meeting the Challenge

Living without one's parents is difficult, but it is not all gloom and doom. Twenty-year-old Paola's mother died when Paola was just six. Her father died when she was ten. A kindly woman gave shelter to her and her four sisters. Has her life been totally miserable? No. Paola says: "Maybe we are not exactly a typical family, but we have a pretty normal life. In fact, the love we have among ourselves is stronger than in most families."

Paola's sister Irene adds: "Even though we are without our parents, we are just like other young people." Her advice to others in this situation? "Don't feel that you are at a disadvantage." Horacio likewise says: "This situation made me mature very quickly."

Losing one's parents is one of the most painful events imaginable. Be assured, though, that with Jehovah's help, you can survive and receive his blessing.

WATCHING THE WORLD

The Year 2000 and Christ

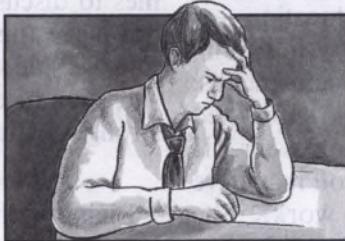
"Poll finds fewer than one in six Britons links year 2000 with Christ," states the *ENI Bulletin*. A Gallup survey "uncovered massive ignorance about the Millennium, with 37 percent of respondents saying they did not know what it commemorated . . . , 18 percent saying the celebrations marked the new century and 17 percent that they marked the year 2000." Only 15 percent see a connection between 2000 and the birth of Christ. According to Professor Anthony King of Essex University, for most people the millennium meant "little more than an opportunity to dance, drink champagne, stay up late with friends or travel abroad." Commented Anglican bishop Gavin Reid: "We live in a society that has lost its cultural and spiritual memory."

Alarm Over "Superbugs"

"The resistance by 'superbugs' to the most potent antibiotics should send alarm bells ringing, not only for the medical profession but for consumers too," says the South African *Star* newspaper. Pathologist Mike Dove warns that "diseases once controlled or almost eliminated have mutated and are making a comeback." Overuse of antibiotics has resulted in new versions of tuberculosis (TB), malaria, typhoid, gonorrhea, meningitis, and pneumonia that are increasingly difficult to treat and are resistant to modern drugs. Over three million people a year die from TB alone. Patients can help by remembering the following: Initially, try such remedies as drinking lots of fluids,

getting needed rest, and gargling with salt and warm water if you have a sore throat. Do not pressure your doctor for antibiotics—let him determine if they are really necessary. If they are prescribed, always complete your course even if improvement is noted. Remember, antibiotics will not cure colds and flu, which are caused by viruses, not bacteria. "Everyone," said Dove, "should work together to combat this very worrying global problem which could create a health catastrophe."

High Cost of Depression



"Depression—much more than physical diseases—is the main cause of job absenteeism and low production quality in the world," says the Brazilian newspaper *O Globo*. A World Health Organization report shows that mental diseases were responsible for 200,000 deaths in 1997. Additionally, minor mental disorders, such as mood changes, had a negative effect on the professional activity of over 146 million people worldwide—a number higher than the 123 million workers who were impeded by hearing problems or the 25 million who experienced accidents at work. According to a study by Oxford University professor Guy Goodwin, the problem of depression will increase

in the coming years, resulting in an enormous burden for society because of loss of productivity and rising costs of treatment. In the United States alone, annual losses due to depression already amount to \$53 billion.

Better on Paper

"No monitor is as readable as printed paper," reports the German press agency dpa-Basisdienst. Reading from paper instead of a monitor results in significantly fewer mistakes and faster reading. Tests show that reading text on a monitor takes, on the average, 10 percent longer than text on paper. Although the results improved when top-quality monitors with increased contrast and resolution and decreased flickering were used, they still did not match the results of reading from paper. "Whoever works at a monitor spends all his time looking directly into a source of light that dazzles, flickers, and reflects," said psychologist Martina Ziefle, from Aachen, Germany. "The contours of the characters are not as sharp, and the contrasts are weaker." The conclusion of dpa: "When you are buying a computer, more attention should therefore be paid to the quality of the monitor."

Sign of the Times

"One more quaint bit of Canadiana will expire in a few weeks when police [in Newfoundland] begin to pack pistols for the very first time," reports *The Toronto Star*. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, founded in 1729, was "the last police force in North America to patrol without a gun at hand's reach."

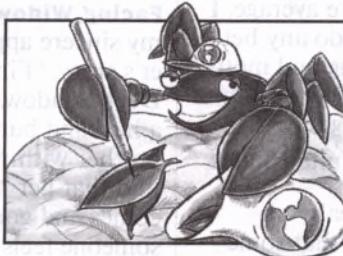
New legislation abolished the previous policy. It required that officers ask a supervisor for permission to arm themselves. If permission was granted, an officer would keep his weapon in a locked box in the trunk of his cruiser. Then, when it was needed on an emergency call, he had to park his car, unlock the trunk, unlock the box, and load the weapon. "It's quaint and it's cute, but it isn't really practical to say a professional, trained police force in 1998 can't have access to their weapons," said Premier Brian Tobin. The Rock, as Newfoundland is affectionately known, still boasts the lowest crime rate in the country and has had no officer shot in the line of duty.

Revenge Is Their Business

Promising "strict confidentiality" and the ability to render service anywhere in Japan, a Tokyo company advertises: "We will settle a score on your behalf." The basic philosophy is "to cause the same kind of suffering to the person who made the client suffer in the first place," says the man who runs the service. As reported in *Asahi Evening News*, the company will "perform legal acts of retribution," such as making sure "a person loses his job and his family," breaking up relationships, and "ensuring a colleague gets fired or a boss who inflicted sexual harassment is humiliated." Of the approximately 50 people who telephone the company each day, 20 ask about contracts for murder; but the company's general rule is not to use force or break the law, "although at times it comes close." The service employs dozens of workers, most of whom work full-time at other jobs. Some are people who have suffered themselves

and who want to help others take revenge. "You never know if something you did in the past has caused other people to hold a grudge against you. Be careful," cautioned the owner.

Land Crabs and Ecology



Ants, termites, and worms break down leaves and debris on forest floors, but what happens in tropical rain forests that are periodically flooded? Land crabs do the job. An ecologist from the University of Michigan, U.S.A., was surprised to find an extensive area of forest on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica that had no leaves on the ground but numerous large holes instead. During the night, he watched as land crabs—estimated at 24,000 to an acre—emerged to forage for dead leaves, fruit, and seedlings, which they carried to the bottom of their three-foot burrows. These eight-inch crabs, which have modified gills for breathing air and make only periodic visits to the sea to breed, help to nurture deeply rooted trees. The whole ecology of the forest is determined by what these creatures do, reports *The Times* of London.

Far Out in Space

"Voyager 1 has entered the record books as the most distant human-made object," states *Astronomy* magazine. "The previous record holder was Pio-

neer 10, which is heading in almost the opposite direction at a slower speed." How far away is Voyager 1? A distance of 6.5 billion miles, as of February 17, 1998. The spacecraft was launched on September 5, 1977; passed Jupiter on March 5, 1979; and flew by Saturn on November 12, 1980. It continues to return data on the solar wind and magnetic field. "Eventually, its instruments may be the first of any spacecraft to sense the heliopause—the boundary between the end of the Sun's magnetic influence and the beginning of interstellar space," says the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Unregistered Children

"Perhaps one-third of all babies do not have their births registered, leaving them in an official limbo that can mean missed educational opportunities and health care," reports *The New York Times*. Birth registrations were lowest in sub-Saharan Africa and in some Asian countries, such as Cambodia, India, Myanmar, and Vietnam. "Not having a birth certificate is the functional equivalent of not having been born," says Carol Bellamy, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund, the agency that conducted the worldwide survey. Many nations require birth registration before a child can receive treatment at a health center or be enrolled in school, and children lacking the certificates are more likely to be forced into child labor or be exploited as sex workers. The article adds: "Poverty alone does not determine the level of registration, the report found, citing high registration rates in most of Latin America, central Asia and North Africa."

FROM OUR READERS

Improving Grades I'm a student in school, and I would like to thank you for the article "Young People Ask . . . Could I Be Doing Better in School?" (March 22, 1998) Although my grades have always been above average, I never really saw much reason to do any better. But because of this interesting and motivating article, I clearly see that I can accomplish more by setting reasonable goals.

B. R., United States

I'm 14 years old, and I never really understood how to study. I decided that some things would be of no use to me in the future and thought it was pointless to study them. Reading this article made me change my mind. Also, I want to thank you for explaining in a very practical way *how* to study!

K. F., Japan

Grinding Teeth The article "Do You Grind Your Teeth?" (March 22, 1998) fitted my needs. Because I suffer from this problem, I found it very informative and encouraging. I never imagined that you would publish something on this subject. With such a variety of information, you touch each individual reader.

A. M. N. C., Brazil

Women As I began to read the series "Women—What Does the Future Hold for Them?", in the April 8, 1998, *Awake!*, tears streamed down my face. I have never been so moved emotionally. Thanks so much for your encouragement to look to the future when oppressive treatment will end.

C. J., United States

I was touched by the difficult life-styles of many women around the world. It brought tears to my eyes to hear of all the things these women have to do—many times bearing the burden all alone. I am a mother of two, and I often cry about the many hardships I face. This article helped me to realize that my lot

in life is more agreeable than that of many others.

K. S., United States

Facing Widowhood I would like to express my sincere appreciation for Barbara Schweizer's story, "Finding Comfort in 'the Valley of Deep Shadow.'" (April 8, 1998) I have not lost a husband but did lose both parents and a brother within three years. Barbara Schweizer said that her "sadness is something that comes and goes." I was grateful to read that someone feels the same way I do.

H. T., Hawaii

I am a 17-year-old full-time evangelizer, and even though I do not have any great problems, this story encouraged me to have a joyful and determined spirit. It made me understand that Jehovah is giving me support and will never abandon me.

T. C., Italy

Orthodontics Thank you for the article in the April 8, 1998, issue "Orthodontics—What Is Involved?" I am 12 years old and have recently started wearing braces on my teeth. I'm not too keen on the idea. But your article explained how they will help me and that many people wear braces, so I don't have to feel embarrassed.

J. L., Canada

I was so delighted with the article on orthodontics! Since childhood I have wanted to have beautiful teeth. Recently, one of my front teeth broke, and I had to have a crown made, which is very expensive. Here in Yugoslavia, dentists often do not have the necessary materials for their work. And private dentists are too expensive for those of us with empty pockets. I can hardly wait for the time in the future when all of us will have perfect teeth!

B. E., Yugoslavia

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"Will All People Ever Love One Another?"

During October and November of 1997, the four-page leaflet "Will All People Ever Love One Another?" received a worldwide distribution of over 300 million copies in more than 100 languages. Many favorable comments were made regarding it, including the following review in the Easton, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., *Express-Times*:

"It highlights examples of neighbors growing cold toward each other—even preying upon each other, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, where longtime neighbors of different ethnic and religious groups killed each other.

"Closer to home, it addressed the elderly living alone where no one visits them, and one dynamic photo catches the face of a woman peering fearfully from the crack of a chained doorway."

The branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Slovenia received the following request from The Philosophical Literature Club Impresie: "As regards the explanation of religious truth, the Roman Catholic Church has in Slovenia, sad to say, the monopoly. To understand these religious truths better, we most courteously request that you send us 50 cop-

ies of the tract entitled "Will All People Ever Love One Another?" It strikes us as something unique, as regards not only the content but also its visual impact."

g98-E 12/22

