

# Awake!

AUGUST 2006

## BLOOD

Why So Valuable?

ALSO: DO HUMANS  
BECOME ANGELS WHEN  
THEY DIE? PAGE 28

# Awake!

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## BLOOD Why So Valuable?

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Colorized electron-microscope image ▶  
of blood. See page 8 for more details

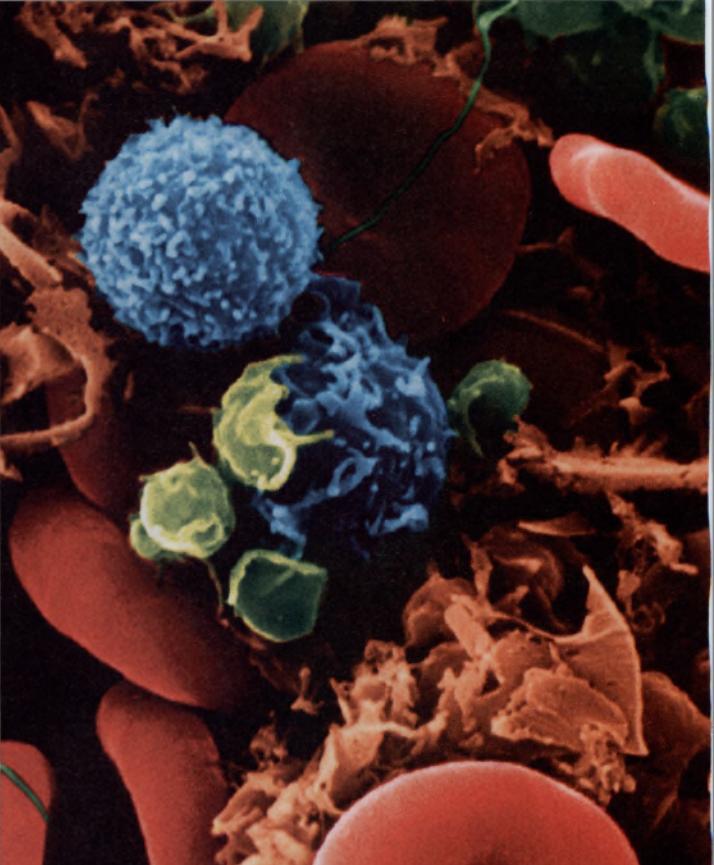
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### How Can I Help Those in Need? 23

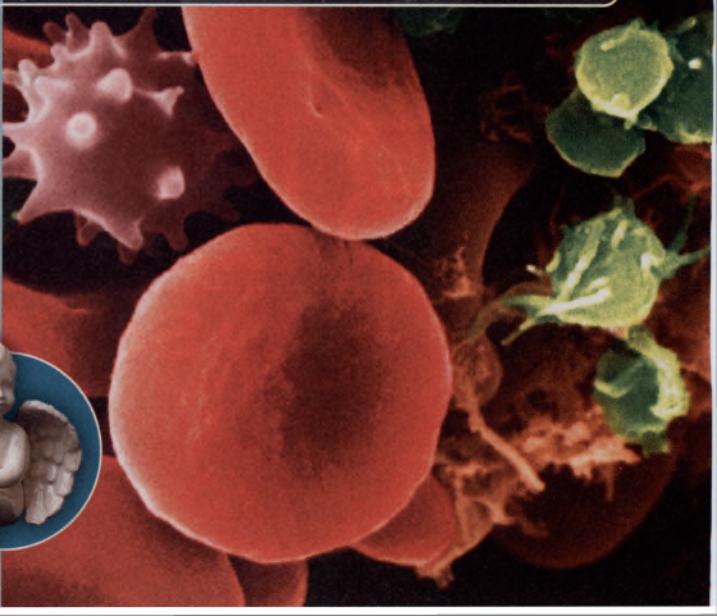
Many young people today are getting involved in volunteer work. What motivates them? And what kind of giving helps the most?

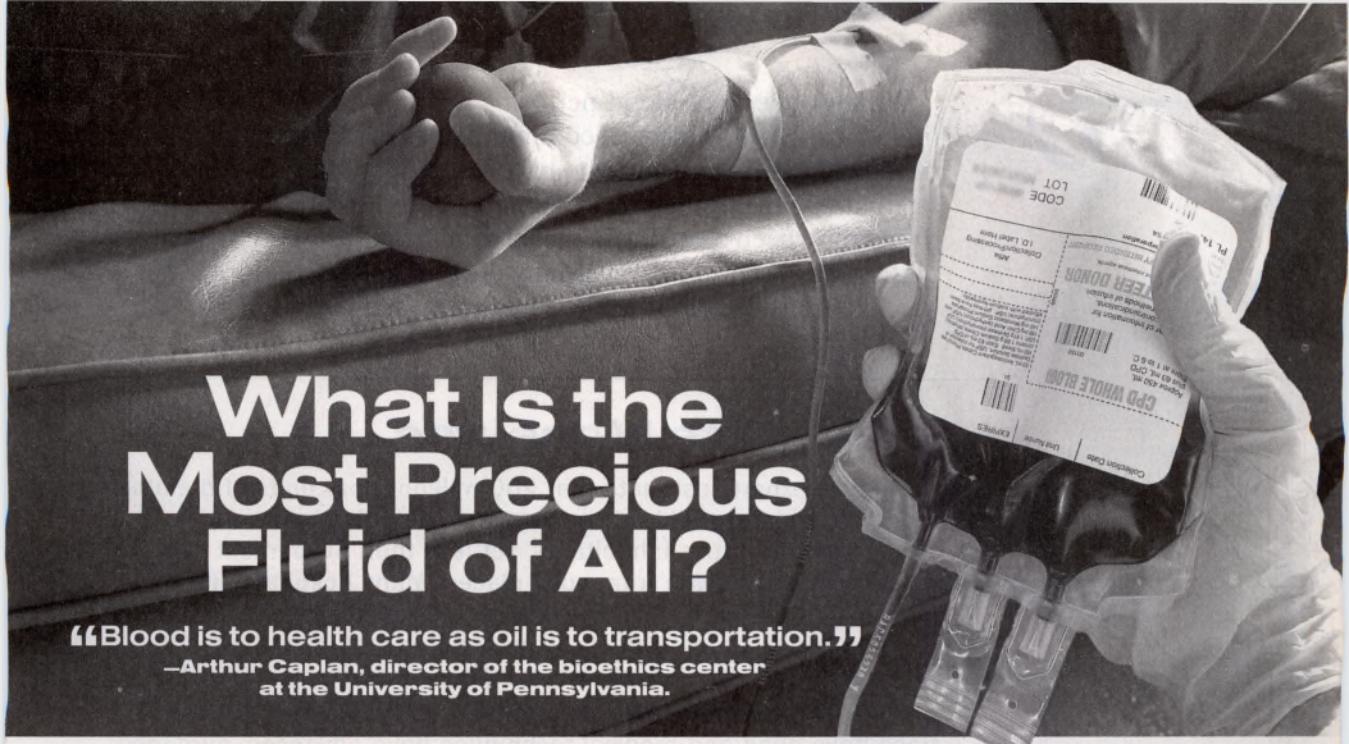
### Do Humans Become Angels When They Die? 28

That is a popular notion, but what does the Bible say on the matter?



A doctor might say that blood is valuable because of its use in medicine. Why, though, do many doctors now hesitate to transfuse blood? What truly makes this unique fluid so valuable?





# What Is the Most Precious Fluid of All?

**“Blood is to health care as oil is to transportation.”**

—Arthur Caplan, director of the bioethics center at the University of Pennsylvania.

**O**IL. Is that the most precious of fluids? In these days when fuel costs often soar, many might think so. In truth, though, each one of us carries around a few quarts of a far more valuable fluid. Think of it: As billions of barrels of oil are extracted from the earth every year to quench mankind's thirst for fuel, some 90 million units of blood are drained from humans in hopes of helping those who are ill.\* That staggering figure represents the blood volume of some 8,000,000 people.

Still, like oil, blood seems to be in short supply. Medical communities worldwide warn of blood shortages. (See the box “Desperate Measures.”) What is it that makes blood so valuable?

## A Unique Organ

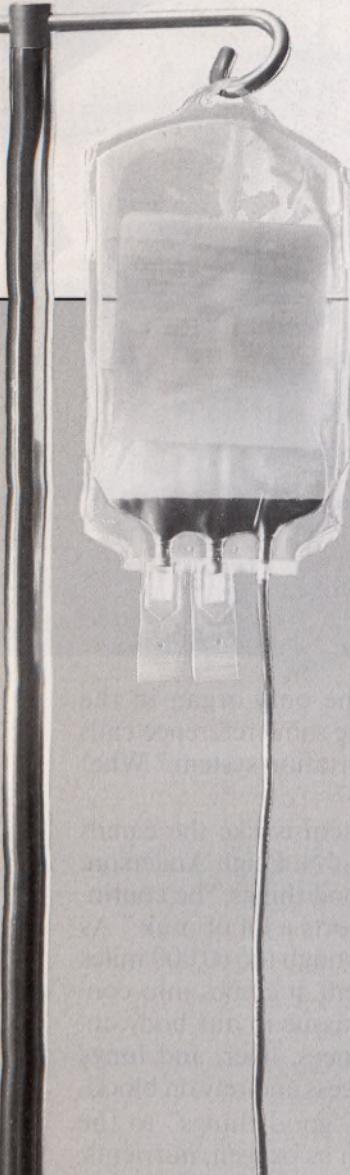
Because of its amazing complexity, blood is often likened to an organ of the body. “Blood is one of the many organs—incredibly wonderful and unique,” Dr. Bruce Lenes told *Awake!* Unique indeed! One textbook

describes blood as “the only organ in the body that's a fluid.” The same reference calls blood “a living transportation system.” What does that mean?

“The circulatory system is like the canals of Venice,” says scientist N. Leigh Anderson. “It transports all the good things,” he continues, “and it also transports a lot of junk.” As blood makes its way through the 60,000 miles of our circulatory system, it comes into contact with nearly every tissue in our body, including the heart, kidneys, liver, and lungs—vital organs that process and rely on blood.

Blood brings many “good things” to the cells of your body, such as oxygen, nutrients, and defensive help, but it also carries away “junk,” such as toxic carbon dioxide, the contents of damaged and dying cells, and other waste. The role of blood in waste removal helps to explain why it can be dangerous to come into contact with blood once it leaves the body. And no one can ever guarantee that all of the “junk” in blood has been identified and removed before it is given to someone else.

\* Each unit contains 450 milliliters (1 pint) of blood.



Without question, blood performs functions that are essential to life. That is why the medical community has made a practice of transfusing blood into patients who have lost blood. Many doctors would say that this medical use is what makes blood so precious. However, things have been changing in the medical field. In a sense, a quiet revolution has been underway. Many doctors and surgeons are not so quick to transfuse blood as they once were. Why?

## Desperate Measures

Medical experts estimate that 200 million more units of donated blood are needed worldwide each year. Developing lands are home to 82 percent of earth's inhabitants, yet less than 40 percent of all blood donations come from such places. Many hospitals in those lands cope without blood. *The Nation*, a newspaper in Kenya, reports that 'every day almost half of the procedures requiring blood transfusion are either canceled or postponed because of lack of blood.'

Blood shortages are also common in wealthy countries. As populations have aged and medical techniques have advanced, surgeries have increased. Additionally, more and more blood donors are turned down these days because of high-risk lifestyles or travel that may have exposed them to disease or parasites.

An atmosphere of desperation seems to have developed among those responsible for stocking blood. Youths, who generally have less risky lifestyles, are sometimes targeted as a safe blood source. For example, schoolchildren now supply 70 percent of the blood in Zimbabwe. Blood-collection centers are keeping longer hours, and some countries even allow them to provide compensation in order to recruit and keep donors. A campaign in the Czech Republic invited citizens to quench their thirst with quarts of beer in exchange for some of their blood! In one area of India, authorities recently went knocking on doors looking for donors who might be willing to help replenish an exhausted blood supply.

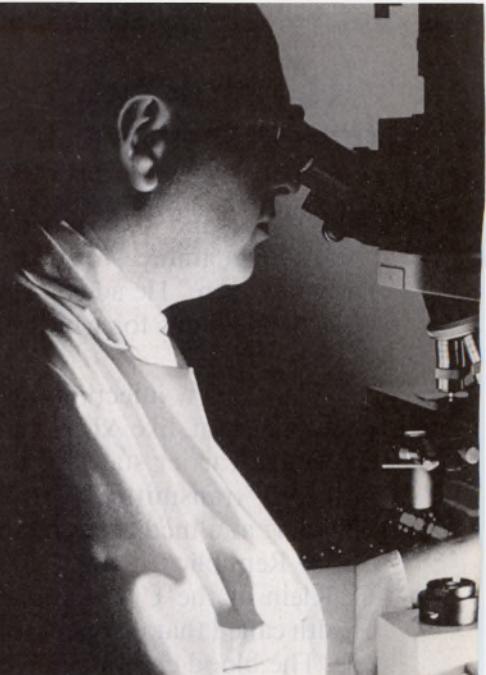
## Awake!

**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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# TRANSFUSION MEDICINE Is Its Future Secure?

**“Transfusion medicine will continue to be a little like walking through a tropical rainforest, where the known paths are clear but still require careful navigation, and new and unseen threats may still lurk around the next corner to trap the unwary.”—Ian M. Franklin, professor of transfusion medicine.**



**A**FTER the worldwide AIDS epidemic cast the spotlight on blood in the 1980's, efforts to eliminate its “unseen threats” intensified. Still, huge obstacles remain. In June 2005, the World Health Organization acknowledged: “The chance of receiving a safe transfusion . . . varies enormously from one country to another.” Why?

In many lands there are no nationally coordinated programs to ensure safety standards for the collection, testing, and transport of blood and blood products. Sometimes blood supplies are even stored dangerously—in poorly maintained domestic refrigerators and picnic boxes! Without safety standards in place, patients can be adversely affected

by the blood drawn from someone who lives hundreds—if not thousands—of miles away.

## Disease-Free Blood—A Moving Target

Some countries claim that their blood supply has never been safer. Yet, there are still reasons for caution. A “Circular of Information” prepared jointly by three U.S. blood agencies states on its first page: “*WARNING: Because whole blood and blood components are made from human blood, they may carry a risk of transmitting infectious agents, eg, viruses. . . . Careful donor selection and available laboratory tests do not eliminate the hazard.*”

Not without reason does Peter Carolan, the senior officer of the International Federation

**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, # Danish, + Dutch, ## English, ##+ Estonian, Finnish, # French, #+ Georgian, German, #+ Greek, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, ##+ Japanese, # Korean, # Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Myanmar, Norwegian, + Polish, Portuguese, ## Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, ## Swahili, Swedish, + Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Zulu

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**Would you welcome more information?** Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address: **America, United States of Wallkill, NY 12589.** **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** P. O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

# **“Think once, twice and three times before transfusing patients.”**

—Professor Ian M. Franklin

of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, say: “Absolute guarantees on blood supplies can never be given.” He adds: “There will always be new infections for which at that moment there is no test.”

What if a new infectious agent were to appear—one that, like AIDS, remains in an undetectable carrier state for a long time and is readily transmitted by means of blood? Speaking at a medical conference in Prague, Czech Republic, in April 2005, Dr. Harvey G. Klein of the U.S. National Institutes of Health called that prospect sobering. He added: “The blood component collectors would be scarcely better prepared to interdict a transfusion-transmitted epidemic than they were during the early days of AIDS.”

## **Mistakes and Transfusion Reactions**

What are the greatest transfusion-related threats to patients in developed countries? Errors and immunologic reactions. Regarding a 2001 Canadian study, the *Globe and Mail* newspaper reported that thousands of blood transfusions involved near-misses because of “collecting blood samples from the wrong patient, mislabelling samples and requesting blood for the wrong patient.” Such mistakes cost the lives of at least 441 people in the United States between 1995 and 2001.

Those who receive blood from another person face risks essentially similar to those undergoing an organ transplant. Immune responses tend to reject foreign tissue. In some cases, blood transfusions can actually prevent the activation of natural immune responses. Such immunosuppression leaves the patient vulnerable to postoperative infections and to viruses that had previously

been inactive. It is no wonder that Professor Ian M. Franklin, quoted at the outset of this article, encourages clinicians to “think once, twice and three times before transfusing patients.”

## **Experts Speak Out**

Armed with such knowledge, a growing number of health-care workers are taking a more critical look at transfusion medicine. Reports the reference work *Dailey's Notes on Blood*: “Some physicians maintain that allogeneic blood [blood from another human] is a dangerous drug and that its use would be banned if it were evaluated by the same standards as other drugs.”

Late in 2004, Professor Bruce Spiess said the following about transfusing a primary blood component into patients undergoing heart surgery: “There are few if any [medical] articles that support transfusion actually improving patient outcome.” In fact, he writes that many such transfusions “may do more harm than good in virtually every instance except trauma,” increasing “the risk of pneumonia, infections, heart attacks and strokes.”

It surprises many to learn that the standards for administering blood are not nearly as uniform as one would expect. Dr. Gabriel Pedraza recently reminded his colleagues in Chile that “transfusion is a poorly defined practice,” one that makes it “difficult to . . . apply universally accepted guidelines.” No wonder Brian McClelland, director of Edinburgh and Scotland Blood Transfusion Service, asks doctors to “remember that a transfusion is a transplant and therefore not a trivial decision.” He suggests that doctors ponder the question, “If this was myself or my child, would I agree to the transfusion?”

## **“If this was myself or my child, would I agree to the transfusion?”**

—Brian McClelland



**Some medical workers  
are very cautious  
about coming into contact  
with blood**

In truth, more than a few health-care workers express themselves as did one hematologist, who told *Awake!*: "We transfusion-medicine specialists do not like to get or to give blood." If this is the feeling among some well-trained individuals in the medical community, how should patients feel?

#### **Will Medicine Change?**

'If transfusion medicine is so fraught with dangers,' you might wonder, 'why is blood still used so extensively, particularly when there are alternatives?' One reason is that many doctors are simply reluctant to change treatment methods or are unaware of therapies that are currently used as alternatives to transfusions. According to an article

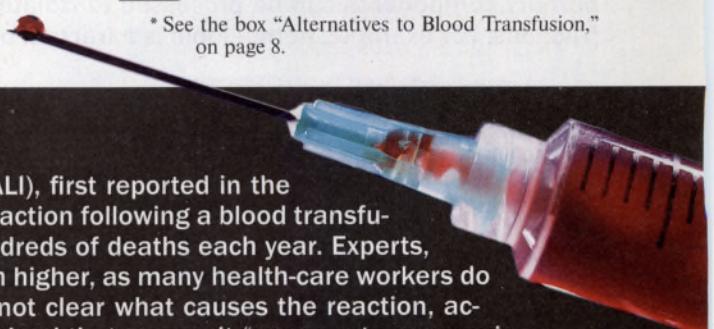
in the journal *Transfusion*, "physicians make transfusion decisions based upon their past teaching, enculturation, and 'clinical judgment.'"

A surgeon's skills also make a difference. Dr. Beverley Hunt, of London, England, writes that "blood loss is highly variable between surgeons, and there is increasing interest in training surgeons in adequate surgical haemostasis [methods to stop bleeding]." Others claim that the costs of transfusion alternatives are too high, although reports are emerging that prove otherwise. Many doctors, however, would agree with medical director Dr. Michael Rose, who says: "Any patient who receives bloodless medicine is, in essence, the recipient of the highest quality surgery that is possible."<sup>\*</sup>

The highest quality of medical care—is that not what you would want? If so, you have something in common with the people who brought you this magazine. Please read on to learn about their remarkable stance on the matter of blood transfusions.

\* See the box "Alternatives to Blood Transfusion," on page 8.

## **Death by TRALI**



Transfusion-related acute lung injury (TRALI), first reported in the early 1990's, is a life-threatening immune reaction following a blood transfusion. It is now known that TRALI causes hundreds of deaths each year. Experts, however, suspect that the numbers are much higher, as many health-care workers do not recognize the symptoms. Although it is not clear what causes the reaction, according to the magazine *New Scientist*, the blood that causes it "appears to come primarily from people who have been exposed to a variety of blood groups in the past, such as . . . people who have had multiple transfusions." One report states that TRALI is now near the top of the list for causes of transfusion-related deaths in the United States and Britain, making it "a bigger problem for blood banks than high-profile diseases like HIV."

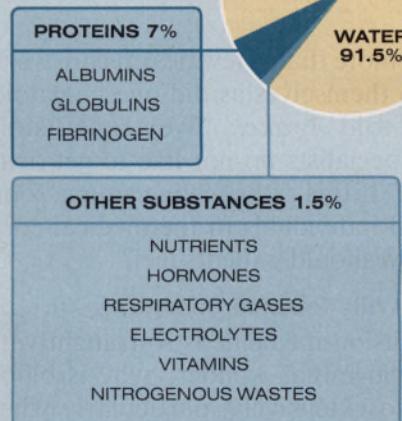
# The Composition of BLOOD

Blood donors generally give whole blood. In many cases, though, they donate plasma. While some countries transfuse whole blood, more commonly, blood is separated into its primary components before it is tested and used in transfusion medicine. Note the four primary components, their function, and the percentage of total blood volume each represents.

**PLASMA** constitutes between 52 and 62 percent of whole blood. It is a straw-colored fluid in which blood cells, proteins, and other substances are suspended and transported.

Water constitutes 91.5 percent of plasma. Proteins, from which plasma fractions are derived, constitute 7 percent of the plasma (including albumins, which make up about 4 percent of the plasma; globulins, about 3 percent; and fibrinogen, less than 1 percent). The remaining 1.5 percent of plasma is made up of other substances, such as nutrients, hormones, respiratory gases, electrolytes, vitamins, and nitrogenous wastes.

## PLASMA



Just as blood plasma can be a source of various fractions, other primary components can be processed to isolate smaller parts, or fractions. For example, hemoglobin is a fraction of the red blood cell.

Page 9: Blood Components in circles: This project has been funded in whole or in part with federal funds from the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, under contract N01-CO-12400. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government

## TRANSFUSION ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

Simple • Safe • Effective

## Alternatives to Blood Transfusion

Over the past six years, Hospital Liaison Committees for Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide have distributed tens of thousands of copies of the video program *Transfusion-Alternative Strategies—Simple, Safe, Effective* in some 25 languages to those within the medical community.\* The program shows world-renowned physicians discussing effective strategies currently used to treat patients without blood transfusions. People are taking note. For example, after viewing the program in late 2001, the National Blood Service (NBS) in the United Kingdom sent a letter with a

\* Contact one of Jehovah's Witnesses to view the DVD program *Transfusion Alternatives—Documentary Series*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

## WHITE BLOOD CELLS

(leukocytes) constitute less than 1 percent of whole blood. These attack and destroy potentially harmful foreign matter.



## PLATELETS

(thrombocytes)

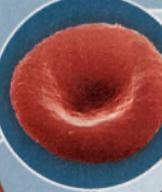
constitute less than 1 percent of whole blood. These form clots, blocking blood from exiting wounds.



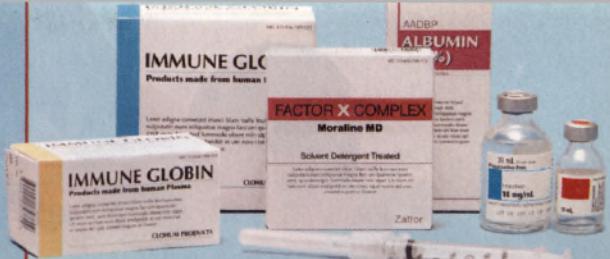
## RED BLOOD CELLS

(erythrocytes)

constitute between 38 and 48 percent of whole blood. These cells keep tissue alive by bringing oxygen to it and taking carbon dioxide away.



copy of this video to all blood-bank managers and consultant hematologists throughout the country. They were encouraged to watch the program because of "increasing recognition that one of the aims of good clinical care is to avoid blood transfusion wherever possible." The letter acknowledged that "the general message [in the video] is praiseworthy and is one the NBS strongly supports."



## FRACTIONATION

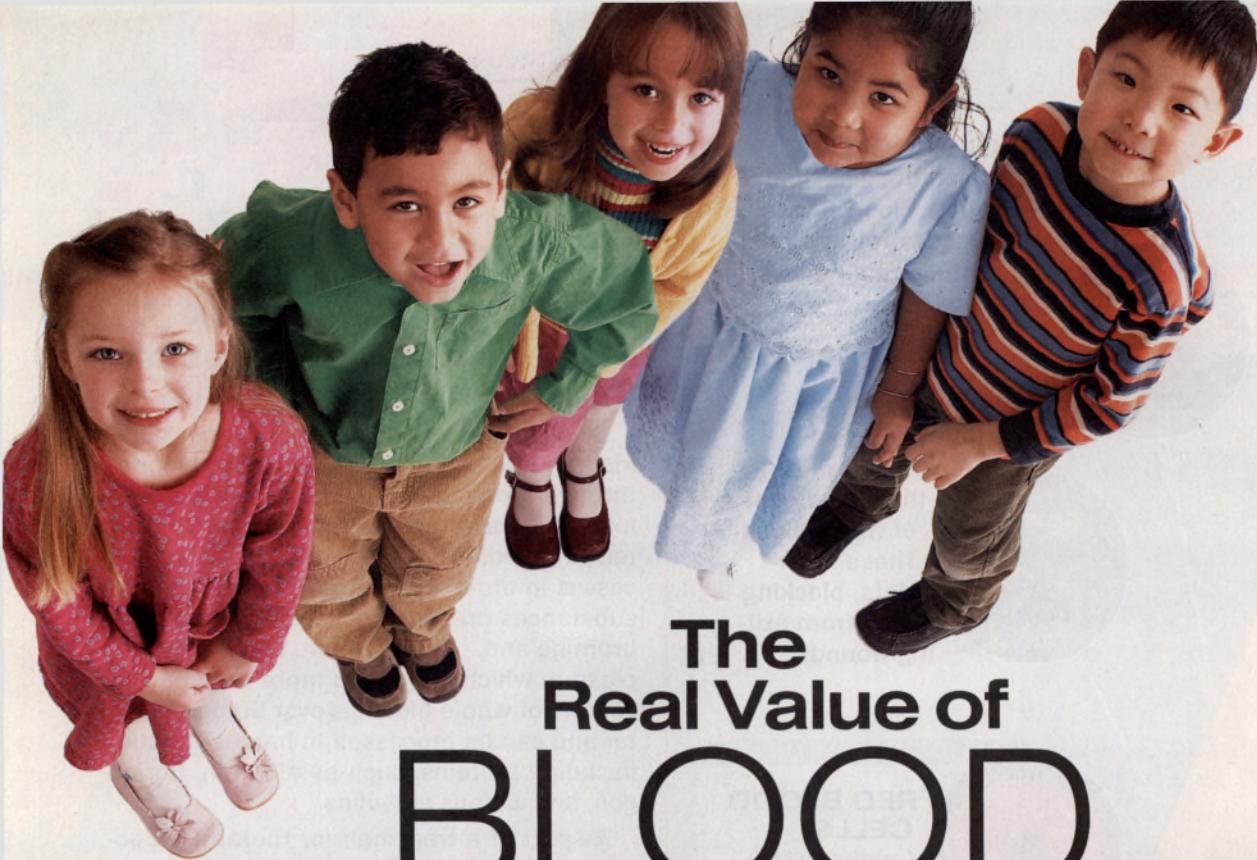
### The Use of Blood's Lesser Ingredients in Medicine

Science and technology make it possible to identify and extract elements from blood through a process called fractionation. To illustrate: Seawater, which is 96.5 percent water, can be divided through fractionation processes in order to capture the remaining substances present, such as magnesium, bromine and, of course, salt. Likewise, blood plasma, which makes up more than half the volume of whole blood, is over 90 percent water and can be processed to harvest fractions including proteins, such as albumin, fibrinogen, and various globulins.

As part of a treatment or therapy, a doctor might recommend concentrated amounts of a plasma fraction. An example of such is protein-rich cryoprecipitate, which is obtained by freezing and then thawing plasma. This insoluble portion of plasma is rich in coagulation factors and is usually given to patients to stop bleeding. Other treatments may involve a product that contains a blood fraction, whether in trace amounts or as a primary ingredient.\* Some plasma proteins are used in routine injections that can help to increase immunity after exposure to infectious agents. Nearly all blood fractions being used in medical applications consist of the proteins found in blood plasma.

According to *Science News*, "scientists have identified only several hundred of the estimated thousands of proteins typically coursing through a person's bloodstream." As understanding of blood grows in the future, new products derived from these proteins may emerge.

\* Fractions from animal blood are also used in some products.



## The Real Value of **BLOOD**

**"The global community shares a common life source: blood.**

**It is the life force in all human beings, regardless of colour, race or religion."**

**—President of the General Assembly of the United Nations.**

**W**I THOUT question, there is a measure of truth in that quote. Blood is essential to all human life. It is a precious resource. Are you convinced, though, that it is safe and wise for humans to share that fluid for medical purposes?

As we have learned, worldwide safety standards are highly variable, and treatments with blood are riskier than many assume. Furthermore, physicians differ widely in their use of blood because of education, skills, and viewpoints. Yet, many are increasingly cautious about transfusing blood. A significant and growing number of doctors are showing a preference for medical treatments that avoid the use of blood.

That brings us back to a question posed at the outset of the first article of this series. Just what is it that makes blood so valuable? If the medical use of blood is increasingly questionable, is there another purpose that blood fulfills?

### **Our Creator and Blood**

Back in the days of Noah, an ancestor of all mankind, God laid down a remarkable law. While granting humans the

right to eat the flesh of animals, he forbade them to consume the blood. (Genesis 9:4) He also gave them his reason, equating blood with the soul, or life, of the creature. He later said: "The soul [or life] is in the blood." In the eyes of the Creator, blood is sacred. It represents the precious gift of life that each living soul possesses. God restated this principle again and again.—Leviticus 3:17; 17:10, 11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23.

Shortly after Christianity was founded some 2,000 years ago, believers were given the divine commandment to "*abstain* from . . . blood." The prohibition was based, not on health concerns, but on the sacredness of blood. (Acts 15:19, 20, 29) Some argue that this God-given restriction applies only to the eating of blood, but the word "*abstain*" speaks for itself. If a doctor told us to abstain from alcohol, we would hardly feel at liberty to inject it into our veins.

The Bible further explains why blood is so sacred. The shed blood of Jesus Christ, representing the human life that he gave in behalf of mankind, is key to the Christian hope. It means forgiveness of sins and hope of eternal life. When a Christian abstains from blood, he is in effect expressing his faith that only the shed blood of Jesus Christ can truly redeem him and save his life.—Ephesians 1:7.

Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for taking these Bible commands to heart. They reject all transfusions involving whole blood or the four primary blood components—red cells, plasma, white cells, and platelets. As for the various fractions derived from those components—and products that contain

## What Are Hemoglobin-Based Oxygen Carriers?

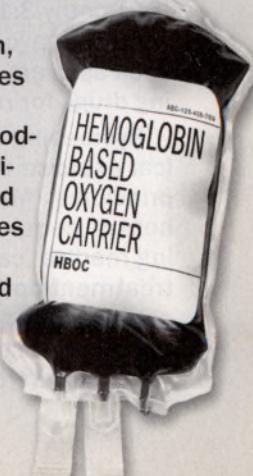
Within each red blood cell are some 300 million hemoglobin molecules. Hemoglobin represents about one third of the volume of a mature red cell. Each molecule contains the protein globin and a pigment called heme—which includes an iron atom. When a red blood cell passes through the lungs, oxygen molecules penetrate the cell and attach themselves to hemoglobin molecules. Seconds later, the oxygen is discharged into body tissue, sustaining the life of the cells.



HEMOGLOBIN MOLECULE

Some manufacturers now process hemoglobin, releasing it from human or bovine red blood cells. The extracted hemoglobin is then filtered to remove impurities, chemically modified and purified, mixed with a solution, and packaged. The end product—not yet approved for use in most lands—is called a hemoglobin-based oxygen carrier, or HBOC. Since the heme is responsible for the rich red color of blood, a unit of HBOC looks just like a unit of red blood cells, the primary component from which it is taken.

Unlike red blood cells, which must be refrigerated and discarded after a few weeks, the HBOC can be stored at room temperature and used months later. And since the cell membrane with its unique antigens is gone, severe reactions due to mismatched blood types pose no threat. However, compared with other blood fractions, the HBOC presents more challenges to conscientious Christians, who seek to obey God's law on blood. Why? As long as the HBOC is derived from blood, there are two objections that may be raised. One, the HBOC carries out the key function of a primary component of blood, the red cells. Two, hemoglobin, from which the HBOC is derived, makes up a significant portion of that component. Regarding this and similar products, then, Christians face a very serious decision. They must carefully and prayerfully meditate on Bible principles concerning the sacredness of blood. With a keen desire to maintain a good relationship with Jehovah, each must be guided by his Bible-trained conscience.—Galatians 6:5.





## An Inviting Option

"A growing number of hospitals are offering an alternative: 'bloodless' surgery," reported *The Wall Street Journal*. "Originally developed to accommodate Jehovah's Witnesses," states the journal, "the practice has gone mainstream, with many hospitals promoting their bloodless-surgery programs to the general public." Hospitals around the world are discovering numerous benefits, particularly to patients, when implementing strategies that curtail the use of blood transfusions. Currently, thousands of doctors are treating patients without resorting to transfusions.

such fractions—the Bible does not comment on these. Therefore, each Witness makes his own personal decision on such matters. Does this Bible-based stand mean that Witnesses reject medical treatment or view their health and life lightly? Not at all!—See the box "Jehovah's Witnesses and Health."

In recent years more than a few doctors have recognized that Witnesses have benefited medically from adhering to the Bible's standard. For instance, a spine surgeon recently spoke out in favor of choosing alter-

natives to blood transfusions. He said: "It's absolutely the safest thing to do, not just for Jehovah's Witnesses, but for everyone."

Serious health decisions can cause a great deal of stress and are often difficult to make. Regarding the common practice of transfusing blood, note the words of respirologist and medical director Dr. Dave Williams: "It's important that we respect people's wishes, . . . and we need to be very careful about what we put into our bodies." Those words ring true—and never more so than today.

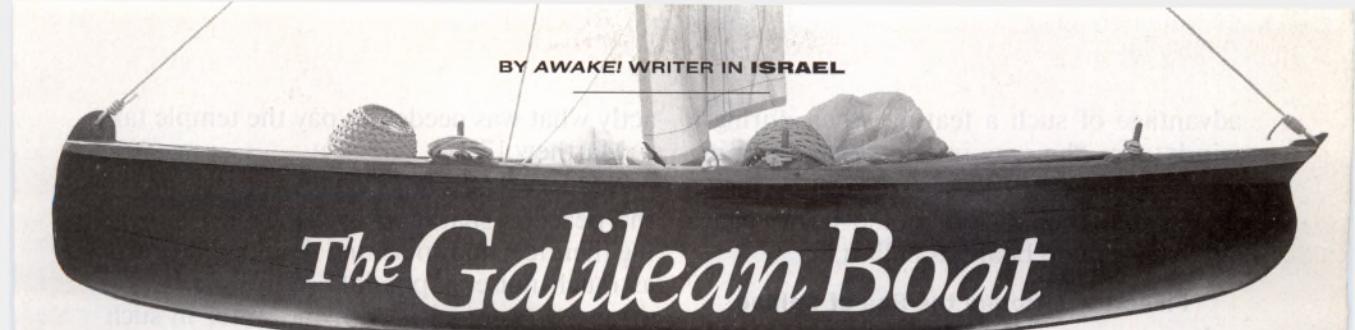
## Jehovah's Witnesses and Health

Jehovah's Witnesses, some of whom are physicians and nurses, are known worldwide for their rejection of transfusions involving whole blood or primary blood components. Does their united stand against this practice stem from a man-made doctrine or a belief that a person's faith can heal medical ailments? That is far from the truth.

Cherishing their life as a gift from God, the Witnesses strive to do their best to live according to the Bible, which they believe is "inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Revelation 4:11) That book encourages worshippers of God to avoid practices and habits that harm health or endanger life, such as overeating, smoking or chewing tobacco, abusing alcohol, and using drugs for recreational purposes.—Proverbs 23:20; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

By keeping our body and surroundings clean and getting some physical exercise for health reasons, we are acting in harmony with Bible principles. (Matthew 7:12; 1 Timothy 4:8) When Jehovah's Witnesses get sick, they demonstrate reasonableness by seeking medical care and accepting the vast majority of available treatment options. (Philippians 4:5) True, they obey the Bible command to "keep abstaining from . . . blood," insisting on nonblood medical management. (Acts 15:29) And this choice often results in a higher quality of treatment.





# The Galilean Boat

## A TREASURE FROM BIBLE TIMES

**T**HE Sea of Galilee witnessed some of the most exciting episodes of Jesus' ministry. It was on this lake or by its shores that God's own Son walked on water, calmed tempestuous waves, miraculously fed thousands, and healed the sick.

In 1986 a surprising discovery was made on the seabed near ancient Capernaum. It was a boat that had sailed this sea back in the time of Jesus' ministry. How was it found? And what can we learn from it?

### Revealed by a Drought

Years of below-average rainfall, followed by the harsh summer of 1985, had taken a severe toll on the Sea of Galilee, and this freshwater lake was also being tapped for crop irrigation. The water level had dropped dramatically, exposing extensive mudflats. Two men, fleshly brothers from a nearby kibbutz, saw a golden opportunity to look for hidden treasures. As they made their way across the mudflats, they spotted some bronze coins and a few old nails. Then they saw it—an oval outline in the mud, marking the spot where an ancient boat lay buried. They had indeed found a treasure!

Archaeologists never expected to find a 2,000-year-old boat in the Sea of Galilee. They assumed that microorganisms would have long since destroyed any wood. Yet, both carbon dating and the coins recovered at the site led experts to date the find to the first century B.C.E. or the first century C.E. Incredibly, the hull was quite well preserved. How was that possible?

It appears that the boat was left in an

undisturbed area, which allowed the entire lower section to be encased in fine silt. In time, the silt hardened. A piece of history was thus kept safe for some 20 centuries!

As news of the craft's discovery spread, it was nicknamed the Jesus Boat. Of course, no one seriously suggested that this very boat was used by Jesus or his disciples. Still, its age and similarities to the boats described in the Gospel accounts make it of interest to historians and Bible scholars alike.

The boat is 26 feet long and 7.5 feet wide. Its builder used the shell-first method of construction. That is, instead of fixing planks onto a frame, he attached them directly to the keel and built up the sides of the boat to form a shell. This method was common in building boats meant for sailing the Mediterranean Sea. However, the Galilean boat may have been adapted for sailing on a lake.

Evidently, the boat was originally fitted with a single square sail. Its four oars indicate that it required a minimum crew of five—four rowers and a helmsman. However, the craft was capable of carrying more than double that number of people. It is easy to imagine a similar-size boat when reading of the seven disciples who were out fishing when they saw Jesus after his resurrection.—John 21:2-8.

The Galilean boat would no doubt have had a stern deck for the storage of large fishing nets. Beneath its planks, such a deck provided a somewhat secluded area where tired fishermen could rest. Jesus may have taken

advantage of such a feature when during a windstorm “he was in the stern, sleeping upon a pillow.” (Mark 4:38) It has been suggested that the “pillow” could have been a sandbag kept on board as ballast.\*

### Fishermen Around the Sea of Galilee

Imagine yourself a passenger on a boat like this one back in the first century. As you sail on the Sea of Galilee, what might you observe? There are fishermen, some in small boats and others wading in shallow water, casting their nets. With an expert’s ease, they use one hand to hurl these weighted circular nets, which were between 20 and 25 feet in diameter. Splashing evenly onto the water’s surface, the nets sink, trapping fish. A fisherman retrieves his catch by dragging the net ashore or perhaps by diving to scoop up the net and its contents. Simon and Andrew are described in the Bible as “casting” their nets, perhaps in a similar manner.—Mark 1:16.

You might also notice a group of fishermen and their lively chatter as they prepare a seine net. This net may be 1,000 feet long, hanging vertically up to 25 feet deep in the center, with towing lines attached to each end. The fishermen select their location, then half go ashore with one of the towing lines. The boat sails straight out into the lake, unfurling the net to its full length; then the boat turns, gradually pulling the net to form a semicircle against the shore. After this the rest of the fishermen disembark with the second towing line. As the two groups of fishermen draw closer to each other, they haul in their catch.—Matthew 13:47, 48.

In the distance you spot a lone fisherman using a hook and line. Jesus once told Peter to cast a fishhook into this very sea. You imagine Peter’s astonishment on catching a fish and finding a silver coin in its mouth—ex-

actly what was needed to pay the temple tax.  
—Matthew 17:27.

At dusk all falls quiet on the lake. Suddenly, the peace is shattered by fishermen pounding their feet and splashing their oars to make as much noise as possible. Why? They have arranged trammel nets in the water in such a way that the fish, frightened by the noise, head straight into the trap. This vertical net, invisible in the darkness, is designed in such a way that fish easily get entangled in it. The nets are lowered repeatedly throughout the night. In the morning they are washed and hung up to dry. You wonder, ‘Did the miraculous catch described at Luke 5:1-7 involve the use of a trammel net?’

### Restoration Work

Let us return to modern times. What happened to the excavated boat? Though intact, its structure was scarcely tougher than soggy cardboard. Simply digging it out of the mud was not an option. How tragic it would have been if after having survived for so long, the boat had disintegrated during the recovery process! With the threat of the lake’s water rising again, a dike was built around the excavation site. Tunnels were built underneath the hull in order to insert fiberglass supports. Then, as the mud was carefully cleared, the boat’s structure was sprayed inside and out with a cocoon of polyurethane foam.

The next challenge was to transport this delicate package to a site 1,000 feet away in order to begin conservation work. The polyurethane casing was strong, yet a sudden jolt could crumble the delicate wood it cradled. The team opted for an inventive solution. They opened up the dike and let the water in. For the first time in many centuries, the boat, now encased in a modern cocoon, floated on the Sea of Galilee.

A concrete tank was built to house the boat during the conservation process, which lasted 14 years. A problem arose when mosquito larvae infested the tank, making life unpleasant

\* See the article “On the Sea of Galilee,” in the August 15, 2005, issue of *The Watchtower*, page 8, also published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



**Workers painstakingly removed the mud from inside the boat**

for those who had to enter its water to work on the boat. However, the conservation team found a solution that was both original and timeless. They enlisted the help of a number of St. Peter's fish, which ate the larvae and cleaned the water.

Soon it was time to dry the boat out. It was still far too delicate to be left to dry naturally. The water that saturated the wood had to be replaced with something. The team used a technique that replaced the water with a synthetic water-soluble wax, which enabled the wood to dry without changing shape.

With the conservation work complete, a relatively humble vessel was revealed. It was made with 12 different types of wood. Why? One possibility is that wood was scarce at the time. A more likely possibility is that the owner was not a wealthy man. The boat was repaired many times before it was eventually abandoned to the lake.

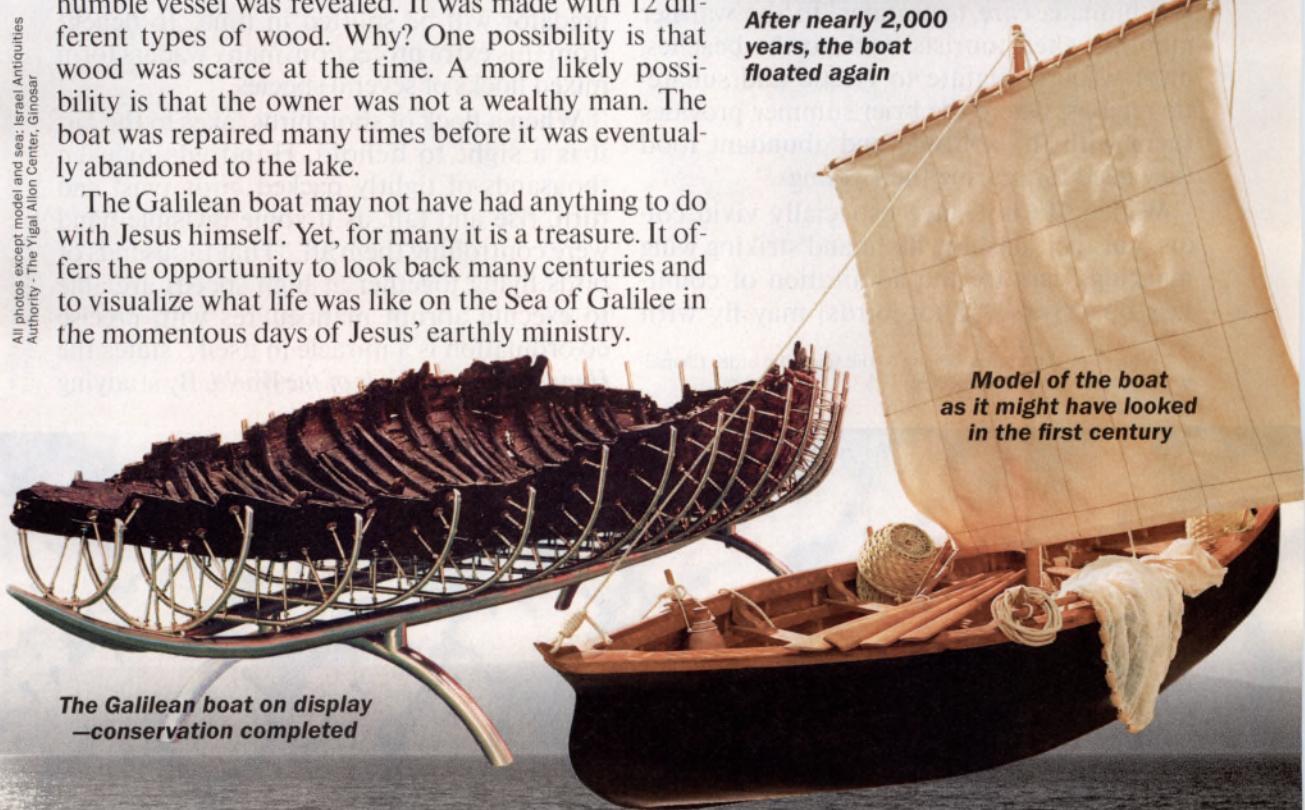
The Galilean boat may not have had anything to do with Jesus himself. Yet, for many it is a treasure. It offers the opportunity to look back many centuries and to visualize what life was like on the Sea of Galilee in the momentous days of Jesus' earthly ministry.



**Cocooned in polyurethane foam**



**After nearly 2,000 years, the boat floated again**



**The Galilean boat on display —conservation completed**

**Model of the boat as it might have looked in the first century**



BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SPAIN

# Waders

## The World's Greatest Wanderers

**I**MAGINE spending two months of the northern summer in the Arctic tundra, where the sun practically never sets. As winter approaches, though, you head to South America, Australia, or South Africa. And for the rest of the year, you are on the move, combing the shores of every continent for your favorite delicacies. This is the typical lifestyle of many of the world's waders.

Waders—as the name implies—are birds that like to feed in shallow water.\* In the colder months of the Northern Hemisphere, these shorebirds congregate at muddy estuaries, beaches, mudflats, or rocky shorelines, where few humans care to wander. In the warmer months, when tourists flock to the beaches, most waders migrate to Arctic and subarctic regions, where the brief summer provides them with the solitude and abundant food they need for rearing their young.

Waders do not have especially vivid colors, but their dashing flight and striking wing markings capture the admiration of countless observers. “[Shorebirds] may fly with

their wingtips grazing the water or at altitudes of four miles or more. They are indeed absolute masters of the air and the wind,” notes the book *Shorebirds—Beautiful Beachcombers*.

### Safety in Numbers

Shorebirds often congregate in large flocks where food is plentiful. They seem to seek safety in numbers. Birds of prey such as peregrine falcons prefer to pursue solitary birds, whereas a compact flock may discourage them from attacking. And thousands of watchful eyes make it more likely that a predator will be spotted in time. To benefit from this extra protection, many waders form mixed flocks of several species.

When a flock of shorebirds takes to the air, it is a sight to behold. Hundreds or even thousands of tightly packed birds twist and turn, rise and fall, as if some invisible hand were controlling them all. “That thousands of birds flying together at high speeds are able to execute abrupt manoeuvres with precise co-ordination is a miracle in itself,” states the *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. By studying

\* Waders, or shorebirds, belong to the scientific order *Charadrii* and number over 200 species.

Top and bottom panoramic photos: © Richard Crossley/VIREO



**To cross vast oceans, waders must acquire huge reserves of fat, since they cannot rest on water**

high-speed film of flocks of dunlins, ornithologists have concluded that a single bird may initiate a maneuver that quickly spreads to the rest of the flock.

#### The World at Their Feet

Some waders are truly global travelers. Red knots and sanderlings, for example, breed farther north than virtually any other birds. Waders may turn up on shorelines practically anywhere on earth and may cover some 20,000 miles in their annual odyssey.

Although some migratory journeys require waders to cross oceans, they cannot swim and never rest on the water. So they must carry huge reserves of fuel—proportionately more than a jumbo jet does, which on takeoff carries about 40 percent of its total weight in fuel. How do the waders fuel up?

"They accumulate [fuel] in the form of fat and feed so voraciously on the mud flats of the coast that in a few weeks they almost

**Sanderlings seek safety in numbers**



double their summer weight," explains David Attenborough in the book *The Life of Birds*. "These reserves are even bigger than that statistic might suggest, for many of their internal organs, including their brain and their guts, shrink in size to accommodate this additional fuel and save weight."

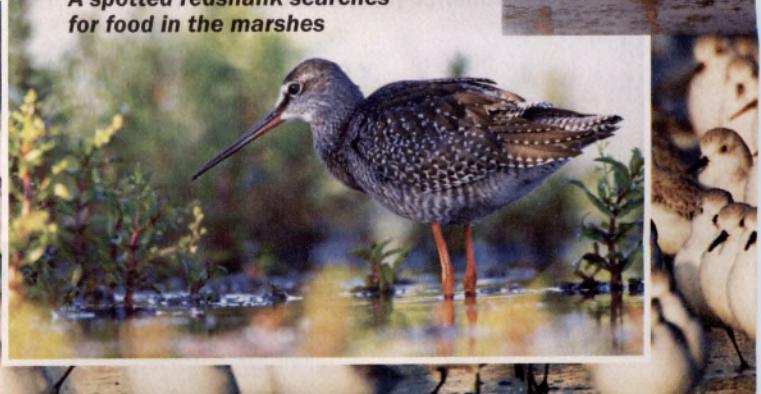
One impressive traveler is the Pacific golden plover, which migrates from Alaska to the Hawaiian Islands. Apart from the endurance needed for the 2,800-mile direct flight, its ability to locate Hawaii in the middle of the ocean is a miracle of avian navigation. A golden plover whose flight was monitored made the journey in less than four days. And one elderly bird has completed the round trip over 20 times!

When they finally begin arriving in their Arctic breeding grounds, these hardy travelers face a hectic life. Within two weeks they must find a mate,

**Eurasian oystercatcher**



**A spotted redshank searches for food in the marshes**





establish a territory, and make a nest. They then have about three weeks to incubate the eggs and another three weeks to rear their chicks. By the end of July, they are heading south once more.

### The Hazards of Migration

On the long journeys that shorebirds undertake, they encounter many hazards. One great threat comes from humans. In the 19th century, naturalist John James Audubon reported that a hunting party shot 48,000 American golden plovers in a single day. Today, the total world population of this species has recovered somewhat, but it is still probably less than the number killed that day.

An even greater threat to waders is the disappearance of wetlands. Shorebirds cannot easily adapt to such losses. "The patterns of breeding, migration and wintering distributions of waders have been built up over many thousands of years and it is all too easy for man to change or destroy them," explains the book *Shorebirds—An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World*. The survival of millions of waders depends on the preserva-

tion of a handful of key migratory stopovers.

A prime example is Delaware Bay, along the coast of southwest New Jersey, U.S.A. There, about a hundred thousand red knots congregate in spring to gorge on the eggs of horseshoe crabs. The birds are ravenous, since they have just completed "one of the longest non-stop flights of the avian world." In two weeks they have flown 5,000 miles to this location from southeastern Brazil, during which time they have lost half their body weight.

Efforts of conservationists may help to ensure that such favorite stopovers of the shorebirds will remain intact. Perhaps there is one such area not far from where you live. Once you have watched a flock of waders twisting and wheeling over the waves or you have listened to their haunting calls, you will find it hard to forget them.

As naturalist Arthur Morris writes, "all who pursue shorebirds share a common bond: each of us has stood countless times on desolate beaches or flats and watched a flock of sandpipers flashing dark and light, twisting and turning in synchronous flight. And each time this happens, we are filled with a sense of awe and wonder."

KK Hui

## Seasoned Globe-Trotters

◀ **Red knots** probably earn the prize for long-haul travel. Those that breed in the far north of Canada usually winter either in Western Europe or on the tip of South America (over 6,000 miles away)

▼ **Flocks of almost a million dunlins** have been observed in the Netherlands and Mauretania



▲ **Bar-tailed godwits** disperse widely from their breeding grounds in Siberia, traveling to the British Isles, South Africa, the Middle East, Australia, or New Zealand

► **Sanderlings** can be found running along beaches practically anywhere in the world. Some may breed within 600 miles of the North Pole



### Catholics From "House to House"?

According to Cláudio Hummes, archbishop of São Paulo, the proportion of Brazilians who are Catholic has fallen from 83 percent to 67 percent over the last 14 years. The prelate blames the church's "inability, for various reasons, to preach the gospel to its baptized members thoroughly." Says Hummes: "We have to reach out to the faithful, from house to house, in the schools, in institutions, and not just in the parishes." *Folha Online* notes that this work will have to be undertaken by laity who are trained as missionaries. A shortage of priests is one of the major problems facing the Catholic Church in Brazil and in the rest of Latin America as a whole.

### Legal Recognition in Germany

In a decision published on February 10, 2006, the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig, Germany, ruled that the State of Berlin must recognize the Religious Association of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany as a public corporation. This ended a 15-year-long legal battle, during which the case was reviewed by several different German courts, including the Federal Constitutional Court. As a public corporation, the Religious Association of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany is entitled to tax exemptions and other privileges enjoyed by the country's major religious denominations.

### Chinese Youth Addicted to Internet Games

"Internet game addiction is rife among China's youth," says Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*. The phenomenon is also evident among youngsters from other areas of the Orient, such as Hong Kong, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The newspaper notes: "The growing desire to plug in and tune out reflects a backlash against society's stranglehold on kids that stems from parents' weighty expectations and cutthroat competition to get into university." It is estimated that up to six million Chinese children need help to overcome the addiction.

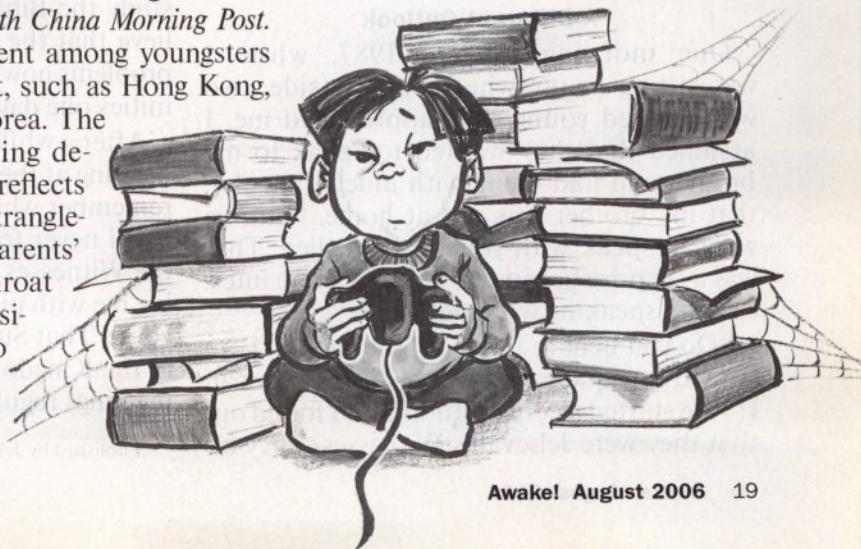
■ Last year was "the warmest on record in the Northern Hemisphere" and the "second warmest globally." "Eight of the 10 warmest years [on record] have occurred within the last decade."

—BBC NEWS, BRITAIN

■ The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season was the "busiest" and "arguably . . . the most devastating" on record. Seven out of the 14 hurricanes recorded registered wind speeds in excess of 110 miles per hour.—U.S. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.

■ "In 1850, there were more than 150 glaciers in Glacier National Park in Montana [U.S.A.]. Now there are 27."—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, U.S.A.

■ "The blunt truth about the politics of climate change is that no country will want to sacrifice its economy in order to meet this challenge."—TONY BLAIR, BRITISH PRIME MINISTER.





# I Will 'Climb Up, Just as a Stag Does'

AS TOLD BY FRANCESCO ABBAITEMARCO

**I**N 1962, in a small town in the region of Basilicata, Italy, my life almost ended the day it began. My mother had a difficult delivery, and the doctor injected medications that had serious side effects. Three days later, convulsions shook my tiny body. My arms and legs were paralyzed, and my vocal cords damaged.

As I grew to adulthood, frustration with my physical condition overwhelmed me. I became irritable and often lashed out at the people around me. I felt excluded from the whole world, and nothing gave my life meaning. By the time I was 25, I was an emotional wreck. Not understanding why God allowed me to suffer so much, I came to a conclusion that seemed plausible—that there is no God.

## A Different Outlook

One morning late in 1987, while I was sitting in my wheelchair outside, two well-dressed young men approached me. I assumed that they wanted to speak to my brother and told them, with much difficulty, that my brother was not at home. "But we want to speak with you," they replied. That was a surprise because few people were interested in speaking with me.

"Do you believe in God?" they asked. I answered brusquely, "In my condition, how can I?" We started a conversation, and I found out that they were Jehovah's Witnesses. They of-

fered me a book entitled *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?*\* which I accepted with reluctance. They said that they would return. I hoped that they would not.

The two Witnesses returned as they had promised, and we resumed our conversation. I remember the Bible verses they read to me, Isaiah 35:5, 6: "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." Those words were beautiful but so different from the reality of my life. I couldn't even stand up, let alone climb up like a stag. In any event, I agreed to study the Bible with them, but I did not believe that the Bible would help me with my problems now. As far as being free of my infirmities one day, that hope seemed unrealistic.

After a while, the Witnesses invited me to a meeting at their local Kingdom Hall. I do not remember what the Bible talk was about, but I will never forget the warmth and love that the Witnesses showed me. Instead of drenching me with pity, they made me feel truly welcome. That Sunday I knew that my place was at the Kingdom Hall, and I started to attend meetings regularly.

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

## A Mountain to Climb

The study of God's Word had an amazing effect on my heart. It was as if sap had started flowing again through a withered tree. I experienced feelings that I had thought were dead and buried. How wonderful to feel alive again! I felt the desire to tell others about the marvelous hope I was making my own. (Matthew 24:14) How, though, could I begin preaching? I made this desire a matter of intense prayer, asking Jehovah to show me a way.

In September 1991, a pioneer (a full-time evangelizer) was assigned to the congregation. One day at his house, I confided to him my desire to preach. I could not speak well, so we discussed my using a typewriter to write letters. My paralyzed arms were an obstacle. With the pioneer's help, I tried many methods. I tried holding a pencil with my teeth and hitting the keys with it. Then, I tried using a helmet with a stick attached and moved my head to strike the keys. Nothing seemed to work.

Later, as we were discussing the problem, that same pioneer jokingly said: "You have a very nice nose." I immediately tried hitting the keys with my nose and found that it worked. Finally, I was able to write. Imagine the effort it took to correct spelling errors with my nose! Soon we realized that using a computer would be much easier. But how could I get the money to buy one? I waited for the right moment and then spoke to my parents. Shortly thereafter, I was using a computer to write letters.

## My Desire Fulfilled

I first wrote to friends and relatives, then to people who lived in my town and in surrounding towns. Soon I was corresponding with people all over Italy. It is difficult to describe the joy I felt every time I received a reply to a letter. In December 1991, I was



**Preparing for a congregation meeting by using my nose to type**

approved as an unbaptized publisher of the good news. I also enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School, a school held weekly in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. When I received an assignment to give a talk, I carefully prepared it at home using my computer. At the meeting, a friend would go to the platform and read what I had prepared.

Ever grateful for the love that Jehovah was showing me, I knew my next steps of spiritual progress would be to dedicate my life to God and get baptized. I mustered up courage and spoke to my parents about my decision. They were not happy, but my desire to get baptized was stronger than my fear. With the support of Jehovah and my fellow Witnesses, I was baptized in August 1992. How happy I was to have my brother and my sister-in-law attend my baptism!

## Changes in My Thinking

As the principles contained in God's Word gradually became clearer to me, I saw a need to change negative personality traits. I realized that as a result of my physical condition, I had become possessive and selfish. I had to struggle to get rid of those flaws. I needed to be humbler and to fight my constant frustration over having to depend on others.

I also worked to stop feeling sorry for myself and considering myself a victim. I began enjoying the funny side of certain situations.

One day as I was preaching from house to house, a little girl opened the door. One of the Witnesses with me asked her if her parents were at home. The little girl shouted, "Mommy, there are two men and a sick man at the door." On seeing me, the mother was so embarrassed that she didn't know what to say. One of my friends said: "Actually, we are two sick men and a healthy one." We all smiled, and a good conversation ensued.

### The Desire to Serve More Fully

After my baptism I served as an auxiliary pioneer for nine months, spending 60 hours monthly in the preaching work. Yet, I wanted to do more. Soon I began service as a regular pioneer, dedicating even more time to the preaching work. The first few months of pioneer service were hard. Many people thought I was at their door asking for money, and this embarrassed me and the Witnesses who accompanied me.

In addition, many in the congregation had difficulty understanding my speech and were not sure how best to help me. But with Jehovah's help and the unselfish assistance of my spiritual brothers and sisters, in time the situation improved. People now think of me not just as a man in a wheelchair but as one of Jehovah's Witnesses who tries to help others learn of God's purposes.

In July 1994, I was able to attend a special two-week training course for pioneer ministers. There, we studied the Scriptural principles that guide the preaching and disciple-making work. We also received practical training in the ministry. I had to overcome obstacles in order to attend, since the school was held about 40 miles away from where I live. It was impossible for me to spend the night away from home, so the Witnesses took turns taking me to the school in the morning and home in the evening. At lunchtime one of them carried me up to the second floor, where we all ate together.

### A Big Responsibility

In March 2003, I was appointed as a congregation elder. That assignment has required that I work hard in behalf of others. Now I more fully understand what Jesus meant when he said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) I work along with a marvelous body of elders, and they have helped me settle into my role. I feel appreciated by the whole congregation—especially the young ones—and they include me in their activities. They see how I have overcome obstacles to serve Jehovah, and many ask me for help in facing their own problems.

I have learned that a person's physical condition is not the crucial factor in happiness. Rather, what matters is having Jehovah's approval and doing his will. I am particularly grateful to him for the wonderful hope of soon being rid of my wheelchair. Yes, I look forward to 'climbing up just as a stag does' and to serving the true God for all eternity.

—Isaiah 35:5, 6.



**People now  
think of me not  
just as a man in a  
wheelchair but as  
one of Jehovah's  
Witnesses who  
tries to help  
others learn  
of God's  
purposes**

# How can I help those in need?



*"I'm hoping that when I leave school, I can get a job as an electrician. I want to help build Kingdom Halls."—Tristan, 14.*

*"I am donating 20 dollars for the new printing press. It's my allowance money, but I want to give it to you."—Abby, 9.*

**I**N AN era when some are quick to label youths as self-centered, many young ones—including those quoted above—are proving to be just the opposite. Among Jehovah's Witnesses, many young men and women use their time, energy, and resources to serve others. (Psalm 110:3) Consider some further examples.

Shortly after his grandmother died, seven-year-old Jirah in Australia received a gift of \$50 from his grandfather. What did Jirah do with the money? At the next congregation meeting, he put the entire amount into the donation box. Why? "I have enough toys, but I had only one grandma," Jirah explained to his mother. "I know that Grandma would

have wanted me to donate this money, because she loved Jehovah very much."

Five-year-old Hannah from the United States loves horses. She wanted to buy a toy horse, which cost \$75. In an effort to teach her the value of saving, Hannah's parents occasionally gave her money to put into a piggy bank. Soon Hannah had more than enough money to purchase the horse.

About that time, however, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. Hannah was concerned about the victims, so she decided to donate her entire savings—more than \$100—to help them. Hannah wrote to the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses: "I want to give this money to you because I love

## WHY LEARN TO GIVE?

*"Watching my parents use their time and energy to serve Jehovah and their neighbors made me want to live my life the same way. My father told me: 'No matter how small it may be, whatever you do for Jehovah lasts forever. Jehovah lives forever, and he will remember it forever. But living just for yourself is in vain. When you die, what you did dies with you.'"—Kentaro, 24, Japan.*

*"To be honest, the last thing I wanted to do was help elderly people with chores around the house on a Saturday afternoon. I just wanted to have fun, to be with my peers. When I did spend time with elderly ones, though, I actually enjoyed it. Then I got to know them as people who are like me, who also had been young at one time. This motivated me to help them."—John, 27, England.*

*"When I was younger, I shared in Kingdom Hall cleaning and many other activities. I also enjoyed doing physical work for others in the congregation. When you help someone, you see the joy it brings them. For example, I once went with some others to put up wallpaper in an elderly sister's apartment. How happy she was! When you make someone happy, you become happy too."*

*—Hermann, 23, France.*



Jehovah and I want to help." Does Jehovah see such acts of generosity? The Bible says: "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Hebrews 13:16.

A young girl named Tiffany, also from the United States, contacted the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses after two hurricanes hit Florida in 2004. "My brother Timothy and I would like to donate \$110," she wrote. "Our house did not receive too much damage, but we saw what the storms did to other houses. We wanted to help, so we started to save our money. Timothy got \$10 for helping to rip out drywall from a house, and I was able to save \$100." Tiffany is 13 years of age, and her broth-

er Timothy is just 7! What happens when we put others' interests ahead of our own? Proverbs 11:25 states: "The one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."

A group of Witness youths in the United States, ranging in age from 4 to 15, heard that their fellow believers in Africa needed Kingdom Halls. So they decided to take action. "We sold cookies and muffins at a yard sale, and we earned \$106.54. We told people that the money may be used for meeting places in Africa where people could learn about the Bible. Many responded. It took us nine hours, but it was worth the effort—it was for Jehovah!"



**Many young people donate money to help victims of disaster**

## You Can Help

The youths whose experiences appear above have learned the truth of Jesus' statement: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) You too can discover the joy of giving. In what ways?

Have you heard reports of fellow believers in need? For example, has there been a natural disaster? Try to imagine what it would be like to lose your home, your possessions, or even a loved one in death. The apostle Paul wrote that Christians should be "keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just [their] own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Philippians 2:4) Even if you live far away from where a natural disaster has occurred, perhaps you can make a donation that would help in the relief effort carried out by Jehovah's Witnesses.\*

There are other ways you can assist those in need. For instance, if you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses, why not look around your Kingdom Hall? Are there any elderly ones or others who could use a helping hand? Can you help them with chores? The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) When you see there is a need, then, take the initiative. Be willing to perform even menial tasks. And remember that serving others is closely linked to serving God. The Bible says: "He that is showing favor

\* Donations for a specific relief effort are gratefully accepted. However, it is preferred that such donations be made to the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses, since monies are drawn from this fund as the need arises.

### TO THINK ABOUT

- Can you think of someone who could use a helping hand?
- What can you do to help?

to the lowly one is lending to Jehovah, and his treatment He will repay to him."—Proverbs 19:17.

Of course, the greatest way you can help others is by sharing what you know about



**"Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Hebrews 13:16**

God's Word, the Bible, with them. Jesus said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Now more than ever, people need to hear the lifesaving message of truth from the Bible. So continue to have a regular and zealous share in the preaching work, confident that "your labor is not in vain."—1 Corinthians 15:58.



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

# A Child's Faith



DUSTIN began to sit in on some of his mother's Bible studies with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although only 11 years of age, he was a deep thinker and posed many thoughtful questions. Soon he asked for his own Bible study with the former missionary who studied with his mother. He also began sharing what he was learning with his schoolmates.

Dustin started attending meetings at the local Kingdom Hall, even sharing in answering questions when audience participation was called for. When he and his younger siblings visited his father, the father insisted that they all attend church together. Dustin explained why he preferred to go to the Kingdom Hall. His father acquiesced and said that he would allow Dustin to go there.

One evening after attending a meeting at the Kingdom Hall, Dustin's mother could not find him. Without telling her, he had approached the Theocratic Ministry School overseer and had asked about enrolling in the school. His mother agreed. Excitedly he looked forward to his first talk assignment. At the same time, however, he began to have severe pain in his hip, and he was thus taken to various doctors for examination. Finally, the big night for Dustin's talk at the Kingdom Hall arrived. By then, he was using crutches. Although it was obvious that he was in pain, he walked without them to the platform.

**Top:** Dustin, while still in good health

**Bottom:** Dustin getting baptized at 12 1/2 years of age

*"I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith."—2 Timothy 4:7*

Shortly afterward, Dustin was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. He spent most of the following year in the children's hospital in San Diego, California. Chemotherapy, radiation, and ultimately the amputation of his right leg and pelvic bone never diminished his strong faith and his love for Jehovah. When he was too weak to read, his mother, who rarely left his side, read aloud to him.

Even though Dustin's condition worsened, he never complained. He kept busy, moving around in his wheelchair encouraging other patients and their parents, including a Witness patient. The hospital staff could see that Dustin and that Witness youth were different—that their faith was sustaining them.

Dustin wanted to be baptized. So while he lay on a sofa, too weak to sit up, Christian elders considered with him the questions used for baptismal candidates of Jehovah's Witnesses. On October 16, 2004, at 12 and a half years of age, Dustin was baptized at a circuit assembly.

As the baptism talk was about to begin, Dustin was wheeled down the aisle to take his place with the other baptism candidates. When asked to stand, Dustin stood up on his one leg, dressed in his best suit, holding on to the arm of the chair for support. He answered the baptismal questions in a loud and clear voice. All of Dustin's family were in attendance, including his biological father and stepmother. Hospital personnel and parents

of other cancer-stricken children from the hospital were present as well.

The day after Dustin's baptism, he was readmitted to the hospital. The cancer had already spread to every bone in his body. As he grew weaker and sensed that he was dying, he asked his mother if this was the case. "Why do you ask?" she responded, "are you afraid to die?"

"No," he said. "I'll just close my eyes, and when I open them in the resurrection, it will seem like I just closed them a second ago. I won't be in pain anymore." Then he explained, "I'm just worried about my family."

Dustin died the following month. His funeral service was attended by doctors, nurses, the families of hospital employees, teachers, neighbors and, of course, Dustin's family—both those who were Jehovah's Witnesses and those who were not. Dustin requested that all who attended his memorial service be given a good witness about his beliefs. The Theocratic Ministry School instructor, who had assigned him the only student talk he had been able to give, delivered a fine, faith-strengthening discourse to a standing-room-only crowd.

Two of Dustin's favorite scriptures were printed out for those who attended his memorial—Matthew 24:14 and 2 Timothy 4:7. His strong faith and integrity encouraged all who knew him. We look forward to welcoming him back in the resurrection.—*As told by the Witness who studied with Dustin.*



- 4. About 940 B.C.E. 5. Jezebel. 6. Micah. —Micah 5:2.
- ♦ Elijah. 2. From 778 B.C.E. 3. About 844 B.C.E.
- ♦ During the Transfiguration vision—Matthew 17:1-3.
- ♦ Fasted for 40 days; Jehovah disposed of his body.
- 7. Called out of Egypt Escaped execution as a baby.

# Do Humans Become Angels When They Die?



A LITTLE girl named Argyro died when she was only seven years of age. Grief-stricken, her parents looked down at her as she lay in a coffin, dressed in white. In an effort to offer solace, the minister told them: "God wanted another angel, and He took little Argyro to be with him. Now her soul flutters around the Almighty's throne."

Many people cherish the belief that angels are the souls of deceased humans, although few religions officially endorse the notion. The media has popularized this concept in movies and television series about dead people who 'earn their wings' as angels by helping and protecting the living.

Can you, in truth, expect your loved ones to become angels at death? What does the Bible teach on this matter? To answer, let us first review what the Holy Scriptures really say about the nature of angels and the actual condition of the dead.

## Angels—Unique Creations

Angels are invisible, powerful servants of God who reside in the spirit realm. Their existence is independent of that of humans. Angels are spirits created by God. The Bible says: "Let [the angels] praise the name of Jehovah; for he himself commanded, and they were created."—Psalm 148:2, 5.

The Bible reveals that many millions of faithful celestial creatures, including seraphs and cherubs, obediently serve in specialized roles according to their rank and assign-

ments. (Psalm 103:20, 21; Isaiah 6:1-7; Daniel 7:9, 10) Did humans have to die in order for God to bring all those angels into existence? In fact, that is quite impossible. Why?

The Bible shows that the angels were created long before humans. When Jehovah created the planet that humans would much later inhabit, the angels—referred to poetically as morning stars—"joyfully cried out together and began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4-7) So they were in existence for aeons before man appeared on earth.

Moreover, angels and humans differ greatly in their nature and their place in Jehovah's purpose.\* God created man "a little lower than angels," so those spirit creatures are rightly considered superhuman, with greater mental capacities and power. (Hebrews 2:7) The "proper dwelling place" of angels is the heavens. (Jude 6) As to humans, God's original purpose was for man to live forever

\* The term "angel," which literally means "messenger," can at times have a broad meaning, including various spirit creatures and even human servants of God. In this article, however, we refer to those spirit creatures whom the Bible commonly calls angels.

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Is There a Creator?
- Does Science Contradict the Genesis Account?
- How Can I Defend My Belief in Creation?

on earth. (Genesis 1:28; 2:17; Psalm 37:29) If the first human couple had been obedient to God, they would never have died. From the beginning, then, humans and angels have enjoyed very different places in God's purpose.

### What Happens at Death?

Other important questions we need to examine are: What happens to humans who die? Do they continue existing but in another form, perhaps as angels in the spirit realm? The Bible has this simple and clear answer: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) So at death humans cease to exist. The dead know, feel, and experience absolutely nothing.

Is there hope for the dead? Yes! The Bible shows that the hope for most humans who have died is to be resurrected. The vast majority of the dead are to be raised to life as humans on a paradise earth.—Luke 23:43; John 5:28.

A few humans have the hope of being resurrected to life in heaven. Their number is small—144,000 in all. However, these 144,000 are quite distinct from those creatures commonly called angels. For example, the 144,000 rule as immortal kings and priests with Christ. They have authority as judges. (1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 20:6) Are they babies who have died? No. They are followers of Christ who have been fully tested and tried! —Luke 22:28, 29.

Consider, too, the contrast between dead humans and living angels. Whereas deceased humans "are conscious of nothing at all," angels have full consciousness, feelings, and personal will. They are free moral agents. (Gene-

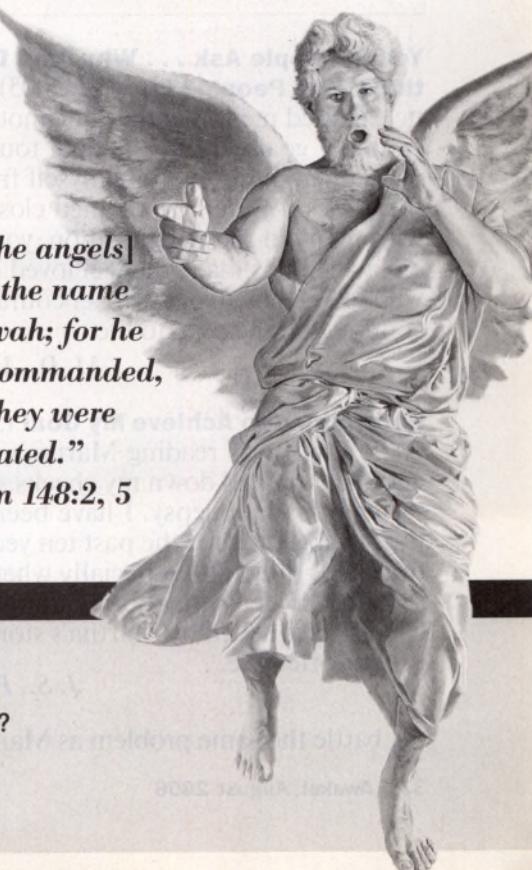
sis 6:2, 4; Psalm 146:4; 2 Peter 2:4) The dead are described as "impotent," or powerless, while angels are "mighty in power." (Isaiah 26:14; Psalm 103:20) And while human descendants of Adam die as a result of sin and imperfection, God-fearing angels are perfect, enjoying a fully approved standing before Jehovah.—Matthew 18:10.

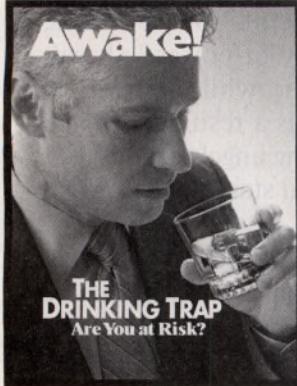
The idea that angels are the souls of deceased humans might make for imaginative TV programs or movies, but the notion finds no support in the Scriptures. The Bible truths set forth above help us to avoid any misconception about the fate of our loved ones who die. And the Bible assures us that faithful angels—separately created, powerful servants of God—are superior to humans and are always ready to do Jehovah's will. Happily, God's will includes using the angels to watch over and assist those who sincerely respect Jehovah and seek to serve him.—Psalm 34:7.

**"Let [the angels] praise the name of Jehovah; for he himself commanded, and they were created."**  
**—Psalm 148:2, 5**

### HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Are your deceased loved ones now angels serving God in heaven?  
—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.
- Do children die because God wants to have more angels around him?  
—Job 34:10.
- Can the dead return to protect the living?—Isaiah 26:14.





**The Drinking Trap—Are You at Risk?** (October 8, 2005) I have read many letters from readers who said: "That article came at just the right time." I never expected to feel that way myself, but that is exactly what I told myself as I read this cover series. For some time I was uneasy about my daily consumption of alcohol, even though it had not led to drunkenness. Then this series came. After reading about the dangers, I felt it was time to throw off the fetters of this problem.

**K. W., Germany**

This series mentioned the experience of Hilario, who drank for 30 years and who had "many relapses." He stated that those in the congregation "were always by my side to give me encouragement."

But should he not have been reproved or even expelled from the Christian congregation?

**R. L., United States**

*"Awake!" responds: The brief description of Hilario's experience does not state at what point during his 30-year struggle with alcohol he actually became a baptized Christian. Nor does it state if he was ever reproved by congregation elders. The article does state that Hilario was given "timely Bible counsel," which occasionally is done in a judicial setting. Dealing with alcoholism sometimes involves relapses, as it did in Hilario's case. As to how such matters are handled when a baptized Christian is involved, please see "The Watchtower," May 1, 1983, pages 8-11.*

**Young People Ask . . . Why Am I Drawn to the Wrong People?** (July 22, 2005) This article helped me to see that I cannot be divided in my goals. It put the final touch on my determination to separate myself from bad associations. I have now formed close bonds with many in the congregation, young and old, which has made me feel loved by those who love Jehovah and who encourage me to continue on the path to life.

**M. D., Mexico**

**Determined to Achieve My Goal** (June 22, 2005) As I was reading Martha's experience, tears rolled down my cheeks. I too have suffered from epilepsy. I have been a full-time evangelizer for the past ten years, and at times it is difficult—especially when I have a seizure. My determination not to give up has been strengthened by Martha's story. It greatly comforted me.

**J. S., Poland**

I battle the same problem as Martha. After

reading her story, I have also begun to take precautions with food. For more than ten years, I allowed epilepsy to keep me from serving Jehovah more fully. But almost three years ago, I decided to become a full-time evangelizer, and I have no regrets. May Jehovah bless you for publishing such encouraging experiences!

**B.C.C., Brazil**

What encouraged me the most about this article was the fact that Martha never gave up. I was comforted in that even though she had to interrupt her service, she had a balanced attitude and confidence that Jehovah is pleased with our whole-souled service.

**S. H., Japan**

I have been confronted with a situation similar to Martha's, and I have to recognize my limits. Like Martha, I have been able to serve as a full-time evangelizer. So her story was very encouraging to me.

**F. G., Switzerland**

## WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES?

**1.** Among the events listed here, circle only those that happened to both Moses and Jesus.

- Called out of Egypt
- Escaped execution as a baby
- Provided water from a rock
- Fasted for 40 days
- Raised the dead
- Hung on a stake
- Jehovah disposed of his body

♦ When, in vision, did Moses stand next to Jesus?

♦ Who else appeared with him?

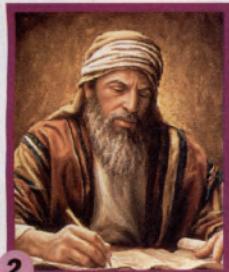
**■ For Discussion:**

In what other ways was Jesus a prophet like Moses?

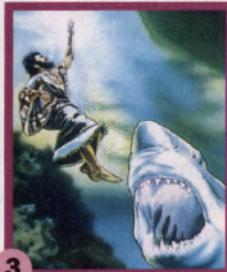
—Acts 3:22.

## WHEN IN HISTORY?

Draw a line connecting each event to the year it happened.



**2**  
Isaiah 1:1



**3**  
Jonah 1:14-17



**4**  
1 Kings 17:2, 3

1077  
B.C.E.

About  
940

From 778  
About 844

From 322

(Answers on page 27)

## FROM THIS ISSUE

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

**Page 11** Why does God view blood as sacred? (Genesis 9:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 13** How many people could a first-century Galilean fishing boat carry? (John 21:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 24** What happens when we put others' interests ahead of our own? (Proverbs 11:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 29** How do we know that dead humans are not living as angels in heaven? (Ecclesiastes 9:\_\_\_\_)

**WHO AM I?**

**5.** My daughter killed her relatives and seized the throne of Judah. But like me, she was a queen who came to a violent end.

**WHO AM I?**

**6.** I foretold the birthplace of the Messiah.

## Children's Picture Search

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



# "It Is Fabulous!"

"It is such an easy read, the illustrations are incredibly effective, the appendix for additional information is just great, and the book really appeals to a person's heart. It is fabulous!"

—John and Paula.

"*What Does the Bible Really Teach?* is absolutely breathtaking in its clarity and simplicity! Surely it will motivate new Bible students to throw off all the things that impede their progress toward serving Jehovah with a complete heart. Perhaps you can tell that I am thrilled with the book far more than words can express."—Joe.

"You have captured what people are really thinking, what is really going on in their minds. And you have given all the answers from God's Word, the Bible."—Robert.

"It is absolutely beautiful and is written with easy-to-understand sentences and beautiful explanations. It is bound to reach many hearts."—Norma.

