

Awake!

June 8, 1999



HOPE
for the Disabled



Hope for the Disabled 3-10

Thousands of people each year suffer the tragedy of losing a limb. What are some of the factors that could put you at risk?

Is it possible for disabled ones to live happy, productive lives?



You Have Value in God's Eyes! 11

Do you ever battle feelings of low self-worth? Knowing how our Creator views you will be of great comfort.



Rescue From the Killer Storm! 14

Read the thrilling story of how Christians helped victims of one of this century's most devastating storms
—Hurricane Mitch.

Loss of a Limb —Could It Happen to You?	3
Loss of a Limb —How You Can Reduce the Risk	4
Quality Life Without a Limb	6
When All Disabilities Will Disappear	9
Crossword Puzzle	21
Coffee, Tea, or Guarana?	22
The Elusive Paperless Office	24
Watching the World	28
From Our Readers	30
'How Does Your Work Benefit the Community?'	31
Millions Will Be Going—Will You?	32

Loss of a Limb

COULD IT HAPPEN TO YOU?

Benjamin was outside enjoying the spring sunshine that warmed the city of Sarajevo when he stepped on a land mine. His left leg was blown off.

"I tried to get up," recalled Benjamin. "I couldn't." Benjamin is just one of the 20,000 people a year who are killed or maimed by land mines.

ANGOLA is littered with as many as 15 million land mines—more than one for every man, woman, and child in the country. Angola now has 70,000 people who have suffered limb loss. With its eight million to ten million sown land mines, Cambodia has the highest percentage in the world of persons who have lost limbs—an estimated 1 out of every 236. Bosnia and Herzegovina reportedly contains over three million mines—152 per square mile.

But it is not only in war-torn lands that people suffer limb loss. For example, there are about 400,000 sufferers of limb loss in the United States. Among most of the adults in that number, the loss of a limb is the result of a chronic condition loosely termed “peripheral vascular disease,” or PVD. This is a general term covering a number of disorders. *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* defines PVD as an imprecise term covering “diseases of the arteries and veins of

the extremities, esp[ecially] those conditions that interfere with adequate flow of blood to or from the extremities.” A leading cause of PVD is diabetes. According to *The World Health Report 1998*, “diabetes cases in adults will more than double globally from 143 million in 1997 to 300 million by 2025.”

In the United States, trauma—including accidents involving vehicles, machinery, power tools, and firearms—is the second leading cause of limb loss, accounting for 20 to 30 percent of all amputations. Other causes of limb loss include tumors (about 6 percent) and birth defects (about 4 percent).

The thought of losing a precious limb is unsettling, to say the least. Is there any way of reducing that risk? And if you have already suffered the loss of a limb, how can you enjoy a good quality of life? The following articles discuss these and other questions.

Loss of a Limb

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK

MOST cases of limb loss can be prevented! And that is true even for people who suffer from peripheral vascular disease (PWD). As mentioned in the previous article, PWD is often the result of diabetes.* Happily, diabetes can often be controlled.

"Diet is the cornerstone of diabetic treatment whether or not insulin is prescribed," says *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Dr. Marcel Bayol, of Kings County Hospital in New York City, told *Awake!*: "If diabetics take their condition seriously, watch their diet, and submit to medical supervision, they will reduce their risk of having to lose a lower limb." Type II diabetics who follow this advice may even see their symptoms improve in time.[#]

* Vascular problems in the lower extremities can also be triggered or exacerbated if a person wears tight clothing on the lower body or ill-fitting shoes or sits (especially with his legs crossed) or stands for long periods of time.

[#] People with Type I diabetes are prescribed daily insulin injections. Those with Type II diabetes (non-insulin-dependent diabetes) can often control their condition by diet and exercise. In the United States, 95 percent of diabetics have Type II diabetes.

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is 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.

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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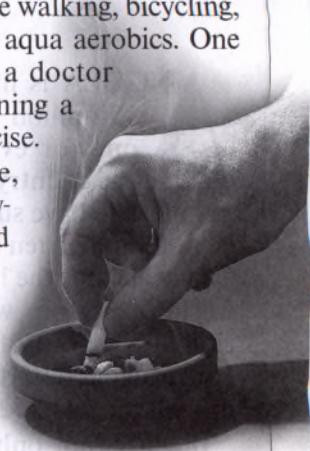
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Exercise Is Vital

Exercise is also important. It helps the body maintain glucose, or sugar, levels within the normal range. When PVD is in evidence, exercise helps maintain vital strength, flexibility, and blood flow to damaged areas. Exercise also helps to minimize intermittent claudication—the pain PVD sufferers may feel in their calf muscles when they walk or exercise. However, such ones should avoid exercises that stress and jar their legs. More suitable exercises include walking, bicycling, rowing, swimming, and aqua aerobics. One should always consult a doctor before dieting or beginning a special program of exercise.

Smoking, of course, should be taboo to anyone who wants good

Smoking greatly increases the risk of loss of a limb, especially for those with vascular disease



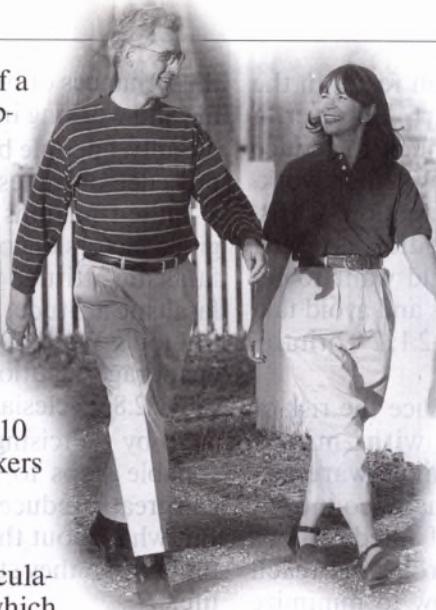
Awake!

health. PVD is just one of a long list of medical problems that smoking either causes or aggravates. "Smoking is a big factor in amputations, especially when the smoker has diabetes and PVD," said Dr. Bayol. How big a factor? A rehabilitation guide for amputees says that "amputation is 10 times higher among smokers than non-smokers."

Care for Sick Limbs

PVD can decrease circulation to the lower limbs, which can bring on a condition called neuropathy—a deadening, or numbing, of the nerves. Limbs then become vulnerable to injury, even while a person is simply resting in bed. For example, because he cannot feel any pain, a sufferer could receive a serious burn if his electric blanket or heating pad were to overheat! For this reason, manufacturers caution diabetics to be careful when using these products.

Sick limbs are also more prone to infection. Just a small scratch can lead to ulcers, even gangrene. So foot care is vital, and this includes wearing comfortable, well-fitting shoes and keeping legs and feet clean and dry. Many hospitals have foot clinics



Suitable exercise and a good diet promote a healthy vascular system

that educate patients in foot care.

When PVD has advanced to the point that surgical intervention is required, surgeons will usually try to avoid amputation. One alternate procedure is balloon angioplasty. A vascular surgeon inserts a catheter with a balloon tip. The balloon is inflated, which then stretches the constricted artery. Another option is bypass surgery—the replacement of badly diseased blood vessels with vessels taken from another part of the body.

Barbara, who is 54 years old, has endured Type I diabetes since the age of four. After she gave birth to her first child, she developed PVD in her feet. Some doctors advised her to have them amputated. However, Barbara found a reputable vascular surgeon who used angioplasty to improve blood circulation to her feet. Angioplasty worked for a time, but eventually Barbara needed a bypass, which was successful. Barbara now takes meticulous care of her feet.

Avoid Trauma

Trauma is the second leading cause of limb loss. Less discriminate in its choice

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of body members, trauma can result in the destruction of any body part. However, a godly view of life can do much to reduce a person's risk of trauma. Whether working, driving, or enjoying recreation, Christians should treat their bodies as a gift from God. Thus, they would want to respect all safety requirements and avoid taking foolish risks.—Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

What is being done to reduce the risk of trauma in lands sown with mines? Government-sponsored mine-awareness programs are in place in many countries. According to a report of the United Nations secretary-general, these programs teach “populations at risk . . . how to minimize

their chances of becoming victims while living and working in mined areas.”

Sadly, “people become accustomed to the presence of mines and grow careless,” says a United Nations report. “Sometimes religious factors encourage [people] to adopt a fatalistic attitude towards such dangers.” A fatalistic attitude, however, finds no support in God’s Word. On the contrary, the Bible encourages caution and safety.—Deuteronomy 22:8; Ecclesiastes 10:9.

So by exercising caution and taking reasonable steps to protect your health, you can greatly reduce your risk of losing a limb. But what about those who have already lost limbs? Can they still enjoy a good quality of life?

Quality Life Without a Limb

CLIMBER is back on top.” So declared one newspaper when Tom Whittaker reached the top of Mount Everest. Many have ascended that lofty peak before, but Tom Whittaker was the first amputee to do so! Whittaker lost his foot in a traffic accident. But an artificial foot, a prosthesis, made it possible for him to resume his sport. Similar devices are allowing thousands of other amputees to enjoy a high quality of life. In fact, it is no longer unusual to see amputees sprinting, playing basketball, or riding bicycles.

Modern prostheses make life much more enjoyable for many disabled people

Early versions of artificial legs and hands were crude wooden pegs and iron hooks. But improvements came as wars left thousands mutilated. Not surprisingly, it is an army surgeon—16th-century Frenchman Ambroise Paré—who is credited with introducing the

first generation of true prostheses. Today’s prosthetic devices utilize hydraulics, sophisticated knee joints, flexible carbon-fiber feet, silicone, plastics, and other high-tech products that enable many people to walk and move more naturally and comfortably than was ever dreamed possible. Advances in microelectronics allow artificial arms and hands to be manipulated more naturally.



Photo courtesy of RGP Prosthetics

Prostheses have also improved in appearance. Modern artificial limbs incorporate fingers and toes, and some even appear to have veins. In fact, a female model who lost a leg because of cancer was fitted with a prosthesis so natural looking that she was able to continue her modeling career.

Mental Attitude Is Important

Nevertheless, mental-health expert Ellen Winchell cautions: "When you undergo a personal crisis such as amputation, you are profoundly challenged on every plane of your being—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual." Consider William, who lost a leg to gangrene following an injury. He says: "One of the keys to overcoming any challenge in life is our mental attitude. I have never viewed my disability as a liability. Instead, I have kept a positive outlook regarding any setbacks that I have had since my accident." Ellen Winchell, herself an amputee, concurs, saying that people with a positive outlook are likely to adjust better to limb loss than pessimistic people. As the Bible says, "a heart that is joyful does good as a curer." —Proverbs 17:22.

Awake! spoke with a number of Christians who have adapted well to losing a limb. Most suggested that amputees avoid being overly self-conscious or secretive about their disabilities. "It would bother me more if others had the feeling that this was one of those forbidden subjects," said Dell, who lost his left leg below the knee. "To me, that just makes everyone uneasy." Some experts recommend that if your right hand is missing and you are introduced to someone, you should go ahead

and initiate a handshake with your left hand. And if someone inquires about your prosthesis, tell him about it. Your being at ease helps the other person to relax. Usually, the conversation will soon drift to other topics.

There is "a time to laugh." (Ecclesiastes 3: 4b) One woman who lost a hand says: 'Most of all, keep your sense of humor alive! We must always remember that our attitude about ourselves largely determines the world's attitude toward us.'

"A Time to Weep"

After losing his leg, Dell initially said to himself, "This is it. My life is over." Florindo and Floriano both lost limbs to land mines in Angola. Florindo says that he cried for three days and nights. Floriano similarly had a battle with his emotions. "I was only 25," he writes. "One day I could do everything, and the next day I couldn't even stand up. I was depressed and discouraged."

There is "a time to weep." (Ecclesiastes 3: 4a) And it is only natural to go through a period of grieving when you have suffered a serious loss. (Compare Judges 11:37; Ecclesiastes 7:1-3.) "The way out of grieving is by going through it," writes Ellen Winchell. Expressing one's feelings to an empathetic listener is often quite helpful. (Proverbs 12: 25) But grieving does not go on forever. Some individuals may temporarily become more volatile emotionally, critical, anxious, or withdrawn after the trauma of limb loss. However, these feelings usually subside. If they do not, clinical depression may have set in—a malady generally requiring medical intervention. Family members and friends should be alert to any



Grieving Is a normal reaction to serious loss

signs that their loved one is in need of such help.*

W. Mitchell, who is paralyzed in both legs, writes: "We all need people who care. Almost anything can be borne if one feels surrounded by a network of friends and family, whereas a minor setback can derail a person who is trying to muscle through life alone. And friendships don't just happen, they must be actively started and actively maintained, or they wither."—Compare Proverbs 18:24.

Quality Living, Without a Limb

In spite of their disability, many with missing limbs lead quality lives. Russell, for example, was born with only the top part of his left leg. At 78 years of age, he still exercises regularly and lives a full life, although now he uses a walking stick. Cheerful by nature, Russell confessed that his long-standing nickname is Happy.

Douglas, who lost a leg in World War II, walks with the aid of a modern prosthesis. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he has enjoyed serving as a regular pioneer, a full-time evangelizer, for six years. And do you recall Dell, who thought that his life was over when he lost his leg?

* See the article "How to Help Depressed Ones Regain Joy," in the March 15, 1990, issue of *The Watchtower*.

Many disabled people enjoy a quality life

Phantom Pain

Phantom limb sensation refers to the very real feeling that the missing limb is still present. It is the normal feeling that amputees have after surgery, and it is so real that a booklet for amputees says: "Be aware of phantom sensation when getting out of a bed or chair without your prosthesis. Always look down to remind yourself that your foot is absent." One patient who had lost both her legs went to stand up to shake her doctor's hand but, instead, fell on the floor!

Another problem is phantom limb pain. This is the actual pain that is perceived as coming from the removed limb. The intensity, type, and duration of phantom pain varies from person to person. Happily, both phantom sensation and phantom pain usually decrease with time.

He too lives a satisfying life as a pioneer, and he is able to support himself.

How, though, do victims of limb loss fare in poor or war-torn lands? Says the World Health Organization: "The reality today is that only a small percentage of people with disabilities get assistance." Many have to rely on canes and crude crutches to get around. Nonetheless, sometimes help is available. Floriano and Florindo, the Angolan land-mine victims, both obtained prostheses through the International Red Cross and the Swiss government. Floriano happily serves as a ministerial servant in the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and Florindo serves as an elder and full-time evangelizer.

An association that cares for the disabled puts it well when it states: "The only handicapped people are those who have lost heart!" Interestingly, the Bible has played a big role in giving disabled ones heart.

"Learning Bible truth while I was recovering helped me tremendously," says Dell. Similarly, Russell says: "My Bible-based hope has always helped me through difficulties." Just what hope does the Bible hold out for disabled ones?



When All Disabilities Will Disappear

A QUADRIPLEGIC once said that most people have only "temporarily abled bodies." How true that is, for sooner or later, physical flaws surface in all of us! Thus, there is a booming market for eyeglasses, contact lenses, dentures, hearing aids, electronic pacemakers, and knee implants. As Romans 8:22 says, "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now."

All of us can, therefore, be comforted by God's promise to restore obedient humans to perfect physical health in a righteous "new earth." (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) Says 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. . . . The lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."

The Bible foretells that “a great crowd” will survive the destruction of this present wicked system. (Revelation 7:9, 14; Psalm 37:10, 11, 29) No doubt soon after that destruction, those with serious disabilities and health problems will experience the *instantaneous repair* of their infirmities! (Isaiah 33:24) As a preview of the healing that will take place in God’s new earth, Jesus performed similar cures while he was on earth. (Compare Mark 5:25-29; 7:33-35.) One cannot even begin to describe the euphoria that people will feel and the tears of joy that will be shed as amputees discard their prostheses, crutches, and wheelchairs! Sound in body, they will then be able to shoulder their God-given assignment of assisting in transforming the earth into a paradise home.—Luke 23:43.

In the meantime, disabled ones today still have a struggle on their hands. Nelson, a disabled person in Canada, says: “When I start feeling sorry for myself, I think of Jesus’ words at Matthew 24:13: ‘He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.’” In spite of their limitations, disabled ones can be complete and sound in the most important way—spiritually—by enduring in the Christian faith.—James 1:3, 4.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have helped millions to embrace this faith. Dell, a disabled man quoted in the preceding article, says: “I cannot begin to express how I felt when I learned that physical problems like mine are really only temporary.” Yes, empowered by such a hope, Dell—and many others like him—can hardly be called handicapped.

Survivors of the coming destruction will enjoy miraculous healing of their infirmities



You Have Value in God's Eyes!

"I HAVE BEEN PLAGUED WITH FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS MOST OF MY LIFE," WROTE ONE CHRISTIAN WOMAN. "NO MATTER HOW MUCH I LOVE JEHOVAH OR HOW MUCH EFFORT I PUT FORTH TO SERVE HIM, I ALWAYS FEEL THAT IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH."

DO YOU know someone who struggles with deep feelings of inadequacy or unworthiness? Or do you have those feelings at times yourself? Such feelings are not uncommon, even among faithful worshipers of God. No one is immune to the effects of living in these "critical times hard to deal with." Many have experienced neglect and abuse from individuals who are "without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness"—traits that are prevalent in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Such painful experiences may leave deep emotional scars, causing feelings of utter worthlessness.

In other cases, negative feelings may be the result of people setting excessively high standards for themselves. Inability to reach these standards reinforces the feeling that they are just never good enough. Whatever the reason, those struggling with feelings of unworthiness may find it hard to see why God—or anyone else, for that matter—loves them. Indeed, they may even believe that they are simply unlovable.

But that is not how Jehovah God feels! In his

Word, Jehovah warns us to guard against the "deceptive tactics" of his Adversary, Satan the Devil. (Ephesians 6:11, *Jewish New Testament*) Satan uses his deceptive tactics to try to get us to stop worshiping our God. To that end, Satan encourages the feeling that we are worthless, that Jehovah could never find us lovable. But Satan is "a liar"—in fact, "the father of the lie." (John 8:44) Therefore, we must not be deceived by his deceptive tactics! In the Bible, Jehovah speaks for himself, reassuring us of our worth in his eyes.

A Balanced View of Our Worth

The Bible warns of the negative effect discouragement can have on us. Proverbs 24:10 states: "Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty." Prolonged negative feelings within us can rob us of strength, making us feel weak and vulnerable. You can be sure that Satan knows this well. It is difficult enough if our heart is plagued with feelings of unworthiness. However, when Satan attempts to exploit such feelings, it makes such a situation even more burdensome.



It is important, then, that we have a healthy, balanced view of our worth. "I tell everyone there among you," urged the apostle Paul, "not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind." (Romans 12:3) Another translation renders these words: "I would say to every one of you not to estimate himself above his real value, but to make a sober rating of himself." (*Charles B. Williams*) So the scripture encourages us to have a balanced view of ourselves. On the one hand, we must guard against arrogance; on the other, we should try not to go to the opposite extreme, for Paul implies that to have a sound mind, it is necessary to think *something* of ourselves. Yes, under divine inspiration Paul indicates that each of us has value in Jehovah's eyes.

A balanced sense of self-worth is also implicit in the words of Jesus when he said: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) The words "as yourself" indicate that we must have some feeling of self-worth, or self-respect. True, we have faults and make mistakes. But when we are striving to please God, are sorry about our shortcomings, and seek his forgiveness, we can still have some measure of self-worth. Our critical hearts might insist otherwise, but remember, "God is greater than our hearts." (1 John 3:20) In other words, Jehovah sees us in a way that may be quite different from the way we see ourselves.

Broken Hearts, Crushed Spirits

The psalmist David wrote: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." (Psalm 34:18) Commenting on this verse, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* notes: "It is the character of the righteous . . . that they are of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, that is, humbled for sin, and emptied of self; they are low in their own eyes, and have no confidence in their own merit."

Those who are "broken at heart" or "crushed in spirit" may feel that Jehovah is far away and that they are too insignificant for Jehovah to care about them. But that is not the case. David's words assure us that Jehovah does not abandon those who are "low in their own eyes." Our compassionate God knows that at such times we need him more than ever, and he is near.

Consider an example. Some years ago a mother rushed her two-year-old son to the hospital because he was suffering from a

Like a loving parent, Jehovah is near to those who are sad at heart

bad case of croup. After examining the boy, the doctors informed the mother that they would have to keep him in the hospital overnight. Where did the mother spend that night? In a chair in the hospital room, next to her son's bed. Her little boy was sick, and she just had to be near him. Surely we can expect even more from our loving heavenly Father, in whose image we are made! (Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 49:15) The touching words of Psalm 34:18 assure us that when we are "broken at heart," Jehovah, like a loving parent, "is near"—ever watchful, attentive, and ready to help.—Psalm 147:1, 3.

"You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows"

During the course of his earthly ministry, Jesus revealed much about Jehovah's thoughts and feelings, including how Jehovah feels about His earthly servants. More than once, Jesus assured his disciples of their value in Jehovah's eyes.—Matthew 6:26; 12:12.

For example, illustrating the individual worth of each of his disciples, Jesus said: "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31) Consider what those words must have meant to Jesus' first-century listeners.

Sparrows were evidently among the cheapest of all the birds used for food. These tiny birds were usually plucked, skewered on wooden sticks, and roasted like kabobs. Jesus had no doubt seen poor women in the marketplace counting out their coins to see how many sparrows they could purchase. The birds were counted as of so little worth that for a coin of small value (literally, an assarion, worth less than five cents), an individual could purchase two sparrows.

Jesus restated this illustration sometime later—but with a slight difference. According to Luke 12:6, Jesus said: "Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not?" Think about it. For one coin of small value, a purchaser got two sparrows. But if he was prepared to spend two coins, he got not four sparrows but *five*. The extra bird was thrown into the deal as if it had no value at all. "Yet," said Jesus, "not one of them [not even the one thrown into the bargain] goes forgotten before God." Applying the illustration,

If Jehovah does not forget the sparrow, how could he forget you?



Illustrated Natural History

Jesus concluded: "You are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7) How those words must have encouraged his listeners!

Do you get the point of Jesus' heartwarming illustration? If Jehovah considers even little birds to be of value, how much more must his earthly servants be dear to him! With Jehovah, none of us is lost in the crowd. Each of us is of such worth to Jehovah that he takes note of even the smallest detail about us—the very hairs of our heads are individually numbered.

Of course, Satan will continue to use his "deceptive tactics"—such as exploiting feelings of unworthiness—to get us to stop serving Jehovah. But do not let Satan win! Recall the Christian woman quoted at the outset. She was helped by an article in the *Watchtower* magazine that warned of Satan's efforts to exploit our feelings.* She says: "I never realized that Satan tries to use my feelings to discourage me. Knowing this gives me the motivation to fight these feelings. Now I can stand up to these satanic attacks, with my head held high."

Jehovah "knows all things." (1 John 3:20) Yes, he knows what we are enduring now. He also knows what we have experienced in the past that may have crushed our self-respect. Remember, it is Jehovah's view of us that counts! No matter how unlovable or worthless we may think we are, Jehovah reassures us that each of his servants is of value to him. We can take Jehovah at his word, for, unlike his Adversary, God "cannot lie."—Titus 1:2.

* See the article "You Are Precious in God's Eyes!" in the April 1, 1995, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 10-15.

Rescue From the

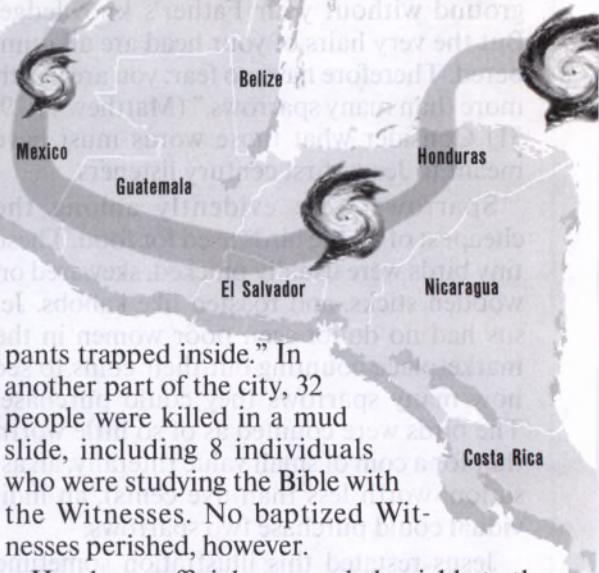
The devastation wrought by Hurricane Mitch last year made headlines around the world. Little attention, though, has been given to the often heroic efforts made by Jehovah's Witnesses to bring relief to victims of this killer storm. The following report dramatically shows how true Christianity and brotherhood can triumph, even under the worst of circumstances.

ON October 22, 1998, the waters of the southwest Caribbean gave birth to a killer. It emerged as a tropical depression. Within 24 hours, it had been upgraded to a tropical storm and given a name that will long be remembered with fear and pain—Mitch. Gaining strength, Mitch headed north. By October 26, it had become a Category 5 hurricane, generating sustained winds of 180 miles per hour and gusts of well over 200 miles per hour.

At first, Mitch seemed poised to strike Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. But the killer turned west and headed straight for Belize, on the coast of Central America. Instead of attacking, though, Mitch hovered menacingly off the northern coast of Honduras. And then, suddenly, the killer made its move. On October 30, Mitch invaded Honduras, cutting a swath of death and destruction.

Mitch Strikes Honduras

Mitch announced its presence with torrential rains. "About one o'clock in the morning, on Saturday, October 31," recalls Victor Avelar, a full-time evangelizer living in Tegucigalpa, "we heard a noise like tremendous thunder. What had been a tiny creek was now a raging river! The current carried away two houses, with their screaming occu-



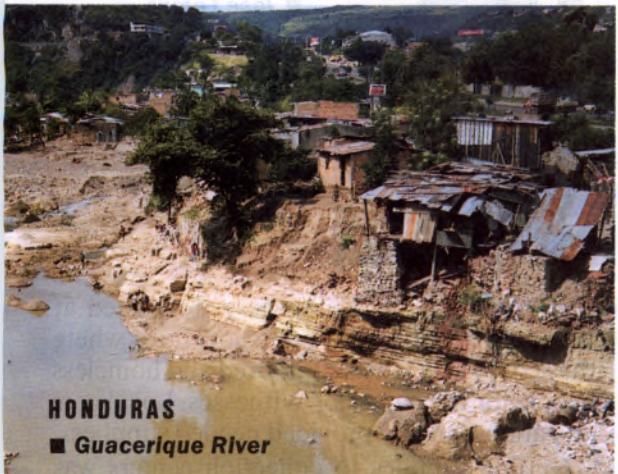
pants trapped inside." In another part of the city, 32 people were killed in a mud slide, including 8 individuals who were studying the Bible with the Witnesses. No baptized Witnesses perished, however.

Honduran officials responded quickly to the crisis, setting up refugee shelters. Also, an international relief team from more than a dozen countries sprang into action. Jehovah's Witnesses likewise began spearheading relief efforts, bringing to mind the Bible's words: "Let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) Emergency relief committees were thus established. Realizing how desperate the situation was in the coastal towns, the Witnesses mounted a rescue mission.

A Witness named Edgardo Acosta recalls: "On Saturday, October 31, we obtained a small boat and journeyed to the flooded area. Although we were able to rescue two brothers,* we realized that we needed a larger boat if we were to get all the brothers out. So we obtained a whaleboat and began a second journey early Sunday morning. Eventually, we evacuated every member of the congregation,

* Jehovah's Witnesses commonly refer to each other as "brother" and "sister."

Killer Storm!



HONDURAS

■ Guacerique River

along with some of the neighbors—a total of 189 persons."

Juan Alvarado helped with rescue operations near La Junta. He recalls: "We could hear people crying, 'Help! Save us!' This was the most horrible experience I have ever had. The brothers were completely trapped. Many were on rooftops." Explains survivor María Bonilla: "The waters around us were like an ocean. All of us were crying." But the rescue efforts were successful. Says survivor Humberto Alvarado: "The brothers not only rescued us but also gave us shelter, food, and clothing." Humberto further recalls: "One man who observed the rescue told us that no one from his church tried to get him out—only Jehovah's Witnesses did. He is convinced now that Jehovah's Witnesses have the true religion!"

In a town called La Lima, a group of Witnesses were trapped in a house. With the waters rising around them, they made an opening in the ceiling and climbed onto the ceiling beams. A Witness named Gabi relates: "We

had enough provisions to last a few days. When those ran out, one of the brothers risked his life by going out in the water to pick coconuts. To ease our distress, we sang Kingdom songs." Juan, a ministerial servant, recalls: "We didn't think we would survive. So we decided to study the Bible journal *The Watchtower*. We all started to cry, thinking that this was the last time we would study together. The study strengthened us to endure." For eight days they held on, until they were finally rescued by the authorities.

Though safe and alive, many flood survivors had to face bitter realities. Admits a Witness named Lilian: "It is very painful to lose personal effects like clothes, furniture, and family photos. When I saw my house full of mud, garbage, and even snakes, it was simply horrible!" Once again, though, the Christian brotherhood proved to be invaluable. "Brothers came to help," recalls Lilian. "My husband, who is not a Witness, asked, 'How are we to repay them for all their work?' One of the sisters answered by saying to me, 'You don't have to thank me. I am your sister!'"

El Salvador Feels Mitch's Fury

As Hurricane Mitch plowed westward toward El Salvador, it lost steam. But it still had the power to kill. At the time, Jehovah's Witnesses in El Salvador were busy planning for the "God's Way of Life" District Convention. Over 40,000 were expected to attend. As Mitch approached, the chances of all the brothers' being able to attend that convention seemed slim. Rivers overflowed, swallowing up crops, highways, and houses. Weakened by deforestation, the hills formed huge mud slides.

Nelson Flores was the presiding overseer of the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in the town of Chilanguera. On Saturday morning,



October 31, he awoke to discover that across the river where Chilanguera had once stood, there was nothing! Five hundred houses had been swept away! Fearing for the lives of his spiritual brothers, and with little thought of his own safety, Nelson plunged into the swollen river. "When I reached the other side," Nelson recalls, "I stood up and tried to get my bearings. I had passed through this area day after day, preaching from house to house, but *I could not find one familiar landmark!*"

About 150 people had died that night in Chilanguera. Among them were several individuals who were studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. No baptized Witnesses died, however.

Rescue efforts soon commenced. Aristedes Estrada, who assisted in organizing these operations, explains: "We were not permitted to go into Chilanguera. The waters were still rising! I will never forget the sight of people who were calling for help but were abandoned by rescue workers forced to flee for their own lives." In time, though, all the brothers were safely evacuated. Kingdom Halls served as refugee cen-



EL SALVADOR

■ Main Street In Chilanguera

■ **José Lemos and his daughters survived, along with the Kingdom Hall**

■ **José Santos Hernandez, in front of his destroyed home**

ters. Additionally, Witnesses were posted at hospitals, schools, and other locations where they could check lists of injured and homeless people for the names of Witnesses. Local congregations quickly provided needed supplies.

Getting supplies to collection centers was not always easy, though. Brothers from a town named Corinto headed out loaded up with produce from their own fields, only to encounter a landslide that blocked their way. The solution? They dug their way through! At first, bystanders watched skeptically. But, in time, they were moved to pitch in and help open the road. The brothers from Corinto reached their destination covered with mud but happy to make their contribution.

The Watch Tower Society's branch office served as one of the collection centers. Gilberto, a staff member who helped with the delivery of donations, recalls: "It was incredible! So many vehicles arrived that volunteers had to be assigned to direct traffic in the parking lot and the street in front of the branch." An estimated 25 tons of clothing and 10 tons of food were donated. It took 15 volunteers a whole week to sort the clothes and ship them.

Mitch Passes by Nicaragua

Mitch passed close enough to Nicaragua's border to dump devastating rain on that land too. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and highways were washed away. Near the town of

Posoltega, a mud slide buried whole villages—and more than 2,000 people.

When Witnesses in Nicaragua learned of the tragedy, a massive relief organization was set in place. Volunteers were sent on a grueling and dangerous mission of mercy—to find their brothers! Two teams of Witnesses, one from León (a town to the south of Posoltega) and one from Chichigalpa (a town to the north), departed for Posoltega, each brother carrying a heavy pack of provisions. Rescue workers warned that the way there was virtually impassable, but the brothers were determined.

Early Monday morning, November 2, the brothers from León loaded provisions on a truck and drove as far as a washed-out bridge. After unloading the truck, the brothers formed two teams of cyclists: One to head out for Posoltega, and the other for a flooded town called Telica. The brothers began by offering up a prayer. “After the prayer,” says one of the

rescuers, “we felt tremendous strength.” They would need it. They had to cross large ditches, at times by sliding across the mud and at other times by carrying the bicycles on their shoulders. Fallen trees often blocked their way. And they had to endure the gruesome sight of dead bodies floating in pools of water.

Amazingly, the cyclists from León and Chichigalpa arrived at Posoltega at virtually the same time! Neric López, a member of the rescue team, recalls: “My bike had worn tires. I thought it was good for a kilometer or two.” Yet, the bike somehow held up. Only on the way back did both tires blow out. In any event, the brothers were the very first relief workers to arrive. What joy they felt when they met up with a group of local Christian brothers and sisters! “I am so thankful to Jehovah and to our brothers because they have given us their support and help,” said one sister. “We never imagined that our brothers would come to help us so soon.”

This was just the first of several bicycle expeditions that were made to flooded towns, and in many cases the brothers were the very first relief workers to arrive. The town of Larreynaga witnessed the spectacle of 16 brothers arriving on bicycles! The local brothers were moved to tears by their efforts. Sometimes the cyclists had to carry more than 50 pounds of supplies on their back. Two brothers carried over 220 pounds of provisions to the town of El Guayabo! Carrying as much as he could on his bicycle, one cyclist found comfort in meditating on the Bible text at Isaiah 40:29: “[Jehovah] is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound.”

NICARAGUA

- **First team of cyclists to Telica**
- **Witnesses in El Guayabo happily received food bags**





Witnesses in the town of Tonalá sent a messenger to report to the responsible brothers that their food provisions were almost depleted. When the messenger arrived, he was surprised to learn that relief provisions had already been sent! And when he got home, there was food waiting for him at his house. Marlon Chavarria, who helped take relief supplies to the flooded area around Chinandega, recalls: "In one town, there were 44 Witness families. However, 80 families benefited because the brothers shared their food."

These relief efforts came to the attention of the authorities. The mayor of the town of Wamblán wrote to the Witnesses, saying: "We are writing to you about the possibility of getting some help. . . . We see how you have been helping your brothers and sisters here in Wamblán, and we want to know if it is possible for you to do something for us too." Jehovah

NICARAGUA

■ **Volunteers rebuild the first of many homes**

■ **Witnesses from local congregations helped in packing food bags**

Jehovah's Witnesses responded by sending food, medicine, and clothing.

Rampage in Guatemala

No sooner had Mitch exited Honduras and El Salvador than it invaded Guatemala. Sara Agustín, a Witness living south of Guatemala City, was awakened by the sound of raging waters. The ravine in which she lived had been transformed into a roaring river. Often, she had knocked on her neighbors' doors to share Bible truth. Now she went from door to door desperately trying to wake them up! A mud slide later came hurtling down the hill, engulfing many of her neighbors' houses. Grabbing a shovel, Sara began helping survivors, digging seven small children out of the mud. A midwife by trade, Sara had helped bring one of these children into the world. Sadly, a teenage girl named Vilma was among the dead. Sara had recently placed Bible literature with her.

Although Mitch had lost much of its fury, the constant rain did considerable damage to crops, bridges, and homes. Great quantities of supplies were sent to the local branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Guatemala,

GUATEMALA

■ **Sara helped save seven children out of the mud**



and it was decided that some of these supplies could be used to help the brothers in Honduras. Since many bridges were out and the airport was flooded, the supplies had to be sent by water. Frede Bruun, from the branch office, relates: "We hired a 27-foot-long fiberglass boat and headed out with about a ton of medicine and food. After a harrowing journey on a rough sea, we finally reached the port of Omoa, drenched to the skin."

Mitch—The Aftermath

Mitch appeared ready to die out over southeastern Mexico. In one last gasp of life, though, Mitch headed northeast and slammed into southern Florida, U.S.A. But Mitch soon lost heart. It retreated into the Atlantic and rapidly began to disintegrate. By November 5, all tropical-storm warnings had been called off.

Some experts have called Mitch "the most deadly hurricane to strike the Western Hemisphere in the last two centuries!" The final death toll may be as high as 11,000; thousands of people are still missing. More than three million were made homeless or at least severely affected. President Carlos Flores Facusse, of Honduras, lamented: "We lost what we had built, little by little, in 50 years."

Many of Jehovah's Witnesses lost their homes to Mitch. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, the plots of land on which their homes rested no longer exist! Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses did make arrangements to assist many in repairing or rebuilding their homes.

Tragic disasters like Hurricane Mitch are a grim reminder that we are living in "critical

Neighboring Witnesses Lend a Hand

WHEN forecasters predicted that Hurricane Mitch would hit Belize, the nation braced itself for the impact. Since the government ordered the evacuation of all coastal and low-lying areas, Jehovah's Witnesses withdrew to the capital city, Belmopan, nearly 50 miles inland, or to other towns on higher ground.

Fortunately, Belize was spared the brunt of Mitch's wrath. But upon hearing of the plight of their brothers in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, the brothers in Belize donated food, clothing, purified drinking water, and money.

Actually, such a response was typical of brothers in neighboring lands. Witnesses in Costa Rica sent four huge containers of food, clothing, and medicine. Brothers in Panama set up four centers to receive, sort, and pack donated items. Within a few days, more than 45,000 pounds of relief items



had been collected. One non-Witness commented: "I thought the military were number one in organizing relief work. But now I see that Jehovah's Witnesses occupy that position." Witnesses have now begun visiting this man regularly to share Bible truths.

A brother in the transportation business provided a semitrailer and a driver (non-Witness) to take relief items to Nicaragua. Officials in both Panama and Costa Rica waived customs requirements when allowing the truck to pass through their borders. One gas station donated enough fuel to fill the truck's two tanks—enough for a round trip! In Nicaragua the customs officials likewise waived in-

spection of the parcels. "If this is from Jehovah's Witnesses, we don't need to inspect it," they said. "We never have any problems with them."

Overland transportation to Honduras, however, was not possible. But a Christian sister working for the Honduran Embassy was able to make arrangements through the embassy to send relief shipments by plane free of charge! Over 30,000 pounds of material was shipped in this way.

Interestingly, some non-Witnesses were quite moved by the Witnesses' relief work. Some companies donated cardboard boxes, tape dispensers, and plastic containers. Others gave monetary donations and discounts. Airport employees in Panama were particularly moved to see over 20 Witness volunteers assist in unloading the donation to be sent to Honduras. The following day, some of these airport workers showed up with a donation that they had collected among themselves.

times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) True protection from such disasters will come only when God's Kingdom assumes management of this planet. (Matthew 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:3, 4) Still, Jehovah's Witnesses are grateful that none of their brothers lost their lives as a direct result of Mitch.* Obedience to local evacuation orders and good organization on the part of local congregations helped many to get out of harm's way.

During the past few months, Jehovah's Witnesses in the affected lands have worked hard to get back into their routine of spiritual activities. In El Salvador, for example, arrangements were made to help storm victims to attend the district convention held just days after Mitch passed through. Buses were rented to provide transportation, and lodging was obtained. Arrangements were even made to give medical treatment to the sick so that they too could attend! The convention was

* In the storm's aftermath, cases of infectious disease multiplied. One Witness in Nicaragua died as a result.

a success, with a peak attendance of 46,855—far more than originally anticipated. "We were traumatized by our experience," admits José Rivera, a Salvadoran brother who lost both his home and his business to Mitch. "But we came away from that assembly transformed for having witnessed the hospitality of the brothers." Reportedly, attendance at meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses in these lands has increased dramatically—a direct result of outsiders' having observed our relief efforts.

But perhaps the greatest impact of the experience has been upon the Witnesses themselves. Carlos, a survivor of the floods in Honduras, says: "I have never experienced anything like this. I have personally felt the love and affection of my brothers." Yes, the damage wreaked by Hurricane Mitch will one day be a thing of the past. But the love shown by Jehovah's Witnesses, many of whom risked life and limb to aid their brothers, will never be forgotten.

Similar Relief Work in Mexico

MEXICO suffered little damage from Hurricane Mitch. But just weeks before that killer hit Central America, there was intense flooding in the state of Chiapas. About 350 communities were affected; some whole towns disappeared.

Naturally, the flooding created many hardships for Jehovah's Witnesses in that area. However, quick action on the part of local congregation elders often helped to minimize the storm's impact. For example, in one small community, elders visited each member of the congregation and warned them to take refuge in the Kingdom Hall if the rains continued. It was felt that the hall was the

soundest structure in that community. At dawn the town was hit by the combined forces of two flooded rivers! The Witnesses—and a number of their neighbors—survived the onslaught by fleeing to the roof of the Kingdom Hall. Not one Witness lost his life.

Still, about 1,000 Witnesses in Mexico were forced to move into government shelters. About 156 Witness homes were totally destroyed, and 24 were damaged. In addition, seven Kingdom Halls were totally destroyed.

Thus, six relief committees were organized to serve the needs of Jehovah's Witnesses and their neighbors. Food, clothing, blankets, and other supplies were quickly distributed. In fact, when local officials were briefed on the extent of the relief work,

they said: "Not even the army has been able to do it so quickly."

Jehovah's Witnesses have long had a reputation for honesty, and often this has worked in their favor. For example, when one group of people requested help from local authorities, they were asked if there were any of Jehovah's Witnesses in their community. When they responded in the affirmative, the officials told them: "Then bring one of them to us so that we can give him the relief provisions!"

A local congregation elder sums matters up well when he writes: "The brothers have kept a positive attitude in spite of this catastrophe. At the risk of their own lives, many brothers from nearby communities came to our aid with food and with Bible publications to strengthen us. We have much for which to give thanks to Jehovah."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Clues Across

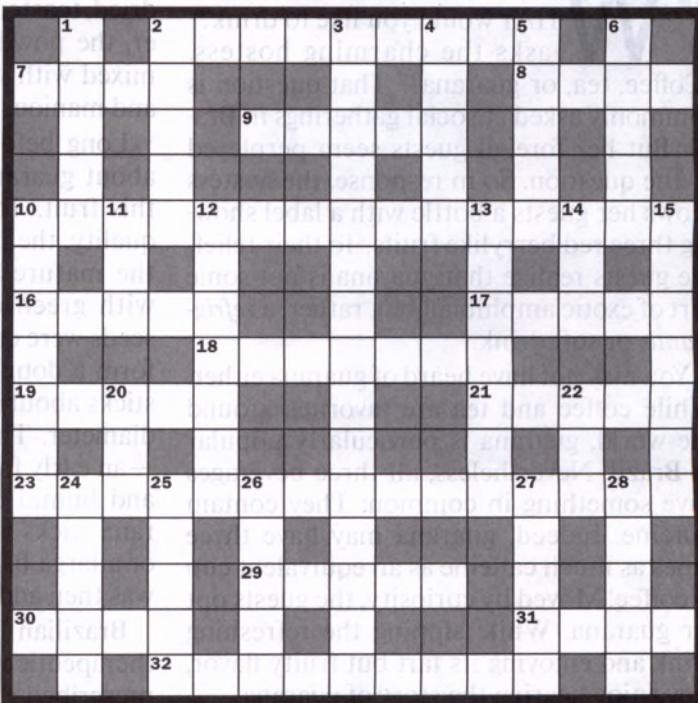
2. Title given to the rulers of five Philistine cities who collaborated on matters of mutual interest, such as trying to overcome Samson [2 words] (Judges 16:5)
7. A food item that the Israelites ate in Egypt and that they longed for while in the wilderness (See Numbers 11:5.)
8. Jesus reminded his disciples that the lilies of the field, although beautifully arrayed, do not need to do this (Luke 12:27)
9. A precious stone
10. In Moses' farewell blessing, it was grouped together with the tribe of Zebulun [3 words] (Numbers 1:29; Deuteronomy 33:18)
16. To act in concert
17. Under the Mosaic Law, a husband could do this to any vow made by his wife (Numbers 30:13)
18. In Bible times, this was a gesture of affection between close friends (1 Samuel 20:41, 42)
19. The father of Geuel, one of the 12 Israelites sent to spy out Canaan (Numbers 13:15)
21. The second commandment forbade even the making of one (Exodus 20:4)
23. Before being written down, the Ten Commandments were first spoken to the Israelites at Mount Sinai out of this [4 words] (Deuteronomy 10:4)
29. Jesus gave his 12 apostles the power to do this for the dead (Matthew 10:8)
30. A son of Sheikh Dishan (Genesis 36:28)
31. The father of Eliasaph, the chief-tain of the Gershonites during Israel's trek in the wilderness (Numbers 3:24)
32. He purchased the threshing floor of Ornan, on which site the temple was later built [2 words] (1 Chronicles 21:24)

Clues Down

1. For one month out of the year, his son provided Solomon's household with food, apparently from the region of southern Dan (1 Kings 4:9)
2. One of 13 Levites who assisted Ezra in explaining the Law (Nehemiah 8:7)

3. Because "God opposes the haughty ones," Peter advises all to gird themselves with this [3 words] (1 Peter 5:5)
4. Regulations (2 Timothy 2:5)
5. In the Athenian marketplace, these philosophers contended with Paul over the matter of the resurrection (Acts 17:18)
6. Near this site at ancient Jerusalem, King Jehoash was assassinated (2 Kings 12:20)
10. An object entrusted to the high priest and used in determining Jehovah's will on a matter (Exodus 28:30)
11. A son of Bela, listed as a valiant, mighty man of Benjamin (1 Chronicles 7:7)
12. Prophet who was given the vision of Jehovah's celestial chariot
13. Term applied to Haman and his father, Hammedatha, indicating that they were of Amalekite descent and
14. Ancient liquid measure, equal today to 3.67 liters or almost a gallon (U.S.) (Exodus 29:40)
15. To render aid or give help (1 Timothy 5:16)
20. Food an animal brings up from its digestive tract to chew again (Leviticus 11:3)
22. The family head of certain returned exiles listed under the sons of the servants of Solomon (Ezra 2:57)
24. Solomon made his throne out of this (1 Kings 10:18)
25. Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for one (John 4:7)
26. A boundary city apportioned to Asher (Joshua 19:24, 28)
27. The place where Cain killed Abel (Genesis 4:8)
28. The first bird specifically named in the Bible (Genesis 8:7)

Crossword Solutions Page 27



Coffee, Tea, or **GUARANA?**

BY AWAKE!
CORRESPONDENT
IN BRAZIL

WHAT would you like to drink?" asks the charming hostess. "Coffee, tea, or guarana?" That question is commonly asked at social gatherings in Brazil. But her foreign guests seem perplexed by the question. So in response, the hostess shows her guests a bottle with a label showing three red berrylike fruits. To their relief, the guests realize that guarana is not some sort of exotic amphibian but, rather, a *refrigerante*, or soft drink.

You may not have heard of guarana either. While coffee and tea are favorites around the world, guarana is particularly popular in Brazil. Nevertheless, all three beverages have something in common: They contain caffeine. Indeed, guarana may have three times as much caffeine as an equivalent cup of coffee! Moved by curiosity, the guests opt for guarana. While sipping the refreshing drink and enjoying its tart but fruity flavor, they enjoy hearing the story of guarana.

The guarana, they learn, is a woody, climbing plant that is native to the Amazon basin. It grows naturally near the towns of Maués and Parintins and in other parts of the state of Amazonas. Guarana is, however, also cultivated in other Brazilian states, such as Pará, Goiás, and Mato Grosso.

The plant may climb to a height of 33 feet. Its dark branches hold oval leaves with toothlike edges and clusters of flowers with short stalks. In its third year, during January or February, the shrub begins to bear fruit. A five-year-old bush can yield about six and a half pounds of fruit.

The guarana fruit, about the size of a grape, contains one or two smooth, oval seeds. The fruit is a vibrant red on top and yellow toward the bottom. When guarana pulp is being prepared, the fruits are soaked. This separates the pulpy seed coat from the seeds. Then the seeds are washed, dried, toasted, and ground into powder. Later, the powder, which contains caffeine, is mixed with water and possibly with cocoa and manioc.

Long before Brazil's colonizers learned about guarana, the Indians already valued this fruit. To produce a drink of superior quality, the Indians took care to select only the mature fruits, not mixing ripe fruits with green or fermented ones. Then the seeds were crushed and mixed with water to form a dough. The dough was shaped into sticks about six inches long and one inch in diameter. The sticks were dried rock hard—an early form of food preservation in hot and humid climates. Later the dried guarana sticks were grated on the palate bone of a large fish called pirarucu. The powder was then added to water or fruit juice.

Brazilian Indians prized the drink for its therapeutic value. Medicine men commonly prescribed the guarana beverage in various



Guarana—before it is made into a drink

forms for the sick. And when work was long and arduous, the Indians used guarana as a remedy for fatigue.

About 1816, guarana arrived in France. Later, in 1826, German botanist Karl von Martius had his brother, Theodore, make the first chemical analysis of the fruit. However, the use of guarana in Europe remained limited because therapists there felt that cheaper products could be used in its place.

Nevertheless, back home in Brazil, a growing number of people considered guarana to be a panacea. In 1905, Luís Pereira Barreto, a Brazilian medical doctor, praised the person who first tasted guarana and noticed its good effects as one of the greatest benefactors of humanity.

Advocates of the guarana drink still regard it highly. Some claim that it is not simply a pick-me-up tonic but also a sedative for the heart and an effective medicine for combating arteriosclerosis, hardening of the

arteries. It has also been claimed that guarana is helpful in curing diarrhea, dysentery, and migraine as well as neuralgia, or nerve pain. Whether these claims hold up to medical scrutiny remains to be seen. At any rate, since 1929, guarana has been a popular soft drink in Brazil.

The guests have found this discussion to be quite enlightening. "Would you like to have some more guarana?" the hostess asks. Unanimously, they nod yes. How about you? Would you like some guarana too?

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our Universe—Made for a Purpose?

The Altaics—A People We Came to Love

The Women Have Had a Large Share

THE ELUSIVE PAPERLESS OFFICE

The final draft of this article was printed out as 11 pages of hard copy—that is, on humble sheets of paper.* During the editing process, the material was reprinted some 20 times. Finally, it was sent to about 80 translation teams around the world, after which each team printed out about six translation drafts. All in all, then, this article consumed more than 5,000 sheets of paper before it ever reached the printing presses!

THESE facts dramatically fly in the face of predictions made by some at the dawn of the computer age—namely, that “the paperless office” was imminent. In his book *The Third Wave*, futurist Alvin Toffler went so far as to declare that ‘making paper copies of anything was a primitive use of

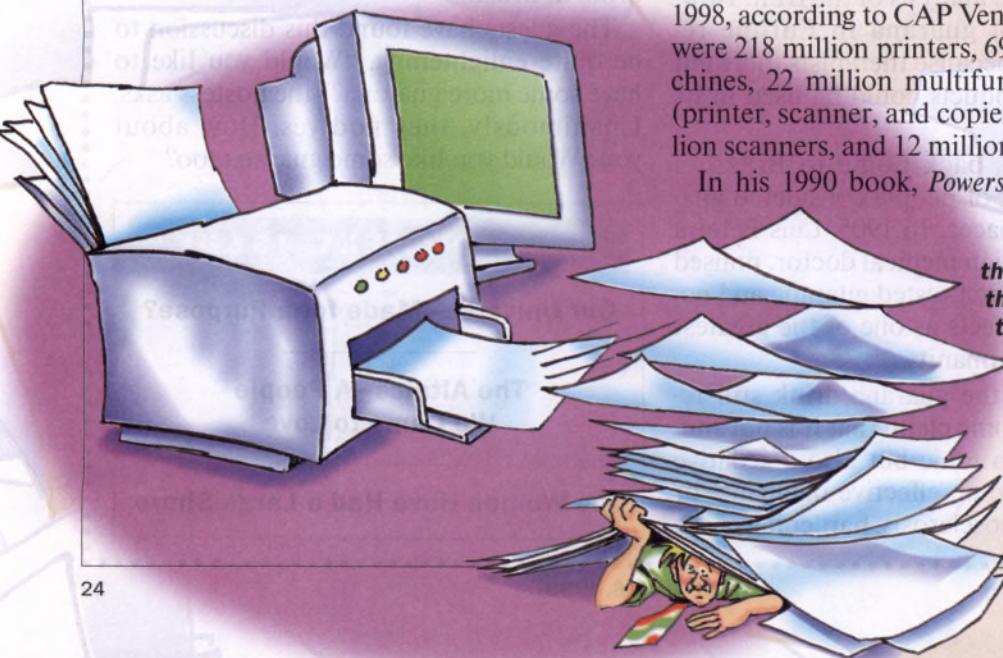
electronic word-processing machines and violated their very spirit.’ Interestingly, when International Business Machines Corporation introduced their original personal computer in 1981, they opted not to provide a printer. Some claim the company felt that users would be happy to read information on the computer monitor. At any rate, some envisioned “a paperless paradise”—that paper would soon be the stuff of museums and dusty archives.

Paperless Promises Versus Reality

In reality, though, the very equipment that was supposed to bring about the paperless office has buried us deeper and deeper in mounds of paper. In fact, some estimate that the overall consumption of paper has increased in recent years. Scott McCready, an analyst at International Data Corporation, says: “What we’ve done by automating our offices is increase our ability to produce paper at a growing rate of more than 25 percent per year.” Personal computers, printers, fax machines, E-mail, copiers, and the Internet have dramatically increased the volume of information that many people deal with—and print—every day. Worldwide in 1998, according to CAP Ventures, Inc., there were 218 million printers, 69 million fax machines, 22 million multifunction machines (printer, scanner, and copier in one), 16 million scanners, and 12 million copiers.

In his 1990 book, *Powershift*, Toffler esti-

Some argue that the very equipment that was supposed to bring about the paperless office has buried us even deeper in paper



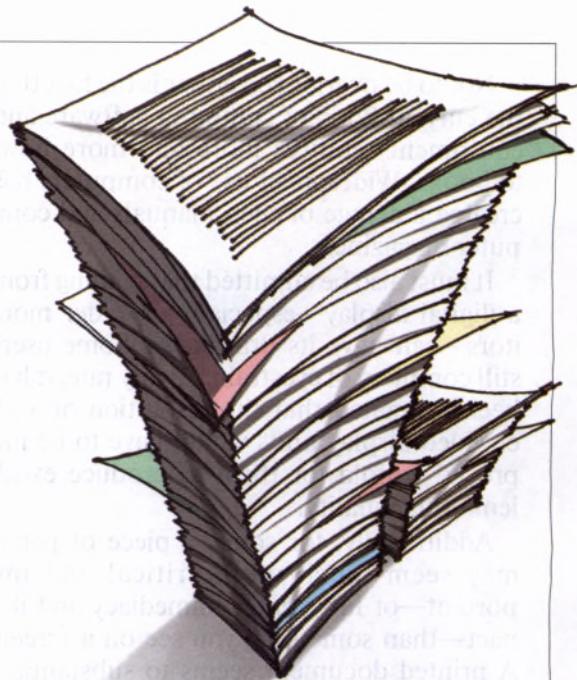
mated that in one year the United States produced 1.3 trillion documents—enough to wallpaper the Grand Canyon 107 times! By all accounts, the numbers are getting bigger. According to one source, by 1995 the United States was producing close to 600 million documents a day—enough to fill a file drawer 170 miles long. As the year 2000 dawns, there is little evidence that the tide is turning; most information is still communicated on paper.

Why Paper Persists

What went wrong with the predictions that electronics would replace paper? The International Paper company ventures a guess, saying: "People don't just want information at their fingertips. They want it on their fingertips. They want to be able to touch, fold and dog-ear; to fax, copy and refer to; scribble in the margins or post proudly on the refrigerator door. And, above all, they want to print out—quickly, flawlessly and in vibrant color."

It must be admitted that paper has definite advantages. It is portable, cheap, stable, easy to archive, and recyclable. It is also very easy to navigate—you can see what page you are on and how many pages you have left. "People are in love with paper. They want to feel it in their hands," says Dan Cox, a representative of a company that sells office supplies. "We have seen people try to achieve the paperless office," says Jerry Mallory, records analyst with the Arizona Department of Libraries, Archives and Public Records. "But all the thousands of computers we see all have one thing in common: They're all hooked up to at least one printer."

Then, too, old habits die hard. The people in business today grew up learning how to read on the printed page. A document or an E-mail can be printed with just one click of the mouse and then read at the holder's convenience, no matter where he or she may be



at the time. Printed material can be taken many places that most computers cannot be used comfortably—anywhere from a bed to a bathtub to a beach blanket!

Another factor: Computers have made it easy for people to create the kind of documents that not long ago only professional printers could produce. Anything from full-color copies, drafts, and reports to illustrated presentations, charts, graphs, business cards, and postcards can be produced with minimal effort. Such capabilities invite experimentation. So after a computer user prints out a document, he may be tempted to change the font and design and print it again. This may be followed by further revisions and, you guessed it, more printouts!

The Internet has also contributed to this situation by giving people access to virtually unlimited data.* Inevitably, this translates into heavy paper consumption, as Internet users often print out hard copy of their research finds.

* See the series "The Internet—Is It for You?" in the July 22, 1997, issue of *Awake!*

Not to be overlooked either is the fact that the current flood of computer software and equipment requires more and more how-to books. Widespread use of computers has created a deluge of such manuals and computer magazines.

It must also be admitted that reading from a digital display—especially on older monitors—can have its drawbacks. Some users still complain of eyestrain. At any rate, it has been estimated that the resolution on older video display units would have to be improved tenfold for them to produce excellent visual quality.

Additionally, for some, a piece of paper may seem much more critical and important—of far greater immediacy and impact—than something you see on a screen. A printed document seems to substantiate one's work and effort, putting it in tangible form. A physical document placed in the hands of one's supervisor or client may even receive more attention and get more of a reaction than an electronic message.

Finally, many people fear that they will lose data. And such fear is often justified. In spite of all the sophisticated back-up

systems that now exist, precious words that represent hours of work can still be at the mercy of a power surge, a crashing disk, or a clumsy keystroke. Most people, therefore, consider paper to be more secure. Interestingly, some experts claim that electronic records will be readable for only a fraction of the 200-to-300-year life expectancy of acid-free paper. True, electronic information degrades very slowly. But technology is developing rapidly. And as obsolescent hardware and software are scrapped, it may become increasingly difficult to read older computer records.

Whether or not the dream of the paperless office will materialize thus remains to be seen. In the meantime, it is clear that, to borrow a phrase from Mark Twain, the reports of paper's death may have been greatly exaggerated.

Will We Kill Off All the Trees?

How many sheets of paper can be made from a single tree? Although a number of variables are involved—such as the tree size and type and the type and weight of the paper—it has been estimated that one market-

At times, the printed page is easier to use than a computer display



How to Reduce Paper Waste at the Office

- ✓ Print as little as possible. Review and modify documents on the screen. Minimize the number of hard copies and paper drafts you make.
- ✓ For larger documents, use smaller font sizes that are still readable.
- ✓ If your printer uses a test or banner page whenever it is turned on or is printing a document, disable this feature.
- ✓ Recycle wastepaper.
- ✓ Before recycling paper that has print on only one side, set it aside to use later, either in printing drafts or for scrap paper.
- ✓ Make double-sided prints or copies whenever possible.
- ✓ When documents must be shared within an office, try circulating them instead of making a copy for each person.
- ✓ To eliminate the need for hard copy, send faxes directly from your computer. When you must fax using hard copies, save paper by not using a cover sheet.
- ✓ Avoid needless printing of E-mail messages.

size pulpwood tree makes about 12,000 sheets of standard writing or printing paper. Even so, the vast quantities of paper presently being consumed still raise the specter of barren, denuded forests. Are we really heading for an ecological crisis?

Paper manufacturers caution against panic in this regard. They are quick to point out that a large amount of paper—as much as 50 percent in some lands—is made from wood chips, waste products of the lumber industry that would otherwise end up in landfills. Not only that, as wood chips decompose, they emit methane, a greenhouse gas associated with global warming. Paper manufacturing thus puts these chips to good use. Environmental and consumer

groups respond, though, by accusing the paper industry of creating pollution and mismanaging forests. They argue that the fuels used in paper manufacturing produce greenhouse gases! They also point out that as wastepaper degrades in landfills, additional greenhouse gases are produced.

Nevertheless, a study by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development concluded that it is possible to produce necessary amounts of paper without depleting the earth's resources. For one thing, trees are renewable, and paper is recyclable. Even so, the study emphasized that "further changes will have to be made to industrial practices within each stage of the paper cycle—forest management, pulp and paper production, paper usage, recycling, energy recovery, and final disposal." In an effort to produce environmentally sound and economically viable pulp, the paper industry is also looking to such alternatives as wheat straw, fast-growing trees, corn, and hemp. To what extent such measures will be applied—and prove effective—remains to be seen.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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WATCHING THE WORLD

World Illiteracy Rate Rising

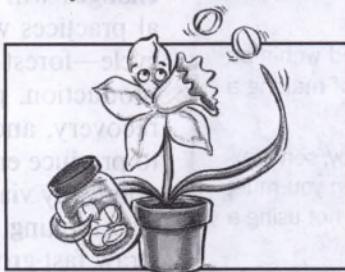
"Nearly one-sixth of the 5.9 billion people in the world cannot read or write," reports *The New York Times*. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the illiteracy rate is expected to climb. Why? Because 3 out of 4 children in the world's poorest nations presently do not go to school. In addition to causing worldwide economic problems, ethnic conflicts have denied millions of children an education. Wars not only destroy schools but also turn many children into soldiers instead of students. Illiteracy, of course, contributes to social problems as well. The UNICEF report entitled *The State of the World's Children 1999* says that there is a direct relationship between illiteracy and birthrates. For example, in one South American country, "illiterate women have an average of 6.5 children, and mothers with secondary school educations have an average of 2.5 children," the *Times* said.

Millennium Madness

"The [Israeli] government has allotted \$12 million to upgrade security at the Temple Mount" to prepare for millennium-related violence, reports *Nando Times*. Police are concerned that Jewish or "Christian" fanatics may try to destroy mosques at the Temple Mount in order to rebuild the Jewish temple. Some "Christian" cults believe that this will hasten the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. According to the report, the

Temple Mount, known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif, is "considered the most sensitive spot in the Mideast conflict." It is located "in the walled Old City of Jerusalem, which was captured by Israel from Jordan in the 1967 Mid-east war." It has been noted that a number of "Christians" have already rented space on the Mount of Olives in anticipation of Christ's return.

Aspirin for a Plant-Ache?



Plants may not feel pain in the way people do, but they do react to injury by producing jasmonic acid. Some even release jasminelike vapors that can evoke a response in other plants. "For years, researchers have known that aspirin somehow shuts down plants' jasmonic acid output," states *Science News*. Now Arizona State University scientists have unlocked part of this mysterious mechanism. Aspirin disables a key enzyme in plants by means of the same kind of chemical reaction that it uses to disable a different enzyme in humans. However, the relationship between aspirin's action in plants and in people is still unclear, since the two enzymes appear to have almost nothing in common.

Posthumous Pardons for "Witches"?

In 1994 the pope called for the Roman Catholic Church to 'examine its historical conscience.' One result is the formation of a Catholic commission in the Czech Republic—the first of its kind—to consider whether to pardon hundreds of people who were burned alive as witches. As a result of church-sanctioned witch-hunts, many thousands of people died in Europe, either by fire or torture, between the 12th and 18th centuries. After Pope Innocent VIII published an edict on witchcraft in 1484, witch-hunts increased, and more than 30 methods of torture were used to identify those suspected of being witches. Even young children were not spared when efforts were made to extract evidence against their parents. Germany burned the greatest number of witches, but such trials were also common in France and Britain. The church may contemplate posthumous apologies, reports *The Sunday Telegraph* of London.

Taming the Yangtze River

Once completed, the Three Gorges Dam on China's Yangtze River will be the world's largest hydroelectric power station. The dam will be 607 feet high, will span 1.4 miles, and will generate 18.2 million kilowatts of power. However, the main reason for building the dam is not to generate hydroelectric power. It is to help reduce flooding by the Yangtze River. Con-

struction started in 1994 and is expected to be finished in 2009. In all, this massive project will require excavating 192 million cubic yards of earth and rock, pouring over 30 million cubic yards of concrete, and installing close to two million tons of steel. "The most difficult task, however, is the relocation of the more than 1.1 million people living in areas affected by the project," says *China Today*.

Asthma on the Rise

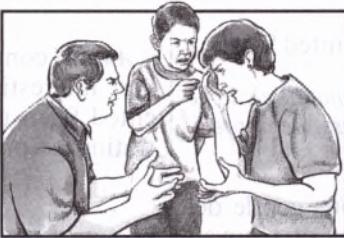
Reports from the World Health Organization indicate that in the last decade, there has been a 40-percent rise in both the prevalence of and the hospitalization rates for asthma worldwide. Why the increase? Members of the American College of Chest Physicians pointed to the dramatic rise in pet ownership, coupled with the current trend toward living in tight, poorly ventilated quarters. Asthma attacks can be triggered by "animal dander (skin, fur and feathers), dust mites, moulds, cigarette smoke, pollen, environmental pollutants and strong smells," says *The Toronto Star*. The biggest allergen, though, is cat dander. The newspaper said that asthma is of particular concern because most deaths from it are preventable. Presently, there are about 1.5 million asthmatics in Canada, and about 500 die every year from the disease.

Record Weather Damage

In the first 11 months of 1998, a record \$89 billion was lost worldwide in weather-related disasters. This damage was "far ahead of the \$55 billion in losses for the entire de-

cade of the 1980s," says an Associated Press report. The report says: "Even when adjusted for inflation, the 1980s losses, at \$82.7 billion, still fall short of the first 11 months" of 1998. In addition to material losses, natural disasters such as storms, floods, fires, and droughts killed an estimated 32,000 people. "More and more," says Seth Dunn of the Worldwatch Institute, "there's a human fingerprint in natural disasters." How so? According to Dunn, deforestation has contributed to the problem by stripping the land of trees and wetlands, which act as 'nature's sponges.'

Families Under Stress



A recent poll of Canadians concludes that families today feel that they are under more financial and emotional stress than postwar families of a half century ago. The *National Post* newspaper cites divorce and family breakdown as topping the stress list. In descending order, other major sources of family stress are "parents working too hard and for too many hours, insecure job conditions, excessive taxation, and lack of respect for the efforts parents put into raising children." These stresses are said by those polled to be even higher in most single-parent families.

Harvesting Icebergs

"Newfoundlanders have long known iceberg water was extremely pure," says the *Financial Times* of London, but now this "endless resource that floats past their beaches" is being harvested. After nets are wrapped around a floating iceberg, at high tide a tugboat tows it toward shore. Moving at full throttle, the tugboat veers sharply when it nears the coastline, releases the nets, and slings the iceberg onto the shore. When the tidal waters recede, the iceberg is marooned on land. A huge crane then breaks the ice into chunks and loads it onto a barge "where it is crushed, melted and filtered before passing under ultraviolet lights" for purification.

Aggression Against Women

"In Brazil, 63 percent of all physical aggression against women occurs in the home, and only a third is reported," states *O Globo* newspaper. The newspaper adds: "Domestic violence mainly involves poor women, but they are the ones who most often report aggression to the police. Rich women hardly show up in the statistics." Other countries report similar statistics. For example, according to a survey published by the U.S. Justice Department, "more than half of all women in the US have been physically assaulted at some point in their lives, and nearly 1 in 5 has been raped or a victim of attempted rape," says Reuters news service. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala says: "Each number in this survey represents our daughters, our mothers, and our neighbors."

FROM OUR READERS

Shakespeare Controversy The article "The Enigma of William Shakespeare" (August 8, 1998) inspired me to investigate further. The book *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years*, by Eric Sams, brought out several points that may be of interest. For one thing, many questions could be explained by understanding that Shakespeare may have been a Catholic in Protestant England. His fleeing of religious persecution could thus explain his so-called missing years. Also, Shakespeare's claimed works have many earmarks of his early life. The names of several characters are names taken from among his family and friends, including the name Hamlet—the name of his son. His plays have numerous details that could have been drawn from his personal experience with such things as butchering.

J. A., United States

The controversy over the bard is not likely to be resolved anytime soon. Nevertheless, we appreciate these comments.—ED.

Bird Lovers Thank you for your gentle description of a marvelous creation of Jehovah in the article "The Cock-of-the-Rock—An Amazonian Jungle Beauty." (September 22, 1998) Your article momentarily transported me to the Amazon forest.

E. L. V., Brazil

This article somehow caught my attention in a new way. It was presented in such a positive light, and it emphasized that Jehovah made all these creatures for our enjoyment!

L. H., Barbados

I enjoyed very much the article "Bird-Watching—A Fascinating Hobby for Everyone?" (July 8, 1998) But the hummingbird, which you refer to as a bird from "North/Central America," can also be seen in South America.

J. P., Argentina

Our caption was incomplete, and we appreciate the clarification.—ED.

Mental Focus I used to have difficulty concentrating while the teacher was speaking. But your article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Keep My Mind on Things?" (September 22, 1998) has helped me to change my habits in the classroom. Since reading your article, I have overcome this problem, and I am now more disciplined.

M. A. M., Brazil

I have problems concentrating. I didn't realize that all it took to concentrate was a little motivation and self-discipline. This is going to be some work, but I think I can do it!

D. R. A., United States

Awake! contains a lot of information that is very interesting for youngsters like me. I benefited from this article because not concentrating is a problem I have. Heartfelt thanks.

M. N., Italy

Trains I thoroughly enjoyed reading the article "The Iron Way—Here to Stay?" (October 8, 1998) I have been interested in trains since I was a small boy. Your information on the history of rail technology from the early 1800's to now was very accurate. Thank you for this enjoyable article.

L. M., United States

I work in one of the most advanced train factories in the world, and I congratulate you on writing such an excellent article. Your information was factual and well documented. I would just like to observe that some high-speed trains use materials like aluminum instead of stainless steel. As was shown by a recent train accident in Germany, it may be that high speed comes at the cost of safety.

I. D. C., Portugal

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'How Does Your Work Benefit the Community?'

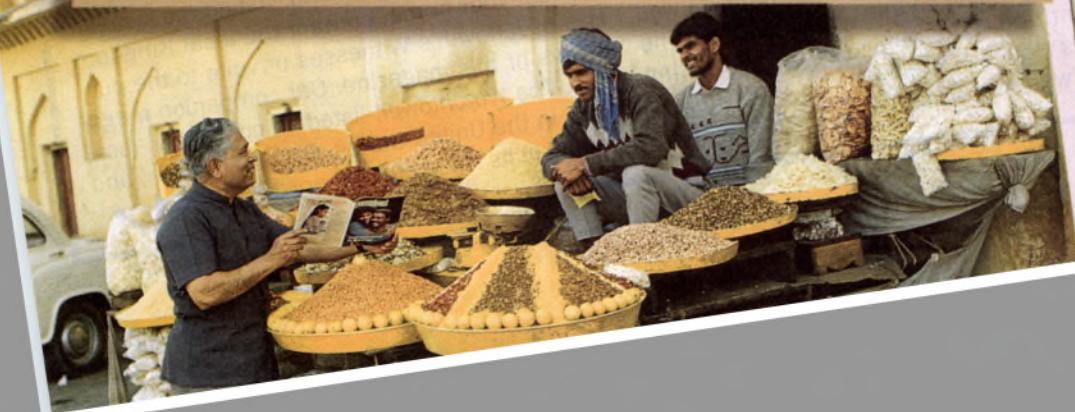
THIS was the question that Chandrakant Patel, an Indian journalist, asked a staff member at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Patel had come for a tour of the facilities and was so impressed by what he saw and heard that upon returning to India, he wrote an article for a Gujarati-language newspaper.

Contrasting some of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses with those of church organizations in India, Mr. Patel wrote that Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the almighty God, Jehovah, as opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity commonly taught in the churches and that they do not use images in their worship. He observed that Jehovah's Witnesses have high principles because they hold firmly to Christian values set out in the Bible regarding adultery, abortion, and the hatred or killing of one's fellowman. He described the Witnesses as peaceable, loving, long-suffering, and service-minded as well as fearless and zealous in spreading the message of the Bible to others.

What reply did the journalist from India get to his question, 'How does your work benefit the community?' He wrote: 'The answer was that Bible education is beneficial in all areas of life.' Mr. Patel had specifically wanted to know about the fields of health care and employment. Citing parts of the explanation that was given him, he reported: 'If a person follows the Scriptural advice to shun harmful substances like tobacco and drugs and leads a clean life, he can avoid various diseases. And hardworking, clean-living, honest individuals are more likely to get employment. Moreover, settling problems in a kind and loving way makes for peaceful relations with others. So teaching people what the Bible says works for the benefit of the community.'

This journalist saw Bible teachings in action at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. His article praised the cleanliness and cheerfulness of devoted volunteer workers at that hub of spiritual activity. You too can benefit from Bible teachings. Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to show you how.

Newspaper background: Courtesy Naya Padkar, Gujarati Daily published from Anand, India



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MILLIONS WILL BE GOING WILL YOU?



WELL over eight million people worldwide attend the annual district conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses every year. This summer, 201 three-day "God's Prophetic Word" District Conventions are scheduled in the United States. Likely, one will be held near where you live. We encourage you to be present when the program begins with music at 9:30 a.m. on Friday.

The morning program will include a welcoming talk as well as the keynote address "Pay Attention to God's Prophetic Word." In the afternoon the symposium "Take Delight in Reading God's Word" will provide practical suggestions on how to make Bible reading both profitable and pleasurable. The concluding discourse of the day, "Fighters Against God Will Not Prevail," will review the fight waged in modern times against proclaimers of God's Kingdom.

The Saturday morning program features a discussion of baptism, and an opportunity to be baptized will be provided for those who qualify. In the afternoon encouraging reports will be presented regarding the marvelous response of people to Bible truth in certain countries in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe, as well as in the huge Asian country of Kazakhstan. The part is entitled "'Desirable Things' Are Filling Jehovah's House." The Saturday program will conclude with two discourses, "Prophetic Scrip-

tures Alert Us to Watchfulness" and "The Prophetic Word in the Time of the End." The last one will focus on the Bible book of Daniel and provide reasons for paying attention to its prophecy.

On Sunday morning a three-part, one-hour symposium entitled "Prophetic Words for the Appointed Time" will discuss the prophecy of Habakkuk. You will see what an encouragement this short Bible book can be to Christians today. Afterward a full-costume drama, featuring the Bible account of Jacob and Esau, will highlight the theme "Appreciating Our Spiritual Heritage." The morning program on Sunday will conclude with the motivating talk "What Does Our Precious Heritage Mean to You?" Then, in the afternoon, you will enjoy the public talk "Making All Things New—As Foretold."

Make plans now to attend. To find the location nearest your home, contact the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses or write to the publishers of this magazine. Our companion magazine, *The Watchtower*, listed all convention locations in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Ireland in its issue of February 15, 1999.