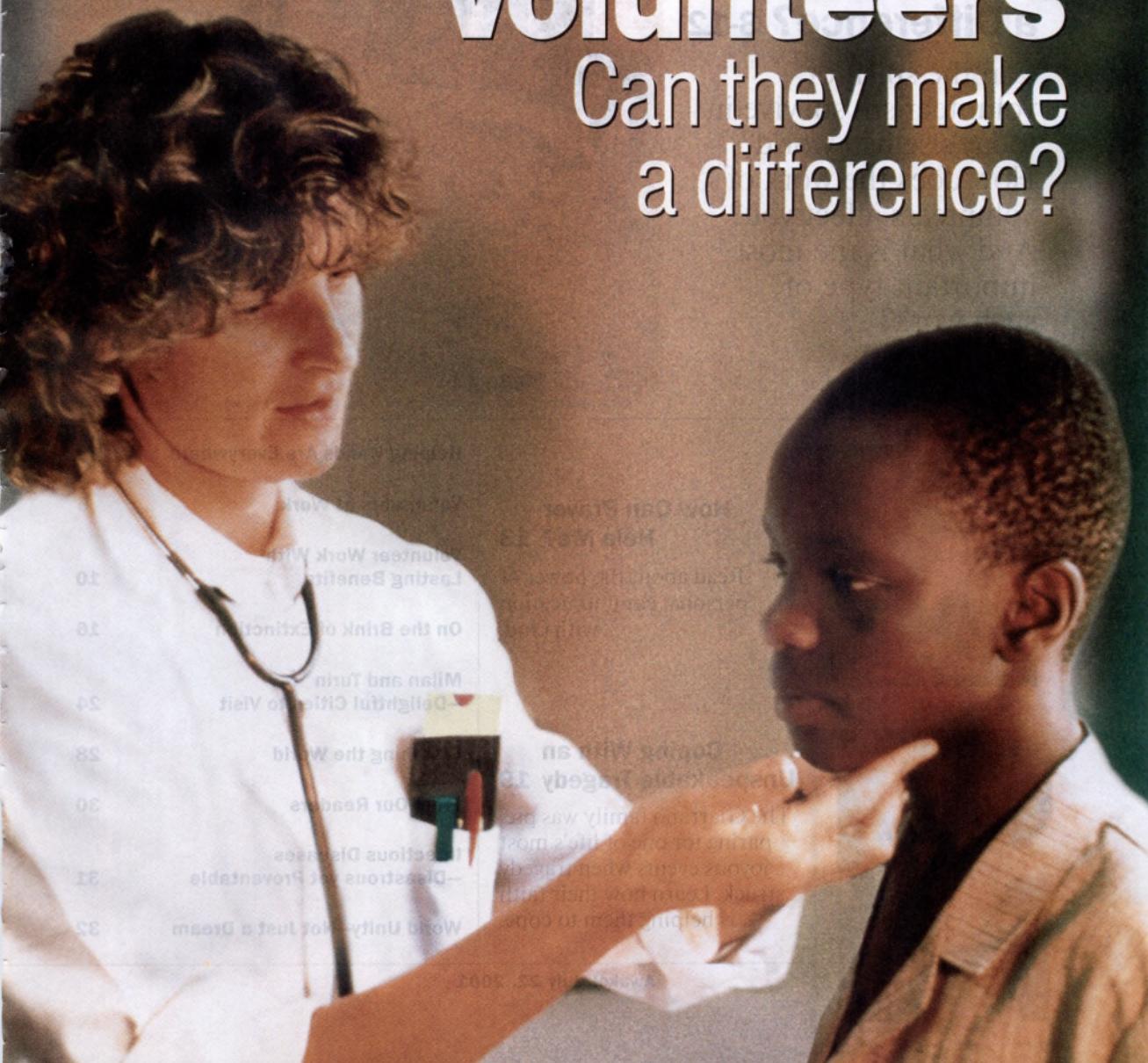


# Awake!

July 22, 2001

## Volunteers Can they make a difference?



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## Volunteers Can They Make a Difference? 3-12

Can the spirit of volunteerism survive in today's selfish world? How does the work of volunteers affect you? And what is the most important type of such work?

COVER: UN/IYV2001 Photo



### How Can Prayer Help Me? 13

Read about the power of personal communication with God.



### Coping With an Unspeakable Tragedy 19

The Giarrano family was preparing for one of life's most joyous events when tragedy struck. Learn how their faith is helping them to cope.

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# Helping Hands Are Everywhere

**B**AXTER, a 15-year-old high school student, has an interesting way of spending his Saturday afternoons. He visits a group of older people, playing music and conducting sing-alongs at their retirement center. "He brings laughter, fun and the joy of life to the residents," says Baxter's teacher. Lucille, aged 78, performs a similar kindness. She distributes food among the needy and visits lonely hospital patients. A friend says of Lucille: "If the need is there and she can be of assistance, she'll be there."

## Volunteerism Defined

This approach to life—"Be there when the need is there"—is shared by many millions of people around the world. They offer a helping hand on construction sites and in offices, factories, nursing homes, hospices, refugee camps, centers for the homeless, fire departments, crisis centers, ani-

mal shelters, and more. They are virtually everywhere! They use their skills for activities that run the gamut from barn raising to fund-raising and from cuddling abandoned babies to soothing the terminally ill. They are volunteers—people who make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Volunteer work has been described as "a noble thought turned into action." It involves such elements as commitment to a cause, a spirit of sacrifice, an absence of remuneration, and a display of altruism. "Volunteer service," say two longtime volunteers, is "a giving of ourselves: of our time, our hands and feet, our ideas, our ability to help another person, our problem-solving skills, our professional knowledge." Interestingly, such giving also benefits the volunteers themselves.—See the box "Volunteers Also Benefit."

## Growing Numbers—Growing Need

In the United States, an estimated 100 million people perform volunteer work—and their number is rising. “Our organization continues to grow at a tremendous pace,” Kathleen Behrens, executive director of the volunteer organization New York Cares, recently told *Awake!* “Last year alone, we had more than 5,000 new volunteers who joined our program.” European volunteer groups are seeing similar growth. In France, for instance, the number of volunteers has

been growing by 6 percent each year during the past two decades. However, the need for more volunteers has not diminished. On the contrary, United Nations Volunteers (a UN agency) states that viewed globally, “the need for increased volunteer effort is greater today than ever.” Says a museum supervisor: “Volunteers are our life blood.”

Yet, there is a paradox. Even though many directors, managers, and coordinators working with volunteers feel that such ones are “worth their weight in gold,” much of

## Volunteers Also Benefit

“Reaching out to others has brought a deeper, richer, far more enjoyable reward than what I could have achieved by continuing to focus entirely on my business career,” says Michael, a part-time volunteer. Michael is not alone. Sharon Capeling-Alakija, executive coordinator of United Nations Volunteers, says: “Around the world people who . . . volunteer are fully aware of how much they gain from the experience.” Dr. Douglas M. Lawson, an expert on volunteer work, confirms that researchers have found that “often during just a few hours of volunteering a person’s general physiological demeanor and psychological well-being are so heightened that this has been

nicknamed ‘The Helper’s High.’” And “helper’s high” is no fleeting feeling. Researchers at Cornell University in the United States studied a group of people for over 30 years and found that “those who volunteered were happier and healthier than those who did not.” Interestingly, the Bible states: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35; Proverbs 11:25.



**Awake!**<sup>®</sup>

**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.

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## International Year of Volunteers

On November 20, 1997, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 to be the "International Year of Volunteers," (IYV 2001). According to the UN, there are four objectives to be achieved during the year.

**Increased recognition** Governments are encouraged to recognize the importance of volunteers by studying and recording their achievements and bestowing awards on outstanding volunteer activities.

**Increased facilitation** Countries are urged to encourage volunteerism by, for example, accepting volunteer service as an alternative to military service or providing certain tax exemptions.

**Networking** The media are invited to assist more in publicizing success stories of volunteer work. As a result, such projects could be replicated, "avoiding the need for each local community to reinvent the wheel."

**Promotion** Volunteer organizations are encouraged to arrange exhibitions to inform the public about the benefits that society is reaping from volunteer work.

The UN hopes that IYV 2001 will result in more requests for the services of volunteers, in more offers from people to serve as volunteers, and in more funding and facilities for volunteer organizations to tackle society's growing needs. A total of 123 governments have joined in sponsoring the objectives of this UN resolution.



the work of volunteers goes unrecognized. To begin to change that situation, the United Nations decided to use the year 2001 as a time for turning the spotlight on volunteer workers. The box "International Year of Volunteers" describes some of the goals the UN hopes to reach.

Meanwhile, changes are taking place in

the world of volunteerism that present a challenge both for volunteers and for those who direct their work. Even so, there are still numerous individuals around the world who are willing to make a difference. What motivates them to do so? What do they accomplish? And how may they affect your life?

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address.  
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# Volunteers at Work

EVERY Friday afternoon Sirley, a middle-aged teacher in Brazil, turns her living room into a classroom. About two o'clock, Amélia, one of the students, arrives. She does not miss a single lesson and is already reading better than many youngsters in high school. Amélia is 82 years old.

Amélia is following in the steps of the more than 60 senior citizens who have graduated from the free literacy classes that Sirley is conducting in her hometown. Recently, Sirley's volunteer work was featured in the Brazilian newspaper *Jornal do Sudoeste*. After noting that she has made "a huge contribution to community life," the newspaper article said that Sirley's method of teaching the elderly is so effective that "after just 120 hours of classes, they are writing letters, reading newspapers, and coping with numbers and other day-to-day tasks." The textbook that Sirley uses, adds

the article, is the booklet *Learn to Read and Write*, prepared by Jehovah's Witnesses.\*

## From Feeling Embarrassed to Living With Dignity

Another of Sirley's students, 68-year-old Dona Luzia, relates that before learning to read and write, she was ashamed to talk to others. Even shopping used to be a challenge. "Now I write letters to my relatives in other towns, and I manage my own money. No one shortchanges me anymore," she says with a smile. Maria, also 68 years of age, recalls how she used to feel embarrassed to sign her pension check with a thumbprint.

\* The booklet *Learn to Read and Write* (available in 6 languages) and the more recent booklet *Apply Yourself to Reading and Writing* (available in 29 languages) are published by Jehovah's Witnesses. For a free copy, contact your local Kingdom Hall or the publishers of this magazine.



▲ Nelson P. Duarte/Jornal do Sudoeste

## The Changing World of Volunteerism

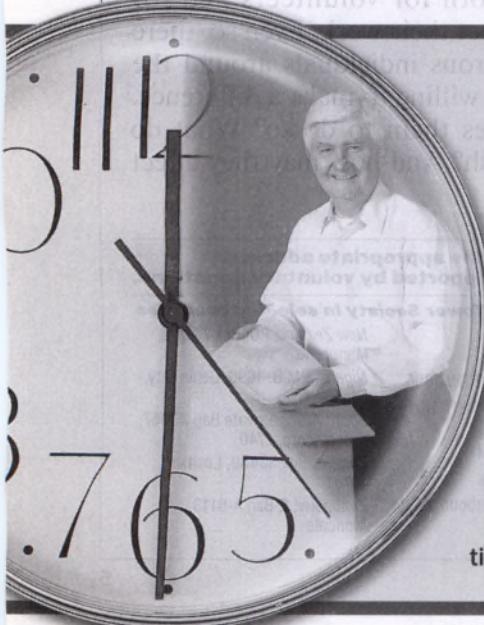
While Julie crisscrosses the globe on business trips, she manages to squeeze in some volunteer work—a few hours here and a day there. Recently while in South America, she spent an afternoon helping out in an orphanage near Santiago, Chile. She says that traveling opens up "great options" in volunteering.

Like Julie, a growing number of volunteers are giving time—but in ever smaller portions.

"It's a new trend," says Sara Méndez, president of a research group that compiles statistics on volunteer work. "People are volunteering, but when they do, it's more of a one-shot deal." As a consequence, organizers are feeling the pinch of what some decry as "volunteering lite," and they are struggling to staff their programs.

### "Flexible Volunteering"

Some organizers feel that this new trend—giving smaller





"I felt like an invalid," she says. But thanks to the literacy classes, Maria now happily writes her own signature.

Praise from students and graduates has made Sirley's free program so popular that her living room is getting overcrowded. Soon the class will move to a roomier location.

#### **Sirley finds satisfaction in teaching others to read**

#### **An Award-Winning Program**

Sirley is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. No doubt you are familiar with the Bible education work that Jehovah's Witnesses perform as a voluntary service. However, Sirley's

amounts of volunteer time—is caused by a change in the attitude of volunteers. "The 'I'm here as long as you need me' type of volunteering is dead," says Susan Ellis, a consultant for volunteer groups. "People don't make commitments." Journalist Eileen Daspin concurs. After interviewing several directors of volunteer groups about the shortage of volunteers, she concluded that "volunteerism is experiencing a severe case of commitment phobia."

However, the director of New York Cares, Kathleen Behrens,

mentioned earlier in this series, feels that those who are volunteering on the run do so, not because they lack commitment, but because they lack time. People who are juggling a 50-hour-plus workweek with care for children or for elderly parents simply cannot volunteer on a regular basis. "Yet, the very fact that these busy people still make community service a part of their life," she says, "shows that their commitment is actually very strong."

For such time-challenged volunteers, says Behrens, "flexible volunteering" is the answer.

Many volunteer organizations now even offer one-day-only projects. "This allows people to volunteer in meaningful ways but to have the flexibility they need to do it on a semi-regular basis."

Also, a growing number of people are volunteering from their computer at home, doing data entry and research. "Online volunteering," notes *The Wall Street Journal*, "is perhaps the most unusual, and some say most promising, of what has come to be called 'flexible volunteering.'"



## To the Rescue in Kobe!

When an earthquake struck the thriving port city of Kobe, Japan, in January 1995, the devastation was overwhelming. With over 5,000 casualties, it was the deadliest quake to hit Japan since 1923. Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan and around the world immediately set about providing relief for victims. When a relief fund was established, over a million dollars was contributed in three business days. Relief supplies of all sorts came flooding into Kobe.

One Christian elder involved in the relief work found that his Kingdom Hall was soon stocked with more supplies than could be used. What was to be done with it all? He suggested donating some supplies to a nearby hospital. The Witnesses filled up a van and made their way through the debris. The trip took hours instead of the usual few minutes. At the hospital, they offered the head doctor their supplies—including blankets, mattresses, diapers, fresh fruit, and over-the-counter medicines. Delighted, the doctor said that the hospital would gladly accept anything the Witnesses could give. The fruit was especially welcome, as there was not enough fresh food for all the patients.

As the Witnesses unloaded the supplies, the doctor stood there quietly watching—despite the urgency of his work. Then he humbly bowed and thanked them. As they drove away, he continued standing there to show how thankful he was. The elder involved noted that this same hospital later became very cooperative with patients who are Jehovah's Witnesses.



success is not unique. Literacy classes conducted in hundreds of Kingdom Halls throughout Brazil have already helped more than 22,000 people in that country to learn to read and write.

Similar programs of Jehovah's Witnesses have yielded success in other parts of the world. In the African country of Burundi, for example, the National Office for Adult Literacy (a department of the Ministry of Education) was so pleased with the results of the Witnesses' literacy program that it gave an award to four of the program's teachers for "the hard work put into teaching others to read." Government officials are especially impressed that 75 percent of those who learned to read and write were adult women—a group that usually shies away from attending such programs.

In Mozambique, 4,000 students are enrolled in the Witnesses' literacy classes, and more than 5,000 students have learned to read and write over the past four years. One former student wrote: "I would like to express my sincere appreciation. Thanks to the school, I can read and write."

### Relief Aid That Is "Practical Rather Than Formal"

Relief work is another form of voluntary service performed by Jeho-

vah's Witnesses. Not long ago a warehouse near Paris, France, was a beehive of activity. Some 400 volunteers spent their weekend filling cartons with food, clothing, and medicine. By the end of the weekend, nine large containers full of relief supplies worth nearly \$1 million (U.S.) were ready to be shipped. Soon thereafter, the shipment arrived in war-torn Central Africa, where local Witness volunteers swiftly distributed the supplies. Most of the supplies were donated by Witnesses as well.

One newspaper in Congo (Kinshasa) praised the humanitarian work of Jehovah's Witnesses as "practical rather than formal." Officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have likewise expressed their support. One UNHCR official in the Democratic Republic of Congo was so pleased with the orderliness of the relief efforts carried out by the Witnesses that she put her vehicle at the disposal of the volunteers. Local people are also impressed. When onlookers noticed how swiftly relief supplies reached all in need, some asked in wonderment: "How are you organized to be able to reach everyone?"

The relief efforts by Jehovah's Witnesses and their literacy programs are just two examples of the services that Witnesses have been performing around the world for decades. However, the Witnesses are also involved in another form of volunteer work—a service that makes a truly long-lasting difference. The next article will consider this.



## Volunteer Work —A Power for Good

When a group of volunteers in Kabaezi, a small community in Burundi, wanted to build a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, the local administrator made an unusual request. He asked if the Witnesses could fix the road passing by the proposed construction site. The Witnesses happily agreed to repair the damaged roadway, doing all the work by hand. The volunteers did the job so well that local officials expressed appreciation for their hard work and willing spirit. Afterward, the volunteers went on to build their Kingdom Hall, pictured above. Now they have a beautiful building that will help to promote Bible education for years to come. Indeed, volunteer work in its many forms can have far-reaching benefits.





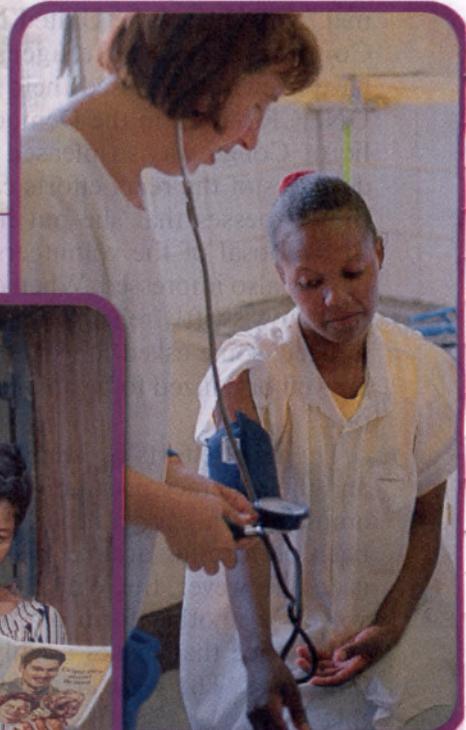
# Volunteer Work With Lasting Benefits

## She Brings Help and Hope

Nadine, a 43-year-old French nurse specializing in tropical diseases, is one of the volunteers who has worked in Central Africa. "People ask me why I do this," she said in a recent interview. "I believe in God, I love people, and I want to give of myself. And being one of Jehovah's Witnesses incites me to bring both a remedy and a hope to those who suffer." While volunteering in Africa, Nadine divides her time between providing relief work and participating in the Bible education work that is carried out there by local Witnesses.



*Nadine in Africa*



**J**ESUS CHRIST regularly performed good deeds for those in need. For instance, he fed the hungry and healed the sick. (Matthew 14:14-21) To which activity, though, did he give the highest priority? An incident that occurred early in Jesus' ministry provides the answer. It is recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

While Jesus was in Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee, he was taken to the home of Simon, or Peter. There "Simon's mother-in-law was lying down sick with a fever," and Jesus healed her. (Mark 1:29-31) Later a crowd including many people "ill with various sicknesses" began to gather at the door of Peter's house, and Jesus cured them too. (Mark 1:32-34) Then night came, and everyone went to sleep.

The next morning "while it was still dark," Jesus quietly got up and left the house "for a lonely place," where "he began praying." Before long, the disciples also woke up, looked out of the house, and saw a large crowd of people waiting at the door. But what were they to do? Jesus was missing! Quickly Peter and those with him tracked Jesus down and said: "All are looking for you." (Mark 1:35-37; Luke 4:42) It seems that, in effect, they were telling Jesus: "What are you doing out here? Last night your healing the sick was a huge success. Today another great opportunity is waiting for you!"

But now note Jesus' reaction: "Let us go somewhere else, into the village towns nearby, that I may *preach* there also." This reply is significant. Jesus did not return to Peter's house to heal others. He showed why when he said: "It is for this purpose [that is, to preach] I have gone out." (Mark 1:38, 39; Luke 4:43) What was Jesus telling his disciples? Doing good deeds was important to him, but preaching and teaching God's word was Jesus' primary mission.—Mark 1:14.

Since the Bible urges Christians "to follow [Jesus'] steps closely," true Christians today have clear guidance when it comes to setting priorities in volunteer work. (1 Peter 2:21) Like Jesus, they help people in need—as the preceding article illustrates. Also like Jesus, they set the work of teaching the Bible's message about the good news of God's Kingdom as their top priority.\* (Matthew 5:14-16; 24:14; 28:19, 20) Why, though, should volunteering to educate people about the Bible's message take priority over other valuable forms of volunteer work?

#### **Why and How Bible Education Makes a Difference**

An Asian proverb points to the answer. It says: "If you plan for a year, sow seeds. If you plan for ten years, plant trees. If you plan for a hundred years, educate people." Indeed, when it comes to providing solutions that are long lasting, education is

**"If you plan for a year, sow seeds.**

**If you plan for ten years, plant trees.**

**If you plan for a hundred years,  
educate people"**

imperative because it develops a person's ability to make decisions that will improve his life. That is why today over six million part-time and full-time volunteers are using their time, efforts, and resources to provide free Bible education to the public. This

\* Jehovah's Witnesses view their preaching work in the same way as the apostle Paul did—as a necessity for true Christians. Paul said: "If, now, I am declaring the good news, it is no reason for me to boast, for necessity is laid upon me." (1 Corinthians 9:16) Still, their preaching work is voluntary because they have freely chosen to become disciples of Christ, knowing fully the responsibilities that come with that privilege.

## How God's Kingdom Will Make a Difference

Please read these scriptures in your own Bible, and see how God promises to fill man's needs in the following areas:

**Health** "He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6.

**Education** "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14.

**Employment** "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant

vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. . . . They will not toil for nothing."—Isaiah 65:21-23.

**Food** "The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us."—Psalm 67:6; 72:16; Isaiah 25:6.

**Social Conditions** "Jehovah has broken the rod of the wicked ones . . . The whole earth has come to rest, has become free of disturbance."—Isaiah 14:5, 7.

**Justice** "Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes, they will rule as princes for justice itself."—Isaiah 11:3-5; 32:1, 2.

time-tested volunteer program conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses is having an impact on communities around the world. How?

As people are helped to understand and follow the Bible's practical counsel, they become better equipped to deal with the problems of life. They gain the moral strength needed to overcome harmful habits. Nelson, a youth in Brazil, stresses another benefit of Bible education: "Since I began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, I have known joy because I now have a purpose in life." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) Hun-

dreds of thousands of others—young and old—who recently began studying God's Word share Nelson's sentiments. In addition to helping students to find a satisfying purpose in life, the message of God's Kingdom provides an uplifting hope for the future—a hope that makes life worth living, even under the most trying circumstances. (1 Timothy 4:8)—See the box "How God's Kingdom Will Make a Difference."

By providing Bible education, Jehovah's Witnesses perform a volunteer service with long-lasting benefits. How long lasting? God's Word states: "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) Imagine participating in a program with everlasting benefits—now *that* is a form of volunteer service that truly makes a difference! Is that not the type of program you would like to learn more about? If so, contact Jehovah's Witnesses in your community. Acting on this invitation will be a step you will not regret.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**Breaking the Cycle of Hate**

**Who Is the Antichrist?**

**My Fight With Scleroderma**

# YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

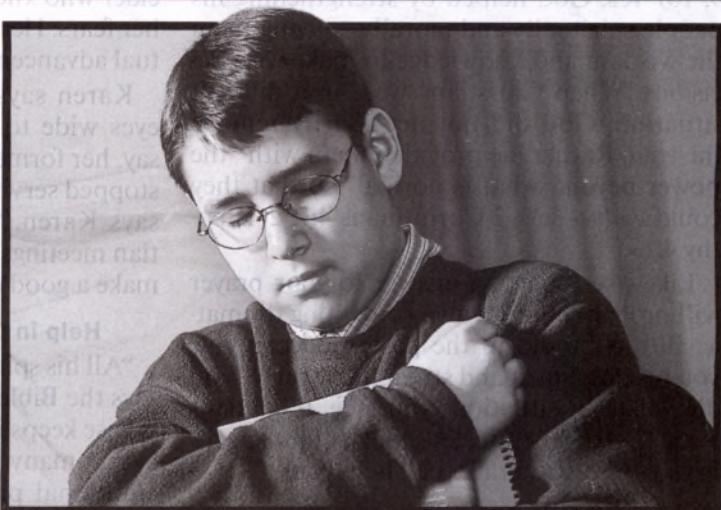
**"It was prayer that helped me get my life back on track."**

**—Brad.\***

MANY young people are praying—perhaps even more than you think. A Gallup Youth Survey of 13- to 17-year-olds in the United States revealed that 56 percent of them say a prayer before dinner. A survey of young adults indicated that 62 percent of them pray every day.

Even so, for many youths prayer is just an empty ritual or a mere routine. Few youths have what the Bible calls “accurate knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1: 9, 10) As a result, God does not play a big role in their lives. One survey asked teenagers if they had ever turned to God for help in making an important decision. A girl answered: “I always turn to God in prayer to guide me to choose the right paths in life.” Still, she admitted: “I can’t remember any one decision right now.” Little wonder, then, that many youths lack confidence that prayer has any power or that it will work for them!

Nevertheless, like Brad, quoted at the outset, thousands of youths have personally experienced the power of prayer. So can you! A previous article showed why we can be confident that God will hear our prayers.\* Now the



## How Can Prayer Help Me?

question is, How can prayer help you? First, let’s examine how God answers our prayers.

### How God Answers Prayers

In Bible times some men of faith did have direct—even miraculous—answers to their prayers. When King Hezekiah, for example, learned that he had a terminal illness, he supplicated God for deliverance. God responded: “I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. Here I am healing you.” (2 Kings 20:1-6) Other God-fearing men and women similarly experienced God’s intervention.—1 Samuel 1:1-20; Daniel 10:2-12; Acts 4:24-31; 10:1-7.

However, divine intervention was hardly the norm, even in Bible times. For the most part, God answered the prayers of his servants, not by miraculous intervention, but by helping them to “be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom

\* Some names have been changed.

“See the article “Young People Ask . . . Will God Hear My Prayers?” in the June 22, 2001, issue of *Awake!*”

and spiritual comprehension." (Colossians 1:9, 10) Yes, God helped by strengthening his people spiritually and morally—giving them the wisdom and knowledge to make wise decisions. When Christians were in a difficult situation, God did not necessarily remove the trial. Rather, he provided them with "the power beyond what is normal" so that they could *endure* it!—2 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:17.

Likewise today, an answer to your prayer will probably not involve something dramatic. But as he did in the past, God can give you his holy spirit and strengthen you to handle whatever situations you face. (Galatians 5:22, 23) To illustrate, let's look at four specific ways in which prayer can help you.

### Help in Making Decisions

Karen was dating a young man with seemingly high spiritual goals. "He would always tell me that he wanted to become an elder in the congregation," she says. This all sounded good. But "he also talked a lot about the business he was starting and all the things he would be able to buy me. I began to have doubts about his sincerity." Karen prayed about it. "I begged Jehovah to open my eyes and show me what I needed to know about him."

Sometimes the very act of praying is beneficial, as it can help you to stop and think matters through from Jehovah's perspective. But Karen also needed practical advice. Would she receive a miraculous answer? Well, consider a Bible account regarding King David. When he learned that his trusted friend Ahithophel was advising his traitorous son Absalom, David prayed: "Turn, please, the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness, O Jehovah!" (2 Samuel 15:31) But David also acted in harmony with his prayer. He entrusted his friend Hushai with this mission: "You must then frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel for me." (2 Samuel 15:34) In a similar way, Karen took action in harmony with her

prayer by talking with a mature Christian elder who knew her boyfriend. He confirmed her fears: Her boyfriend had made little spiritual advancement.

Karen says: "That situation opened my eyes wide to the power of prayer." Sad to say, her former boyfriend pursued riches and stopped serving God. "If I had married him," says Karen, "I might be coming to Christian meetings alone." Prayer helped Karen to make a good decision.

### Help in Controlling Your Emotions

"All his spirit is what a stupid one lets out," says the Bible at Proverbs 29:11, "but he that is wise keeps it calm to the last." The problem is that many people today live under intense emotional pressure and often lose control—sometimes with disastrous results. Young Brian recalls: "I was having problems with a workmate. One day he pulled out a knife." What would you have done? Brian prayed. He says: "Jehovah helped me to stay calm, and I talked my workmate out of it. He dropped the knife and walked away." Controlling his emotions helped Brian to avoid giving in to anger, and this likely saved his life.

You may not often find yourself at the point of a knife. But there will be many situations in your life where you will need to control your emotions. Prayer can help you to remain calm.

### Help With Worry

Barbara recalls "going through a trialsome time" some years ago. She says: "My job, family, friends—nothing seemed to be working out. I didn't know what to do." Barbara instinctively prayed for help. But there was a problem. "I didn't know what to ask Jehovah for," she says. "Finally, I asked for peace of mind. I asked every night that he would help me not to worry about everything."

How did that prayer help her? She says: "A few days later, I realized that although my problems hadn't disappeared, I wasn't so

occupied or concerned with them anymore.” The Bible promises: “Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6, 7.

### Help in Drawing Closer to God

Consider the experience of a youth named Paul. “I had just moved in with some relatives,” he says. “One night I found myself in massive depression. I had recently graduated from high school, and I missed all my friends. Tears came to my eyes that night as I remembered the great times we had enjoyed together.” What could Paul do? For the first time, he prayed fervently. He says: “I opened my heart and asked Jehovah for strength and peace of mind.”

What resulted? Paul recalls: “The next morning, I woke up feeling more relieved than I ever have in my life. I went from an agonizing frame of mind to having ‘the peace of God that excels all thought.’” Now that his heart was calm, Paul could look at things from a less emotional point of view. And he soon realized that the ‘good old days’ hadn’t been so good after all. (Ecclesiastes 7:10) In fact, the “friends” that he so sorely missed had not really been a good influence on him.

Above all, Paul got to experience Jehovah’s care in a personal way. He felt the truth of the words of James 4:8: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.” For Paul this was a major turning point. He was moved to put Jehovah ahead of everything else in his life and to dedicate his life to him.

### Talk to God!

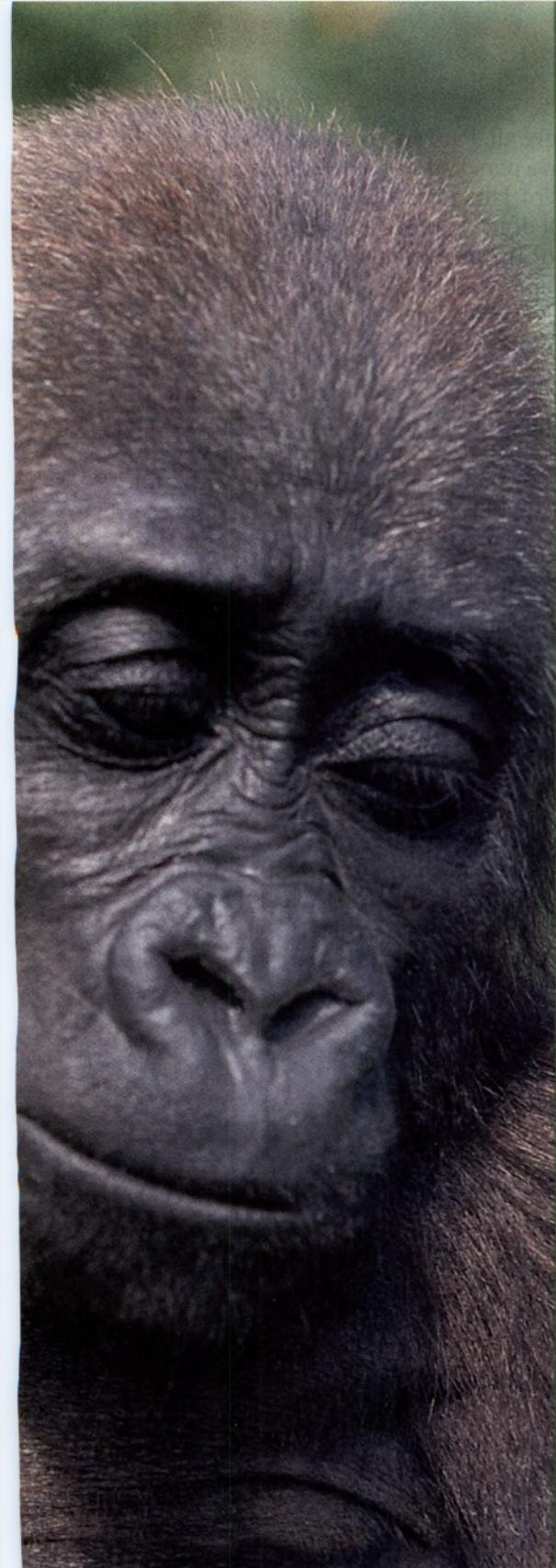
These positive experiences provide assurance that prayer can help you. Of course, that is so only if you are serious about getting to know God, cultivating a friendship with him. Unfortunately, many youths put off doing so. Carissa was raised in a Christian home. But she admits: “I think that only in the last few years have I fully grasped the incredible significance of our unique relationship with Jehovah.” Brad, mentioned at the outset, was raised as a Christian but fell away from true worship for a number of years. “It wasn’t until I realized what I’d lost,” he says, “that I turned to Jehovah. I now know how cold and empty life can be without that relationship.”

However, do not wait for a crisis to strike before you draw close to God. Begin talking to him now—regularly! (Luke 11:9-13) “Before him pour out your heart.” (Psalm 62:8) You will soon find that prayer can really help you!

## Prayer Can Help You

- Make better decisions
- Stay calm in times of stress
- Find relief from worry
- Draw closer to God





# On the Brink of Extinction

**S**AM, the three-year-old gorilla in the photo, certainly looks sad. But perhaps that should not surprise us. Hunters killed his mother, leaving him orphaned with no chance of returning to the wild. Unfortunately, just a few months after this picture was taken, Sam died of a respiratory ailment. But he was not the only gorilla with bleak prospects.

The relentless destruction of their natural habitat has put such creatures on the list of vulnerable species. And since gorillas are actually killed for food in some places, hunters equipped with modern rifles also seriously threaten the animals' long-term survival. Although the future for gorillas sounds dismal, that of many other species is even more so.

A report prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) paints a gloomy picture of the state of much of the world's wildlife. During the past few years, more species have become endangered, and the pace of the decline has been alarming. The IUCN, an organization that monitors the status of thousands of species, has recently published its Red List, designed to increase awareness of the plight of the planet's embattled wildlife.

Nearly a quarter of all the world's mammals and about an eighth of the birds are now threatened with extinction. And these are just the species that have been documented. The conservation status of the majority of our planet's species remains unknown.



▲ Foto: Zoo de la Casa de Campo, Madrid

### Giant Panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*)

#### ■ Estimated population in the wild:

1,000—making it one of the rarest mammals on earth

■ Main threats: low reproduction rates and destruction of the mountain bamboo forests on which it depends for food



### Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)

■ Estimated population in the wild: some 5,000 to 7,500 (down from about 100,000 a century ago)

■ Main threats: poaching, poisoning, loss of habitat, and isolation of tiger populations

Foto: Zoo, Santillana del Mar, Cantabria, Espana ▶

### Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*)

■ Estimated population in the wild: about 20,000

■ Main threats: forest fires, logging, poaching, and smuggling for the pet trade



## Lesser (Red) Panda

(*Ailurus fulgens*)

### ■ Estimated population in the wild:

unknown, but it seems to be declining throughout its range as a result of human encroachment and a low breeding rate

■ **Main threats:** poaching, destruction of mountain bamboo forests, and livestock grazing



Foto: Zoo de la Casa  
de Campo, Madrid

Foto: Zoo, Santillana del Mar, Cantabria, España



## Goeldi's Monkey

(*Callimico goeldii*)

■ **Estimated population in the wild:** unknown (this primate was only discovered in 1904)

■ **Main threats:** destruction of the Amazon rain forest and sparseness of populations, which could easily become isolated

## Red-Crowned Crane

(*Grus japonensis*)

### ■ Estimated population in the wild:

about 2,000

■ **Main threats:** collisions with electric cables, destruction of breeding habitat, and contamination



# Coping With an Unspeakable Tragedy

AS TOLD BY JAMES GIARRANO

*Being grandparents is one of life's great joys. With much anticipation my wife, Vicki, and I awaited the birth of our first grandchild. Our daughter, Theresa, and her husband, Jonathan, were expecting a baby in early October 2000. We could not have imagined that we were about to face an unspeakable tragedy.*

MY WIFE and I, along with our son and his wife, left for vacation on Saturday, September 23. We were going to meet other relatives and spend a week on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Theresa and Jonathan had decided not to come on vacation with us because she was in her ninth month of pregnancy and it was a long drive—about 11 hours from our home in Ohio.

We wanted to postpone our vacation, but Theresa insisted that we go. She assured us that she would be all right. Besides, her doctor felt that her pregnancy would probably go full term, and her due date was a couple of weeks away.

Wednesday, September 27, 2000, was a beautiful day that reminded me of why our family has chosen to vacation in this area for the past several years. Little did we know that before the end of the day, our lives would be drastically changed.

## **"Theresa Is Missing!"**

That evening I received a phone call from my brother back in Ohio. He was extremely hesitant and nervous. Finally, he got the words out: "Theresa is missing!" The police were involved because the events surrounding her disappearance were suspicious. When Jonathan arrived home that afternoon, he found the front door unlocked. Theresa's breakfast was still on the table, and her purse was left behind. Something else was strange: Her shoes—the only ones that fit her in her ninth month—were still by the door.

Jonathan had called home about 9:30 a.m. Theresa told him that a woman had called saying that she wanted

to come and look at the car they were selling. Afterward, Theresa was going to run some errands. Jonathan called home at lunchtime, but he couldn't reach her. During the afternoon, he kept calling, but there was still no answer. When he got home at 4:15 p.m., he noticed that the car was missing. He called the hospital because he thought that perhaps Theresa had gone into labor. She wasn't there. He also called



**Our daughter Theresa, listening to her baby's heartbeat**

some family members, but no one had seen her. He was frantic, so he called the police. About 6:00 p.m., the police found the car not far from their home. But Theresa was still missing.

Back in North Carolina, we were stunned by the news. My wife and I, along with our son and his wife, packed our bags and headed home. It was a long, emotional drive. We traveled through the night and arrived back in Ohio the next morning.

#### A Break in the Case

Meanwhile, Jonathan and some relatives, close friends, and others cooperated with the police in searching for Theresa, working through the night. The search continued for five agonizing days. Finally, on Monday, October 2, there was a break in the case. By then, the police had traced the phone call that had been made to Theresa's house on Wednesday morning. A woman who lived just a few blocks away had made the call from a cellular phone.

After interviewing the woman, the police were suspicious. Later that evening the police returned to the woman's home. But as they approached the door, they heard a gunshot. Breaking into the house, they found the woman dead. She had shot herself. To their surprise, they found a newborn baby boy in a room on the second floor. Incredibly, he had slept through all the commotion!

But still there was no trace of Theresa. For the next few hours, the police searched the house for any evidence that she had been there. The search ended in the early hours of Tuesday morning inside the garage. There, in a shallow grave, they found Theresa's body. The coroner later determined that she had been knocked unconscious, then shot in the back. She had died instantly, and then her baby had been taken from her womb. In looking back, there is a measure of relief in knowing that she did not suffer.

The newborn baby was taken to the hospital, where he was found to be in excellent health—not a scratch on him! A mandatory DNA test

confirmed that he is indeed our grandson. Jonathan gave him the name that he and Theresa had chosen—Oscar Gavin. After a short stay in the hospital, our 8-pound 11-ounce grandson was released into his father's arms on Thursday, October 5. We were thrilled to have our grandson, but words cannot describe how devastated we were that Theresa was not there to hold him.

#### Community Reaction

My family and I were moved to tears by the outpouring of support—in many cases from people we had never met. During the days that Theresa was missing, hundreds volunteered to help in the search. Many donated money. Several local office-supply stores made thousands of copies of flyers free of charge. And volunteers distributed the flyers over many miles around Theresa's home.

One of our Christian sisters works for a local attorney, and when she told him about our situation, he offered to assist. We accepted his offer, and this proved to be a tremendous blessing. He helped us to deal with the media as well as with certain legal issues that arose. In addition, he recommended two private investigators, who did much to help with the case. Their genuine concern for us truly touched our hearts.

After our grandson was recovered, the support intensified. Several grocery stores sent food and household supplies. Many individuals donated clothing for Oscar as well as disposable diapers, baby formula, and toys. We received far more than Oscar could ever use, so we gave the surplus to the maternity ward of a local hospital. Because the media had picked up the story, we received thousands of cards and letters—not just from our community but from around the world.

The outflow of support was particularly evident at the memorial service for Theresa, which was held on Sunday, October 8. We knew that many people wanted to attend, but the response exceeded our expectations. Ar-

rangements were made to use an auditorium at a local high school, and with more than 1,400, it was filled to capacity. In attendance were family members, friends, police officers, the mayor, and others from the community. Members of the media were also present, and local television stations filmed the discourse, which was also broadcast live over the Internet. In addition, hundreds of people stood in the school lobby or huddled under umbrellas outside in the cold rain, listening over speakers that had been hooked up. The discourse gave a far-reaching witness about our Bible-based beliefs.

Afterward, hundreds of people waited patiently in line to offer condolences. We stayed for nearly three hours, hugging all those who had come and expressing our appreciation for their presence. Following the service a local hotel graciously provided a meal for over 300 of our family members, close friends, and others who had assisted in recovering our grandson.

We cannot adequately express how much we appreciate what people—mostly strangers—did to help us. This experience has made us more determined than ever to have a full share in the Christian ministry, for there are a lot of kindhearted individuals whom we want to reach with the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

#### **How the Congregation Responded**

From the beginning of this ordeal, we were enveloped by a wave of support from our

**We felt the outflow of support  
at the memorial service**

Christian brothers and sisters. This seemingly endless support came from our own congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses as well as from surrounding congregations.

Even before we arrived home from North Carolina, the elders in our congregation had helped to organize efforts to locate Theresa. Many of our brothers and sisters took time off work to join in the search. Some told their employers that they were willing to forfeit salary, but in some cases their employers gave them time off with pay. During the days that Theresa was missing, some of our spiritual brothers stayed with Jonathan so that he would not be alone. A number of brothers and sisters just came over and kept our home clean and neat. Others helped to feed volunteers and answer the phones.

About six weeks after Theresa's death, my wife and Jonathan faced a daunting challenge—going through Theresa's things and clearing out her home. Jonathan felt that he could no longer live in the house that he and Theresa had shared, so he decided to put it up for sale. Going through Theresa's belongings was a painful task—everything reminded them of her and how much they missed her. But here, too, our brothers and sisters came to our aid. They helped box up her things and even did some needed repairs on the house to prepare it for sale.



Most important, our brothers and sisters provided our family with spiritual and emotional support. They called and visited us to offer encouragement. Many sent touching cards and letters. This loving support continued not just for the first few days and weeks but for many months.

A number of our brothers and sisters told us to let them know whenever we needed someone just to listen, and we have taken them up on their kind offer. It is so comforting to be able to share your feelings with friends you love and trust! Truly, they have exemplified the words of the Bible proverb: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress."—Proverbs 17: 17; 18:24.

### The Impact on Our Family

I must say that coping with Theresa's murder has not been easy for my family and me. It has truly changed our lives. There are times when I am angry that she is not here with me. I miss her hugs and kisses.

My wife was extremely close to Theresa. There wasn't a day that they didn't at least talk to each other. They spent countless hours talking about Theresa's pregnancy. They worked together to set up the nursery.

Vicki describes her feelings: "There are so many things I miss. I miss sharing in the preaching work with her. I miss our shopping together. What hurts the most is not seeing her with her baby—it just breaks my heart. I know how much she loved Oscar even before he was born. She knew that she was having a boy. After I made a blanket for the baby and gave it to her, Theresa wrote me this card:

'Dear Mom,

Thank you so much for the beautiful baby blanket. I really appreciate all of the hard work that you put into it. I just want to thank you again for all the help and encouragement that you've given me to get through some of the hardest times of my life. I will always remember and thank you for that. I've

heard that one day you'll grow up and realize that your best friend is your mom. Well, I just thank Jehovah every day that it didn't take me too long to come to that realization. I will always love you."

It was also painful for us to see what our son-in-law went through. While Oscar was in the hospital, Jonathan faced one of the most difficult things he has had to do. Since he decided to move in temporarily with us, he had to move the nursery that he and Theresa had set up at their house. He packed up the rocking horse, the crib, and the stuffed animals and moved them to our home.

### What Has Helped Us to Cope

When you lose a loved one in such a tragic way, a lot of confusing questions and emotions arise. There have been times when I as a Christian elder have endeavored to comfort and help others struggling with such questions and feelings. But when you are the one grieving, emotions can cloud clear thinking.

For example, knowing Theresa's condition and that we would be away for a week, I had prayed for Jehovah to protect her. When she was found murdered, I must admit that I initially wondered why my prayers were not answered. Of course, I know that Jehovah does not guarantee miraculous protection for his people individually. I continued to pray for understanding. I have been comforted in the knowledge that Jehovah protects his people spiritually—that is, he provides what we need in order to safeguard our relationship with him. That type of protection is most important, for it can affect our eternal future. In that sense, Jehovah did protect Theresa; she was serving him faithfully at the time of her death. I have found peace in knowing that her future life prospects are in his loving hands.

A number of scripture texts have been especially comforting. Here are some that have helped me to cope:

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

15) I have long believed the Bible's promise of a resurrection to an earthly paradise, but now that hope is even more real to me. Just knowing that I will be able to hold Theresa again has given me the strength to make it through each day.

"Jehovah . . . is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him." (Luke 20:37, 38) There is much comfort in knowing that the dead who will one day be resurrected are, even now, "all living" to Jehovah. So from his standpoint, our dear Theresa is very much alive.

Vicki would like to share some of the Bible texts that have been particularly strengthening to her:

"It is impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2) Because Jehovah cannot lie, I know that he will fulfill his promise to resurrect the dead.

"Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) The words 'memorial tombs' suggest that Theresa is in Jehovah's memory

until he has his Son, Jesus Christ, resurrect her. I know that there is no safer place for her to be than in Jehovah's perfect memory.

"In everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) In particular, I pray for Jehovah's spirit to give me strength. When I get really upset, I go to Jehovah and say, 'I need more of your spirit,' and he helps me through another day. Sometimes I cannot even articulate the words, but he gives me the strength to go on."

Jehovah truly has helped us to cope with this unspeakable tragedy. Oh, we still grieve for our dear Theresa. We expect that our grief will not be completely erased until we can hug her again in Jehovah's new world. In the meantime, we are more determined than ever to serve Jehovah faithfully. Jonathan is determined to do his best to raise Oscar to love and serve Jehovah, and Vicki and I will assist him in every way possible. It is our heartfelt desire to be on hand in God's new world to welcome Theresa back and introduce her to the son that she did not get to hold in her arms.



**With my wife, Vicki,  
at Theresa's wedding**

**Our grandson Oscar**



MILAN  
TURIN

# MILAN AND TURIN —DELIGHTFUL CITIES TO VISIT

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ITALY

**A**VISIT to Italy can be a delightful experience. The food, the wine, the scenery, the history, the culture, the music, the language—all combine to make this land unforgettable. This summer may be as good a time as any for a tour, especially for those invited to attend one of the conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses being held there. Let us now take you on a brief tour of two remarkable Italian cities and their regions.

## Milan—The True Capital of Italy?

In terms of business and industry, Milan is often considered the true capital of Italy. Compared with other Italian cities, it is not as well-known for antiquity and art. Here, the modern seems to dominate over the ancient. Nevertheless, Milan is home to some outstanding art and architecture that testify to an ancient past.

About 600 B.C.E., the region was settled by the Gauls, an ancient Celtic people from the area now known as France. In 222 B.C.E., the Romans conquered the city and gave it the Latinized name Mediolanum, now Milan. Through the centuries, the Italian peninsula has been a divided and conquered land, attaining independence only in the second half of the 19th century. So Milan was subject to an endless succession of invaders. Among those who occupied this area

were the Lombards, probably originating in Scandinavia. They gave their name to Lombardy, the region of which Milan is capital.

## Come Visit the City

The history of Milan, like that of the rest of Italy, is dominated by the Catholic Church. Little wonder, then, that the cathedral, or duomo, there is the third-largest church in Europe and one of the largest Gothic churches in the world. About 500 feet long, it bristles with spires and more than 3,000 statues and gargoyles. Construction began in 1385 and took five centuries to complete. Today when Italians speak of a job that is taking too long to com-

Milan cathedral



*The modern seems to dominate over the ancient in Milan*



In Milan, La Scala (above) and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (right)



plete, they say that it is like "building the cathedral."

Bible readers will be interested to see God's name, in the form "Jahve," high up in a Gothic window of the cathedral facade. The exterior of the facade is decorated with numerous depictions of Bible episodes.

The Castello Sforzesco is one of the buildings that have become symbols of the city. It was built in the 15th century by the Sforza family, the lords of Milan. Today it houses a number of museums. One famous room contains frescoes that some say were painted by Leonardo da Vinci, the renowned artist and scientist.

Among da Vinci's best-known paintings is a fresco in the 15th-century Renaissance convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie. It depicts Jesus at what is commonly called the Last Supper and is judged one of the most famous of all Renaissance paintings. The Pinacoteca di Brera, another museum, has one of the largest Italian collections of paintings by such famous artists as Bellini, Raphael, Tintoretto, and Caravaggio.

Bible students will appreciate the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, which is a library and art gallery. There you can find the Muratorian Fragment, a Latin catalog of the Christian Greek Scriptures dating to the end of the second century C.E. It helps to confirm the composition of the "New Testament" canon.\*

The same library contains a codex called Ambrosian O 39 sup., dated to the end of the ninth century C.E., which renders the divine name by the Tetragrammaton written in square Hebrew

\* See "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," pages 302-4, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

characters, as mentioned in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.\* The library also possesses other ancient versions of the Bible, as well as the Atlantic Codex, a collection of more than 2,000 drawings and scientific notes made by Leonardo da Vinci.

A useful suggestion for visitors to remember is that many museums and libraries are housed in ancient buildings, splendid for their beauty, but easily filled to capacity by today's ever-increasing flow of tourists. In many cases

\* Appendix 1C, page 1564, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

#### The "Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci





**Drawbridge entrance to  
Turin's medieval burg**

visits have to be booked in advance, and some museums set a time limit on visits.

Before leaving the old part of the city, music lovers might want to see the outside of La Scala, one of the most famous opera houses in the world. Even if the visitor cannot attend an opera, he might like to tour the museum, where many mementos of musi-



**Mole Antonelliana in Turin; its spire is 550 feet high**

cians and famous singers are on display.\*

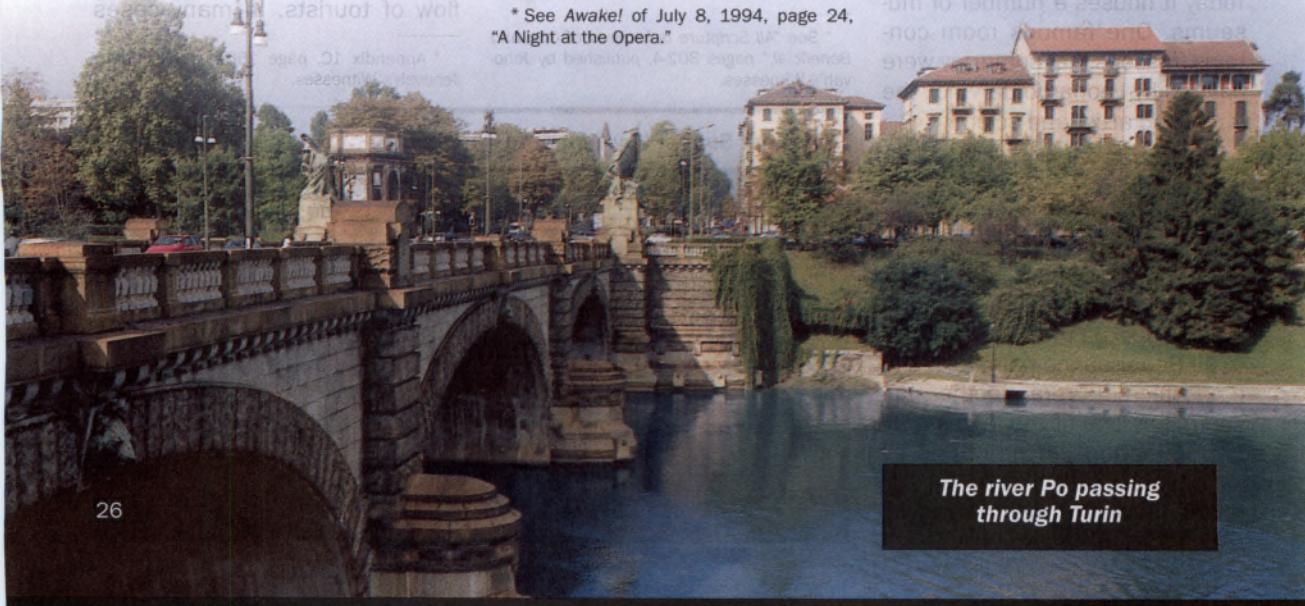
A tour of the modern part of Milan, one of the wealthiest cities in Europe, with its skyscrapers and sports stadium will provide you with an overview of the city. You will be able to appreciate the variety, beauty, and long history of Milan. Visitors who love shopping and sightseeing will want to visit the huge Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, with its superb glass ceiling and dome.

You'll be glad you came to Milan! But now, let's travel westward to visit an altogether different great city of Italy.

### **Turin—Another of Italy's Jewels**

Turin, a city with a population of about one million, is located at the narrowest point of the Po Valley, at the foot of the western Alps, and less than 60 miles from the French border. It is surrounded by an awesome "amphitheater" of alpine mountains that reach as far

\* See *Awake!* of July 8, 1994, page 24, "A Night at the Opera."



**The river Po passing  
through Turin**

as the eye can see. Almost half of Turin's province consists of mountains, woods, and valleys. A drive of less than an hour takes you to mountain resorts. In less than two hours, you can be on the beaches of Liguria.

Turin's origins predate the Romans. Originally a settlement of a people called the Taurini, it later became a Roman colony, the remains of which lie in the historical area. There are medieval features, but most of the city's architecture dates from the 17th and 18th centuries, with the baroque style dominating among buildings lining the downtown streets.

Turin is home to one of the best Egyptian museums in the world. Its exceptional collection of objects from the ancient civilization that developed along the Nile is second only to the one in Cairo.

In a visit of just a few hours, you can admire the city's historical and artistic center, the Madama Palace, the Royal Palace, and the Mole Antonelliana, which at 550 feet high was until recently one of the tallest masonry structures in Europe. As a city landmark, it is sometimes called Turin's equivalent of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Then there is Valentino Park, with its botanical gardens as well as lawns, avenues, fountains, and a medieval burg—a picturesque and faithful reconstruction of a 15th-century Piedmontese village.

Turin is one of the most important manufacturing centers of Italy. It is the home of the FIAT (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino) car company. If you are interested in vintage cars, the Museo dell'Automobile, about two miles from the city, has a collection of

150 veteran, vintage, and classic cars, including Bugattis, Maseratis, and Lancias. It is obvious why the livelihood of about half of Turin's present population is in some way tied to the automotive industry.

### Jehovah's Witnesses in Turin and Milan

The valleys around Turin have for centuries had a high concentration of Waldenses, the descendants of itinerant preachers of the Protestant Reformation. It is no surprise, then, that during a trip to Europe in 1891, Charles Taze Russell, who took the lead among the early Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known), made contact with a local Waldensian pastor, Daniele Rivoir. Russell made arrangements with him to have a number of Bible study aids translated into Italian. The year 1903 saw the formation of the first group of Bible Students in this area. When Russell returned to Italy in 1912, some 40 individuals were holding regular Christian meetings in a building in Pinerolo, near Turin. And at Pinerolo, their first Italian assembly was held in 1925.

Thus, the first real traces of Bible Students in Turin date back to the 1920's. The first missionar-

ies of Jehovah's Witnesses were sent to Italy in 1946. They helped to put the work of the Witnesses onto a solid footing. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, the first congregations were formed in Turin. Now there are some 13,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city and its province. What, though, about Milan?

For a little over a year, the branch office representing Jehovah's Witnesses in Italy was in Milan. It was moved to Rome in 1948. The first postwar assembly was held in a city theater in Milan in 1947. Some 700 from all parts of the country were present. In 1963 the "Everlasting Good News" International Assembly was held in Milan's Vigorelli Velodrome, then perhaps the most famous cycling track in Europe.

The modern-day preaching of Jehovah's Witnesses has met with great success in Milan. At present, there are 57 congregations in the city, with more than 4,000 active evangelizers, as well as an Assembly Hall in a converted city theater.

Visiting Milan and Turin can be rewarding indeed. Whenever you go there, you are likely to find a warm welcome and have an experience to treasure.

### The Shroud of Turin—Authentic?

Perhaps the most famous feature of Turin is the shroud that some believe is the winding-sheet in which Christ's body was wrapped. A travel guidebook explains: "The most famous—and most dubious—holy relic of them all is kept in Turin's duomo [cathedral]." It is permanently exhibited in one of the duomo's chapels, locked in an airtight, bulletproof glass case filled with an inert gas. The book goes on to say: "In 1988, however, the myth of the shroud was exploded: a carbon-dating test showed that it dates back no farther than the 12th century."\*

\* See *Awake!* of December 22, 1998, page 23, "The Shroud of Turin—Burial Cloth of Jesus?"

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Mysterious Survival

While France's forests were badly damaged by severe storms in December 1999, recent observations indicate that big game did not suffer as much as anticipated, reports the Paris newspaper *Le Monde*. Only 20 dead animals—10 stags, 5 roe deer, and 5 boars—were found in an area of 25,000 acres in the devastated forests of eastern France. Obeying "mechanisms that are still mysterious," the animals found ways to escape, perhaps hiding under fallen trees or gathering together in the open. Jean-Paul Widmer of the French National Forest Office states: "We know less about the [behavior] of stags and boars than that of lions and other distant wild animals."

### Economy-Class Syndrome

Over the past eight years, 25 passengers arriving at Japan's Narita Airport "have died of so-called economy-class syndrome," reports the newspaper *The Daily Yomiuri*. Contrary to its name, "economy-class syndrome" can also affect first-class passengers. Sitting for several hours can restrict blood circulation in the legs and cause blood clots to form. If a clot moves to the lungs, it can cause breathing difficulties and even death. Annually, between 100 and 150 travelers arriving at Narita Airport suffer from some form of this problem, says Toshiro Makino, head of Nippon Medical School's New Tokyo International Airport Clinic. "Passen-

gers who fly more than seven or eight hours at a time should drink more water than usual and take some preventive measures, such as stretching and bending their legs," he suggests.

### Tokyo Warming Up



"The average number of days per year when the temperature in Tokyo fell below freezing decreased by 95 percent over the course of the 20th century," reports *The Daily Yomiuri*. During the 1990's, there were on average only 3.2 days per year with subfreezing temperatures in Tokyo, compared with 61.7 days for the first ten years of the century. One veteran meteorologist at Japan's Meteorological Agency commented that global warming has prevented temperatures from falling as low as before, and he expressed concern that in Tokyo "a really cold winter" could soon become a thing of the past. According to the agency, if greenhouse gas emissions continue at present levels, a 2-to 6-degree Fahrenheit rise in global temperature is predicted to occur during the 21st century. A rise of 6 degrees across Japan would result in Tokyo becoming as hot as present-day Nairobi.

### Syphilis Comeback

Syphilis had been almost totally absent from France for decades. Last year, however, doctors noted a new epidemic of this sexually transmitted disease, primarily among homosexuals, reports the French daily *Le Figaro*. Similar outbreaks of syphilis were also noted in Britain and Ireland in 2000. Syphilis is a bacterial disease that causes skin lesions and rashes in its early stages and if not treated leads to neurological and cardiovascular damage. The resurgence of syphilis is worrisome, observes *Le Figaro*, as it is "totally unknown to new generations of doctors who have never examined a single case during their medical training." Doctors may thus misdiagnose it, hindering effective treatment. Disease specialists suspect that dangerous sexual practices are responsible for the resurgence of syphilis. They fear, therefore, that this trend could be the harbinger of "a new explosion in the AIDS epidemic."

### Caution for Older Travelers

The number of older adults traveling to less-developed areas of the world is increasing, and many become ill because of ingesting bacteria-contaminated food or water, says the *Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter*. The resulting "traveler's diarrhea" can lead to more serious health problems for people 60 or older. Unless you are dining in a first-class hotel or restaurant in

a large, modern city, the *Health & Nutrition Letter* cautions:

- Don't drink tap water or brush your teeth in it. Use only bottled, boiled, or disinfected water. Don't use ice in drinks unless you are certain it was made from safe water.
- Don't eat fish or meat unless it has been thoroughly cooked.
- Don't eat unpasteurized milk products or raw vegetables.
- Don't eat fruit unless you peel it yourself after washing it in clean water. After peeling it, wash your hands before eating.
- Don't eat food sold by street vendors, even though it may be served hot.

#### **"Internally Displaced" Multitudes**

"There are as many of them as there are people infected with HIV, twice as many as there are refugees. They are what the international aid community calls the 'internally displaced,'" reports *The Independent* of London. Although forced by war to flee their homes, they remain in their own countries. The UN estimates that there are 25 to 30 million of such displaced persons worldwide. Most live, not in refugee camps, but with other families or on the streets. Dennis McNamara, UN special coordinator for the problem, says that rather than seek refuge in some other land, "many try to stay as close to home as they can: that's where the land they farm is." Relief agencies are sometimes denied access to such people. Up to 90 percent are women and

children. "It is the men who make the wars," adds McNamara. "The women and children are the victims. Displaced women are in constant danger of rape from the forces persecuting them."

#### **Suction-Cup Tongue**



How can a chameleon catch other lizards and even birds that weigh up to 10 percent of its own weight? Until now, it was believed that prey got stuck to the rough and sticky surface of the chameleon's tongue. But that did not explain how this creature can catch relatively heavy prey. To find out, scientists in Antwerp, Belgium, made high-speed video recordings of the chameleon's lightning-fast tongue in action, reports the German science news service Bild der Wissenschaft-Online. The scientists found that when shooting out, the chameleon's tongue forms a ball at its tip. Just before impact, two muscles in the tongue contract, forming the tip into a suction cup that adheres to the prey.

#### **The Encroaching Desert**

"The Sahara has crossed the Mediterranean," reports *The Guardian* of London, "as a lethal combination of soil degradation and climate change turns parts of southern Europe into desert." At a United Na-

tions conference on combatting desertification held in December 2000, one expert put partial blame on global farming, which has made it hard for many small farmers to compete. Farmers therefore abandon land that had been preserved for thousands of years by means of terracing and careful irrigation, and the soil eventually washes away. The situation is acute in southern Italy, Spain, and Greece. Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Russia, and China are also facing increased desertification. Klaus Töpfer, executive director of the UN Environment Programme, stated: "Soil is a natural resource that is no less important to human well-being and the environment than clean water and clean air."

#### **Source of the Amazon Identified**

A 22-man team of explorers has confirmed "the source of the world's largest river, ending decades of speculation and contradictory findings," reports *The Times* of London. The Amazon starts as a trickle from the Nevado Mismi, an 18,000-foot-high peak in the southern Peruvian Andes. From there it meanders through a valley of grass and moss, where it is joined by other streams and rivers before continuing its 4,000-mile journey to the Atlantic Ocean. Describing the river's source, Andrew Pietowski, the team's leader, said: "It's a pretty spot. You're standing in a green valley at the base of an impressive, almost black, cliff about 130 feet high. It's very silent and serene."

## FROM OUR READERS

**Oceans** Today I read the series "The Oceans Reveal Their Deepest Secrets." (November 22, 2000) I love nature, but the ocean abyss was unfamiliar to me. Truly, the more one learns about the earth and its wonders, the more one should respect this dynamic planet and its infinitely wise Creator.

C. F., Italy

Thank you for this fascinating series. I had always wondered why Jehovah created such organisms as the tube worm, when most of mankind is unaware that such creatures exist. I liked the point that the existence of these creatures shows Jehovah's concern for the cleanliness of the earth—a concern we should imitate.

H. S., Britain

Reading this series was like making an actual visit to the seabed and watching the wonders of the deep while receiving a detailed and competent explanation. Your presentation helped me to perceive more clearly God's qualities as evident in the things he has made.

J.M.M., Zambia

This is one of the most fascinating series I have read in *Awake!* It presents further proof that only an intelligent Being could have created our planet in all its detail. Articles like these strengthen our desire to serve our Grand Creator.

S. G., Brazil

**Absent Fathers** My father left home when I was six years old. I am now 20, and I have not seen him since he left. I have always felt that his leaving was my fault and that he didn't love me. The article "Young People Ask . . . Why Did Dad Leave Us?" (November 22, 2000) answered everything clearly. Thank you for understanding the hearts of children without fathers.

K. M., Japan

More than two years ago, my husband and I got a divorce. I have tried to do everything possible to get my son to talk to me about the family breakup, but nothing has worked. Now for the first time, my son has admitted that he was affected by the divorce. That was a huge breakthrough. Very gradually, he's opening up. I can't express how thankful I am for the many helps you provide for young people in all their distresses.

D. H., United States

With the exception of one brief statement, the article said that fathers leave home because of misconduct on their part. However, there seem to be a growing number of wives leaving their husbands. After 18 years of marriage, my wife began a promiscuous life-style. I was driven out of my own house. I feel I had to mention this aspect of the problem.

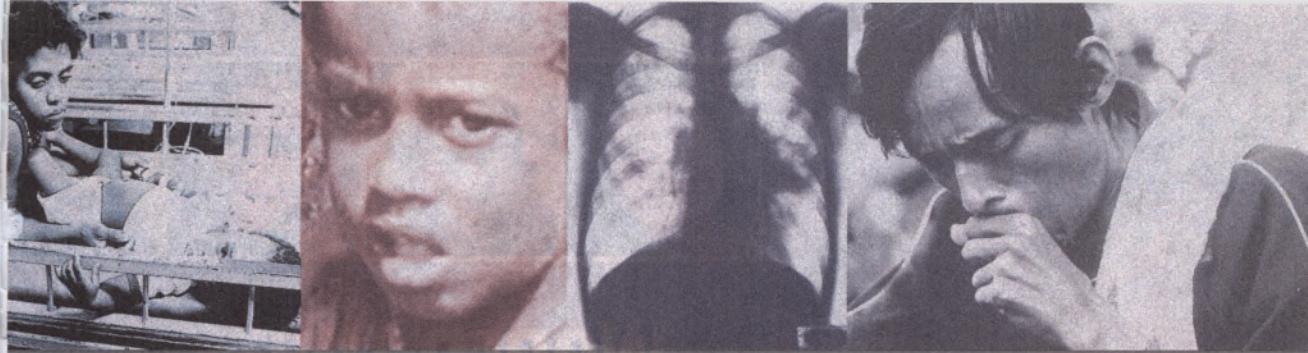
L. G., United States

*As you mention, we acknowledged that some fathers leave home because of the wife's misconduct. Many of the principles discussed in the article would apply in this situation as well.—ED.*

**Anesthesia** In the article "From Agony to Anesthesia" (November 22, 2000), you state that there was no anesthesia prior to the 1840's. Operations were performed successfully in Japan by Seishu Hanaoka long before the 1840's.

S. A., Japan

*In general, the medical world did not embrace the use of anesthesia prior to the 1840's. However, the "Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan" says that Seishu Hanaoka (1760-1835) prepared an anesthetic substance called "mafutsusan" by mixing "six crude drugs." He "used it successfully in a surgical operation for breast cancer in 1805, about 40 years before the first use of ether at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston." Seishu subsequently used his anesthetic in a number of operations.—ED.*



# INFECTIOUS DISEASES

## ***Disastrous yet Preventable***

**WHILE** devastating earthquakes and catastrophic floods make front-page news, the silent spread of infectious diseases rarely attracts the media spotlight. Even so, "the death toll from infectious diseases (such as AIDS, malaria, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea) is 160 times greater than the number killed in last year's natural disasters," states a Red Cross/Red Crescent press release of June 2000. "And the situation is getting worse."

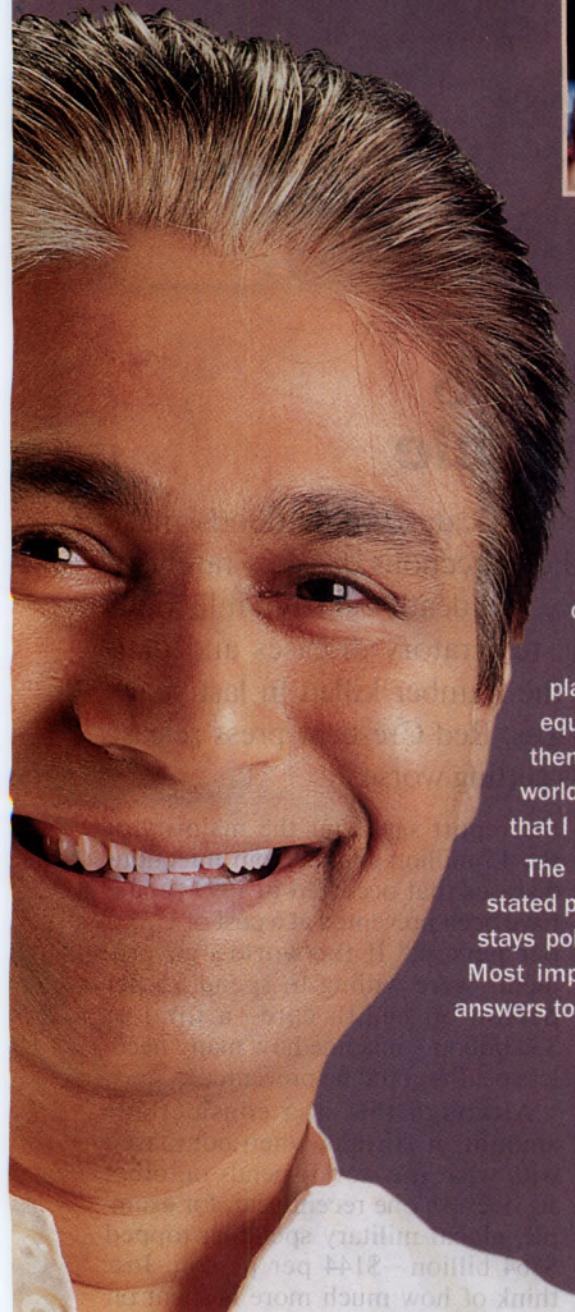
Two main factors are said to be responsible for this shocking figure. One is the unrelenting spread of AIDS, which kills 300 people every hour. AIDS "is no longer a disease, it is a disaster," says Peter Walker, director of disaster policy for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Such a widespread disease destroys the workforce and shatters the economy." The other factor is the deterioration of public health systems, resulting in a dramatic comeback of older diseases such as tuberculosis, syphilis, and malaria. For instance, one Asian country is presently reporting 40,000 new tuberculosis cases every year. In one Eastern European country, syphilis infections have increased 40-fold in the last decade.

The irony is, however, that although infectious diseases have turned into disasters, they are actually among the most preventable disasters. In fact,

the report says that the majority of the 13 million deaths from infectious diseases that occurred in 1999 "could have been prevented at a cost of US\$ 5 per person." If the world's governments were willing to spend \$5 per person on health care—a total of \$30 billion—imagine how many needless deaths could be prevented!

Although this is a considerable amount, it shrinks when compared with what the world spends on other services. In one recent year, for example, global military spending topped \$864 billion—\$144 per person. Just think of how much more is spent on preparing for war than on preventing the spread of diseases! Perhaps stemming the tide of infectious diseases is simply beyond mankind's reach—not because of insufficient funds, but for deeper reasons. After all, human governments cannot even set the right priorities.

X ray: New Jersey Medical School—National Tuberculosis Center  
Photo of man coughing: WHO/Thierry Falise



## WORLD UNITY NOT JUST A DREAM

A man in the state of Kerala, India, wrote the publisher of this journal: "Your *Awake!* magazine certainly stands out from all other magazines. I feel there is practically no subject that it has not touched. I have especially enjoyed reading articles on nature."

The man found *Awake!* appealing for a particular reason, explaining: "I don't think there is another magazine that would equal *Awake!* in helping people of different nationalities to view themselves as brothers. No other magazine promotes the idea of world unity as *Awake!* does. When I compare the many magazines that I read, I can certainly say that *Awake!* is a valuable magazine."

The reader's observations about *Awake!* are in keeping with its stated purpose appearing on page 4 of every issue, namely: "It always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another." Most important, *Awake!* directs readers to look to our Creator for answers to the essential questions of life.

