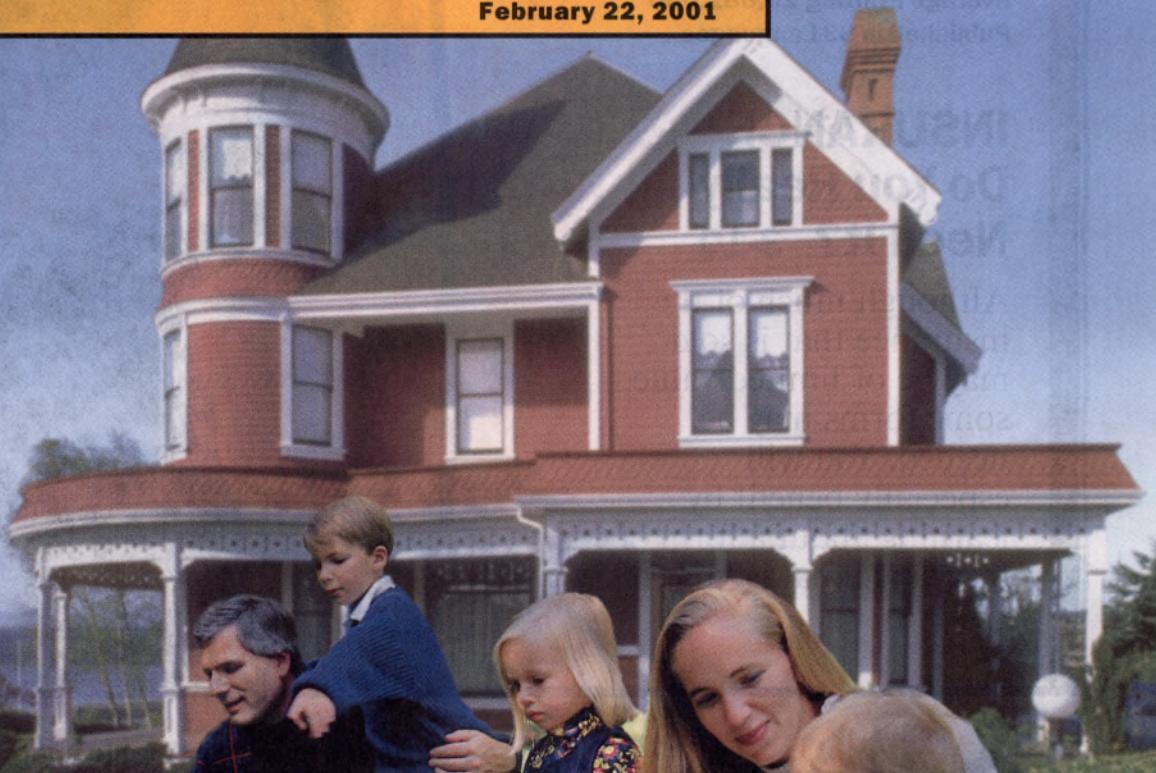


# **Awake!**

February 22, 2001



**INSURANCE**  
**Do You Really Need It?**

Average Printing 20,682,000  
Published in 83 Languages

## **INSURANCE Do You Really Need It? 3-10**

Although much of the insurance that is sold may be of limited value, some forms may be needed. You will especially benefit by learning about a form of insurance that is vital.



### **Shocking AIDS Statistics! 14**

Over 34 million people are infected with HIV. What have been factors in its spread?



### **The Eucalyptus—How Useful Is It? 16**

Learn how you have likely used part of this tree, which is ranked among the tallest in the world.

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# A Business With a Long History

***John's carpentry shop was the best built and best stocked in his community. It was his pride and joy. But one night fire broke out. In a few hours, his beautiful shop was reduced to smoldering ashes.***

**E**ARLIER, John had thought about buying fire insurance with some of the funds that he put into building his shop. However, he reasoned: 'I'm very careful. And if I never have a fire, insurance will be a waste of money.' But there was a fire. If John's shop had been insured, very likely he could have rebuilt it. Without insurance, he could not.

## **What Is Insurance?**

Insurance is not necessarily an investment from which one expects to get one's money back. Nor is it gambling. A gambler takes risks, while insurance offers protection against risks that already exist. Insurance is a way to share risk with others.

Since ancient times, communities have pooled some of their resources to help individuals who suffer loss. About 3,500 years ago, Moses instructed the nation of Israel to contribute a portion of their produce periodically for "the alien resident and the fatherless boy and the widow."—Deuteronomy 14:28, 29.

## **The Origins of Insurance**

Insurance has existed for thousands of years. A form of credit insurance was included in the Code of Hammurabi, a collection of Babylonian laws said to predate the Law of Moses. To finance their trading expeditions in ancient times, shipowners obtained loans from investors. If a ship was lost, the



***One of the world's most famous insurance providers started in a coffeehouse***

owners were not responsible for paying back the loans. Since many ships returned safely, the interest paid by numerous shipowners covered the risk to the lenders.

It was likewise in a maritime setting that later one of the world's most famous insurance providers, Lloyd's of London, was born. By 1688, Edward Lloyd was running a coffeehouse where London merchants and bankers met informally to do business. There financiers who offered insurance contracts to seafarers wrote their names under the specific amount of risk that they would

Courtesy of Lloyd's of London

accept in exchange for a certain payment, or premium. These insurers came to be known as underwriters. Finally, in 1769, Lloyd's became a formal group of underwriters that in time grew into the foremost market for marine risks.

### Insurance Today

When people buy insurance today, they are still sharing their risk. Modern insurance companies study statistics that show the fre-

quency of past losses—for example, losses from shop fires—to try to predict what losses their clients will experience in the future. The insurance company uses the funds paid by many clients to compensate the clients who suffer losses.

Do you need insurance? If so, what kind of insurance is right for your circumstances? And whether you have insurance or not, what precautions can help you to cope with life's risks?

# Do You Need Insurance?

**I**N SOME lands certain kinds of insurance are compulsory. In others, most kinds are practically unknown. In addition, the cost of insurance and the type of coverage provided vary widely from country to country. But the fundamental principle of insurance—sharing risk—remains the same.

Naturally, the more property a person owns, the more he has to lose. Similarly, the more family responsibility a person has, the greater the impact if he or she dies or becomes physically disabled. Having insurance can alleviate one's concern about the possi-

bility of suffering a loss of property or a disabling accident.

Yet, is it wise to spend money on insurance even though a claim may never be made? Well, is keeping a spare tire in the car a wasted investment, even if the tire is never needed? The sense of security to the car driver may make the expense of the extra tire worthwhile. While financial compensation cannot make up for certain losses, it may compensate for other losses.

What types of loss do insurance policies cover?

### Awake!

**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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## **Types of Insurance**

Much of the insurance purchased by individuals falls into the categories of property, liability, health, disability, and life insurance.

**Property insurance:** Insuring against the loss of property—home, business, car, or other possessions—is among the most common forms of risk management. This is the insurance that John, mentioned in the preceding article, decided not to buy for his carpentry shop and tools.

Some home-insurance policies include coverage of certain items inside the home. If you buy this type, it is wise to make an inventory of your insured household possessions, if possible including photographs or a videotape. This inventory along with any appraisals or purchase receipts for the items should be kept in a safe location outside the home. Having these records could make settling a claim much easier.

**Liability insurance:** Anyone who drives a car, owns a home or other real estate, operates a business, or employs others runs the risk of liability for an accident. And that accident may result in property damage or injury or death to another person. The car driver or the owner of property or a business may become liable to pay for property repair or for the medical treatment or even the pain and suffering of another. In many countries employers and drivers are required by law to carry liability insurance to help pay these expenses. Even where insurance is not

a legal requirement, a driver, property owner, or employer may be held legally or morally responsible to help victims of an accident or their families.

**Health insurance:** Many countries have some form of state-sponsored insurance that provides such benefits as pensions for seniors and medical care. Even where this is the case, however, such insurance may pay only a portion of medical expenses or may pay for only certain ones. Some individuals, therefore, obtain additional private insurance to help them pay the remainder. In many places workers may receive health insurance as a condition of their employment.

Some health-care plans, including managed care arrangements and health maintenance organizations (HMOs), provide comprehensive medical care for a set monthly or annual fee. These organizations endeavor to lower costs by providing less-expensive medical care and by promoting preventive medicine. However, in an HMO, a patient's choice of doctors or treatment may be more limited than with traditional health insurance.

**Disability insurance and life insurance:** Disability insurance provides some income if a person is injured and cannot work. Life insurance provides financial assistance to a person's dependents in case of his or her death. Such insurance has enabled many families to pay off outstanding debts and carry on their routine of life after the injury or the death of their main breadwinner.

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## Finding Reliable Insurers

Insurance is based on the principle of paying money now for financial protection in the future, so it is not surprising that the insurance industry attracts more than its share of swindlers. This is true in developed as well as developing economies. Therefore, one is wise to beware of so-called low-cost insurance and to be alert to any other questionable insurance scheme. Too many hopeful buyers have ended up with nothing when such companies failed to pay on their policies—or just vanished overnight!

So, as with any other important purchase, comparison shopping is wise, and it often saves money. For instance, some companies offer lower rates on health insurance to nonsmokers and on car insurance to those who have passed driver-education courses. But how can a potential buyer find reliable insurance?

A first step can be to find out what others have experienced with various insurance companies and agents. Friends and neighbors may know a company's reputation for service or an agent's reputation for integrity and personal concern. It is also good to stay alert to news reports indicating which insurance companies may be having problems.

Additionally, a company's record and financial standing may be checked by consulting insurance rating guides at a library or a bookstore or on the Internet. These can provide the answers to such questions as: Is the company financially secure? Has it been in business successfully for many years? Is it known for handling claims quickly and amicably?

Insurance rating guides, however, should not be considered infallible. One long-established, multibillion-dollar insurance company had to be taken over by the government only one week after it had been rated as superior in a well-known handbook!

## Role of Insurance Agents

An insurance agent is normally committed to a particular insurance company. A broker, or independent agent, may consult various companies to find the best insurance available for a given price. Both need to maintain a good relationship with clients in order to keep their business. When an insurance agent is trustworthy and concerned, he can be of great aid to his clients.

First, a good agent or broker can help a client to select appropriate coverage from the seemingly endless list of insurance options. He will also explain the details of the policy to his client. As many well know, insurance policies are notoriously complicated. The president of one insurance company admitted that he did not understand parts of his own homeowner's policy!

An agent's explanation can help the client to avoid unpleasant surprises. For instance, most property- and health-insurance policies have a deductible. This is a set amount that the insured person must pay—say, for car repairs or medical bills—before the insurance company pays its share of a claim. The agent can also become his client's advocate with the insurance company in case the client has difficulty obtaining a settlement.

## Insurance and Christians

Does a Christian who trusts in God's help and anticipates the end of the system of things need insurance? Back in the year 1910, some posed this question to Charles Taze Russell, editor of the magazine now known as *The Watchtower*, companion magazine to *Awake!* Russell acknowledged that the Bible foretells the end of the present economic system, adding that personally he carried no life insurance.

"Nevertheless all are not situated alike," Russell observed. "A father having dependent wife and children—if the latter be of tender years and unable to make their own



**A trustworthy agent can help you to make decisions about insurance**

living—has some responsibility for them.” (1 Timothy 5:8) A man might set aside funds to provide for his family, Russell noted. “But in case he could not do this, he might be able to discharge his duty toward them through the medium of life insurance.”

One responsible for a family might also provide health, disability, and other forms of insurance for its members. Many single individuals carry insurance to facilitate obtaining needed services as well as to protect themselves from going into debt in case of accident or illness.

Honesty comes into play in connection with insurance. A true Christian would certainly never deceive an insurance company, either when filling out an insurance application or when making a claim. (Hebrews 13:18) He or she

would keep in mind that the purpose of insurance is to compensate for loss. It is not a lottery ticket—a chance to live a life of luxury.—1 Corinthians 6:10.

Christians obey all laws related to such requirements as obtaining insurance. Where the law states that they must have proper insurance to operate a business or drive a car, they comply. (Romans 13:5-7) Honesty and practical wisdom also dictate keeping up with the payment of premiums. If payments are not made, the company may cancel the policy and not pay claims. It is prudent to verify payments periodically by checking with the company

directly and to retain written proof of payment, such as canceled checks.

Whether insurance is available where you live or not, there are basic precautions that can help you to avoid loss and thus spare you and your loved ones pain that no insurance claim can erase. We will next consider some of these precautions.

**Many carry insurance, whether required to by law or not**



# Insurance That Everyone Needs

**W**HETHER you live where insurance is common or where it is nonexistent, there is a type of insurance that everyone can and should obtain. Since "insurance" can refer to "a means of guaranteeing protection or safety," how can you avail yourself of that kind of insurance?

You can do so by taking practical steps to reduce the risks to which you are exposed. The Bible observes that "time and unforeseen occurrence" affect everyone. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Yet, by not taking unnecessary chances, the possibility of suffering injury or loss is reduced.

## Think of the Future

Showing practical wisdom is a protection. During times of relative economic prosperity, it may be possible to put aside something for a rainy day—a time of need. In ancient times the God-fearing man Joseph distinguished himself as "a man discreet and

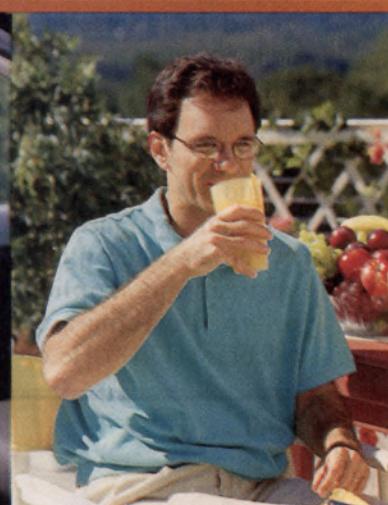
wise" by saving up foodstuffs for the whole land of Egypt during a time of plenty. When the land was later struck by famine, Joseph's actions provided for not only the Egyptians but also his own family.—Genesis 41:33-36.

Being modest in our consumption can also serve as a protection. We can save money and reduce stress by not constantly pursuing the latest gadget, fashion, or entertainment—a course that adds little or nothing to our genuine security. In fact, as already noted, the more material possessions a person has, the greater the possibility of suffering theft or loss.—Luke 12:15.

## Be Safety Conscious

We can reduce much of the risk in life by simply being safety conscious. How many tragic car accidents could be avoided if everyone drove carefully and at safe speeds? Think, too, of how many lives would be spared if no one drove while overtired or af-

*Being conscious of safety and health is a form of insurance*



ter drinking alcohol. There are also other driving risks that are within our control.

For instance, in several countries the law prohibits use of a cellular telephone while driving. One study concluded that such use increases the risk of an accident fourfold. That is as much increase in risk of accident as is driving with a blood-alcohol level of 0.1 percent, the point at which in many places a person is considered legally too drunk to drive.

The regular use of seat belts also reduces the risk of death for drivers and passengers. But never assume that having such safety devices as seat belts and air bags or having insurance makes it all right to take chances. Research shows that such thinking leads to more accidents.

Being safety conscious is also good insurance in the home and in the workplace. Are your living and work areas neat and free of hazards? Take a look around. Is there anything in a walkway over which people could trip? Are sharp objects or hot appliances—stoves, heaters, irons—located where people could get cut or burned? Are there accumulations of paper or other flammable materials? Be especially alert for hazards to children. For example, are alcoholic bev-

erages and all poisonous cleaning products out of the reach of small children?

### Take Care of Your Health

By being health conscious in a reasonable way, you can lower your risk of illness. In this regard, knowledge can serve as a form of insurance. Be aware of hazards to your health, and take prompt action when health problems develop. More important, learn how to maintain your health and that of your family. Remember the old saying: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

*Awake!* has long provided information that encourages people to live in harmony with Bible principles and thereby avoid habits and life-styles that are damaging to health. For example, among the many subjects considered in *Awake!* have been the importance of cleanliness, a proper diet, sufficient sleep, and regular exercise as well as the need to control stress and the pace of life.

### A Vital Kind of Insurance

In this imperfect world, insurance can be a very practical tool, but no insurance policy can completely protect us or fully compensate for our losses. Yet, whether insurance is available to them or not, there are people who are confident that they will not be left on their own. Why? Because when



disasters strike, genuine followers of Jesus Christ—those who serve his Father, Jehovah God—do what they can to ease the burdens of one another.—Psalm 83:18; James 2:15-17; 1 John 3:16-18.

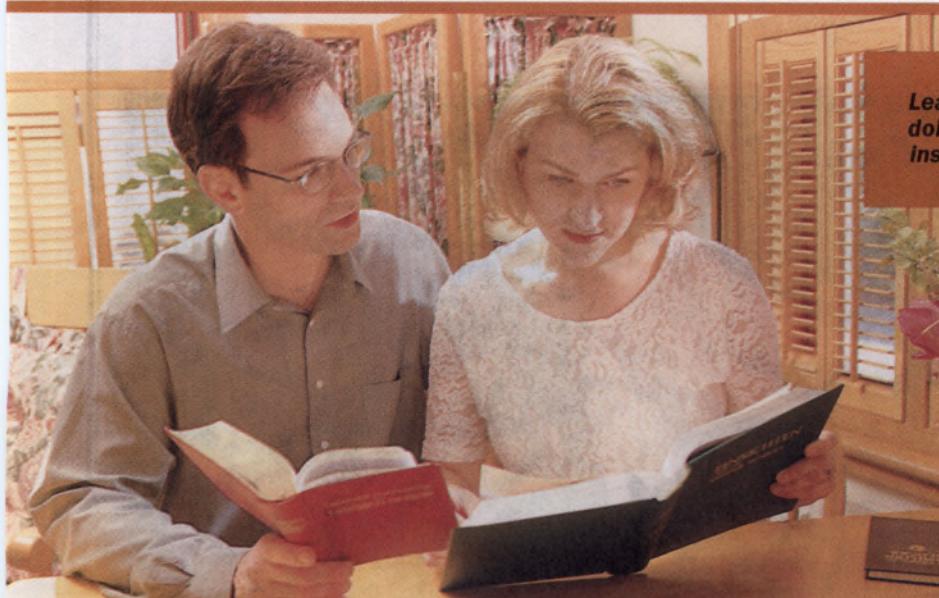
Furthermore, Jehovah himself promises never to abandon his faithful servants. A Bible psalmist wrote: “In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up.” (Psalm 27:10) As the Source of life, Jehovah can resurrect those who die, and according to the Bible, he has empowered his Son, Jesus Christ, to raise the dead. (Psalm 36:9; John 6:40, 44) Yet, God’s Word indicates that not everyone will be resurrected. (John 17:12) How, then, can we ensure that we are remembered by God in the resurrection?

In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke, in effect, about the most reliable form of insurance. He said: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —Matthew 6:19-21.

Often people think of accumulating a nest egg in the hopes that it will ensure them a more comfortable life when they are older. Jesus, however, identified a more secure form of insurance. Its value is inestimable, and it will never fail! He explained: “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.

By obtaining accurate knowledge of God and his Son and applying what we learn in our lives, we will build up a good record with God. (Hebrews 6:10) Both the apostles Peter and John, basing their beliefs on the teaching of their Master, Jesus Christ, emphasized that the present system of human rule will end. Yet, John explained: “He that does the will of God remains forever.”—1 John 2:17; Matthew 24:3, 14; 2 Peter 3:7, 13.

We can be confident that if we serve God and die, he will resurrect us or that if we live to the time when he brings this system of things to its end, he will preserve us alive into his righteous new world. Indeed, God’s promise is to “wipe out every tear from [our] eyes” and to make “all things new.” (Revelation 21:4, 5) Serving God and placing trust in his promises is truly the best insurance of all. And it is available to everyone.



**Learning about God and  
doing his will is the best  
insurance for the future**

# COPING WITH MARFAN'S SYNDROME

## When Joints Dislocate

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BRITAIN



"I take morphine twice a day, in time-release form. This keeps me going, but when pain breaks through, I resort to liquid morphine." Michelle, a fair-haired middle-aged woman smiled softly as she spoke. At her side her husband, Philip, nodded reassuringly.

**W**HEN things get bad," Michelle continued, "every movement hurts because my joints are not held in place. Then when the nerves stretch as a result, the pain can be excruciating." Michelle has bravely contended with health problems for decades. She suffers from Marfan's syndrome.

What is this illness? Is there a cure? I determined to find out.

### A Sinister Syndrome

I discovered that the syndrome is named after Antonin Marfan, a French pediatrician. In 1896 he described the condition that came to bear his name. Although the syndrome is rare—estimated to affect only 1 person in 10,000—victims cut across all social and ethnic boundaries.

The syndrome is identified as a genetic disorder. Since the gene responsible for it is dominant, it can be passed to children even if only one parent suffers from the syndrome. For this reason the disorder is often observed in families generation after genera-

tion. At present, there is no cure, even if the condition is diagnosed early in life.

Michelle is tall and thin, with long arms, narrow hands and feet, and long fingers and toes. This can be an indication of Marfan's syndrome. Most individuals affected will not have *all* the signs and complications associated with the syndrome, but once one has been identified, doctors wisely look for others. What are some of them?

### Physical Signs to Look For

A common effect of Marfan's syndrome is myopia—nearsightedness. About 50 percent of sufferers also experience dislocation of the ocular lens. In addition, the aortic valve may be affected. This valve keeps the blood in the aorta—the body's largest artery—from leaking back into the heart.

Doctors usually stress that individuals suffering from Marfan's syndrome should not engage in activities requiring vigorous exertion. Even though only 1 in 10 with the syndrome may develop serious heart problems, the inherent weakness is there and

caution is advised. If the aorta ruptures, death is usually inevitable. Flo Hyman, a six-foot-five-inch U.S. women's Olympic volleyball player, died at the age of 31 during a match in Japan in 1986 from complications of Marfan's syndrome.

Those with Marfan's syndrome may also suffer abnormality in chest structure as well as curvature of the spine. In severe cases, upper jaw and palate problems are evident. When the syndrome is diagnosed in childhood, careful monitoring is necessary, with physical therapy and perhaps surgery playing a part. Some sufferers have difficulty with joint dislocation, as Michelle does. What causes this?

#### Role of Fibrillin

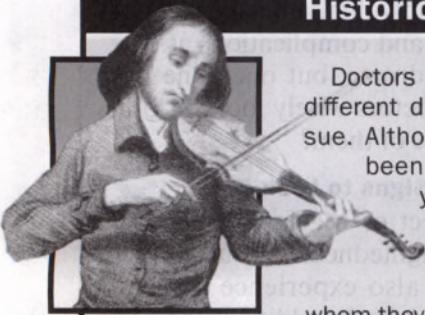
In 1986, scientists isolated a protein called fibrillin. This protein is an essential component of connective tissue and appears to contribute to its strength and elasticity. In 1991 a defective gene, mapped to the human chromosome 15, was identified as the cause

of Marfan's syndrome. Normally this gene tells the body to produce fibrillin. Apparently, because the gene is defective, the body's production of fibrillin is scant or faulty, causing tissues to stretch abnormally, since they cannot withstand normal stress. This may explain the difficulties some Marfan's syndrome patients have with their lungs. Strong connective tissue is essential to provide stability and elasticity to the tiny air sacs in the lungs.

This does not mean, however, that those with Marfan's syndrome are automatically more susceptible to asthma, bronchitis, or even emphysema. Yet, spontaneous lung collapse sometimes occurs, and when it does, prompt medical attention is important. Michelle told me that she has to be alert to such an emergency involving her lungs, since they are quite badly affected.

By now I was interested in learning how Michelle manages to cope with the pressures of everyday life.

### Historical Evidence?



From the book *Great Men and Famous Women*

Doctors have identified up to 200 different disorders of connective tissue. Although such disorders have been identified only in recent years, scientists and historians have reviewed physical characteristics of famous people of the past whom they believe may have had Marfan's syndrome or a kindred condition.

The tall, thin violinist Niccolò Paganini, who lived from 1782 to 1840, is thought to have been a sufferer. So remarkable were his talents that some claimed that he had sold his soul to the Devil in return for his prowess. Paganini's physician, Dr. Francesco Bennati, observed: "His hand is no larger than normal, but thanks to the elasticity peculiar to all its parts, his span is doubled. By these means, for example, he can—without altering the position of his hand—bend the upper joints of the fingers

of the left hand in a lateral direction, and with the greatest ease and rapidity."

Looking further back in time, researchers are also intrigued by Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten, the husband of Nefertiti. He is portrayed as a thin-faced man with long neck, arms, hands, and feet. His dynasty suffered many early deaths, which is a scenario representative of ancient Marfan's syndrome sufferers.



Ägyptisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

### **She Learned to Cope**

"At the age of 15, I experienced total body pain from what was subsequently diagnosed as Marfan's syndrome," Michelle explained. "Our family now wonders if my father had this condition. For many years he suffered from arthritis, and that tends to mask any evidences of Marfan's syndrome. Our son, Javan, now 24, is definitely affected, but just how it may develop in him remains to be seen."

"In recent years I took steroids, which helped considerably, but when I had to discontinue this treatment, the pain increased.\* My shoulders can partially dislocate, as can my hands, knees, wrists, and ankles. If this happens at night when I turn over in bed, I wake up screaming. But Philip is such a supportive husband! He will sit up with me, sometimes all night, and he gives me much comfort, praying for strength for both of us."

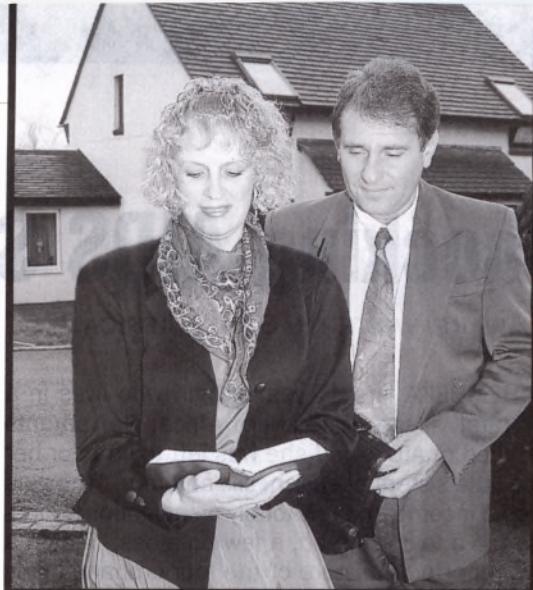
"I still do what housework I can, although getting upstairs is difficult, as I have to use a chair lift. But Philip and Javan do much to help me. When things are bad, I have steel-strengthened supports that can be strapped to my hands. Others strapped to my legs give support to my ankles. But these supports are cumbersome and rather restrictive. Moreover, the longer I keep them on, the less exercise I get—and that is not good for me."

"Surely you must get depressed at times," I said.

"Yes, of course," Michelle responded. "Depression comes easily with constant pain and heart problems. So I pray for my Christian brothers and sisters in other lands who may suffer similarly. I am so grateful to have a supportive family and the care of a compassionate doctor and his medical team."

"Sometimes I have to stay in bed more than I would like, and just sitting at home can make me feel worse. For this reason, after talking

\* Steroids are not a standard treatment for Marfan's syndrome. Much depends on the extent of the problem and on medical preference.



**Philip often accompanies Michelle in the house-to-house ministry**

things over with Philip, 11 years ago I decided to enroll as a regular pioneer, a full-time evangelizer. Although my condition has deteriorated since then, I do what I am able, and Philip often accompanies me in my house-to-house ministry. But I also speak to others informally, as well as on the telephone and by writing letters.

"Sharing the truths of the Bible with my neighbors brings me great joy, especially when I see some become baptized servants of Jehovah. Just talking about Jehovah God's new world, in which pain and sickness—even death—will be no more, lifts my spirits as nothing else can. As I walk along, I talk silently to Jehovah, and I experience the strength of his holy spirit, enabling me to endure my pain. Believe me, there is no power like it in the world!"

Michelle explained that she has gained particular comfort from reading the Bible. She mentioned Psalm 73:28; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 4:13; and Revelation 21:3, 4 as texts that have been especially comforting to her. After reviewing these Bible texts myself, I feel that they can truly be an encouragement to anyone who is coping with a stressful situation.

# Shocking AIDS Statistics!

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICA

**T**HEMBEKA is a 12-year-old girl who lives in a rural village of southern Africa. Her parents died of AIDS, and she was left to care for her three little sisters aged ten, six, and four. "The girls have no income and rely totally on neighbours kindness . . . a loaf of bread, a few potatoes," stated a news reporter. A picture of the four orphaned girls was displayed on the front page of a South African newspaper that reported on the 13th International Aids Conference, held during July 2000 in Durban, South Africa.

Millions of AIDS orphans face a situation similar to that of Thembeka and her younger sisters. The conference discussed methods of dealing with the growing AIDS crisis, such as education on the prevention of AIDS through the use of condoms; the use of less expensive AIDS treatment, which is now available; and more funding for the development of AIDS vaccines. The vulnerability of women, especially young girls, was also addressed.

Sadly, many AIDS orphans are sought out by men who believe that having sex with a virgin will cure sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, many men will not marry a girl unless she has first produced a child. The use of condoms is therefore seen as a barrier to both marriage and motherhood.

Unfortunately, many girls are ignorant of the risk of AIDS. The South African newspaper *Sowetan* commented on a report that was released at the conference by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): "Unicef's surveys found that 51 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 in South Africa did not know that someone who looks healthy can be infected with HIV and transmit it to them."

Another factor in the spread of AIDS is the sexual

abuse of women. Ranjeni Munusamy, who attended the conference, reported in the *Sunday Times* of Johannesburg, South Africa: "Violence against women, the most disturbing form of male power, remains a major barrier to HIV prevention and care. Its many forms—rape, incest, wife battering and sexual abuse—mean that sex is often coerced, which is itself a risk factor for HIV infection."

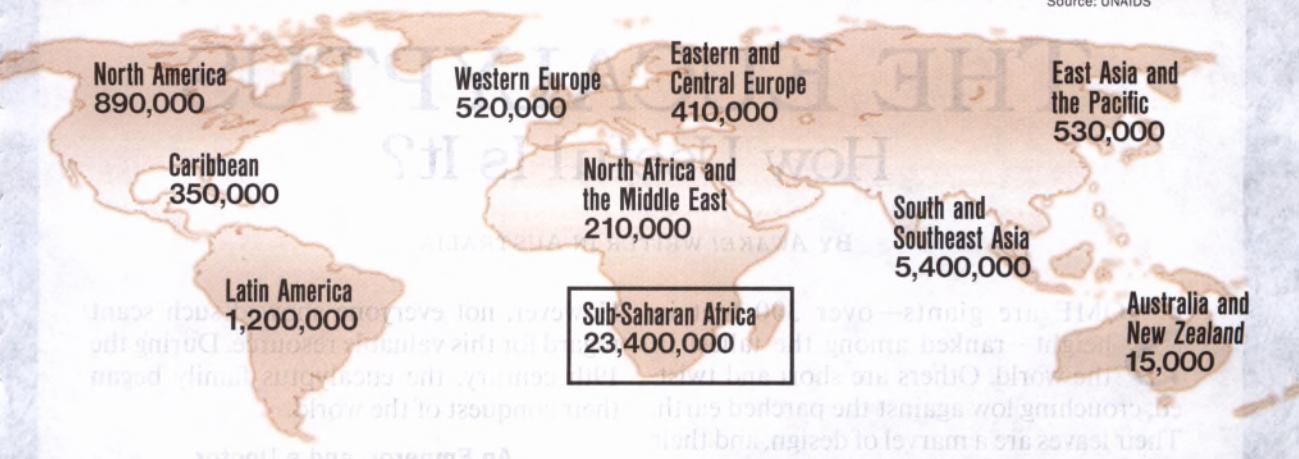
Statistics released at the conference were frightening, as the accompanying chart shows. Every day an estimated 7,000 young people and 1,000 infants are infected with HIV. In one year, 1999, some 860,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teachers because of AIDS.

According to a survey published by the Medical Research Council of South Africa, 4.2 million people in South Africa are infected with HIV, representing 1 out of every 10 citizens. The situation in neighboring countries is worse. *The Natal Witness* reported on an estimate given by the U.S. Census Bureau: "The populations of some Aids-stricken African countries will soon begin to fall as millions die of the disease, and life expectancy by the end of the decade will plunge to around 30."

The AIDS tragedy is further evidence that mankind is living in the "critical times hard to deal with" that the Bible foretold would occur "in the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Lovers of God's Word, the Bible, look forward to a complete and permanent solution to AIDS and all the other problems plaguing mankind. Soon, God's Kingdom will take over the administration of earth's affairs. In the new world of righteousness, poverty and oppression will be things of the past. (Psalm 72:12-14; 2 Peter 3:13) Instead, earth's inhabitants will be restored to perfect health, and none of them will ever say: "I am sick."—Isaiah 33:24.

# NUMBER OF ADULTS (AGED 15 to 49) WITH HIV/AIDS, END OF 1999

Source: UNAIDS



## PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (AGED 15 to 49) WITH HIV/AIDS IN 16 AFRICAN COUNTRIES, END OF 1999

Source: UNAIDS

1	<b>Botswana</b>	35.8%
2	<b>Swaziland</b>	25.2
3	<b>Zimbabwe</b>	25.0
4	<b>Lesotho</b>	23.5
5	<b>Zambia</b>	20.0
6	<b>South Africa</b>	20.0
7	<b>Namibia</b>	19.5
8	<b>Malawi</b>	16.0
9	<b>Kenya</b>	14.0
10	<b>C.A.R.</b>	14.0
11	<b>Mozambique</b>	13.2
12	<b>Djibouti</b>	11.7
13	<b>Burundi</b>	11.3
14	<b>Rwanda</b>	11.2
15	<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	10.7
16	<b>Ethiopia</b>	10.6



**Thembeka with her sisters**

Photo: Brett Eloff

# THE EUCLYPTUS

## How Useful Is It?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN AUSTRALIA

SOME are giants—over 300 feet in height—ranked among the tallest in the world. Others are short and twisted, crouching low against the parched earth. Their leaves are a marvel of design, and their blossoms, a delight to the eye. In one way or another, you have likely used part of this tree yourself.

A few have aristocratic names such as alpine ash and Tasmanian oak, but most are just known as the common gum tree. Technically speaking, though, true gum is a water-soluble substance made of carbohydrates, and no eucalypti produce this. So the name gum tree is actually a misnomer. The trees are more correctly identified as the genus *Eucalyptus*, and there are over 600 members in this family of Australian natives.

Eucalypti thrive in the tropical heat of Australia's Northern Territory as well as in the arid plains of the outback. But they also flourish in the Antarctic winds of southern Tasmania and the misty conditions of the coastal mountain ranges. So pervasive are they that one 19th-century explorer and zoologist complained: "We can never get beyond the sight of the eternal gum trees: there is not the slightest variation whatever in the foliage for mile after mile."

Since the influx of European settlers to Australia in the 19th century, the eucalyptus has suffered heavy casualties. An estimated 100,000 square miles of these trees have been torn out by the roots because the trees were considered a hindrance to progress.

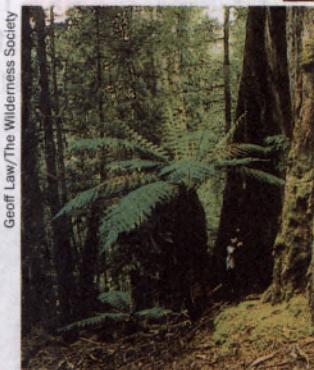
However, not everyone showed such scant regard for this valuable resource. During the 19th century, the eucalyptus family began their conquest of the world.

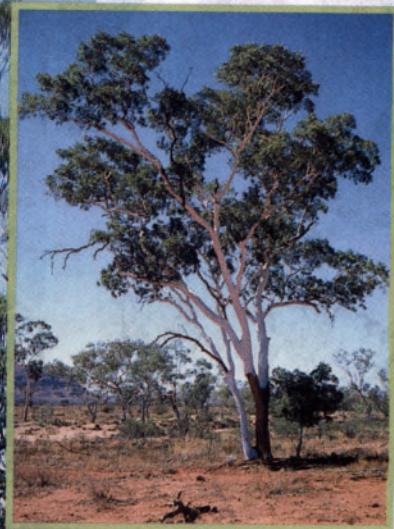
### An Emperor, and a Doctor

In the 1880's, Emperor Menelik II of Abyssinia, now called Ethiopia, needed shade trees and a ready source of firewood for his arid new capital city, Addis Ababa. No native tree of Africa was found suitable for this deforested area. The emperor's experts therefore looked elsewhere to find a tree that was thriving under a scorching sun at least as harsh as their own. "Addis Ababa" means "New Flower," and the name may have been given in honor of the eucalyptus, a useful import that came to play a vital role in Ethiopia's economy.

Another man who contributed to the modern migration of the eucalyptus is Dr. Edmundo Navarro de Andrade. Determined to rebuild Brazil's rapidly dwindling forests, in 1910 he started importing eucalypti from Australia. He was responsible for planting 38 million of them. Today there are more than two billion eucalypti under cultivation in Brazil.

Thus, in addition to its native rain forests, Brazil lays claim to the largest population of





**Eucalypti are ranked among the tallest trees in the world**



**Bees use eucalyptus nectar to produce exquisite honey**



Courtesy of the  
Mount Ararat Botanic Gardens



**Eucalypti "produce some of the heaviest, hardest and most durable woods known"**



**Koalas (left) and the gliding opossum (above) feed on eucalyptus leaves**

© Alan Root/Okapia/PR

eucalypti outside Australia. The benefits to Brazil's economy have been such that for introducing this valuable asset to his country, Dr. Navarro was awarded a special medal for distinguished service.

#### A Tree of Life

Some eucalypti, such as the mallees, make the most of the drought-cracked earth by storing large quantities of water in their roots. Australian Aborigines and early explorers survived in the arid outback by exploiting these underground water bottles. Lengths of the surface roots were dug up and broken into short sections. When air is blown into one end of a section, pale-brown sap can be forced from it. While not the most palatable of beverages, it is estimated that 1.5 quarts of this lifesaving liquid can be extracted from a 30-foot root.

Other members of the family flourish in marshy conditions, greedily soaking up water from sodden soils. This talent was utilized by

the Italians, who used swamp-loving eucalypti to help drain the once mosquito-infested Pontine marshlands. This area has now been transformed into valuable farmland.

More than 50 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe have adopted eucalypti for their commercial and aesthetic value. Furniture makers prize their rich-red and honey-gold timbers. One authority states: "The eucalypts produce some of the heaviest, hardest and most durable woods known. The quality of the timber, coupled with the rapid growth-rate . . . , makes this genus the most valuable source of hardwood in the world."

Water-resistant varieties of the tree are used in the construction of ships, marine piers, telephone poles, fences, and paving blocks. In addition, beautiful gum-nut blossoms on varieties known as yellow box and ironbark produce sweet nectar, which bees convert into a particularly delicious honey. In recent years, 4.5 million tons of eu-

eucalyptus wood chips have been exported from Australia, resulting in an income of \$250 million annually.

### Kino, Oil, and Tannin

A blood-red, gumlike substance called kino oozes from the bark and timber of the eucalyptus. Some types of kino are used to protect wood from shipworms. Kino is also employed in producing a drug that helps stop bleeding. The bark of other species yields tannin, used for the tanning of leather and the dyeing of fabrics.

The leaves are a marvel of design and a reservoir of valuable oil. They droop like listless fingers on a limp hand, their tips pointing to the base of the tree. This design helps the foliage act like a large funnel. Precious moisture is captured on the surface of the leaves, and then it drips from their leathery tips to the waiting root system.

Eucalyptus oil, which has a strong, invigorating aroma, is extracted from the leaf by a steaming and distilling process. It is used widely, for example, in perfumes, soaps, medicines, confectionery, and cleaning products. In its natural setting, the oil transpires from the leaf and fills the air with tiny droplets that refract the sunlight, giving the eucalyptus forest a characteristic blue hue. The Blue Mountains, which define the western extremity of the city of Sydney, were given their unusual name because of this phenomenon.

### Home to Some Fussy Eaters

The most famous inhabitant of the eucalyptus forest is the adorable ball of fur known as the koala. This fastidious herbivore prefers to dine on the tips of 12 or so varieties of eucalyptus leaves. Such an exclusive diet would prove lethal to most animals but not the koala. Why not?

This is because of the koala's specially designed digestive system, which includes an appendix that is six to eight feet in length. By comparison, a human appendix is only three

to six inches in length. The koala's unique appendix allows the little animal to extract from this menu all the proteins, carbohydrates, and fats that it needs.

A less-known Australian native that shares the koala's strict diet of eucalyptus leaves is the largest of the gliding opossums. This furry marsupial is about the size of a domestic cat. It has a shaggy tail about a foot and a half long and flaps of skin stretched between its front and rear paws. Utilizing these fleshy wings, an opossum will leap from a limb, glide for up to 100 yards, make 90-degree turns as it flies, and then safely grasp the next branch.

### Bushfires and Regrowth

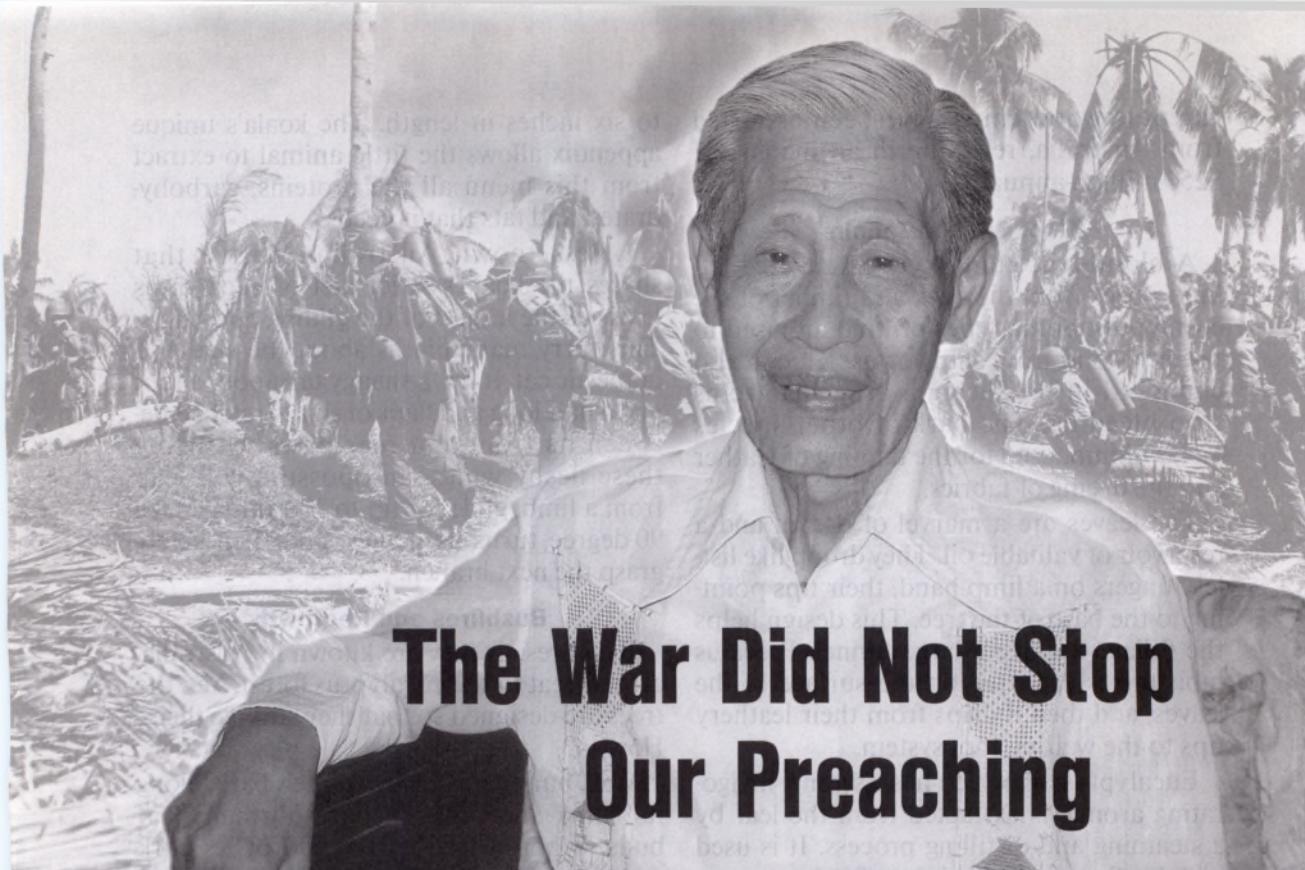
Bushfires, as they are known in Australia, are a threat to the eucalyptus forest. Yet, the trees are designed so that they survive them. How so?

Well, buried just below a tree's bark, along its trunk and branches, are dormant leaf buds. When a tree is stripped of its bark and leaves by a fire, these buds spring to life. They clothe the blackened trunk of the tree with an overcoat of fresh green leaves. As a result, the parent tree is able to survive. Moreover, seeds of the tree lying dormant on the ground often seize the opportunity to germinate, resulting in new growth.

### A Tree to Be Appreciated

Have you soothed your throat with a medicine extracted from the eucalyptus or savored a sweet made with eucalyptus honey? Have you been transported by a boat constructed with the tree's timbers, or have you been housed or warmed by the wood of a eucalyptus? Chances are that in some way you have been benefited by this remarkable tree. So the next time you see a furry koala—or admire the photo of one—may it call to your mind the marvelous design of the tree that the koala calls home.

Indeed, the versatile, tenacious eucalyptus is a tree with many uses.



# The War Did Not Stop Our Preaching

AS TOLD BY LEODEGARIO BARLAAN

In 1942, during World War II, Japan and the United States were locked in battle for the Philippines, my homeland. I was at the mountain village of Tabonan, where local guerrillas fighting the Japanese had taken me into custody.

I was beaten, accused of being a spy, and threatened with execution.

Let me explain how I got into this situation and how I survived.

I WAS born on January 24, 1914, in the town of San Carlos, Pangasinan. In the 1930's, Father sent me to school to study agriculture. On Sundays I attended Mass, and the priest would speak about the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As a result, I wanted to read them.

One day I went to the convent to buy a copy of the Gospels with money I had obtained from selling some vegetables. Instead,

I was given a booklet entitled *The Way to Heaven*, and it did not contain the Gospels. This disappointed me. Later, pursuing my desire to obtain the Gospels, I traveled to Manila. There my uncle, who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, provided me with a copy of the complete Bible.

In Manila, I met several Witnesses, whose ability to quote scriptures impressed me. From them I received satisfactory answers

to many questions. Eventually, my uncle, Ricardo Uson, took me to a meeting at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. When nearing the place, I lit a cigarette. "Throw that away," my uncle said. "Jehovah's Witnesses don't smoke." So I threw the cigarette away and never smoked again. I met Joseph Dos Santos, the branch overseer, as well as some other Witnesses. Today, all these decades later, I still remember those fine Christian brothers.

### A Desire to Serve God

By October 1937, while a student at Los Baños Agricultural College, I no longer attended Mass. Instead, I read the Bible along with the literature that had been given to me by my uncle. A group of Jehovah's Witnesses visited the college compound, and as a result of discussions with one of them, Elvira Alinsod, my desire to serve Jehovah God became strong.

When I told my instructors that I planned to quit school, they asked: "Who will support you?" I explained that I was confident that if I served God, he would support me. After quitting school, I went to the Watch Tower Society's office and presented myself as a volunteer, explaining: "I have read the publications *Loyalty*, *Riches*, and *Where Are the Dead?* Now I want to serve Jehovah full-time." I was directed to Cebu Province to join three pioneers, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called.

### Beginning My Preaching

On July 15, 1938, Salvador Liwag met me at the pier when I arrived on the island of Cebu. The next day, I started in the house-to-house ministry. No one trained me. I just presented the householder with a testimony card that explained our work. In fact, I knew only two words in Cebuano, the local language. Thus began my first day in the ministry.

When we started witnessing in a new town, it was our custom to go to the municipal building first. There Brother Liwag would witness to the mayor; Pablo Bautista, to the chief of police; and Conrado Daclan, to the judge. I would speak to the postmaster. Then we would visit the bus terminal, the police barracks, the stores, and the schools. In addition, we would call on people at their homes. We presented the Bible study aid *Enemies*. As I imitated the way my companions gave a testimony, little by little I learned to speak Cebuano, and I began to place books. Within three months we finished the whole province of Cebu—54 towns. Then I asked Brother Liwag: "Can I be baptized now?"

"Not yet, brother," he answered. So we transferred to another island, Bohol, and preached there for a month and a half, covering 36 more towns. Again I asked to be baptized. "Not yet, Brother Barlaan," I was told. So having finished Bohol and then Camiguin Island, we went to the big island of Mindanao and preached in Cagayan de Oro City.

By this time Virginio Cruz joined our group. He had been a public-school teacher and had quit to become a pioneer. We moved on to other towns and eventually reached Lake Lanao. While there I again asked if I could be baptized. At last, on December 28, 1938, after about six months of pioneering, Brother Cruz baptized me in the waters of Lake Lanao at the town of Lumbatan.

### Rewarded for Trusting in God

Later I joined three pioneers in Negros Occidental. They were Fulgencio de Jesus, Esperanza de Jesus, and Natividad Santos, whom we called Naty. We preached together in many towns in that province. We really had to put full trust in Jehovah, since at

times our finances were meager. Once we wanted to find fish to go with our rice. I met a man on the beach and asked about buying some, but all of his had been taken to the market. However, he offered me one that he had set aside for himself. I asked how much it was. "Never mind," he said. "You can have it."

I thanked him. But as I was leaving, I realized that one fish would not be enough for four people. Passing by a small creek, I was

## We were suspected of being Japanese spies and so were interrogated the rest of the night

surprised to see a fish lying on top of a stone, still wet from the water. I thought, 'Maybe it's dead.' I went to pick it up and was surprised to find that it was alive. Grabbing it, I held on tightly, remembering immediately Jesus' promise: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."

—Matthew 6:33.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**What Should We Learn  
From History?**

**What Is Interstitial Cystitis?**

**The Challenges  
of a United Germany**

### Preaching in the Midst of War

When our group of pioneers grew to nine, two groups were formed. Ours was assigned to Cebu. It was now December 1941, and World War II was in progress in the Philippines. While we were in the town of Tuburan, a Philippine lieutenant came to our room at midnight. "Sons, wake up," he said. "The soldiers are looking for you." We were suspected of being Japanese spies and so were interrogated the rest of the night.

Afterward, we were placed in the municipal jail. The U.S. armed forces in Cebu City required us to provide them with copies of each of our books so that they could determine if we were Japanese spies. Many local folks visited us in jail, curious to see what those accused of being Japanese spies looked like. Some asked questions, and we gave them a witness about God's Kingdom.

After we had spent five days in jail, the chief of police received a telegram from the U.S. Army headquarters, directing him to release the Witnesses of Jehovah. However, he instructed us not to preach anymore because it was now wartime. We explained that we could not stop preaching because we had a commission from God to do this work. (Acts 5:28, 29) The chief became angry and said: "If you continue preaching, I'll let the people kill you."

In the days that followed, the chief of police sought to have us rearrested. Eventually, a squad of U.S. Army soldiers stopped us, and a lieutenant named Soriano asked Sister Santos: "Will you stop preaching?"

"No," she replied.

"Suppose we put you before a firing squad?" he asked.

"That would not change our decision," she explained.

At that, we were all put on a cargo truck and taken to Cebu City, where we appeared before Colonel Edmund. Lieutenant So-



*In 1963, with our friends on the Island of Bohol. My wife and I are fourth and fifth from the right*

"Oh my! Jehovah's Witnesses are still inside!" he shouted. "Open the door, and let them out!" We thanked Jehovah for His protection.

Immediately we headed for the mountains to find fellow Witnesses. We located one in the town of Compostela. Earlier

Colonel Edmund introduced us to him by saying: "These are Jehovah's Witnesses. They are Japanese spies!"

"Jehovah's Witnesses?" the colonel asked. "I knew Jehovah's Witnesses very well in America. They are not spies! They are neutral." He then turned to us and said: "Because you are neutral, you will not be released." Later, after we had been held in a storage room for some time, Colonel Edmund spoke with us again and asked: "Are you still neutral?"

"Yes, Sir, we are," we replied.

"Then, you won't be released," he said, "because if we release you, you will continue to preach, and those you convert will become neutral. And if everybody does that, then nobody will fight."

#### **Free to Preach Again**

Later we were transferred to the jail in Cebu City. On April 10, 1942, the Japanese invaded the city. Bombs fell everywhere, and a big fire broke out! The warden saw Sister Santos, whose cell was near the front of the jail.

"Oh my! Jehovah's Witnesses are still inside!" he shouted. "Open the door, and let them

out!" We thanked Jehovah for His protection. Immediately we headed for the mountains to find fellow Witnesses. We located one in the town of Compostela. Earlier he had taken a lead in the preaching work, but now he decided to stop preaching and go off to Cebu City and develop a business selling various goods. Our decision, however, was to continue preaching about God's Kingdom, come what may.

We had many copies of the booklet *Comfort All That Mourn*, and we worked hard to place them in the hands of the people. However, many tried to frighten us by saying that if the Japanese saw us, they would cut off our heads. Soon afterward, an anti-Japanese guerrilla movement was organized, and the one who had ceased preaching and had gone off to do business in Cebu City was arrested. We were saddened to learn that he was accused of being a Japanese spy and was executed.

#### **Accused of Being Spies**

In the meantime we continued preaching in the mountains. One day we learned of an interested woman, but to reach her, we had to pass several guerrilla outposts. We came to the village of Mangabon, where the woman resided, but a squad of soldiers there found us and shouted: "What is your purpose in coming here?"

"We are Jehovah's Witnesses," I replied. "Do you want to hear the message we

are bringing by means of the phonograph?" When they responded favorably, I played the record *The Value of Knowledge*. Afterward, we were searched and questioned and then taken to the guerrilla headquarters at the village of Tabonan. We prayed for Jehovah's protection because it was commonly reported that almost everyone taken there was executed.

We were kept under guard and mistreated. This brings us to the situation that I described at the beginning, when I was beaten and the lieutenant pointed at me and said: "You are a spy!" Our mistreatment continued for a while, but instead of being executed, we were sentenced to hard labor.

My brother Bernabe was one of the pioneers imprisoned at Tabonan. Each morning we prisoners were required to sing "God Bless America" and "God Bless the Philippines." Instead, the Witnesses sang "Who Is on the Lord's Side?" Once, the officer in charge shouted: "Anyone who is not singing 'God Bless America' will be hanged on that acacia tree!" But despite such threats, none of us were killed. Eventually, we were transferred to other camps. Finally, my release papers, dated July 1943, came. By then, I had been a prisoner for eight months and ten days.

#### A Lifetime of Preaching

Our desire to see interested individuals to whom we had preached earlier moved us to hike 40 miles to the city of Toledo. Regular meetings were established there, and many people were eventually

baptized. Finally, the war ended in 1945. Two years later, almost nine years after my baptism, I was able to attend my first convention, which was held at the Santa Ana Racetrack in Manila. About 4,200 assembled for the public talk "The Joy of All the People."

Before the war started, we had about 380 Witnesses in the Philippines, but by 1947, there were some 2,700! Since then I have continued to enjoy many privileges in Jehovah's service. From 1948 to 1950, I served as a traveling overseer in the Surigao region. In 1951, I married Natividad Santos, who had courageously preached with our group during the war. After our marriage we served in the traveling work throughout Mindanao from 1954 to 1972.

So that we could be near our aged parents and offer them assistance, we became special pioneers in 1972. Even though we are both in our 80's, we continue to pioneer, having spent, between us, more than 120 years in the full-time ministry. What a joy it has been to us to see the number of those proclaiming the good news of God's Kingdom in the Philippines grow to more than 130,000! It is our desire to help many more to appreciate that God's Kingdom is the only hope for enjoying true peace and happiness on earth.

**With my wife today**



## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

"We'd sneak out at midnight and go to the coffee shop to be with some guys. Then we started hanging out at the hill. The kids all smoked, although I never did. We'd sit around and talk about whatever, listening to heavy metal music. Then we'd go home at 5:00 a.m. before my parents woke up."—Tara.\*

"When my dad left for work and my mom was asleep, I'd sneak out the front door. I'd leave it open so that she couldn't hear me close it—it was a metal door. I'd hang out with my friends all night. Then in the morning when the sun came up, I'd try to sneak back in. Sometimes she discovered I was gone and would lock me out."—Joseph.



## What's So Bad About Sneaking Out?

**S**NEAKING OUT—it sounds exciting and fun. It's a chance to experience life on your own for a few hours, a chance to do what you want and be with whom you want without answering to anyone. Besides, you've probably heard your peers brag about the things that they do and the fun that they have when they sneak out at night. So it may be very tempting for you to try to join them.

In a survey of 110 junior and senior high school students in North America, 55 admitted to sneaking out at least once. Most of them first did so at the age of 14. The problem is so serious that some experts have recommended that parents install electronic alarm systems in their homes to prevent their children from leaving unannounced. Why are so many youths risking their parents' wrath by sneaking out?

### Why Some Sneak Out

Sometimes youths sneak out simply because they are bored and want to have some fun with their friends. The book *Adolescents and Youth* explains that youths might sneak out "because of some restriction, say over an early evening curfew or grounding that kept them from going to some social event. The youth would go anyhow and sometimes manage to return without having been discovered." One 16-year-old explained her reasons for sneaking out. "I feel as though I'm a baby and that I don't have a life," she said. "My curfew is a lot earlier than anyone else's. And my parents won't let me go to the places my friends do . . . So of course I go anyway and lie." Joseph, mentioned at the outset, began sneaking out at age 14 when he went to a rap concert that his parents had forbidden him to attend.

\* Names have been changed.

True, most youths do not have sinister motives for sneaking out. Tara, one of the youths quoted at the outset, said: "The first thing on our mind was not 'Let's go commit some bad sin.' I just wanted to be with my sister, and she wanted to go out and have fun with her friends." Joseph said: "We just hung out. I wanted to talk and be with my friends." But while hanging out with one's friends may rarely lead to major crimes, many youths do get into serious trouble.

### The Risks

Mental-health professional Dr. Lynn E. Ponton argues: "It's normal for teens to take risks." Dr. Ponton goes on to explain that it's normal and perhaps even healthy for youths to want to become independent, to try new things, to be in new and interesting situations. It's part of growing up. But many youths take risk taking beyond all reasonable limits—especially when they are far away from their parents' scrutiny. Says *Teen* magazine: "A formula of peer pressure, boredom, unchanneled energy and perhaps some other catalyst like a beer . . . can lead teens to take the wrong risk—and pay with their lives." One survey listed some of these risky teen activities, including speeding, vandalism, driving while drunk, and stealing.

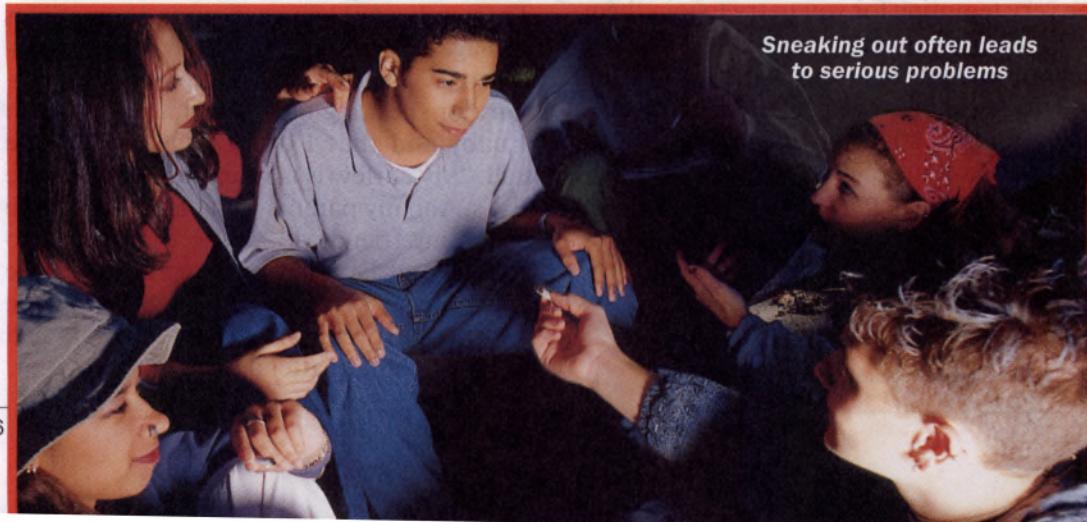
Once you have dabbled in disobedience, it is easy to move on to more serious wrongs. It

is as Jesus said at Luke 16:10: "The person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much." Not surprisingly, then, sneaking out with friends can lead to gross sins. Tara committed fornication. Joseph began selling drugs, got arrested, and went to prison. A Christian youth named John began abusing drugs and stealing cars. Sadly, many youths also reap the physical consequences of such behavior—unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, or addiction to alcohol or drugs.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

### The Damage

Far more devastating than the damage to your body can be the damage to your emotions. A troubled conscience can be very painful. (Psalm 38:3, 4) Joseph says: "There's a saying that you don't know what you have until you lose it. Sometimes I reflect back and can't believe that I was so blind."

Also not to be overlooked is the possible damage to your reputation. Says Ecclesiastes 10:1: "Dead flies are what cause the oil of the ointment maker to stink, to bubble forth. So a little foolishness does to one who is precious for wisdom and glory." In ancient times a valuable ointment or perfume could be ruined by something as tiny as a dead fly. Similarly, your hard-earned reputation could be ruined by just "a little foolishness." And if you are a Christian, such misconduct would



Sneaking out often leads  
to serious problems

no doubt hold you back from privileges in the congregation. After all, how can you encourage others to follow Bible principles when others know that you have not done so yourself?—Romans 2:1-3.

Finally, consider the pain your absence can cause your parents when it is discovered. One parent discusses the horror of discovering that her 15-year-old daughter was not in the house. She describes herself and her husband as being ‘beside themselves with worry’

## **“My parents won’t let me go to the places my friends do . . . I go anyway and lie”**

because of not knowing where their daughter had gone. Do you want to cause such pain and grief to your parents?—Proverbs 10:1.

### **Getting More Freedom**

Understandably, it can be frustrating if your parents seem to be overly strict. But is sneaking out really the answer? Almost invariably, you will eventually get caught. Even if you are clever enough to fool your parents, Jehovah God sees your deeds, even those that are done under the cover of night. (Job 34:21) So sooner or later you will be exposed, likely damaging whatever trust your parents had in you before that. The result? You will lose much of the very thing you wanted—freedom!

Remember: To enjoy freedom, you need to earn your parents’ trust. And the best way to do that is simply to be obedient to them. (Ephesians 6:1-3) If you feel that your parents are being unreasonable in some way,

talk frankly—and respectfully—with them. They may very well consider what you say. On the other hand, you may find that they have good reasons for restricting you somewhat. Even if you don’t agree, never forget that they love you and have your best interests at heart. Keep building on the trust that they have in you, and in due time you will get the freedom that you desire.\*

### **‘Do Not Go With Them’**

Back in ancient times, God-fearing youths were often tempted to join their peers in wild behavior. Solomon thus urged youths: “My son, if sinners try to seduce you, do not consent.... Do not go in the way with them.” (Proverbs 1:10, 15) Heed that counsel when so-called friends try to talk you into sneaking out. Solomon further warns: “Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty.”—Proverbs 22:3.

If you have already begun sneaking out, *stop!* You are only damaging yourself in the long run. Let your parents know what you have been doing, and face up to any punishment or restrictions they might impose. If necessary, choose new friends—friends that will be a good influence on you. (Proverbs 13:20) Seek out more wholesome and less risky ways of enjoying yourself.

Most important, work on your spirituality by reading the Bible and attending Christian meetings. “How will a young man cleanse his path?” asked the psalmist. He answers: “By keeping on guard according to [God’s] word.” (Psalm 119:9) As you gradually make your mind over to do what is right, you will conclude that while sneaking out may be fun and exciting, it just isn’t worth the risks.

\* For information on earning more freedom, see chapter 3 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

## WATCHING THE WORLD

### Keep Learning as You Age

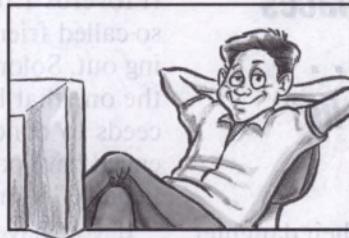
Learning new workplace technologies, such as computers and communication systems, can be stressful for some older workers, reports the *Toronto Star* newspaper. Job trends specialist Ann Eby says that the problem is more often a matter of how they are learning rather than what they are learning. "As we age," explains Julia Kennedy, president of Axiom Training and Development, "our neural processes slow down, but the brain remains healthy." Kennedy observes that unlike children, who are adept at learning by repetition without paying attention to meaning, "adults need to draw connections between what they already know (life experiences) and what they have just learned." While it may take longer for senior workers to learn complex tasks, they still have the ability to learn. Kennedy offers the following suggestions for older workers attempting to learn new and difficult tasks: If possible, schedule your training periods in the morning, try to master concepts rather than every detail, and avoid comparing yourself with others.

### World's Oil Supply Updated

"After a five-year study, the U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] raised its previous estimate of the world's crude oil reserves by 20 percent, to a total of 649 billion barrels," reports the magazine *Scientific American*. "What we did is

look into the future and predict how much [oil] will be discovered in the next 30 years," says Suzanne Weedman, coordinator of USGS World Petroleum Assessment 2000. In addition to newfound reserves, advances in drilling technology add to the world's oil supply by enabling petroleum companies to "squeeze more oil out of existing fields," says the magazine.

### Casual Clothes—Casual Work?



A nationwide survey in Australia found that some office workers believe that dressing casually for work leads to laziness, reports *The Sunday Telegraph*. Nearly 42 percent of those working at Australia's information technology companies now dress casually all the time, and 40 percent of Australian companies have "casual Fridays," when employees may dress casually for the day if they wish. Although the casual-dress approach to work is gaining popularity with workers, 17 percent of the bosses surveyed thought that casual dress affected the performance of employees. This figure closely matches the opinion of workers themselves, with 21 percent of the women and 18 percent of the men stat-

ing that casual dress has a negative impact on production.

### Mozambique Flood Damage

One year ago this month, floodwaters in Mozambique left more than half a million people homeless, destroyed about a third of the country's corn crop, and drowned more than 20,000 head of cattle. While the nation was recovering from this flood, which has been called the worst flood since before 1948, many asked how and why it happened. The journal *African Wildlife* said that urban development, tilling of grasslands, and overgrazing in neighboring countries upriver from Mozambique have destroyed the natural ability of the country's grasslands and wetlands to absorb floodwaters. The runoff of heavy rain, therefore, eventually becomes a raging torrent. David Lindley, coordinator of a South African wetlands project, says: "What humans have done, in our infinite arrogance and lack of foresight, is to upset the integrity of our wetlands and mess with the dynamics of our rivers."

### Cows and Greenhouse Gas

Methane gas is said to be 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide in causing global warming. It is estimated that worldwide, 100 million tons of methane are produced every year by some two billion cattle, sheep, and goats. According to *The Canberra Times*, livestock produce 13 percent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions,

while in New Zealand the figure is about 46 percent. Microorganisms in a ruminant's stomach break down fodder and produce methane, which is released through the animal's mouth. In an effort to reduce the animals' contribution to global warming, scientists are now experimenting with ways to increase milk production per head while reducing the methane produced by the animals.

#### **Smoking Myth Debunked**

"The economic argument that people who smoke are less of a burden on the health-care system than others because they die early is false," reports the *Globe and Mail* newspaper of Canada. Dutch researchers who studied the health status of some 13,000 Dutch and American citizens found that nonsmokers spend less time disabled than do smokers. Dr. Wilma Nusselder of the department of public health at Rotterdam's Erasmus University writes: "Eliminating smoking will not only extend life and result in an increase in the number of years lived without disability, but will also compress disability into a shorter period." According to the *Globe*, "there are about 1.15 billion smokers worldwide, one-third of the planet's adult population. Approximately 943 million of those smokers live in developing countries."

#### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Children**

"Children as young as 11 are being treated for sexually transmitted diseases," reports *The Times* of London. One En-

glish city has twice the national average of gonorrhea, and 1 in 8 of its teenage girls carries chlamydia. Chlamydia infection in England has almost doubled since 1995 and has increased by one fifth among teenagers in the past year alone. Gonorrhea's 56-percent rise countrywide in five years has mainly affected teenagers.

#### **Using Its Head**



Queen ants of the *Blepharidatta conops* species, a native of Brazil's savanna, have a large flat, round head. According to the Brazilian edition of *National Geographic*, the ants use this unusual appendage to block the entrance to a chamber where eggs, larvae, and pupae are stored, protecting these from potential predators. The walls of the queen's chamber are made up of parts of insect bodies collected by worker ants. After extracting the body fluids from these bodies and carefully eliminating their muscles, worker ants build an enclosure around the queen ant, leaving an opening exactly the size of her head. Worker ants gain access to this special chamber by tapping out a kind of password on the royal head.

#### **Power Thieves**

Utility companies throughout the United States are starting to clamp down on a grow-

ing problem—electricity theft. Years ago electricity seemed too cheap to steal, observed *The Wall Street Journal*, but the cost of electricity has soared in recent years, making power theft more common. For example, Detroit Edison Company estimates that in 1999 it lost \$40 million to power thieves. Thieves, often unaware of the dangers, have been known to use the crudest of tools, such as automobile jumper cables, household extension cords, and copper pipe. Others have burrowed underground in order to tap into a power company's buried feeders.

#### **Not Even Missed?**

Recently the mummified remains of a male were found in an apartment in Helsinki, Finland. A maintenance man who entered to install a fire-alarm device noticed a huge pile of mail and a foul odor. The police who responded to his call found that the 55-year-old pensioner, who had lived alone there, had been dead for over six years. As reported in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, all that time the Social Insurance Institution had paid his pension and the welfare office had paid his rent, yet no one had met with him. Neither was he missed by his adult children living in the capital area. "For six years a man lives in the midst of a human community—that is, not on a desert island, but in a city community—and nobody misses him enough to wonder where this person has gone or what has happened to him," noted Mrs. Aulikki Kananoja, director of the Department of Social Services in Helsinki.

## FROM OUR READERS

**Internet Pornography** I received the June 8, 2000, issue with the series "Internet Pornography—What Harm Can It Do?" Boy, did it hit home! A month or so prior to that, I found my husband looking at pornography on the computer; he had just hooked it up that very day. I opened the door unexpectedly and found him looking at a lewd picture. I can't tell you what this has done to our relationship. He says he is sorry, but he has degraded our marriage.

L. K., United States

I would like to express my gratitude for these articles. I have battled the problem of viewing pornography for almost eight years. Recently I prayed and resolved to quit my addiction to pornography. That very day I received these articles.

L. M., United States

A few months ago, I found a pornographic Internet site by accident. I began frequenting other, more graphic, sites. As a result, I've become withdrawn and sullen and have lost my love for spiritual things. It's very easy to become addicted to these images. But now I will work hard to break this addiction.

M. G., United States

**Neckties** I want to express my appreciation for the interesting article "Neckties—Then and Now." (June 8, 2000) I am the mother of three children, and I am teaching them to love Jehovah. My oldest son is 13 years old, and neither he nor I knew how to tie a necktie so that he could fulfill assignments on the Theocratic Ministry School. My husband, who is an unbeliever, has never worn one. Thanks for showing us how to tie a necktie in such a simple way.

M. B., United States

I am 11 years old, and strange as it may seem, the illustrations finally taught me how

to tie my tie. Now I can use all the ties I have in my wardrobe!

A. P., Italy

**Evolution** Some stumbling blocks to honest debate on the subject of evolution appeared in the article "Is Evolution Logical?" (June 8, 2000) You state: "Is it conceivable that the spider has evolved a manufacturing technique so complex that man has yet to understand it?" Why not? Scientists don't have all knowledge.

C. W., Australia

*The spider's manufacture of silk involves a number of incredibly complex mechanisms that scientists still do not understand after decades of research. Yet, they dogmatically state that this is all the product of evolution. We believe that this and numerous other examples illustrate the basic illogic of evolution and suggest that belief in that theory is more akin to faith than science.*  
—ED.

I have never read anything on one point that I have always felt argues strongly against the logic of evolution: How did our ancestors (whatever some think they were) divide and become two different sexes? Saying that this happened over millions of years hardly explains things, since a female cannot become pregnant gradually.

H. R., United States

*Our reader makes a valid point, one that we commented on in our May 8, 1997, article "Is Evolution's Foundation Missing?" We stated: "We are expected to believe that by chance evolution also produced a male and a female at the same time in order for the new species to be perpetuated. To compound the odds, we also have to believe that the male and the female not only evolved at the same time but also in the same place! No meeting, no procreation!"—ED.*



## RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT A MATTER OF CONCERN

FOLLOWING tests of nuclear weapons in the 1950's, strontium 90 (Sr90), a by-product of nuclear reactions, was found in baby teeth, reports the *Globe and Mail* newspaper of Canada. At the time, this was blamed for a surge in cancer among children.

Now, decades later, scientists associated with the U.S. Radiation and Public Health Project are concerned again. Dr. Janet Sherman, an internal-medicine specialist working with the project, explains that "Sr90 levels in baby teeth of children born since 1990 are reaching levels that were in existence during the above-ground testing years."

Where is the Sr90 coming from? Some scientists point to past nuclear accidents, to radiation from properly functioning nuclear plants, or to the bomb tests carried out many years ago as possible sources.\* Whatever its origin, humans take in Sr90 by eating food from contaminated

plants and drinking milk from cows that have eaten tainted grass. Since Sr90 is chemically similar to calcium, humans store the radioactive material in their bones, increasing the risk of bone cancer and leukemia.

The *Globe* also expresses concern about future generations' exposure to radiation. "When removed from the reactor core," the newspaper explains, "[nuclear waste] is about a million times more radioactive than when it was loaded. A freshly spent fuel bundle is reckoned to be so deadly that a person standing only a metre [three feet] away would die of radiation poisoning within an hour."

With the threat of radioactive fallout hanging over mankind, is it realistic to hope for a secure future? When the earth and its living things were first created, the Bible tells us that everything was "very good." (Genesis 1:31) We can be confident in the Bible's promise that soon our planet will be a paradise. Food and water contaminated by radiation will be a distant memory.—Psalm 65:9-13; Revelation 21:1-4.

\* Following the 1986 nuclear power plant accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, Sr90 levels in the baby teeth of German children increased tenfold.

# Helping People to Overcome Challenges

THE branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sri Lanka received a letter from the secretary of the Youth and Human Resources Development Society, Eastern Province. The secretary requested certain back issues of *Awake!* and observed:

"My colleagues and I have found the magazines you sent to me to be educational, informative, and motivating as well as logical and convincing. The magazines are not spreading Christian doctrine with any ulterior motive, as some erroneously would say. I find them excellent literature."

"There is an increasing demand for copies of *Awake!* (both new and old), and there is every indication that this demand will continue to grow in the coming months. The articles in your magazines provide knowledge for the elderly, youths, and children. They help all to overcome modern and future challenges that emanate from secularism."

