

Awake!

April 8, 1994

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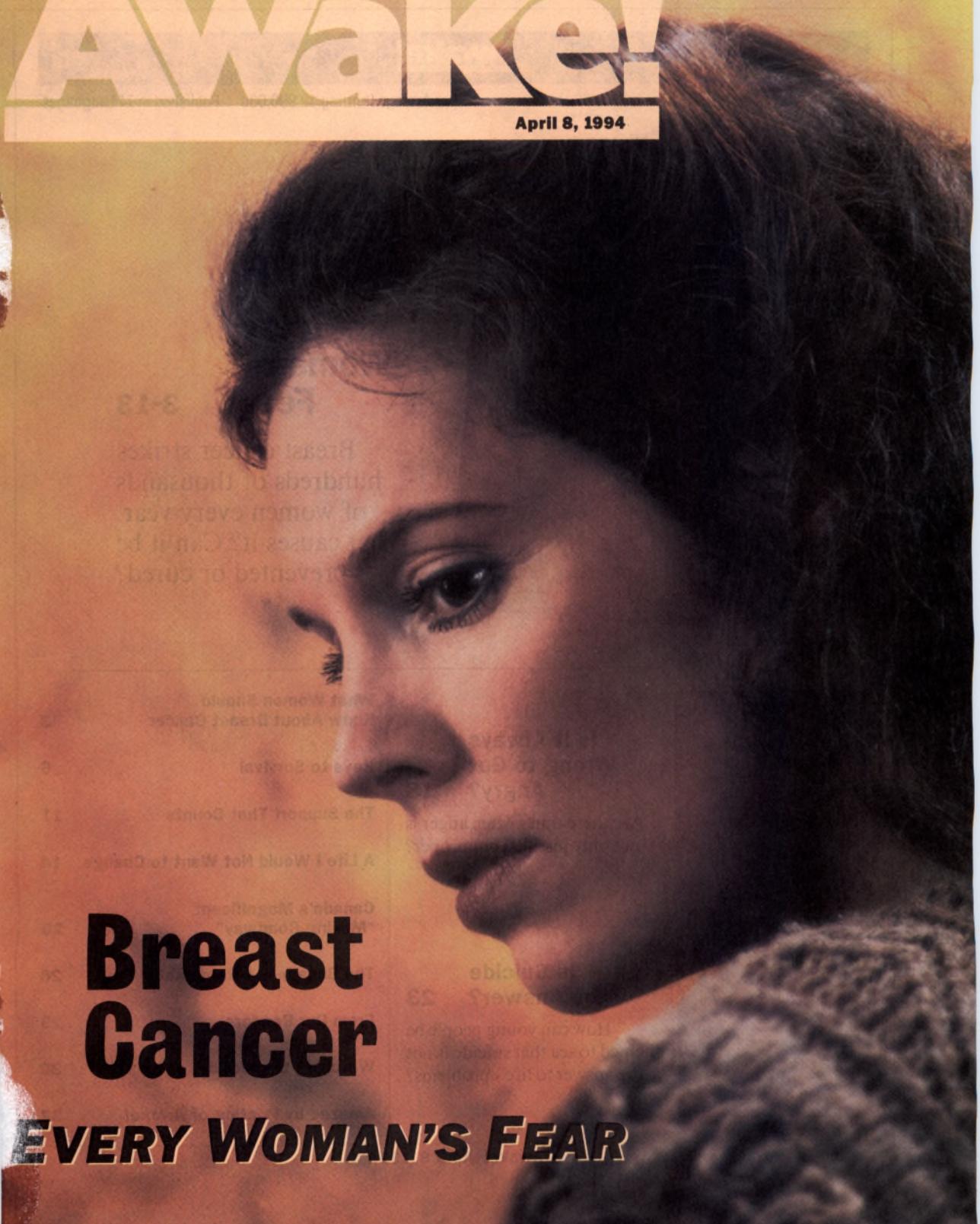
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Breast Cancer

EVERY WOMAN'S FEAR





BREAST CANCER

—Every Woman's Fear 3-13

Breast cancer strikes hundreds of thousands of women every year. What causes it? Can it be prevented or cured?



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WHAT WOMEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BREAST CANCER

THE number of cases of breast cancer is rising on every continent. According to some estimates, by the year 2000, about one million new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed throughout the world each year.

Is any woman safe from getting this disease? Can anything be done to prevent it? And what comfort and support are needed by those fighting this foe?

Most skin cancers are caused by ultraviolet rays from the sun. Most lung cancers are caused by smoking. But no single cause has been established for breast cancer.

However, according to recent research, genetic, environmental, and hormonal factors may play a role in breast cancer. Women who are exposed to these factors may be at increased risk.

Family History

A woman having a family member with breast cancer, such as a mother, a sister, or even a maternal aunt or grandmother, has an increased likelihood of developing it. If several of them had this disease, her risk is greater.

Dr. Patricia Kelly, a geneticist in the United States, tells *Awake!* that while hereditary factors are involved, they may account for only 5 to 10 percent of all breast cancers. "We

think," she explains, "that a block of others are due to not-quite-as-strong hereditary factors working in combination with the environment." Family members having the same genes tend to share the same environment as well.

Environmental Factors

"Clearly there are environmental factors, broadly conceived, that are involved" in triggering the disease, said Devra Davis, a scholar commenting in the journal *Science*. Since the female breast is one of the most radiosensitive parts of the body, women exposed to ionizing radiation have an increased risk of breast cancer. So do those exposed to toxic chemicals.

Another environmental factor is diet. Some suggest that breast cancer may be a vitamin-deficiency disease and point to a lack of vitamin D. This vitamin helps the body absorb calcium, which may in turn help prevent uncontrolled cell growth.

Other studies link the fat in diet, not as a cause, but as a promoter of breast cancer. The magazine *FDA Consumer* stated that the death rate from breast cancer was the highest in countries like the United States, where the intake of fat and animal protein is high. It commented: "Japanese women historically have a low risk for breast cancer, but that risk has been rising dramatically, concurrent with a 'Westernization' of eating habits; that is, from a low-fat to high-fat diet."

A recent study suggested that the large number of calories consumed in a high-fat diet may represent the real risk. *Science News* stated: "Every excess calorie raises breast cancer risk, with each excess fat-derived calorie posing about 67 percent more risk than calories from other sources." Excess calories can put on excess pounds, and women who are severely overweight are thought to have

stimulation . . . will set off a series of cytological changes that eventually result in malignant [cancerous] conversion." For this reason it is thought that women who have had an early menarche, by age 12, or have a delayed menopause, in the mid-50's, have a higher risk.

The additional estrogens received from ERT (estrogen replacement therapy) as a possible link to breast cancer has been the subject of much controversy. While some studies indicate that ERT creates no increased risk, other studies show a significant risk for long-term recipients. Considering the studies reviewed, the *British Medical Bulletin* of 1992 stated that the possibility exists that "non-contraceptive oestrogen increases the risk of breast cancer by 30-50%" after long-term use.

Reports on the relationship between oral contraceptives and breast cancer suggest little risk from use. However, there emerges a subgroup of women who are at higher risk. Younger women, women who have never had children, and women who have used birth-control pills for a long time may have as much as a 20-percent higher risk of breast cancer.

Three out of every 4 women with breast cancer cannot point to anything specific that contributed to their having the disease

about a threefold higher risk of breast cancer, especially women past menopause. Body fat produces estrogen, a female hormone that can act adversely on breast tissue, leading to cancer.

Personal History and Hormones

Within a woman's breast is a rich hormonal milieu that produces changes in the breast all throughout her life. Dr. Paul Crea, a surgical oncologist, writes in the *Australian Dr Weekly*: "In some women, however, the exposure of breast tissue to prolonged hormone

Yet, 3 out of every 4 women with breast cancer cannot point to anything specific that contributed to their having the disease. The question is therefore posed, Should any woman consider herself safe from breast cancer?

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 before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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FDA Consumer reports: "From the point of view of the clinician, all women should be treated as being at appreciable risk for breast cancer."

Thus, women, especially those advanced in years, are vulnerable to this disease. Dr. Kelly comments that while there are various causes of breast cancer, 'some of it, I suspect, is just because of getting older, and a misdivision of cells takes place.'

Why Vulnerable

Examining the makeup of the female breast explains why it is so vulnerable to cancer. Within it are ducts, tiny passageways, that channel milk from milk-producing sacs to the nipple. Lining the ducts are cells that divide and change continually in response to a woman's monthly cycle, preparing her for pregnancy, lactation, and nursing her young. It is in these ducts where most breast cancers develop.

In the book *Alternatives: New Developments in the War on Breast Cancer*, researcher Rose Kushner explains: "Any routine that is constantly being upset by one interruption or another—even if it is perfectly natural . . . —is subject to a greater risk of errors." She further states: "The overworked breast cell is always being bathed in some hormone that orders, 'Stop doing that. Start doing this.' No wonder so many of the daughter cells go haywire."

Breast cancer begins when an irregular cell

divides, loses control of its growth mechanism, and begins to proliferate. Such cells do not stop reproducing, and in time they overwhelm the surrounding healthy tissue, turning a healthy organ into a diseased one.

Metastasis

When cancer is contained within the breast, the malignancy can be removed. When breast cancer has spread to distant sites in the body, it is called metastatic breast cancer. This is the most likely cause of death in breast-cancer patients. As cancer cells multiply in the breast and the tumor grows in size, cancer cells can quietly and secretly exit the primary tumor site and penetrate blood vessel walls and lymph nodes.

At this point tumor cells can travel to distant parts of the body. If they evade the body's immune defenses, which include natural killer cells circulating in both the blood and the lymph fluids, these malignant cells can colonize vital organs, such as the liver, lungs, and brain. There they can proliferate and spread again, after making these organs cancerous. Once metastasis has begun, a woman's life is in jeopardy.

Therefore, a key to survival is detecting breast cancer early in its development, before it has had a chance to spread. What can each woman do to improve the chances of early detection? Is there anything that can be done to help prevent breast cancer in the first place?

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KEYS TO SURVIVAL

IF YOU heard a news report that a killer was stalking your neighborhood, would you take measures to protect yourself and your family? Likely you would lock and bolt your doors so as not to invite an easy entry. You would also keep on the watch for suspicious-looking strangers and report them right away.

Should women do any less regarding a killer disease, breast cancer? What measures can they take to protect themselves and increase their chances of survival?

Prevention and Diet

It is estimated that 1 out of 3 cancers in the United States is caused by dietary factors. A good diet that will help maintain your body's immune system may be your first line of defense. While no known food can cure cancer, eating certain foods and cutting down on others can be preventive measures. "Following the right diet could reduce your risk of getting breast cancer by up to fifty percent," stated Dr. Leonard Cohen of the American Health Foundation in Valhalla, New York.

Foods rich in fiber, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, may help lower the amount of prolactin and estrogen, possibly by binding to these hormones and flushing them out of the body. According to the journal *Nutrition and Cancer*, "these effects could suppress the promotional phase of carcinogenesis."

Cutting down on saturated fats may reduce risk. *Prevention* magazine suggested that

switching from whole milk to skim, reducing butter intake, eating leaner meats, and removing skin from chicken can bring saturated fat intake down to safer levels.

Vegetables rich in vitamin A, such as carrots, squashes, sweet potatoes, and dark leafy greens, as spinach and collard and mustard greens, may be a help. It is thought that vitamin A inhibits the formation of cancer-causing mutations. And such vegetables as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and green onions contain chemicals that induce protective enzymes.

In the book *Breast Cancer—What Every Woman Should Know*, Dr. Paul Rodriguez says that the immune system, which recognizes and destroys abnormal cells, can be strengthened through diet. He suggests eating foods rich in iron, such as lean meats, leafy green vegetables, shellfish, and fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C. Fruits and vegetables high in C reduce the risk of breast cancer, reports the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. Soybeans and unfermented soy products contain genistein, known to suppress tumor growth in laboratory experiments, but the effectiveness in humans has yet to be established.

Early Detection

"Early discovery of breast cancer remains the most important step in altering the course of breast cancer," says the publication *Radioologic Clinics of North America*. In this regard three key measures are regular breast self-

examination, annual examination by a doctor, and mammography.

Breast self-examination should be done regularly each month, as a woman must be vigilant in looking for anything suspicious in the appearance or the feel of her breasts, such as a hardening or a lump. No matter how small her finding may seem, she needs to contact her doctor immediately. The earlier a lump is diagnosed, the more control she has over her future. A report from Sweden showed that if a nonmetastatic breast cancer was slightly over one half inch or smaller in size and was surgically removed, a life expectancy of 12 years was 94 percent possible.

Dr. Patricia Kelly comments: "If you haven't heard from a breast cancer in 12 1/2 years, it's very unlikely to come back.... And women can be taught to find breast cancers smaller than a centimeter [1/3 in.] in size just using their fingers."

It is recommended that a physical exam by a clinician or physician should be done routinely each year, especially after a woman reaches the age of 40. If a lump is discovered, it would be good to get a second opinion from a breast specialist or surgeon.

The National Cancer Institute in the United States says that a good weapon against breast cancer is a regular mammogram. This

form of X ray can detect a tumor perhaps up to two years before it can be felt. The procedure is recommended for women over 40. However, Dr. Daniel Kopans informs us: "It is far from perfect." It cannot detect all breast cancers.

Dr. Wende Logan-Young of a breast clinic in New York State tells *Awake!* that if a woman or her physician finds an abnormality but a mammogram shows no sign of it, the tendency may be to ignore the physical findings and believe the X ray. She says that this is "the biggest mistake that we see nowadays." She advises women to have a certain reservation about mammography's ability to detect cancer and rely heavily also on breast examination.



While no known food can cure cancer, eating certain foods and cutting down on others can be preventive measures. 'Following the right diet could reduce your cancer risk by up to fifty percent,' stated Dr. Leonard Cohen

disease and said: "I'm absolutely sure you don't have cancer." The nurse who did the mammogram was worried, but Irene said: "I felt that if the doctor was sure, maybe I was being paranoid." Soon the lump grew larger, so Irene consulted another doctor. A biopsy

was taken and showed that she had inflammatory carcinoma, a fast-growing cancer. To determine whether a tumor is benign (as about 8 out of 10 are) or malignant, a biopsy must be performed. If the lump looks or feels clinically suspicious or is growing, a biopsy should be performed.

Treatment

At present, surgery, radiation, and drug therapy are the conventional treatments for breast cancer. Information about the type of tumor, its size, its invasive quality, whether it has spread to lymph nodes, and your menopausal status can help you and your doctor determine the method of treatment.

Surgery. For decades radical mastectomy, the removal of the breast along with underlying muscles and lymph nodes, has been widely used. But in recent years breast-conserving treatment that includes removal of only the tumor and lymph nodes, plus radiation, has been used with survival rates that equal those of mastectomy. This has given some women more peace of mind when deciding to have a small tumor removed, that being less disfiguring. But the *British Journal of Surgery* says that younger women, those with cancer in several loca-

tions in the same breast or with tumors larger than one inch, have a higher risk of recurrence with conservation treatment.

An important factor in recurrence-free survival is noted by the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*: "Blood transfusion does have an adverse effect on the survival and recurrence rate

... after modified radical mastectomy." The report showed that the five-year survival rate was 53 percent for one group who received blood transfusion, as opposed to 93 percent for the no-blood group.

Another aid to survival is reported in *The Lancet*, where Dr. R. A. Badwe stated: "The timing of surgery in relation to phase of menstrual cycle has a large impact on long-term outcome for premenopausal patients with breast cancer." The report said that women who underwent tumor excision during a phase of estrogen stimulation fared worse than those operated on during other phases of the menstrual cycle—54 percent survived ten years versus 84 percent for the latter group. The optimal timing of surgery for premenopausal women with breast cancer was said to be at least 12 days after the last menstrual period.

Radiation Therapy. Radiation therapy kills cancer cells. In the case of



"Early discovery of breast cancer remains the most important step in altering the course of breast cancer," says the publication "Radiologic Clinics of North America."
In this regard three key measures are: regular breast self-examination, an annual examination by a doctor, and mammography

Self-Examination—A Monthly Checkup

BREAST self-examination should be done four to seven days after the menstrual period. Postmenopausal women also need to check every month on the same day.

Signs to Look for Every Month on the Same Day

- Lump of any size (tiny or large) or thickening in the breast.
- Puckering, dimpling, or discoloration of the skin of the breast.
- Drawing back or turning in of the nipple.
- Rash or scaling of the nipple or escaping fluid.
- Enlarged glands under the arm.
- Changes in moles or incisions of the breast.
- Marked asymmetry of breasts that is a change from normal.

Self-Examination

While standing, raise the left arm. Using the right hand and beginning at the outer edge of the breast, press the flat part of the fingers in small circles, moving slowly around the breast and toward the nipple. Give attention also to area between underarm and breast.

Lying flat, position a pillow under the left shoulder, and place left arm over or behind the head. Use the same circular motion as described above. Reverse for the right side.

Gently squeeze the nipple to check for any discharge. Repeat for the right breast.

breast conservation treatment, tiny cancer seeds may escape a surgeon's knife as he tries to preserve the breast. Radiation therapy can clean up lingering cells. But with radiation comes a slight risk of inducing secondary cancers in the opposite breast. Dr. Benedick Fraass recommends minimizing radiation exposure to the opposite breast. He states: "With a few simple maneuvers it is possible to reduce significantly the dose received by the opposite breast during primary breast irradiation." He suggests that a one-inch-thick lead shield be placed over the opposite breast.

Drug Therapy. Despite efforts to eradicate breast cancer by surgery, 25 to 30 percent of women with newly diagnosed breast cancer will have hidden metastases too small to produce symptoms at first. Chemotherapy is a treatment that uses chemical agents to attempt to kill those cells that invade other parts of the body.

Chemotherapy is limited in its effect because cancerous tumors are made up of different types of cells that each have their own sensitivities to drugs. Those cells that survive treatment may spawn a new generation of

drug-resistant tumors. But the January 1992 issue of *The Lancet* gave evidence that chemotherapy increased by 5 to 10 percent a woman's chance of surviving an extra decade, depending on her age.

Side effects of chemotherapy may include nausea, vomiting, hair loss, bleeding, heart damage, immune suppression, sterility, and leukemia. John Cairns, writing in *Scientific American*, commented: "These may seem like relatively minor hazards for a patient who has

Women who are fatigued, suffer depression, or lack emotional support may have their immune system compromised

an advanced and rapidly growing cancer, but they would be serious considerations for a woman who has a small [1/3 inch] and apparently localized cancer of the breast. Her chance of dying of her cancer within five years is only about 10 percent even if she receives no additional treatment after surgery."

Hormone Therapy. Antiestrogen therapy cuts off the growth-stimulating effects of estrogen. This is achieved by reducing estrogen levels in premenopausal women either by surgical removal of the ovaries or by drugs. *The Lancet* reported a ten-year survival rate for every 8 to 12 women out of 100 treated with either measure.

Follow-up care for any woman with breast cancer is a lifelong endeavor. Close surveillance needs to be maintained, for if one regimen fails and relapse occurs, other types of treatment may provide the needed weapon.

Another type of cancer therapy that takes a different approach revolves around a syndrome called cachexia. The journal *Cancer Research* explains that two thirds of all cancer deaths are caused by cachexia, a term used to describe the wasting away of muscle and other tissues. Dr. Joseph Gold, of Syracuse Cancer Research Institute in the United States, tells *Awake!*: "We feel that a tumorous growth cannot extend itself through the body unless the biochemical pathways for cachexia are open." One clinical study, using the nontoxic drug hydrazine sulfate, showed that some of these pathways can be blocked. Stabilization was achieved in 50 percent of the late-stage breast-cancer patients involved.

Alternatives known as complementary medicine have been looked to by some women to provide noninvasive or nontoxic treatment for breast cancer. Therapies vary, some using diet and herbs, as in the Hoxsey therapy. But published studies enabling one to assess the efficacy of these treatments are few.

While this article is designed to present keys to survival, it is not the policy of *Awake!* to underwrite any treatment. We encourage all to look circumspectly at these different avenues in the treatment of this disease.—Proverbs 14:15.

Stress and Breast Cancer

In the journal *Acta neurologica*, Dr. H. Baltzsch explains that extreme or prolonged stress may reduce the body's antitumoral defenses in the immune system. Women who are fatigued, suffer depression, or lack emotional support may have their immune system compromised by as much as 50 percent.

Thus, Dr. Basil Stoll, writing in *Mind and Cancer Prognosis*, emphasized: "Every effort should be made to minimize the inevitable physical and psychic trauma sustained by cancer patients during and after treatment of their disease." But what kind of support is needed?

THE SUPPORT THAT COUNTS



IHAD to fight the fear of death and periods of depression," relates Virginia, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Argentina. She underwent radical mastectomy and removal of both ovaries in her fight against breast cancer.*

Indeed, the fear of death as a consequence of breast cancer is universal. This fear, along with a dread of disability and a loss intimately associated with femininity and nurturing capacity, can wreak havoc in a woman's life emotionally. Overwhelming feelings of isolation can quickly cause her to spiral into the

depths of despair. How can she be spared such emotional battering?

The Need for Support

"She needs support!" answers Joan, from the United States. Her own mother and grandmother were victims of breast cancer, and she now faces the same fight they had. This is a time when loyal family members and friends can provide comforting support and help. Joan's husband, Terry, became for her a strong positive advocate. Terry explains: "My position, as I saw it, was to be a stabilizing influence. I needed to help Joan to make decisions regarding treatment that would give her confidence and strength to

* The ovaries are a major source of estrogen in premenopausal women.

fight and not give up. Her fear of cancer surgery was something we had to come to grips with, and I tried to be sure her questions and fears were addressed in our discussions with the doctors." Terry added: "This is something we can do for our families and for fellow Christians who do not have family support. We can be their eyes, ears, and voice with the medical personnel."

Special attention needs to be given to those who are single or widowed. Diana, from Australia, tells us: "My husband died following a cancer operation five years ago, but my children helped to fill the void. They were kind but not emotional. That gave me strength. Everything was attended to quickly and calmly."

Breast cancer makes an emotional impact on the entire family. So they are all in need of loving concern and support from others (particularly from their spiritual brothers and sisters, if they are Jehovah's Witnesses).

Rebecca, from the United States, whose mother fought breast cancer, explains: "The congregation is your extended family, and their actions have a huge bearing on your emotions. Although many did not personally agree with the unorthodox treatment my mom chose, emotionally they supported us with telephone calls and visits. Some would even come and lend a hand in preparing her special diet. The elders arranged a telephone linkup so that we would never miss the meetings. The congregation even sent a card with a money gift."

Joan admits: "To this day, when I think of the love my spiritual brothers and sisters displayed, I get goose bumps! For seven weeks, five days a week, my loving sisters would take turns driving me to and from the hospital for treatment. And that was a 92-mile round-trip! How I thank Jehovah for the rich blessing of this Christian brotherhood!"

Another way all of us can be encouraging and supportive is by our upbuilding comments. Care needs to be exercised that we do not inadvertently cause distress by dwelling on negative things. June from South Africa explains: "One can't expect a person who has not had cancer to say just the right thing. In my case I felt it was better for others not to mention cancer cases unless they were positive." Noriko from Japan agrees: "If people tell me about someone who has recovered and not had a relapse, then I too have hope that maybe I will be like them."

Keep in mind that some women would prefer not talking about their health all the time. Others though, for the sake of their own well-being, need to talk about their experience with breast cancer, especially with those close to them. How would one know what is the most helpful thing to do? Helen, from the United States, suggests: "Ask the individual if she wants to talk about it, and let her do the talking." Yes, "be ready to listen," says Ingelise from Denmark. "Just be there for her so that she is not left alone with her own sad thoughts."

Working for a Positive Outlook

Breast cancer therapy can leave a patient exhausted and fatigued for weeks, months, or years. One of the greatest trials for a woman with breast cancer may be in facing the fact that she can not do as much as before. Coming to terms with her body will mean pacing herself and resting during the day.

When depression sets in, quick measures need to be taken to keep a positive attitude. Noriko relates her experience: "The results of hormone treatment left me depressed. In this condition I couldn't do the things I wanted, and I began feeling useless to Jehovah and in the Christian congregation. As my thinking became more negative, I would call

to mind the final sufferings of those in my family who had died with cancer. Fear would engulf me as I wondered, 'Can I go through with it as they did?'

Noriko continues: "It was at that time that I made an effort to adjust my thinking by using the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses to make myself think of how Jehovah views our existence. I learned that godly devotion is shown, not by the amount of work done, but by the motive in which it is done. As I wanted Jehovah to take pleasure in the condition of my heart and my thinking, I decided that I should serve him with joy and be whole-souled even if I could only do a little in the Christian ministry."

The long-term uncertainty for many women fighting breast cancer can tend to erode a positive outlook. Diana explains that what has helped her the most is filling her heart and mind with all the lovely things Jehovah God has given her: "My family, friends, beautiful music, looking at the mighty sea and beautiful sunsets." She especially encourages: "Tell others about God's Kingdom. And cultivate a real longing for the conditions that will prevail on earth under the Kingdom, where there will be no more sickness!"—Matthew 6:9, 10.

Virginia also gains the strength to fight her depression by meditating on her purpose in life: "I really want to live because I have such a precious work to do." As for the times when critical moments come and fear wells up, she says: "I put my full trust in Jehovah, knowing that he will never abandon me. And I think about the Bible verse at Psalm 116:9, which assures me that 'I will walk before Jehovah in the lands of those living.'"

All these women have centered their hope upon the God of the Bible, Jehovah. The Bible book of 2 Corinthians, at chapter 1, vers-

es 3 and 4, calls Jehovah "the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." Does Jehovah stretch out his hand to support those needing comfort?

Mieko from Japan answers: "I am convinced that by staying in his service, I receive Jehovah's strong comfort and help." Yoshiko also tells us: "Although people may not understand my suffering, Jehovah knows everything, and I am convinced that he has helped according to my needs."

Joan says: "Prayer has the power to lift you out of despair and get you back on your feet. When I think about the grand healing Jesus accomplished when on earth and the complete healing he'll do in the new world, how those words comfort me!"—Matthew 4:23, 24; 11:5; 15:30, 31.

Can you imagine a world without breast cancer, in fact, without any illnesses at all? This is the promise made by the God of all comfort, Jehovah. Isaiah 33:24 speaks about a time when no person on earth will ever say that he or she is sick. That hope will soon be realized when God's Kingdom in the hands of his Son, Christ Jesus, brings its full rule to the earth, wiping away all causes for sickness, sorrow, and death! Why not read about this wonderful hope at Revelation 21:3 to 5? Take courage to face the future with the support that gives true comfort.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Addictions—What's Behind Them?

How People Can Live Together in Peace

The Compact Disc —What Is It All About?

A Life I Would Not Want to Change

MANY people regret the way they have lived their lives. They may say: 'If only I could start life over again, how many things I would do differently!' But in reflecting on my life, although not an easy one, it has been a life that I would not want to change.

I was raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses by my parents and had God's laws embedded in my heart from infancy. (2 Timothy 3:15) I cannot remember a time when I was not going to meetings and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. And as a young girl, I also went with older Witnesses to call on people to help them learn about the Bible's hope of eternal life on a paradise earth under the rule of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) I can still remember at the age of five offering to others the booklet entitled *The Kingdom, the Hope of the World*.

My parents first heard the truth about God's Kingdom in 1917. Although church-goers, they recognized the ring of truth in a lecture given in Bridgeton, New Jersey, U.S.A., by a traveling representative of the Watchtower Society. My grandfather listened to the same lecture, and he too was convinced that what he heard was the truth. Then, when I was 14, at a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Detroit, Michigan, I was baptized to symbolize that I had dedicated my life to Jehovah.

In those years our weekly meetings for Bible study were held in our living room. Eventually a store was purchased and converted into a Kingdom Hall. Back then there were few Kingdom Halls. But today, worldwide,

tens of thousands of such halls accommodate over 70,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Beginning the Full-Time Ministry

My mother began her career as a full-time minister in 1939 and continued until her death at the age of 85. My brother, Dick, and I began our careers of full-time service on April 1, 1941, when World War II raged in Europe and antagonism against Jehovah's Witnesses was widespread because of our neutral position regarding politics.

Three of the young Witness men in our congregation were sentenced to five years in prison because of their neutrality. How encouraging it is to see two of those men still serving as elders in the congregation! My brother later served at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in New York, and is still serving as an elder in our hometown of Millville, New Jersey.

Those war years were very difficult in the United States, as elsewhere, for Jehovah's Witnesses. Mob action was common. Children were expelled from school. (See the July 22, 1993, *Awake!* on the life of Lillian Gobitas Klose.) Thousands of our spiritual brothers went to prison, so we women had to perform various congregation duties. That's why, at an early age, I was the literature servant. With Jehovah's help we survived the difficult war years, and when the brothers came back from prison, things moved forward.

It was at this time that Lyman Swingle from Bethel visited our congregation. He encouraged me to come to Brooklyn and help in

the relief efforts being made in behalf of our fellow Witnesses in Europe following World War II. So it was that in March 1948, I went to Brooklyn.

Happy Years In a New Congregation

I was assigned to my new congregation, Brooklyn Center. It was the very first congregation formed in New York City and adjacent areas before World War I, although under a different name. At that time, it was located in the Brooklyn Heights area. But when I came to Brooklyn Center in 1948, it was at 5th Avenue and 8th Street in Brooklyn. For nearly 30 years, that rented location served as our meeting place, until a new hall was purchased a short distance away.

I will never forget my first day in the preaching work in Brooklyn—on Henry Street. It was quite a change from witnessing in a small town. But soon I met a young woman who accepted Bible literature and agreed to a home Bible study. In time she became a dedicated servant of Jehovah, as did two of her children. Her son, Arthur Iannone, is currently serving at Brooklyn Bethel with his wife, Linda, along with their son and daughter-in-law.

The congregation's territory where we preached was large and fruitful. With Jehovah's help, I was able to see many of my Bible students learn the truth and get baptized. To this day some are serving as full-time ministers in this country. Others are missionaries in distant lands. Some became elders in congregations. And many have served in other capacities as faithful proclaimers of the good news of God's Kingdom.

The growth was amazing. Where originally there was just one congregation for New York City and the surrounding area, now there are nearly 400 in New York City alone. What fond memories I have of participating in some of this expansion!

French-Speaking Interest Blossoms

In the 1960's, we began to find many French-speaking people in the congregation's territory who had moved from Haiti. Most spoke limited English or none at all. Here was a challenge. How could we help them learn more about the Bible? I did not speak French, but with an English copy of a basic Bible textbook in one hand and the French translation of that book in the other, I was able to conduct Bible studies.

However, there were no meetings in French to help these people grow spiritually. That's why any Witness missionary who visited Brooklyn and could speak French was immediately asked to help. One of the first to come to our aid was Nicolas Brisart, who is the coordinator of the Branch Committee in Guadeloupe. He gave our first public talk in French at the home of Sister Bertha Luisdon, who is still faithfully serving Jehovah. Twenty-seven persons were in attendance.

Still, at that time, aside from Spanish, there were no foreign-language congregations in New York City. So the idea of establishing an official French-speaking congregation was hard even to imagine. In fact, a traveling overseer made things look even more bleak when he informed us that the policy at that time was to encourage people living in this country to learn English.

Brother Fred W. Franz, who later became president of the Watch Tower Society, was a source of encouragement. He said: "If it is Jehovah's will, Mary, there will be a French Congregation." Also encouraging was Brother Harry Peloyan, the presiding overseer of Brooklyn Center Congregation. He said that on evenings when the Kingdom Hall was not in use, we could have an unofficial Congregation Book Study and public talks whenever a visitor came who could speak French.

By this time we had a number of baptized brothers from Haiti who had moved here, but there was still no one experienced enough to take the organizational lead in the French language. Then, Brother Timothy Galfas, who was schooled in Paris and was now a member of the Brooklyn Bethel family, learned of our situation. Every Saturday after working at Bethel, he would come out, and we would search for Haitian brothers and sisters who were living here but who did not know where to associate.

Soon we had about 40 persons associating with us. We asked our circuit overseer to write the Society to give us approval for an official Congregation Book Study in French. How pleased we were when this was granted! Later we also got permission to have regular public talks and a weekly *Watchtower* Study.

The First French Congregation

On December 1, 1967, we received approval to establish a French-speaking congregation, the first in the United States. It would share the Kingdom Hall with the Brooklyn Center and Prospect congregations. We were thrilled! We knew that all would make greater spiritual advancement in the language they understood. Much appreciated during all those years of our growing pains was the support of such brothers as Harry Pelyan, George Hadad, and Carlos Quiles, who formed the Brooklyn Center service committee.

We grew quickly. Soon new French congregations were formed in Manhattan, Queens, and Nyack, New York. Helping in this expansion were Jeff Keltz and Tom Cecil of Brooklyn Bethel. Brother Keltz served as our circuit overseer, and Brother Cecil has served on our District Convention Committee. Others helped, such as missionaries who for health reasons had to return to the United States from countries where French was the language. How valuable their assistance proved to be! Among them is Stanley Boggus, who

serves as a presiding overseer and substitute circuit overseer.

What a joyful time it has been to see that small French group at 5th Avenue and 8th Street grow to dozens of congregations and two circuits! In fact, we had our first circuit assembly in French in April 1970. Brother Nathan H. Knorr, then president of the Watch Tower Society, addressed us on Friday night and wished us well. That summer we also had our first district convention, under the bleachers at Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City, New Jersey. It was hot and dusty, but the more than 200 in attendance were very happy to hear the entire program, including the drama, in French.

It was also a thrill when, in 1986, we were allowed to use the Jersey City Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses for our district convention. At a French convention there last year, 4,506 attended, with 101 baptized. At the same time, another French convention was held in Florida.



Mary Kendall

Faithful Roommates

Another part of my life that has been so pleasant is sharing an apartment in Brooklyn with other sisters who were in full-time service. The first two (Rose Lewis Pelyan and Madelyn Murdock Wildman) went to Bethel. Later two more (Lila Rogers Molohan and Margaret Stelmah) also became members of the Bethel family. Two others (Barbara Repasky Forbes and Virginia Burris Beltramelli) went to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and are still serving in Guatemala and Uruguay respectively.

We sisters always took time to discuss a Scripture text to start our day, then we went to our secular work and in the ministry. We returned at night tired and hungry but happy! We had many upbuilding experiences to share! For example, on one occasion I studied with a young woman, Elisa Beumont Farina, who insisted that her study be held at 10:00 p.m. She made rapid progress. The first time I took her in the ministry, she said: "Don't think I'm going to do this all the time!" But she became a full-time minister and later attended Gilead school, serving many years in Ecuador. She is still serving full-time, in Trenton, New Jersey.

Some of my roommates have raised children who also appreciate and serve Jehovah. Last year the daughter (Jodi Robertson Sakima) of one of my former roommates (Virginia Hendee Robertson) got married and currently serves with her husband at Brooklyn Bethel.

Of the roommates I have had, who number more than 20, I am happy to say that all of them remained faithful to Jehovah, and a goodly number of them still continue in full-time service.

Enjoying Our Global Family

It has also been a source of joy for me to become acquainted with many Witnesses

from other lands. For instance, since we lived near the Society's headquarters, we had the privilege of associating with students attending the Gilead missionary school, then located at Brooklyn Bethel.

Two students, Guenter Buschbeck, currently serving at the branch in Austria, and Willi Konstanty, serving at the branch in Germany, were assigned to the Brooklyn Center Congregation while attending Gilead. What a source of encouragement they were! They had such a positive influence on my roommates that they too were soon thinking of Gilead service.

A number of times, I've had the privilege of expanding my friendships with our global family by traveling overseas. I have attended international conventions and have again seen, in their assignments, many of the Gilead graduates I had known before.

A Full Life

In reflecting on my life, I can say that it has been wonderful—a happy life full of blessings. While I have had many of the usual problems that come with this system of things, nothing has ever caused me to regret my past or to give up the precious privilege of full-time service.

At an early age, my mother instilled in me the words of Psalm 126:5, 6: "Those sowing seed with tears will reap even with a joyful cry. The one that without fail goes forth, even weeping, carrying along a bagful of seed, will without fail come in with a joyful cry, carrying along his sheaves." That scripture still serves as a guide for me. No matter what the problems were, Jehovah helped me to find a way to overcome them and maintain that joy.

My life is one that I surely would not want to change. I have no regrets in giving some 53 years to Jehovah in the full-time ministry. I look forward to continuing to serve him throughout eternity in his new world.—*As told by Mary Kendall*.

Is It Always Wrong to Get Angry?

ANGER is a short madness." Thus the ancient Roman poet Horace voiced a common view of one of the strongest of all emotions. While not everyone agrees that anger is a form of temporary insanity, many do view it as inherently bad. As early as the sixth century C.E., Catholic monks compiled the famous catalog of "seven deadly sins." Anger, not surprisingly, made that list.

It is easy to see why they felt this way. The Bible does say: "Let anger alone and leave rage." (Psalm 37:8) And the apostle Paul exhorted the congregation at Ephesus: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness."—Ephesians 4:31.

You might well wonder, though, 'Is that all there is to the Bible's viewpoint on anger? After all, did not Paul also prophesy that these "last days" in which we live would be "critical times hard to deal with"? (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Does God really expect us to live in these times when people are 'fierce, without love of goodness,

with no natural affection'—and never become even a little angry?

A Balanced View

The Bible's treatment of this subject is not so simplistic. Notice, for example, Paul's words at Ephesians 4:26: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin." This verse would be quite puzzling if anger were automatically a "deadly sin," one meriting eternal punishment.

Paul was quoting from Psalm 4:4, which reads: "Be agitated, but do not sin." According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, the Hebrew word translated here "be agitated," *raghaz'*, means to "quiver with strong emotion." But which strong emotion? Was it anger? In the *Septuagint* translation of Psalm 4:4, *raghaz'* was rendered in Greek as "be made wrathful," and that is clearly what Paul intended here.

Why would the Bible allow a place for anger? Because not all anger is bad. The view that, as one Bible commentator put it, "man's anger is never in itself just and permissible" is not Scriptural. Bible scholar R. C. H. Lenski rightly



Cain and Abel

remarked on Ephesians 4:26: "The ethics which forbids all anger and demands unruffled calmness in every situation is Stoic and not Christian." Professor William Barclay similarly noted: "There must be anger in the Christian life, but it must be the right kind of anger." But what is "the right kind of anger"?

Righteous Anger

While anger is not one of his dominant qualities, Jehovah is repeatedly described in the Scriptures as feeling and expressing his anger. For two reasons, though, his rage is always righteous. One, he never gets angry without a proper basis. And two, he expresses his anger in a just and righteous way, never losing control.—Exodus 34:6; Psalm 85:3.

Jehovah is enraged by deliberate unrighteousness. For example, he told the Israelites that if they victimized defenseless women and children, he would 'unfailingly hear the outcry' of such ones. He warned: "My anger will indeed blaze." (Exodus 22:22-24; compare Proverbs 21:13.) Like his Father, Jesus had a soft place in his heart for children. When his well-meaning followers once tried to prevent some children from approaching him, "Jesus was indignant" and took the children into his arms. (Mark 10:14-16) Notably, the Greek word for "indignant" originally referred to "physical pain or irritation." Strong feelings indeed!

Righteous indignation likewise stirred in Jesus' heart when he saw that merchants and money changers had turned his Father's house of worship into "a cave of robbers." He upset their tables and threw them out of there! (Matthew 21:12, 13; John 2:15) When the Pharisees and the scribes showed more concern for their niggling Sabbath rules than for the sick who needed help, Jesus was "deeply hurt as he sensed their inhumanity" and "looked round in anger at the faces surrounding him."—Mark 3:5, *Phillips*.

Similarly, faithful Moses of old was filled with righteous indignation at the disloyal Israelites when he hurled down the tablets of the Mosaic Law. (Exodus 32:19) And the righteous scribe Ezra was so angry over the Israelites' disobedience to God's law on marriage that he tore his garments and even pulled some of his hair out!—Ezra 9:3.

All of those who "love what is good" strive to "hate what is bad." (Amos 5:15) Thus, Christians today may feel righteous anger welling up in their hearts when they see deliberate, unrepentant acts of cruelty, hypocrisy, dishonesty, disloyalty, or injustice.

Handling Anger Properly

It is no accident that the Bible often likens anger to a fire. Like fire, it has its place. But it can also be horrendously destructive. All too often, unlike Jehovah and Jesus, humans feel anger without proper basis or express their anger in an unrighteous way.—See Genesis 4:4-8; 49:5-7; Jonah 4:1, 4, 9.

On the other hand, simply bottling up one's anger and pretending it is not there may not be righteous either. Remember, Paul counseled: "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state." (Ephesians 4:26) There are Scriptural ways to express anger, such as 'having your say in your heart,' talking out your feelings with a mature confidant, or even calmly confronting a wrongdoer.—Psalm 4:4; Proverbs 15:22; Matthew 5:23, 24; James 5:14.

Therefore, it most decidedly is not always wrong to get angry. Both Jehovah and Jesus have got angry—and will again! (Revelation 19:15) If we are to imitate them, we may even face situations wherein it is wrong *not* to feel angry! The key will be to follow Bible counsel, making sure that we have a valid basis for our feelings and that we express them in a righteous, Christian manner.

Canada's Magnificent "Moving Roadway"

"What river is this?" "A river without end,"
replied the native guide

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CANADA

THE year was 1535. Little did the inquiring explorer, Jacques Cartier, know that the waterway he was about to chart would one day be one of the most important in North America. This river came to be the first spacious "roadway" for early fur traders and colonists and eventually for modern-day giant

ocean freighters. It is over 80 miles wide at its mouth and extends inland some 745 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Ontario.

History books credit Cartier with naming this majestic waterway the St. Lawrence. Eventually, that name was applied both to the river and to the gulf at its entrance.

Courtesy of The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority



Some of North America's most beautiful landscapes are found along the St. Lawrence River. Rocky cliffs and rugged valleys run down to the water to create one of the world's longest fjords, the Saguenay Fjord, which spans almost 60 miles. The mighty Saguenay River swirls into the St. Lawrence from the north to produce an estuary where the ocean tide mixes with the river's flow.

It is here, marine biologists say, that two worlds meet beneath the surface. Cold, salty ocean water flows in through underwater channels as deep as 1,300 feet, then rises and mixes with fresh water from the rivers. Marine life flourishes in this estuary. Relatively close together are belugas (small white whales), minke whales, fin whales, and gigantic blue whales. Usually these four types of whales live hundreds of miles apart. No wonder more than 70,000 tourists took whale-watching trips on the St. Lawrence in one recent year.

The combination of plants, animals, and birds along the river is one of the most unusual on earth. There are hundreds of species of fish, more than 20 types of amphibians and reptiles, and 12 kinds of marine mammals. Close to 300 bird species are said to frequent its marshes and shores. Migratory birds such as ducks and snow geese flock to these waters by the thousands.

Further upstream, tranquil blue-hued mountains rise beyond its shores. Dark forests line its banks. Stately islands stand watch in its broad channel. Farms, villages, and cities perch on its shores.

Inland from Montreal a series of rapids punctuate the river for a hundred miles. Beyond the rapids, navigation becomes more leisurely through a 40-mile stretch of water dotted with what are named the Thousand Islands (actually closer to two thousand in number).

Traffic on the "Roadway"

As early as 1680, European settlers talked of extending the "roadway" to ocean traffic beyond Montreal by means of canals to get around the rapids. Nearly 300 years later, the dream was fulfilled with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. It is hailed as one of the world's great engineering accomplishments.

To complete this 182-mile stretch of waterway, seven new locks were built between Montreal and Lake Ontario. This required the excavation of more than 200 million cubic yards of earth and rock that if evenly piled on a football field, would create a mountain over 22 miles high. The amount of concrete used in the locks could build a four-lane highway between London and Rome.

Jacques LesStrang, author of *Seaway—The Untold Story of North America's Fourth Seacoast*, quoted a sea captain who said: "There is no waterway like it in the whole world. It's no easy traffic, but the grandeur of the river, the roaring of Niagara Falls, the endless chain of lakes and islands makes it highly attractive."

Ocean ships that travel up the extended "roadway" to Duluth-Superior on the United States side of Lake Superior make an elevatorlike climb to 600 feet above sea level, the height of a 60-story skyscraper. The total journey inland is 2,300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

Such sea traffic has brought commercial prosperity to cities along the route. The book *The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence System* comments: "Within its bi-national boundaries lie the industrial heartland of both Canada and the United States, population densities in excess of 100 million and the single largest source of industrial and manufacturing wealth in the western world."

Among the more than 150 ports that line the waterway from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Superior are (in Canada) Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Sault Sainte Marie, and Thunder Bay and (in the United States) Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Duluth-Superior. Ships from Casablanca, Le Havre, Rotterdam, and elsewhere transport millions of tons of cargo on the St. Lawrence each year. Use of the "roadway" generates tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in revenue each year.

Cries of Alarm

However, after more than 30 years of navigation on this "roadway," cries of alarm have been sounded. For centuries the St. Lawrence River along with its Great Lakes reservoir "has been used as a sewer and a dump," maintains Environment Canada. The "Great River" could handle it, until recently.

Large ocean freighters have voided their ballast in the freshwater lakes and the river. Industries and cities along the seaway have added toxic chemicals to the river. Agriculture has contributed its runoff. The cumulative effects have endangered the river.

As more pollutants poured into the river, species of fish gradually disappeared. In time swimming was prohibited. Then came bans on eating certain fish and shellfish. Drinking tap water taken from the river came into question. Certain types of wildlife became officially endangered. Dead belugas washed up on shore, victims of illnesses induced by poisons in the water.

Cleaning Up the "Roadway"

The river was sending a clear message. The magnificent "moving roadway" needed repairs. So in 1988 the Canadian government responded by launching the St. Lawrence Action Plan designed to clean up the river with

a program of conservation, protection, and restoration, particularly from Montreal to the Atlantic Ocean.

There is now ongoing development of survival plans for endangered species. Conservation areas are being established to hold on to what remains. The innovative Saguenay Marine Park, where the Saguenay River meets the St. Lawrence, was established to preserve the exceptional marine environment and wildlife.

New rules were established. Industries were given target dates to reduce river pollutants by 90 percent. New technologies are being developed to reduce pollution. Sites contaminated by toxic substances in river sediment or from dredging are being cleaned up. In some areas new wildlife habitats are to be established along the shores using treated sediments. Measures are being taken to control the number and movement of the thousands of tourists who come every year to view the river.

The damage can be reversed. For one thing, unlike man-made roadways, the river will repair itself if people stop polluting it. The greatest need is to change the attitude of both industrialists and ordinary consumers, those who benefit from the commerce generated along the river and the Great Lakes.

One indication of success in reversing the deterioration is the beluga whale. Although still endangered, belugas are making a comeback after having dropped from 5,000 to only about 500.

There is new public awareness of the damage that has been done to the natural richness of the river and its past glory. Will this appreciation be strong enough to sustain restoration efforts in the future? It will, when human creatures respect and appreciate God's creations.

**Young
People
Ask...**



Is Suicide the Answer?

"I am tired of waking up every morning. I am lost. I am angry. My heart hurts.... So I think about leaving.... I don't want to leave, but I feel I have to.... I look into the future, I only see darkness and pain."

—A suicide note from 21-year-old Peter.*

EXPERTS claim that as many as two million young people in the United States have attempted suicide. Tragically, about 5,000 a year succeed. But suicide among the young is hardly unique to the United States. In India some 30,000 youths committed suicide during 1990. In countries such as Cana-

da, Finland, France, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, and Thailand, suicide rates among young people have increased dramatically.

What if someone feels overwhelmed by sadness—or feels trapped in a web of pain and can see no means of escape? Suicide may seem tempting, but in reality it is nothing more than a tragic waste. In its aftermath it leaves nothing but misery and pain for friends and family. As dark as the future may appear and as large as troubles may loom, killing oneself is *not* the answer.

Why Some Feel This Way

The righteous man Job knew the meaning of despair. Having lost his family, his possessions, and his good health, he said: "My soul chooses suffocation, death rather than my bones." (Job 7:15) Some young people today have felt the same way. One writer put it this way: "*Stress... leads to pain* (feelings of hurt and fear) [which] leads to *defense* (attempts to escape pain)." Suicide is thus a misguided attempt to escape seemingly unbearable pain.

What causes such pain? It can be triggered by an event, such as a furious argument with one's parents, boyfriend, or girlfriend. After breaking up with his girlfriend, 16-year-old Brad fell into despair. He never talked about his feelings, though. He simply ended it all by hanging himself.

Nineteen-year-old Sunita slid into depression when her parents discovered she was carrying on an immoral relationship with her boyfriend. "I knew that I didn't want to continue living as I was," she recalls. "And so I just came home one night, and I started popping the aspirins down. The next morning I was throwing up blood. It wasn't my life but my life course I wanted to end."

School can also be a source of intense pressure. Pushed toward becoming a doctor by his parents (doctors themselves), young Ashish developed insomnia and began withdrawing

* Some of the names have been changed.

from others. Unable to meet his parents' academic expectations, Ashish took an overdose of sleeping pills. This reminds one of Proverbs 15:13 in the Bible: "Because of the pain of the heart there is a stricken spirit."

Family Distress

Family turmoil—such as a parental divorce or separation, the death of a family member, or a move to a new location—is another factor in the suicide of some youths. Brad, mentioned above, for example, lost two close friends and a relative in a car accident. Then his family began experiencing financial difficulties. Brad was simply overwhelmed. He may have felt like the psalmist who cried: "My soul has had enough of calamities . . . They have closed in upon me all at one time." —Psalm 88:3, 17.

Alarming numbers of youths are being subjected to stress of another kind: physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The state of Kerala, India, has one of the highest rates of youth suicide in that land. A number of teenage girls there have tried to kill themselves because of abuse by their fathers. Child abuse of different kinds has risen to epidemic proportions worldwide, and for its innocent victims, the distress can be severe.

Other Causes of Distress

But not all suicidal feelings are caused by outside factors. Says one research report of unmarried teenagers: "Males and females who engaged in sexual intercourse and alcohol consumption were at greater risk [of suicide] than were abstainers." Sunita's promiscuity resulted in a pregnancy—which she termini-

nated by abortion. (Compare 1 Corinthians 6:18.) Afflicted with guilt, she wanted to die. Similarly, Brad had been experimenting with alcohol since age 14, going on binges quite regularly. Yes, when abused, alcohol can 'bite just like a serpent.'—Proverbs 23:32.

Suicidal feelings can even spring from a person's own "disquieting thoughts." (Psalm 94:19) Doctors say that depressive thinking can sometimes result from various biological factors. For example, Peter, mentioned at the outset, had been diagnosed as having a chemical imbalance in his brain before his suicide. Feelings of depression that are left unchecked can intensify; suicide can begin to seem like an option.

Getting Help

Suicide, though, should *not* be considered an option. Whether we realize it or not, all of us have what mental-health professionals Alan L. Berman and David A. Jobes call 'internal and external resources for coping suc-



***It is better to talk out
painful feelings with someone***

cessfully with stress and conflict.' One resource might be family and friends. Says Proverbs 12:25: "Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down, but the good word is what makes it rejoice." Yes, a good word from an understanding person may make all the difference in the world!

So if anyone is feeling depressed or anxious, it is advisable that he not suffer alone. (Proverbs 18:1) The sufferer can pour out his heart to a person he trusts. Talking to someone helps diminish the intensity of one's emotions, and it may give one a fresh perspective on the problems. If someone is heartbroken over losing a friend or a loved one in death, that one should talk it over with a confidant. When the pain of such losses is acknowledged and grief is felt, a person is comforted. (Ecclesiastes 7:1-3) It might help for the person to promise to contact a confidant should suicidal urges return.

True, it may be hard to trust someone. But since life itself is at stake, isn't it worth the risk? Likely the urge to hurt oneself will pass if things are talked out. 'With whom?' some may ask. If one's parents are God-fearing, why not try 'giving one's heart' to them? (Proverbs 23:26) They may understand better than many think and may be able to help. If it appears that additional assistance is needed—such as a doctor's exam—they can arrange for it.

Members of the Christian congregation are another source of help. The spiritually older men in the congregation can support and help distressed ones. (Isaiah 32:1, 2; James 5:14, 15) After her suicide attempt, Sunita got help from a full-time evangelizer (pioneer). Says Sunita: "She stuck through everything with me. If it wasn't for her, I would have literally gone crazy."

Coping

There are also internal resources that can be drawn upon. For example, is the suffering

of guilt feelings due to some wrongdoing? (Compare Psalm 31:10.) Rather than letting such feelings build, one should work at setting matters straight. (Isaiah 1:18; compare 2 Corinthians 7:11.) A positive step would be to confess to one's parents. Granted, they may be upset at first. But they will likely focus on giving help. We are assured too that Jehovah 'forgives in a large way' those who are genuinely repentant. (Isaiah 55:7) Jesus' ransom sacrifice covers the sin of repentant ones.—Romans 3:23, 24.

Christians also have faith, knowledge of the Scriptures, and their relationship with Jehovah God to draw from. On various occasions the psalmist David was so distressed that he said: "The enemy . . . has crushed my life to the very earth." He did not give in to despair. He wrote: "With my voice, to Jehovah I proceeded to call for aid; with my voice, to Jehovah I began to cry for favor." "I have meditated on all your activity; I willingly kept myself concerned with the work of your own hands."—Psalm 142:1; 143:3-5.

If the desire to hurt oneself becomes strong, one should call upon Jehovah in prayer. He understands the pain and wants the sufferer to live! (Psalm 56:8) He can supply the "power beyond what is normal" to help cope with the pain. (2 Corinthians 4:7) One should think too of the pain that self-inflicted death would bring to family, to friends, and to Jehovah himself. Reflecting on such things may very well help a person to keep alive.

For though it may seem to some as if the hurt will never go away, they can be assured that there are those who have lived through the same kind of pain. They are able to tell from experience that things can and do change. Others can give help to come through such a painful time. Depressed ones should seek the needed help they deserve—and keep on living!



The Banana

A Remarkable Fruit

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN HONDURAS

THE Greeks and

the Arabs called it
“a remarkable fruit tree.”

In 327 B.C.E., it was found
in India by the armies
of Alexander the Great.

According to an old story,

the sages of India rested in
its shade and partook of
its fruit. So it has been called
“the fruit of the wise men.”

What is it? Why, the banana!

Copine

There are also numerous theories that can
be drawn upon. For example, is the influence

But how did the banana get from Asia to the Caribbean? Well, early Arab traders carried roots of the banana plant from Asia to the east coast of Africa. In 1482, Portuguese explorers discovered the banana plant growing there and took some roots and its African name, banana, to Portuguese colonies in the Canary Islands. The next step was a journey across the Atlantic to the New World. That came in 1516, a few years after the voyages of Columbus. Spanish missionaries took banana plants to islands and the tropical mainland of the Caribbean. Thus, this remarkable fruit plant had to travel halfway around the world to reach Central and South America.

Reportedly, in 1690 the banana was first taken from the Caribbean Islands to New England. Puritans boiled the strange fruit and did not like it. In South and Central American countries, as well as in other tropical lands, however, millions of people boil raw green bananas and eat them with delight.

Banana Plantations

Between 1870 and 1880, the possibility of exporting bananas began to interest various European and North American merchants. They formed companies and established banana plantations, called fincas. For this purpose, workers and engineers had to clear jungles, build roads, and establish railroad and communication systems. Villages were built with housing, schools, and even hospitals for the workers and their families. Steamship lines were set up to transport bananas around the world. As the industry grew, more land in banana-growing countries was bought by companies.

Today, Latin-American lands supply more than 90 percent of the bananas eaten in North America. Brazil is the leading exporter. Honduras is number six on the list, exporting more than two billion pounds of bananas yearly.

How Bananas Grow

The banana plant is not a tree. It has no wood fibers. Rather, it is a gigantic herb that looks like a palm tree. Climate and soil determine the growth and size of the plant. Bananas grow best in hot, damp climates and thrive in rich, sandy loam soil that has good drainage. For the best growth, the temperature should not go below 70 degrees Fahrenheit for any length of time.

To start a crop, you have to plant cuttings, called suckers, cut from the underground stems of mature plants. Holes are dug a foot deep and 18 feet apart. In three to four weeks, green shoots appear, and tightly rolled green leaves sprout and unroll as they grow. Banana plants grow very fast, about an inch a day. After ten months, a plant is full-grown and resembles a palm tree, standing 10 to 20 feet high.

On a full-grown plant, a large bud with little purple leaves grows from leaves that wrap into a bundle. Then clusters of small flowers appear. A plant produces only one bunch, which weighs from 60 to 100 pounds and has between 9 and 16 clusters of bananas. Each cluster, called a hand, produces from 10 to 20 bananas. Thus, bananas are called fingers.

Bananas first grow downward, toward the ground, then out and up, forming the well-known banana curve. What about nourishment and protection during growth? In time a worker comes and removes the bud so that the bananas receive all the energy from the plant. Then he covers the fruit with a polyethylene bag to keep out insects. Since bananas grow upward and become very heavy, the plant is tied to the base of neighboring plants to prevent winds or the weight of the fruit from toppling it. Finally, a colored ribbon is tied to the cover to indicate when the fruit will be ready for harvest.

Every day, planes fly over the plantation to spray the leaves of the plants. This protects them from three main diseases. One is Panama disease, in which fungus destroys some plants. But these are replaced by types that can resist it. Another is Moko disease, caused by bacteria. It is controlled by removing affected plants and any flowers that attract certain disease-spreading insects. Then there is Sigatoka disease, which destroys plant leaves but does not harm the bananas if chemical sprays are used soon enough. Bananas need a great amount of water, provided by irrigation and by high-pressure sprayer systems. It may be added that the plantation is kept free of grass and weeds.

From the Plantation to Your Table

At the time the color of the ribbon indicates that the bananas are ready for harvest, they are first measured to make sure that they are the right size for cutting. Another notable fact is that bananas are never left to ripen on the plant, even for local consumption. Why is this? Because they would lose their flavor. Before deciding when to harvest a crop, the distance for exporting and the type of transportation must be considered. Then a worker cuts off the bunches with his machete, and they are sent to the packing plant. And what is done to the banana plant after the harvest? It is cut down to fertilize the new plants that will grow in its place.

At the packing plant, the bananas are washed, and any bruised fruit is removed, to be eaten by the workers and their families. Small bananas will be used for flavoring and for baby food. The best bananas are packed 40 pounds to a box and sent abroad by refrigerated trains and ships.

On the dock, the quality of the fruit is checked, and its temperature is taken. Once cut, the fruit must stay green until it reaches the market. Since the banana is perishable, it

must be picked, shipped, and sold in the stores within 10 to 20 days. The fruit is kept cool at 53 to 56 degrees Fahrenheit to keep it from ripening. With modern transportation, bananas can be sent from Central and South America to as far away as Canada and Europe without any problem.

Practical Value and Nutrition

There are a hundred or more varieties of bananas. The dwarf banana is the common kind, exported primarily to Europe, Canada, and the United States. Smaller kinds, with a skin too thin for export, can be found in abundance in Honduras. These are known as the *manzana* (Apple) and the Red Jamaica.

Banana leaves contain useful fibers and are used for various purposes in tropical countries. When visiting an open market, one often sees the leaves piled up in the street to be sold for wrapping hot tamales, a very popular meal in various lands.

Many people in Honduras like to eat plantain with their meals. A delicious dish on the north coast of Honduras is called *machuca*. To prepare it, the unripe plantain is mashed in a mortar, spices are added, and the mixture is cooked with crabs in coconut oil.

In the United States, about 11 billion bananas are eaten yearly. A great quantity go to Canada and to Britain and other countries of Europe. What nutritional benefits are there in eating this fruit? Bananas are rich in vitamins A and C, carbohydrates, phosphorus, and potassium.

There are so many uses for the banana! It is just right in snacks, cereals, fruit cocktails, pies, cakes, and, of course, the renowned banana split. But the next time you eat a ripe banana, think about its outstanding qualities. This fruit has its own package. It is rich in vitamins and minerals. Yes, and the banana may have come halfway around the world to get to your table.

FROM OUR READERS

Family Defies Nazis I am 90 years old and am studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. I read the article "Oh, Jehovah, Keep My Young Girl Faithful!" (September 22, 1993) It told of Witness parents and their daughter who, although put under the severe oppression of Hitler, fought a heroic struggle to uphold Jehovah's teachings. I broke down in tears as I read it. I am determined to learn the teachings of Jehovah with an even more serious attitude.

S. T., Japan

This experience touched me deeply. Simone Arnold Liebster was a mere girl, without her parents and confined in a reformatory because of her obedience to Jehovah. What a wonderful example of faith!

M. C. L. S., Brazil

The reliance on Jehovah and the love, dignity, and strength that both she and her parents *lived* made me reassess my own relationship with Jehovah. I felt humbled, and it helped me appreciate the spiritual assets of endurance and faith.

V. B., Australia

Loneliness I read the articles on loneliness (September 22, 1993) three or four times. You suggest that one should dance around, sing, and act happy. But you didn't mention how a chemical imbalance can cause one to have suicidal feelings.

P. C., United States

The articles were not directed to those suffering from severe depression or suicidal tendencies, which generally require special care. Rather, they were addressed to those suffering temporary bouts of loneliness because of grievous circumstances, such as the death of loved ones. Material on depression was published in our October 22, 1987, issue and also in the feature "Young People Ask . . ." in this issue.—ED.

Northern Lights I enjoyed your article "Mysterious Riders of the Celestial Winds" (September 22, 1993) about the aurora boreal-

is. But you failed to point out that the lights can also be seen from northern and eastern parts of Scotland. There's even a song about 'the northern lights of old Aberdeen'!

G. S., Scotland

Thanks for the additional information.—ED.

Protecting Wildlife I am president of a local environmental foundation. It's good to see a series of accurate articles about the environment. ("Who Will Protect Our Wildlife?", November 8, 1993) It has been my contention for years that were it not for God, we would already have perished.

M. S., United States

God has certainly made the earth resilient, which is no doubt why it has withstood man's efforts to ruin it. Ultimately, though, His solution is to "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18)—ED.

AIDS I enjoyed very much the articles on AIDS in the "Young People Ask . . ." series. (August 22, 1993, September 8, 1993) I'm 20 years old and used to be embarrassed by the fact that I am a virgin. But after reading those articles, I've come to realize that my virginity is a gift from Jehovah.

L. K., United States

To imply that heterosexual contact is in the same risk category as homosexual contact is wrong. All research indicates that homosexuals have the highest risk of contracting HIV.

J. S., United States

Research shows that homosexuals are indeed at greater risk of HIV infection. Even so, experts say that infection by heterosexual contact is growing at an alarming rate. And according to one spokesperson for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, women "are the most rapidly growing segment of the HIV-infected population in this country." Not that the women are always at fault; many are infected by profligate husbands.—ED.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Roman Treasure Found In Britain

A hoard of 14,780 gold, silver, and bronze coins, as well as a three-foot-long gold chain, 15 gold bracelets, and about 100 silver spoons, have been uncovered on a farm in Suffolk, England. The trove was discovered by a retired gardener who was using a metal detector to search for a lost hammer. One expert has estimated the value of the find to be at least 15 million dollars. A jury determined the treasure to be the property of the Crown, which means that 70-year-old Eric Lawes, who found the hoard, will receive an ex gratia payment equal to the collection's market value. The treasure has been put on public display in the British Museum, reports the *Guardian Weekly*.

India's Deadly Quake

"With the head of an elephant and the body of a potbellied man, Lord Ganesha is one of Hinduism's most beloved deities, a god of new beginnings and good luck," states *Time* magazine. But just hours after a ten-day festival in honor of this god of good luck had concluded, the southwestern region of India was struck by an earthquake that caused houses to collapse in more than 50 villages and towns. Nearest to the epicenter of the quake, which measured 6.4 on the Richter scale, the village of Killari was 90 percent flattened. Some estimates put the death toll beyond 20,000, making it the worst earthquake to hit the Indian subcontinent in 58 years. Most of the deaths are attributed, not to the power of the quake, but to the primitive construction of most houses, made of pressed mud or

masonry, which collapsed and entombed their inhabitants. The San Francisco earthquake of a few years ago, for example, hit 6.9 on the Richter scale. Yet, only 67 persons were reported to have died, including deaths attributed to heart attacks.

Literacy Problems in Canada and the United States

A four-year federal study of literacy in the United States has shown that "nearly half of the nation's 191 million adult citizens are not proficient enough in English to write a letter about a billing error or to calculate the length of a bus trip from a published schedule," reports *The New York Times*. This



means they face difficulty in everyday matters, such as correctly getting information from a newspaper, making out a bank-deposit slip, reading a bus schedule, or determining from a label the correct dose of medicine to give a child. A similar official study in Canada pointed out that "the reading skills of 16 per cent of Canadian adults are too limited to allow them to deal with the majority of written material encountered in everyday life" and that an additional 22 percent can only read print that clearly outlines a simple task and is in a familiar context, according to *The Globe and Mail*. Lost productivity, errors, and acci-

dents because of poor literacy have cost businesses many billions of dollars.

Public Image of Clergy Plunges

"Every year since 1988, Gallup polls have shown that more people believe religion is losing influence than believe religion's sway is gaining," notes the *Los Angeles Times*. One reason is that the clergy as a profession are slipping in public esteem. Eight years ago a peak of 67 percent of Americans rated the clergy "high" or even "very high" in honesty and ethical standards. A 1993 survey showed a drop to 53 percent. Why? Scandals involving sexual misconduct by televangelists, Protestant pastors, and Catholic priests have blackened the clerical image, as have controversies over fund-raising claims. By 1988, pharmacists had replaced the clergy for the ethical top spot in the public's eye. Another survey even showed that independently run businesses, as well as computers and technology, ranked higher than the churches as influences for good. But the public still feels that the clergy are more honest than politicians and journalists.

Indian Wildlife Threatened

Officials in India's Union Environment Ministry were all set last year to herald their accomplishments in saving the Indian tiger when they discovered the opposite to be true: The tiger is heading for extinction. Some 1,500 of the 4,500 tigers in the wild have been killed by poachers since 1988. Virtually all parts of the slain tigers—skins, bones, blood, and even genitals—are sold in underground markets for lucrative prices. Illegal trade is

also pushing many other animals in India to extinction. The number of rhinoceroses being killed for their horns has doubled. Male elephants are again being slaughtered in large numbers for their tusks. All types of leopards are being killed for their skins, musk deer are butchered for the perfumed pods under their bellies, and black bears are slaughtered for their gallbladders. Additionally, snakes and lizards are being killed for their skins, and mongooses for their bristly hair, which is used to make brushes. Other animals, such as starved tortoises and falcons, are shipped out in the illegal pet trade. Forest guards fear for their lives because of the heavily armed poachers.

World Health Report

Painting a bleak picture of the global fight against disease, the World Health Organization, in its *eighth report on the world health situation*, states: "Tropical diseases seem to have gone on a rampage, with cholera spreading to the Americas for the first time this century, yellow fever and dengue epidemics affecting even greater numbers, and the malaria situation deteriorating . . . The AIDS pandemic is spreading globally . . . pulmonary tuberculosis is on the increase . . . In the developing world, the number of cancer cases has for the first time overtaken that in the developed countries. Diabetes is increasing everywhere." Covering the period 1985-90, the report shows that 46.5 million of the 50 million deaths each year are due to illness and disease and that almost 4 million of the 140 million babies born each year die within hours or days of their birth. Seven million new cancer cases occur each year, and over one million people a year become infected with AIDS-causing

HIV. On the bright side, certain childhood diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, are decreasing, and life expectancy has increased by between one and two years. The global average is now 65 years.

Smoking-Related Deaths in the United States Are Down

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced a decline in the number of smoking-related deaths—the first since records started to be kept in 1985. The number of Americans dying each year from cigarette smoking dropped by 15,000, to 419,000 in 1990, primarily because of a



reduction in smoking-induced heart disease. Some 42.4 percent of American adults smoked in 1965. By 1990 it was 25.5 percent. However, smoking still remains the biggest cause of preventable disease and death and increases health costs by about \$20 billion a year. While the government spends about \$1 million a year on antismoking advertising, the tobacco industry spends \$4 billion on promotions and ads to increase smoking. Smoking causes an average life-expectancy loss of five years per smoker, the CDC reports.

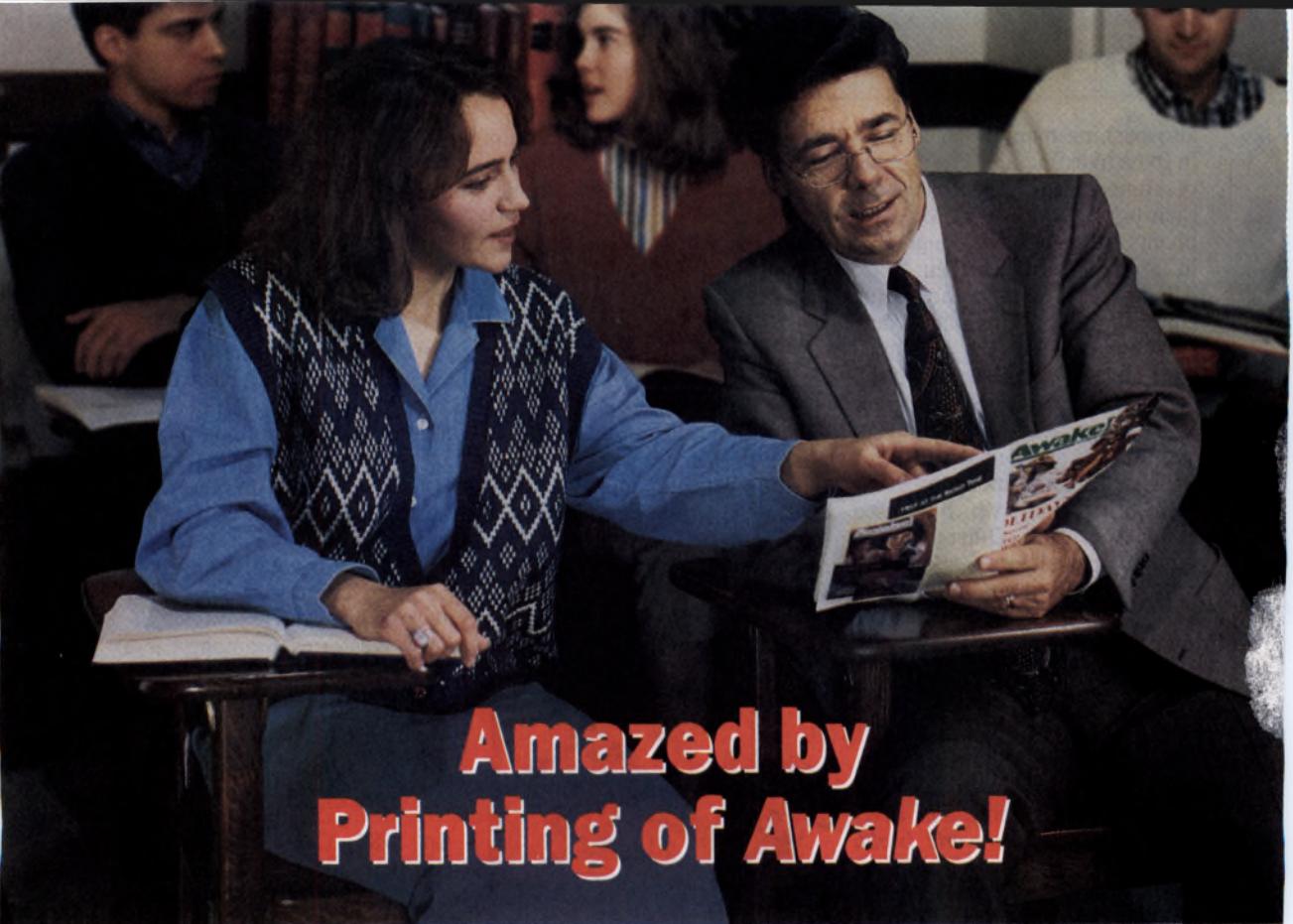
Hopelessness and the Heart

"Nagging despair and emotional distress markedly boost a person's chances of developing heart disease and dying from its con-

sequences," states *Science News*. "Hopelessness and sadness that linger for years, yet fall short of 'severe depression,' can undermine heart function," researchers say. The investigators studied 2,832 adults, ages 45 to 77, for an average of 12 years. All started free of heart disease and other chronic illnesses. The findings showed that deaths from heart disease were four times more common among participants who reported severe hopelessness than among those who reported no hopelessness and that cases of nonfatal heart disease also appeared more often in those who were depressed. The death rate from heart disease was significantly greater even among those who suffered mild depression and moderate hopelessness as compared with those who reported no hopelessness.

No End in Sight

In 1989, Craig Shergold, a seven-year-old British lad, was suffering from a brain tumor and was not expected to live. His wish was to break the world record for receiving the most get-well cards. Publicized by the media and the Atlanta-based Children's Wish Foundation International, the record was broken within months. Over 16 million greeting cards were received the first year, 33 million by 1992. They are still being received at the rate of 300,000 cards a week even though pleas went out over two years ago not to send any more. The count was stopped at 60 million. "We've got a 10,000-square-foot warehouse that is stacked to the ceiling with mail that still hasn't been opened," says Arthur Stein, the foundation's president. Through the help of a benefactor, an operation was performed on Craig early in 1991, and 90 percent of the tumor was removed.



Amazed by Printing of *Awake!*

AN *AWAKE!* READER IN MINNESOTA, U.S.A., works for a college where marine biologist Sam LaBudde was scheduled to deliver a presentation entitled "Where Have the Dolphins Gone?" Remembering that he had been quoted in the *Awake!* article "Drift-Net Fishing on the Way Out?" (May 22, 1992), she took the magazine along to the lecture.

"On the magazine I wrote a note addressed to Mr. LaBudde. I said that I thought he would enjoy knowing that this fine article was going to be distributed worldwide in many languages and that the magazine had a printing of over 13,000,000. Then I signed my name and laid the *Awake!* open on the podium and returned to my seat.

"Shortly I saw a man go over to the podium, pick up the magazine, and begin reading. After a few minutes, he looked up and asked loudly

if the person who left the magazine was present. When I raised my hand and said, 'I am,' he came down and sat next to me. He thanked me for the magazine and said that he appreciates it when someone presents to him information that highlights the work or accomplishments in his field. He felt, though, that I might have made a mistake by saying that the printing was 13,000,000. He thought I must mean 13,000. I turned to the front of the magazine and showed him that it was 13,000,000. He was amazed. He was also very impressed by the number of languages the magazine was published in [now 74 languages]. He thought the magazine was distributed only in the United States, but I explained how it is done worldwide."