

Awake!

JANUARY 2006

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING?



ALSO: WHY LOOK
TO THE BIBLE FOR
GUIDANCE?
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Awake!

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To Our Readers

BEGINNING with this issue, the format of *Awake!* will reflect some changes. Although certain things will be different, much will remain the same.

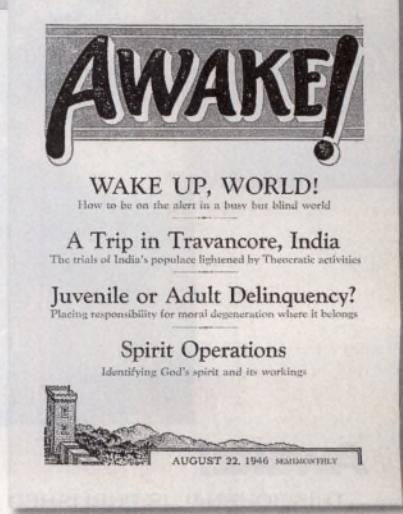
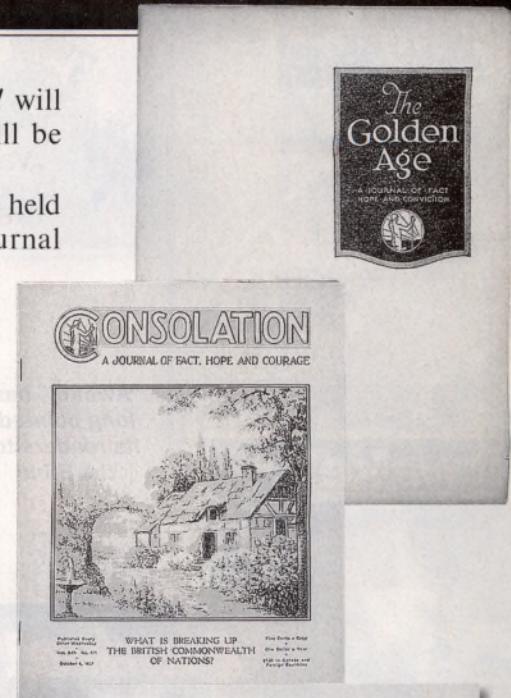
Awake! is still committed to the objective that it has held for many decades. As explained on page 4, "this journal is published for the enlightenment of the entire family." Examining world events, telling about people in various cultures, describing the wonders of creation, discussing health, or explaining science for the non-scientist, *Awake!* will continue to inform our readers, keeping them alert to the world around us.

In its issue of August 22, 1946, *Awake!* pledged: "Integrity to the truth will be the highest aim of this magazine." True to that promise, *Awake!* has always endeavored to publish factual information. To that end, articles are thoroughly researched and carefully checked to ensure accuracy. But this journal has demonstrated "integrity to the truth" in an even more important way.

Awake! has always pointed readers to the Bible. However, beginning with this issue, *Awake!* will feature even more Bible-based articles than in the past. (John 17:17) *Awake!* will also continue to feature articles that show how the Bible's practical counsel can help us to live meaningful and successful lives today. For example, much Bible-based guidance is provided in the series "Young People Ask . . ." and "The Bible's Viewpoint," which will remain regular features of this journal. In addition, *Awake!* will continue to direct readers to the Bible's promise of the peaceful new world that will soon replace the present lawless system of things.
—Revelation 21:3, 4.

What else will be different? Beginning with this issue, *Awake!* will be published monthly in most of the 82 languages in which it appears (formerly it was published semimonthly in many languages).* "Watching the World," which has been a regular feature since 1946, will still appear in each issue but will be reduced from two pages to one. On page 31, we

* *Awake!* is published quarterly in some languages, and the features discussed in this article may not appear in all such editions.



Called "The Golden Age" in 1919, the name was changed to "Consolation" in 1937, and to "Awake!" in 1946

Guns: U.S. National Archives photo;
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Awake!

WHY
DOES GOD
PERMIT
SUFFERING?
When Will It End?

**"Awake!" has
long pointed
its readers to
the Bible**

Awake!

יהוָה

Do You
Know God
by Name?

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.



are also introducing an exciting new regular feature called "How Would You Answer?" What will it contain, and how can you use it?

Take a moment to look at page 31 of this issue. Some sections of the page will appeal to young readers; others will challenge the memory of more advanced Bible students. The section "When in History?" will help you build a time line showing when Bible characters lived and when major events happened. While the answers to the section "From This Issue" will be found throughout the magazine, the answers to most of the other questions will appear on a designated page in the same issue, where they will be printed upside down. Why not do some research before you read those answers and then share with others what you learn? You might even use this new feature, "How Would You Answer?" as a basis for family or group Bible discussions.

Some 60 years ago, *Awake!* made this promise: "As for coverage this magazine will endeavor to treat information from a world-wide rather than local viewpoint. It will appeal to all honest people of all lands.

... The material and contents of the magazine ... will be informative, educational and interesting to the greatest number of persons, young and old alike." Readers from all over the world agree that *Awake!* has kept that promise. We assure you that it will continue to do so.

The Publishers

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A BRIGHTER TOMORROW?

The future is a subject of intense fascination. Who of us would not like to know what we will be doing next month, next year, or even a decade from now? On a broader scale, what kind of world will this be in 10, 20, or 30 years?

DO YOU have an optimistic view of the future? Millions of people do, and these may be divided into two groups: those who say they have solid grounds for their belief that things will get better and those who maintain a bright outlook simply because the alternatives are too bleak to consider.

Of course, some people see *no* good news on the horizon. Among them are prophets of doom who seem to take delight in heralding an apocalyptic annihilation of planet Earth. Their view of the future has room for few, if any, survivors.

How do *you* envision the future? Do you foresee gloom and doom or peace and security? If you expect the latter, on what is your hope based—wishes or firm evidence?

Unlike the doomsayers, the publishers of *Awake!* do not believe that mankind is headed for extinction. On the contrary, the Bible provides solid reason to believe that the best of times are ahead.

▲ U.S. Department of Energy photograph

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

[#] Audiocassettes also available.

^{+○} CD also available.

[○] MP3 CD-ROM also available.

Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

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



WHERE IS THIS WORLD HEADING?

WHAT will the next 10, 20, or 30 years bring? It can be frightening to contemplate the future in this age of terrorism. Technology is booming. Globalization has made many nations interdependent. Will world leaders unite and pave the way for a brighter tomorrow? Some people say yes, hoping that by the year 2015, leaders will be able to stem the tide of poverty and hunger, reverse the spread of AIDS, and halve the proportion of those without

"Listen to me, you that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will travel to a certain city, where we will stay a year and go into business and make a lot of money.' You don't even know what your life tomorrow will be!"

—James 4:13, 14, Today's English Version

access to safe drinking water and sanitation.—See the box "Optimism Versus Reality."

However, man's vision of the future has often proved to be illusory. For example, decades ago one expert said that by 1984, farmers would plow the ocean floor with underwater tractors; another said that by 1995, cars would be equipped with computerized hardware that would prevent collisions; and another predicted that by 2000, there would be some 50,000 people living and working in space. Of course, those who made such predictions likely now wish they had remained silent. One journalist wrote: "There's nothing like the passage of time to make the world's smartest people look like complete idiots."

A "Map" to Guide Us

People speculate endlessly about the future, but sometimes their vision is more idealistic than realistic. Where can we turn for a *reliable* view of what lies ahead?

Consider an illustration. Imagine that you are traveling by bus through a foreign land. Because the area is unfamiliar, you begin to feel uneasy. 'Just where *am* I?' you wonder. 'Is this bus really headed in the right direction? How far am I from my destination?' By consulting an accurate map and by observing the signs outside your window, you can find the answers to your questions.

The situation is similar for many today who feel anxious as they think about the future. 'Where are we heading?' they wonder. 'Are we really on the road to global peace? If so, when will we reach that destination?' The Bible is like a map that can help us to answer those questions. By carefully

■ The Bible traces our history back to the first man and woman. Thus, it tells us where we came from. It also indicates where we are heading. But to understand what the Bible is telling us, we need to study it closely, as we would a map

reading it—and by looking closely at what is happening outside our “window” on the world scene—we can learn much about where we are and where we are heading. First, though, we need to consider how our problems began.

A Tragic Starting Point

The Bible tells us that when God created the first man and woman, they were perfect and that he placed them in paradisaic surroundings. Adam and Eve were made to live forever—not just for 70 or 80 years. God said to them: “Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.” God’s purpose was for Adam, Eve, and their descendants to extend Paradise to all parts of the globe.—Genesis 1:28; 2:8, 15, 22.

Adam and Eve rebelled against God. As a result, they lost their Paradise home. More than that, they began a slow but steady process of physical and mental deterioration. Each day, Adam and Eve moved one step closer to the grave. Why? Because by turning

■ “Sin” can refer to a wrong act or to a condition of being inclined toward badness. We are born in a sinful state, which affects our actions. “There is no man righteous in the earth that keeps doing good and does not sin.”—Ecclesiastes 7:20

against their Creator, they had sinned, and “the wages sin pays is death.”—Romans 6:23.

Adam and Eve eventually died but not before having a number of sons and daughters. Would these children be able to carry out God’s original purpose? No, for they inherited their parents’ imperfection. In fact, from one generation to the next, *all* of Adam’s descendants have inherited sin and death. We have too. “Through one man,” the Bible says, “sin entered into the world and death through

OPTIMISM VERSUS REALITY

In September 2000, member states of the United Nations unanimously set a number of goals to be met by 2015. These included the following:

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day as well as those who suffer from hunger.
- Ensure that all children complete primary schooling.
- Eliminate gender inequality at all levels of education.
- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five years of age.
- Reduce the maternal mortality rate by 75 percent.
- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as the incidence of other major diseases, such as malaria.
- Reduce by 50 percent the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water.

Can these goals be reached? After re-evaluating matters in 2004, a panel of health officials from around the world concluded that optimism has to be tempered with the realization that hoped-for gains do not reflect what is really happening. The foreword to the book *State of the World 2005* reports: “Poverty continues to undermine progress in many areas. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS are on the rise, creating public health time bombs in numerous countries. In the last five years, some 20 million children have died of preventable waterborne diseases, and hundreds of millions of people continue to live with the daily misery and squalor associated with the lack of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation.”

■ If you were to photocopy a sheet of paper that had a dark spot on it, that spot would appear on all the copies. As Adam's descendants—copies, so to speak—we have the stain of sin upon us. It is the same mark that appeared on Adam, the "original"

sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Romans 3:23; 5:12.

Pinpointing Our Present Location

The rebellion of Adam and Eve marked the beginning of a long and bitter journey for mankind that has continued till our day. The way one Bible writer put it, mankind has been “subjected to futility.” (Romans 8:20) How well that describes the human struggle! Why, Adam’s descendants have included brilliant men and women of science, masterminds of medicine, and trailblazers of technology. Yet, not one of them has been able to bring about the global peace and optimal health that God purposed for man.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve affects each of us in a personal way. Who, for example, has not felt the sting of injustice, the fear of crime, the pain of chronic illness, or the grief that overwhelms us when a loved one dies? Any calm in our life seems to be quickly interrupted by tragedy. Even with its pleasant moments, our existence is just as the ancient patriarch Job described it when he said: “Man . . . is short-lived and glutted with agitation.”—Job 14:1.

Considering where we came from and the lamentable condition in which we now find ourselves, the future may look bleak. But the Bible assures us that God will not allow such

■ The Bible says: “It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.” (Jeremiah 10:23) This explains why man’s efforts to achieve world peace have met with failure. He was not created to “direct his step” independent of God

SOME FEATURES OF “THE LAST DAYS”

Unprecedented warfare.—Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:4.

Famine.—Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:5, 6, 8.

Pestilences.—Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:8.

Increasing lawlessness.—Matthew 24:12.

Ruining of the earth.—Revelation 11:18.

Great earthquakes.—Luke 21:11.

Critical times hard to deal with.—2 Timothy 3:1.

Inordinate love of money.—2 Timothy 3:2.

Disobedience to parents.—2 Timothy 3:2.

Lack of natural affection.—2 Timothy 3:3.

Loving pleasures rather than God.—2 Timothy 3:4.

Lack of self-control.—2 Timothy 3:3.

Without love of goodness.—2 Timothy 3:3.

Taking no note of the impending danger.—Matthew 24:39.

Ridiculers reject proof of the last days.—2 Peter 3:3, 4.

Global preaching of God’s Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.



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© Paul Lowe/Panos Pictures

conditions to continue indefinitely. His original purpose for man will succeed. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) Why can we be sure that this will happen soon?

According to the Bible, we are now passing through a critical era called “the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1) That phrase does not signify the end of planet Earth and of all life upon it. Rather, it means “the conclusion of the system of things” and therefore the end of the conditions that cause us sorrow. (Matthew 24:3) The Bible describes the events and the traits of people that would be prevalent during the last days. Note some of these in the box on page 8, and then look outside the “window” at the world scene. Our map, the Bible, helps us to pinpoint our present location as being very close to the end of this system of things. But what will follow?

The Road Ahead

Immediately after Adam and Eve rebelled, God began to reveal his purpose for an arrangement to install a Kingdom “that will never be brought to ruin.” (Daniel 2:44) That

**Jehovah's Witnesses are known
for preaching the good news
of God's Kingdom**



Kingdom, which many have been taught to pray for in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, will bring untold blessings to mankind.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

God's Kingdom is not some vague concept that exists in the heart. It is a real heavenly

■ The Bible psalmist said to God: “Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway.” (Psalm 119:105) As a lamp, the Bible helps us to take wise steps when we are faced with decisions. As a ‘light to our roadway,’ it illuminates the path ahead so we can discern what the future holds for mankind

government that will have profound effects on earth. Just consider what God promises to accomplish for humans by means of his Kingdom. The Bible says that God will first “bring to ruin those ruining the earth.” (Revelation 11:18) What will he do for those who demonstrate their obedience to him? His written Word says that he will “wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:4) What human could ever accomplish those things? Only God can bring us to the condition he originally purposed for mankind.

How can you benefit from the blessings that God's Kingdom will bring? John 17:3 says: “This means everlasting life, their *taking in knowledge* of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” Jehovah's Witnesses are involved in a worldwide educational program that is helping people to do just that. Their ministry is carried out in some 230 lands, and their literature is published in more than 400 languages. If you would like to learn more, contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally or write to the appropriate address listed on page 5.

Why do I hurt myself?

"I cut my wrists so bad I had to get stitches. At the time, I told the doctor that I cut myself on a light bulb, which was true—I just didn't mention that I'd done it on purpose."—**Sasha, 23.**

"My parents have noticed my cuts, but only the ones that aren't so bad and look like scrapes. . . . Sometimes they'll see one they don't recognize, so I make up an excuse. . . . I don't want them to know."—**Ariel, 13.**

"I had been a self-injurer since I was 11. I knew of God's high regard for the human body, but even this did not deter me."

—**Jennifer, 20.**

YOU might be familiar with someone like Sasha, Ariel, or Jennifer.* It could be a schoolmate. It could be a sibling. It could be you. In the United States alone, it is estimated that millions of people—many of them youths—deliberately hurt themselves by various means, such as cutting, burning, bruising, or scraping their skin.[#]

Deliberately hurting themselves? In the past many would link such behavior with some bizarre fad or cult. In recent years, however, knowledge about self-injury—which includes cutting or self-mutilation—has grown dramatically. Evidently, so has the number of those coming forward with the problem. “Every clinician says it’s increasing,” states Michael Hollander, director of a treatment center in the United States.

Self-injury is rarely fatal, but it is dangerous. Consider Beth, for example. “When I injure myself, I use a razor,” she says. “I’ve been hospitalized twice. Once I had to go to the emergency room because of a deep cut.” Like

* Some names in this article have been changed.

[#] Self-injury is not to be confused with body piercing or tattooing. Generally, these have more to do with fad than compulsion. See *Awake!* of August 8, 2000, pages 18-9.

many sufferers, Beth has carried the practice of self-injury into adulthood. "I have been doing it since I was 15 years old, and now I'm 30," she says.

Have you or someone you know fallen prey to self-injury? If so, do not despair. Help is available. In the next issue of *Awake!* we will discuss how those who self-injure can be helped.* First, though, it would be good to discuss the people who develop the disorder and why they do it.

A Diverse Profile

It is difficult to put self-injurers—or cutters, as they are sometimes called—into a single category. Some come from troubled families; others from stable, happy homes. A number are failing at school, but many are excelling as students. Often, self-injurers give little if any indication that they have a problem, for a person who is beset with adversity does not always show it on the outside. The Bible states: "Even in laughter the heart may be in pain."—Proverbs 14:13.

Then, too, the severity of self-injury differs from one person to the next. One study, for example, found that some individuals cut themselves only once a year, while others

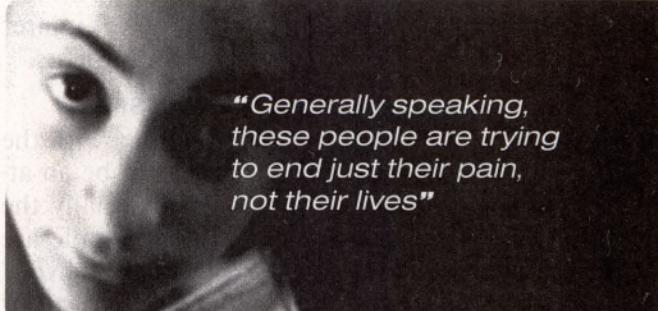
"Even in laughter the heart may be in pain."—Proverbs 14:13

average twice a day. Interestingly, more males are injuring themselves than was once thought. Still, the problem is found mostly among adolescent girls.⁷

Even with such a diverse profile, some self-injurers seem to share certain traits. One en-

* Leviticus 19:28 states: "You must not make cuts in your flesh for a deceased soul." This pagan custom—evidently designed to appease the gods who were thought to preside over the dead—is different from the habit of self-injury being discussed here.

* For this reason, we will refer to the self-injurer as a female. However, the principles discussed apply to both genders.



"Generally speaking, these people are trying to end just their pain, not their lives"

cyclopedia on youths observes: "Adolescents who self-injure often feel powerless, have difficulty trusting others with emotions, feel isolated or alienated, feel afraid, and have low self-esteem."

Of course, some may say that this description could fit almost *any* young person who is facing the fears and insecurities of growing up. For the self-injurer, though, the struggle is particularly intense. The inability to put troubled feelings into words and to express these to a confidant can make pressures from school, demands of work, or conflicts at home appear overwhelming. She sees no solution and feels she has no one to talk to. The tension feels unbearable. Finally, she discovers something: By hurting herself physically, she seems to find some relief from the emotional anguish, and she feels she can carry on with her life—at least for the moment.

Why does the cutter resort to physical pain in an effort to relieve emotional anguish? To illustrate, consider what happens when you are in a doctor's office about to get a shot. As the process begins, have you ever found yourself pinching your skin or perhaps putting pressure on it with your fingernail, just to distract yourself from the sting of the needle? What the self-injurer does is similar, although on a more serious level. To the self-injurer, cutting provides a form of distraction and a sense of relief from the sting of emotional anguish. And the anguish is so great that by comparison physical pain is

preferable. Perhaps that is why one self-injurer described cutting as “medicine for my fears.”

“A Mechanism to Cope With Stress”

To those who are not acquainted with the disorder, self-injury may appear to be an attempt at suicide. But this is not usually the case. “Generally speaking, these people are trying to end just their pain, not their lives,” writes Sabrina Solin Weill, executive editor of a magazine for teens. Hence, one reference work refers to self-injury as a ‘life preserver’ rather than an exit strategy.” It also calls the practice “a mechanism to cope with stress.” What kind of stress?

It has been found that many self-injurers have suffered some type of trauma, such as childhood abuse or neglect. For others, family conflict or the alcoholism of a parent is the factor. For some, a mental disorder is involved.

There could be other problems as well. Sara, for example, was in the throes of what she calls self-abusive perfectionism. While she had made serious mistakes and had received help from Christian elders, she felt exceedingly guilty over her daily imperfections. “I figured that I had to ‘get tough’ on myself,” Sara says. “To me, self-injury was merely self-discipline. My ‘self-discipline’ included pulling out my hair, cutting my wrists and arms, hitting myself and causing deep bruises, and sentencing myself to such punishments as keeping my hand under scalding water,

sitting outside in the freezing cold without a coat, or going an entire day without eating.”

For Sara, self-injury was a reflection of a deep self-loathing. “There were times

when I knew that Jehovah had forgiven me for my mistakes,” she says, “but I did not want him to. I wanted to suffer because I hated myself so much. While I knew that Jehovah could never have conceived of a place of torment like Christendom’s hell, I wanted him to invent one just for me.”

“Critical Times”

Some might wonder why such a disturbing practice has only come to light in recent decades. However, students of the Bible know that these are “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Timothy 3:1) Thus, they are

We are living in “critical times hard to deal with.”—2 Timothy 3:1

not surprised to learn that people—including youths—turn to behavior that is hard to explain.

The Bible acknowledges that “oppression may make a wise one act crazy.” (Ecclesiastes 7:7) The challenges of adolescence—in some cases, coupled with tragic life experiences—can provide the groundwork for a pattern of harmful behavior, including self-injury. A youth who feels isolated and believes that she has no one to talk to might resort to cutting in an effort to find relief. But whatever relief self-injury may seem to offer is short-lived. Sooner or later the problems return, and so does self-injury.

Generally, those who practice self-injury want to quit but find it very difficult. How have some been able to break the practice of self-injury? This will be discussed in the “Young People Ask . . .” article “How Can I Stop Hurting Myself?” in the February 2006 issue of *Awake!*



TO THINK ABOUT

- Why do some young people resort to self-injury?
- After reading this article, can you think of some better ways to cope with distressing feelings?

MOLD

Friend and Foe!

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SWEDEN

Some molds save lives; others kill.

Some add to the flavor of cheeses and wines; others make food poisonous.

Some grow on logs; others infest bathrooms and books. In fact, molds are everywhere—spores might even be passing through your nostrils as you read this sentence.

IF YOU doubt that mold is all around us, just leave a slice of bread lying around, even in the refrigerator. Before long it will develop a fuzzy coat—mold!

What Is Mold?

Molds belong to the Fungi kingdom, which boasts over 100,000 species, including mildews, mushrooms, plant rusts, and yeasts. Only about 100 fungi are known to cause disease in humans and animals. Many others play a vital role in the food chain—decomposing dead organic matter and thereby recycling essential elements in a form that plants can use. Still others work in symbiotic relationships with plants, helping them to absorb nutrients from the soil. And some are parasites.

Mold begins life as a microscopic spore carried by air currents. If the spore lands on a suitable food source that has, among other things, the right temperature and moisture level, the spore will germinate, forming threadlike cells called hyphae. When hyphae form a colony,

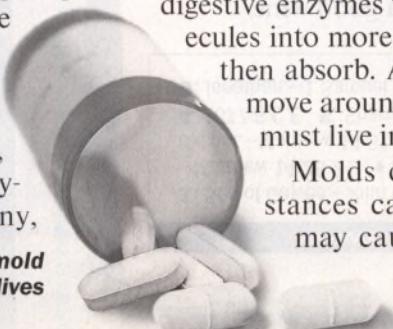
the fluffy, tangled mass is called a mycelium, which is the visible mold. Mold may also resemble dirt or a stain, such as when it forms on the grout between bathroom tiles.

Mold is a master at reproduction. In the common bread mold, *Rhizopus stolonifer*, the tiny black dots are the spore bodies, or sporangia. Just one dot contains upwards of 50,000 spores, each of which can produce hundreds of millions of new spores in a matter of days! And given the right conditions, mold will grow just as well on a book, a boot, or wallpaper as on a log in a forest.

How do molds “eat”? Unlike animals and humans, who eat first and then absorb their food through digestion, molds often reverse the process. When organic molecules are too large or complex for molds to eat, they exude digestive enzymes that break down the molecules into more simple units, which they then absorb. Also, since molds cannot move around to search for food, they must live in their food.

Molds can produce toxic substances called mycotoxins, which may cause adverse reactions in

Medicines derived from mold have saved many lives



both humans and animals. Exposure may occur through inhalation, ingestion, or contact with the skin. But the story is not all bad, for mold has some very useful properties.

The Friendly Face of Mold

In 1928 scientist Alexander Fleming observed by accident the germicidal power of green mold. Later identified as *Penicillium notatum*, the mold proved to be lethal to bacteria but harmless to humans and animals. This find led to the development of penicillin, termed "the single greatest lifesaver of modern medicine." For their work, Fleming and fellow researchers Howard Florey and Ernst Chain were awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1945. Since then, mold has furnished a number of other medicinal substances, including drugs for treating blood clots, migraine headaches, and Parkinson's disease.

Mold has also been a blessing to the palate. Take cheese, for example. Did you know that Brie, Camembert, Danish blue, Gorgonzola, Roquefort, and Stilton owe their distinct flavors to certain species of the mold *Penicillium*? Likewise, salami, soy sauce, and beer owe much to mold.

The same is true of wine. When certain grapes are harvested at the correct time and with a suitable measure of fungal growth on each bunch, they can be used to produce exquisite dessert wines. The mold *Botrytis cinerea*, or "noble rot," acts on the sugars in the grapes, enhancing the flavor. In the wine cellar, the mold *Cladosporium cellare* adds a final touch during the maturing process. To paraphrase an adage of Hungarian winegrowers: 'A noble mold spells a good wine.'

- 1. Sea of Galilee.—John 6:1, 16. ♦ Jesus and Peter.
- Matthew 14:26-31. ♦ Peter gave way to doubt; Jesus did not.—Matthew 14:31. 2. 539 B.C.E. 3. 647 B.C.E.
- 4. 1077 B.C.E. 5. Sharmgar.—Judges 3:31.
- 6. Jonathan.—1 Samuel 14:27.

When Mold Becomes a Foe

The harmful traits of certain molds also have a long history. In the sixth century B.C.E., the Assyrians used the mold *Claviceps purpurea* to poison the wells of their enemies—an ancient form of biological warfare. In the Middle Ages, this same mold, which sometimes forms on rye, gave many people epileptic fits, painful burning sensations, gangrene, and hallucinations. Now called ergotism, the disease was dubbed St. Anthony's fire because many victims, hoping for a miraculous cure, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Anthony in France.

The strongest carcinogenic (cancer causing) substance known is aflatoxin—a toxin produced by molds. In one Asian country, 20,000 deaths a year are attributed to aflatox-

MOLD IN BIBLE TIMES?

The Bible mentions "the plague of leprosy in a house," meaning in the building itself. (Leviticus 14:34-48) It has been suggested that this phenomenon, also called "malignant leprosy," was a form of mildew or mold, but about this there is uncertainty. Whatever the case, God's Law instructed homeowners to remove infected stones, scrape out the entire inside of the house, and discard all the suspect matter outside the city in "an unclean place." If the plague returned, the whole house was to be declared unclean, pulled down, and disposed of. Jehovah's detailed instructions reflected his deep love for his people and for their physical welfare.

in. This lethal compound has been used in modern biological weapons.

In everyday life, however, the symptoms of exposure to common molds are more an annoyance than a serious health threat. "Most molds, even if you can smell them, are not harmful," says the *UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*. People who usually have an adverse reaction include those with lung disorders, such as asthma; individuals with allergies, chemical sensitivities, or a weakened immune system; and farmworkers who may be exposed to massive amounts of mold. Infants and the elderly may also be more susceptible to the effects of exposure to mold.

According to the California Department of Health Services in the United States, mold can cause the following symptoms: 'Respiratory problems, such as wheezing, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath; nasal and sinus congestion; eye irritation (burning, watery, or reddened eyes); dry, hacking cough; nose or throat irritation; skin rashes or irritation.'

Mold and Buildings

In some lands it is common to hear of schools being closed or people having to vacate homes or offices for mold remediation. Early in 2002, the newly opened Museum of Modern Arts in Stockholm, Sweden, had to be closed because of mold. Remediation cost approximately five million dollars! Why has this problem become more common recently?

The answer involves two main factors: building materials and designs. In recent decades construction materials have included products that are more susceptible to mold. An example is drywall, or gypsum board, which is often made of several layers of paper bonded to a hardened plaster core. The core holds moisture. So if this material remains wet for extended periods, mold spores

can germinate and grow, feeding on the paper in the drywall.

Structural designs have also changed. Prior to the 1970's, many buildings in the United States and in a number of other lands were less insulated and airtight than later designs. The changes resulted from a desire to make buildings more energy efficient by minimizing heat loss and gain and by reducing air-flow. So now when water gets in, it tends to stay longer, encouraging the growth of mold. Is there a solution to this problem?

The most effective way of solving, or at least minimizing, mold problems is to keep everything inside clean and dry and to keep the humidity low. If moisture does accumulate somewhere, dry the area promptly and make the necessary changes or repairs so that water cannot build up again. For example, keep the roof and gutters clean and in good repair. And ensure that the ground slopes away from the building so that water will not accumulate around the foundation. If you have air-conditioning, keep the drip pans clean and the drain lines unobstructed.

"Moisture control is the key to mold control," says one authority. Simple measures may spare you and your family from an encounter with the unfriendly face of mold. In some ways, mold is like fire. It can do harm, but it can also be extremely useful. Much depends on how we use and control it. Of course, we still have much to learn about mold. But knowledge of God's amazing creations can only be to our advantage.

Drywall and vinyl can trap moisture, which then promotes the growth of mold





Off They Go!

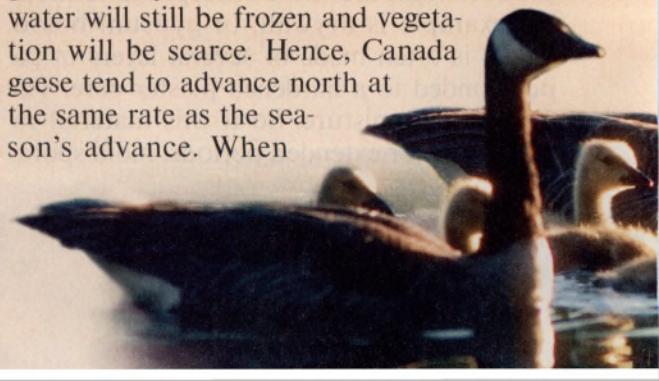
IT WAS nearly dusk, and there was a chill in the autumn air. But the calm silence was soon interrupted by the clamorous honking of a flock of geese. Suddenly, they appeared overhead—about 20 of them forming a giant V as they started to fly with elegant, powerful wing strokes. One goose gracefully banked to its left and moved to the back of the group. The awesome sight sparked my curiosity. Why do geese fly in formation? And where are they going?

The goose is a waterbird, closely related to the duck and the swan. There are some 40 species of geese worldwide, and they are most commonly seen in Asia, Europe, and North America. The Canada goose is one of the best-known species, with its characteris-

tic long dark neck and white patch about its throat. Mature males of the subspecies called giant Canada geese can weigh up to 20 pounds and have a wing span of 6.5 feet. This goose spends its summer as far north as Alaska and northern Canada and then migrates as far south as Mexico for the winter months.

The timing of migration is critical for geese. If they arrive north too soon, the water will still be frozen and vegetation will be scarce. Hence, Canada geese tend to advance north at the same rate as the season's advance. When

Flying geese: © Tom Brakefield/CORBIS





Did you know?

- As soon as they are hatched, goslings leave the nest for good with their dad and mom. Families usually remain together.
- Bar-headed geese are said to migrate over Mount Everest, which has an altitude of nearly 30,000 feet.
- Some types of geese can fly as much as a thousand miles without resting.
- When flying at speeds similar to geese flying solo, geese flying in formation beat their wings less frequently and hence have lower heart rates.



they arrive at their destination, the geese divide up into pairs, and each pair then establishes its own breeding ground.

Flying in formation allows geese to keep one another in view and to respond quickly when the bird in front changes direction, speed, or altitude. In addition, some experts believe that the air current created by the geese up front makes flight easier for the rest of the flock, reducing air turbulence. In any event, it seems that a migrating flock usually consists of a number of families, with adults taking turns leading.

Often, Canada geese use the same nest site year after year. The nest is usually made of simple materials, such as sticks, grass, and moss. Geese are monogamous—that is, they have one mate for life. If one of the pair dies, the surviving goose might accept another mate.

Usually, though, it remains alone.

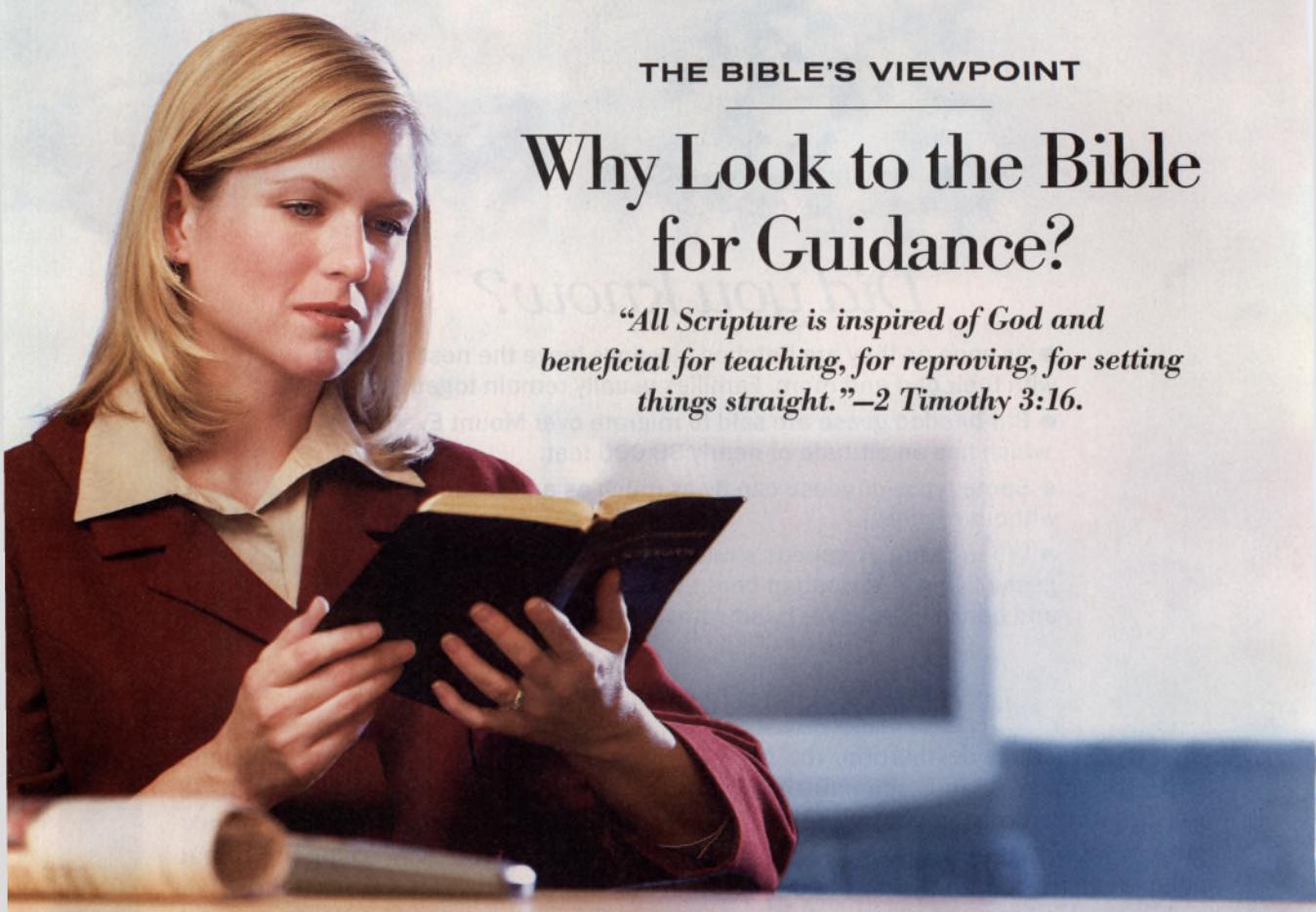
The female lays between four and eight eggs, which she incubates for about 28 days. The parents are formidable protectors. When they or their young are threatened, the pair become quite aggressive. With their wings they can deliver powerful blows against predators.

Goslings begin communicating while still in the egg. Their calls range from high-pitched trills (signaling contentment) to distress calls. When communicating with their young and with each other, adults too use a variety of calls. In fact, researchers have isolated at least 13 distinct calls among Canada geese.

Geese truly give evidence of being “instinctively wise.” (Proverbs 30:24) Of course, all credit for this goes to Jehovah God, the one who made all things—including the winged creatures of the heavens.—Psalm 104:24.

Why Look to the Bible for Guidance?

"All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight."—2 Timothy 3:16.



WHERE do you go for guidance in your life? Today there is a superabundance of advice available on virtually every imaginable subject. Still, many people look to the ancient writings of the Bible for guidance.

The majority, however, regard the Bible as of little value, especially in this age of information and modern technology. Some respected educators and scientists hold to the idea that the Bible is no longer relevant. Are they right? Considering the many sources of guidance so prevalent today, why should anyone look to the Bible?

A Book of Truth

On one occasion Jesus Christ was resting by a fountain and had a conversation with a Samaritan woman. He said to her: "God is a

Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) These words show that there is a form of worship acceptable to God. For our worship to be rendered with truth, it must harmonize with what God has revealed about himself in the Bible. God's Word contains the truth.
—John 17:17.

However, there are many religions professing belief in the Bible, and each one seems to teach different things. As a result, there is much confusion as to what the Bible really teaches. Is Jesus God, or is he the Son of God? Is there life after death or not? Is hell a real place where people are tormented after death? Is Satan an actual person? What does it mean to be a Christian? Do our

actions and thoughts really matter to God? Does true love justify premarital sex? Is it wrong to drink alcoholic beverages?* Various religions claim to teach the truth about these matters. But religious doctrines are often in conflict with one another. They cannot all be the truth.—Matthew 7:21-23.

How, then, are you to find the truth about God and the form of worship that pleases him? Suppose you found out that you needed surgery to correct a serious medical condition. What would you do? If possible, you would thoroughly search to find the best surgeon available for that type of operation. You would consider his credentials and experience, contact him, and talk with him. Finally, after you were convinced on the basis of the evidence that he was the best, you would place your trust in him and let him operate on you. Others may have a different opinion. But your faith in this surgeon is now well-grounded.

In the same way, if you make an honest and thorough examination of the available evidence, you can build faith in God and the Bible. (Proverbs 2:1-4) In seeking answers to questions about the kind of worship that is acceptable to God, you have a choice. You can look to the conflicting teachings and opinions of men, or you can consider the Bible's viewpoint.

Accurate and Practical

A careful examination of the Bible will provide you with considerable evidence that "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial."[#]

* "The Bible's Viewpoint"—a regular feature of *Awake!*—will consider these and other questions in future issues.

[#] For evidence that the Bible is divinely inspired, see the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

(2 Timothy 3:16, 17) For instance, the Bible is filled with detailed prophecies. History documents their fulfillment. (Isaiah 13:19, 20; Daniel 8:3-8, 20-22; Micah 5:2) Although not a science textbook, the Bible is scientifically accurate. It contains facts about nature and health that were written thousands of years before scientists were able to reach similar conclusions.—Leviticus 11:27, 28, 32, 33; Isaiah 40:22.

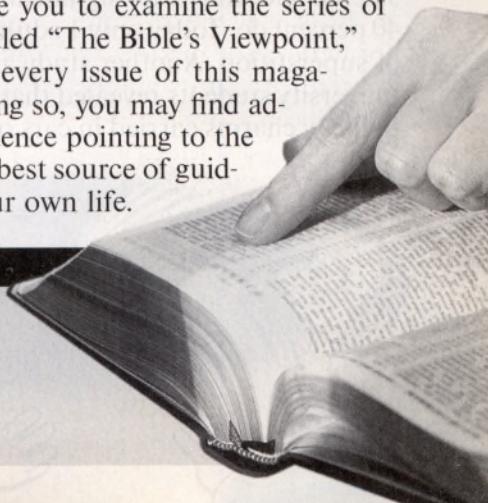
Moreover, the Bible helps us make wise decisions. Its pages contain an abundance of practical advice on family life, physical and emotional health, business, and other day-to-day matters. Proverbs 2:6, 7 says: "Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment. And for the upright ones he will treasure up practical wisdom." By looking to the Bible for guidance, you can train your perceptive powers "to distinguish both right and wrong."—Hebrews 5:14.

God's Word also helps us to understand the purpose of life. (John 17:3; Acts 17:26, 27) It explains the meaning of world conditions. (Matthew 24:3, 7, 8, 14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) In it God shows us how he will remove badness from the earth and enable mankind to enjoy perfect health and eternal life.—Isaiah 33:24; Daniel 2:44; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Millions have experienced firsthand that the Bible is indeed a reliable and trustworthy source of practical wisdom. The publishers of *Awake!* invite you to examine the series of articles entitled "The Bible's Viewpoint," featured in every issue of this magazine. By doing so, you may find additional evidence pointing to the Bible as the best source of guidance for your own life.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- What form of worship is acceptable to God?—John 4:24.
- What must you do to benefit from the wisdom of God?—Proverbs 2:1-4.
- In what way is the Bible a source of practical guidance?—Hebrews 5:14.



Increasing Violence Against Clergymen?

"Being a priest is one of the most dangerous professions in [Britain]," reported London's *Daily Telegraph* in 2005. A 2001 government survey revealed that almost three quarters of clergymen interviewed had suffered abuse or assault in the preceding two years. Since 1996 at least seven clergymen have been murdered. One urban area, Merseyside, has had "an average of an assault, robbery or arson attack carried out in one of its 1,400 places of worship every day."

Extraordinary Biological Diversity

Despite rain forest destruction, "the island of Borneo retains an extraordinary amount of biological diversity in its interior," states *The New York Times*. According to the World Wildlife Fund, between 1994 and 2004, biologists discovered 361 new species of plants and animals on the island, which is shared by Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The finds included 260 newly discovered insects, 50 plants, 30 fish, 7 frogs, 6 lizards, 5 crabs, 2 snakes, and a toad. The rain forests of the interior, however, could be threatened by increasing deforestation, driven by demand for tropical hardwood and for rubber and palm oil.

Superstition on the Rise

"Even in a time characterized by technology and science, superstition has not lost its persuasiveness," reports the German opinion poll institute Allensbach. A long-term study has shown that "irrational belief in good or bad omens persists in the population and is, in fact, more popular today than it was a quarter of a century ago." In the 1970's, 22 percent considered shooting stars significant to their lives. Now 40 percent do. Today only 1 adult in 3 rejects all forms of superstition. Another study among 1,000 German university students revealed that a third of them trust in lucky charms carried in cars or on key rings.



■ During 2000, an estimated 8.3 million new cases of tuberculosis (TB) developed worldwide, and nearly two million TB victims died—almost all of them in low-income countries.—*MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA*.

■ "Ten million young people are currently living with HIV, and over half of the 4.9 million people newly infected worldwide each year are between the ages of 15 and 24."—*UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND*.

■ Satellite tracking recorded round-the-world journeys by wandering albatrosses. The fastest one circumnavigated the globe in just 46 days.—*SCIENCE MAGAZINE, U.S.A.*

■ "Every hour of every day, the world spends more than \$100 million on soldiers, weapons, and ammunition."—*VITAL SIGNS 2005, WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE*.

Antarctic Glaciers Retreating

"In the last 50 years, 87 percent of the 244 glaciers on the Antarctic peninsula have retreated," and faster than experts previously thought, reports the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín*. The first comprehensive analysis of glaciers in the area also found that air temperatures have risen by more than 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit during the last 50 years. The widespread retreat was largely caused by climate change, notes David Vaughan of the British Antarctic Survey. "Are humans responsible?" he asks. "We can't say for sure, but we are one step closer to answering this important question."

Michael Agricola

A “Man of the Dawn”

“No other book has had a deeper and more comprehensive influence on Finnish culture, values, and thinking than the Bible.”

—“Biblia 350—The Finnish Bible and Culture.”

DO YOU have access to the Bible in your native tongue? There is a good chance you do. After all, the Bible—either whole or in part—is available in over 2,000 languages. And this is no accident. Throughout history, scores of men and women have labored arduously at translating the Bible into the vernacular, even in the face of great obstacles. Michael Agricola was one of them.

Agricola was the scholar who took up the work of translating the Bible into Finnish. His body of literary works helped give rise to Finnish culture as it is known today. No wonder he is called a Man of the Dawn!

Agricola was born in about 1510 in the village of Torsby in southern Finland. His father owned a farm, which explains the surname Agricola, from the Latin word for “farmer.” Growing up in a bilingual region, Agricola likely spoke both Swedish and Finnish. He expanded his linguistic skills while attending a Latin school in the town of Vyborg. Later he moved to Turku, Finland’s administrative center at the time, where he served as

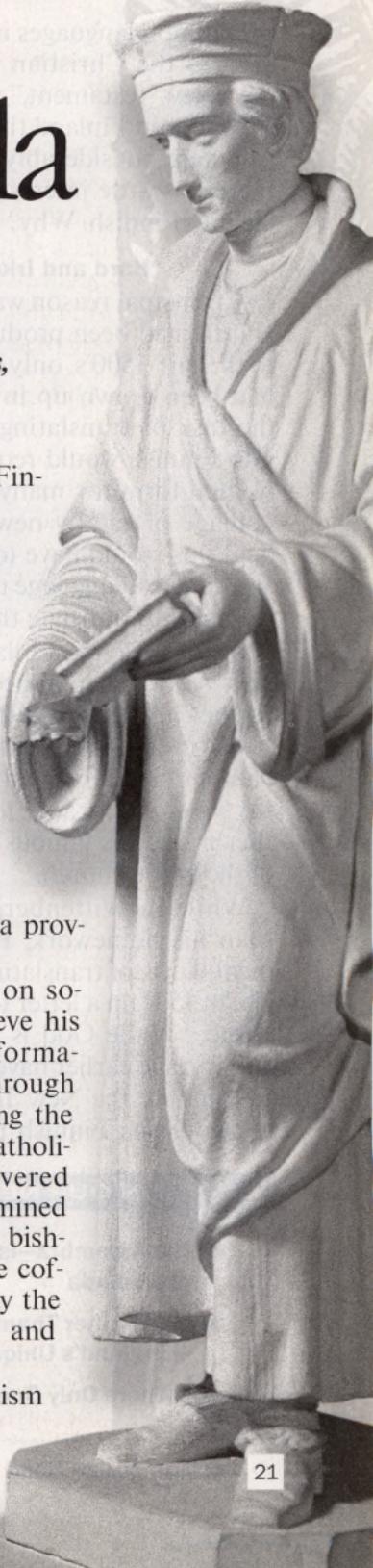
secretary to Martti Skytte, Finland’s Catholic bishop.

The Religion and Politics of His Time

During this period of Agricola’s life, Scandinavia was in turmoil. Sweden was struggling to break free from the Kalmar Union, which consisted of the Scandinavian countries. In 1523, Gustav I was crowned king of Sweden. This would have a profound effect on Finland, which was at the time a province under Swedish rule.

The new king was intent on solidifying his power. To achieve his goals, he embraced the Reformation, which was sweeping through northern Europe. By changing the religion of his realm from Catholicism to Lutheranism, he severed ties with the Vatican, undermined the authority of the Catholic bishops, and got his hands on the coffers of the church. To this day the populations of both Sweden and Finland are mostly Lutheran.

A leading goal of Protestantism was to hold church services



in common languages instead of Latin. Thus, in 1526 the Christian Greek Scriptures, or the "New Testament," appeared in Swedish. However, in Finland the winds of Protestantism were considerably weaker. At the time, there was little interest in translating the Bible into Finnish. Why?

"Hard and Irksome" Work

A principal reason was that virtually no literature had been produced in Finnish. Prior to the mid-1500's, only a few Catholic prayers had been drawn up in the language. Hence, the task of translating the Holy Scriptures into Finnish would require the creation of a written form for many words as well as the coinage of totally new words and phrases. And this would have to be done without the assistance of language textbooks. Yet, Agricola set out to translate the Bible!

In 1536, Skytte, Finland's Catholic bishop, sent Agricola to Wittenberg, Germany, to further his studies in theology and language. It was in this town that the blows of Luther's hammer had reportedly echoed 20 years earlier when, according to some accounts, Luther nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the castle church.

While in Wittenberg, Agricola did more than his homework. He started the monumental task of translating the Bible into Finnish. In 1537, in a letter to the Swedish king, he wrote: "While God is guiding my studies, I will try, as I earlier have initiated, to continue to translate the New Testament into the language of the Finnish people." Upon his re-



**Michael Agricola and the first Finnish Bible.
A postcard from 1910**

turn to Finland, he continued his translation work, serving at the same time as a school principal.

Translating the Bible was as laborious for Agricola as it was for the other early Bible translators. Even Luther had exclaimed: "How hard and irksome it is to force Hebrew writers to speak German"! Granted, Agricola could take advantage of the translations of others, but the major hurdle he had to confront was the Finnish language. In effect, it had hardly ever been set down in writing!

Thus, it was as if Agricola were constructing a house without an architectural plan, building with scanty and scattered materials. How did he do it? Agricola started by picking out words from various Finnish dialects and writing them as they were pronounced. Likely it was Agricola who first coined words in Finnish for "government," "hypocrite," "manuscript," "military force," "model," and "scribe." He made compound words, created derivatives, and borrowed from other languages, particularly Swedish. Among such words are *enkeli* (angel), *historia* (history), *lamppu* (lamp), *martyyri* (martyr), and *palmu* (palm tree).

The Word of God for the Native People

Finally, in 1548, Agricola's first installment was published, namely *Se Wsi Testamenti* (The New Testament). Some believe that this translation had been completed five years

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- **The Alhambra—Islamic Jewel of Granada**
- **"Old Father Thames"—England's Unique Heritage**
- **Is There Only One True God?**

earlier but that lack of money delayed its publication. Presumably, Agricola financed a major part of the printing himself.

Three years later came *Dauidin Psaltari* (the Psalms), which Agricola likely translated with the help of colleagues. He also spearheaded some of the translation of the books of Moses and the prophets.

Humbly recognizing his limitations, Agricola candidly wrote: "May no Christian and godly person or any reader of this Holy Book take it unkindly if in this novice translation there happens to be something erring or odd and ugly or put in a new way." Despite any deficiencies that might be found in Agricola's translations, his tenacious zeal in making the Bible available to the common people is highly commendable.

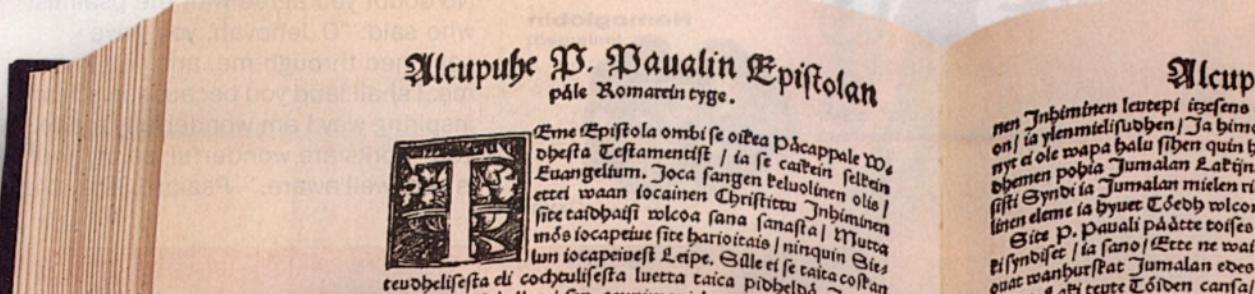
Agricola's Legacy

Early in 1557, Agricola—who was by then Lutheran and the bishop of Turku—was elected to a delegation that was sent to Moscow to arbitrate in boundary disputes between Sweden and Russia. The mission was successful. However, the rigors of his return trip evidently caused Agricola to fall ill unexpectedly. He died on his way home, at about 47 years of age.

During his relatively short life, Agricola produced only about ten publications in Finnish, with a total of some 2,400 pages. Still, many believe that this "Man of the Dawn" energized the growth of Finnish culture. Since then, the Finnish language and its people have made great strides in the fields of art and sciences.

More important, Michael Agricola helped to usher in another kind of dawn, as he helped make the light of God's Word clearer to Finnish-speaking people. This is summed up in a memorial poem written for him in Latin after his death: "No ordinary testament did he leave behind him. In place of a testament might be his work—he translated holy books into Finnish—and that work is worthy of great praise."

Agricola's "New Testament"



Alcupuhe P. Paavalin Epistolat pale Romarettitye.



Eme Epistola ombis se oitea Pihappale W⁴
dpesta Testamentat / ja se cartein feltein
Evangeliun. Joca sangen kluovilien olis /
etet vaan locainen Christituu. Inhiminen
site taidhaisi wloca sana sanastia / Nutta
mös locapeitue site harioitaas / nruquin Sies
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Sic P. Paavali pädte toses
pi syndiseet / ja sano / Ette ne roa
ouat wanhuskaat Jumalan edes
nen Latte teute Tööden canfa



The Finnish Bible

The first complete Finnish Bible, largely based on Michael Agricola's work, was published in 1642. In time, it became the official Bible of the Finnish Lutheran Church. Over the years the text received several minor revisions but remained virtually unchanged until 1938. The latest revision was released in 1992.

The only other complete Bible in Finnish is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. It was released in 1995. Twenty years earlier, in 1975, the Witnesses had already published their translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is as faithful as possible to the original text. To date, some 130,000,-000 have been printed.

Your Marvelous Red Blood Cells

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICA

The most common cell in your bloodstream gives blood its red color and is thus called a red blood cell. Just one drop of your blood contains hundreds of millions of such cells. When viewed through a microscope, they look like doughnuts with a depressed center instead of a hole. Each cell is packed with hundreds of millions of hemoglobin molecules. Each hemoglobin molecule is, in turn, a beautiful spherical structure made up of about 10,000 hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and sulfur atoms, plus four heavier atoms of iron, which give blood its oxygen-carrying ability. Hemoglobin facilitates the transport of carbon dioxide from the tissues to the lungs, where it is exhaled.

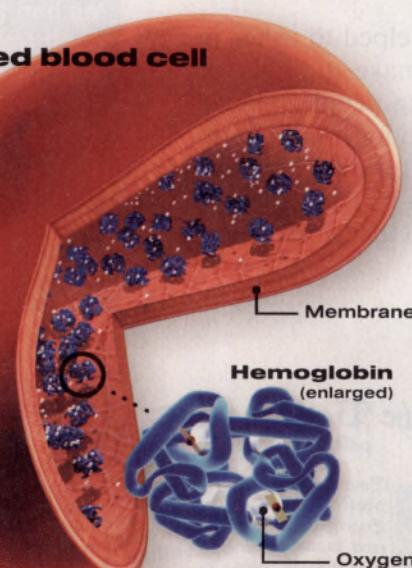
Another vital part of your red blood cells is their skin, called a membrane. This marvelous covering enables the cells to stretch into thin shapes so as

to pass through your tiniest blood vessels and thus sustain every part of your body.

Your red blood cells are manufactured in your bone marrow. Once a new cell enters your bloodstream, it may circulate through your heart and body more than 100,000 times. Unlike other cells, red blood cells have no nucleus. This gives them more space to carry oxygen and makes them lighter, which helps your heart to pump trillions of red blood cells throughout your body. However, lacking a nucleus, they are unable to renew their internal parts. Thus, after about 120 days, your red blood cells begin to deteriorate and lose their elasticity. Large white blood cells called phagocytes consume these worn-out cells and spit out the iron atoms. The scarce iron atoms attach themselves to transport molecules that take them to your bone marrow to be used in the manufacture of new red cells. Every second, your bone marrow releases two million to three million new red cells into your bloodstream!

If your trillions of red blood cells were suddenly to stop functioning, you would die within minutes. How thankful we should be to Jehovah God for this marvelous aspect of his creation, which enables us to live and enjoy life! No doubt you agree with the psalmist who said: "O Jehovah, you have searched through me, and you know me. I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware."—Psalm 139:1, 14.

Red blood cell



Sustained by My Faith

Living With ALS

"I'm sorry, Mr. Stuart. You have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease." The doctor then gave me the dismal prognosis: Soon I would no longer be able to move or speak, and the disease would eventually take my life. "How much time do I have?" I asked. "Probably three to five years," he replied. I was just 20 years old. Yet, despite the sad news, I could not help but feel blessed in many ways. Let me explain.*

I WAS born on March 2, 1978, in Redwood City, California, U.S.A., the third of four children born to Jim and Kathy Stuart. My parents had a strong love for God, and they instilled deep respect for spiritual values in me and my siblings—Matthew, Jenifer, and Johnathan.

As far back as I can recall, sharing in the door-to-door ministry, studying the Bible, and attending Christian meetings were a regular part of our family routine. That spiritual upbringing helped me to build strong faith in Jehovah God. Little did I know how my faith would be put to the test.

A Boyhood Dream Comes True

In 1985 my father took our family to New York to visit Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although I was just seven years old, I felt that there was something special about Bethel. Everyone seemed to find joy in

* To understand the impact of this illness, it is suggested that you read the box "Facts About ALS," on page 27.



his work. I thought, 'When I grow up, I'm going to come to Bethel and help make Bibles for Jehovah.'

On October 18, 1992, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism. A few years later, when I was 17, my father took me to visit Bethel again. Being older, I was able to appreciate much more the importance of the work that is done there. I came home more determined than ever to reach my goal of going to Bethel.

In September 1996, I began serving as a regular pioneer, or full-time evangelizer. To keep my mind on track, I immersed myself in spiritual things. I increased my daily Bible reading and personal study. At night

I listened to recordings of Bible talks. Some of these talks mentioned experiences of Christians who had faced death with unwavering faith in the coming Paradise and the resurrection. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4) Soon I had all the talks memorized. I had no way of knowing then just how



valuable such upbuilding information would prove to be in the near future.

On July 11, 1998, a letter arrived from Brooklyn. Yes, I had been invited to go to Bethel. A month later I was in my Bethel room. I was assigned to work in the bindery, making books that are shipped to many congregations. My boyhood dream had come true. I was at Bethel, 'making Bibles for Jehovah'!

The Disease Takes Hold

A month or so before going to Bethel, however, I had noticed that I was not able to extend my right index finger fully. About the same time, I found that my work as a pool cleaner was leaving me quickly exhausted. I figured that I just wasn't trying hard enough. After all, I had held jobs that were far more physically demanding with no problem.

Within a few weeks of my arrival at Bethel, the symptoms worsened. I could not keep up with the other young men as they bounded up and down flights of stairs. My work in the bindery involved lifting bundles of book signatures. Not only would I tire easily but my right hand was curling up. Also, my thumb muscle began to atrophy, and soon I could not move my thumb at all.

In mid-October, just two months after my arrival at Bethel, the doctor diagnosed my condition as ALS. As I left the doctor's office, I immediately began to recall those Bible talks I had memorized. Jehovah's spirit must have been with me because the thought of dying didn't frighten me. I simply went outside and waited for my ride back to Bethel. I prayed that Jehovah would strengthen my family when I told them the news.

As I mentioned at the outset, I could not help but feel blessed. My boyhood dream of going to Bethel had come true. That evening I walked over the Brooklyn Bridge, and I thanked Jehovah for allowing me to reach my goal. I also fervently asked for his help to face this dreadful ordeal.



Many friends called to offer support and encouragement. I tried to be upbeat and positive. However, about a week after the diagnosis, when I was on the phone with my mom, she said that it was good that I was being so brave but that it was OK to cry. The words had barely left her lips before I started sobbing. It hit me that I was about to lose everything I had dreamed about.

Mom and Papa were eager to get me home, so they surprised me one morning in late October by knocking on my door. Over the next couple of days, I showed them around Bethel and introduced them to my friends as well as to older, longtime members of the Bethel family. Those precious days when I got to share my Bethel experience with my parents are among the happiest memories of my life.

Counting My Blessings

Since then, Jehovah has continued to bless me in many ways. In September 1999, I gave my first public discourse. I was able to give several more in various congregations, but soon my speech became so slurred that it was necessary for me to stop giving public talks.

Another blessing has been the unwavering love and support of my family as well as my spiritual family of brothers and sisters. As my legs grew weaker, friends held my hands to help me walk in the ministry. Some even came over to our home to help take care of me.

Among the greatest blessings has been my wife, Amanda. When I came back from

With Amanda on our wedding day

Bethel, we became friends, and I was impressed by her spiritual maturity. I told her everything about my ALS and the doctor's prognosis. We spent much time together in the ministry before we began courting. We were married on August 5, 2000.

Amanda explains: "I was attracted to Jason because of his love for God and his zeal for spiritual things. People young and old were naturally drawn to him. I am quiet and reserved by nature, and he was so alive and animated, very outgoing. We both have a sense of humor, so we laughed a lot together. I felt so comfortable with him, as if we had always known each other. Jason made sure that I was fully aware of his illness and of what was to come. But I figured that we would enjoy as much time as we could together. Besides, there are never any guarantees in this system of things. 'Time and unforeseen occurrence' befall even those with good health."—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Finding Ways to Communicate

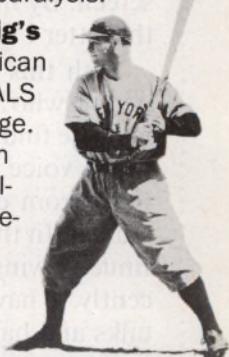
As my speech became less and less understandable, Amanda began serving as my translator. When I could no longer speak at all, we devised a special system of communicating. Amanda says the letters of the alphabet, and when she says the letter I want, I blink my eyes. She remembers that letter, and then we go on to the next one. In this way I am able to spell out entire sentences. Amanda and I have become quite proficient at this method of communicating.

Lou Gehrig: Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Facts About ALS

■ **What is ALS?** ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a disease that progresses rapidly and attacks the motor neurons (nerve cells) in the spinal cord and lower brain. The motor neurons are responsible for transmitting messages from the brain to the voluntary muscles throughout the body. ALS causes the motor neurons to degenerate or die, leading to progressive paralysis.*

■ **Why is ALS also called Lou Gehrig's disease?** Lou Gehrig was a famous American baseball player who was diagnosed with ALS in 1939 and died in 1941 at 38 years of age. In some lands ALS is called motor neuron disease, which is a broader category of illnesses that includes ALS. ALS is also sometimes referred to as Charcot's disease, after Jean-Martin Charcot, the French neurologist who first described it in 1869.



■ **What causes ALS?** The cause of ALS is not known. According to researchers, the suspected causes include viruses, protein deficiencies, genetic defects (especially in familial ALS), heavy metals, neurotoxins (especially in Guamanian ALS), immune-system abnormalities, and enzyme abnormalities.

■ **What is the prognosis?** As the disease progresses, muscle weakness and atrophy spread throughout the body. In later stages the disease weakens the muscles of the respiratory system, and eventually patients must depend on a ventilator. Because the disease affects only the motor neurons, it does not impair the patient's mind, personality, intelligence, or memory. Neither does it impair the senses—patients are able to see, smell, taste, hear, and recognize touch. ALS usually proves fatal within three to five years of the onset of symptoms, but up to 10 percent of patients may survive for ten years or more.

■ **What is done to treat the disease?** There is no known cure for ALS. A doctor may prescribe medications to help reduce the discomforts associated with certain symptoms. Depending on the symptoms and the stage of the disease, the patient may benefit from certain rehabilitation services, including physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, and various assistive devices.

* There are three common classifications of ALS: sporadic (the most common), familial (about 5 to 10 percent of cases have a family history), and Guamanian (a high number of cases have occurred in Guam and the trust territories of the Pacific).

Now, thanks to modern technology, I have a laptop computer that allows me to communicate. I type what I want to say, and the computer voice will speak whatever I have typed. Since I can no longer use my hands, an infrared sensor is aimed at my cheek and senses any movement. A box containing the alphabet appears in the corner of the computer screen. By moving my cheek, I can highlight the letter I want and type out words.

With this computer I can write letters to people who are interested in the Bible—those my wife finds in the ministry. Using my computer voice, I can offer prepared presentations from door to door and conduct Bible studies. In these ways I have been able to continue serving as a regular pioneer. More recently, I have once again been able to give talks and handle other teaching assignments in the congregation, where I am a ministerial servant.

Maintaining a Sense of Humor

We have had our share of harrowing ordeals. As my legs grew weaker, falling down became a recurring problem. More than once, I fell backward and split my scalp open. My muscles would lock up, so I would fall down like a tree. Those around me would be horrified and rush to my aid. But I would often make a joke to break the tension. I have always tried to maintain a sense of humor.

What else could I do? I could get

angry about how difficult my life was becoming, but what good would that have done?

One night when I was out with Amanda and two friends, I suddenly fell backward and hit my head. I remember the three concerned faces looking down at me and one of my friends asking if I was all right.

"Yes," I said, "but I'm seeing stars."

"Are you serious?" my friend asked.

"Really, look," I replied, pointing to the sky. "They're beautiful." Everyone laughed.

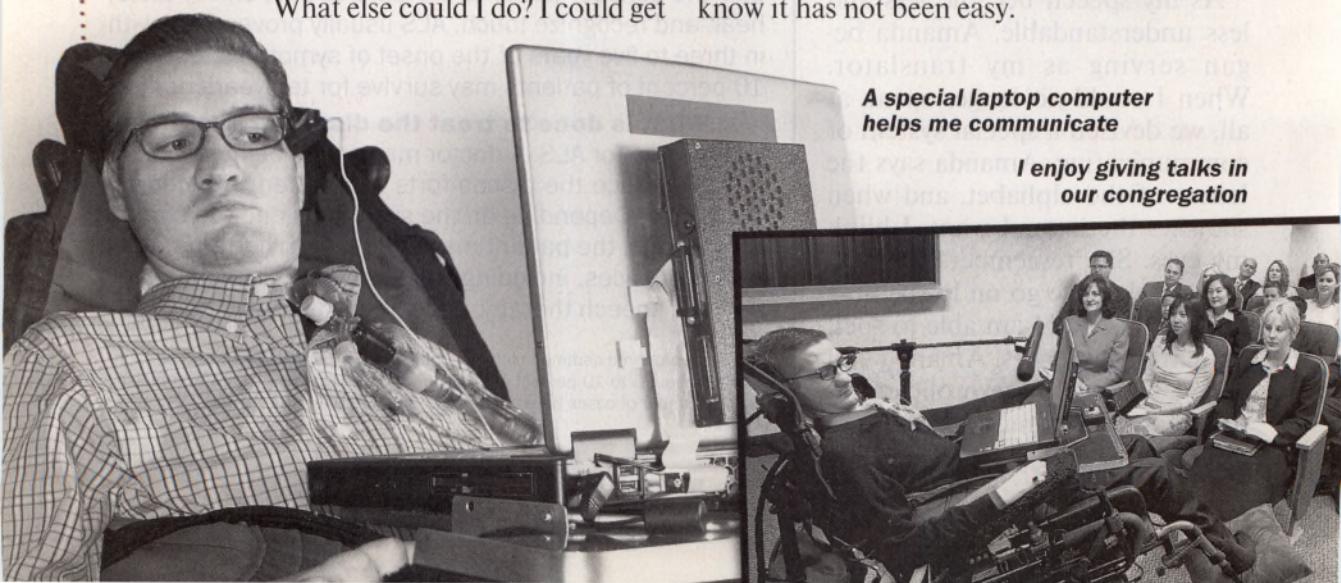
Coping With the Daily Challenges

As my muscles continued to atrophy, I began to experience more and more challenges. Simple tasks, such as eating, bathing, using the toilet, and buttoning my clothes, soon became exhausting and frustrating daily rituals. Now my condition has deteriorated to the point where I am no longer able to move, speak, eat, or breathe without assistance. I have a feeding tube in my stomach through which I am fed a liquid diet. I have a ventilator connected to a tube in my throat, which allows me to breathe.

Although I was determined to be self-sufficient for as long as possible, Amanda was ever willing to assist me. As I have become more dependent, she has never caused me to feel like less of a man. She has always allowed me my dignity. The work she now does in caring for me is nothing short of amazing, but I know it has not been easy.

A special laptop computer helps me communicate

I enjoy giving talks in our congregation



Amanda describes her feelings: "Jason's decline has been gradual, so I have learned how to take care of him as we have gone along. Since he is on a ventilator, he requires 24-hour care. A lot of phlegm and saliva build up in his lungs, which must be vacuumed out using a suction device. As a result, it is hard for either of us to get a good night's sleep. I feel alone and frustrated at times. Though we are always together, it is difficult to communicate. He was such an animated person, and now only his eyes are animated. He is still very funny, and his mind is sharp. But I miss his voice. I also miss having him hug me and just hold my hand."

"People sometimes ask me how I cope. Well, this ordeal has taught me how much I need to rely on Jehovah. If I rely on myself, I get so consumed with my situation that I feel like I cannot even breathe. Prayer helps, for Jehovah is the only one who truly understands me and what I am going through. Jason's parents have been a big help. They are always available whenever I need a break or want to go out in the field ministry. I appreciate the help and support we have received from the brothers and sisters in our congregation. Something else that helps me is remembering that any suffering in this system is 'momentary and light.' (2 Corinthians 4:17) I try to focus on the coming new world, where Jehovah will fix everything. I will probably laugh and cry at the same time when all this pressure is gone and Jason is Jason again."

Fighting Depression

I must admit that at times it can be very discouraging for me, as a man, to sit here in this wheelchair, completely helpless. I remember one time when we were at my sister's home for a family gathering. I had not yet had my food, so I was hungry. Everyone was enjoying barbecued hamburgers and corn on the cob. As I watched the others eating and playing with the babies, I got very depressed. I began thinking: 'This just isn't fair! Why do I have to

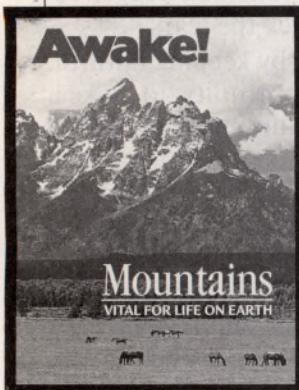
miss out on these things?' I did not want to spoil the evening for everyone, so I begged Jehovah to help me hold back the tears.

I reminded myself that by keeping faithful, I can give Jehovah an opportunity 'to make a reply to Satan, who is taunting him.' (Proverbs 27:11) This gave me strength, for I realized that there are much more important issues than whether I can eat corn on the cob or play with babies.

I am very well aware of how easy it is for a sick person like me to become absorbed in his own problems. But I have found it helpful to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) By keeping busy in the ministry, I don't have time to be anxious about my own problems. Focusing on helping others to develop faith in Jehovah has been a key to happiness for me.

Something else has helped me to fight depression. I reflect on the experiences of faithful ones who have been imprisoned, some in solitary confinement, because they refused to stop preaching about God's Kingdom. I pretend that my room is my prison cell and that I am in prison for my faith. I reflect on the advantages that I have over some of them. I have access to Bible literature. I can attend Christian meetings, either in person or by telephone. I am free to carry out my ministry. I have my precious wife to keep me company. Meditating in this way helps me to appreciate how blessed I am.

The words of the apostle Paul are especially close to my heart: "We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day." I am most definitely a man who is wasting away on the outside. But I am determined not to give up. What sustains me is keeping my eyes of faith focused on "the things unseen," including the blessings of the coming new world, where I know that Jehovah will make me whole again.
—2 Corinthians 4:16, 18.



Young People Ask . . . Why Should I Do Manual Labor? (March 22, 2005) I work at a painting company run by my father, but someone told me that in this type of work, you do not need to use your head. The article, however, pointed out that Jesus and Paul worked with their hands. Now I am encouraged to do my work with even more enthusiasm. I want to try hard so that I can use this skill for Assembly Hall and Kingdom Hall construction.

M. Y., Japan

This article really encouraged me! It reminded me once again that our main purpose in life is to serve Jehovah God and that the vocation I choose should be in line with this purpose. That wonderful article moved me to improve in taking the initiative to do what is needed around the home. More important, the article helped me to get Jehovah's viewpoint on manual labor.

Y. K., Russia

Life—An Amazing Assembly of Chains (January 22, 2005) I am 15 years old. In my biology class at school, we are studying a topic called energy metabolism. When I took this magazine to school, my biology teacher used the article to conduct the class, showing the drawings it contained. After class everyone

Mountains—Vital for Life on Earth (March 22, 2005) Visiting the Grand Tetons was one of the most awe-inspiring events of my life. But reading about how vital mountains are amazed me. I now have a much greater appreciation for the mountains on our earth and for the wonderful Creator who designed them.

J. G., United States

When I see the beauty of Jehovah's creation, I do not have words to describe how I feel. In spite of human aggression and contamination of the environment, one can still appreciate and enjoy the mountains. I find joy in telling others what will come about in the near future, as promised at Psalm 72:16.

R. C., United States

expressed a desire to have this magazine. It is clear from this article just how much wisdom Jehovah possesses. He is without question deserving of praise. I cannot wait for the time when every living thing will praise Jehovah!

Y. B., Russia

"If People Only Knew!" (January 8, 2005) I am 17 years old, and I have often considered moving to an area where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers. David's example strengthened my determination to move to such a territory right after graduation from school. Please continue publishing such encouraging examples. Young people my age need constant encouragement to move forward in the preaching activity.

K. O., Poland

I am 20 years old, and I was moved to tears as I read this article. I thought, 'If I were to die while still young, I would not want to have any regrets because I put off serving Jehovah to the best of my ability!' My goal is to become a full-time evangelizer soon. I am going to frame this article and hang it on the wall so that I never forget the feeling I had when I read it. Thank you for publishing such wonderful experiences.

N. N., Japan

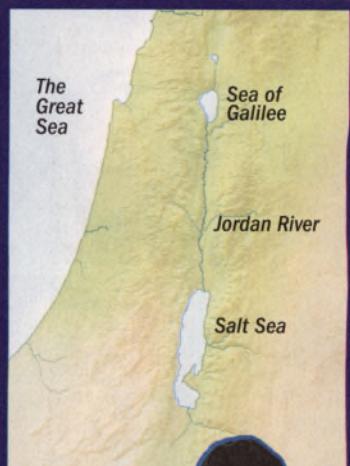
WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

1. In what body of water did the event in the picture take place?

Circle your answer on the map.

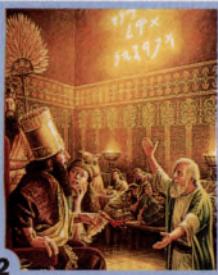
♦ Can you name the two people who are not in the boat?

♦ Why is only one person sinking?



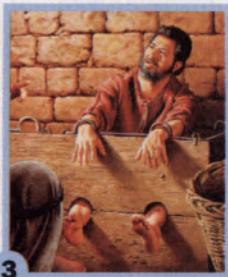
WHEN IN HISTORY?

Draw a line from the picture to the correct date.



2

Daniel 5:5



3

Jeremiah 1:1-3



4

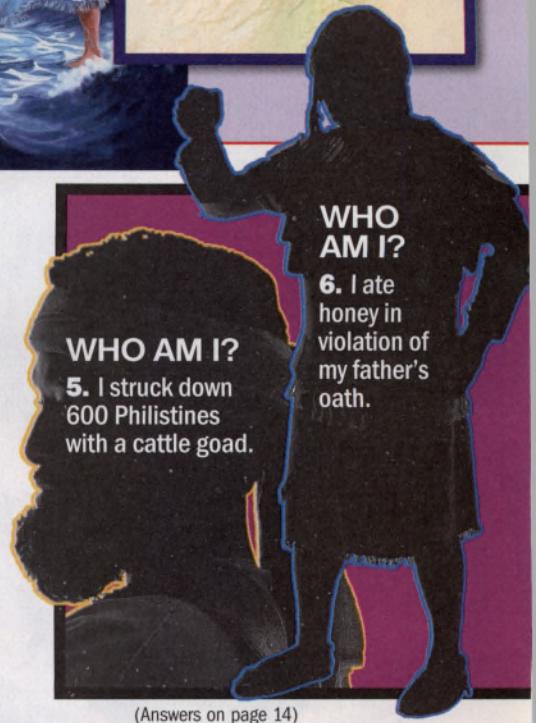
2 Samuel 2:1-4

1077 B.C.E.

947 B.C.E.

647 B.C.E.

537 B.C.E.
539 B.C.E.



(Answers on page 14)

FROM THIS ISSUE

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

Page 7 Why do humans die? (Romans 6:____)

Page 9 What future does the Bible promise? (Revelation 21:____)

Page 12 What can make a person act irrationally? (Ecclesiastes 7:____)

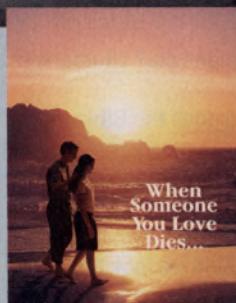
Page 19 Where should we look for guidance, and why? (2 Timothy 3:____)

Top circle: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,
Washington, D.C./Duane C. Anderson

Children's Picture Search

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





When a child dies

■ The death of a child is traumatic for the survivors, especially for the parents. A mother whose 16-year-old son was fatally burned in a tragic accident lamented: "God does not allow us to trade places with our dying children, neither does he allow us to die with them."

Yet, she was not without hope, as she explained: "God has told us the truth about death, and this keeps my husband and me from becoming bitter or losing our minds." She acknowledged that "our God did not do this to our son, and He has purposed to resurrect the dead to a paradise earth. In our mind's eye, we can see our son alive, healthy and happy, living among his friends and family."

Still, even those with confident hope in God's promise of a resurrection need comfort, which this mother gratefully received from many friends. She noted: "Many of the Scriptural thoughts and acts of kindness shared with us came from the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*. We encouraged everyone around us to read it so that they could better understand us and the grief we will continue to experience."