

Awake!

OCTOBER 22, 2002

Prayers for Peace

*Can They Stop
Terrorism?*



Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 21,153,000
PUBLISHED IN 87 LANGUAGES

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U.S. National Archives photo

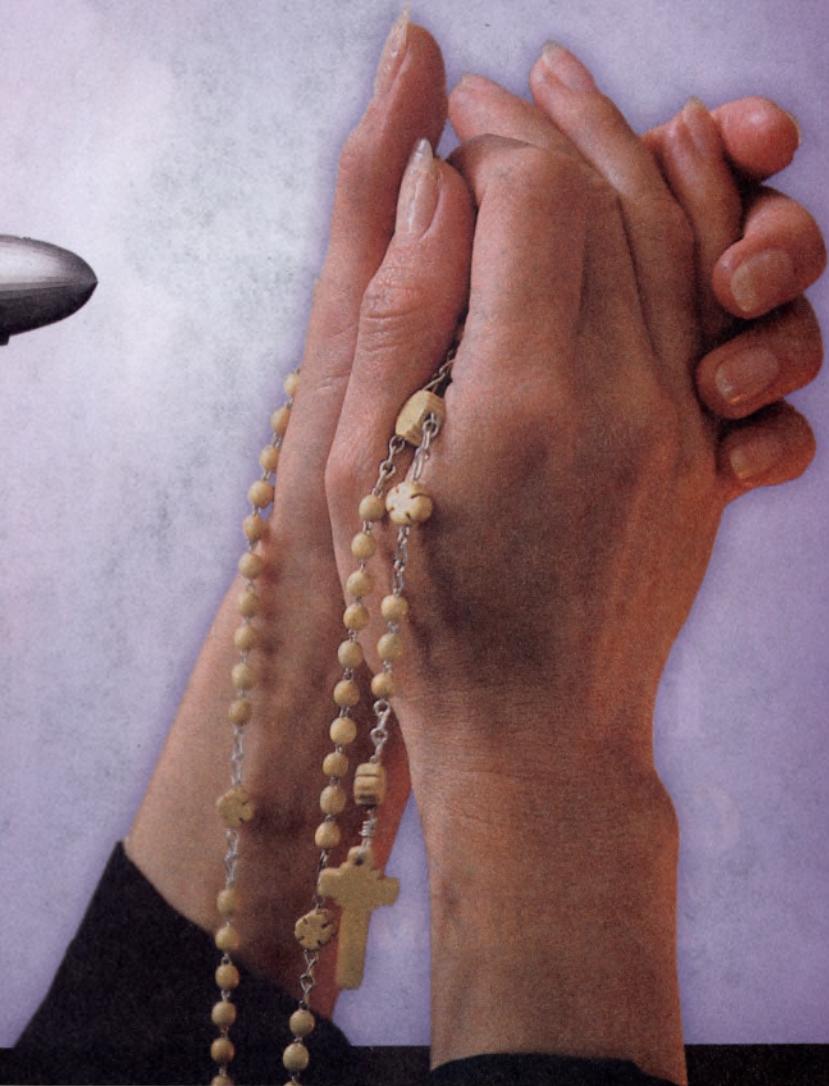


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Many of the world's religious leaders met earlier this year at Assisi, Italy, to pray for peace. Can the prayers of religious leaders put a stop to such threats to global peace as war and terrorism?



"Today we get the feeling that we are living . . . in the middle of a tornado, an unparalleled catastrophe."

—“*La Repubblica*” newspaper, Rome, Italy.

Is Hope for Peace Fading?

AFTER last year's terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., more people than ever before wonder about the future of humanity. The TV images showing the Twin Towers collapsing in flames—as well as those showing the desperation of the survivors—have been broadcast countless times. These images have brought anguish to people around the world. Along with that anguish has come a sense that the world has somehow undergone a historic change. Has it?

War broke out in the wake of September 11, 2001. Soon, nations that had previously been hostile toward one another became allies in joint efforts to repress terrorism. All told, the toll of death and destruction has been high. But perhaps a more significant change for many people worldwide has been the loss of a sense of security, the increasing feeling that no one, anywhere, is truly safe.

World leaders find themselves facing enormous problems. Journalists and commentators wonder how terrorism can be prevented from spreading like wildfire, since it appears to be fueled by poverty and fanaticism—ills that no one seems to know how to cure. Injustice is so widespread in the world that every ingredient is present for a highly explosive state of affairs. People of all kinds wonder whether society's ills will ever be eliminated. Will war—with all the misery, death, and ruin it brings—ever end?

Millions of people turn to organized religion with these questions. Others, though, are more skeptical. What about you? Do you think that religious leaders can answer such questions? And can they actually contribute to peace by their prayers?





*"Violence never again! War never again! Terrorism never again!
In the name of God, may every religion bring upon the earth
justice and peace, forgiveness and love!"—Pope John Paul II.*

Religions at Assisi in Search of Peace

ASSISI, ITALY, January 24, 2002—Representatives of the world's organized religions were gathered to pray for peace, a peace threatened by terrorism, intolerance, and injustice. The meeting was announced by the pope some two months after the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City. Many religious leaders accepted the Vatican's invitation with enthusiasm.

On two earlier occasions—once in 1986 and again in 1993—the pope had called for a day of prayer in that same Italian town.* More

* To learn more about the day of prayer for peace in 1986, please see *Awake!* of June 8, 1987.

than a thousand journalists from all over the world came to monitor the 2002 meeting. Many religions were represented in prayers for peace—those of Christendom (Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Orthodox, Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals, Mennonites, Quakers, and others), Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, Sikhism, Jainism, Tenrikyo, Buddhism, Judaism, traditional African religions, Shinto, and Zoroastrianism. Delegations from other religions, as well as a representative of the World Council of Churches, were also present.

Declarations in Favor of Peace

The day began at 8:40 a.m., when the "peace train" pulled out of the small Vatican station. Made up of seven railroad cars well-equipped for comfort, the train was escorted by two helicopters for protection. A two-hour journey

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.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. © 2002 Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.



brought the pope and other religious leaders to Assisi. Security was high—about one thousand policemen stood on the alert.

The religious leaders gathered in an ancient piazza covered by an enormous marquee. Inside, a large, red V-shaped stage accommodated the religious representatives, with the pope's seat placed in the center. At the side of the stage was an olive tree—a symbol of peace. In front of the stage was an audience of more than 2,000 carefully selected guests. The front row was occupied by some of Italy's highest-ranking officials. Great choirs sang hymns to peace between speeches. In other parts of the town, thousands of people, mainly youngsters, displayed antiwar slogans in several languages and sang songs about peace. Many bore olive branches.

After taking his seat on the stage, the pope welcomed the members of the various religious delegations. Then, after the singing in Latin of a hymn based on Isaiah 2:4—which prophesies a time when “nation will not lift up sword against nation”—a dozen delegates, each in distinctive religious garb, made sol-

emn declarations in favor of peace. The following are some examples.

“In this historical moment humanity needs to see gestures of peace and to hear words of hope.”—Cardinal François Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuân.

God “is not a God of war and conflict but a God of peace.”—Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeus I.

“Religious differences should not lead [people] to ignore, or even hate, those who are different.”—Dr. Setri Nyomi, World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

“Justice and fraternal love are the two indispensable pillars of true peace among people.”—Chief Amadou Gasseto, representative of traditional African religions.

“Only peace is holy, war is never holy!”—Andrea Riccardi, Catholic Church.

Some delegates acknowledged that religions bear a serious responsibility for fomenting intolerance and war. The representative of the Lutheran World Federation stated that the world had been “shaken by the ferocity of hatreds fanned by religious fundamentalism.”

Semimonthly Languages: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Croatian, Czech,[#] Danish,[#] Dutch, English,[#] Estonian, Finnish,[#] French, German,[#] Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,[#] Japanese,[#] Korean,[#] Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,[#] Swahili, Swedish,[#] Tagalog, Ukrainian.

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Monthly Languages: Albanian, Amharic, Bulgarian, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Ewe, Georgian, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Igbo, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Nepali, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhala, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

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A representative of Judaism said: "Religions have served to foment scores of horrendous and bloody wars." A Hindu delegate declared: "History repeatedly throws up instances where self-proclaimed saviours of religion have put religion in the service of power and divisive forces."

After solemn condemnations of terrorism and war, the delegations retired, each to its assigned place, to pray to their respective divinities for peace.

Prayers for Peace

The representatives of Christendom's religions prayed together in the lower Basilica of St. Francis, near the tomb that gives the church its name. The function began with a "Trinitarian invocation" by the pope and three other delegates. Prayers were interspersed with hymns and invocations exalting peace as well as with Bible readings on the same theme. One prayer requested the establishment of "an undivided faith." To conclude the ceremony, the participants sang the Our Father in Latin, based on Matthew chapter 6, verses 9 through 13.

At the same time, delegates of other religious groups were praying at other locations. In a hall oriented toward Mecca, the Muslims, kneeling on carpets, called on Allah. The Zoroastrians, who prayed near the Jains and Confucians, lit a sacred fire. The delegates representing traditional African religions prayed to the spirits of their ancestors. The Hindus asked for peace from their gods. All implored their divinities according to their own rites.

A Common Commitment to Peace

The delegations reconvened under the marquee for the conclusion of the ceremonies. Burning lamps—representing the hope of peace—were solemnly handed to the delegates by monks. The scene was picturesque. Then various members of the delegations read a common commitment to peace, each making a different declaration.

"Building peace requires loving one's neighbour."—Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeus I.

"Violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion."—Dr. Konrad Raiser, delegate of the World Council of Churches.

"We commit ourselves to educating people to mutual respect and esteem."—Bhai Sahibji Mohinder Singh, representative of the Sikh religion.

"Peace without justice is no true peace."—Orthodox Bishop Vasilios.

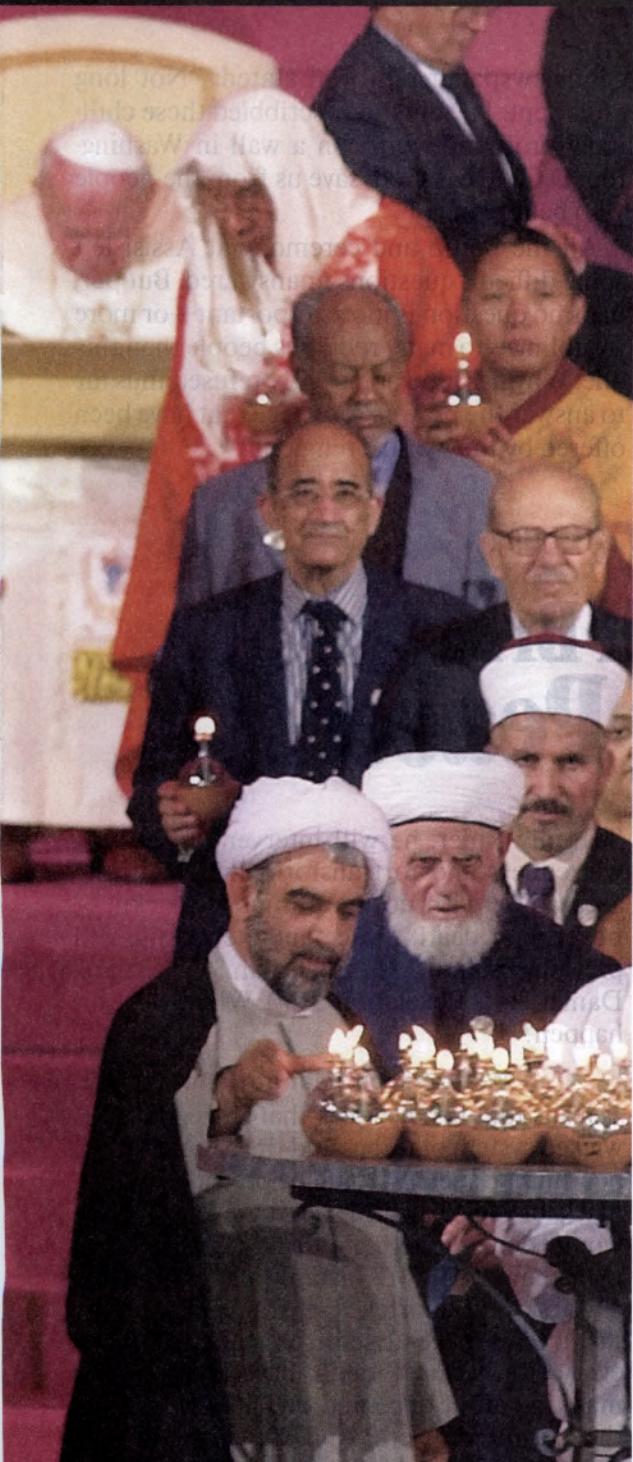
Finally, the pope read the words found in the introduction to this article. This interfaith meeting concluded with the delegates embracing one another in symbol of peace. Carefully prepared, eloquent words were accompanied by pomp and ceremony. What, though, was the reaction to this impressive occasion?

If Actions Follow Words

Newspapers and television acclaimed the pope's initiative. Some even called the pope the "spokesman of all Christendom." The Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano* defined the day at Assisi as a "milestone on the road to building a civilization of peace." The headline of the newspaper *Corriere dell'Umbria* was "Assisi Gives Light to Peace."

Not all observers were so enthusiastic. Some expressed skepticism because despite previous days of prayer for peace in 1986 and 1993, wars fought in the name of religion continue to plague mankind. Religious hatred has fueled bloody slaughter in Uganda, the former Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland.

The Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* noted that some critics dismissed the meeting as "just a show." A member of the European Parliament said that in order to promote peace, religious people should "practice the Gospel"—that is, observe the words "love your enemies, turn the other cheek." That, in his view, is something "nobody is doing."



**Delegates with burning lamps
representing the hope of peace**

The president of the Italian Jewish Communities said that "it will be good to see what happens now, that is, if concrete actions and real change follow words." The representative of the Italian Buddhists expressed herself in like manner, saying that one should "ensure that appeals for peace do not remain just good intentions." One journalist, writing for the Italian magazine *L'Espresso*, suggested that the meeting at Assisi served another purpose for the religions of Christendom represented there. He called it "a coalition of resistance against religious disaffection, discipline, and disbelief," as well as an effort to combat the "severe process of secularization" that afflicts Europe despite its "Christian history."

Among the event's more severe critics were Catholic traditionalists, who fear the watering down of their church doctrines. In a television interview, Vittorio Messori, a well-known Catholic writer, noted the risk that the event at Assisi might blur the differences between religions. Of course, ecclesiastical authorities had taken precautions to avoid giving the impression of mixing religions. The pope himself made a statement to refute such charges. Nonetheless, for many the very nature of the event seemed to suggest that the various religions simply represent different ways to approach the same higher power.

Religion and Peace

What, though, can organized religions do to bring about peace? Some people find the very question ironic, for religions seem to do more to cause wars than they do to prevent them. Historians have noted the way secular powers have used religion to foment war. However, the question arises: Why have religions allowed themselves to be used?

The religions of Christendom, at least, have a sacred precept available to them that could have helped them avoid the guilt associated with warfare. Jesus stated that his followers would be "no part of the world." (John 15:19;

17:16) Had Christendom's religions lived by those words, they would not have united themselves with political powers, approving of and blessing armies and war.

Really, in order to live up to the fine words spoken at Assisi, religious leaders would have to keep their distance from political power. Moreover, they would have to teach their adherents the ways of peace. However, historians note that the people carrying out the violence in the world include plenty who believe in God—or at least say they do. A re-

cent newspaper editorial stated: "Not long after Sept. 11, somebody scribbled these chillingly profound words on a wall in Washington, D.C.: 'Dear God, save us from the people who believe in you.'"

All the pomp and ceremony at Assisi left some difficult questions unanswered. But perhaps no question is more important—or more troubling—to many religious people than this one: Why has God apparently refused thus far to answer the prayers for peace that have been offered by the world's religions?

Who Will Bring Lasting Peace?

WHY has God not answered the prayers for peace uttered by the leaders of the world's various religions? The Bible has a fascinating answer. It is not that God has no interest in peace—he has a far stronger desire for peace than do the clergymen praying on the subject. In fact, God has already made definite arrangements to bring about world peace. He has already taken decisive steps toward that goal. He has clearly communicated his intentions to mankind. Tragically, however, the world's religions largely ignore what God has stated.

God long ago promised a "seed," a ruler, whom the Bible progressively describes, providing more and more information regarding his identity. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18; 49:10) The prophet Isaiah, known for his extraordinary Messianic prophecies, wrote that this foretold Leader would become "Prince of Peace" over the earth and that under his rule, there would be 'no end to peace.' (Isaiah 9:6, 7) As a

heavenly Ruler, he will intervene to destroy wickedness and to transform the earth into a paradise, with no more injustice, sickness, poverty, or death. Peace and eternal life will prevail. (Psalm 72:3, 7, 16; Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6; Daniel 2:44; Revelation 21:4) When will this happen?

World Peace Near at Hand

Jesus told his disciples that the end of this wicked system of things and the beginning of a new human society would be preceded by a remarkable set of world-shaking events, which would occur together during the same era. (Matthew 24:3, 7-13) Many of these events—wars, food shortages, earthquakes, to cite just a few—have arisen from time to time in every era. Never, though, have they plagued mankind all at once and on a global scale as they have in our era. And the effects of such calamities are far more disastrous than they once were because the earth is more densely populated.

Another event predicted by the Bible is the ongoing destruction of the environment by mankind. (Revelation 11:18) What is more, before the foretold end, a worldwide warning work is to be accomplished, the preaching of the “good news of the kingdom.” Today Jehovah’s Witnesses are carrying out that work worldwide.—Matthew 24:14.

The fulfillment of those prophecies means good news for faithful mankind. A prophesied new world of total peace is at hand! That will guarantee the complete and final disappearance of hate and terrorism. The Bible explains: “They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

Prayers to Which God Listens

Praying to God is by no means a futile act or an empty ceremony. In the Bible, Jehovah is called the “Hearer of prayer.” (Psalm 65:2) So at any given moment, he is listening to untold numbers of prayers uttered by sincere people on earth. Are there requirements, though, that must be met for prayers to be heard? The Bible suggests that honesthearted people who learn Bible truths about God need to respond to these, becoming “true worship-

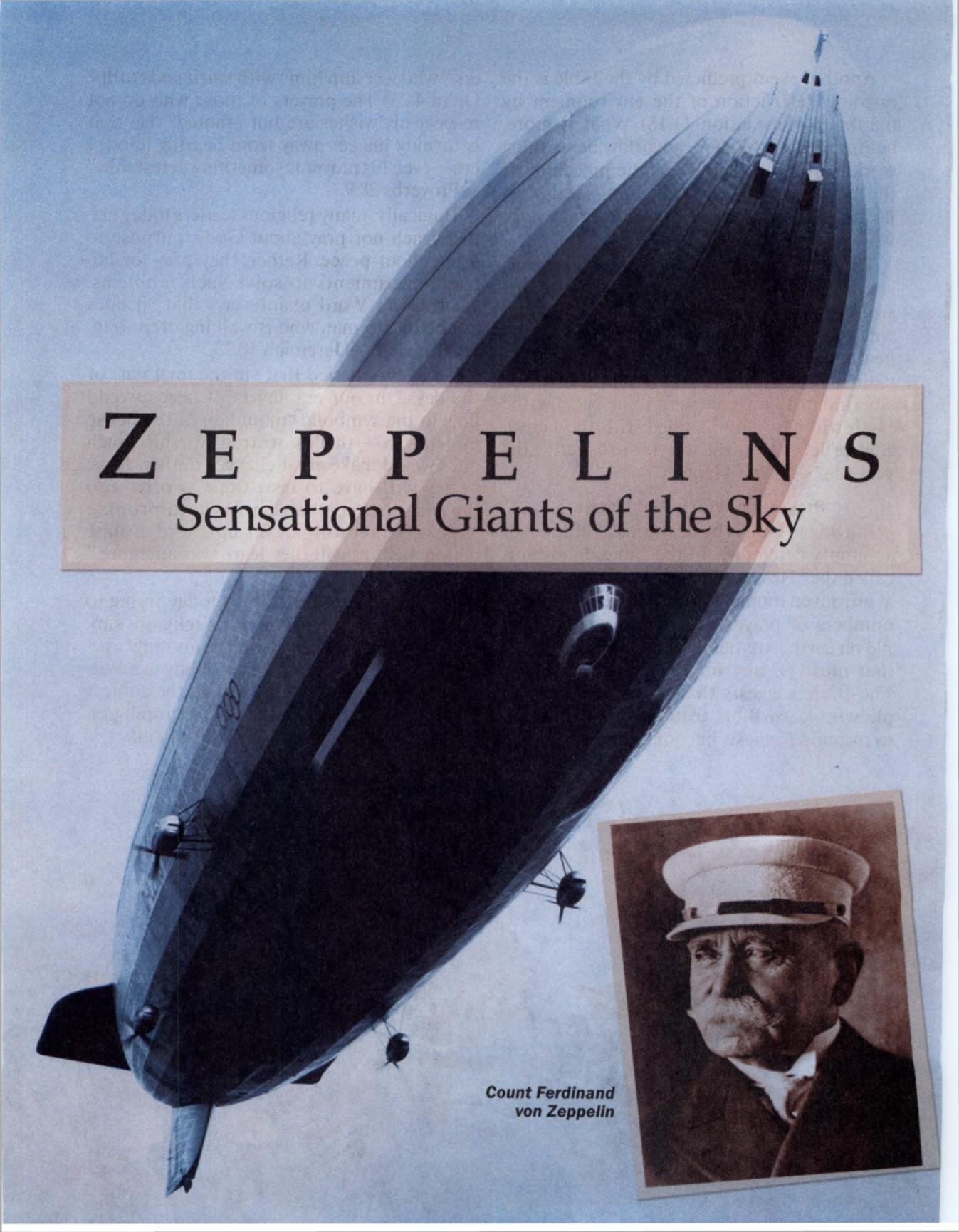
ers,” who worship him “with spirit and truth.” (John 4:23) The prayers of those who do not respect his wishes are not granted: “He that is turning his ear away from hearing [God’s] law—even his prayer is something detestable.”—Proverbs 28:9.

Tragically, many religious leaders today neither teach nor pray about God’s purpose to bring about peace. Rather, they pray for human governments to solve such problems, when God’s Word plainly says that “it does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.”—Jeremiah 10:23.

It was prophesied that “in the final part of the days,” in our era, lovers of peace would flow to the symbolic “mountain of the house of Jehovah”—that is, to true worship. Such ones would make great changes in their lives: “They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.”—Isaiah 2:2-4.

Is any group of worshipers today trying to live up to those words? Or do all religions simply talk about peace while promoting warfare? The next time you meet Jehovah’s Witnesses, you are invited to discuss the subject of peace with them and learn which religion educates people to be peaceable with all.





Z E P P E L I N S

Sensational Giants of the Sky

*Count Ferdinand
von Zeppelin*



MY FATHER was a radio operator on board a zeppelin, and he loved every minute of it," Ingeborg Waldorf told *Awake!* Indeed, early in the 20th century, much of the world was in awe of these giant airships. Wherever they went, they were a sensation.

The era of the giant airships occupied the early part of the 20th century. They loomed large on the world stage because of their spectacular achievements—offset by equally spectacular disasters. When the *Hindenburg* crashed at Lakehurst, New Jersey, U.S.A., in 1937, the era came to an abrupt end. But that era has a fascinating history.

From Hot-Air Balloons to Airships

Inventors tried for centuries to find a way for man to fly. Eighteenth-century Frenchmen Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier noticed smoke rising through the air and concluded that smoke must possess a special property that could perhaps be used to help men fly. Hence, they made a huge bag out of paper and fabric and held it over a smoky fire. Villagers who gathered to see the experiment were aghast when the bag rose into the sky. That was June 1783, and the Montgolfier brothers had invented the hot-air balloon. Five months later the first manned flight took place in a Montgolfier balloon.

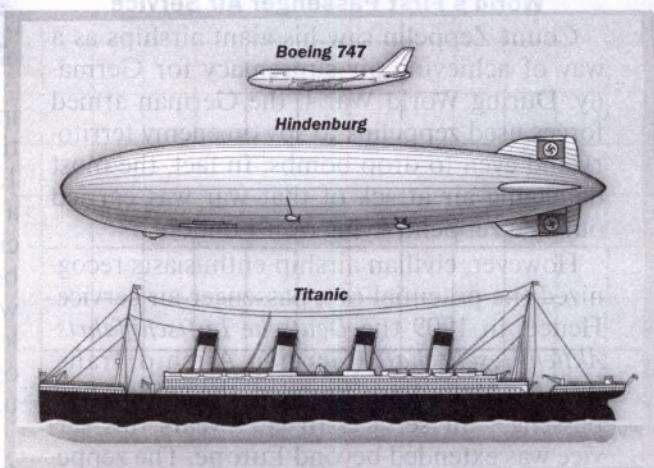
The drawback with balloons, however, was that they drifted with the wind and could not be piloted in any particular direction. To make the balloon steerable, a method of propulsion was needed. The first person to combine lift with propulsion was Frenchman Henri Giffard, who in 1852 flew a steam-driven airship. Instead of using hot air to provide lift, Giffard used hydrogen, a gas lighter than air. Since Giffard's vehicle could be steered, it was called a dirigible—from the Latin *dirigere*, meaning "to steer."

About ten years later, a German army officer went to North America to observe the Civil War, where both sides employed bal-

loons to reconnoiter enemy positions. His first balloon flight high above the Mississippi River so deeply impressed the officer that his name came to be indelibly linked with airships. He was Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin.

Count Zeppelin's Giant Airships

By some accounts, Zeppelin acquired a design for an aluminum-framed airship from a Croatian inventor named David Schwarz. The idea of an airship big enough to carry a large number of passengers or heavy cargo fascinated Zeppelin. His airships were distinctive because of their huge size and cigarlike shape. Zeppelins had a metal frame wrapped in an outer cover of fabric.* In or beneath



the frame was a car, or gondola, that held the crew. Passengers were accommodated either in the gondola or in the airship's belly. Lift was provided by hydrogen, held within a number of compartments—gas cells or gas-bags—located within the frame. Propulsion came from motors mounted on the frame. As Count Zeppelin experimented with airships,

* This type is known as a zeppelin, or a *rigid* airship, since it has a rigid frame, which maintains the shape of the vehicle. The *nonrigid* airship—sometimes called a blimp—has no frame but simply consists of a balloonlike bag kept in shape solely by the pressure of the gas inside. The third type is the *semirigid* airship, similar to the nonrigid but with the addition of a fixed keel under the envelope of gas. The common feature of all airships that distinguishes them from balloons is the motor, which enables airships to be steered.

he was regarded as a foolhardy eccentric. But the count would have his day.

Count Zeppelin left the army and concentrated on designing and constructing airships. His first zeppelin made its maiden flight near Friedrichshafen, Germany, in July 1900. Crowds lined the shores of Lake Constance as the cylinder-shaped vehicle, some 420 feet long, flew over the water for 18 minutes. The airship construction company *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH* was founded, and other airships followed. The count was no longer an eccentric; he was a world celebrity. The kaiser called him the greatest German of the 20th century.

World's First Passenger Air Service

Count Zeppelin saw his giant airships as a way of achieving air supremacy for Germany. During World War I, the German armed forces used zeppelins to spy on enemy territory and even to drop bombs. In fact, the most damaging air attack of that war was carried out by a zeppelin flying over London.

However, civilian airship enthusiasts recognized the potential of a passenger air service. Hence, in 1909 the *Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-Aktien-Gesellschaft* (German Airship Transport Company) was founded, the world's first passenger air service. In later years this service was extended beyond Europe. The zeppelins *Graf Zeppelin* and *Hindenburg* made round-trips from Germany to Rio de Janeiro and to Lakehurst.

Zeppelin fever gripped the United States. Following the *Graf Zeppelin*'s maiden crossing of the Atlantic from Friedrichshafen to the U.S. East Coast in 1928—during which the airship was damaged—President Coolidge ran onto the White House lawn to look at the colossus passing overhead. New York's enthusiasm knew no bounds; the city favored the *Graf*'s crew with a ticker-tape parade.

Climb Aboard the *Hindenburg*

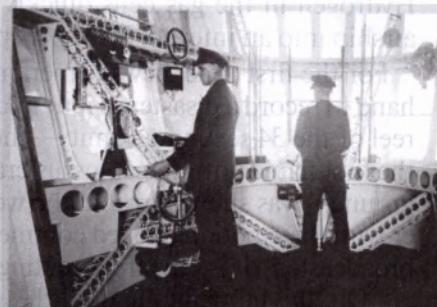
Cruising in an airship was different from traveling in a modern airplane. Imagine climb-



ing aboard the *Hindenburg*, which was three times as long as a jumbo jet and as tall as a 13-story building. You would be allocated, not a seat, but a cabin with a bed and washing facilities. For takeoff, no need to fasten your seat belt. Instead, you could stay in your cabin or wander through the lounge or the promenade, looking out of the windows that could even be opened. All these passenger facilities were situated in the huge belly of the airship.

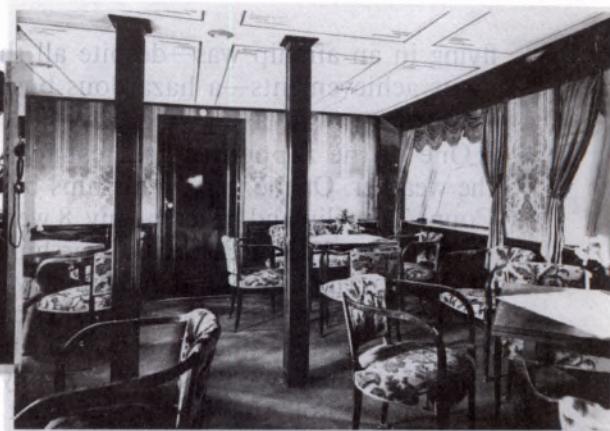
According to the book *Hindenburg—An Illustrated History*, 50 passengers ate meals in the dining room, seated at tables draped in white cloths and set with fine silver and china. On a typical Atlantic crossing, the kitchen staff used 440 pounds of meat and poultry, 800 eggs, and 220 pounds of butter, preparing meals in a galley equipped with electric stove, ovens, ice machine, and refrigerator. A baby grand piano graced the lounge, where a stewardess took care of the passengers.

The *Hindenburg* was built for comfort, not speed. At a cruising speed of almost 80 miles an hour and at an altitude of 650 feet, the *Hindenburg* made its quickest North Atlantic crossing in 1936 in almost 43 hours. Normally, the passage was smooth. On one flight



Left to right:
The "Graf Zeppelin"
over Philadelphia;
the control room;
the guest lounge

Archiv der Luftschiffbau
Zeppelin GmbH



from Lakehurst, a lady passenger was so tired when she boarded the airship that she stayed in her cabin to sleep. Later she called the steward and demanded to know when the airship would finally take off. The perplexed steward explained that they had been airborne for over two hours. "I don't believe you," she barked. The lady was convinced only when she went to the lounge and peered through the windows at the New England coast several hundred feet below.

The Most Famous Aircraft Ever Flown

The climax of the zeppelin era came in 1929 when the *Graf Zeppelin* flew around the world. Starting officially at Lakehurst, the airship circumnavigated the globe from west to east in 21 days, landing at Friedrichshafen, at Tokyo—where a quarter of a million people flocked to welcome her—and also at San Francisco and Los Angeles. Two years later the *Graf* made history again, flying to an Arctic rendezvous with a Russian icebreaker. *Hindenburg—An Illustrated History* comments: "By now the *Graf Zeppelin* had achieved an almost mystical reputation. Wherever she went she caused a sensation. It is probably safe to

say that she was the most famous single aircraft ever flown—including the modern-day Concorde."

Other nations also envisioned a great future for rigid airships. Britain planned a fleet of silver giants to unite the far-flung corners of its empire by regular flights to India and Australia. In the United States, the *Shenandoah* was the first rigid airship to use helium to provide lift instead of the inflammable hydrogen. The *Akron* and the *Macon* each had the capacity, in flight, to launch and retrieve small aircraft, which were stored in the ship's belly. With its radio-homing equipment, the *Macon* became the world's first fully effective airborne aircraft carrier.

Spectacular Disasters

"Yes, indeed, my father loved flying," said Ingeborg Waldorf, mentioned at the outset. "But the risks bothered him." Her father flew during World War I, but even in peacetime,

In Our Next Issue

- Will the Deadly March of AIDS Be Halted?
- Crazy Horse—Transforming a Mountain Into a Monument
- Will God Overlook Our Weaknesses?

flying in an airship was—despite all the famous achievements—a hazardous business. How so?

One of the zeppelin's greatest foes was the weather. Of the first 24 airships built by Count Zeppelin and his company, 8 were lost to the elements. In 1925 the U.S. airship *Shenandoah* was ripped apart in mid-flight by fierce winds. And two further airship crashes caused by severe weather—the *Akron* in 1933 and the *Macon* less than two years later—finally heralded the end of America's era of giant rigid airships.

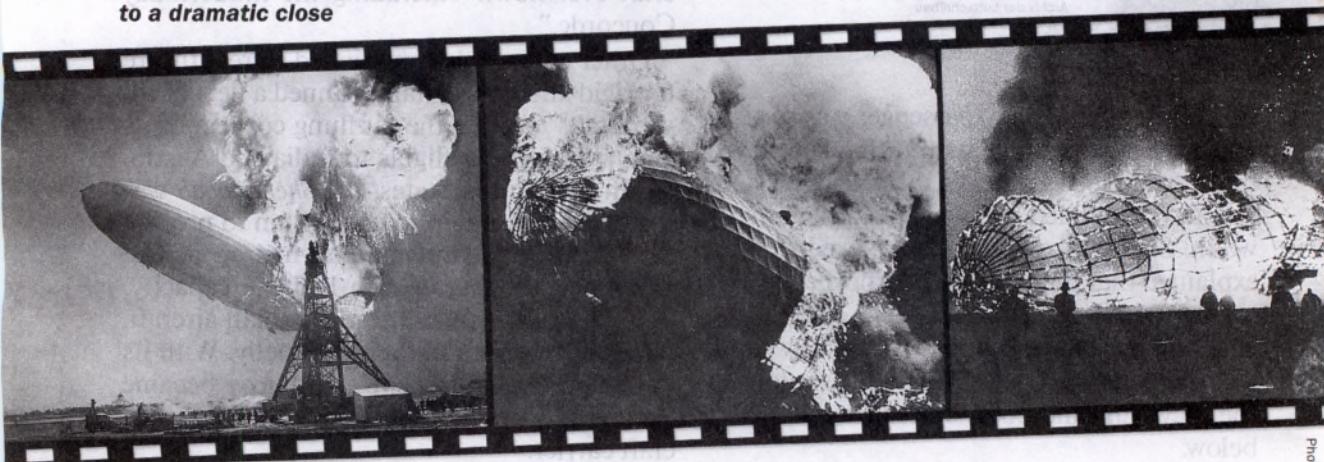
The "Hindenburg" disaster at Lakehurst in 1937 helped to bring the era of the giant airships to a dramatic close

Hydrogen in the gas cells quickly turned the airship into an inferno. Thirty-six people died.

For the first time, news cameramen were on hand to record a disaster as it unfolded. A newsreel of the 34-second calamity—the time from the first flame until the colossus crashed to the ground—was shown around the world, together with the emotion-choked commentary of the broadcaster: “It is burning, bursting into flames . . . Oh, the humanity and all the passengers!” The era of the giant airship lasted over 30 years; in a sense, it came to an end in 34 seconds.

A New Generation of Zeppelins

Friedrichshafen never lost its fascination for zeppelins. The Zeppelin Museum takes



Britain's hopes rested on the *R 101*. In 1930 on its first trip from Britain to India, the *R 101* got no farther than France, where it ran into foul weather and crashed. One writer reports that “no disaster since the loss of the *Titanic* in 1912 had so shocked the British public.” The heyday of British rigid airships was at an end.

Nonetheless, in the German zeppelin industry, confidence was still running high. Then came the disaster that shook the world. In May 1937 the *Hindenburg* flew from Frankfurt to New Jersey and was maneuvering for landing at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station. Suddenly, a tiny mushroom of flame appeared on the top of the outer cover, near the tail.

visitors back in time, offering them a chance to climb into a reconstructed section of the *Hindenburg*. A museum guide, who saw the real *Hindenburg* at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, told *Awake!*: “You cannot describe how you felt upon seeing a zeppelin. It was overwhelming.”

A new generation of zeppelins is said to be on the way, using up-to-date technology. Smaller than their giant forerunners, the new zeppelins are designed for “exclusive, gentle and environment-friendly tourism.” Will they reach the heights of their ancestors, the sensational giants of the sky? Time will tell.

Photos: Brown Brothers



Here Come Little Penguins on Parade!

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN AUSTRALIA

THE crowd is hushed and expectant. Watchful eyes peer into the distance for a first glimpse of the star performers. The floodlit scene comes to life when suddenly a tiny figure pops into view at the water's edge. A murmur of excitement ripples through the crowd as another and then another join him. The nightly show has begun. Here come Phillip Island's little penguins on parade!*

Penguins first marched onto the world stage when the famous explorers Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan sailed the great southern oceans in the 16th century. At first, men wondered just how to classify the penguin. It had feathers like a bird, it swam like a fish, and it walked on land like a beast. It was the feathers, finally, that settled the matter. Only birds have feathers—so a bird this must be. Ranging from the stately emperor and the Adélie penguins of Antarctica to the equatorial Galápagos penguin, 18 different species make up this family of flightless birds.

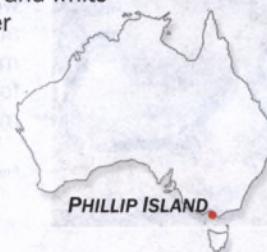
Would you like to visit a colony of penguins in their natural habitat? Then come to Phillip Island—just 90 miles southeast of the modern city of Melbourne, Australia. Some 500,000 visitors stream through here each year to be charmed by this miniature marvel. What makes the little penguins of Phillip Island so lovable?

Cute, yet Feisty

Dressed in their formal-looking black-and-white plumage, little penguins quickly win over those who see them. Standing some

* Little penguins were formerly known as fairy penguins and are often called little blue penguins.

Photos: Photography Scancolor Australia



13 inches tall and weighing a mere two pounds, they are the smallest of the world's penguin species. But do not be fooled! What they lack in size they more than make up for in tenacity and endurance.

"Little penguins are cute, yet feisty," explains Professor Mike Cullen, who has studied penguins at the Phillip Island colony for over 20 years. These smallest of penguins are also the most vocal. At night the colony resounds with growls, squawks,



brays, and screeches as penguins defend their nests against trespassers, advertise for a mate, or enjoy "choir practice" with their partners.

When first described in 1780, little penguins were aptly dubbed *Eudyptula minor*, from the Greek, meaning "good little diver." With their streamlined, torpedo-shaped bodies, sleek waterproof plumage, and flipperlike wings, they seem literally to fly through the water.

A Perfect "Life Jacket"

In their quest for food, these penguins may swim up to 50 miles a day, staying at sea for days or weeks at a



Spectators, seats, and floodlights—the stage is set for a penguin parade

time if necessary. How do they sleep at sea? The answer lies in their remarkably designed plumage.

Penguins have a thick coat of down and interlocking feathers, three to four times denser than that of flying birds. Air trapped under this coat insulates the bird and gives it natural buoyancy—much like a life jacket. Thus, a penguin can easily sleep at sea, bobbing up and down like a cork, flippers outstretched as stabilizers, its beak resting safely above the surface of the water.

Of course, even the penguin's thick coat would be no protection if it were soaked through with the chilling waters in which the bird searches for food. No problem for the penguin—a special oil gland above the bird's tail secretes liquid waxes. The penguin preens, using its bill to spread these waxes through its feathers, keeping them waterproof, clean, and healthy. No scuba diver could have a

suit better designed to cope with life at sea.

Does the lack of fresh water at sea pose any difficulty for this ocean-going creature? Two uniquely constructed glands, located just above each eye, desalinate the seawater. With a simple shake of the beak, the penguin expels the unwanted salt from each nostril.

Additionally, penguins have eyes specially designed to see as well under the water as they do above it. Clearly, this creature is perfectly equipped for its aquatic life. But fortunately for us, little penguins do not spend all their time at sea.

Their Link to Land

Phillip Island and the nearby mainland have a rugged, sandy coastline covered with dense grass and foliage. This makes an ideal habitat for the colony of 26,000 little penguins. Life begins in a nest laboriously burrowed by the parents in a coastal sand dune. A newly laid egg may remain cold, yet viable, for several days before both parents conscientiously take turns at incubation duty. Breeding birds have a special brood patch, rich in blood vessels, on the lower portion of their abdomen. When incubating an egg, this patch becomes swollen with warm blood, thus transmitting the heat essential for the egg to develop. Between incubation shifts the patch subsides, allowing the feathers to resume their waterproofing action and permitting the adult to return to the sea to feed.

Once hatched, a chick grows at a phenomenal pace. In just eight to ten weeks, the young penguin is the size of an adult and ready for the sea. "It is remarkable that young penguins set out for extended trips at sea armed with no more than a superb set of physiological





equipment . . . and a battery of instincts with which to survive," observes the book *Little Penguin—Fairy Penguins in Australia*.

Over the next one to three years, fledgling penguins may range thousands of miles, spending much of their time at sea. Those who survive usually return to their home colony to breed—within 2,000 feet of their birthplace. How do they know their way home? Some claim that penguins navigate by the sun, using a built-in biological clock that compensates for the sun's movement across the sky. Others believe that penguins recognize familiar geographical landmarks. At any rate, the spectacle of these mariners returning to land after a long voyage or after a hard day of fishing is what draws crowds to Phillip Island.

Let the Parade Begin!

As dusk settles, hundreds of excited visitors take their places, ready to view the nightly penguin parade. The penguins have long since congregated offshore beyond the breaking surf in large groups, or rafts, made up of hundreds of birds. The beach is illuminated by several floodlights. A light breeze stirs, and small waves lap the shoreline. Doubts ripple through the audience. Where are the penguins? Will they come ashore? Just then, the first little penguins appear and shuffle nervously at the water's edge. Suddenly startled, they vanish into the surf. Mindful of exposure to predators, such as eagles, the penguins keep on high alert. Soon

they reappear and gradually gather confidence. Finally, one bold penguin steps from the water and waddles smartly across the beach toward the shelter of the dunes. The others in its group are quick to follow. Ignoring the lights and onlookers,

From chick to full-grown bird in just ten weeks



they march up the beach, giving the impression of a lively parade.

Upon reaching the safety of the dunes, the penguins visibly relax and gather in larger groups to preen their feathers. Group after group crosses the beach in this manner, pausing to mingle and "chat" with neighbors before wandering home. For some this means a stiff walk, hop, and scramble up a sloping 200-foot cliff before reaching their burrows.

Little Penguins—Big Questions



As with other creatures around the world, little penguins face numerous challenges, many of these related to man. Threats include oil discharges from passing ships, habitat reduction through human activities, and introduced predators, such as foxes and domestic pets.

Commendable efforts have been made to address these issues. In recent years the number of little penguins in the Phillip Island Penguin Reserve has stabilized. "We are winning the battle . . . but slowly," reflects Professor Cullen. He adds: "The greatest challenge we now face is securing the little penguin's food supply . . . , and this is tied in with the fate of the oceans and mankind as a whole." The

effects of global warming and climate events, such as El Niño, on the ocean's food supplies pose big questions that researchers are now studying intensively.

The results of this research will no doubt increase our appreciation for the diverse yet fragile planet we share. Thanks to the tender care already shown for the wildlife on Phillip Island, you too may one day have the chance to be among the spectators who excitedly whisper, "Here come little penguins on parade!"

Young People Ask . . .

Do I Need a Mobile Phone?



"I feel very insecure and irritated if I don't have a mobile phone with me."—Akiko.*

MOBILE phones are becoming ever more popular in many lands. They are convenient. Your friends and parents can contact you anytime, anywhere—and you them. Some models allow you to exchange short text messages, which "is the latest way for young people to feed their urge to communicate," says *The Times* of London.

* Some names have been changed.

There are even mobile phones that can connect you to cyberspace, providing access to Web sites and E-mail.

You may already have one, or you may be planning to get one. In either case, you might consider the saying: "There are two sides to every coin." A mobile phone may well have some benefits. However, you may want to think about the other side of the coin, for even if you

choose to buy one, being fully aware of its potential drawbacks will help you use it wisely.

"Calculate the Expense"

Jesus stated the wise principle that one should "calculate the expense" before undertaking an important project. (Luke 14:28) Can that principle be applied to mobile phones? Certainly. Now you may be able to get the phone itself at very little cost, or it may even be free. However, as 17-year-old Henna discovered, "the bill can suddenly get very high." There can also be constant pressure to keep up with additional services and to buy more-expensive models. Thus, Hiroshi says: "I have a part-time job and save money to get a newer model every year." Many youths do the same.*

Even if your parents agree to pay the bill for you, it is still important to understand the costs. A traveling Christian minister in Japan notes: "Some mothers are taking on extra part-time work just to pay for their children's mobile phone, which may not be necessary in the first place." You surely would not want to put such a burden on your parents!

"A Time Killer"

Many who start out using the phone moderately may find it taking up more of their time than they expected—and crowding out more important things. Mika used to spend a lot of time with her family around the dinner table. "Now," she says, "after we have our meal we go back to our rooms with our own [mobile phones]."

"A third of young adults aged between 16 and 20 prefer text messaging over all other means of written communication," says *The Guardian* of London. Text messaging may cost you less money than voice conversation, but it costs you more time to key in text messages. Mieko admits: "If someone sends 'good night,' I answer 'good night.' Then, messages start flying back and forth for an hour. It is just silly talk."

Many mobile-phone users might be quite

* For a discussion of after-school jobs, please see the article "Young People Ask—What Is Wrong With Making Money?" in the September 22, 1997, issue of *Awake!*

surprised if they were to stop and add up all the time they spend using their phone in one month. A 19-year-old girl, Teija, admits: "For many people, a mobile phone is a time killer rather than a time saver." Even if your circumstances justify owning one, it is important to be time conscious while using it.

A young Christian girl named Marja observes: "At Christian assemblies many young people keep sending trivial messages to others. It's very common!" Similar behavior has been observed among youths engaging in the Christian ministry. The Bible advises Christians to buy out time for spiritual activities. (Ephesians 5:16) How sad when such precious time is taken up by telephone conversations!

Secret Communication

Marie comments on another pitfall: "Since the calls come directly to the individual, not to the home, there is a danger of parents not being aware of whom their kids are talking to or even whether they are on the phone or not." Some youths thus use mobile phones to establish secret contact with those of the opposite sex. Some have dropped their guard, bypassing standards they would normally observe when communicating with others. How so?

"Text messaging means that no one can monitor what [young people] are doing," says *The Daily Telegraph* of London. Not seeing or hearing the other party can affect you. "Some feel that a text message is a more neutral way to communicate," observes Timo. "In a message some may write things that they would consider too bold to say face-to-face."

When Keiko, a 17-year-old Christian girl, started using a mobile phone, she let many of her friends know her number. Soon she started exchanging messages every day with a boy in her congregation. Keiko says: "At first we just talked about everyday things, but then we started sharing our troubles. We created our own little world by means of our mobile phones."

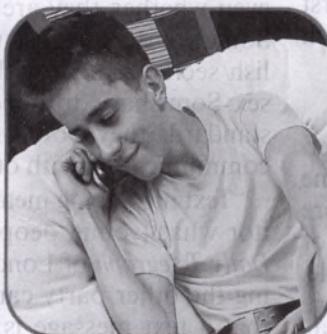
Happily, she received help from her parents and the Christian elders before things got too serious. She now admits: "Even though before

giving me a mobile phone, my parents had warned me so much about exchanging mail with the opposite sex, I mailed him every day. It wasn't the best way to use the phone."*

The Bible admonishes us to "hold a good conscience." (1 Peter 3:16) Doing so means that when you use a mobile phone, you must make sure that, as Koichi says, "you have nothing to be ashamed of," even if someone else should see your messages or overhear you. Always remember that there are no secrets when it comes to our heavenly Father. The Bible explains: "There is not a creation that is not manifest to [God's] sight; but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Hebrews 4:13) Why, then, try to maintain a secret relationship?

Set Limits

If you are considering getting a mobile phone, why not first evaluate your situation carefully to



Some youths carry on secret relationships via the mobile phone

see if you really need one? Discuss the matter with your parents. Some feel as did young Jenna, who says: "A mobile phone is too big a responsibility for many young people."

Even if you decide to own such a phone, it is important to keep it under control. How? Set

* Regularly talking to or exchanging messages with a member of the opposite sex over the phone could be a form of dating. Please see the article "Young People Ask—What's Wrong With Talking to Each Other?" in the August 22, 1992, issue of *Awake!*

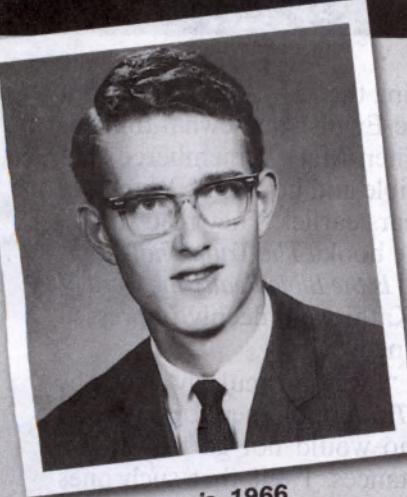
reasonable limits. For example, limit the number of features you use or the amount of time and money you spend on the phone. Since most phone companies provide a detailed report of your usage, you might want to analyze the bill with your parents from time to time. Some find it convenient to use a prepaid type of mobile phone to limit usage.

Also, give careful thought to when and how you respond to calls and messages. Make your own reasonable guidelines. Shinji explains: "I open my mailbox only once a day, and I usually reply to messages only when they are important. As a result, friends have stopped sending junk messages. If there is a really urgent problem, they will call me anyway." More important, be selective as to the people with whom you communicate. Be careful about giving out your phone number. Apply the same standards you always use regarding good association.—1 Corinthians 15:33.

The Bible says: "For everything there is an appointed time, . . . a time to keep quiet and a time to speak." (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7) Clearly, there are times for mobile phones "to keep quiet" too. Our Christian meetings and ministry are the "appointed time" for worshiping God, not for using the phone. Restaurant and theater managers often request that their clients refrain from using mobile phones. We respectfully comply with such requests. Surely the Sovereign of the universe deserves no less respect!

If they are not expecting a crucial call, many choose to turn off their phone, or they switch to a silent mode when engaging in essential activities. Some put their mobile phone out of reach. After all, cannot most messages be attended to later?

If you decide to own a mobile phone, be determined to control it and not let it control you. Clearly, you need to stay alert and keep your priorities in order. The Bible encourages us: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." (Philippians 4:5) If you decide to have a mobile phone, by all means resolve to show your reasonableness in the way you use it.



Dennis, 1966

A UNIQUE REUNION

After 30 Years



Mark, 1964

IN 1967 two young men were thrown together by chance. They were assigned as roommates at Michigan Technical University in the United States. Dennis Sheets, from Lima, Ohio, was then an 18-year-old freshman studying forestry. Twenty-year-old Mark Ruge hailed from Buffalo, New York. He was a junior studying civil engineering.

At the time, their friendship might have seemed a brief, fleeting one. Neither of the youths continued with university education; each went his separate way. More than three decades passed. Then, one day in the Dominican Republic, the two men came face-to-face once more. Chance played a role in this surprising reunion. But something else was at work too. What was that? To find the answer, let us follow the separate threads of their lives.

Dennis Goes to War

Dennis returned home after his first year of college. Then, in December 1967, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, and in June 1968, he was sent to Vietnam. There he saw the horrors of war. When his tour of duty was up in 1969, he returned to the United States, eventually landing a job with a large company in Ohio. However, he wasn't satisfied.

"My boyhood dream was to move to Alaska and homestead," Dennis explains. So in 1971 he and a high-school friend set out to fulfill

that dream. Rather than homestead, however, he worked at a number of odd jobs. For a while he lived in a tent and worked in fire control. He grew a beard and long hair and began smoking marijuana.

In 1972, Dennis left Anchorage to experience the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Louisiana. After that, he built a small cabin in the woods of Arkansas. There he worked at framing houses and finishing concrete. In June 1973, Dennis hitchhiked around the country to see if he could find a purpose in life.

Mark in the Antiwar Movement

Mark stayed at the university for a few semesters after Dennis left but then decided that he didn't want to become part of the system that was supporting the war. So he went back to Buffalo, where he worked for a while as a foreman at a steel plant. Still dissatisfied with the war effort, he quit his job, bought a motorcycle, and traveled across the country to San Francisco, California. Although they didn't realize it then, Dennis and Mark were in San Francisco for a while at the same time.

Like Dennis, Mark grew a beard and long hair and began using marijuana. But Mark was heavily involved in the antiwar movement, participating in protests and marches. He was wanted by the FBI for draft evasion, so for a few years he used aliases to escape detection. He pursued a hippie life-style in San

Francisco. There, in 1970, two of Jehovah's Witnesses came to his door.

Mark explains: "They must have felt that I showed some interest, so they returned. I wasn't home, but they left a green Bible and three books." Mark, however, was too absorbed in political activism and in having a good time to read them. Also, he was closely pursued by the FBI. So under another alias, he moved to Washington, D.C. His girlfriend, Kathi Yaniskivis, whom he had met at the university, joined him there.

Finally, in 1971, the FBI caught up with Mark. Two FBI agents escorted him on a flight from Washington, D.C., to New York and made sure that he continued on to Toronto, Canada. Evidently, the FBI didn't consider him a threat to civil order; they just wanted him out of the country. The following year Kathi and he were married, and they moved to Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada. They wanted to escape from society, yet they felt there had to be more to life.

They Become Witnesses

Dennis, you will recall, was hitchhiking around the country looking for a purpose in life. His tour took him to Montana, where he found a job outside of Chinook helping a farmer during the grain harvest. The man's wife and daughter were Jehovah's Witnesses. Dennis was given an *Awake!* magazine to read. Before long, he became convinced that the Witnesses practice the true religion.

Taking a Bible with him, Dennis left the farm and moved to Kalispell, Montana. There he attended his first meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. He asked for a Bible study at that meeting. Shortly thereafter, he cut his hair and shaved his beard. In January 1974 he went out in the preaching work for the first time, and he was baptized in a watering trough in Polson, Montana, on March 3, 1974.

Meanwhile Mark and Kathi, living on Gabriola Island, decided that since they had the time, they would try investigating the Bible.

They began reading the *King James Version* but found the archaic English somewhat difficult to understand. Then Mark remembered that he still had the Bible and books the Witnesses had given him years earlier. They read the Bible along with the books *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* Mark and Kathi were deeply impressed by what they learned.

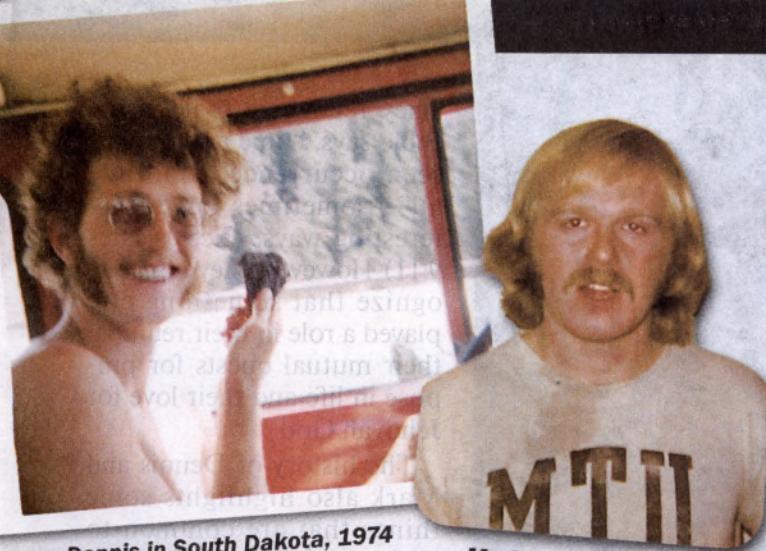
Mark explains: "I was particularly struck by the fact that the *Truth* book mentions a group of Christians who would not go to war under any circumstances. I felt that such ones were practicing true Christianity." Shortly afterward, Mark and Kathi returned to Houghton, Michigan, to visit Kathi's family—despite the risk of arrest. There, still looking like hippies, they attended a meeting of the Witnesses. They accepted a Bible study and studied during the month they were in Michigan.

After returning to Gabriola Island, they met a Witness on the street in Nanaimo, British Columbia, and explained that they wanted a Bible study. That same day a carload of Witnesses came over on the ferry to contact them, and a Bible study was started. Three months later, Mark and Kathi began in the preaching work. Three months after that, on March 10, 1974, both were baptized. It was one week after Dennis was baptized!

Dennis in the Full-Time Ministry

Dennis became a pioneer, or full-time minister, in September 1974. He observes: "I was happy pioneering, but I wanted to expand my ministry; so in July 1975, I applied to serve at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. That December I was invited there."

The first assignment Dennis was given was to assist in converting the former Towers Hotel into a residence for the headquarters staff. He worked for several years there, overseeing the tile crew. Then, desiring to get married, he moved to California. In 1984, while serving as an elder in the Cathedral City congregation, he married a pioneer named Kathy Enz.



Dennis in South Dakota, 1974

Mark in Ontario, 1971

Dennis and Kathy were determined to keep their lives simple in order to pursue the interests of God's Kingdom. So Dennis often turned down opportunities to make a lot of money in the booming southern California construction trade. In 1988 he and Kathy applied to help in the international construction work of Jehovah's Witnesses. In December of that year, they received an assignment to work on the branch construction project in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In 1989, Dennis and Kathy were invited to serve in the construction work of Jehovah's Witnesses in a more permanent way. In this special form of the full-time ministry, they have twice served in Suriname and Colombia. They have also worked on branch construction in Ecuador and Mexico, as well as on a similar project in the Dominican Republic.

Mark in the Full-Time Ministry

In 1976, Mark, along with thousands of other young American men who had fled to Canada to escape the draft, was granted amnesty by the U.S. government. He and his wife, Kathi, also desired to keep their lives simple in order to devote more time to their ministry. So Mark worked part-time as a surveyor, and he and Kathi gradually paid off the

bills they had accumulated before their baptism.

In 1978, when the Witnesses in Canada were planning to build a new branch complex near Toronto, Ontario, Mark and Kathi were in a position to offer their services. Since Mark had experience in surveying, they were invited to participate in the construction. They worked on the project in Georgetown until its completion in June 1981. Afterward, they moved back to British Columbia and for the next four years helped with building an Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses there. When it

was completed, they were invited back to work on the expansion of the Canada branch.

In 1986, after a few months in Georgetown, Mark and Kathi were invited to stay on as regular members of the Canada branch staff. They have served on the staff ever since and have also had extensive opportunities to share in construction work in many other countries. Thanks to Mark's experience in surveying, he began to be used to do surveying for branch buildings and Assembly Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses in South and Central America and the islands of the Caribbean.

Over the years, he and Kathi served in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guyana, Barbados, the Bahamas, Dominica, the United States (Florida), and the Dominican Republic. This special form of the full-time ministry caused the thread of Mark's life to cross that of Dennis' life once more.

Reunion in Dominican Republic

Unbeknownst to each other, Mark and Dennis were working on similar projects in the Dominican Republic. One day they happened upon each other at the branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Santo Domingo. As you can imagine, they were delighted to get reacquainted. After all, they were both 33 years



**Dennis and Mark, along with their wives,
shortly after their chance reunion, 2001**

older and had a lot of catching up to do. With growing wonder, they shared much of what you have read above. But most remarkable to them—as well as to all with whom they have shared their experiences—were the many similarities in their lives.

Both lived hippie life-styles and moved to remote areas to get away from the materialistic modern way of life with all its anxieties. Dennis married a girl named Kathy; Mark married a girl named Kathi. Both men accepted a Bible study when attending their first meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. Both were baptized in March 1974. Both became members of branch families of Jehovah's Witnesses—Dennis in the United States and Mark in Canada. Both have made efforts to keep life simple in order to pursue spiritual goals. (Matthew 6:22) Both became involved in international construction and have received assignments in numerous countries. Until their chance meeting in the Dominican Republic, neither had ever met any former friends who had accepted Bible truths.

Do Mark and Dennis attribute these remarkable coincidences to fate? Not at all.

They recognize that, as the Bible says, “time and unforeseen occurrence befall [us] all”—sometimes in very interesting ways. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) However, they also recognize that something else played a role in their reunion: their mutual quests for purpose in life and their love for Jehovah God.

The history of Dennis and Mark also highlights some things that are common to all honesthearted ones who learn Bible truth. Dennis comments: “What Mark and I have experienced demonstrates that Jehovah is aware of the life situations of people, and when their heart becomes rightly disposed, he draws them to him.” —2 Chronicles 16:9; John 6:44; Acts 13:48.

Mark adds: “Our experience has also taught us to appreciate that when one adjusts to Jehovah's standards, dedicates his life to him, and makes himself available, Jehovah can use his talents and abilities to promote true worship for the benefit of his people.”—Ephesians 4:8.

Their experience also shows that Jehovah God blesses the whole-souled service of his people. Dennis and Mark certainly feel blessed. Dennis says: “It is a privilege to serve Kingdom interests in special full-time service. It has allowed us to enjoy an interchange of encouragement while working with Christian brothers and sisters from all over the world.”

Mark adds: “Jehovah definitely blesses those who put his Kingdom first. I consider it a special blessing to be able to serve as a member of the Canada branch family and to participate in international construction.”

A unique reunion? Yes, because as Mark says: “The real reason why meeting up with each other was such a thrill is that both of us have come to know, love, and serve the unique God, Jehovah.”

Alabaster Carving

THE ANCIENT CRAFT OF VOLTERRA

BY AWAKE! WRITER
IN ITALY

Imagine a naturally occurring material that can readily be fashioned into flowing, delicate forms—a variegated medium whose beauty, translucence, and veining make it suited to the carving of highly ornamental details and fantastic figures. Do you know what it is?



WE ARE describing alabaster. We knew little about this stone before we visited the traditional center for its production in Italy—the Tuscan city of Volterra.

Alabaster carving has a long history in Volterra, going all the way back to the Etruscans, the ancient inhabitants of the region. Among the many artifacts we admired in the local Etruscan museum were hundreds of alabaster cinerary urns—rectangular stone boxes in which the ashes of the deceased were buried after cremation—dating from the fourth to the first century B.C.E. These stone boxes are richly adorned with carvings in relief, often including scenes of the deceased person's supposed journey to the afterworld.

Of course, the Etruscans were not the only ones to use alabaster in ancient times. The Egyptians used a great deal of it. There is a difference in chemical composition, however, between such oriental alabaster—also referred to in the Bible—and the much softer Volterranean chalky alabaster.

Marble too was used extensively in ancient Greek and Roman art, but compared with such "noble" materials, chalky alabaster was considered something of a poor relative. It is a softer, more fragile rock, easily scratched, and its role in architecture and art has thus always been subordinate to that of marble. Alabaster sculptures cannot endure exposure to the elements. In architecture alabaster is used primarily in interiors. The ductility of alabaster, on the other hand, makes it particularly suited to the sculpturing of minute details.

Development of an Industry

There is no evidence of alabaster production in Volterra for centuries after Etruscan and Roman times. However, historical records preserve references to the craft in the mid-16th century. At that time Francesco de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, acquired a rare and beautiful lathe-turned vase from a Volterrano craftsman and presented it to the Duke of Bavaria. In the 17th century, local craftsmen were busy producing artistic objects and minor decorative pieces. The craft enjoyed notable expansion during the 18th century, with quality reproduction of classical sculptures. By this time, the

1. Alabaster stones are extracted from tunnels that are up to 900 feet deep.
2. An artisan turns a vase on a lathe.
3. An ornate alabaster urn.
4. A modern alabaster sculpture



fame of Volterrana alabaster had spread throughout Europe and beyond.

During this period Marcello Inghirami Fei, a local nobleman with a reputation for artistic talent and business acumen, gave impetus to the alabaster trade. He began to exploit newly discovered underground deposits of the mineral, and in 1791 he established a school where more than 100 apprentices could learn the art under the direction of master craftsmen called in from different regions of Italy and abroad. The industry flourished.

The eight or nine alabaster workshops that existed in 1786 multiplied to 60 by 1830. In those years some 50 adventurous Volterrana merchants toured the world's markets from Europe to the Americas, India, and the Far East to sell high-quality alabasters. Some amassed great fortunes. The boom lasted until 1870, but since then, there have been alternating periods of prosperity and slump. Even so, alabaster production remains one of the pillars of the local economy.

An Afternoon Stroll in Volterra

With its quiet, narrow, stone-paved streets, stone buildings, picturesque corners, and sunny piazzas, all surrounded by charming Tuscan countryside, Volterra has an atmosphere of its own. It seems as though we have stepped back into the Middle Ages. On our summer afternoon stroll with friends, we make a point of visiting the Porta all'Arco, an imposing Etruscan arched gateway dating to the fourth century B.C.E., which is part of the medieval city walls.

We linger before shop windows to gaze in astonishment at groups of birds in flight, cavorting horses full of vitality, and graceful human figures—all in alabaster but glowing with the translucence of ground glass. Vaulted showrooms display ornate urns decorated with grape-bearing vines and reproductions of classical sculptures as well as intricately perforated and engraved vases, candlesticks, chess sets, jewelry cases, and a host of other ornaments.

Noting our interest, our friends are happy to take us into dusty workshops so that we can see for ourselves how artisans transform their raw materials into these delightful products. We learn that egg-shaped boulders, weighing from 4 to 2,000 pounds, occur irregularly throughout the chalky strata that underlie the Volterra region. The

stones are extracted from open-air quarries or from tunnels up to 900 feet deep. The alabaster ranges in color from a translucent white to ivory and yellow, from a reddish color to dark brown, and from gray-green to black, many with different veinings and degrees of opacity.

In the various workshops we visit, we observe different production techniques. We meet Gloria, engaged in etching delicate decorations onto a plate, and Franco, who is busy turning ornaments on a lathe. Many rounded objects are produced this way, from plates and bowls to light fittings and lamps—for which translucent alabaster is particularly suited. The tools and products of the trade lie in apparent disorder—rasps and files, mallets and chisels, compressed-air mills, sandpaper, and half-finished busts. The human and animal figures that clutter the shelves are used, we are told, as models for the reproduction of similar pieces.

White alabaster powder lies thick on every surface. Even this dust has its uses. Statuettes are mass-produced by pouring a mixture of alabaster powder and polyester resin into molds—but the results are not to be confused with the authentic handmade article, as many artisans are quick to point out.

A Passionate Debate

It is said that the Volterrana have alabaster dust in their blood, and it is soon apparent as we talk with friendly artisans that there is a passionate debate among them concerning their historic craft. Some maintain that low-priced objects with little or no artistic value are ruining the good name of a product that was traditionally of high quality. Others argue that there is room on the market for a range of products, from unique works of art to mass-produced ornaments. The debate is not new, and it is far from over. After all, ruthless competition and commercial concerns overshadow so many human endeavors, and these will likely continue to exert their influence.

One thing is sure, though. The artistic abilities with which our Creator endowed mankind will endure forever. What we saw on our visit to Volterra is just one example of the enchanting skills that all those alive will be capable of developing to perfection when they witness the fulfillment of Jehovah God's prophetic words: "The work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full."—Isaiah 65:22.

Watching the World

Antarctic Ice Shelf Breaks Up

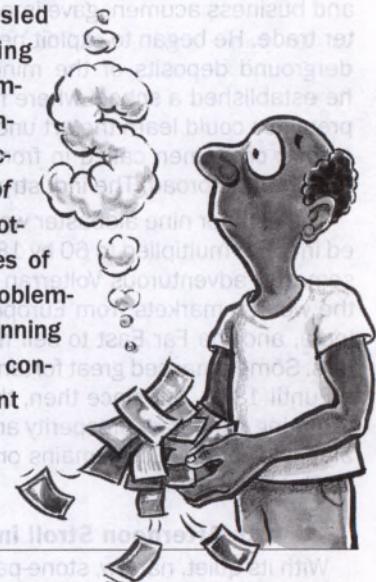
During a period of just 35 days beginning at the end of January, 2002, a 1,200-square-mile section of the Larsen B ice shelf on the Antarctic Peninsula's eastern side disintegrated into thousands of drifting icebergs, reports the University of Colorado's National Snow and Ice Data Center. Much of Antarctica is rimmed by thick, glacier-fed plates of ice, but those on the peninsula have been receding as a result of a climatic warming trend there since the late 1940's. Because the ice shelf is floating, the breakup will not raise the sea level significantly. However, "ice shelves act as a buttress, or braking system, for glaciers," states the report. "Once their ice shelves are removed, the glaciers . . . may begin to dump more ice into the ocean than they gather as snow." The reasons for the warming are not yet clear, and the data can be confusing. Beyond the peninsula, "the rest of Antarctica shows no signs of widespread warming," notes *The New York Times*. In fact, some research indicates that the continent as a whole may have cooled during the past 35 years.

China's Space Program

On April 1, 2002, China's Shenzhou III unmanned space-craft landed successfully in Inner Mongolia after a one-week mission, reports BBC News. The craft carried an "artificial human"—a dummy outfitted with sensors for monitoring oxygen levels and temperature as a test of life-support systems that could be used on a future

"Fantasies of Wealth"

Aggressive advertising has misled many poor people into believing that they will escape poverty by gambling, although the chances of winning any meaningful amount are actually very small, reports the *Times of Zambia*. According to the article, "lottery advertising stimulates fantasies of wealth, luxury and an instantly problem-free life," while "the tiny odds of winning are rarely mentioned." The paper concludes: "No matter what argument one gives, gambling is daylight theft and should be outlawed in any morally upright society."



manned flight. Chinese space officials have announced plans to put a man in space no later than 2005. "The longer-term goal which the Chinese space agency has set itself is to put humans on the Moon by 2010," states the report.

For Budgies, Bright Is Beautiful

How do budgerigars (budgies), or shell parakeets, select a mate? The answer may lie in how brightly the birds' feathers glow. Budgies' feathers contain a chemical that absorbs ultraviolet light and re-emits it at a longer wavelength, causing the feathers to glow a fluorescent yellow-red. Dr. Justin Marshall of the University of Queensland, Australia, along with his colleagues, applied sunscreen to the feathers of wild budgies to dull this fluorescent effect. "The dull birds were

much less attractive to members of the opposite sex," reports *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Marshall said that a good glow probably indicates a high-quality bird. Though the bodies of certain other creatures may contain fluorescent chemicals, Marshall noted that this is the "first demonstrated use of fluorescence in the animal kingdom," states the *Herald*.

Endangered Lions

"Lions may soon become extinct in large parts of Africa," reports *New Scientist* magazine. It takes a population of 500 to 1,000 lions to provide about 100 breeding pairs—sufficient to avoid inbreeding. According to the World Conservation Union, lion populations in West and Central Africa fall far short of such numbers. "It's a serious situation," says Hans Bauer of Leiden University in the Neth-

erlands. "There's not one population that we can be sure will continue to be there." The main reason for the decline is man's encroachment on the animals' habitat. Lions need very large hunting areas—as much as 75 square miles for a single male. "The lion is a keystone species," Bauer warns. "It's a signal—the fact that lions are threatened now could mean that other species might be threatened in 20 to 30 years time."

Sunbed Dangers

"Sunbed users are more than twice as likely to develop skin cancer, and the young are at extra risk," reports *The Guardian* of London. Professor Margaret Karagas, of Dartmouth Medical School, New Hampshire, U.S.A., interviewed 1,500 people aged 25 to 74, more than half of whom were newly diagnosed skin-cancer patients. The

chances of developing cancer increased "by up to 20 per cent for each decade of sunbed use before the age of 50," states *The Times of London*. Professor Karagas says: "Tanning lamps mimic sunlight [with] an intense, concentrated dose of ultraviolet radiation." There are now three times as many deaths from skin cancer in Britain as there were in the 1960's, and in Scotland there are four times as many as there were then. Experts blame the deaths on increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation through sunbathing and the use of tanning lamps. "There is no such thing as a safe tan," said a Cancer Research UK spokesperson. "A tan is actually the body's response to DNA damage."

"Water Towers" in Peril

Half the world's population relies on fresh water from

mountain ecosystems, notes *The Toronto Star* of Canada. These mountain ranges, termed the "water towers of the world" in a United Nations report marking the UN Year of Mountains, are seriously threatened. According to the *Star*, the damage is caused by "climate change, pollution, armed conflict, population growth, deforestation and exploitation by the agricultural, mining and tourism industries." The report warns that "this degradation will lead to more floods, landslides and famine," the paper says.

Addiction to Alcohol

One out of every 13 people in Britain is now alcohol-dependent, reports *The Independent* of London, making addiction to alcohol "twice as common as addiction to illegal or prescription drugs." From 1994 to 1999, deaths directly attributable to alcohol abuse—including those from heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver, and alcohol poisoning—increased nearly 43 percent. Drunk-driving accidents rose from 10,100 in 1998 to 11,780 in 2000 and were responsible for 1 in 7 deaths on the road. Sixty percent of employers have problems with employees who drink too much, and 40 percent of those who commit violent crime do so under the influence of alcohol. Eric Appleby, director of the British charity Alcohol Concern, said: "The sheer breadth and scale of the problems in terms of their impact on people's health, relationships and pockets, not to mention on public services, . . . reinforces the need for urgent, joined-up action."

Afraid of the Dark

"Children are more frightened of the dark than their parents were because increasing exposure to artificial light means they rarely experience total blackness," according to a report in *The Times* of London. Psychologist and author Aric Sigman analyzed research showing that nearly two thirds of children under ten insist on sleeping with a night-light. He claims that youngsters' imagination is being stifled by lack of exposure to darkness—even in bed at night. "Children's imaginations need to be given space to develop," notes the report. "It can be very stimulating for them to play and entertain themselves in the dark, because all the images they produce will be unique." But today, "ready-made images imprinted on children's minds from television, cinema and computer games" frighten them. Dr. Sigman comments: "It sounds like old-fashioned advice to say read more and watch television less, but it needs repeating."



From Our Readers

Teachers I have been an elementary-school teacher for the past four years, and I was delighted to read the series "Teachers—What Would We Do Without Them?" (March 8, 2002) One disturbing

trend I notice is that children are unaware of the difference between right and wrong. It is also a challenge when children fully understand their rights before they are aware of their responsibilities. Nevertheless, teaching is a rewarding career, especially when students are motivated and are progressing.

J. K., United States

Thank you for these articles. They helped me to understand how many sacrifices teachers make for us, even though we often do not do the same for them.

S. M., Italy

I am eight years old. Your articles about teachers helped me to see that teachers love the students. They love to teach kids, even when it's hard. I gave my teacher a thank-you note. My four-year-old sister and I are learning how to teach people about Jehovah—even if it's hard sometimes—because we love people.

T. M., United States

Four years after I left my teaching job, a student wrote to me expressing her appreciation for the times I had helped her. She enclosed a bookmark that she had made with her own hands. You can imagine how happy I was to receive that letter!

A. R., Slovenia

I gave this magazine to the principal and two teachers at the school my children attend. I waited two days and returned to get their opinion. They requested 20 additional magazines in Spanish and English to give out to parents.

M. M., United States



Last year I worked as an elementary-school teacher for four months. Other teachers I worked with said that a lack of appreciation on the part of parents made their work as teachers difficult. So I was really happy that this series highly esteems the work of dedicated teachers. When my term ended, I received many thank-you letters from my students. Each one is a treasure to me!

S. I., Japan

Ballooning Thank you so much for your wonderful article "At One With the Wind." (March 8, 2002) Going on a ballooning trip has long been my heartfelt, though unfulfilled, desire. Your article was something of a compensation to me, however, because I really felt as though I had gone along on the trip! I could actually "feel" the basket lifting off and swaying from side to side. The world must seem so small from up high, yet it and mankind are important to Jehovah.

S. A., Germany

Guilt Feelings I really needed the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Feelings of Guilt—Are They Always Bad?" (March 8, 2002) Because my expectations were too high, I found it hard to control my emotions when dealing with my partner in full-time evangelizing. But this article pointed out that constantly trying to make others feel guilty if they do not always do things the way we think they should is unloving and counterproductive. I am happy that I was able to adjust my outlook. Please continue to teach us Jehovah's way of looking at things.

K. K., Japan

When Small Failures Become Disasters

AP Photo/Toshihiko Sato

ON July 6, 1988, workers on the Piper Alpha offshore drilling rig in the North Sea worked on repairing a gas-condensate pump but did not complete the job. Because of a communication breakdown, the next shift of workers turned the pump on. Fire broke out. High above the sea and with no way to escape, 167 persons died.

Twelve years later, on July 25, 2000, a supersonic Concorde accelerated down the runway at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, France. As the plane gathered momentum, a small piece of titanium debris on the runway caused a blowout in a tire, which, in turn, caused a wing tank to rupture. Fuel streamed into the left engines, robbing them of power and forming a 200-foot-long tongue of fire. After about two minutes, the plane crashed into a hotel, killing all on board as well as some people on the ground.

Reflecting on such accidents, James Chiles says in his book *Inviting Disaster—Lessons From the Edge of Technology*: "In our new world, surrounded by machines occasionally gone savage, we need to acknowledge the

extraordinary damage that ordinary mistakes can now cause." In a review of Chiles' book, the journal *Science* says: "The extraordinary, accelerating advance of science and technology over the past few hundred years has been intoxicating. It fills us with a sense of nearly unlimited possibility for understanding and manipulating the physical world. [But] there is no reason to suspect that we are now any less fallible than before."

Regarding the more dangerous technologies, *Science* states: "Even a tiny risk [of error] is intolerably high. For those technologies, we must insist on perfection." But does mankind's track record indicate that perfection is attainable? Hardly! So error-related disasters of one kind or another will no doubt continue.

But they will not continue indefinitely. God-fearing people can look forward to a future when life will not be tragically cut short because of human failure or limitations. Why? Because God, by means of his heavenly Kingdom government, will eliminate all causes of death, sorrow, and pain.—Matthew 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:3, 4.

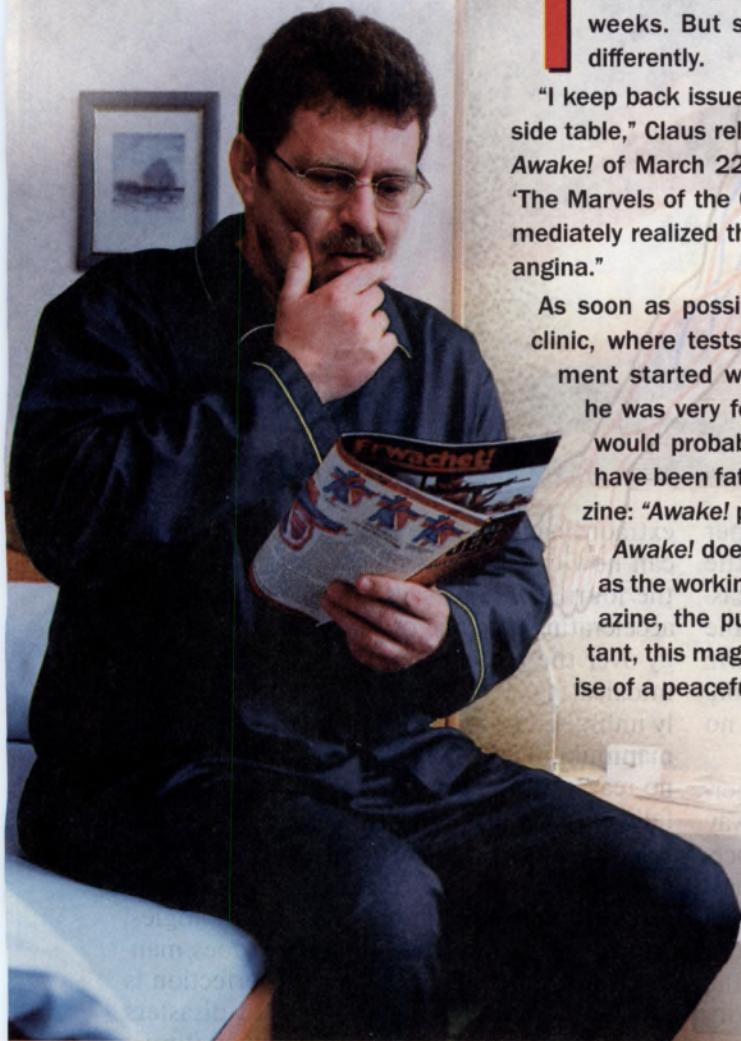
'It Probably Saved My Life!'

IDID not take the symptoms seriously," explained Claus, who had been experiencing shortness of breath for some weeks. But something happened that made him think differently.

"I keep back issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* on my bedside table," Claus related. "One evening I happened to pick up the *Awake!* of March 22, 2001, and turned at random to the article 'The Marvels of the Circulatory System.' Reading the article, I immediately realized that my symptoms matched the description of angina."

As soon as possible, Claus had an examination at the local clinic, where tests revealed diseased coronary arteries. Treatment started without delay. The physician told Claus that he was very fortunate, since his condition if left untreated would probably have led to a heart attack that may well have been fatal. Claus wrote to the publishers of this magazine: "Awake! probably saved my life!"

Awake! does more than feature such marvels of creation as the workings of the human body. On page 4 of this magazine, the purpose of *Awake!* is presented: "More important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world."



WHAT IS
THE PURPOSE
OF LIFE?
How Can You Find It?