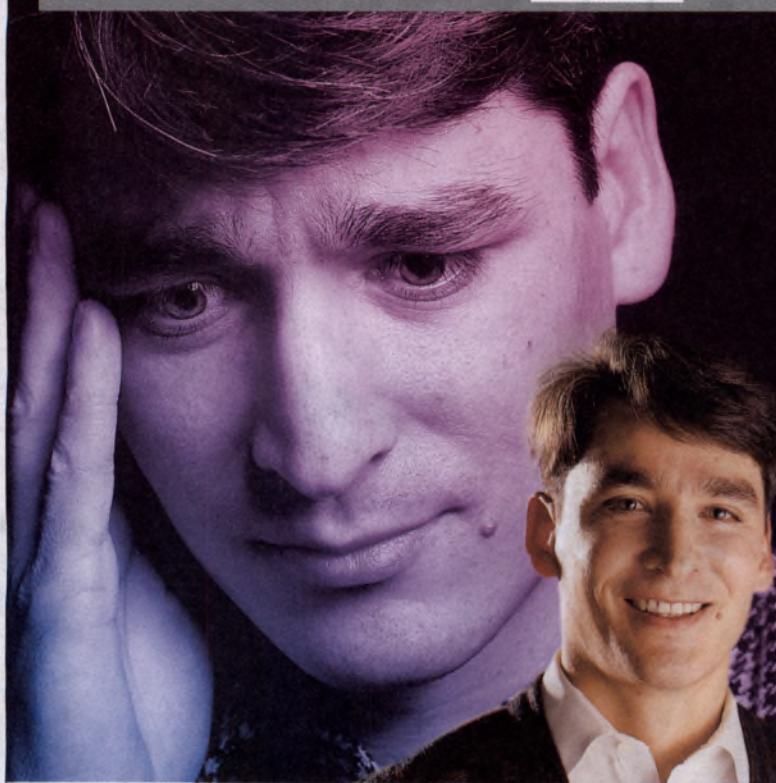


Awake!

March 22, 1998

A close-up photograph of two women. One woman, with long dark hair, is resting her head against the other woman's shoulder. Both women are smiling warmly at the camera. The woman in the foreground has short brown hair and is wearing a pink t-shirt.

**You Can
Manage
Stress!**



You Can Manage Stress!

3-13

It has been called “the silent killer” and “slow poison.” What can you do about stress?



Ivory—How Much Is It Worth? 15

From piano keyboards to ornaments and sculpture, the demand for ivory is enormous. But what has it cost—in elephants?



I Survived Flight 801 23

When a 747 crashed in Guam, there were 26 survivors. Read the fascinating story of one of them.

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Stress “The Silent Killer”



“The first symptom I noticed was intense pressure. It began near my breastbone; shot up into my shoulders, neck, and jaws; and surged down again through both of my arms. It was as if an elephant had plopped down on my chest. I could barely catch my breath. I started sweating. I began getting bowel cramps and then overwhelming nausea. . . . Later, as the nurses helped me into a hospital bed, I remember saying with astonishment, ‘I’m having a heart attack.’ I was forty-four years old.”

IN HIS book *From Stress to Strength*, Dr. Robert S. Eliot thus describes his brush with death more than 20 years ago. Earlier that morning he had attended a conference and had given a lecture—ironically, on the subject of heart attacks. Suddenly, Dr. Eliot, a cardiologist, found himself on what he calls “the wrong side of the sheets in a coronary care unit.” To what does he attribute his unexpected crisis? “On the inside,” says Dr. Eliot, “my own physical reactions to stress were killing me.”*

As Dr. Eliot’s experience illustrates, stress can have life-threatening consequences. Indeed, in the United States, it has been linked to some of the leading causes of death. The effects of stress can accumulate quietly over time and then surface without warning. It is thus for good reason that stress has been called “the silent killer.”

Surprisingly, those with type-A personalities—characterized by impatience, ag-

gressiveness, and competitiveness—are not the only ones who are vulnerable to stress-related catastrophes. Those with seemingly serene personalities may also be at risk, especially if their calmness is merely a fragile facade, like a weak lid sitting atop a pressure cooker. Dr. Eliot feels this to be true in his case. He now warns others: “You could drop dead today—unaware that for years you’ve had a time bomb strapped to your heart.”

But heart attack and sudden death are not the only problems that have been linked to stress, as the following article will show.



* While stress can be one contributing factor, in most cases of heart attack, there is significant compromise of the coronary arteries by atherosclerosis. Therefore, it would be unwise for a person to take heart disease symptoms lightly, perhaps believing that simply reducing stress will cure him. See *Awake!*, December 8, 1996, pages 3-13.

Stress The "Slow Poison"



"We hear people say all the time, 'Don't get yourself so stressed out that you become sick.' They probably don't realize there is an actual biological basis for that."—*Dr. David Felten*.

JILL, a single mother with a teenage son, a dwindling bank account, and a strained relationship with her parents, already had ample reason to feel stressed-out. Then, unexpectedly, an itchy, burning rash developed on her arm. She tried antibiotics, cortisone creams, and antihistamines, but none of these helped. Instead, the rash spread all over Jill's body, including her face. Stress was literally getting under her skin.

Jill was referred to a dermatology clinic that examines the emotional state of its patients. "We try to find out what's going on in their lives," says Dr. Thomas Gragg, the clinic's cofounder. He often finds that in addition to needing medical care, people with stubborn skin problems need help managing stress. "It would be simplistic to say that the way you feel or act causes skin disease," Dr. Gragg admits. "But we can say that one's emotional state can play a large part in skin disorders, and we shouldn't keep writing pre-

scriptions for steroid cream without also helping a person to work on the stress in her life."

Jill feels that learning to manage stress literally saved her skin. "I still have flare-ups," she says, "but my skin is nothing like the disaster it was." An unusual case? Hardly. Many doctors believe that stress is often a factor in a number of dermatologic conditions, including hives, psoriasis, acne, and eczema. But stress can affect more than just your skin.

Stress and Your Immune System

Current research shows that stress can suppress your immune system, perhaps opening the door to a number of infectious diseases. "Stress doesn't make you sick," says virologist Ronald Glaser. "But it does increase your risk of being sick because of what it does to your immune system." There is particularly compelling evidence linking

Awake!

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stress to colds, the flu, and herpes. Although we are continually exposed to such viruses, our immune system normally fights them off. But some experts say that when a person is under emotional distress, these defenses can fail.

The biological mechanisms involved are not yet fully understood, but some theorize that the hormones that gear you up for action when you are under stress can hamper your immune functioning as they surge through the bloodstream. Usually, this is not a cause for concern, since these hormones are only on a temporary mission. Nevertheless, some say that if a person faces stress that is ongoing and intense, his immune system may be compromised to the extent that he becomes susceptible to illness.

This might help to explain why Canadian doctors estimate that some 50 to 70 percent of the office visits they handle are stress-related, typically involving headaches, insomnia, fatigue, and gastrointestinal problems. In the United States, the figure is estimated at between 75 and 90 percent. Dr. Jean King feels that she is not exaggerating when she says: "Chronic stress is like slow poison."

Neither Sole Cause nor Sole Cure

Despite the foregoing, scientists are not sure that stress alone can affect the immune system enough to make a medical difference. Thus, it cannot be stated dogmatically that everyone who faces stress, even in its chron-

Some Ailments That Have Been Linked to Stress

- allergies
- arthritis
- asthma
- back, neck, and shoulder pain
- colds
- depression
- diarrhea
- flu
- gastrointestinal problems
- headaches
- heart problems
- insomnia
- migraine
- peptic ulcers
- sexual dysfunction
- skin problems

ic form, will succumb to a disease. Conversely, it cannot be said that the *absence* of stress will guarantee *good* health, nor is it wise to refuse medical attention on the misinformed notion that illness can be willed away through optimism and positive thinking. Dr. Daniel Goleman cautions: "The result of this attitude-will-cure-all rhetoric has been to create widespread confusion and misunderstanding about the extent to which illness can be affected by the mind, and, perhaps worse, sometimes to make people feel

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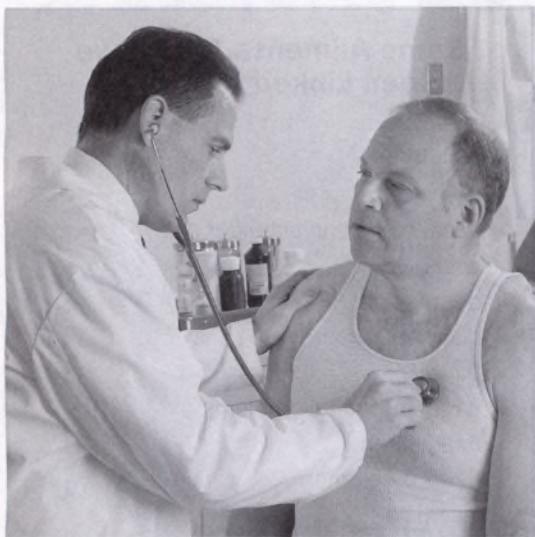
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guilty for having a disease, as though it were a sign of some moral lapse or spiritual unworthiness."

A high percentage of visits to the doctor are because of stress

It must be realized, therefore, that the cause of an illness can rarely be narrowed down to a single factor. Still, the connection between stress and illness emphasizes the wisdom of learning how to alleviate this "slow poison" whenever possible.

Before considering how this can be done, let us take a closer look at the nature of stress and how in some cases it can even be good for you.

Good Stress, Bad Stress



"Since stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand, everybody is always under some degree of stress."

—Dr. Hans Selye.

FOR a violinist to make music, the strings on his instrument must be taut—but only to a degree. If they are too tight, they will snap. But if the strings are too loose, they will produce no sound at all. The proper amount of tension lies somewhere between the two extremes.

It is similar with stress. Too much can be harmful, as we have already seen. But what about no stress at all? While the prospect might sound inviting, the fact is that you need stress—at least to a degree. For example, imagine that while crossing a street, you suddenly notice that a car is speeding to-

ward you. It is stress that enables you to get out of harm's way—quickly!

But stress is not only useful for emergencies. You also need stress to accomplish everyday tasks. Everybody is under some degree of stress all the time. ‘The only way to avoid stress is to die,’ says Dr. Hans Selye. He adds that the statement “he is under stress” is as meaningless as the expression “he is running a temperature.” “What we actually mean by such phrases,” says Selye, “is an *excess* of stress or of body temperature.” In this context recreation also involves stress, and so does sleep, since your heart must continue to beat and your lungs to function.

Three Kinds of Stress

Just as there are different *degrees* of stress, there are also different *types*.

Acute stress results from the strains of everyday life. Often, it involves unpleasant situations that need to be resolved. Since these are incidental and only temporary, the stress can usually be managed. Of course, there are some who jump from one crisis to another—indeed, chaos seems to be part of their personality. Even this level of acute stress can be brought under control. The sufferer may resist change, however, until he realizes the effect that his tumultuous lifestyle is having on him and on those around him.

While acute stress is temporary, chronic stress is long-term. The sufferer sees no way out of a stressful situation, be it the woes of poverty or the misery of a despised job—or no job. Chronic stress can also result from ongoing family problems. Caring for an infirm relative can bring on stress as well. Whatever the cause, chronic stress grinds away at its victim day after day, week after week, month after month. “The worst as-

Job Stress —A “Global Phenomenon”

A United Nations report says: “Stress has become one of the most serious health issues of the 20th century.” Its presence in the workplace is palpable.

- The number of stress claims made by government workers in Australia increased 90 percent in just a three-year period.
- A survey in France revealed that 64 percent of nurses and 61 percent of teachers say that they are upset about the stressful environment in which they work.
- Stress-related illnesses cost the United States an estimated \$200 billion each year. It is reckoned that 75 to 85 percent of all industrial accidents are related to stress.
- In country after country, women were found to suffer more from stress than men, likely because they juggle more duties between home and work.

Stress on the job certainly is, as the UN report calls it, a “global phenomenon.”



pect of chronic stress is that people get used to it,” says one book on the subject. “People are immediately aware of acute stress because it’s new; they ignore chronic stress because it’s old, familiar, and, sometimes, almost comfortable.”

Traumatic stress is the impact of an overwhelming tragedy, such as rape, accident,

PTSD—A Normal Reaction to an Abnormal Experience

'Three months after our car smashup, I still couldn't stop crying, or sleep through the night. Just leaving the house was terrifying.'—Louise.

LOUISE suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a debilitating malady characterized by recurring and intrusive recollections or dreams of a traumatic event. The person with PTSD may also have an exaggerated startle response. For example, mental-health expert Michael Davis tells of one Vietnam veteran who on the day of his wedding dived into the bushes at the sound of a car backfiring. "There should have been all kinds of signals in the environment that told him everything was okay," says Davis. "It was 25 years later; he was in the United States, not Vietnam; . . . he was wearing a white tuxedo, not battle fatigues. But when that primordial stimulus came through, he ran for cover."

Battlefield trauma is just one cause of PTSD. Accord-

ing to *The Harvard Mental Health Letter*, the disorder can result from any "event or series of events that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury or a threat to physical integrity. It might be a natural disaster, accident, or human action: flood, fire, earthquake, car crash, bombing, shooting, torture, kidnapping, assault, rape, or child abuse." Simply witnessing a traumatic event or learning about it—perhaps through striking testimony or photographs—may induce symptoms of PTSD, especially if the people involved are family members or close friends.

Of course, people respond to trauma differently. "Most people who undergo a traumatic experience do not develop serious psychiatric symptoms, and even when there are symptoms, they do not necessarily take the form of PTSD," explains *The Harvard Mental Health Letter*. What about those whose

stress does lead to PTSD? In time, some are able to handle the feelings associated with the trauma and gain relief. Others continue to wrestle with memories of a traumatic event many years after it occurred.

Either way, those who suffer from PTSD—and those who want to help them—should remember that recovery requires patience. The Bible exhorts Christians to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls" and to "be long-suffering toward all." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) For Louise, quoted at the outset, five months elapsed before she could once again get behind the steering wheel of a car. "Despite the strides I've made," she stated four years after the accident, "driving will never be the pleasant experience it once was for me. It's something I must do, so I do it. But I've come a long way since the helpless time following the accident."

or natural disaster. Many war veterans and concentration camp survivors suffer from this type of stress. Symptoms of traumatic stress may include vivid memories of the trauma, even years later, along with an increased sensitivity to minor events. Sometimes the sufferer is diagnosed with a condition called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).—See box above.

Sensitized to Stress

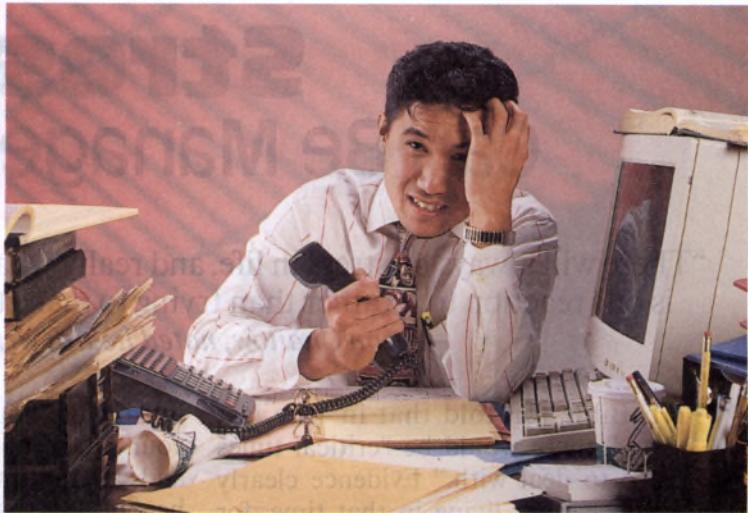
Some say that the way we respond to stress in the present largely depends on how much and what kind of stress we have encountered in the past. They say that traumatic events can actually alter the brain's chemical "wiring," leaving a person much more sensitive to stress in the future. For example, in a study of 556

veterans of World War II, Dr. Lawrence Brass found that risk of stroke was eight times higher among those who had been prisoners of war than among those who had not—even 50 years after the initial trauma. “The stress of being a POW [prisoner of war] was so severe it changed the way these folks responded to stress in the future—it sensitized them.”

Stressful events experienced in childhood should not be underestimated, experts say, since these can have a substantial impact. “Most kids who suffer a trauma are not brought to the doctor,” says Dr. Jean King. “They get through the problem, go on with their lives, and wind up in our offices years later, suffering from depression or heart disease.” Consider, for example, the trauma of losing a parent.

“Stress of that magnitude occurring when you are young may permanently rewire the brain’s circuitry,” says Dr. King, “leaving it less able to handle normal, everyday stress.”

Of course, how a person responds to stress can depend on a number of other factors as well, including his physical constitution and the resources available to help him cope with stressful events. Regardless of its cause, though, stress



Many office workers are stressed-out

can be managed. Granted, this is not easy. Dr. Rachel Yehuda observes: “Telling someone who has been sensitized to stress to just relax is like telling an insomniac to just fall asleep.” Still, there is much that a person can do to reduce stress, as the following article will show.

Not all stress is bad for you



Stress Can Be Managed!



"There will always be stress in life, and really what we have to look at is our reaction to it rather than trying to make the stress go away."

—Leon Chaitow, noted health writer.

THE Bible foretold that in "the last days," there would be "critical times hard to deal with." Evidence clearly shows that we are living in that time, for people are—true to the prophecy—"self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

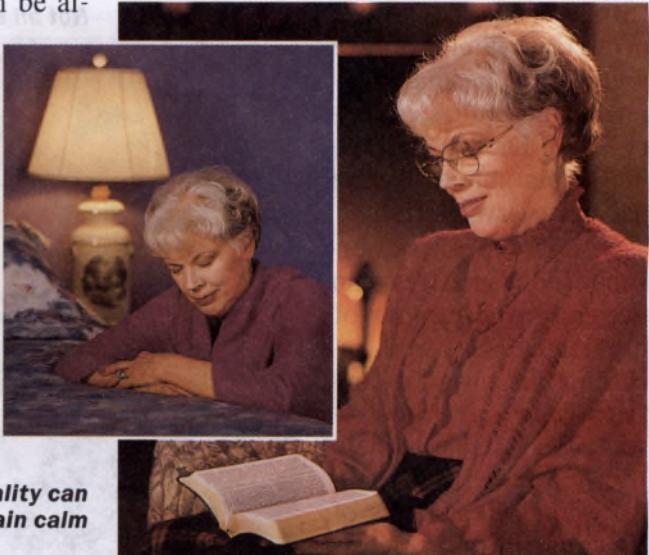
It is little wonder that maintaining a measure of serenity is so difficult! Even those who try to live peaceably can be affected. "Many are the calamities of the righteous one," wrote the psalmist David. (Psalm 34:19; compare 2 Timothy 3:12.) Still, there is much you can do to alleviate stress so that it does not overwhelm you. Consider the following suggestions.

Take Care of Yourself

Watch what you eat. A healthy diet includes proteins, fruits, vegetables, cereals and other grains, and dairy products. Be wary of re-

fined white flour and saturated fats. Watch your intake of salt, refined sugar, alcohol, and caffeine. Improve your diet, and you may become less susceptible to stress.

Exercise. "Bodily training is beneficial," advises the Bible. (1 Timothy 4:8) Indeed, moderate but consistent exercise—some recommend three times a week—strengthens the heart, improves circulation, lowers cholesterol, and reduces your chances of a heart attack. More than that, exercise promotes a sense of well-being, likely because of the endorphins that are released during strenuous activity.



Cultivating spirituality can help you to remain calm

Taking care of your health reduces stress

Get sufficient sleep. Lack of sleep leads to exhaustion and decreases your ability to manage stress. If you have trouble sleeping, try keeping to regular times for going to bed and getting up. Some recommend that naps be limited to 30 minutes so that they do not interfere with a good night's sleep.

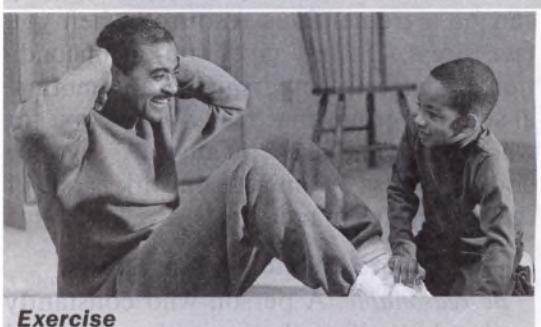
Get organized. People who manage their time are much better able to cope with stress. To get organized, first determine which responsibilities deserve priority. Next, make a schedule so that these will not be neglected.—Compare 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40 and Philippians 1:10.



Rest



Good diet



Exercise

Maintain Healthy Relationships

Get support. During stressful times those who have a social network gain at least a measure of protection against becoming overwhelmed. Finding just one trusted friend in whom to confide can make a difference. A Bible proverb states: “A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress.”—Proverbs 17:17.

Resolve conflicts. “Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Ephesians 4:26) The wisdom of quickly settling differences rather than harboring anger is shown in a study of 929 heart-attack survivors. Those with high hostility rates were three times more likely to die of cardiac arrest within ten years of the first attack than their mild-tempered counterparts. The authors of the study point out that while anger seems to be the strongest factor, any intense negative emotion that sends strong surges of stress hormones through the body can have the same effect. “Jealousy is rottenness to the bones,” says Proverbs 14:30.

Make time for family. Israelite parents were

commanded to spend time with their children, inculcating right principles into their hearts. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) The bond that resulted promoted family solidarity—something that is sadly lacking today. One study revealed that some working couples spend an average of just 3.5 minutes playing with

Stress and Surgery

Some physicians consider the stress level of their patients before taking them into the operating room. For example, Dr. Camran Nezhat, a surgeon, says:

"If someone scheduled for surgery tells me she's panicked that day and does not want to go through with it, I cancel the surgery." Why? Nezhat explains: "Every surgeon knows that people who are extremely scared do terribly in surgery. They bleed too much, they have more infections and complications. They have a harder time recovering. It's much better if they are calm."



their children each day. Yet, your family can be a tremendous resource when you face stress. "Family gives you an unconditional charter membership in an emotional support group that really knows you for who you are and likes you anyway," says one book on stress. "Family teamwork is one of the best means of reducing stress."

Create Balance in Your Life

Be reasonable. A person who constantly pushes himself to the limit physically and emotionally is a prime candidate for burnout and possibly for depression. Balance is the key. "The wisdom from above is . . . reasonable," wrote the disciple James. (James 3:17; compare Ecclesiastes 7:16, 17 and Philippians 4:5.) Learn to say no to demands that exceed what you can reasonably handle.

Do not compare yourself with someone else. Galatians 6:4 states: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person." Yes, even in matters of worship, God does not make unfavorable comparisons, demanding more than our individual circumstances allow. He accepts our gifts and sacrifices 'according to what we have, not according to what we do not have.' —2 Corinthians 8:12.

Make time for relaxation. Even Jesus, hard-working though he was, made time for rest for himself and his followers. (Mark 6:30-32) The inspired writer of Ecclesiastes felt that wholesome relaxation was beneficial. He wrote: "I myself commended rejoicing, because mankind have nothing better under the sun than to eat and drink and rejoice, and that it should accompany them in their hard work for the days of their life, which the true God has given them under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 8:15) Balanced pleasures can refresh the body and help to offset stress.

Put Stress in Perspective

When facing stressful circumstances:

Do not conclude that you are disapproved by God. The Bible tells us that Hannah, a faithful woman, was for years "bitter of soul" ("deeply distressed," Revised Standard Version). (1 Samuel 1:4-11) In Macedonia, Paul was "in distress at every point." (2 Corinthians 7:5, Byington) Before his death, Jesus was "getting into an agony," and his stress was so great that "his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground."* (Luke 22:44) These were faithful servants of

* Bloody sweat has reportedly occurred in certain cases of extreme mental stress. In hematidrosis, for example, there is an excreting of perspiration tinged with blood or blood pigment or of bodily fluid mingled with blood. It cannot be stated with certainty, however, just what took place in Jesus' case.

God. When you face stress, therefore, there is no reason to conclude that God has abandoned you.

Learn from your distressing circumstances. Paul wrote that he had to endure “a thorn in the flesh,” no doubt a health problem that caused him much distress. (2 Corinthians 12:7) About five years later, though, he was able to say: “In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want. For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.” (Philippians 4:12, 13) Paul did not enjoy his “thorn in the flesh,” but by enduring it, he learned how to rely all the more on God for strength.—Psalm 55:22.

Cultivate Spirituality

Read and meditate on God’s Word. “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need,” said Jesus. (Matthew 5:3) Reading and meditating on God’s Word is essential. Often, by making a diligent search through the Scriptures, we find just the right word of encouragement that we need to get through the day. (Proverbs 2:1-6) “When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me,” wrote the psalmist, “your [God’s] own consolations began to fondle my soul.” —Psalm 94:19.

Pray regularly. Paul wrote: “Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6, 7) Yes, “the peace of God” can transcend our troubled feelings and stabilize them, even when “power beyond what is normal” is needed.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

Attend Christian meetings. The Christian congregation offers a valuable support system, for those in it are exhorted to “con-

sider one another to incite to love and fine works, . . . encouraging one another.” With good reason, Paul told first-century Hebrew Christians not to ‘forsake the gathering of themselves together.’—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

A Sure Hope

Granted, reducing stress is usually more than a matter of following a simple formula. Often, a fundamental change in thinking is required. For example, a person may need to learn new ways of reacting to his circumstances so that they do not overwhelm him. In some cases the frequency or intensity of the stress might make it necessary to seek competent medical attention.

Of course, no one today has a life that is completely free of bad stress. The Bible, however, assures us that God will soon turn his attention toward humans and eliminate the conditions that cause them so much harmful stress. At Revelation 21:4, we read that God will “wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” Afterward, faithful mankind will dwell in security. The prophet Micah foretold: “They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it.” —Micah 4:4.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Women—What Does the Future Hold for Them?

The Grave of Christ in Japan?

Are Demons Real?



Do You Grind Your Teeth?

SINCE ancient times people have been grinding their teeth when under stress. The Bible frequently uses grinding, or gnashing, of the teeth to denote rage or anguish. (Job 16:9; Matthew 13:42, 50) In today's angry and stress-filled world, millions of people literally grind their teeth, and most are unaware of doing it. They may be wearing their teeth away.

Why do some people grind their teeth? The causes are complex and not yet fully understood. But in some cases emotional stress stands out as a likely culprit. The *UC Berkeley Wellness Letter* points out: "People who grind their teeth often report that they are undergoing marital or financial difficulties, taking final exams, fearful of losing their jobs, or otherwise under pressure." Other possible causes and contributing factors include faulty contact between upper and lower teeth, sleep disturbances, or alcohol consumption. Therefore, the *Wellness Letter* suggests that sufferers try to cut down

on alcohol; take simple steps to relax before going to bed, such as enjoying a warm bath; or talk out distressing problems with a friend or a trusted counselor.

During the day you may catch yourself gritting your teeth or rubbing them together. But how can you know if you do this in your sleep? Sometimes chronic grinding, known as bruxism, produces a sound loud enough to awaken someone else sleeping in the same room. You may wake up with a headache in your temples, or your jaw may make clicking noises.* Your dentist may even notice excessive wear on your teeth. He can recommend measures to provide some relief, such as an appliance to place over your teeth at night. Although a mouth guard like this is not designed to stop you from grinding, it can protect your teeth from further damage. In any case, relax! The less you worry, the less you may grind your teeth.

* For further information, please see the June 22, 1991, issue of *Awake!*, pages 20-2.

IVORY

How Much Is It Worth?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN KENYA

At an international conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, during June 1997, delegates from 138 countries voted to ease a seven-year-old global ban on the trade in ivory. The decision, which followed bitter debate, allows three nations in southern Africa—Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe—conditionally to sell ivory to one country, Japan. Representatives from southern Africa rejoiced at the decision, breaking forth in song. Other delegates brooded with apprehension at what this might mean for the African elephant.

WHEN Hannibal challenged the army of Rome in the third century B.C.E., he had with him a train of domesticated African elephants. In those days African elephants probably numbered in the tens of millions and thrived from the Cape to Cairo.

Things changed. One observer noted: "Human islands in a sea of elephants changed to increasingly small islands of elephants in a sea of people." As people increased in numbers, competition for land left elephants the losers. Another factor in the decline of elephants was the expansion southward of the Sahara Desert.

Overshadowing these reasons, however, was the demand for ivory. Unlike tiger bone and rhino horn, ivory is not bound to any myth of pharmaceutical value. Nevertheless, it is luxurious, beautiful, durable, and easy to carve. From ancient

About Ivory

"Ivory is no doubt a beautiful substance. It has an incandescence and warmth unlike any other material used for ornaments or sculpture. But I always feel that people forget that ivory is the tusk of an elephant. The word *ivory* disassociates it in our minds from the idea of an elephant. One tends to lump it with jade, teak, ebony, amber, even gold and silver, but there is a major difference: The other materials did not come from an animal; an ivory tusk is

a modified incisor tooth. When one holds a beautiful ivory bracelet or delicate carving in one's hand, it takes a certain leap of understanding to realize that that piece of ivory came from an elephant who once walked around using its tusk for feeding, digging, poking, playing and fighting, and furthermore that the elephant had to be dead in order for that piece of ivory to be sitting in one's hand."

—*Elephant Memories*, by Cynthia Moss.

times, ivory from elephant tusks has been classed among things precious and desirable.

Four hundred years after Hannibal, the Roman Empire decimated elephant populations in northern Africa to satisfy a craving for ivory. That craving has burned, especially in the Western world, ever since. Early in this century, the demand had become intense—not so much for works of art and religious objects as before but for the production of piano keyboards. According to the book *Battle for the Elephants*, in the year 1910 alone, about 700 tons of ivory (representing 13,000 slaughtered elephants) was used to make 350,000 keyboards in the United States.

An Orgy of Poaching

Following the first world war, the demand for ivory declined, new wildlife conservation laws were passed, and elephants began to increase in numbers. By the early 1970's, however, large-scale killing began



afresh. Now the call for ivory came from newly prosperous Asian countries.

This time, two factors portended disaster for elephants in Africa. First was the increased availability of lightweight, sophisticated weapons. Suddenly it was easy to gun down not only individual elephants but also entire herds. Second, electric carving tools meant that raw ivory could be swiftly transformed into items ready for market. In the past, a Japanese carver might have spent a year carving a single tusk. With electric tools, however, in just one week, a factory of eight people making jewelry and *hanko* (name seals popular in Japan) could consume the tusks of 300 elephants. Rising demands for ivory caused prices to soar.

Of course, the big money did not go to the poachers but to middlemen and dealers, many of whom became fabulously wealthy. The cost in elephants was horrendous. Within roughly two decades, Tanzania

lost 80 percent of its elephants, mostly to poachers. Kenya lost 85 percent of its elephants. Uganda lost 95 percent. At first, poachers shot mainly bull elephants, because they had the largest tusks. But as the older elephants became fewer, poachers began shooting even calves for their puny tusks. During that period, more than a million elephants may have been slaughtered for their ivory, cutting Africa's elephant population to 625,000.

Global Ban

Efforts to control trade in ivory and to halt the carnage failed miserably. Finally, in October 1989, at a conference in Switzerland, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) banned all trade in ivory among its member nations. The ban was bolstered by massive funding to protect elephants in the field.

Some predicted that a ban on ivory would produce higher black-market prices and that poaching would increase. The opposite happened. Prices plummeted, and once lucrative markets dried up. In India, for example, retail sales of ivory fell by 85 percent, and most of the country's ivory craftsmen had to find other work. Poaching decreased dramatically. Before the ban, poachers in Kenya slaughtered at least 2,000 elephants a year. By 1995, the figure had dropped to 35. Moreover, Kenya's elephant population increased from 19,000 in 1989 to about 26,000 today.

For these reasons, the Environmental Investigation Agency, based in London, hailed the trade ban on ivory as "one of the great successes of recent con-

servation history." Not everyone shares this enthusiasm, however, especially in southern Africa.

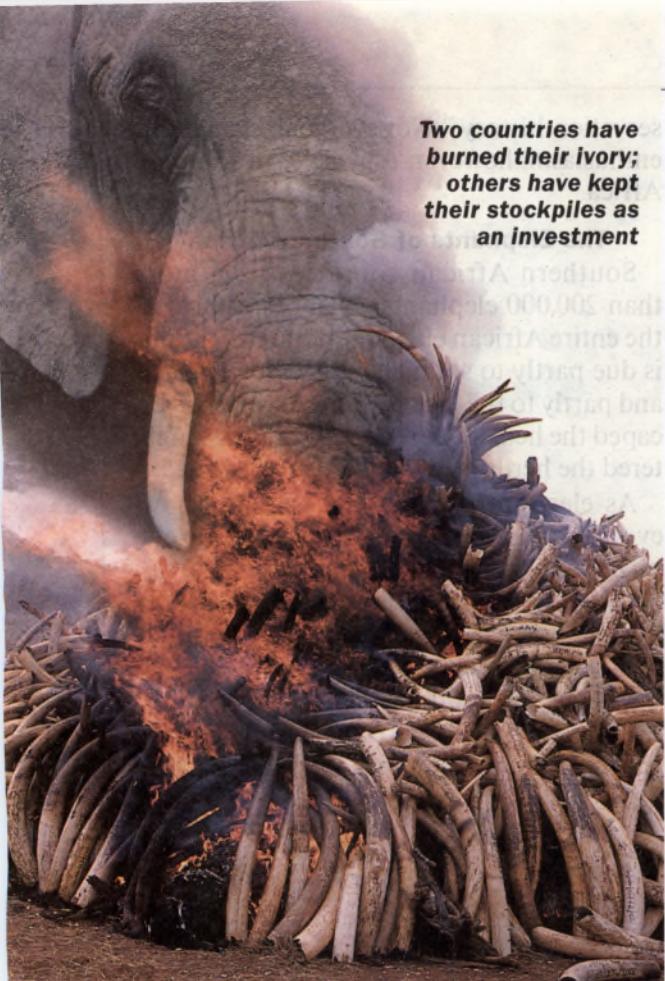
The Elephants of Southern Africa

Southern African countries have more than 200,000 elephants, or about a third of the entire African elephant population. This is due partly to sound conservation policies and partly to the fact that these countries escaped the heavily armed militias that slaughtered the herds of East and Central Africa.

As elephant populations increase, however, there is often conflict between elephants and people who live in rural areas. After all, an adult elephant has a huge appetite and is able to consume over 600 pounds of vegetation a day. If an elephant lives in your neighborhood, you know it.

Africa Resources Trust, based in Zimbabwe, states: "Elephants are regarded with





**Two countries have
burned their ivory;
others have kept
their stockpiles as
an investment**

fear, suspicion and hostility by most rural Africans. In a few hours, elephants can ruin people's livelihood by eating their crops or trampling their livestock to death. They also damage houses and schools, cattle sheds, fruit trees, dams and soil contours. Every day local newspapers carry reports of elephant damage."

Southern African nations take pride in their success in maintaining healthy elephant populations. But conservation is expensive, and they do not believe that they should be penalized for the problems of other African countries. A controlled ivory trade, they reason, would allow money to be pumped back into conservation efforts and

would help to compensate rural farmers for their losses.

Ivory Stockpiles

In countries where elephants roam, ivory accumulates. It comes from elephants that have been culled, from elephants that die of natural causes, and from illegal hoards that have been confiscated. What is done with this ivory?

Kenya burns her ivory. Since July 1989, Kenya has publicly torched raw ivory worth millions of dollars, with no direct compensation from outside sources. In 1992, Zambia also burned its ivory stockpile. The message was clear: Kenya and Zambia wanted no part in the ivory trade.

Other countries have kept their stockpiles as a future investment. TRAFFIC, the world's largest wildlife monitoring organization, estimates that the total volume of ivory presently stockpiled in African countries is at least 462 tons, worth 46 million dollars. Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, the three countries now permitted to trade with Japan, hold 120 tons of ivory. Therefore, many ask, 'In a region where people are struggling economically, why let ivory collect dust in warehouses? Why not sell it and channel the funds back into conservation?'

Concerns Linger

While some African nations argue that an easing of the ivory ban will help elephant conservation, others passionately believe that a total trade ban is the only measure that will prevent a renewed poaching frenzy. Concerns center on how strictly the trade is controlled. Might marketing systems provide loopholes through which poached ivory can enter the legal trade? Also, what of speculative poaching? Might the relaxing of the ban mean that elephants will be killed and ivory hoarded by those who hope that the ban might be further relaxed in the future?

Added to these worries is the fact that guns are more plentiful in Africa than ever. Civil wars here have put automatic rifles into the hands of people who, spurred by harsh economic conditions, are willing to use them to make money. Nehemiah Rotich, director of the East African Wildlife Society, wrote: "With a price placed on ivory [because of renewed trade], there is no question that these guns will be turned onto elephants—after all it is much easier to shoot an elephant in a vast park than it is to rob a city bank."

An additional problem is that antipoaching measures are not only expensive but also difficult. Patrolling the vast areas where elephants roam demands huge financial resources. In East Africa, these are hard to find.

What Future for the Elephant?

The consequences of the decision to relax the ban on the trade in ivory remain to be seen. Yet, even if things work out well, the threat to the elephant will not vanish. The elephant is also threatened by growing numbers of people who need land for farming and for other reasons. In southern Africa alone, people deforest, mostly for agriculture, more than 3,000 square miles of land each year—an area half the size of Israel. As the sea of people grows larger, the islands of elephants are certain to become ever smaller.

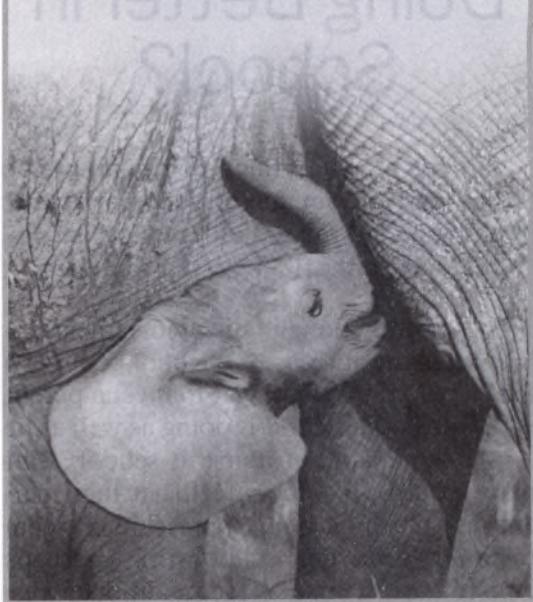
World Watch magazine states: "There is one point on which everyone who has studied the problem agrees: the African elephant faces a difficult future. The habitat crisis [due to growing numbers of people] is bound to mean that many elephants will die prematurely, one way or another. If they aren't killed by licensed hunts or culling operations—or slaughtered by poachers—many more will die by starvation in population crashes."

This gloomy prospect considers neither the views nor the purpose of the elephant's

Creator, Jehovah God. God's concern for the creatures he has made is evident from the words of Jesus Christ, who said: "Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them goes forgotten before God." (Luke 12:6) If God does not forget a tiny sparrow, we may be certain he does not ignore the plight of the large elephant.

About Elephants

Elephants are immensely powerful, and when they are angry, the earth trembles. An elephant can seize you with its trunk and fling you through the air like a stone. Yet, an elephant can also caress you with its trunk or gently take food from your hand. Elephants are intelligent, complicated, and funny. They display strong family loyalty and will tend each other's wounds, stand watch over their sick, and react to the death of a family member. While ignoring the remains of other animals, they recognize the bones of other elephants and react by scattering or burying them.



Young People Ask...



Could I Be Doing Better in School?

"Grades are everything to my parents. 'What mark did you get on your math test? What mark did you get on your English paper?' I hate that!"—13-year-old Sam.

SAM is not alone in his predicament. Indeed, the authors of the book "Could Do Better" write: "We have yet to meet a parent who thinks their child is doing as well as he or she is capable of doing at school." But many youths, like Sam, feel that their parents are putting *too much* pressure on them to improve in their schoolwork—perhaps even to excel. They may face additional pres-

sure in the classroom. "Teachers don't have enough patience," complains one teenager. "They want you to remember things right away and if you don't, they make you feel stupid. So I don't even try."

Young people who fail to live up to the expectations of parents and teachers are often called underachievers. And virtually all students underachieve in school at some point. Why? Interestingly, laziness or an inability to learn is not always the reason.*

Why Some Underachieve

Granted, when it comes to schoolwork, there are some youths who seem to be content just to coast along. "If I can do the minimum to get by," confesses 15-year-old Herman, "I do just that." In all fairness, though, not all these youths are indifferent about learning. It may be that they simply find a certain subject unappealing. Then there are some who have difficulty seeing the practical value of what they are learning. Reuben, aged 17, put it this way: "There are subjects that I'm sure I'll never use again after I leave school." Lack of interest or incentive can easily lead to underachievement.

There are other factors. For example, if a teacher's pace is too fast for you, you will become frustrated. If it is too slow, you will become bored. Peer pressure can also affect how well you do in school. Explains the book *Kids Who Underachieve*: "If a bright, academically capable child wants to be accepted by a nonacademically-oriented peer group, he may feel compelled to underachieve." Thus, one teenager complained that when he worked hard in his earlier years at school, others were jealous and made fun of him. Yes, a youth may face the reality of the principle at Proverbs 14:17: "The man of thinking abilities is hated."

* Youths who have learning disabilities may face special challenges in this regard. For more information, see *Awake!*, June 22, 1996, pages 11-13.

At times, the roots of underachievement run deeper. Sadly, some youths grow up with a negative self-image. This can result when a child is constantly bombarded with unkind nicknames, such as slowpoke, stupid, or lazy. Unfortunately, such labels can become self-fulfilling prophecies. As one doctor put it, "if you are told you are dumb and let yourself believe it, you will perform accordingly."

Most often, the proddings of parents and teachers are well-intentioned. Even then, however, youths may feel that too much is being demanded of them. If that seems true in your case, rest assured that your parents and teachers are not trying to drive you crazy. They probably just want you to reach your full potential. Still, the anxiety of measuring up might make you feel like simply giving up. But take heart: You *can* do better in school.

Getting Motivated

The first step is to get motivated! To do that, you need to see purpose in what you are learning. The Bible says: "The man who plows ought to plow in hope and the man who threshes ought to do so in hope of being a partaker." (1 Corinthians 9:10) Seeing the value of "plowing" through certain subjects is not always easy. For example, you might say, 'I want to be a computer programmer. So why do I have to study history?'

Granted, not everything in your school curriculum may seem relevant—at least not right now. But try to take a long-range view. A general education in a variety of subjects will enrich your understanding of the world around you. Many youths among Jehovah's Witnesses have found that a well-rounded education has helped them to "become all things to people of all sorts," giving them a greater versatility in presenting the Kingdom message to people of various walks of



Don't hesitate to talk to your teacher about your goal to improve your grades

life. (1 Corinthians 9:22) Even if a subject seems to have little practical value, you benefit from mastering it. At the very least, you will increase your "thinking ability," something that will greatly benefit you in the long run.—Proverbs 1:1-4.

School can also serve to reveal your hidden talents. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Stir up like a fire the gift of God which is in you." (2 Timothy 1:6) Timothy had evidently been appointed to some special service in the Christian congregation. But his God-given ability—his "gift"—needed to be cultivated, lest it lie dormant and go to waste. Of course, your scholastic abilities are not directly bestowed upon you by God, as was Timothy's gift. Nevertheless, the abilities you have—whether in art, music, math, science, or other fields—are special to you, and school can help you to discover and develop such gifts.

Good Study Habits

To benefit the most from school, though, you will need a good study routine. (Compare Philippians 3:16.) Schedule sufficient time to cover an ample amount of material, but allow yourself an occasional break so that you can refresh yourself. If your study includes reading, first *survey* the material so that you can get an overview of it. Next, make up *questions* based on chapter titles or



Even if a subject seems to have little practical value, you benefit from mastering it

main headings. Then *read*, looking for the answers to your questions as you do. Finally, see if you can recite from memory what you have learned.

Relate what you learn to what you already know. For example, a science course can be a window through which God's "invisible qualities are clearly seen." (Romans 1:20) History can help you prove for yourself the truth of the statement: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) As you apply yourself to study, you will likely find that learning becomes easier—even more enjoyable! Solomon observed: "To the understanding one knowledge is an easy thing."—Proverbs 14:6.

Keep a Positive Attitude

Sometimes, though, underachievement is related to one's choice of friends. Do your friends encourage success, or are they themselves underachievers? A Bible proverb states: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) So choose your associates wisely. Keep company with those who have

a positive attitude toward school. Don't hesitate to talk to your teacher personally about your goal to improve your grades. No doubt your teacher will put forth extra effort to help you do so.

When beset with negative thoughts about your abilities, consider the example of the apostle Paul. When people criticized his speaking ability, he replied: "Even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge." (2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6) Yes, Paul focused on his *strengths* rather than his *weaknesses*. What are your strengths? If you cannot isolate them, why not talk to a supportive adult? Such a friend can help you to identify your strengths and to make the most of them.

Progressing Despite Problems

"Give your whole attention, all your energies, to these things, so that your progress is plain for all to see." (1 Timothy 4:15, Phillips) Like a father speaking to his son, Paul encouraged the already successful Timothy to make yet more progress in his ministry. In Bible times the Greek verb "progress" literally meant "cutting forward," calling to mind someone cutting his way through bushes. At times, going through school may seem like that. But it will be much easier to take the path through school if you think that the reward at the end is worthwhile.

Effort, motivation, and learning go hand in hand. To illustrate: Think about someone who plays a musical instrument. If he enjoys it, he plays more. The more he plays, the better he gets, which in turn increases his joy. The more we learn, the easier it is to learn even more. So do not lose heart with your schoolwork. Put forth the needed effort, associate with those who will help you to excel, and take to heart the words of Azariah to ancient King Asa: "Do not let your hands drop down, because there exists a reward for your activity."—2 Chronicles 15:7.

801

I Survived Flight



US Navy/Sipa Press

I LOOKED out the window as we descended for a landing in Guam. 'That's strange,' I thought. 'It seems too dark.' True, it was past midnight, and heavy rain made visibility poor. But where were the island's familiar lights and the airport's shining runways? All I could see were dim lights from our jumbo jet's wings.

One of our flight attendants had made the usual announcements in preparation for landing, and I heard the plane's landing gear clunk solidly into place. Suddenly, there was a loud noise as our aircraft scraped the ground. The plane jerked uncontrollably, and passengers clutched their armrests and cried out, "What's going on?"

Moments later, our Boeing 747 slammed

into a hillside, three miles short of the airport, evidently because of our pilot's miscalculation. As a result of that airline disaster on August 6, 1997, a total of 228 passengers and crew members died. I was one of only 26 survivors.

Prior to my boarding in Seoul, Korea, an airline representative upgraded my coach seat assignment, giving me the last remaining seat in first class. I was so pleased that I telephoned my wife, Soon Duck, who was to meet me at the airport in Guam. That seat change proved beneficial beyond my wildest dreams.

The Crash and the Scene Afterward

Because of limited visibility, the flight crew may have been unaware of any



impending danger. Everything happened so quickly! One moment, I was bracing myself for the worst, and the next thing I knew, I was on the ground outside the plane, still strapped into my seat. I'm not sure whether I had lost consciousness or not.

'Is this a dream?' I wondered. When I realized that it wasn't, my first thoughts were of how my wife would react when she heard about the crash. Later, she told me that she never gave up hope. Even when she overheard someone at the airport say that just seven passengers had survived, she believed I was one of the seven.

Our plane had broken into four sections, which were spread out along rugged jungle terrain. Bodies were scattered everywhere. Portions of the aircraft were on fire, and I heard explosions along with horrible moaning and crying. "Help me! Help me!" voices pleaded. My seat had landed in six-foot-tall saw grass, and in the eerie light of the fires, I could see a steep hill nearby. It was about 2:00 a.m., and rain continued to fall.

I was so stunned that I didn't even think I might be injured, until I noticed a young girl with her scalp hanging down the back of her head. I immediately reached for my head and found that I was bleeding from a

cut above my left eye. I began checking the rest of my body and discovered many more small cuts. But, thankfully, none seemed serious. There was, however, paralyzing pain in my legs, making it impossible for me to move. Both of them were broken.

Later, when I reached the hospital, doctors would label my injuries as "minor." And indeed they were, compared with those of other survivors. One man was pulled from the wreckage with his legs missing. Others suffered severe burns, including three who lived through the crash only to die later, after weeks of excruciating pain.

Worried by the Flames

Rather than being preoccupied with my injuries, I was concerned as to whether rescuers would reach me in time. The middle sections of the airplane, where my coach seat would have been, were almost completely demolished. What remained was on fire, and passengers trapped inside experienced an agonizing death. I will never forget their screams for help.

My seat rested near the nose of the plane. I was within an arm's length of the wreckage. By craning my neck backward, I could see the flames. I feared it was just a matter of time until they reached me, but thankfully they never did.

Finally Rescued!

Minutes ticked by slowly. More than an hour passed. Finally, a few rescuers located the crash site about 3:00 a.m. I could hear them talking at the top of the hill, expressing astonishment over what they saw. One of them called out: "Is anybody there?"

"Here I am," I hollered back. "Help me!" Other passengers also responded. One rescuer referred to another as "Ted." So I began shouting, "Hey Ted, I'm here!" and, "Ted, come help us!"

"We're coming down! Just wait," was the reply.

Pouring rain, which may have saved many from the flames, hindered the climb down the slippery slope. As a result, another long hour passed before rescuers reached survivors. The time they took to find me seemed like an eternity.

"We're here," two rescuers with flashlights said. "Don't worry." They were soon joined by two more rescuers, and together they attempted to move me. Two grabbed my arms, and the other two held my legs. It was extremely painful to be carried that way, especially since they kept slipping in the mud. After going a short distance, they put me down. One of them went for a stretcher, and I was moved to where a military helicopter could transport me to an ambulance at the top of the hill.

Seeing My Wife, at Last!

It was not until 5:30 a.m. that I reached the emergency room. Because of the severity of my injuries, doctors would not permit me to make a phone call. So my wife did not find out that I had survived the crash until 10:30 a.m., almost nine hours after the plane went down. She was notified by a friend who had seen my name on a list of survivors.

When my wife was finally permitted to see me, about 4:00 p.m., I did not immediately recognize her. My senses had been dulled by the pain medication. "Thank you for being alive," were her first words. I do not remember the conversation, but I was later told that I replied: "Do not thank me. Thank Jehovah."

Keeping Priorities in Order

As I was recovering in the hospital, the pain I felt was familiar to me. In 1987, less than a year after moving from Korea to Guam, I fell from a fourth-floor scaffold in a construction accident and broke both my legs. That proved to be a turning point



in my life. My older sister, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, had been urging me to study the Bible. My six-month period of recuperation provided opportunity for me to do this. As a result, that same year I dedicated my life to Jehovah God and symbolized this by water baptism.

Since the plane crash, I have been thinking about a favorite scripture of mine, which says: "Keep on, then, seeking first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) While recovering from the plane crash, I had opportunity to reevaluate my life.

In a very powerful way, the crash of Flight 801 impressed on me how precious life is. I could so easily have been killed! (Ecclesiastes 9:11) As it was, I needed several operations to repair my body, and I spent more than a month in the hospital recuperating.

Now I want to show our Grand Creator that I truly do appreciate his marvelous gift of life, including his provision for humans to enjoy everlasting life in an earthly paradise. (Psalm 37:9-11, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4) I realize that the best way to show such appreciation is by continuing to put Kingdom interests first in my life.—*Contributed.*

The Art of Stick Dressing

By Awake!
correspondent in Britain



I AM always surprised to learn that there are whole areas of the British Isles where no one has any idea what you mean when you say that your hobby is stick dressing," says one master of the art.

Many are familiar with the walking stick or the shepherd's staff. Stick dressing transforms these ordinary implements into extraordinary works of art. For centuries, shepherds and farm workers have found that this fascinating craft requires considerable skill—and a great deal of patience. But what is involved in stick dressing?

Selecting the Wood

The first step is selecting the wood. Any wood of the right proportions can be used—blackthorn, apple, or pear. Holly is often selected for its prominent and attractive knots. But many stick dressers prefer to use the wood of the hazel tree. Sometimes a tree has a shoot growing out at a slight angle to a branch or a root. This makes it possible to form the entire stick—head and shank—from a single part of the tree.

When is it best to cut a shank? Usually when the tree is dormant and the sap is not flowing, although many stick dressers maintain that the best time is immediately—before someone else finds it! In any event, once the stick dresser is satisfied that he has cut a suitable piece of material, he must grease or paint the cut ends, to prevent the block from cracking. The wood must then be seasoned, a process that can take two years or more. Only then can the stick dresser begin carving.

Carving the Head

When a stick does not have a natural handle, or head, the dresser may create one using the horn of a cow, a sheep, or a goat. Like the shank, the horn must be seasoned, usually for a year. Then, using a vise,

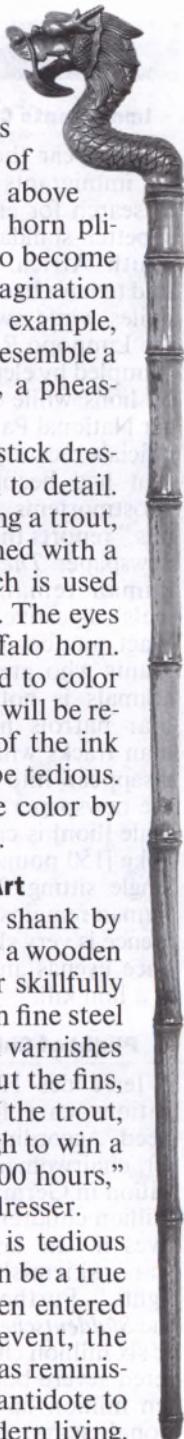
the stick dresser shapes the horn to his intended design. For generations shepherds would use the blacksmith's fire, boiling water, the embers of a peat fire, or even the heat above a paraffin lamp to make the horn pliable. It would then be ready to become whatever the shepherd's imagination and skill could produce. For example, he could carve the handle to resemble a collie, a bird, a brown trout, a pheasant's head, or a small animal.

As the horn is carved, the stick dresser pays meticulous attention to detail. If, for example, he is fashioning a trout, the tail and fin bones are etched with a hot iron and a circular punch is used to form each individual scale. The eyes can be made from black buffalo horn. Ink, rather than paint, is used to color the body. More than one coat will be required, and the application of the ink to the polished surface may be tedious. The final touch is to seal the color by coating the horn with varnish.

A Finished Work of Art

The horn is joined to the shank by means of a steel bolt, a nail, or a wooden dowel. Then the stick dresser skillfully rubs down his work of art with fine steel wool. Next, he polishes it and varnishes its shank. "To make a trout, cut the fins, etc., and to scale the body of the trout, colour and finish good enough to win a show would take me about 100 hours," writes one experienced stick dresser.

Undeniably, stick dressing is tedious work. But the end product can be a true work of art, and some are even entered into competitions. In any event, the stick dresser regards his craft as reminiscent of a more restful era, an antidote to the stresses and strains of modern living.



WATCHING THE WORLD

Immigrants Chance Death

Each year thousands of illegal immigrants risk their lives to search for employment and a better standard of living in South Africa. Hundreds are said to have been eaten by crocodiles while swimming across the Limpopo River. Others are trampled by elephants or killed by lions while traversing Kruger National Park on foot. Park officials recently shot five lions that had become man-eaters. "Postmortems on the five lions," reports the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star*, "revealed human remains in the animals' digestive systems." The exact number of illegal immigrants who are killed by wild animals is not known. "Regular patrols have found human tracks which inexplicably disappear into thin air," says the newspaper. "A fully grown male [lion] is capable of eating 70kg [150 pounds] of meat at a single sitting. The chances of human remains being left as evidence is very slim, particularly once hyenas and jackals arrive at a lion kill."

Plight of Children in War

Terre des Hommes organizations care for children in need. According to Petra Boxler, chairwoman of the organization in Germany, "about two million children have lost their lives in the last ten years in wars, skirmishes, and street fights." Furthermore, reports the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, another six million children have suffered severe bodily injury, and ten million have serious emotional scars. Boxler laments

that for children, wars have recently taken on a more sinister character. In some lands children are forcibly trained as killers, and in other countries they are "being used as living mine-searchers."

"New" Animals Discovered

"Just a few decades ago, common wisdom held that most of the world's mammals—furry, warm-blooded, milk-giving creatures—were already known. No longer," says *U.S. News & World Report*. "Between the 1983 and 1993 editions of *Mammal Species of the World*, 459 entries were added. In the last four years, biologists have discovered dozens



more—rodents, bats, deer, antelopes, wild ox, and even monkeys." It is predicted that the 4,600 mammal species now recognized will grow to close to 8,000. Some "mammal 'discoveries'" are made in museums, when scientists take a closer look at specimens collected years ago." Additionally, "many new species host a community of parasites and other tiny creatures that also are unknown to science," the article states, and "1 out of 3 newly described mammals is an animal never before seen by a scientist." Most

new discoveries are being made in tropical forests and other isolated regions of the world. Says mammalogist George Schaller: "I'm surprised to see people get so wildly excited about a possible bacterium on Mars when our own planet is crawling with undiscovered species."

Religion at the Crossroads

"As we move towards the end of this century and of this millennium, there is a sense that it's more than just a symbolic threshold, that there is something of an epochal change taking place," said Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches. "The trouble is that we don't quite understand the direction in which this change is leading us. Therefore we are somewhat inhibited in actively shaping the process of change instead of just responding to [it] and reacting." Dr. Raiser listed the "plurality of religions" as an issue to be faced. *ENI Bulletin* quoted him as saying that Christendom "still is more part of the problem than part of the solution." He added: "We are far from having developed ways in which we can live with one another as neighbours without continuing to perceive the other, the one who is different from us in religious conviction and practice, as a threat rather than . . . a potential source of enrichment."

The Millennium Already Ended?

According to scholars, "the millennium actually turned several years ago. Sorry, but we all missed it," states *Newsweek*

magazine. The reason? Our calendar "rests on an arbitrary division of time," supposedly based on the birth of Christ. But, the article notes, modern scholars believe that Jesus was actually born several years "before Christ." According to *Newsweek*, that "means that we are already well into the third millennium." The error lies with Dionysius the Short, who, in 525 C.E., was commissioned by Pope John I to develop a standard liturgical calendar. Dionysius decided to use Jesus' birth as the pivotal point but erred in calculating it. "Historians will never know for sure exactly when Jesus was born," says *Newsweek*. "Even the dating of Christmas, which celebrates his birth, is arbitrary. The church selected Dec. 25, scholars believe, to coincide with—and religiously counter—pagan celebrations of the winter solstice." Bible chronology indicates that Jesus was born in the year 2 B.C.E.

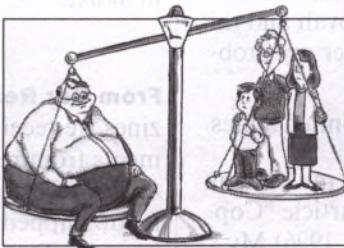
Cats Now Included

For decades it has been a crime in New York State to leave the scene of an accident involving a cow, a horse, or a dog, without seeking to locate the animal's owner or at least notifying the local police. Cats were excluded. However, that matter has now been taken care of by a new bill that was overwhelmingly passed and signed into law. Known as the "Flat Cat" bill, this law makes it a crime to leave the scene of an accident that injures a cat, without at least reporting the injury to the police. Failure to report could carry a fine of \$100 for "hit-and-run injurers" of cats. "For cat lovers, it rep-

resents the shining possibility that one manifestation of species discrimination might be put to rest," commented *The New York Times*.

"Epidemic of Obesity"

"A growing epidemic of obesity is threatening the health of millions worldwide," reports *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, citing a warning issued by the World Health Organization. "Nutrition and health experts from 25 countries said the prevalence of obesity in adults is up to 25% in



some countries in western Europe and the Americas. The figure rises to 40% for women in eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries and in black women in the United States. Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia have the highest obesity prevalence—up to 70% in some areas." The experts warned that unless trends shift toward diets lower in fat and toward more active life-styles, many countries will face overwhelming numbers of people with coronary heart disease, respiratory problems, stroke, gallbladder disease, cancer, diabetes mellitus, and musculoskeletal problems. "Obesity 'should be regarded as one of the greatest neglected public health problems of our time, with an impact on health [that] may well prove to be as great

as that of smoking,' the experts said."

Misguided Devotion?

On June 1, 1997, a figure—apparently caused by humidity—appeared on a wall in one of the stations of the Mexico City Metro. To many devoted Catholics, this was a supernatural appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe—a name given to the Virgin Mary in Mexico. "The Catholic Church does not consider the appearance of the Virgin of the Metro to be an authentic miracle but a natural formation produced by water filtration in the station walls," stated *El Universal* newspaper. Nonetheless, many people stop in front of it to worship, and the image has been "visited by more than a thousand per hour." A small niche was constructed for the image and was inaugurated by a Catholic priest.

Profiting From Addiction

According to the United Nations organization, it is estimated that there are some 340 million drug addicts worldwide. As reported in the *Jornal da Tarde*, "dependence on tranquilizers and sedatives comes first, with 227.5 million users, or nearly 4 percent of the world's population. Next comes marijuana, with 141 million addicts, totaling 2.5 percent of the global population." It is also estimated that only 5 to 10 percent of all illicit drugs are seized by the police. The selling of drugs generates up to \$400 billion every year. In some cases, dealers make a profit of up to 300 percent—"profits never found in any other kind of business," says the newspaper.

FROM OUR READERS

Why Control Anger? Thank you for the article "Why Control Your Anger?" (June 8, 1997) I come from a large family, and during my childhood I saw a series of fights in my home. My parents got divorced, and since then I have occasionally had fits of anger. Day and night I have prayed to Jehovah, asking him to help me with this problem. What a surprise to read this article, which seemed directed to me! I am taking into consideration the scriptures cited—for example, Ephesians 4:26, which states: "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state." My husband and I have applied this. Thanks to Jehovah and this article, I have been able to get over my problem.

A. R. S., United States

Coping With Panic Attacks I must thank Jehovah wholeheartedly for the article "Coping With Panic Attacks." (June 8, 1996) My sister recently had a nervous breakdown. We did not know what was happening to her, since no doctor was able to diagnose her condition. Eventually, she landed in the hospital and was diagnosed as having had a nervous breakdown and as suffering from panic attacks. The article came at just the right time, making us feel that Jehovah cares for us. My sister sat crying as she read it, for then she truly knew that Jehovah understood exactly what she was going through. The words of the sister quoted in the article, saying that she had repeatedly seen Jehovah to be a genuine source of strength and comfort, show how wonderful our God Jehovah really is.

A. E. W., South Africa

"Into the Ears of a Babe" This article (June 8, 1997) touched me deeply. In the field ministry, I often meet young ones. Not overlooking or underrating them, I always talk to them about Paradise. Many thanks for pub-

lishing this experience, for it encouraged me to continue in this manner. Who knows whose will be the next "ears of a babe"?

M. O. U., Nigeria

This article really hit home! When I reached the part "Learning Bible Truth" and read of the shock that Louise felt in seeing Psalm 37:9 about possessing the earth—and in her *King James Version* at that!—I shed many tears. Thank you for these life stories, and please continue to print them regularly in *Awake!*

P. C., England

From Our Readers I cherish all the magazines we receive. I especially enjoyed the comments from readers in the June 8, 1997, *Awake!* regarding disfellowshipping. I was disfellowshipped and then reinstated the following year. Too many people think that this action is harsh. But it truly isn't. The discipline I received was hard to take but definitely not harsh. I know that the elders were only trying to help me. It was my rejection of their help that got me disfellowshipped. Once disfellowshipped, I realized how lonely life is without Jehovah. There was a huge void in my life that could not be filled until I changed my life-style and turned back to Jehovah. Being disfellowshipped humbled me and showed me that I needed Jehovah and his organization.

A. C., Canada

Awake! You must forgive me for forgetting to renew the subscription for the good magazine *Awake!* It is an informative, educational, and factual magazine with inspiring and awakening topics. I want all the back issues I've missed. I cannot miss even one. Thank you for patiently helping to fight ignorance.

N. S., Sri Lanka

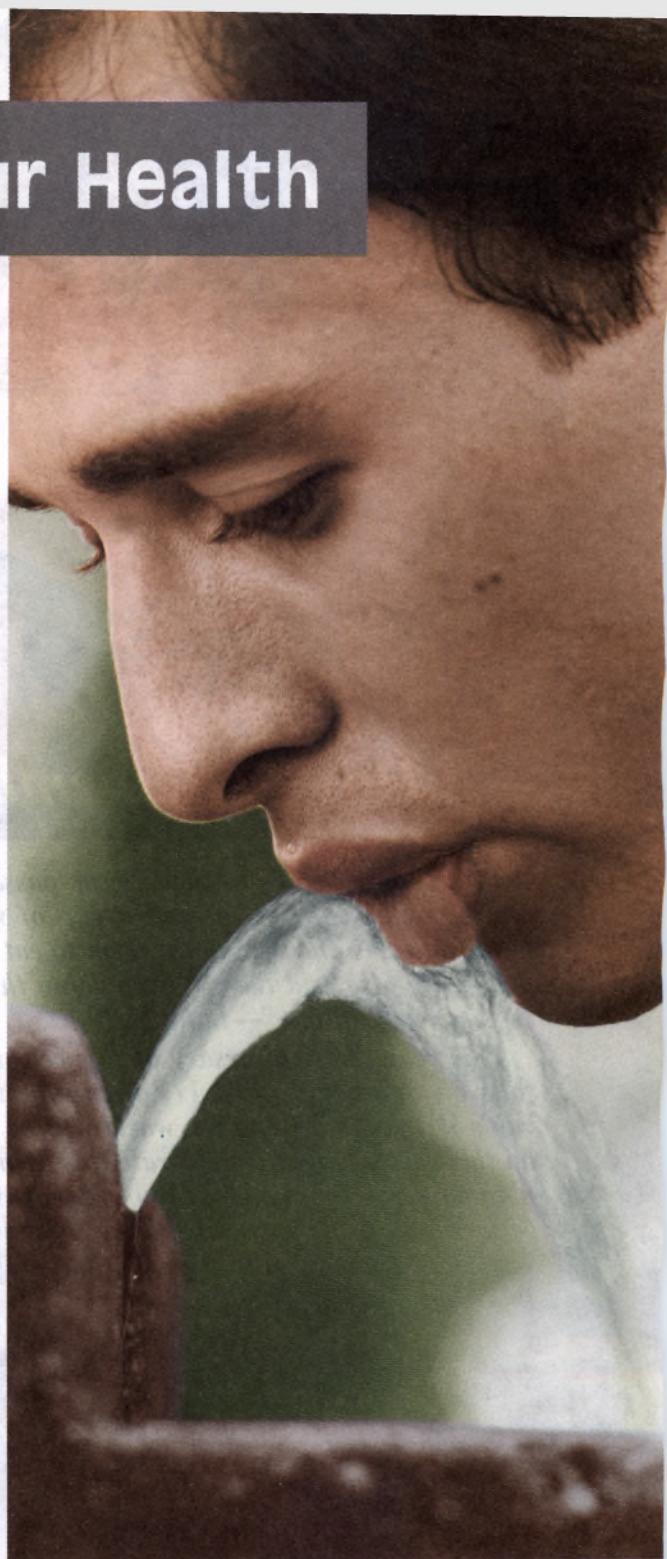
Water and Your Health

"YOU can't rely on thirst to tell you how much water your body requires," points out the magazine *Health*. Yet, drinking plenty of water is essential to our physical and emotional well-being, and even to our appearance. Our bodies continually lose water through sweat, tears, and urine as well as through our breath. This lost fluid must be replaced. How much is needed? Many authorities recommend drinking at least eight glasses of water—two quarts—every day.

Why? Water is vital for transporting nutrients within our bodies and for removing wastes. It is necessary for regulating our temperature and lubricating our joints. "Even the smallest deficit can leave you feeling tired . . . or ill," notes *Health*. "Dehydration is a commonly overlooked cause of fatigue." The magazine recommends: "Don't be fooled by the liquid nature of coffee and tea, caffeinated soft drinks, and alcohol; they actually contribute to dehydration." Caffeine and alcohol act as diuretics and cause the body to lose water.

In addition, "your skin needs water to stay soft and supple." To assist in this, moisturizers may also be applied to the skin. But they do not add moisture. Rather, they leave a protective coating that helps to retain the moisture already in the skin. Retaining this moisture becomes more important with age, since our skin loses some of its ability to hold water as we get older.

Unhappily, in much of the world, considerable effort is required to obtain enough pure, clean water. But it is worth the effort. By all means, drink plenty of water, and take advantage of this simple way to look and feel your best!





April 11, 1998 —A Day to Remember

The evening before he died, Jesus passed a loaf of unleavened bread and a cup of wine to his apostles and instructed them to eat and drink. He also told them: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me."—Luke 22:19.

This year the anniversary of this celebration falls on Saturday, April 11, after sunset. Jehovah's Witnesses around the world will be gathered on this special night to celebrate this Memorial in the manner Jesus commanded. You are most warmly invited to join us as an observer. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place of the meeting.

