

Awake!

October 8, 2001

Popular Celebrations



Are There Hidden Dangers?

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How Awake Saved His Life

Awake! October 8, 2001



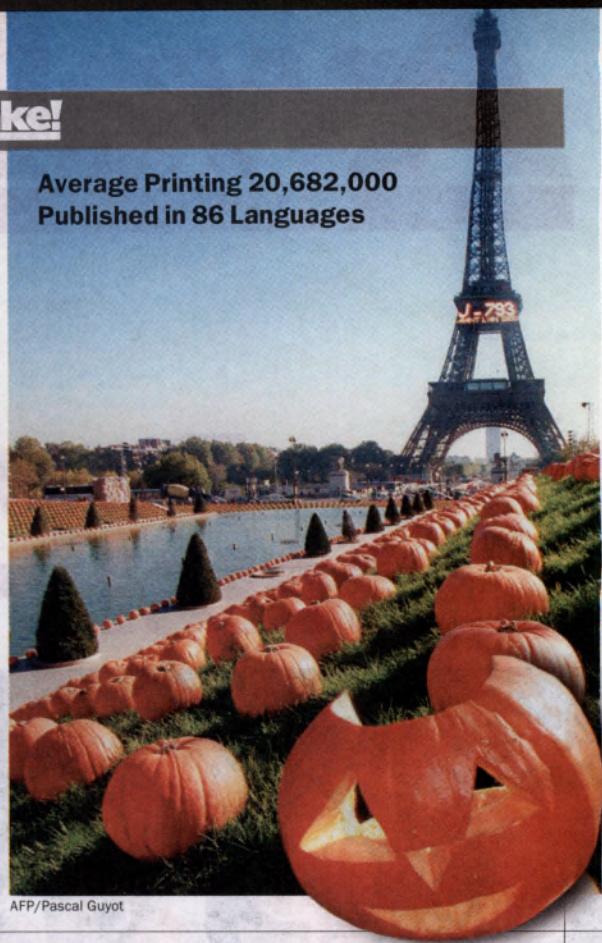
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Popular Celebrations

Are There Hidden Dangers? 3-10

Many popular celebrations are rooted in superstition. What dangers might such celebrations pose?

COVER: Right photo: AP Photo/Edward Wray



AFP/Pascal Guyot



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Sugar skulls used for Mexico's Day of the Dead

Popular Celebrations Harmless Fun?

IN MID-OCTOBER, a strange transformation begins to take place in some cities in France. Shop windows fill up with pumpkins, skeletons, and spiderwebs. In local supermarkets, cashiers don pointed black hats. As a grand finale, little children haunt the streets, knock on doors, and threaten mischief if their demands for a "treat" are not met.

These strange customs are all part of the celebration known as Halloween. Formerly viewed as mainly an American holiday, Halloween has spread around the world, becoming popular among both children and adults. France, it seems, has embraced Halloween with open arms. According to one estimate, nearly a third of French households celebrated the event last year. The Italian daily *La Repubblica* speaks of the current fad as a "boom" that is sweeping the Italian peninsula. The newspaper *Nordkurier* states that "more [German] citizens than ever before do not want to miss out on the gruesome fun."

Europe is not alone in falling under the spell of Halloween. From the Bahamas to Hong Kong, Halloween is being celebrated with gusto. The *International Herald Tribune* reports that last year a radio station in Sri Lanka held a competition for "the weirdest Halloween recipes and the most bloodcurdling death screams." Halloween also has a foothold in Japan, where 'pumpkin



In Britain, Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated with bonfires

parades' with thousands of participants have been held in Tokyo.

Even in parts of the world where Halloween is not popular, there are often festivals and celebrations that resemble it. During Britain's Guy Fawkes Night, you can see roving bands of children who plead for money and play Halloweenlike pranks. In Taiwan, there is the colorful Lantern Festival. Small children roam the streets carrying lanterns that depict birds and beasts. Mexico has its *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead, a celebration that has traveled across the Mexican-U.S. border. According to writer Carlos Miller, some Mexican-Americans still "don wooden skull masks called *calacas*

and dance in honor of their deceased relatives."

Most people might view such celebrations as nothing more than harmless fun—an excuse for children and adults to dress up and lose their inhibitions. Such a nonchalant viewpoint, however, ignores the fact that these celebrations are undeniably pagan in origin. Taiwan's Lantern Festival, for example, was started when people lit lanterns in an attempt to see celestial spirits that they believed were floating in the sky. Mexico's Day of the Dead has its origin in an Aztec ritual that honored the dead.

Some might argue that the origin of celebrations like these is of little consequence. But ask yourself, 'Can celebrations that have such dark origins really be viewed as harmless?' Commercial promoters of these celebrations are certainly not concerned. Regarding Halloween, a representative of the Cultural Institute of Barcelona, Spain, observed: "It is a festival that is being implanted from a commercial point of view." Why, last year, receipts from Halloween were estimated at \$6.8 billion in the United States alone. In France, a company that makes Halloween costumes has seen its business increase more than a hundredfold in just three years.

But should you participate in such celebrations simply because they are popular or profitable? In answer, we will take another look at the celebration of Halloween.

Awake!

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

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

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The Truth About Popular Celebrations

WITCHES and ghosts, pumpkins and bonfires, trick or treat. The outward trappings of Halloween are easy to identify. But what lies behind this and similar celebrations? Halloween has also been called All Hallows' Eve, the eve of All Saints' Day. This supposedly Christian name, however, hides origins that are far from hallowed. In fact, scholars say that Halloween's roots go back to a time long before Christianity—the era when the an-

cient Celts inhabited Britain and Ireland. Using a lunar calendar, the Celts divided the year into two seasons—the dark winter months and the light summer months. On the full moon nearest November 1, the Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain, meaning "Summer's End."^{*}

* Samhain may not be, as is often said, the name of the Celtic god of death but, rather, the name of the festival. According to Jean Markale, French specialist on the Celts, it was probably Lug, the god of light, who was honored during Samhain.

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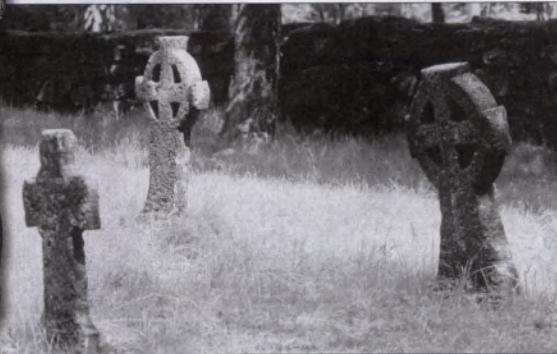
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Halloween finds its origin in a Celtic festival, probably the worship of Lug, god of light

This festival, which marked the beginning of the Celtic new year, came at the end of summer, when the harvest had been gathered and the flocks and herds had been brought down from pasture into shelter. The Celts believed that as the days shortened, it was necessary to reinvigorate the sun through various rites and sacrifices. In symbolism of the dying old year, all fires were put out, and the new year was inaugurated with sacred bonfires from which all members of the community rekindled their hearths. These bonfires—an echo of which can be found today in Britain on Guy Fawkes Night and in Brazil in the June festivals—were also thought to frighten away evil spirits.

It was believed that on the festival of Samhain, the veil between the human and the supernatural worlds was parted and spirits, both good and evil, roamed the earth. The souls of the dead were thought to return to their homes, and families would put out food and drink for their ghostly visitors in hopes of appeasing them and warding off misfortune. Thus, today when chil-



Graveyard with ancient Celtic crosses

Halloween perpetuates the lie that the dead are actually living

dren dressed as ghosts or witches go from house to house demanding a Halloween treat or threatening a mischievous trick, they unwittingly perpetuate the ancient rituals of Samhain. Jean Markale comments in his book *Halloween, histoire et traditions* (Halloween—History and Traditions): “In receiving something in their hands, they establish, on a symbolic level that they do not understand, a brotherly exchange between the visible and the invisible worlds. That is why the Halloween masquerades . . . are in fact sacred ceremonies.” *continued*

Since people believed that the barriers between the physical and supernatural realms were down, they thought that humans were able to cross over into the spirit world with ease. Samhain was therefore a particularly auspicious time to unlock the secrets of the future. Apples or hazelnuts, both viewed as products of sacred trees, were used to divine information concerning marriage, sickness, and death. For example, apples with identifying marks were placed in a tub of water. By seizing an apple using only the mouth, a young man or woman was supposed to be able to identify his or her future spouse. This divination practice survives today in the Halloween game of bobbing for apples.

Samhain was also characterized by drunken revelry and a casting aside of inhibitions. “Traditional values, if not flouted, were re-

versed," states Markale. "What was forbidden was allowed, and what was allowed was forbidden." Halloween still reflects this spirit today, which no doubt accounts to a great extent for its increasing popularity. Commenting on this, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* describes Halloween nowadays as "a time when adults can also cross cultural boundaries and shed their identities by indulging in an uninhibited evening of frivolity. Thus, the basic Celtic quality of the festival as an evening of annual escape from normal realities and expectations has remained into the twentieth century."

Religious Rivalry

Following the potato famine in the 19th century, Irish immigrants took Halloween and its customs to the United States. From there it has returned to Europe in the past few years. The growing popularity of Halloween, though, is not viewed favorably by all. As notes the newspaper *Le Monde*, "Halloween, which coincides with All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (Novem-

ber 1 and 2) and could even replace them, is making shopkeepers happy and panicking churchmen."

Church representatives in France have expressed concern over the decline of these traditional Catholic holidays in favor of Halloween, seeing it as a sign of the "paganization of society." For Stanislas Lallanne, spokesman for France's Conference of Catholic Bishops, Halloween "distorts the meaning of life and death." The bishop of Nice, Jean Bonfils, stated that "this festival and its rituals have nothing to do with our Mediterranean and Christian culture," and he warned Catholics against "the most important festival of Satanists the world over."

Commenting on the French abandonment of Catholic traditions for such pagan festivals, Hippolyte Simon, bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, notes: "It is as if French society were looking for a kind of civil religion capable of replacing Christian symbolism." He writes: "At Halloween the dead are imitated and their 'ghosts' come back to frighten us and threaten us with death. On All Saints' Day, in contrast, we affirm that the departed are alive and that we are promised to rejoin them in the City of God."—*Vers une France païenne?* (Toward a Pagan France?)



Celtic divination rites have survived in Halloween games

Bobbing for apples is one of the games that has Celtic origins

In a similar vein, Carlo Maria Martini, cardinal of Milan, Italy, urged Italians not to abandon Catholic holidays, declaring that Halloween is "alien to our tradition, which has immense value and must be continued. All Souls' Day is a celebration that belongs to our history. It is the moment in which hope for eternal life unfolds, a moment in which the Lord makes us understand that there is more to life than that on earth." Many sincere Catholics no doubt feel the same way. Yet, is the distinction between Halloween and All Souls' Day as clear-cut as these comments would lead us to believe? What does a close examination of the roots of these Catholic holidays reveal?

A Hallowed Masquerade

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines All Saints' Day as a feast to "honour all the saints, known and unknown." At the end of the second century, so-called Christians began to honor those who had been martyred for their faith and, believing that they were already with Christ in heaven, prayed to them to intercede on their behalf. A regular commemoration began when on May 13,^{*} 609 or 610 C.E., Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon—the Roman temple of all the gods—to Mary and all the martyrs. Markale comments: "The Roman gods left their

* Incidentally, this date coincided with the Roman festival of *Lemuria*, held on May 9, 11, and 13 to placate the souls of the dead and prevent them from haunting and injuring relatives.

Pope Boniface IV dedicated the pagan Roman Pantheon to Mary and all the church martyrs

place to the saints of the triumphant religion."

The change of date to November came under Pope Gregory III (731-741 C.E.), who dedicated a chapel in Rome to all the saints and ordered that they be honored on November 1. Exactly why he did this is unknown. But it may have been because such a holiday was already being celebrated on this date in England. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* points out: "Samhain remained a popular festival among the Celtic people throughout the christianization of Great Britain. The British church attempted to divert this interest in pagan customs by adding a Christian celebration to the calendar on the same date as Samhain. . . . The medieval British commemoration of All Saints' Day may have prompted the universal celebration of this feast throughout the Christian church."

Markale points out the increasing influence of Irish monks throughout Europe at this time. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also observes: "The Irish often assigned the first of the month to important feasts, and since November 1 was also the beginning of the Celtic winter, it would have been a likely date for a feast of all the saints." Finally, in 835 C.E., Pope Gregory IV made this festival universal.

As for All Souls' Day, on which prayers are recited in order to help souls in purga-

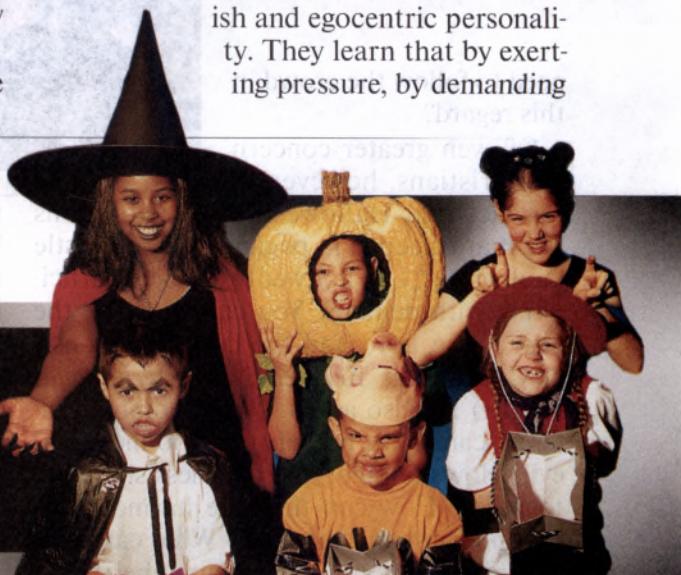


tory attain heavenly bliss, this holiday was fixed on November 2 during the 11th century by the monks of Cluny, France. While All Souls' Day is ostensibly a Catholic holiday, it is clear that confusion existed in the minds of ordinary folk. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* notes that "throughout the Middle Ages it was popular belief that the souls in purgatory could appear on this day as will-o'-the-wisps, witches, toads, etc."

Unable to uproot pagan beliefs from the

A school inspector from France with more than 20 years of experience in teaching was asked about the influence of Halloween on young children. He commented: "I am worried that going from house to house threatening adults in order to obtain sweets can have long-term negative consequences on children. It can foster a selfish and egocentric personality. They learn that by exerting pressure, by demanding

What influence does Halloween have on your children?



churches tried to sidetrack and ban-stoning hearts of its flock, the church simply hid them behind a "Christian" mask. Highlighting this fact, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* says: "The Christian festival, the Feast of All Saints, commemorates the known and unknown saints of the Christian religion just as Samhain had acknowledged and paid tribute to the Celtic deities."

Popular Celebrations and You

Just how concerned should you be about the dark past of Halloween and similar celebrations? After all, in most people's minds, Halloween is little more than a time to dress up and have fun. But would you not agree that it is important for parents to make sure that whatever recreation their children pursue is wholesome and not harmful?

with threats, by making others afraid, they can obtain what they want." Parents must therefore ask themselves, "What "lessons" will my children learn from celebrating this holiday?"

Not surprisingly, many families find that giving in to childish demands for treats and costumes can be an expensive undertaking. "Halloween . . . is not a holiday," observes Robert Rochefort, general director of France's Research Center for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions, "it is event marketing." Halloween fills a shopping lull prior to Christmas. In other words, it is just one more thing pressuring people to spend money—money that in many cases they cannot afford to spend. Do you really

True Christians
enjoy wholesome
family recreation

need to follow the crowd in this regard?

Of even greater concern to Christians, however, is the fact that Halloween and celebrations like it are steeped in paganism. The apostle Paul wrote: "I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20-22, *New International Version*) He also asked: "What common interest can there be between goodness and evil? How can light and darkness share life together? How can there be harmony between Christ and the devil? What can a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, *Phillips*) The Bible thus condemns the whole idea of putting a Christian mask on a pagan practice!

Also, the Bible warns against the practice of spiritism. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) While it is true that the vast majority of those who celebrate Halloween would claim to spurn Satanic practices, we should, nevertheless, be aware that historically this holiday has close connections with the occult. Thus, it can serve as a door leading to spiritism, especially for impressionable youths. Pagan rites and traditions tainted by spiritism simply have no place in Christian worship; they are far from harmless.

Finally, there is the fact that Halloween, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day are all based on the beliefs that the dead suffer or



that they can somehow bring harm to the living. However, the Bible clearly shows that such beliefs are not true, saying: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) For that reason, the Bible counsels: "All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the common grave of mankind], the place to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) Since the dead are unconscious and thus incapable of harming others or suffering themselves, we have nothing to fear from them. At the same time, prayers to help them are of no use whatsoever. Does this mean that there is no hope for our dead loved ones? No. The Bible assures us that "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24:15.*

With knowledge comes the freedom to choose. We cannot be expected to make intelligent decisions if we do not have all the facts. After considering the facts brought up in this series of articles, what will you decide?

* For more information on the Bible's teaching of the resurrection, see "What Happens to Our Dead Loved Ones?", chapter 9 in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Clues Across

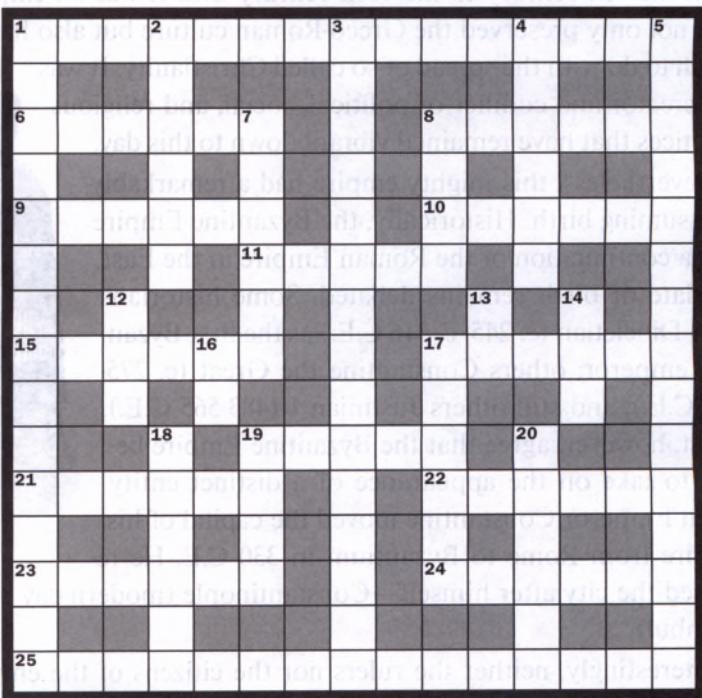
1. Peter said that those exhibiting this quality receive God's undeserved kindness [3 words] (1 Peter 5:5)
6. Father of Tibni, who was Omri's rival for the throne of Israel (1 Kings 16:21)
8. One of the Christians in the Rome congregation to whom Paul sent greetings (Romans 16:14)
9. Joint author of a letter to King Artaxerxes opposing the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7)
10. Because the Amorites were this, the Israelites were terrified of them and refused to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1:28)
11. An ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:26)
15. The largest of the Hebrew units of weight and of monetary value (Ezra 8:26)
17. Felix listened to Paul regarding this (Acts 24:24)
19. Job said that he escaped with the skin of these, indicating that he barely escaped death (Job 19:20)
21. The psalmist likened a man delighting in God's law to a well-watered tree whose foliage does not do this (Psalm 1:3)
22. Allow (Ecclesiastes 6:2)
23. Jehovah said that after the Israelites had done this to their harvest, they must take a sheaf to the priest (Leviticus 23:10)
24. Fatal (Revelation 6:8)
25. The pelican and the little owl are said to inhabit these areas [2 words] (Psalm 102:6)

Clues Down

1. A designation that Jesus claimed as true for both himself and his followers [4 words] (Matthew 5:14; John 8:12)

2. This designation applies only to Jesus and not to his followers (Matthew 23:10)
3. James used this expression to refer to ambition, prominence, and power [2 words] (James 4:1)
4. Building material used predominantly in the Persian palace at Shushan (Esther 1:6)
5. One of three worldly things that do not "originate with the Father" [4 words] (1 John 2:16)
7. In Paul's listing of a Christian's spiritual armor, this part represents salvation (Ephesians 6:17)
8. The second-listed son of Noah's grandson Canaan (Genesis 10:15)
12. He was noted for honoring his sons more than Jehovah (1 Samuel 2:27-29)
13. Fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Psalm 111:3)
14. The month of the Jewish calendar in which Solomon began the construction of the temple (1 Kings 6:1)
16. Amon was chief god of this city, the onetime capital of Egypt (Jeremiah 46:25)
17. Seen (1 John 4:12)
18. A son of the Horite sheikh Shobal (Genesis 36:23)
19. Walked (Joshua 14:9)
20. The Lycian seaport where Paul and his associates transferred to a boat sailing to Phoenicia (Acts 21:1)

Crossword Solutions Page 21



THE FORGOTTEN GLORY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

USE THE WORD "BYZANTINE" AND IN SOME LANGUAGES YOU IMPLY INTRIGUE, SECRETIVENESS, AND TREACHERY. NOT MANY PEOPLE, HOWEVER, REALIZE THAT THIS ADJECTIVE WAS THE NAME OF A VAST DOMAIN THAT FLOURISHED FOR NEARLY 12 CENTURIES.

FROM the Caucasus to the Atlantic, from the Crimea to Sinai, from the Danube to the Sahara—that was the realm of the Byzantine Empire at its peak. Many historians say that it lasted from the 4th century to the 15th century C.E. It was an empire that not only preserved the Greco-Roman culture but also had much to do with the spread of so-called Christianity. It was the creator and codifier of political, social, and religious practices that have remained vibrant down to this day.

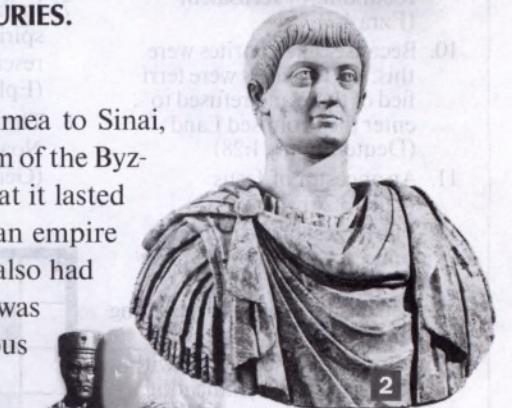
Nevertheless, this mighty empire had a remarkably unassuming birth. Historically, the Byzantine Empire was a continuation of the Roman Empire in the East. Its date of birth remains debated. Some historians view Diocletian (c. 245–c. 316 C.E.) as the first Byzantine emperor; others Constantine the Great (c. 275–337 C.E.); and still others Justinian I (483–565 C.E.). Most, however, agree that the Byzantine Empire began to take on the appearance of a distinct entity when Emperor Constantine moved the capital of his empire from Rome to Byzantium in 330 C.E. He renamed the city after himself—Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul).

Interestingly, neither the rulers nor the citizens of the empire ever referred to themselves as Byzantines. They considered themselves to be



Shaded area shows the empire at its peak (527–565 C.E.)

▲ Musée du Louvre, Paris



Scholars debate whether the first Byzantine emperor was (1) Diocletian, (2) Constantine the Great, or (3) Justinian I



Romans, or *Romaioi*. The term “Byzantine” did not come into use until after the 14th century.

A Resplendent Capital

One historian describes ancient Constantinople as “rich in renown and richer still in possessions.” Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia—the Bosphorus Strait—Constantinople bestrode both a superbly defensible peninsula and a sheltered harbor, the Golden Horn. In 657 B.C.E., Greek settlers named the place Byzantium after their legendary leader Byzas. More than ten centuries later, it was considered the New Rome, becoming home to half a million people during its glory days between the 6th and the 11th centuries C.E.

Visitors from the West were awed by this metropolis and major center of world trade routes. Its harbor was crowded with vessels. Its markets offered silks, furs, precious stones, perfumed woods, carved ivory, gold, silver, enameled jewelry, and spices. Understandably, Constantinople was the envy of other powers, so they repeatedly tried to breach its walls. Before the Ottoman conquest of 1453, only once did attackers succeed in conquering the city—namely, “Christians” of the Fourth Crusade. “Not since the world was made was there ever seen or won so great a treasure,” exclaimed the crusader Robert of Clari.

A Lasting Legacy

Believe it or not, Byzantine government, laws, religious concepts, and ceremonial splendor continue to affect the lives of billions today. For example, Justinian’s famous compilation of legal principles called the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Body of Civil Law) became

the foundation of Roman law in continental Europe today. Via the Code Napoléon, Byzantine legal precepts were transmitted to Latin America and other countries, where they still hold sway.

Moreover, Byzantine architects learned how to set a large dome over a quadrangular space—a style that spread as far as Russia. Some even credit the Byzantines with popularizing the use of forks at the dinner table. In Venice in the 11th-century, when a Byzantine princess used a two-pronged fork instead of eating with her fingers, onlookers were shocked! Centuries later, however, the fork began to catch on among the wealthy. Popes of Rome also yielded to Byzantine influence, wearing a tiara modeled after the Byzantine emperor’s. England’s monarchs likewise copied the emperor’s orb and scepter.

Law and Order

The Byzantine Empire also left behind a fascinating collection of government policies. For example, the needy were put to work in state bakeries and market gardens. “Idleness leads to crime,” believed Emperor Leo III (c. 675-741 C.E.). Because it was thought that drunkenness led to disorder and sedition, taverns were closed at 8:00 p.m. According to *National Geographic Magazine*, “incest, homicide, privately making or selling purple cloth (reserved for royalty alone) or teaching shipbuilding to enemies might bring decapitation, impalement—or drowning in a sack with a hog, a cock, a

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND THE BIBLE



Monasticism was one of the most powerful religious trends in the empire. Monasteries served as centers for copying and storing thousands of Bible manuscripts. Three

of the most important and most complete extant Bible manuscripts—the Vatican 1209, the Sinaitic (inset), and the Alexandrine (background)—may have been produced or preserved in the monasteries and religious communities of Byzantium.

Both manuscripts: Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum

KEY EVENTS

286 Diocletian starts ruling from Nicomedia, Asia Minor

395 The Roman Empire is permanently divided into East and West

1054 A religious schism separates the Greek Orthodox Church from the Roman Catholic Church

330 Constantine makes Byzantium the capital of the empire, renaming the city Constantinople

1204 Armies of the Fourth Crusade sack Constantinople

1453 Constantinople and the empire fall to the Turks

viper, and an ape. The grocer who gave false measure lost his hand. Arsonists were burned.”

Interestingly, the Byzantine Empire also provided much of the cradle-to-grave care provided by welfare states today. Emperors and wealthy citizens went to great lengths to finance hospitals, poorhouses, and orphanages. There were homes for repentant prostitutes—some of whom became “saints”—and even a reformatory for fallen female aristocrats.

An Empire Built on Trade

Such generosity reflected the prosperity the empire enjoyed. The State controlled prices, wages, and rents. Wheat was stockpiled to offset poor harvests. Officials inspected shops to check weights and measures, ledgers, and the quality of merchandise. Hoarders, smugglers, defrauders, counterfeiters, and tax evaders faced severe punishment.

The emperor himself was the empire's foremost merchant and manufacturer, with monopolies in minting, in armaments, and in renowned Byzantine luxury articles. Justinian himself founded its famed silk industry with silkworm eggs smuggled out of China.

Insurance and credit services were also developed. Banking was closely audited. The gold solidus, the coin introduced by Constantine, held its value for ten centuries! It was history's most stable currency.

The Byzantine Court

How, then, did the word “Byzantine” come to be associated with intrigue, secretiveness, and treachery? According to historian William Lecky, behind the Byzantine court's glittering facade, there was woven “a monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of poisonings, of conspiracies, of uniform ingratitude, of perpetual fratricides.”

Writer Merle Severy notes: “Surrounded by would-be usurpers and assassins, no incompetent emperor remained God's vicar on earth very long. Of the 88 emperors from Constantine I to XI, 13 took to a monastery. Thirty others died violently—starved, poisoned, blinded, bludgeoned, strangled, stabbed, dismembered, decapitated. The skull of Nicephorus I ended up as a silver-lined goblet from which Khan Krum of the Bulgars toasted his boyars [noblemen].”

Even the “sainted” Constantine the Great had his oldest son slain and his wife suffocated in her bath. The Empress Irene (c. 752-803 C.E.) was so obsessed with retaining power that she had her son blinded and took his title of emperor.

The Path to Decline

But it was not political intrigue that led to the decline of the empire. The European West began transforming itself through the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment

as well as the rise of science. In Byzantium, however, change of any sort was not only viewed as heresy but also eventually became viewed as a crime against the State.

Additionally, changing political winds began taking their toll. In the seventh century, Islam engulfed Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. Slavic invasions of the Balkans and Lombard conquests in Italy drove a wedge between Rome and Constantinople. Rome, deprived of imperial support, linked its fortunes to the rising Germanic West. Constantinople's shrinking empire became increasingly Greek. Then, in 1054, the Greek Orthodox patriarch and the Roman Catholic pope excommunicated each other over theological differences, causing a rift between the Orthodox and Catholic churches that has not healed to this day.

The year 1204 saw further disaster for the empire. On April 12, armies of the Fourth Crusade en route to Jerusalem committed what historian Sir Steven Runciman called "the greatest crime in history"—the sacking of Constantinople. Burning, pillaging, and raping in the name of Christ, the crusaders destroyed the city and took their plunder to Venice, Paris, Turin, and other Western centers.

More than 50 years passed before Constantinople was finally recaptured. By then the empire was a mere shadow of its former self. The Venetians and Genoese had a stranglehold on its trade. And before long the Byzantine Empire found itself under pressure from the Islamic Ottomans.

Such pressure led to the inevitable demise of the empire. On April 11, 1453, Sultan Mehmed II laid siege

to the capital, deploying 100,000 troops and a powerful fleet. The scant 8,000 defenders of Constantinople held out for seven weeks. Then, on May 28, invaders poured through a lightly guarded port in the city's moat. By the next day, the capital had changed hands. Mehmed—now a conqueror—reportedly shed tears and lamented: "What a city we have given over to plunder and destruction!" The Byzantine Empire had fallen. But its influence remains to this day.

A painting in a manuscript, depicting the siege of Constantinople in 1204

© Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris



A gold solidus coin, 321 C.E., shown mounted in the center of a pendant



Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul—at one time the largest Byzantine church, it was converted into a mosque in 1453 and into a museum in 1935

RELIGION IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Commenting on the close ties that existed between Church and State, Norman Davies writes in his book *Europe—A History*: "The state and the church were fused into one indivisible whole. The Emperor . . . and the Patriarch were seen as the secular and the ecclesiastical pillars of divine authority. The Empire defended the Orthodox Church, and the Church praised the Empire. This 'Caesaropapism' had no equal in the West."



AUTUMN

A Spectacular Time of Year

autumn excursions that allow them to admire nature's art.

Many national parks in Korea reach their peak of beauty at this time of the year. So newspapers keep the public informed regarding the best time to see the autumn colors. Soraksan, one of Korea's most famous national parks, is a favorite destination. Its granite cliffs and towering outcrops adorned with clinging pine trees seem to be the very essence of an Oriental landscape. In the autumn the granite monoliths of Soraksan are garlanded with a fiery necklace of beech and maple trees. And when these peaks emerge from a sea of morning mist, the early riser is rewarded with a sight he will never forget.

"I always enjoy walking in the mountains, but especially in the autumn," explains Park Ii-kyun, a lively Korean in his 70's. "In the autumn it seems that God has clothed the hills with many colors—colors that change

AUTUMN is a special time of year. It is a time when, in temperate lands, blue skies, sunny days, and cool nights gradually paint the wooded hills a hundred hues of yellow, orange, and red. It is a time when evergreen pines and cedars provide a sober backdrop for the vivid reds and yellows of their deciduous cousins—trees that shed their leaves.

Autumn is particularly appreciated in Oriental countries such as Japan and Korea. In Japan people often go "hunting for the autumn colors"—their expression for going on



"from day to day, colors
that come to life under
our clear autumn skies."
His wife, Kōng-young, de-
lights in watching autumn
leaves flutter from the sky like
golden butterflies.

Why Do Leaves Change Color?

To the curious mind, this colorful transformation demands an explanation. What determines whether a leaf will turn yellow or red?

Autumn colors are part of the process by which trees prepare for the winter. The shorter days of autumn alert the tree's internal clock to begin cutting off the supply of water and nutrients to the leaves. Each leaf responds by constructing a separation layer at the base of the stalk. This layer—composed of a corklike substance—blocks off any circulation from the leaf to the rest of the tree and causes the leaf eventually to fall off the tree.

While this process is going on, carotenoid pigments begin giving leaves their yellow or orange color. These pigments are usually present throughout the summer, but they go unnoticed because of the predominant green chlorophyll in the leaves. The

red color, on the other hand, comes mainly from anthocyanin, a pigment that the leaves do not produce until the autumn. During autumn, chlorophyll breaks down and the yellow and red pigments take center stage. When there is no chlorophyll left, a poplar leaf turns bright yellow but a maple leaf takes on a brilliant red color.

Searching for a Spectacular Autumn

Most lovers of nature have noticed that the autumn display varies somewhat from year to year and from place to place. Much has to do with the



type of deciduous trees in the region. Different species of maple trees, for example, produce some of the most striking red colors. Many species of these trees grow naturally in the Orient, and they are frequently planted in parks and gardens.

Another factor is the climate—the amount of anthocyanin produced by the leaves depends much on the weather. Clear, sunny days and cool nights enable the leaves to produce a maximum amount of anthocyanin. Autumns in the Far East usually provide these conditions. Both Japan and Korea are mountainous countries. Many of their hills are forested with a variety of deciduous trees, thus providing visitors an ideal environment for viewing the autumn colors.

An Elegant Recycling Process

The whole process whereby trees shed their leaves is practical as well as beautiful. By discarding their leaves, trees conserve water and energy during the winter. They also rid themselves of toxic wastes that build up in the leaves during the summer.

What happens to the billions of leaves that fall on the ground? Thanks to insects, fungi, worms, and other soil animals, all this organic material is soon converted into humus, a vital ingredient of fertile soil. So after providing a dazzling spectacle, the fallen leaves also provide fertilizer for new growth in the spring! Can you imagine a more attractive recycling process? When pausing to admire such handiwork, we may sense that 'the trees of the field are all clapping their hands' as they give silent praise to

their Maker.—Isaiah 55:12; Psalm 148:7-9.

THE CHICKEN

Popular and Plentiful

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN KENYA

THE chicken is probably the most populous bird on earth. According to estimates, there are over 13 billion chickens! And its meat is so popular that more than 73 billion pounds of it are consumed each year. Additionally, hens produce some 600 billion eggs a year worldwide.

In Western lands, chicken is plentiful and inexpensive. Decades ago, U.S. voters were promised there would be a chicken in every pot only if a certain candidate was elected. Today, however, chicken is no longer the luxury it was or the preserve of a minority. How did this unique bird become so available and so popular? And what about poorer nations? Is there any chance of their sharing in this abundance?

The Bird's Record

The chicken is a descendant of the red jungle fowl of Asia. Man soon discovered that the chicken could be domesticated easily. Why, some 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ referred to the way a hen gathers her chicks under her protective wings. (Matthew 23:37; 26:34) The use of such an illustration indicates that people in general were quite familiar with this bird. But it was not until the 19th century that mass production of chickens and eggs became a commercial venture.

Some breeds of chicken are the White Leghorn, Gray Jungle Fowl, Orpington, Polish, and Speckled Sussex

All except White Leghorn: © Barry Koffler/www.feathersite.com



Today chicken is by far the most popular poultry meat. Chickens are raised by millions of households—including urban families—for domestic and commercial use. In fact, few farm animals are able to breed in as many diverse geographic locations as chickens are. Many countries have developed breeds that are peculiar to their climatic conditions and needs. Some of these include: the Australorp of Australia; the well-known Leghorn, originally from the Mediterranean but quite popular in the United States; the New Hampshire, the Plymouth Rock, the Rhode Island Red, and the Wyandotte, all bred in the United States; and the Cornish, the Orpington, and the Sussex, from England.

Advanced scientific methods of husbandry have made raising chickens one of the most



successful agricultural industries. In the United States, farmers use carefully controlled methods of feeding and caging, along with scientific disease control. Many people condemn these mass-production techniques as cruel. But that has not stopped farmers from developing increasingly efficient ways of breeding these birds. Modern techniques now make it possible for just one person to care for from 25,000 to 50,000 chickens. It takes the birds only three months to reach market weight.*

A Source of Meat

Visit virtually any hotel, restaurant, or village eating establishment, and you will rarely fail to see the meat of this domestic fowl on the menu. In fact, many fast-food outlets the world over specialize in serving chicken. There are societies where chicken is still the ideal choice for special occasions. Fascinating ways of serving this bird have been developed in some lands, such as India. Dishes such as red pepper chick-

* Though chickens are also raised for their eggs, in the United States, 90 percent are raised for their meat.

Efforts are being made to help farmers in developing lands to increase poultry production



en, *lal murgi*; shredded chicken, *kurgi murgi*; and chicken smothered in ginger, *adrak murgi*, delight the palate!

Why does chicken have such popularity? For one thing, few foods blend as well with different flavorings as it does. How do you like it prepared? Fried, roasted, broiled, braised, or stewed? Open just about any cookbook, and you'll probably find dozens of chicken recipes designed to bring the best out of every piece.

Because of its availability in many countries, chicken is relatively inexpensive as well. It is also a friend of nutritionists, since it contains proteins, vitamins, and minerals that are vital to one's body. Yet, chicken is low in calories, saturated fats, and other fats.

Feeding Developing Lands

Of course, not all countries have an abundance of poultry products. This is signif-

In the
United States,
90 percent of
chickens are
raised for
their meat





Safe Handling of Raw Poultry

"Raw poultry may harbour potentially harmful organisms, such as salmonella bacteria, so it is vital to take care in its preparation. Always wash your hands, the chopping board, knife and poultry shears in hot soapy water before and after handling the poultry. It is a good idea to use a chopping board that can be washed at high temperature . . . and, if possible, to keep the chopping board just for the preparation of raw poultry. Thaw frozen poultry completely before cooking."—*The Cook's Kitchen Bible*.



ificant in view of the report of a task force for the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, which said: "World population is projected to increase to 7.7 billion by the year 2020 . . . However, the majority (95%) of the population increase is forecast to occur in developing countries." This statement takes on an even more somber tone when you consider that already some 800 million people are suffering from malnutrition!

Nevertheless, many experts feel that the chicken could play a major role both in feeding these hungry populations and in providing much-needed income to farmers. The problem is that large-scale breeding of these birds can be a real challenge for poor farmers. For one thing, in poorer nations chickens are raised mainly on small, rural farms or in backyards. And in such lands, chickens are rarely housed in protective environments. During the day the birds are allowed to roam free and scavenge for food, returning home at night, sometimes to roost in trees or in metal cages.

Not surprisingly, many of the birds raised by such methods die off—some as victims of the deadly Newcastle disease and others as victims of predators, animal and human. Most farmers have neither the know-how nor the means to feed their chickens adequately, to provide proper housing for them, or to protect them from diseases. For this reason programs have been started to help

educate farmers in developing lands. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for example, recently initiated a five-year project "to benefit the rural poor in Africa through increased poultry production."

It still remains to be seen what will come from such well-intentioned initiatives. It is therefore sobering for residents of wealthier lands to contemplate the fact that something as commonplace as a slice of chicken may be a luxury to most of earth's inhabitants. For such ones, the idea of a 'chicken in every pot' may seem like little more than a distant dream.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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How Tolerant Is God?

"GOD, ALTHOUGH HAVING THE WILL TO DEMONSTRATE HIS WRATH AND TO MAKE HIS POWER KNOWN, TOLERATED WITH MUCH LONG-SUFFERING VESSELS OF WRATH MADE FIT FOR DESTRUCTION."—ROMANS 9:22.

THROUGHOUT history God has tolerated much badness and outright wickedness. More than 3,000 years ago, Job lamented: "Why is it that the wicked themselves keep living, have grown old, also have become superior in wealth? Their offspring are firmly established with them in their sight, and their descendants before their eyes. Their houses are peace itself, free from dread, and the rod of God is not upon them." (Job 21:7-9) Other lovers of justice, such as the prophet Jeremiah, have also manifested concern over God's seeming tolerance of bad people.—Jeremiah 12:1, 2.

What do you think? Are you puzzled by God's permission of wickedness? Do you feel at times that God should hurry up and destroy all wicked people right away? Consider what the Bible says about the limits of God's tolerance and the reasons for it.

Why Is God Tolerant?

First, we must ask: Why does God, who has the highest standards of righteousness, tolerate badness at all? (Deuteronomy 32:4; Habakkuk 1:13) Does this mean he condones evil? Not at all! Consider the following illustration: Imagine that there is a surgeon who violates basic principles of hygiene and who also inflicts great pain on his patients. If he worked in a hospital, would he not be removed swiftly? But there are some circumstances where extraordinary tolerance

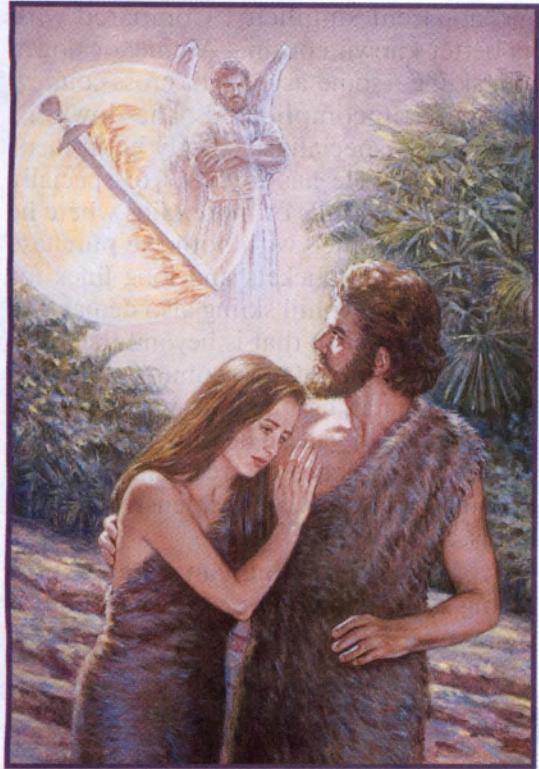
might be required. In an extreme emergency, perhaps on a battlefield, for example, might it not be necessary to tolerate surgeons' working in primitive and dangerous conditions, perhaps even using what would normally be considered inferior equipment and surgical instruments?

In a similar way, today God is patiently tolerating many things that he finds totally unacceptable. Although he hates wickedness, he is temporarily allowing it to continue. There are good reasons for his doing so. For one thing, this allows time for the crucial issues raised by Satan's rebellion in the garden of Eden to be settled once and for all time. These are issues that center around the rightness and rightfulness of God's way of ruling. Also, his patient endurance of wrong provides time and opportunity for those involved in badness to change.

A Merciful, Patient God

Our original parents, Adam and Eve, joined Satan's rebellion against God. God could legitimately have destroyed them then and there. Instead, he showed himself to be merciful and patient, lovingly allowing them to have children. But these children, and the whole human family descended from them, were born in a sinful state.—Romans 5:12; 8:20-22.

God purposed to rescue man from his woeful condition. (Genesis 3:15) In the



God allowed Adam and Eve to have offspring

meantime, though, because he understands how imperfection inherited from Adam affects us, he shows tremendous patience and mercy. (Psalm 51:5; 103:13) He is “abundant in loving-kindness” and is ready and willing to “forgive in a large way.”—Psalm 86:5, 15; Isaiah 55:6, 7.

Limits to God’s Tolerance

However, it would be unloving and unreasonable for God to allow wrongdoing to continue forever. No loving father would endlessly tolerate badness from one of his children who continued deliberately to inflict grievous pain on other family members. God’s patience in the face of sin, therefore, will always be balanced by other qualities such as love, wisdom, and justice. (Exodus

34:6, 7) Once the purpose behind his long-suffering is complete, his tolerance of evil will end.—Romans 9:22.

The apostle Paul clearly indicated this. “In the past generations,” he said on one occasion, “[God] permitted all the nations to go on in their ways.” (Acts 14:16) On another occasion Paul spoke of how “God has overlooked the times of such ignorance” on the part of people who have disobeyed his laws and principles. “Now,” Paul continued, “[God] is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent.” Why? “Because he has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness.”—Acts 17:30, 31.

Benefit Now From God’s Tolerance

Certainly, then, no one should assume that he can ignore God’s laws and then casually ask for God’s forgiveness when he wants to escape the consequences of his actions. (Joshua 24:19) Many in ancient Israel thought that they could do that. They would not change. They missed the purpose of God’s tolerance and patience. God did not forever tolerate their badness.—Isaiah 1:16-20.

The Bible shows that to avoid God’s final judgment, a person must “repent”—that is, contritely acknowledge his imperfect, sinful state before God and then genuinely turn away from bad. (Acts 3:19-21) Then, on the basis of Christ’s ransom sacrifice, Jehovah God will grant forgiveness. (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:6, 7) In his due time, God will undo all the grievous effects of Adamic sin. There will be “a new heaven and a new earth” where he will no longer tolerate “the presence . . . of things that cry out to be destroyed.” (Revelation 21:1-5; Romans 9:22, *Phillips*) What a wonderful result from God’s extraordinary, but not limitless, tolerance!

LANGLÄUFER LEBEN LÄNGER"—"Cross-country skiers live longer." This popular German saying highlights the value many see in the winter sport of cross-country skiing. Indeed, in many lands where winter snow abounds, the winter countryside is often crisscrossed by a gridwork of ski trails. In some lands, distances between towns and villages are often posted, and many trails have artificial lighting so that skiers can use them to commute between home and work.

Practiced by relatively few before the 1960's, cross-country skiing has in recent years become popular in many places throughout the world. Some estimate that as many as four million people a year enjoy the sport in North America alone! The secret of its appeal and charm? Its low cost

and apparent simplicity. Compared with its better-known cousin—Alpine, or downhill, skiing—some aspects of cross-country skiing are uncomplicated. The downhill skier needs specialized, costly equipment and clothing. He has to travel to specially maintained ski hills or mountains where he may be confronted with both the purchase of expensive lift tickets and long lines for the ski lift. Downhill skiing also demands a certain athleticism that is beyond the grasp of many beginners. Cross-country skiing, on the other hand, can be enjoyed by virtually anyone at any age. The only things needed are a few inches of fresh snow, a little training, and relatively inexpensive skis, ski boots, and ski poles.

Cross-country skiing can be an exhilarating experience! The skier can go vir-

Cross-Country Skiing

Is It for You?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN CANADA





Cross-country skiing is relatively inexpensive and can be enjoyed by people of all ages

tually wherever he wishes—through fields and meadows, over frozen lakes and icebound streams, into silent forests and snow-covered valleys. Cross-country skiing can lend itself to meditation, reflection, and thought, which can give us a chance to confide in our Creator and thank him for the wonders of life. Winter puts a unique stamp on Jehovah God's creation. A glistening blanket of snow brings a hush to the landscape. The earth seems

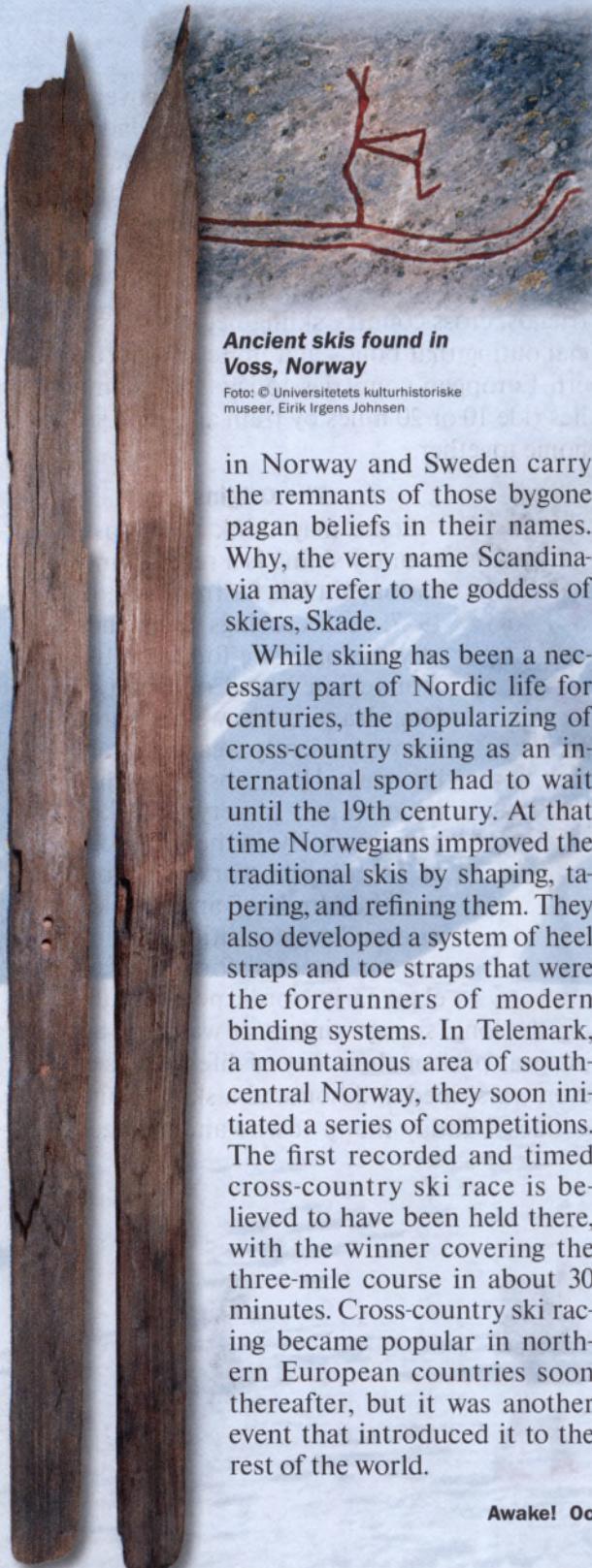
fresh and clean, as if awaiting discovery. Gliding through a forest, the trees laden with frost, is soothing to the heart and mind. The stridency of our mechanical world fades away, and soon the only sound is the whooshing of skis.

If shared in by a family or group of friends, cross-country skiing becomes a social outing that bonds and unites. In northern European countries today, some families ride 10 or 20 miles by train and then ski home together.

The Origins

Some may think that cross-country skiing is a recent innovation, but it is far from new. In 1927, rock carvings thousands of years old were found on the Norwegian island of Rødøya. One drawing shows a hunter who is evidently wearing a rabbit mask. He seems to be gliding on a pair of very long skis. More recently, in the peat bogs of Scandinavia, workers uncovered hundreds of ancient skis in excellent condition. Skiing was an essential form of travel for early Nordic peoples during the long, snowy winters. It was such an integral part of their way of life that they even worshiped and honored a ski god and goddess! Today many towns and villages





Ancient skis found in Voss, Norway

Foto: © Universitetets kulturhistoriske museer, Eirik Irgens Johnsen

in Norway and Sweden carry the remnants of those bygone pagan beliefs in their names. Why, the very name Scandinavia may refer to the goddess of skiers, Skade.

While skiing has been a necessary part of Nordic life for centuries, the popularizing of cross-country skiing as an international sport had to wait until the 19th century. At that time Norwegians improved the traditional skis by shaping, tapering, and refining them. They also developed a system of heel straps and toe straps that were the forerunners of modern binding systems. In Telemark, a mountainous area of south-central Norway, they soon initiated a series of competitions. The first recorded and timed cross-country ski race is believed to have been held there, with the winner covering the three-mile course in about 30 minutes. Cross-country ski racing became popular in northern European countries soon thereafter, but it was another event that introduced it to the rest of the world.

A rock carving of a skier

Foto: Inge Ove Tysnes / Sylva sørstø forlag

In 1888 the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen led an expedition across Greenland on skis. He subsequently wrote a book about his experience that in 1891 was translated into English, French, and German. The account, which described his grueling journey across the stark Arctic landscape, captured the imagination of its Victorian readers. It stirred romantic notions of conquering the untamed wilderness.

In the 1960's, family ski touring was organized and launched on a major scale. Ski centers that specialized in cross-country skiing began to spring up. Manufacturers took note, and new, sophisticated equipment appeared. Fashion even entered the picture, making cross-country skiing chic. The demand by the public for areas in which to ski saw many municipalities scrambling to groom any available land, including golf courses and city parks.

Physical Benefits

Cross-country skiing is considered to be one of the safest of the popular sports. Although falling can result in minor sprains, serious injuries are rare, and they usually occur only when the cross-country skier ventures into steep terrain and backcountry.

Because the movements involved in cross-country skiing are fluid and rhythmic, there

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Life Is Worth Living

A United Brotherhood Unshaken

What's Wrong With Getting Even?

is very little overuse of or shock damage to joints and muscles. Sports doctors will often prescribe cross-country skiing as therapy for those injured by jogging or cycling. It is one of the few activities that uses almost all the body's major muscle groups, so the skier receives a complete workout. The heart and lungs benefit greatly, and active skiers usually have blood pressure and pulse rates lower than those of inactive people. Cross-country skiers are thus regarded as some of the fittest athletes in the world.

The combination of low risk of injury with smooth, dynamic movement also makes cross-country skiing an ideal endeavor for older ones. In some northern European countries, it is very common to see individuals in their senior years out for a ski.

Skiing generates a tremendous amount of body heat, so it is possible to be quite comfortable in relatively cold conditions. On the coldest of days, ski racers routinely compete in thin, one-piece racing outfits, often without gloves. Nonprofessionals, however,

cold much quicker than adults'. Since they lose heat from their skin very rapidly, they are susceptible to frostbite.

Add to Your Winter Experience

"If you can walk, you can ski" is a common catchphrase among cross-country skiers because the movements of the sport are so closely related to walking. While this statement is true to some degree, most of us would benefit immensely from an hour or two spent with a qualified teacher. Ski centers offer private or group lessons, and in a short while, the novice can learn the fundamentals of skiing cross-country—cruising the flats, skiing uphill, negotiating downhills and, of course, stopping! Once shown these basic skills, most people are equipped to go out and tackle the terrain.

"Nothing hardens the muscles and makes the body so strong and elastic," said Fridtjof Nansen in 1890 regarding cross-country skiing. Perhaps you too would enjoy the sport. It could very well add excitement to your winter experience.



must take adequate care to protect their extremities from the cold. Experienced outdoor enthusiasts generally dress in layers, starting with a woolen or synthetic underlayer and finishing with a waterproof and windproof outer shell. This enables them to regulate their body temperature and personal comfort. They just remove or add layers as needed. Wise parents do well to make sure that their little ones are properly attired, as children's small bodies get



WATCHING THE WORLD

Rain Forests

In India, rain forests were known to exist only in the southern state of Kerala. Recently, however, environmentalist Saumyadeep Dutta discovered a 200-square-mile area of rain forest bridging the northeastern states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, reports the New Delhi magazine *Down to Earth*. The forest supports a wide variety of wildlife—"32 species of mammals and 260 species of birds, including rare species of elephant, tiger and the clouded leopard, Chinese pangolin, sloth bear, sambar, hoolock gibbons, kalij pheasants, hornbills, and wood ducks." Still, international demand for forest products threatens many rain forests, notes *Down to Earth*. Some naturalists fear that if such products become depleted through overharvesting, rain forests would no longer be conserved but would merely be converted to agricultural use.

The Roar of a Tiger

Why does the roar of a tiger seem to paralyze not only other animals but also some humans? Scientists from the Fauna Communications Research Institute in North Carolina, U.S.A., "have established that the tiger emits low-pitched 'infrasound,' a growl so deep that it is inaudible to humans," reports *The Sunday Telegraph* of London. Humans can only hear sound frequencies above 20 hertz (Hz), but the tiger "mixes infrasound growls at

18 Hz and below with the roar that we can hear, and the result, according to Elizabeth von Muggenthaler, the president of the institute, is that humans can actually feel the tiger roar, a sensation that causes momentary paralysis," explains the newspaper. Even longtime tiger trainers have experienced this phenomenon.

Tenderizing With Explosives



Cooks traditionally tenderize tough meat by beating it with a culinary hammer or by adding a tenderizing powder containing meat-softening enzymes. Researchers in Maryland, U.S.A., however, have been conducting experiments in tenderizing meat with powerful shock waves, reports *New Scientist* magazine. The researchers place the meat on a steel plate at the bottom of a plastic garbage can that is filled with water. They then set off the equivalent of a quarter stick of dynamite inside the can. "The water transmits the shock wave through the meat," says the report, "but the unfortunate garbage can gets blown to smithereens." Besides tenderizing the meat, the process also destroys bacteria, such as *E. coli*, that can cause food poisoning. Still, as Randy Huff-

man of the American Meat Institute notes: "The real challenge will be getting this implemented in a real-world solution."

Ships Spread Disease

"Ballast water in ships is spreading disease around the world, threatening people, animals and plant life," says *The Daily Telegraph* of London. Ships use ballast water as a stabilizer and discharge it at sea or at ports of call. In the United States, researchers from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Maryland found that the ballast water carried by ocean-going vessels contains high numbers of bacteria and viruses. The ballast plankton of all 15 ships tested in Chesapeake Bay contained the bacterium that causes cholera. Typically, one liter of ballast contained about 830 million bacteria and 7,400 million viruses—six to eight times the number of other organisms.

Too Many Toys

"Children are losing the ability to play properly because they are being given too many toys and games, according to new research," reports *The Sunday Times* of London. The research was motivated in part by concern in Britain that "childhood is being irrevocably altered by parents substituting toys, computers and television for spending time with their children." After studying 3,000 three- to five-year-olds, Professor Kathy Sylva of Oxford University concluded: "When they

have a large number of toys there seems to be a distraction element, and when children are distracted they do not learn or play well."

Workplace Depression

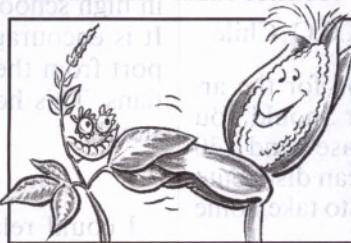
"In the workplace . . . anxiety, burnout and depression are spiralling out of control," reports *The Guardian* of London. According to the UN's International Labour Organisation, up to 3 out of every 10 employees in the United Kingdom are experiencing mental-health problems, and 1 in 10 workers in the United States reportedly suffers from clinical depression. Nearly 7 percent of early retirements in Germany are due to depression. Over half of Finland's work force suffers from stress-related symptoms. In Poland, anxiety resulting from soaring unemployment rates increased by 50 percent in 1999, while suicides also rose. The report predicts that with the continued shift to new technologies and management methods in the workplace, depression will grow dramatically. And it warns that "by 2020, stress and mental disorders will overtake road accidents, Aids and violence as the primary cause of lost working time."

The Soaring Cost of Crime

"Crime in England and Wales is costing society £60bn [\$85 billion] a year," reports *The Independent* of London. This figure, described by the Home Office as conservative, represents 6.7 percent of the gross domestic product of the nation. Murder and manslaughter are by far the most expensive crimes, costing the

country more than £1 million [\$1.4 million] each on average, while other serious crimes of violence average £19,000 [\$27,000] each. Fraud and forgery account for nearly a quarter of the total cost. These figures do not include "the cost of the fear of crime, the impact on the families of victims, the money spent by the Government on crime prevention, . . . or the cost of insurance claims," adds the newspaper.

Weeds Better Than Pesticides



East African farmers are using weeds instead of pesticides to improve their crops of corn, reports *New Scientist* magazine. Corn farmers in East Africa encounter two serious pests. One is Striga, a parasitic plant that destroys \$10 billion worth of corn crops yearly. Kenyan researcher Ziad Khan discovered that Striga refused to grow if a weed called desmodium was planted between rows of corn. The other pest is the larvae of the stem borer insect, which most years devour a third of the corn crop. However, Khan has found that stem borers prefer eating a local weed called napier grass. By planting this weed in their fields, farmers lure the insects away from the corn. A sticky substance produced by the grass traps and kills the larvae. "It's better than pesticides, and a lot cheaper," says Khan. "And

it has raised farm yields round here by 60 to 70 per cent."

Archaeologist's Fraud

One of Japan's top archaeologists, who has been called the divine digger because of his seemingly amazing discoveries, has been recorded cheating. A video camera set up by the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper caught the archaeologist burying stone artifacts at an archaeological site before the digging team arrived. Unable to deny the evidence, the archaeologist admitted burying items from his own collection. Now, all the results of his 30 years of work are under review. Book publishers expect to revise archaeological reference works and school textbooks on this account.

Childhood Accidents

Accidents are the primary cause of childhood deaths in the world's richest nations, according to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) study of 26 countries. "Injuries accounted for almost 40 percent of deaths of children ages 1 to 14 in the countries studied," amounting to some 20,000 fatalities each year, reports Japan's *Mainichi Daily News*. Factors that increase the likelihood of childhood injury include poverty, single parents bringing up children alone, large families, and substance abuse by parents. UNICEF urged that attention be given to "proven life-savers: helmets, speed limits in heavily populated areas, child-safety seats in cars, seat belts, child-safety caps on medicine, smoke detectors in homes, and playground safety standards."

FROM OUR READERS

Comfort for the Sick I am 22 years old, and I have suffered with a degenerative cancer for most of my life. I appreciated the cover series "Comfort for the Sick." (January 22, 2001) How comforting it was to know that Jehovah understands the feelings of frustration and anger that overwhelm me! I could identify with William and Rose Meiners and the manner in which they dealt with their situation. Jehovah knows how to sustain those who love him!

A.C.C., Chile

Fire Extinguishers Thank you for the article "Fire! Which Extinguisher Should You Use?" (January 22, 2001) Please send 130 copies of this issue so that we can distribute them to each of our employees to take home to their family.

D. F., United States

Thank you for your hard work on this article. There is no other 32-page magazine that covers such a wide variety of helpful information. However, I would like to point out that where you refer to a "dry powder" extinguisher, I believe you meant a "dry chemical" extinguisher. Dry powder extinguishers, which have a yellow star containing the letter D, can be used only for metal fires, whereas dry chemical extinguishers can be used for ABC or BC fires.

J. H., United States

Thank you for the clarification. In some lands the term "dry powder extinguishers" includes what are known in the United States as dry chemical extinguishers. Since "Awake!" is an international magazine, it is inevitable that variances in terminology will arise from time to time.—ED.

Too Young to Date? I really enjoyed the article "Young People Ask... What if My Par-

ents Think I'm Too Young to Date?" (January 22, 2001) I am 17 years old, and I have come to the conclusion that I am not yet ready for marriage or to provide for a family. This article helped me to think twice before dating and also to use discernment when I do decide one day to date and to marry.

A.M.H., United States

Being only 15 years old, the pressure I get in high school to date can be very draining. It is encouraging to know that I have support from the Bible and from fellow Christians. This helps me to remain firm in my stand!

L. M., Canada

I could relate to the picture of the two youths talking on the phone because that is where I could see myself going. I had to cut off association with one person because I know I'm not ready to date. Articles like this cheer me on in sticking to my decision to wait.

M.R.C., United States

I am 14 years old. This article really helped me to understand how risky it is to date at my age, since I'm really not ready for marriage. The article helped me to see the need to work on my relationship with Jehovah right now rather than pursue a romance.

A. P., Canada

It seems that this article was written just for me. I thought that my parents were too strict with me and did not understand my feelings. Now I understand that they are doing everything possible to help and protect me. I can't wait to read future "Young People Ask" articles!

H. E., Romania

The TREE That Wakes Up Early



IN LATE January or early February, many of the terraced hillsides of Israel are dramatically transformed. Awakening from their winter sleep, almond trees burst into bloom. Since it is one of the earliest trees to do so, the almond usually has the stage to itself. Its white and pink blossoms grace the wintry countryside, reminding us of Solomon's words at Ecclesiastes 12:5. There he compares the white hair of old age to 'the almond tree that carries blossoms.'

In view of the almond's precocious bloom, the Hebrew word for almond appropriately has the literal meaning "awakening one." It has thus been used in the Bible in a number of powerful illustrations. For example, the prophet Jeremiah saw in vision an offshoot, or branch, of an almond tree. What did it represent? "I am keeping awake concerning my word in order to carry it out," Jehovah told him. (Jeremiah 1:11, 12) Of course, Jehovah never tires out, nor does he sleep. But his words emphasized his desire to finish his work.—Isaiah 40:28.

Centuries before Jeremiah's day, a flowering almond rod was used to identify the one whom Jehovah had appointed as high priest. A rod for each one of the 12 tribes of Israel was deposited before Jehovah in the tent of meeting. The following morning Aaron's almond rod

had not only flowered miraculously but also produced ripe almonds! This almond rod was kept inside the ark of the covenant for a while as a sign to the nation that they should never again murmur against Jehovah's appointed representatives. —Numbers 16:1-3, 10; 17:1-10; Hebrews 9:4.

Jehovah desired that representations of the almond's beautiful blooms embellish the seven-branched golden lampstand that illuminated the Holy Place of the tabernacle. According to the description that Moses recorded, "three cups shaped like flowers of almond were on the one set of branches, with knobs and blossoms alternating; and three cups shaped like flowers of almond were on the other set of branches, with knobs and blossoms alternating. That is the way it was for the six branches running out from the lampstand. And on the lampstand there were four cups shaped like flowers of almond, with its knobs and its blossoms alternating."—Exodus 37:19, 20.

Although the Bible makes few references to the almond tree, it does draw our attention to its beautiful white blossoms and its early awakening. This attractive tree reminds us, above all, that Jehovah will not rest until he has accomplished his purpose.—Isaiah 55:11.



HOW AWAKE! SAVED HIS LIFE

"I DID not want to continue to be a burden on my family, so I decided that suicide would be the answer." So writes a man in Nepal. He continues: "I prepared a rope and decided the place and date. But just a week before that day, I received the February 22, 2000, issue of *Awake!*"

The cover series for that issue was "Suicide—Who Are Most at Risk?" The man writes: "It took all my strength to pick it up and all the courage I had to read it. The explanation of the ten risk factors for suicide deeply impressed me and made me change my mind." He concluded: "I cannot hold back from expressing my appreciation for what you have done for me. Your work of writing this article saved my life!"

