

# Awake!

APRIL 22, 2002

**“CAN I  
WORSHIP GOD  
IN MY OWN WAY?”**

## “CAN I WORSHIP GOD IN MY OWN WAY?” 3-11

More and more people today would answer that question with a “yes.” What is behind the trend? And can tailoring religion to meet personal preferences really satisfy your spiritual needs?

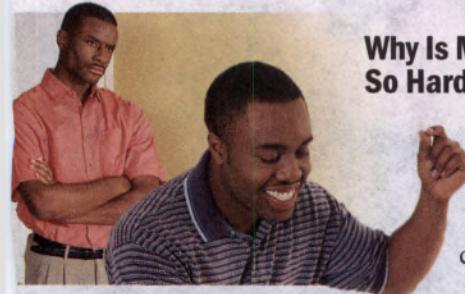


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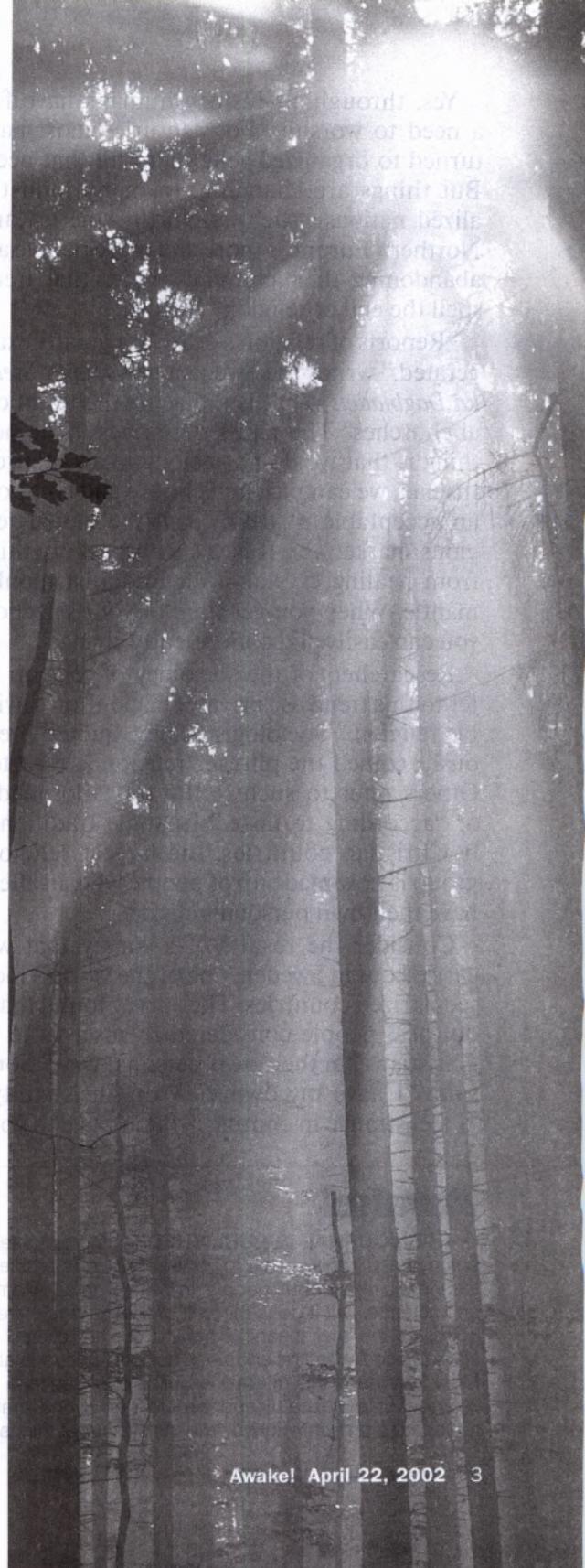
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# A NEED ALL OF US SHARE

**YOU NEED FOOD.** You need water. You need air. You need some measure of shelter and protection from the elements. These are needs not only of every human but also of countless billions of other living creatures on this planet. There is one need, however, that is unique to humans. What is it?

Canadian sociologist Reginald W. Bibby wrote: "People have needs that only religion can address." And in its February 2000 issue, the journal *American Sociological Review* printed an article that said: "Spiritual concerns will probably always be part of the human outlook."

**Commenting on a recent trend to seek spirituality in nature, one researcher concluded: "God has moved out into the woods"**



Yes, throughout history humans have felt a need to worship. For centuries most have turned to organized religion to fill that need. But things are changing. In many industrialized nations—such as North America and Northern Europe—more and more people are abandoning their churches. Does that trend spell the end of religion? Hardly.

“Reports of religion’s death are greatly exaggerated,” writes the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet*. What is replacing the traditional churches? The paper continues: “The new thing is that we do not belong to any church. Instead, we can pick and choose and compose an acceptable mixture from the global religious market. . . . It can encompass anything from healing crystals to a Buddhist monk’s mantle. When you get tired of your selection, you can easily and conveniently change.”

Researchers of the sociology of religion refer to this trend as “private religion” or “invisible religion.” Sociologist Bibby, quoted previously, coined the phrase “religion à la carte.” Others refer to such faiths as “tailor-made” or “according to taste.” In some traditionally Christian countries, the largest religious group is now made up of people who, in effect, have their own personal religion.

Consider the results of a survey that was carried out in Sweden, one of the world’s most secularized countries. The survey found that 2 out of 3 people considered themselves to be Christians “in their own personal way.” Some said: “I have my own view of Christianity,” “I feel strange in church,” “I don’t like to go to

church and listen to priests,” or “I can go into my private room and pray by myself.” Many were inclined to believe in reincarnation or in fate. Most said that they believed that some form of divine force or power may exist but that they could not define it.

Another survey found that many people reserve their religious feelings for times when they are outdoors, enjoying earth’s natural settings. A young female farmer said: “When you’re out in the woods and fields, that’s when you’re closest to God, I think.” Another person interviewed, who did not consider himself religious, explained: “When I go out in the woods, I feel as if it were a huge temple. . . . And who is in control of it, I don’t know, but I feel it.” Some described nature as holy, divine, and awe-inspiring and said that being in its presence gave them renewed strength, peace, and harmony. As a summary, one interviewer concluded his report: “God has moved out into the woods.”

This trend is noticeable in many parts of the world today. Thomas Luckmann, an American specialist in the sociology of religion, spoke of church-oriented religion as being pushed aside in industrial societies and being replaced by a “social form of religion.” The individual, in effect, forms a philosophy of life by picking out ideas about spiritual matters and then combining these notions into his own private religion.

You may wonder, ‘Are the established religions and churches really being pushed to the fringes of society? If so, why?’ These questions are considered in the following article.

## Awake!®

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

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# WHY ARE PEOPLE LEAVING TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS?

**RELIGIONS CLAIMING** to base their teachings on those of Jesus Christ have some 1.7 billion adherents. Christendom has been counted as the world's largest religion, even outnumbering such popular religions as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Reports show, however, that in many professedly Christian countries, Christendom is losing its grip on the masses.

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People of all social backgrounds are abandoning their churches. Ronald F. Inglehart, a researcher at the University of Michigan and director of the World Values Survey, said that religion is playing a waning role in developed lands. The magazine *Bible Review* quotes him as saying: "Not only has weekly church attendance plunged, but Latin American countries are now sending missionaries to save the souls of their former colonizers." He claims that the "collapse of religion" is particularly striking in some northern European countries. In Norway and Denmark, only 5 percent of the population are regular churchgoers. In Sweden the figure is as low as 4 percent, and in Russia 2 percent.

Reports from Germany show that between the years 1984 and 1993, the number of regular churchgoers among registered Catholics declined from 25.3 percent to 19 percent. By 1992, only 4 percent of Protestants were regularly attending Sunday services. In 1999, *Christianity Today* reported: "Only one German in ten goes to church each week."

Regarding the decline in believers in Britain, the newspaper *The Guardian* says: "Christianity has never looked in worse shape." The article states that "for priest and presbyter, 1950-2000 was the worst of half-centuries." Referring to a special report on religion in the United Kingdom, the newspaper shows that not only young people but also the elderly are losing faith in institutional religion. It says: "Older people are losing faith in God as they age. New research confirming the trend will shock Britain's crisis-hit churches, which until now have regarded the elderly as the enduring backbone of their dwindling congregations."

Similar trends are found outside of Europe. For instance, the Canadian magazine *Alberta Report* says that Canada is experiencing a "collapse of institutional belief and worship" and that "three times as many Canadians prefer their own subjective imaginings of God to submission to a clear creed."

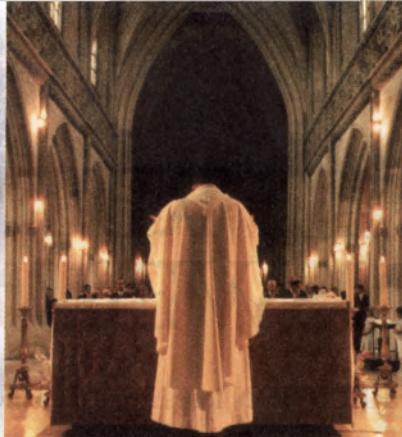
Many people simply do not feel spiritually enriched or enlightened by attending church services. According to Canada's *Maclean's* magazine, both Jews and Catholics who were interviewed at a Himalayan ashram, or Hindu religious retreat, voiced the opinion: "We were no longer moved and touched by wooden rituals." Indeed, even after many years of faithful church attendance, some find themselves wondering, 'What have I really learned in church? Am I closer to God as a result?' No wonder that, as author Gregg Easterbrook put it, "in the West, spiritual poverty has replaced material poverty as the leading want of our age."

Of course, there are many lands in which church attendance figures are more robust. However, attending church does not always mean adhering loyally to church teachings. For example, the Australian newspaper *The Age* states that in the West, "the proportion of Christians who practise their religion is declining rapidly. In much of Africa, Asia and Latin America, Christianity is a veil behind which many people continue to embrace more exotic tribal or cultic beliefs that have nothing to do with orthodox Christian teachings, often contradict them, and were officially jettisoned years ago."

Why are so many people, young and old, abandoning their churches? A big factor, it seems, is disillusionment.

### **Religion's Dismal Record**

*The Guardian* makes the following observation: "The Roman Catholic church had a deplorable record of colluding with fascism throughout the 20th century, from the congratulations it bestowed on General Franco after the Spanish civil war, to its recent efforts on behalf of General Pinochet." The *Guardian* also noted that Pope Pius XII, the wartime pontiff, "was happy enough to come to an arrangement with [Hitler] and steer clear of potential embarrassments like denouncing the Holocaust."



**Lavish ceremonies leave many  
feeling spiritually unfulfilled**

*The Age* states: "The claims of Christianity have rung hollow on too many occasions. Christians have not managed to preserve their own internal peace and unity. . . . The many wars of plunder and conquest justified in terms of winning converts to Christ attest to that. Faith, hope and love may be the pre-eminent Christian virtues, but those who are said to aspire to those virtues can be just as cynical, just as prone to despondency as non-Christians, and arguably no more charitable. . . . It was a Christian country that gave birth to the Holocaust and another that unleashed the horrors of atomic warfare on Japan."

Some might argue that Christendom has long promoted such virtues as prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. However, *The Age* comments: "Well, as a rule Christians

in Europe, North America and Australia consume far more than their share of the Earth's resources and haven't stopped at tolerating the exploitation, oppression and environmental degradation of weaker neighbors to feed their appetites."

As to Christendom's future, *The Age* continues: "Without a healthy institutional expression, Christianity can never hope to reclaim the social power it had in centuries past. This may be good or bad, depending on one's point of view. But it is the reality confronting Christianity in the years ahead."

As a result of such decay in the world of organized religion, many are turning away from the established churches. But does the alternative they find really satisfy their needs? Is it the answer?

**Many have turned away from traditional  
religions because of their role in supporting  
wars and oppressive political regimes**

foto: age fotostock



# IS “PRIVATE RELIGION” THE ANSWER?

**AS ORGANIZED RELIGION** loses its grip on the masses, it is hardly surprising that so many people would formulate their own personal religion. The questions are, though, Can doing so really satisfy one’s spiritual needs? Is “private religion” the answer?

To address these questions, we might first consider whether private religion can truly stand up under the scrutiny of our “power of reason,” one of the greatest gifts that humans possess.—Romans 12:1.

The reasoning mind tends to reject what is self-contradictory. However, in a survey of private religion in Sweden, it was concluded that people often “rather spontaneously combine different (and possibly logically incompatible) life philosophy elements into their own philosophy.”

For example, only 2 percent of those who claimed to be “Christian in their own way” mentioned Jesus, even as a historical person. Yet, belief in reincarnation was mentioned frequently. Now, is it not inconsistent to label oneself a follower of Jesus Christ while ignoring his life and teachings—and even embracing doctrines diametrically opposed to those of Christ?\*

Our power of reason also tends to shy away from things that seem hopelessly vague and undefinable. However, when asked whether they believed in “God or a divine power,” most people interviewed answered that “Something” of that sort might exist. One said: “I believe in something supernatural but not necessarily a God figure.” Those who did believe in God felt that he “played a rather insignificant role in their life.” The report thus described private religion as a “diffuse conceptual world,” and it concluded by quoting one

of the most common answers: “I believe in something, but I am not sure what.”

A study of private religion in Canada showed similar results. The magazine *Alberta Report* observes: “We now see a high level of belief in almost anything imaginable, but there’s no rhyme or reason to it. And when we then try to measure the sort of guidance these private beliefs play in people’s lives, there’s really nothing there. There’s no ultimate moral authority. So it really doesn’t add up to anything.” The magazine spoke of

**Should we view religion as a mere buffet, picking and choosing beliefs that appeal to us?**

\* Jesus did not teach that the dead are reincarnated. Rather, he taught that the dead are in a sleeplike state of nonexistence, awaiting a future resurrection.—John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14.



"the fragmented god" because those espousing such beliefs are "grasping bits and pieces of the traditional creed." Does it strike you as sound reasoning to base religious beliefs—even a hope for the future—on such vague, tenuous, and fragmentary ideas?

### Our Need for Fellowship

Fellowship, brotherhood, and solidarity have long been cherished by religious believers. (Acts 2:42, 46) But since private religion is just that—private—how can it fill these needs?

Doesn't private religion, with "every man his own church," only multiply and deepen the religious divisions among people? "Religion is now a matter of private judgment . . . , and thus we have become a country of not a few hundred different creeds but a few million," Alberta

*Report* noted. Not surprisingly, then, private religion has even been described as a form of spiritual anarchy.

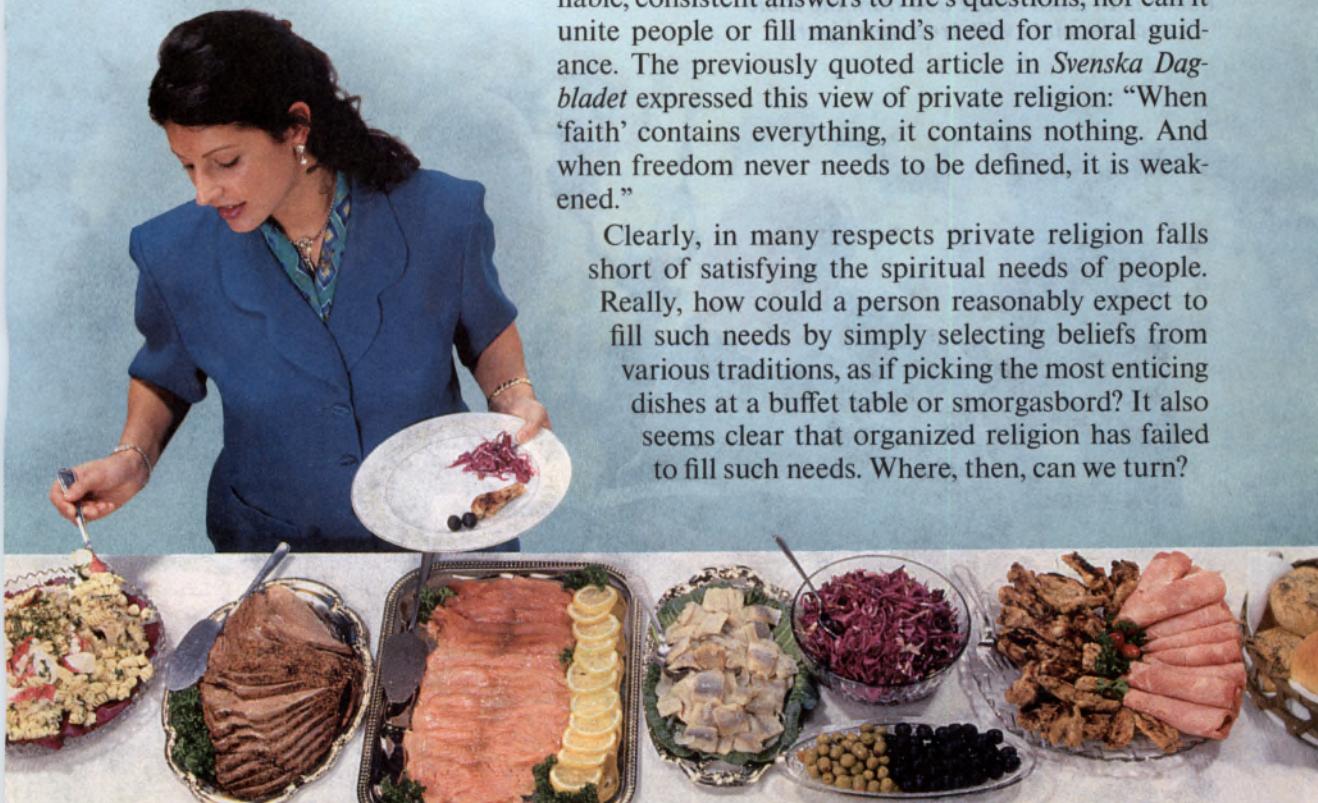
### What About Values?

Swedish Bishop Martin Lönnebo points out in an interview with the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* that "private religion cannot enrich our age, and it has trouble transferring its values to a new epoch." This opinion finds a measure of confirmation in a common attitude among Swedish parents toward raising children. *Svenska Dagbladet* summarizes the attitude this way: "Believe what you want! And don't force your children to decide. But let them choose when they are old enough."

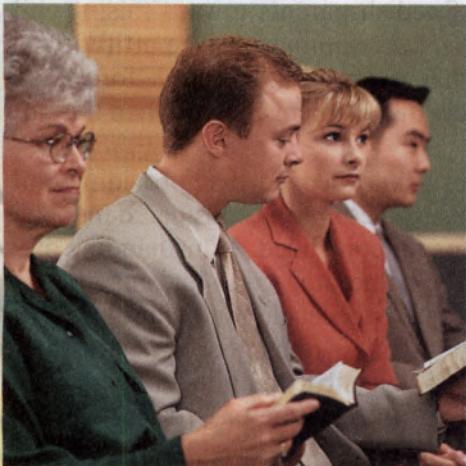
The newspaper acknowledged that providing children with religious values may be considered indoctrination. Yet, the paper concluded: "This handing over to children can be something good and may be the only way for them . . . to decide for themselves." Indeed, the current plight of young people suggests that private religion has done little to unite families on the basis of solid values that can be passed on from one generation to the next.

It seems, then, that private religion cannot offer reliable, consistent answers to life's questions, nor can it unite people or fill mankind's need for moral guidance. The previously quoted article in *Svenska Dagbladet* expressed this view of private religion: "When 'faith' contains everything, it contains nothing. And when freedom never needs to be defined, it is weakened."

Clearly, in many respects private religion falls short of satisfying the spiritual needs of people. Really, how could a person reasonably expect to fill such needs by simply selecting beliefs from various traditions, as if picking the most enticing dishes at a buffet table or smorgasbord? It also seems clear that organized religion has failed to fill such needs. Where, then, can we turn?



# THE BEST WAY TO SATISFY YOUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS



***The best way to satisfy your spiritual needs is to learn about God from the Bible and associate with true worshipers***

**WHY DO PEOPLE** need religion? Some would say that humans turn to spiritual matters in order to find security in an insecure world. But there is more to it than that. An article in the journal *American Sociological Review* noted: "The need for security is not the only attraction of religion. People have always sought answers to such questions as: Where do we come from? Where are we going? Why are we here?"



No doubt you would agree that those are profoundly important questions. As such, do they not require reliable answers? Such questions are too important, too weighty, to be resolved by simply selecting religious beliefs from various traditions because these appeal to us personally. If we are to find solid, reliable answers to life's deeper questions, surely we need a better method.

Is there something better? Ferrar Fenton, a translator of the Bible, said something remarkable about that book. He called it "the only key that unlocks the Mystery of the Universe to Man, and the Mystery of Man to Himself." Yes, the Bible answers questions about the past, the present, and the future. It tells us where we came from, what the meaning of life is, how we can find happiness, and what the future holds for us. No other book in history has been as influential as the Bible; nor has any other book survived so many virulent attacks. Why, though, do so many disregard this unique book in their search for answers to life's questions?

Many people have not paused to consider the profound differences between the Bible and the churches they have known. They have seen how so-called Christians slaughter one another in God's name. Many have complained, as *The Guardian* noted, that "priests are more interested nowadays in raising money than in pastoral visits." They think, perhaps, that the Bible endorses or condones such behavior. The truth is, the Bible commands Christians to "love one another," and it tells those who preach the word, "You received free, give free." (John 13:34; Matthew 10:8) Is it fair, then, to judge the Bible by the deeds of people who claim to respect it but do not follow it?

Many believe that the Bible is unscientific, self-contradictory, and old-fashioned. But a thorough investigation shows the opposite. Granted, the Bible is not a science textbook. Yet, when it does touch on subjects relating to science—such as the order in which living things appeared on earth, the shape of

the earth, or the proper treatment of infectious diseases—the Bible says nothing incorrect. On the contrary, it contains statements that were centuries ahead of their time. And although the Bible is composed of 66 books written over a period of 1,600 years, all of them are in harmony with one another. Furthermore, the Bible exhibits extraordinary insight into human nature, making it as up-to-date today as ever.

This remarkable book says something crucial about the worship of God. It says that such worship must be carried out, not on man's terms, but on God's terms. (John 5:30; James 4:13-15; 2 Peter 1:21) But few people have truly observed that principle. From earliest times men have made religions to suit their own purposes. That is true when people carve their gods from pieces of wood and worship them. It is true when religious institutions teach doctrines that they have invented. And is it not also true of those individuals who tailor a private religion to suit their own preferences?

Consider an alternative. Why not do as a chief justice of the United States Supreme Court did? In the same way that he tried cases in court, he impartially investigated the evidence for and against the truthfulness of the Bible. With what result? He said: "I have come to the decision that the Bible is a supernatural book, that it has come from God."

How can you make a similar investigation yourself? As a suggestion, you might try a systematic study of the Bible, examining its answers to the questions raised at the outset of this article. There are about six million of Jehovah's Witnesses, in 235 countries, who have made such a study. They volunteer their time in order to share with others what they have learned. The home Bible study course they offer without charge has helped millions to find a faith that is more than a fad or a matter of taste. The true, pure Christianity presented in the Bible is not just another religion. It represents the truth about God and his purposes. So why settle for less?—John 17:17.



# AUSTRALIA'S INFAMOUS ERA OF CONVICTS

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN AUSTRALIA

**JOHN HILL:** *Convicted of stealing one linen handkerchief valued at six pence and banished to Australia for seven years.*

**ELIZABETH BASON:** *Convicted of stealing seven yards of calico. Although sentenced to be hanged, her sentence was changed to banishment for seven years.*

**JAMES BARTLETT:** *Declared guilty of stealing a thousand pounds of rope yarn. He was banished to Australia for seven years.*

**GEORGE BARSBY:** *Found guilty of assaulting William Williams and of stealing from him one silk purse, one gold watch, and six guineas (about six British pounds). He was sentenced to be hanged, but the sentence was changed to banishment for the rest of his natural life.*

THESE are but four examples of individuals convicted in England and then banished to Australia in the late 18th century. Some 160,000 people shared a similar fate during the infamous convict era. Women, in many cases even with their children, were routinely sentenced for from 7 to 14 years.

"Many of Australia's 'criminals' were boys and girls not yet in their teens," says Bill Beaty in *Early Australia—With Shame Remembered*. One convict, he reports, was a child of only seven. The boy was banished to Australia "for the term of his natural life."

Yet, the situation for some convicts was not a hopeless one. In fact, banishment for some eventually meant a better life. Indeed, the whole convict era was a bag of contradictions; it was a mixture of brutality and compassion, of death and hope. And it all began in Britain.

## The Convict Era Begins

Eighteenth-century Britain went through social changes that led to an increase in crime,

which was often a result of abject poverty. To curb this trend, authorities introduced harsh laws and penalties. Early in the 19th century, some 200 offenses carried the death penalty. "The smallest theft," observed one traveler, "is punished with death." Indeed, one 11-year-old boy was hanged for stealing a handkerchief!

Early in the 18th century, however, an act was passed that allowed for the death sentence to be commuted in many cases to transportation to Britain's colonies in North America. Thus, in time, some 1,000 convicts a year were being shipped away, at first mainly to Virginia and Maryland. But when the colonies won their independence from Britain in 1776, this practice ceased. Thereafter, convicts were thrown into the infamous prison hulks that dotted London's river Thames. These floating jails obviously had limited capacity. So, what was to be done?

Explorer Captain James Cook furnished the answer when he claimed New Holland—now

Australia—for Britain. Shortly thereafter, in 1786, Australia's east coast was earmarked for penal colonies. The following year the "First Fleet" left England to found the colony of New South Wales.\* Other fleets followed, and soon a number of convict settlements sprang up in Australia, along with one on Norfolk Island, 1,000 miles northeast of Sydney.

### **Trials at Sea**

The early voyages to the penal settlements were a nightmare for the convicts, who were crammed into wet, stinking hulls. Hundreds died en route; others perished soon after arrival. Scurvy took a heavy toll. Eventually, however, doctors were assigned to the convict ships, especially those carrying women convicts. This led to a dramatic improvement in survival rates. Eventually, faster ships cut sailing time from about seven months to four months, and then even more passengers survived.

Shipwreck too was a threat. Five days out of England and still within sight of the French coast, the British convict ship *Amphitrite* encountered a horrific gale. Battered mercilessly for two days, she ran aground at five o'clock on the evening of August 31, 1833, three quarters of a mile offshore.

Help was rejected, and the lifeboats were not launched. Why not? Because it was believed that the convicts—120 women and children—might escape! So after three terrifying hours, the disintegrating ship spilled its human cargo into the sea. Most of the crew and all of the 120 women and children perished. During the next few days, 82 bodies washed up onto the shore—one was that of a woman clutching her child in an embrace that death failed to break.

### **When Death Was Preferred**

The governor of New South Wales, Sir Thomas Brisbane, declared that the worst convicts of New South Wales and Tasmania must be sent to Norfolk Island. "The felon who is sent there," he said, "is forever

excluded from all hope of return." Sir Ralph Darling, a later governor, vowed to make the island "a place of [the most extreme] punishment short of death." Norfolk Island became just that, especially when aristocrat-born John Price became governor.

Price, it was said, "seemed to know, with terrifying accuracy, the way a criminal's mind worked, and this, coupled with his merciless administering of the Law, gave him an almost hypnotic power over [the convicts]." Price's minimum of 50 lashes or of ten days in a cell with up to 13 other prisoners, with standing room only, was for such offenses as singing, not walking fast enough, or not pushing hard enough on cartloads of stone.

Many prisoners sought peace in death. Reporting on a rebellion by 31 convicts, of whom 13 were executed and 18 reprieved, a clergyman wrote: "It is a literal fact that each man who heard his reprieve wept bitterly, and that each man who heard his condemnation to death went down on his knees, with dry eyes, and thanked God." This clergyman added: "When the irons were struck off and the death warrant read, they knelt down to receive it as the will of God. Next, by a spontaneous act, [the condemned] humbly kissed the feet of him who brought them peace."



**SIR THOMAS  
BRISBANE**



**GOVERNOR  
LACHLAN  
MACQUARIE**



***The British  
convict ship  
"Amphitrite"***

\* For a discussion of the penal colony at Botany Bay, please see *Awake!* of February 8, 2001, page 20.

Only the clergy, with their ecclesiastical immunity, dared speak out against such cruelty. "No language of mine can ever convey an adequate notion of [Price's] barbarous inhumanity . . . towards the prisoners," one cleric wrote. "It is sickening to think of, and it can be practised with impunity."

### A Sliver of Hope Appears

With the arrival of Captain Alexander Maconochie, some relief came to Norfolk Is-



## REPORT BY A CONVICT DESCENDANT

A fifth-generation descendant of two convicts tells how one of his forefathers came to Australia. He explains:

"At the age of 19, one of my ancestors was sentenced . . . for stealing a pocketbook. He left England aboard the ship *George III* on December 12, 1834, with 308 passengers—220 of whom were convicts. By the time the ship sighted the coast of Tasmania on April 12, 1835, 50 prisoners were down with scurvy. A soldier's wife, 3 children, and 12 others had died. Two children were born during the long voyage.

"Six weeks out to sea, fire broke out on board. But disaster was averted, thanks to the courage of two prisoners who prevented two casks of gunpowder from igniting. As it was, many provisions were destroyed, leaving supplies short for the remainder of the voyage. In his endeavor to make port speedily, the captain chose a shorter passage through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel at the southern tip of Tasmania. At 9:30 p.m., the ship struck an uncharted rock, today known as King George Rock, three miles offshore and sank. Of the 133 who drowned, almost all were prisoners locked below deck. Only 81 of the original 220 convicts survived. One was my ancestor. In 1843 he married a freed convict, and two years later he was pardoned. He died in 1895."

land in 1840. He devised a mark system that combined reform with reward and enabled convicts to earn their freedom after accruing a certain number of marks, or credits. "I believe," Maconochie wrote, "recovery is always possible, if properly sought. There is indefinite elasticity in the human mind if its faculties are placed in healthful action, and not either diseased by mal-treatment, or locked up in the torpor of a living grave."

So successful were Maconochie's reforms that they were later adopted in England, Ireland, and the United States. At the time, however, Maconochie cut more than just new ground; he also cut the egos of some influential people whose methods he repudiated. As a result, he was eventually removed from office. With his departure, brutality revisited Norfolk Island. But not for long. In 1854, after strong complaints by the clergy, the island was abandoned as a penal settlement, and its convicts were shipped to Port Arthur in Tasmania.

Port Arthur also inspired fear, especially in the early years. However, the brutality exercised there was not in the same league as that meted out on Norfolk Island. The practice of flogging, for example, was all but abandoned at Port Arthur by 1840.

Tasmania's strict governor, George Arthur, wanted to give the colony "a reputation for machine-like discipline," writes Ian Brand in *Port Arthur—1830-1877*. At the same time, Arthur wanted every convict to know "the rewards for good behaviour and the punishments for bad." To that end he placed the convicts into seven classes, ranging from those who were granted ticket-of-leave for good behavior to those who were sentenced to hard labor in chains.

### Banishment—A Blessing for Many

"Except those who were confined to the penal settlements at Port Arthur, Norfolk Island, . . . and such places during their grimmest periods," writes Beatty, "the convicts often had better prospects than they would have had in the

country of their birth. . . . They had opportunities for making good."

Indeed, convicts who gained an early pardon (emancipists) as well as those who served out their time (expirees) found that many opportunities opened up to them and their families. Therefore, few returned to England when freed.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie, a champion of freed convicts, said: "When once a man is free his former state should no longer be remembered or allowed to act against him; let him feel himself eligible for any situation which he has by a long term of upright conduct proved himself worthy of filling."

Macquarie backed up his words by giving freed convicts land. Then he assigned convicts

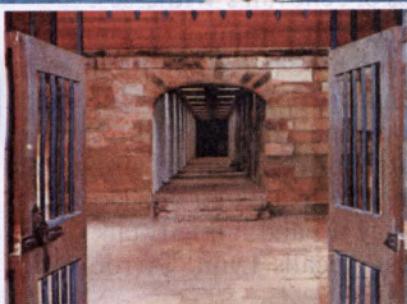
to help those who had been freed from prison to work their land and to perform various duties in their homes.

In time, many hardworking and enterprising ex-convicts gained wealth, respect and, in some cases, even fame. Samuel Lightfoot, for example, played a key role in establishing the first hospitals in Sydney and Hobart. William Redfern became a respected physician, and Francis Greenway left his mark in and around Sydney in the form of distinctive architecture.

Finally, after 80 years, banishment to Australia ceased in 1868. Today Australia's modern, multicultural society gives little evidence of those early years. The ruins of penal settlements are now merely tourist attractions. Yet, a closer look reveals many less painful reminders of the convict era: bridges, old buildings, and even churches—all erected by convicts. Some are in excellent repair and in use to this very day.

**This lighthouse at Sydney Harbor  
is a replica of one designed by  
ex-convict Francis Greenway**

**Norfolk Island's  
inaccessible coastline**



**Cell block of the  
Port Arthur convict prison**



**The old military barracks on Norfolk Island**



**Different tastes in music  
can present a challenge**

## Why Is My Roommate So Hard to Live With?

**"I'm neat, real neat. But when I come home, my roommate is sprawled out on the floor watching TV—papers and popcorn everywhere. Each time I come home, I have this mental picture of what I'm going to see, and I say to myself, 'I don't want to go in there.' "**—David.

**"My roommate was a spoiled brat. I guess she figured that she had a maid and a butler living with us. And she always wanted things done her way."**—Renee.\*

**L**EARNING to tolerate a stranger's idiosyncrasies may teach . . . flexibility and the art of compromise," said an article in *U.S. News & World Report*. "But the learning process is often painful." Those who have ever had a roommate might agree.

Many university students live with a roommate to help trim the high cost of schooling. Other young ones move in with a roommate because they want independence from their parents. Among young Christians, many have taken on a roommate in order to pursue

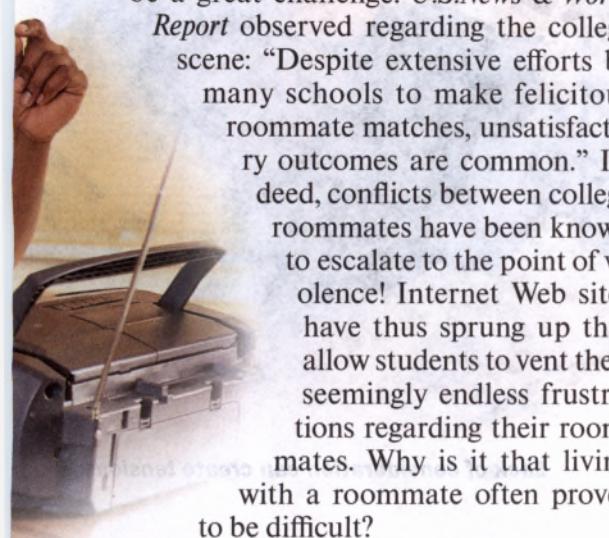


spiritual interests. (Matthew 6:33) They find that having someone to share living expenses helps them to serve as full-time evangelizers. Having a roommate is also at times part of missionary life and of service at various branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses.\*

*Awake!* talked with a number of young men and women who have lived with roommates. All agreed that a roommate can be much more than someone who helps with the rent—a roommate can be a source of companionship, someone to talk to and do things with. "We'd stay up and talk girl talk or just watch movies," recalls Lynn. "A roommate

\* Some of the names have been changed.

\* Although this counsel is directed to young people, it may also prove helpful to older ones who have had to take up living with a roommate after changed circumstances, such as widowhood.



can also encourage you," says Renee. "Sometimes when you're working, trying to pay all your bills, trying to preach, it's nice to have a roommate to encourage you."

Even so, living with a roommate—especially one who at first is a virtual stranger—can be a great challenge. *U.S. News & World Report* observed regarding the college scene: "Despite extensive efforts by many schools to make felicitous roommate matches, unsatisfactory outcomes are common." Indeed, conflicts between college roommates have been known to escalate to the point of violence! Internet Web sites have thus sprung up that allow students to vent their seemingly endless frustrations regarding their roommates. Why is it that living with a roommate often proves to be difficult?

#### **Living With a Stranger**

"Moving in with a stranger is kind of an interesting experience," says Mark. "You don't really know what he's going to be like." Indeed, the thought of living with someone with whom you may have little or nothing in common can be quite unsettling. True, Christians should have much in common and many things to talk about. Even so, David admits: "I had a lot of fears about having a roommate."

It turned out, however, that David's roommate had a background similar to his. But not all matches work so well. Says Mark: "My first roommate just didn't talk much. When you are with someone in close quarters, you really need to talk. But he wouldn't. It really got to me."

Differences in background can cause yet other stresses and strains. Lynn says: "When you first move out on your own, you want to

do things your way. But you soon find out that there are other people to consider." Indeed, coming from the secure cocoon of your family's home, it can be quite a shock to find out just how differently other people might view things.

#### **Different Backgrounds, Different Ways**

Much depends upon the training—or lack of training—that one received from his or her parents. (Proverbs 22:6) Young Fernando says: "I'm a neat person, and my roommate was sloppy. Take the closet: He liked throwing things all over. I liked hanging things up." Sometimes the differences in standards are quite extreme.

Recalls Renee: "I had a roommate whose bedroom literally looked like a dump! I've also had roommates who don't clean up the table after eating or who leave their dishes in the sink for two or three days." Yes, when it comes to housework, some roommates seem to be the embodiment of the words of Proverbs 26:14: "A door keeps turning upon its pivot, and the lazy one upon his couch."

On the other hand, rooming with someone who registers far on the other end of the neatness spectrum may not be much fun either. Says a young woman named Lee of one roommate: "As far as she was concerned, the cleaning needed to be done hourly. By no means am I dirty, but I sometimes left stuff, like books, out on my bed. And she felt she had to police the situation."

Roommates may also have their own ideas about personal hygiene. Mark explains: "My roommate gets up at the last minute. He just runs to the sink, throws some water over his hair, and heads out the door."

Differences in background and personality can affect choices of entertainment and recreation. "We don't like the same kind of music," says Mark of his roommate. Where there is mutual respect, however, such differences can be beneficial, perhaps helping both

roommates to broaden their tastes. But all too often, these differences result in conflict. "I like Spanish music," says Fernando, "but my roommate is always criticizing it."

### The Phone—A Problem

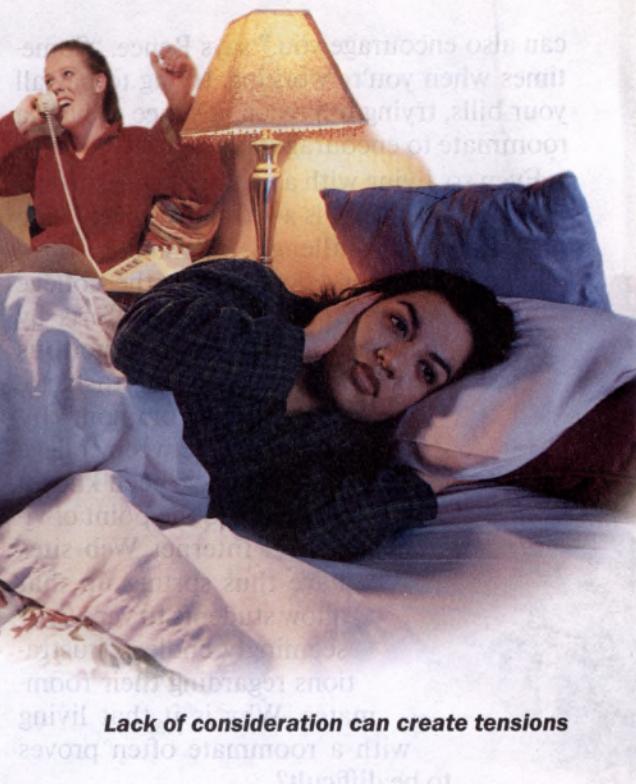
Use of the telephone can be one of the greatest causes of conflict. Says Mark: "I like to go to bed. But my roommate stays up late talking on the phone. That can get annoying after a while." Lynn similarly recalls: "Sometimes my roommate's friends would call at three or four in the morning. If she wasn't there, I had to get up and answer the phone." Their solution? "We made sure that we each had our own phone."

However, not all youths can afford to have their own phones, and many are forced to share. This can set the stage for some very tense times. Recalls Renee: "One of my roommates was dating, and she was often on the phone for hours. One month she ran up a bill of over 90 dollars. She expected each of us to pay a part of it, since we had all agreed to split the bill evenly."

Just getting access to the phone can be another issue. "I was rooming with someone older than me," recalls Lee. "And we had just one phone. I'd be on the phone all the time because I had a lot of friends. She never said anything. I figured that if she wanted to use the phone, she would tell me. I realize now that I was being inconsiderate."

### Lack of Privacy

"Everybody needs some time by himself," says David. "Sometimes, I just need to lay back and do nothing at all." However, find-



### Lack of consideration can create tensions

ing private moments can be challenging when you're sharing your living quarters with someone. "I like to have my alone time," agrees Mark. "So the hardest thing for me has been the lack of privacy. My roommate and I have the same schedule. So privacy is hard to find."

Even Jesus Christ occasionally needed some time alone. (Matthew 14:13) It can be frustrating, therefore, when the presence of a roommate makes it difficult, if not impossible, to read, study, or meditate. Says Mark: "It's hard to study because something is always going on. He has friends over, he's on the phone, or he's watching the TV or listening to the radio."

Nevertheless, as challenging as putting up with a roommate can be, thousands of young ones have made a success of it. Further articles in this series will discuss some practical ways to make the most out of rooming with someone.

# DESPITE TRIALS, MY HOPE HAS REMAINED BRIGHT

*The year was 1943, and World War II was raging. Because I took a neutral stand, I was in prison in Budapest, Hungary. There, a bearded Orthodox priest offered me his Bible in exchange for three days' rations of my bread. Although I was starving, I am convinced that I made a good exchange.*

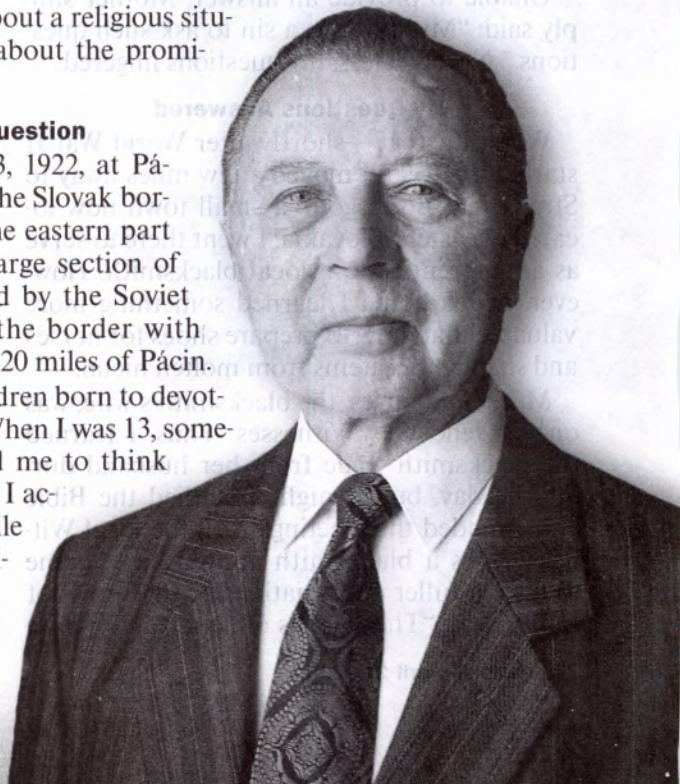
AS TOLD  
BY  
ANDREJ  
HANÁK

**I**T WAS a challenge to maintain a clear Christian conscience when the Nazis took control of our land during World War II. Later, during more than 40 years of Communist rule, it was also a struggle to serve our Creator, Jehovah God, without compromising Bible principles. Before I describe what it was like to keep godly integrity back then, let me provide a little background about myself. You will no doubt find it interesting to learn what Jehovah's Witnesses endured in those early years. First, let me tell about a religious situation that made me wonder about the prominent religions in our area.

#### A Puzzling Religious Question

I was born on December 3, 1922, at Pácin, a Hungarian village near the Slovak border. Slovakia then made up the eastern part of Czechoslovakia. When a large section of Czechoslovakia was absorbed by the Soviet Union after World War II, the border with Ukraine was moved to within 20 miles of Pácin.

I was the second of five children born to devoted Roman Catholic parents. When I was 13, something took place that caused me to think more seriously about religion. I accompanied Mother on a 50-mile religious pilgrimage to the village of Máriapócs in Hungary. We walked there because we





*The Bible I received in exchange for my ration of bread*

believed that doing so would ensure us a greater measure of blessing. Both Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics made the pilgrimage. I previously supposed that these two churches were part of a somewhat united Catholic religion. But I soon learned differently.

It happened that the Greek Catholic Mass was celebrated first. So I decided to attend that one. Later, when Mother learned that I had gone to it, she was very upset. Somewhat bewildered, I asked: "What difference does it make what Mass we attend? Is it not the one body of Christ that we all partake of?"

Unable to provide an answer, Mother simply said: "My son, it is a sin to ask such questions." Nevertheless, my questions lingered.

#### **My Questions Answered**

When I was 17—shortly after World War II started in 1939—I moved a few miles away to Streda nad Bodrogom, a small town now located in eastern Slovakia. I went there to serve as an apprentice to a local blacksmith. However, at his home I learned something more valuable than how to prepare shoes for horses and shape other items from molten metal.

Mária Pankovics, the blacksmith's wife, was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Thus, I learned the blacksmith trade from her husband during the day, but at night I studied the Bible and attended the meetings with the local Witnesses. As a blacksmith apprentice, I came to have a fuller appreciation for the words of Psalm 12:6: "The sayings of Jehovah are pure

sayings. As silver refined in a smelting furnace of earth, clarified seven times." How pleasant were those evenings of examining the sayings of Jehovah and of having my Bible questions answered!

Little did I realize that very soon, as World War II intensified, my newfound faith would be put to the test.

#### **Imprisoned for My Faith**

It was not long after I began my blacksmith apprenticeship that young men in Hungary were required to participate in military training. But I decided to follow the Bible principle found at Isaiah 2:4, 'not to learn war anymore.' For my resolve, I was sentenced to ten days in prison. After my release, I continued to study the Bible. Then, on July 15, 1941, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

By that time, Nazi Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, and eastern Europe was engulfed in war. War propaganda grew intense and nationalistic feelings ran high. But in harmony with their Bible-based convictions, Jehovah's Witnesses remained neutral.

In August 1942 a vicious attack was mounted against us. The authorities prepared ten collection points where the Witnesses, young and old alike, were brought together. Even those who were not yet baptized but were known to have contact with us were taken to these collection points. I was among those taken to a prison in Sárospatak, a city about 15 miles from my village of Pácín.

The youngest inmate in prison was only three months old. He had been incarcerated along with his Witness mother. When we asked for some food at least for the child, the guard retorted: "Let him cry. It will help him to grow into a strong Witness." We felt sorry for the little one, but it also saddened us that the young guard's heart could be so hardened by nationalistic propaganda.

At my trial, I was given a two-year sentence. I was then transferred to the prison at 85 Margit Körút in Budapest. The cells, measuring about 15 by 20 feet, were crammed with some 50 to 60 people. For eight months we lived there without any bathroom or toilet facilities. So we couldn't shower or bathe, not to mention wash our clothes. All of us were covered with lice, and at night, bugs marched over our dirty bodies.

We had to get up at four in the morning. Our breakfast consisted of only a small cup of coffee. At noontime we received a similar amount of soup and about a third of a pound of bread along with a little mash. Nothing was provided in the evening. Although I was 20 and had been in good health, I eventually became so weak that I was unable to walk. Prisoners started to die from starvation and infections.

During that time a new prisoner came to our cell. He was the bearded Orthodox priest I mentioned at the outset. He had been allowed to keep his Bible. Oh, how I desired to read it! But when I asked him to let me do so, he refused. Later, though, he approached me. "Hey, lad," he said. "You can have the Bible. I will sell it to you."

"Sell it? For what?" I asked. "I have no money with me."

That is when he offered me his Bible in exchange for my ration of bread for three days. How rewarding that exchange proved to be! Despite my physical hunger, I received the spiritual food that helped sustain me as well as others in our trials during those troublous times. I have kept that Bible to this day.  
—Matthew 4:4

#### Our Neutrality Tested

In June 1943, young male Witnesses from throughout Hungary—about 160 of us—were taken to Jászberény, a town near Budapest. When we refused to put on military caps and to have a tricolor band placed on our arms, we were put into freight cars and taken to the Budapest-Kőbánya train station. There

**Tibor Haffner  
encouraged me  
in my trials**



military officers called us out of the freight cars by name, one at a time, and ordered us to report as soldiers.

We were commanded to say: "Heil Hitler," which means "Hail to Hitler." When each Witness refused to do so, he was severely beaten. Eventually, the tormentors got tired, so one of them said: "Well, we'll beat one more, but he is not going to survive it."

Tibor Haffner, an older, longtime Witness, had obtained a copy of the list of Witnesses on board. He whispered to me: "Brother, you're next. Be courageous! Trust in Jehovah." At that I was called. As I stood at the door of the freight car, I was told to come down. "There is nothing left on him to beat," one of the soldiers said. Then he told me: "If you report as you've been asked, we'll see that you are assigned to the kitchen to prepare food. Otherwise, you'll die."

"I won't report for military duty," I replied. "I want to go back to the freight cars where my brothers are."

#### In Our Next Issue

- Is World Peace Just a Dream?
- Meet the Mysterious Snow Leopard
- Comfort for Those Who Mourn

Taking pity on me, a soldier grabbed me and threw me back into the freight car. Since I weighed less than 90 pounds, that was not difficult for him to do. Brother Haffner came and placed his arm around my shoulders, caressed my face, and quoted Psalm 20:1 to me: "May Jehovah answer you in the day of distress. May the name of the God of Jacob protect you."

### In a Labor Camp

After that we were put on a boat and taken on the Danube River to Yugoslavia. In July 1943 we arrived at the labor camp near the city of Bor, which had one of the largest copper mines in Europe. In time, the population of the camp reached some 60,000 people of many nationalities, including some 6,000 Jews and about 160 of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Witnesses were put in one large barrack. In the middle of it were tables and benches, and we had our meetings twice a week there. We studied *Watchtower* magazines that were smuggled into the camp, and we read the Bible that I had exchanged for my bread allotment. We also sang songs and prayed together.

We tried to maintain good relations with other inmates, and this proved beneficial. One of our brothers had severe intestinal pains, and the guards were unwilling to arrange for help. As his condition worsened, one of the Jewish inmates, a doctor, agreed to operate. He gave the brother some primitive anesthetic.

### Witnesses in the Bor labor camp



A Witness funeral at the Bor labor camp with German soldiers present

ics and performed the operation with a sharpened spoon handle. The brother recovered and returned home after the war.

The work in the mines was exhausting, and food was scarce. Two brothers died in work accidents, and another from disease. In September 1944, as the Russian army was approaching, it was decided to empty the camp. What happened afterward would be hard to believe if I had not seen it with my own eyes.

### A March Filled With Horror

After a tiring week-long march, we arrived in Belgrade along with many Jewish prisoners. Then we continued several more days and found ourselves in the village of Cservenka.

When we arrived at Cservenka, Jehovah's Witnesses were ordered to make a formation, with five to each row. Then one Witness was taken from every second row. With tears in our eyes, we looked at those being taken away, thinking that they were going to be executed. But after a while they were back. What happened? The German soldiers had wanted them to dig graves, but a Hungarian commander explained that they had not eaten for a week and were too feeble to work.

That evening all of us Witnesses were taken to a loft in a building used for drying bricks. A German officer told us: "Be quiet and stay here. This is going to be a dog's night." He then locked the door. In a few minutes, we heard the yelling of the soldiers: "Come on!

*Jolana became my wife  
in September 1946*

Come on!" Then there was the sound of machine guns, followed by frightening silence. Again we heard, "Come on! Come on!" and more gunfire.

Through the roof, we could see what was happening. The soldiers would bring groups of dozens of Jewish inmates, stand them at the edge of a pit, and shoot them. Afterward the soldiers threw hand grenades on the piles of bodies. Before dawn all but eight of the Jewish prisoners were dead, and the German soldiers had run away. We were mentally and physically devastated. János Török and Ján Bali, still living, were among the Witnesses who were present at that execution.

#### **Preserved Alive**

With Hungarian soldiers guarding us, we continued our march westward and northward. We were repeatedly asked to become involved in military activities, yet we were able to maintain our neutrality and still survive.

In April 1945 we found ourselves between the German and the Russian armies at the city of Szombathely, near Hungary's border with Austria. When an air-raid alert was announced, a Hungarian captain, who was our guard, asked: "May I go with you to find shel-



ter? I can see that God is with you."

After the bombing was over, we left the city, making our way through the dead bodies of animals and humans.

Seeing that the end of the war was imminent, that same captain gathered us together and said: "Thank you for respecting me. Here I have some tea and sugar for each one. At least it is something." We thanked him for having treated us as humanely as he did.

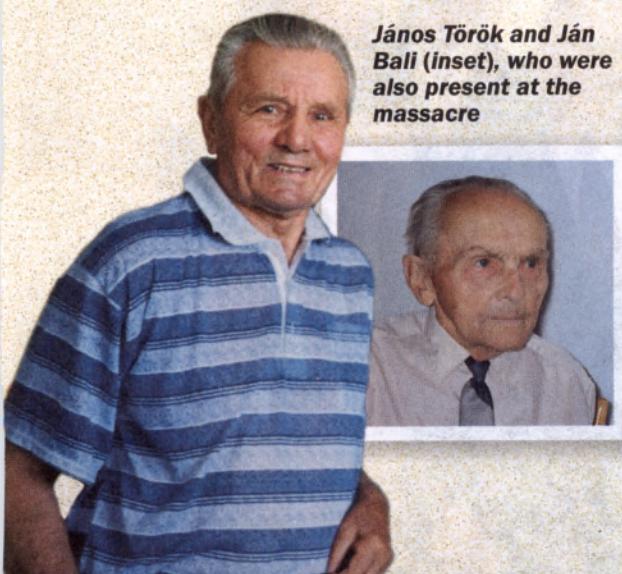
In a few days, the Russians arrived and we started on our way home in little groups. But our troubles were by no means over. After arriving in Budapest, we were taken into custody by the Russians and subjected to another draft —this time into the Soviet army.

The man in charge of the proceedings was a medical doctor, a high-ranking Russian official. As we entered the room, we did not recognize him, but he recognized us. He had been with us in the labor camp at Bor, and he was one of the few Jews who had survived the Nazi genocide. Seeing us, he ordered the guards: "Let these eight men go home." We thanked him, but above all, we thanked Jehovah for his protection.

#### **My Hope Still Bright**

Finally, on April 30, 1945, I arrived home in Pácin. Shortly afterward I returned to the home of the blacksmith in Streda nad Bodrogom to complete my apprenticeship. The Pankovics had given me a lot—not only a trade by which I could earn a living but more

**János Török and Ján Bali (inset), who were also present at the massacre**



important, the Bible truths that changed my life. Now they gave me something more. On September 23, 1946, their charming daughter, Jolana, became my wife.

Jolana and I continued our regular activity of Bible study and preaching. Then, in 1948, we realized the additional blessing of becoming parents to our son, Andrej. Our joy of religious freedom, however, did not last long. Soon the Communists took over our country, and another wave of persecution started. I was drafted in 1951, this time by the Czechoslovak Communist authorities. The scenario was repeated: a trial, a prison sentence, incarceration, slave labor, and starvation. But with God's help I again survived. As a result of an amnesty, I was released in 1952 and joined my family in Ladmovce, Slovakia.

Despite the ban on our Christian ministry, which lasted about 40 years, we continued our sacred service. From 1954 to 1988, I was privileged to serve as a traveling overseer. I visited congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses on weekends and encouraged the brothers and sisters to remain steadfast in their integrity. Then, during the week, I was with my family and did secular work to support us materially. All this time we felt Jehovah's loving direction.

I found the words of the Bible psalmist to be true: "Had it not been that Jehovah proved to be for us when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up even alive, when their anger was burning against us." —Psalm 124:2, 3.

In time, Jolana and I were happy to see Andrej get married and eventually become a mature Christian overseer. His wife, Eliška, and their two sons, Radim and Daniel, also became active Christian ministers. Then, in 1998, I suffered a great loss when my beloved Jolana died. Of all the trials I have gone through, this is the hardest to cope with. I miss her every day, but I find comfort in the precious resurrection hope.—John 5:28, 29.

Now, at 79 years of age, I serve as an elder in the village of Slovenské Nové Mesto, Slovakia. Here I find my greatest joy in sharing my precious Bible-based hope with my neighbors. When reflecting on the past, and on more than 60 years in Jehovah's service, I am convinced that with Jehovah's help we can endure all obstacles and trials. My desire and my hope are in agreement with the words of Psalm 86:12: "I laud you, O Jehovah my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify your name to time indefinite."



***With my son, his  
wife, and my  
grandsons***

# HOW SAFE ARE CARPETS?

**H**OW much time do you spend in indoor areas covered with carpets? A report in *New Scientist* magazine suggests that the answer may be a matter of concern, particularly for children.

The magazine noted: "Our exposure to most toxic pollutants is between 10 and 50 times higher in indoor environments than it is outdoors." John Roberts, an environmental engineer in the United States, claims that samples of carpet dust from typical homes can contain alarmingly high levels of pollutants. These include lead, cadmium, mercury, pesticides, and the carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Reportedly, pesticides carried into the home on shoes and pets' paws can increase the pesticide content of carpet dust 400-fold. These pollutants are said to persist for years. Since pesticides and PAHs are semivolatile, they evaporate, drift about, and then resettle on carpets or other surfaces.

Young children often play on the floor and then put their fingers in their mouth. So they are especially vulnerable to pollutants. Since young children have a higher metabolic rate than adults, weight for weight they breathe in much more air than do adults.

Some researchers wonder if the increase in indoor carpeted areas may be contributing to the upsurge in children's asthma, allergies, and cancer. Roberts observes: "A house with bare floors and a few area rugs will have about one-tenth of the dust found in a house with wall-to-wall carpet."

Roberts suggests that to make carpets safer, you should use a vacuum cleaner with a power head. Then, once a week for a period of several weeks, make 25 passes over the carpet within four feet of the main entrances, 16 passes over areas with heavy foot traffic, and 8 passes over the remainder of the carpeted areas.

After you have completed this simple procedure, if you then make half the above-recommended number of passes over the carpet each week, you should be able to keep dust levels low. Roberts also advises: "Put a high-quality doormat at each of the entrances to your home and wipe your feet twice before entering."



# The Intriguing Rock Engravings of VAL CAMONICA

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ITALY

*The sun's rays pass through a notch in Mount Concarena*

FOR millennia they have borne silent testimony to an ancient way of life. They are stylized figures engraved in stone that depict hunting, agriculture, warfare, and worship. In picturesque Val Camonica in the Alps of northern Italy, hundreds of thousands of such figures adorn the rocky landscape.

Today, in the oblique rays of the early morning sun, visitors to Val Camonica still find the engravings to be clearly visible. But who made them, and why?

## The Camunians

This beautiful valley is named for its ancient inhabitants—the Camunians. They first appear in history in the year 16 B.C.E., when they were subjugated by the Romans and lost their independence. However, the Val Camonica engravings began to be made many centuries before the arrival of the Roman legions.

Moreover, an analysis of what these engravings depict—arms, utensils, domestic animals, maps of villages—leads experts to conclude that the artists belonged to a population that

*Val Camonica is a World Heritage site*

*Rock carvings intended to ensure success in the hunt*

*A human figure praying with uplifted arms*



had a complex economy. They evidently engaged in a host of activities, including metallurgy, textile production, farming, stock raising, and commerce.

The vast majority of the engravings were made during the first millennium B.C.E., although many are much older. The Camunians' cultural apex seems to have occurred between 1000 and 800 B.C.E. Thousands of designs from this period depict details of their way of life. They show people bound together and men on horseback armed with spears, suggesting captured prisoners. There are also depictions of blacksmiths, draft horses, and wagons as well as buildings supported by posts.

### Inspiration From the Mountains

Scholars describe the authors of these depictions as 'artist-priests,' men who were moved by religious or mystic influences. They may have isolated themselves in quiet places away from the centers of population in order to reflect and meditate. In this respect, the Camunians may have been particularly inspired by at least two extraordinary natural phenomena that occur here a few days each year.

In spring and in autumn, the sun rises behind Mount Pizzo Badile, a majestic peak overlooking the valley. Before sunrise on certain days, sunlight is refracted around the mountain, causing an enormous shadow, surrounded by bright rays, to be projected up into a milky sky. This evocative display is still known as the "spirit of the mountain." And when the sun sets behind a narrow cleft in Mount Concarena, on the other side of the valley, a spectacular beam of light, which seems to split the mountain in two, shoots up into the darkening sky for just a few minutes before fading away. Apparently, in the minds of the valley's ancient inhabitants, such then-inexplicable occurrences endowed the place with supernatural qualities.

Concentrations of engravings are found at the foot of Mount Pizzo Badile and in its immediate vicinity. The engravings were made

with instruments of stone, horn, bone, and ivory. Sometimes the artist traced an outline with a pointed instrument. The engravings vary in depth from marks that only graze the surface of the rock to grooves of more than an inch in depth. There is evidence that the artists also used paints of a variety of colors, though it is no longer possible to see these colors with the naked eye.

### Engravings as a Form of Prayer

The Camunians may have been sun worshipers. This would explain one of the recurring themes of the engravings—a figure praying with uplifted arms before a disk, probably a symbol of the sun. Although archaeologist Ausilio Priuli identifies "the cult of the sun god" as the major one, he also mentions "minor cults." He observes: "Processions, propitiatory dances, sacrifices, ritual combat, and communal prayers were the commonest, most often depicted, religious acts. The very act of engraving was a form of prayer." But prayers for what?

According to Emmanuel Anati, an authority on prehistoric rock art, making the engravings "was considered part of the activities indispensable to ensuring the economic and social welfare of the group and friendly co-habitation with occult forces." The Camunians apparently hoped to enhance the productivity of the fields by portraying plowing, to increase the richness of pastures by depicting stock raising, to gain supremacy over their enemies by representing war, and so on.

Val Camonica is a World Heritage site, protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Interestingly, etched and painted rocks exist in at least 120 countries—in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America, and on numerous islands. Significantly, similar themes are repeated in rock-art designs around the world. These bear witness to man's natural desire to express himself and to look to spiritual forces beyond himself.

# Watching the World

## Most Precise Timekeeper

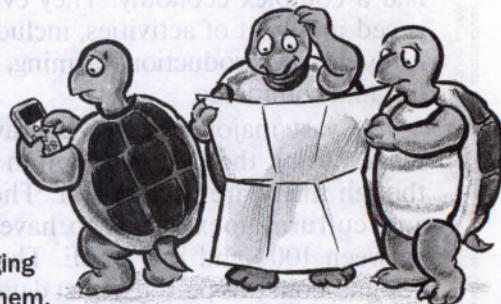
A team of U.S. scientists has developed a mercury-ion clock that is "precise to a single femtosecond—the smallest unit of time commonly used in science," reports *The Times* of London. It is said to be "about 1,000 times more accurate than the atomic clocks used to keep Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC), the worldwide time-keeping standard." Physicist Scott Diddams explains: "The most immediate applications will be in fundamental physics, to gain a much finer-grained understanding of the universe." In time, telephone networks and navigation satellites will also benefit. While Diddams claims that the timekeeping device is "the world's most stable clock," he says that there is potential to make it even better.

## "Most Accurate Census"?

The U.S. population survey of 2000 has been called "the most accurate census in history," states *The Wall Street Journal*. However, "the 2000 total includes 5.77 million people the Census Bureau believes exist but didn't actually count." The newspaper explains: "When it received no answers from what it believed were occupied addresses, the bureau simply directed its computers to 'impute' people, based on various clues, including how their neighbors responded." This was done even when officials were not sure that there was a home at the address. Guesses could include how many people lived there, their age, sex, race, and marital status. It is deemed accurate, an official stated, "because similar people do tend to live close to

## Misguided Help?

Some efforts to preserve the Japanese loggerhead turtle from extinction have been called into question, notes *The Daily Yomiuri*. Digging up turtle eggs, incubating them, and releasing them into the sea may actually hamper the turtles' inborn navigational abilities. Naturally hatched turtles "detect the earth's magnetism while toddling across the sand, thereby developing an instinct for direction," the newspaper reports. "Artificial hatching involves keeping baby turtles in a confined area before placing [them] in the natural ocean environment, which keeps them from developing their innate sense of orientation and ability to navigate the ocean on their own."



each other." In some states, imputed Americans made up over 3 percent of the total, and imputation was used to fill in the race category of over 11 million people.

## Deadly Trees?

A battle is being waged in France to determine the fate of some 400,000 trees that line the country's roads. Roadside trees are increasingly being blamed for deaths in motor accidents. Of the 7,643 road deaths in the year 2000, 799 involved hitting a tree, reports the French magazine *L'Express*. Some claim, though, that the real cause of the deaths is, not the trees, but alcohol and excessive speed. Nevertheless, between 10,000 and 20,000 trees that stand less than seven feet from the edge of the road are scheduled to be cut down. Referring to an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* on the matter, the French magazine article noted that the trees appear

to have committed "the serious crime of not moving out of the way of drunk drivers."

## Chinese Writing—A Dying Art?

"Chinese characters, painfully memorised by generations of Chinese children, are facing their gravest peril yet—from the computer," states *The Daily Telegraph* of London. "Members of China's educated elite, who always prided themselves on knowing the 6,000 characters by heart, are forgetting how to write. They can still read, but take away their computers and many find their minds go blank." The syndrome is called "'ti bi wang zi'—or forgetting the character as you lift the pen." Until the 1980's, almost everything was handwritten, but since then, advanced software has allowed Chinese characters to be entered on an ordinary keyboard. As a result, the art of writing handsome characters by hand, a highly prized skill said to reveal the inner per-

son, is dying out and is "causing alarm among linguists, psychologists and parents."

### Youthful Dieting

A recent survey of 1,739 Canadian girls aged 12 to 18 revealed that 27 percent display symptoms of eating disorders, says the *Globe and Mail* newspaper. Participants from urban, suburban, and rural populations completed a questionnaire that examined eating attitudes and body dissatisfaction. Data revealed that some as young as 12 engaged in binge eating and purging (self-induced vomiting) or used diet pills, laxatives, and diuretics to lose weight. According to Dr. Jennifer Jones, a research scientist with Toronto's University Health Network, girls in particular "need to develop healthy attitudes toward food and exercise. They need to learn about their bodies and that the bodies they are seeing on billboards, in magazines and

in rock videos are not normal." The *Globe* adds that "many teenaged girls are not aware that it is normal to accumulate fat during puberty, and that doing so is important to normal development."

### Pills in the Classroom

More and more children are taking pills to cope with mounting pressure in school, reports Germany's *Südwest Presse*. One in 5 elementary school children is said to take tranquilizers or performance-enhancing drugs. In high school, 1 student in 3 does. However, Albin Dannhäuser, president of the Bavarian Teachers Association, claims that taking medication to manage stress or to improve one's results is a poor choice, since it does nothing to help children solve their problems. He advises parents not to demand too much of their child but to "have his physical and mental health in mind as well as the development of a stable personality."

### Pest Weeds Put to Use

"Weeds like the water hyacinth, the lantana and parthenium have driven developers to despair with their resilience," states *India Today*. Brought to India by the British in 1941 for use as a hedge, *Lantana camara* has taken over more than 200,000 acres of land and has proved almost impossible to eradicate—manually, chemically, or biologically. The toxic effects of the weed prevent the growth of other plants, and whole villages have had to be shifted after an invasion. However, to the villagers of Lachhiwala, the weed has proved economically valuable. Lantana is used together with mud to erect houses and chicken coops. Stripped of its bark, the pest- and insect-resistant weed makes excellent furniture and baskets. Lantana leaves are used for mosquito repellent and for incense sticks. Powdered, the plant's roots are used to combat dental infections.

### Effect of Hopelessness

"Why do some people die while others, who may be no less ill, continue to live?" asks Dr. Stephen L. Stern of the department of psychiatry at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. "One answer to this question may lie in the presence or absence of hope." A study of 800 elderly Americans has suggested that hopelessness often leads to an earlier death. The researchers, however, point out that the effects of hopelessness often vary among individuals, depending on such factors as childhood experiences, depression, cultural background, and economic security.

### That All-Important Smile

"A simple smile is the best way to win friends and influence people," reports *The Times* of London. A national survey conducted for the Royal Mail reveals that the first thing most people notice about someone is his or her smile. Nearly half of those surveyed said that they would not do business with anyone who looked unfriendly. Women managers in particular are more likely to promote employees who smile. Says Brian Bates, coauthor of *The Human Face*: "This research shows how important smiling is in society. We would often

rather share our confidences, hopes and money with smilers." Smiling increases the body's production of pain-killing endorphins, he adds, and people who smile spontaneously "have a more successful life in personal and career terms."



## From Our Readers

**Teen Depression** How happy I was to receive the *Awake!* cover series "Help for Depressed Teens"! (September 8, 2001) I have been battling this illness for several years. Thank you for this helping hand at a difficult time.



*L. D., France*

I am a pediatric nurse. The scope of depression is underestimated by many but not by you. I have ordered a hundred copies of this magazine. I intend to deliver them to all the pediatricians and mental-health workers in this area.

*B. P., United States*

I have a number of relatives who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder. Recognizing these as illnesses rather than weaknesses goes a long way in restoring the dignity that many have lost. The suggestions you gave will help us all to be compassionate and supportive.

*C. M., Canada*

As soon as I got hold of this magazine, I began to read it. I shed tears of joy over the fact that young people are dear to your heart and that you dedicated 12 pages to the subject. Thanks ever so much!

*M. M., Austria*

This article really helped me to calm down and to be settled in my heart. Also, it made me aware that I am not the only one with this illness. I pray that Jehovah gives comfort and help to all people suffering from depression.

*Y. T., Japan*

I am going to keep a supply of this issue on hand at all times. It is exactly what our teenagers need, and I believe it will help many of them and their parents to get through what you accurately described as a disease. It will probably save lives.

*R. F., United States*

I was comforted to know that this emotional pain does not come from some spiritual deficiency. My heart felt lighter, and I cried when I read that "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart."—Psalm 34:18.

*A. I., Japan*

I am 16, and I have had recurring bouts of depression for years. This magazine was just what I needed! These articles gave me the advice I needed.

*L. B., Australia*

I was a depressed teen, and I never told my parents or anyone that I wanted to kill myself. This was a grave error. It is important to get help when you are depressed. Thank you for showing your care and concern for young people.

*S.G.C., United States*

**Steel** I work in the steel industry, and I offered the article "A Hard Worker With a Soft Touch" (September 8, 2001) to my technical director. He said that even though the article deals with a complex subject, it is clear and accurate, without using too many technical terms. Such articles enable us to help others become acquainted with *Awake!*

*G. B., Italy*

Since I have just finished occupational training for metal materials testing, I didn't much fancy reading an article about steelmaking. But the way you handled such an extensive and extremely complex subject absolutely fascinated me.

*M. F., Germany*

# A Spider That Masquerades as an Ant

**T**HERE is a small spider that creeps into an anthill and lives undercover among its enemies. To avoid detection, it changes its appearance and behavior so as not to be noticed. This is important because if they are disturbed, ants can become quite vicious. Since the spider has a body different from the ant, this poses quite a challenge.

The ant has six legs and two antennae, while the spider has eight legs and no antennae. So how does the spider make itself appear to be an ant? Well, it runs about the anthill on six legs, and it projects its other two legs so that they appear to be antennae.

Furthermore, the spider moves its two imitation antennae quite credibly. It wiggles them in such a way that they are mistaken for ants' antennae. This master of disguise can even imitate the jerky, zigzagging walk of ants!

The spider tries to be the perfect ant in every way, since being recognized as a resident of the anthill is vital to its safety. Within the anthill the spider receives protection from its natural enemies, including spider wasps. Songbirds, which consider the spider a delicacy, also leave it alone. Even spiders that hunt other spiders are fooled by the "antennae" of the imitator.

Yet, if a bird, lizard, or some other creature attacks the ant community, the spider quickly assumes its true identity and escapes. Spiders have better sight than ants, and they can jump, while ants cannot—all of which makes escape easier for them.

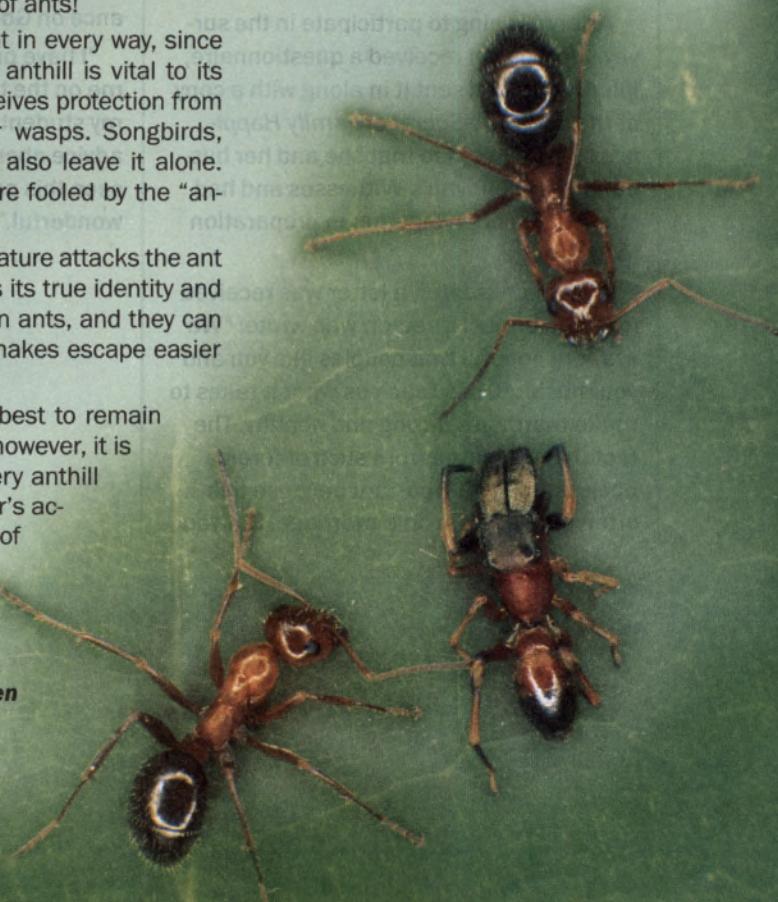
During the day, the spider does its best to remain undetected within the anthill. At night, however, it is active and will catch ants inside the very anthill in which it makes its home! If the spider's activity is discovered, it takes advantage of its eight legs and escapes speedily.

The male spider may be joined in the anthill by a female companion. She evidences not only faithfulness to her mate but a good deal of initiative as well. She builds a protective cover of threads in the anthill, which protects not only her mate but her eggs too.

Undoubtedly there is much more to learn about this spider. Yet, the same can be said of most other species of animal life on earth. How fine it will be in the future to learn more about God's intriguing creations!

BILL BEAUGY

*A spider between two ants*



# A Book That Can Help Save Marriages

A WOMAN NAMED LESLIE, in Louisiana, U.S.A., received a telephone call last year from a representative of Tulane University. The caller said that Tulane, as well as another university, was conducting a survey of newlywed couples in Louisiana.

After agreeing to participate in the survey, the woman received a questionnaire, filled it out, and sent it in along with a copy of the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*. She explained that she and her husband were Jehovah's Witnesses and had studied this book together in preparation for marriage.

A few weeks later, a letter was received from the project director, who wrote: "We are very hopeful that couples like you and your husband can teach us what it takes to make marriages strong and healthy. The fact that you came from such different backgrounds is important because this often puts a strain on a marriage. But your

preparation for marriage, especially with materials like the book you sent, will allow you to deal with any differences that arise. And, of course, a religious basis for a marriage is the most important thing. You are both lucky to share a strong faith and reliance on God's help.

"I have put the copy of the book you sent me on the top of my desk, and I show it to my students now when they ask me for advice about getting married. I had never seen this particular book, and it is simply wonderful."

