

Awake!

May 8, 2000

LAND MINES WHAT CAN BE DONE?



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LAND MINES

What Can Be Done? 3-9

Land mines kill or maim some 26,000 people each year. Most victims are civilians—even children. Will the threat of land mines ever be eliminated?

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Despair is common to all humans. How can the Bible help you to deal with intense feelings of despondency?

Loida's Journey out of Silence 22

From birth, Loida could not communicate. What helped her to break through her 18-year silence?



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A FOOTSTEP AWAY FROM DEATH

*"Sometimes I dream that I have two legs again.
... Years ago, when I was very small, I went to play
with my friends close to my house. All of a sudden
'BOOM'... The whole of my right leg was blown off."*

—Song Kosal, 12, Cambodia.



© ICRC/David Higgins

Each day, on the average, some 70 people are maimed or killed by land mines. Most victims are not soldiers. Instead, they are civilians—men tending cattle, women getting water, and children playing. For example, eight-year-old Rukia, featured on our cover, was maimed by a mine that killed her three brothers and her aunt.

A land mine can remain active for more than 50 years after it is planted. Thus, "it is the only weapon in existence which kills more people after a conflict ends than while it is fought," notes *The Defense Monitor*. No one knows how many land mines are planted worldwide. It is not uncommon to hear estimates of at least 60 million. True, many land mines are being removed. As recently as 1997, however, the United Nations reported that "for every mine cleared, 20 are laid. In 1994, approximately 100,000 were removed, while an additional 2 million were planted."

Why are land mines the weapon of choice for many modern-day warlords? What are the economic and social costs? How are survivors affected? Will our planet ever be free of land mines?





LAND MINES WEIGHING THE COST

On December 26, 1993, six-year-old Augusto was strolling through an open field near Luanda, the capital of Angola. Suddenly he noticed a shiny object on the ground. Intrigued, he decided to pick it up. His next movement set off a land mine.

As a result of the blast, Augusto had to have his right foot amputated. Now 12 years old, he is confined to a wheelchair much of the time, and he is blind.

AUGUSTO was maimed by an antiper-sonnel land mine, so named because its prime target is people rather than tanks or other military vehicles. It is estimated that to date, more than 350 types of anti-personnel land mines have been manufactured in at least 50 countries. Many of these are designed to wound, not kill. Why? Because injured soldiers need assistance, and a soldier maimed by a land mine will slow down military operations—just what the enemy wants. Furthermore, the desperate cries of a wounded combatant can strike terror into the heart of his comrades. Hence, land mines are usually considered most effective when the victims survive—even if just barely.

As noted in the preceding article, however, most victims of land-mine explosions are civilians, not soldiers. This is not always acci-

dental. According to the book *Landmines—A Deadly Legacy*, some explosives are “aimed deliberately at civilians in order to empty territory, destroy food sources, create refugee flows, or simply spread terror.”

To cite one example, in a Cambodian conflict, mines were placed around the perimeters of enemy villages, and then these villages were bombarded with artillery fire. Attempting to escape, civilians fled straight into the minefields. Meanwhile, in an effort to force the government to the bargaining table, members of the Khmer Rouge placed mines in rice paddies, striking fear into the hearts of farmers and virtually halting agriculture.

What happened in Somalia in 1988 was perhaps even more heinous. When Hargeysa was bombed, residents were forced to flee. Soldiers then planted land mines in the aban-

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.

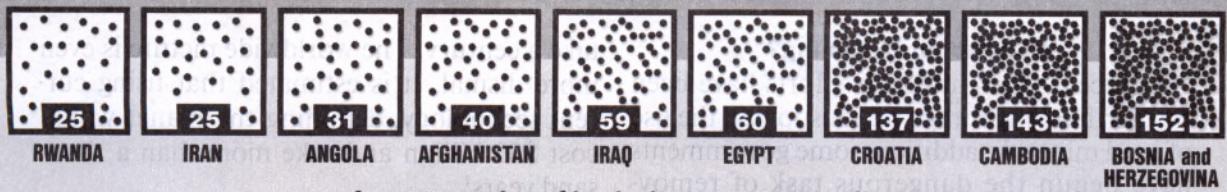
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Source: United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1996

**Average number of land mines per square mile
In the nine most densely mined countries**

doned homes. When the fighting ended, the refugees returned, only to be maimed or killed by hidden explosives.

But land mines threaten more than life and limb. Consider some other effects of these sinister weapons.

Economic and Social Cost

Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, notes: "The presence—or even the fear of the presence—of a single landmine can prevent the cultivation of an entire field, rob a whole village of its livelihood, place yet another obstacle on a country's road to reconstruction and development." Thus, in Afghanistan and Cambodia, about 35 percent more land could be cultivated if farmers did not fear to tread on the soil. Some take the risk. "I'm terrified of mines," says a Cambodian farmer. "But if I don't go out to cut grass and bamboo, we won't survive."

Often, survivors of land-mine explosions face a crushing financial burden. For example, in a developing country, a child who loses a leg at ten years of age may need up to 15 artificial limbs during his or her lifetime, each of which will cost, on the average, \$125. Granted, that

may not sound too expensive to some. But for most of the population of Angola, \$125 represents more than three months' wages!

Consider also the agonizing social cost. Citizens in one Asian land, for instance, avoid socializing with amputees for fear of being contaminated by "bad luck." Marriage might be just an elusive dream for an amputee. "I don't plan to marry," laments an Angolan man whose leg had to be amputated after he was injured in a land-mine explosion. "A woman wants a man who can work."

Understandably, many victims suffer feelings of low self-worth. "I can no longer feed my family," says a Cambodian man, "and this makes me ashamed." Sometimes such feelings can be even more debilitating than the loss of a limb. "I believe that the greatest damage I experienced was emotional," says Arthur, a victim in Mozambique. "Many times I would become irritated simply because someone looked my way. I thought that no one had any respect for me anymore and that I would never again have a normal life."*

* For more information on dealing with the loss of a limb, see the cover series entitled "Hope for the Disabled," appearing on pages 3-10 of the June 8, 1999, issue of *Awake!*

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address.
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What About Demining?

In recent years intensive efforts have been put forth to encourage nations to ban the use of land mines. In addition, some governments have begun the dangerous task of removing those mines that have been planted. But several obstacles stand in the way. One has to do with time. Demining is painfully slow. In fact, deminers estimate that, on the average, it takes a hundred times longer to clear a mine than to plant one. Another obstacle is expense. A single mine costs between \$3 and \$15, but to remove one can cost up to \$1,000.

Thus, total demining seems virtually impossible. To clear all the mines in Cambodia, for example, would require that everyone in that country devote his entire income to this task for the next several years. It is estimated that even if the finances were available, removing all the mines there would

take a century. The worldwide picture is even more dismal. It is estimated that using current technology, demining the planet would cost \$33 billion and take more than a thousand years!

Granted, innovative techniques for clearing mines have been proposed—from the use of fruit flies that are genetically manipulated to detect explosives to the use of giant radio-controlled vehicles that would demine five acres per hour. It may be some time, though, before such techniques can be used on a large scale, and they will likely be available only to the richest countries.

In most places, therefore, demining is accomplished the old-fashioned way. A man crawls on his belly probing the soil ahead with a stick, inch by inch, clearing 200 to 500 square feet a day. Dangerous? Yes! For every 5,000 mines cleared, one deminer is killed and two are injured.

Making Money Twice?

A basic principle of business is that companies are liable when their products cause harm. Thus, Lou McGrath, of the Mines Advisory Group, argues that companies that have profited from manufacturing land mines should be obliged to pay reparations. Ironically, though, many of the manufacturers have been the very ones to profit from demining. For example, a former mine producer from Germany reportedly got a \$100-million demining contract in Kuwait. And in Mozambique a \$7.5-million contract for clearing priority roads went to a consortium of three companies—two of which had developed mines.

Some feel that it is grossly immoral for the companies that manufacture land mines to be the ones to make money clearing them. In a sense, they claim, land-mine developers are making money twice. Be that as it may, both the manufacturing and the disarming of land mines continue to be thriving businesses.

Efforts to Unite Against Land Mines

In December 1997, representatives from a number of countries signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa treaty. "This is an achievement without precedent or parallel in either international disarmament or international humanitarian law," says Jean Chrétien, prime minister of Canada.* Still, nearly 60 countries—including some of the world's greatest landmine manufacturers—have not yet signed the treaty.

Will the Ottawa treaty succeed in eliminating the scourge of land mines? Perhaps to some extent. But many are skeptical. "Even if all the countries of the world would adhere to the proceedings of Ottawa," points out Claude Simonnot, a codirector of Handicap

* The treaty went into effect on March 1, 1999. As of January 6, 2000, it had been signed by 137 countries and ratified by 90 of them.

International, in France, "that would be only one step in the direction of freeing the planet from all danger of mines." Why? "Millions of mines remain buried in the soil, patiently waiting for future victims," Simonnot says.

Military historian John Keegan brings up another factor. Warfare, he says, "reaches into

the most secret places of the human heart, . . . where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king." Treaties cannot reverse such deeply entrenched human traits as hatred and greed. But does this mean that humans will forever be helpless victims of land mines?

Background: © ICRC/Paul Grabhorn



© ICRC/Till Mayer

In Cambodia, graphic posters and signs warn of land mines

For every 5,000 mines cleared, one deminer is killed and two are injured

© ICRC/Philippe Dutoit

AN EARTH FREE OF LAND MINES

WHOM can solve the problem of land mines? As we have seen, human efforts cannot root out hatred, bigotry, and greed. Students of the Bible, however, realize that the Creator *can* bring a lasting solution. But how will he do so?

Establishing a Peaceful Society

Wars are fought by people, not by weapons. If we want to see peace, therefore, the hatred that divides mankind into racial, tribal, and national groups must be done away with. God promises to do this by means of his Kingdom, for which millions throughout the world have been taught to pray.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

The Bible speaks of Jehovah as “the God who gives peace.” (Romans 15:33) The peace that God offers is not based upon bans and treaties, nor is it founded upon fear of retri-

sals from a well-armed enemy nation. On the contrary, God-given peace involves changes in the way people think and in the attitudes that they hold toward fellow humans.

Jehovah God will educate meek ones in his ways of peace. (Psalm 25:9) His Word, the Bible, promises a time when all those alive “will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant.” (Isaiah 54:13) To an extent, this is already taking place. Worldwide, Jehovah’s Witnesses are known for promoting peace among people of even the most diverse backgrounds. People who are taught the lofty principles of the Bible strive to live in unity regardless of issues that would otherwise divide them. Bible education changes their entire outlook from one of hatred to one of love. —John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Besides education, the need for global collaboration has long been regarded as a key ele-



ment in the elimination of weapons. For example, the International Committee of the Red Cross recommends that the international community unitedly promote preventative and curative measures in dealing with the threat of land mines.

Jehovah promises to do far more. The prophet Daniel foretold: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these [existing] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

God's Kingdom will accomplish what man cannot. For example, prophetically Psalm 46:9 says: "He [Jehovah] is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the wagons he burns in the fire." God's Kingdom will bring about a climate wherein man can truly enjoy peace with his Creator and with his fellowman.—Isaiah 2:4; Zephaniah 3:9; Revelation 21:3, 4; 22:2.

Augusto, mentioned in the introduction to the preceding article, finds comfort in this Bible message. His parents, who are Jehovah's Witnesses, are helping him to put faith in the

***Under God's Kingdom, land mines
will no longer pose a threat***

marvelous promises of the Bible. (Mark 3:1-5) Of course, at present he must endure the painful effects of the land-mine explosion that maimed him. Nevertheless, Augusto looks forward to the day when God's promise of a paradise earth will be a reality. "At that time," foretold the prophet Isaiah, "the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and . . . the lame one will climb up just as a stag does."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

In that coming Paradise, land mines will no more pose a threat to life and limb. Instead, people living in all corners of the globe will reside in security. The prophet Micah described it this way: "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it."—Micah 4:4.

Would you like to learn more about God's promises as set forth in his Word, the Bible? Contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally, or write to the appropriate address listed on page 5 of this magazine.



A Sailing-Ship Extravaganza

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE

JULY 1999 SAW MANY OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SAILING SHIPS IN THE WORLD CONVERGE ON ROUEN, IN NORTHERN FRANCE, FOR A SUMPTUOUS FESTIVAL CALLED THE ARMADA OF THE CENTURY. THIRTY GREAT SAILING SHIPS WERE BERTHED ALONG THE FOUR MILES OF QUAYS FITTED OUT FOR THE OCCASION.

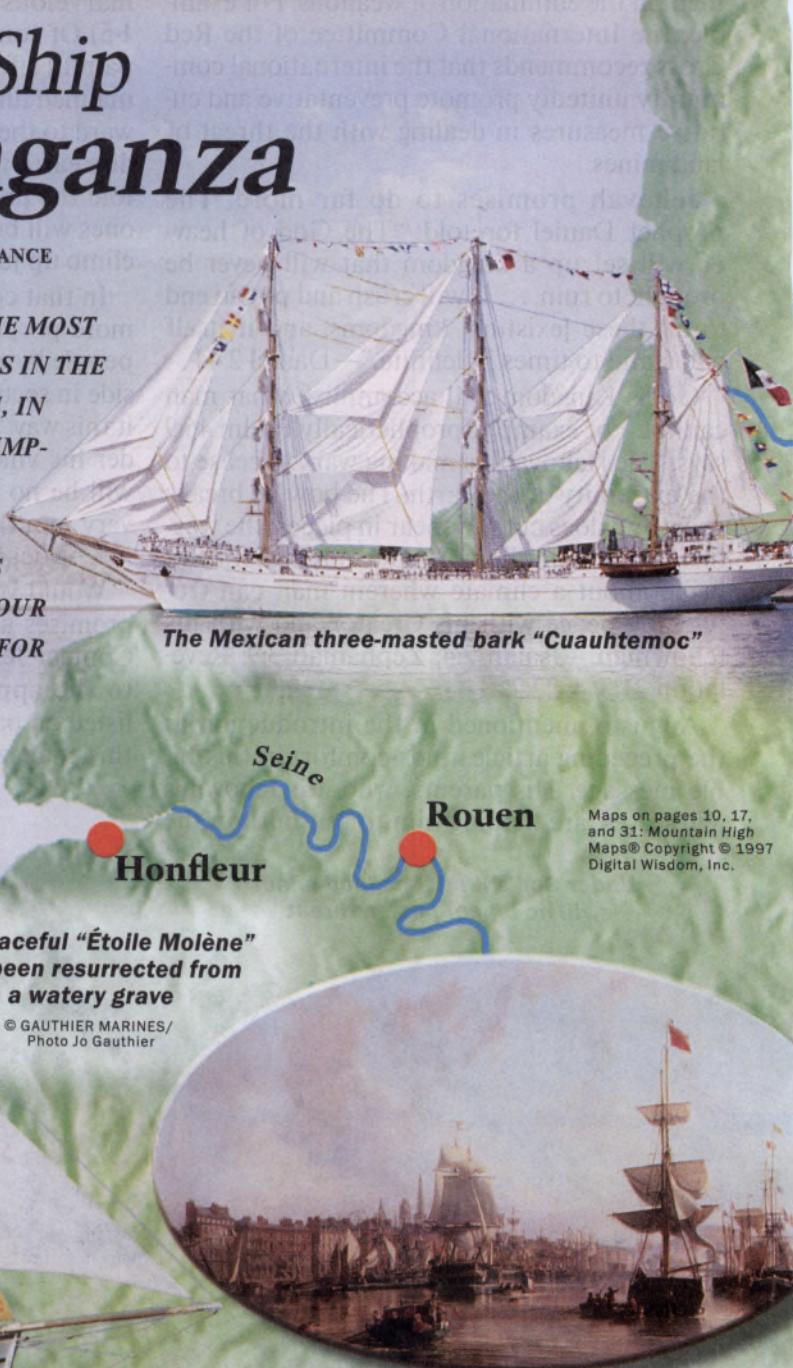


The Mexican three-masted bark "Cuaauhtemoc"



The graceful "Étoile Molène" had been resurrected from a watery grave

© GAUTHIER MARINES/
Photo Jo Gauthier



A painting of the port of Rouen from 1855, when sailing ships navigated the Seine

Charles-Louis Mozin, Port de Rouen, vue générale © Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts

The event was billed as "the maritime extravaganza of the millennium." Concerts, fireworks, nautical events, and exhibitions of maritime paintings and photographs were scheduled during the event.

Friday, July 9, was marked by the majestic arrival of the sailing ships. Over the next ten days, millions of visitors from France and other European countries flocked to the quays.

Some of the ships—such as the *Dar Młodzieży* (Poland), the *Khersones* (Ukraine), the *Statsraad Lehmkuhl* (Norway), and the *Liber-tad* (Argentina)—are seafaring giants measuring 300 feet in length, with the tallest mast rising 160 feet above the water.

Tall ships were present from 16 countries, including Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Russia, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The Netherlands was the most represented country, with six ships. Among these were the handsome three-masted bark *Europa* and the old *Oosterschelde*, a three-masted topsail schooner launched in 1918, which used to carry wood, salted herring, clay, cereals, hay, and fruit between Africa, the Mediterranean, and northern Europe.

The Armada provided an exceptional opportunity for visitors to satisfy their curiosity. The gangplanks were put down, and everyone could easily visit the decks, free of charge.

Some of the ships have been featured in motion pictures. The Norwegian ship *Christian Radich*, for example, had a starring role in the 1958 film *Windjammer*. The old wooden *Kaskelot* ("sperm whale" in Danish) has been in several movies, including the French film *Beaumarchais l'insolent* and a remake of *Treasure Island*.

The Polish three-masted *Iskra* is unique in that her three masts have different riggings. The foresail mast is square-rigged, the mainmast has a gaff (trapezoidal) rig, and the mizzenmast has a Bermuda (triangular) sail.

Some of the old ships present in Rouen had been saved from a watery grave. For example, determined enthusiasts rescued the Uruguayan *Capitán Miranda* by restoring the magnificent vessel. The *Étoile Molène*, which sank in the early 1980's in the port of Douarnenez, Brittany, was refloated and given a new lease on life, thanks to much loving care.

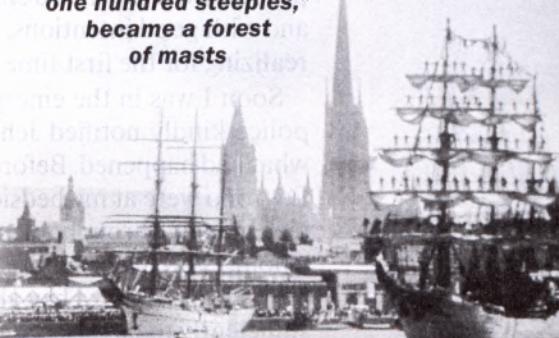
A local association of amateur radio operators decided that during the festival they would establish a radio connection between the ship *Mir* and the orbiting Russian space station, *Mir*. Finally, at 10:27 p.m., on July 17, the link was made between the three-masted ship and her "sister ship" in space. Captain Zorokhov was able to speak with Commander Afanassiev, who was in the space station some 220 miles above.

The Armada reached its climax on Sunday, July 18, with a parade down the Seine River, from Rouen to the open sea. Hundreds of thousands of people lined the 75-mile-long route, waving at the crews on the ships as they passed by old Norman villages, abbeys, and châteaus.

Afterward, the splendid sailing ships left for a regatta, a film, or some other extravaganza in a distant port. The quays returned to their regular business. But Rouen will remember that, at least for ten days, it was the crossroads of the sailing world.

Rouen, "the city of one hundred steeples," became a forest of masts

© GAUTHIER MARINES/
Photo Jo Gauthier



“YOU ARE GOING TO DIE!”

My search for the best available treatment without blood in Spain



**With my husband
and son**

IF YOU could take a trip anywhere in the world, where would you choose to go? For me the answer was simple. I teach Spanish in school, and along with my husband, Jay, and my son Joel, I attend a Spanish-language congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Galax, Virginia, U.S.A. My longing, then, was to travel to Spain. So you can imagine how thrilled I was when my parents offered to take me there! Although my husband and son could not come along, my dream was about to come true as my parents and I boarded a direct flight to Madrid. Upon our arrival on April 21, we decided to drive to Estella, a small town in Navarre, in northern Spain. I made myself comfortable in the back seat and promptly dozed off.

The next memory I have is of lying in a field, with the sun shining in my eyes. ‘Where am I? How did I get here? Am I dreaming?’ As these questions raced through my mind, a horrible reality settled in. Something was wrong, and this was no dream. My left sleeve was torn to shreds, and I couldn’t move my arms or my legs. Later, I learned that our car had crashed through a guardrail and that I had been

thrown from the vehicle as it tumbled down a 65-foot embankment. Thankfully, neither I nor my parents have any recollection of the accident.

I called out for help, and a truck driver rushed over to me. Then he descended farther down the embankment to the car, where my parents were trapped. ‘Tell the ambulance to hurry!’ he shouted to his partner. ‘The people in the car are in bad shape!’ Then he came back to where I lay paralyzed, and with good intentions, he tried to straighten my leg. I screamed in agony, realizing for the first time how badly I was hurt.

Soon I was in the emergency room in the local hospital in Logroño. The police kindly notified Jehovah's Witnesses in the area of where I was and what had happened. Before long, many from the congregations in Estella and Logroño were at my bedside, along with the local Hospital Liaison Committee. Indeed, throughout my ordeal at this hospital, dear fellow Christians whom I had never before met were ready and willing to care for my needs, around the clock. They also lovingly cared for my parents, who recovered sufficiently to be released from the hospital about a week after the accident.

About 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday, the doctors came to operate on my broken hip. I told the doctor that I did not want to receive blood.* He reluctantly agreed to honor my request, although he told me that I would likely die. I survived the surgery, but I found it strange that my wounds were not cleaned, nor were my bandages later changed.

By Friday my blood count had dropped to 4.7, and I was losing strength. The doctor agreed to give me an alternative treatment— injections of erythropoietin (EPO), which, along with iron and blood-building supplements, stimulates red blood cell production.* By now, Jay and Joel had arrived. How good it was to see my husband and my son!

At approximately 1:30 a.m., a doctor told Jay that the hospital had already obtained a court order to administer blood if my condition worsened. Jay told him that my wishes were that I not receive blood under any circumstances. "Then she will die!" the doctor replied.

Jay talked to the Hospital Liaison Committee about transferring me to another facility—one that would respect my wishes. Not that everyone at this hospital was antagonistic. One doctor, for example, assured me that she would do her utmost to make sure that I was treated with all the respect I deserved. But soon other doctors were pressuring me. "Do you want to die and leave your family behind?" they asked. I assured them that I wanted the best treatment available without blood. The doctors were not moved to help. "You are going to die!" one stated bluntly.

The Hospital Liaison Committee found a hospital in Barcelona that agreed to treat me without blood. What a contrast between the two hospitals! In Barcelona two nurses gently washed me and made me feel comfortable. When changing my bandages, one of the nurses saw that they were green and caked with dried blood. She said that she was ashamed that her fellow countrymen had treated me this way.

Soon I was receiving the medical treatment that was supposed to have been started at the hospital in Logroño. The results were dramatic. Within days my vital organs were out of danger, and my hemoglobin count had gone up to 7.3. By the time I left the hospital, it had risen to 10.7. When I needed more surgery at a hospital in the United States, it was up to 11.9.

I am grateful for the efforts of doctors and nurses who are willing to accommodate the wishes of their patients, whether they agree with them or not. When the hospital staff respect a patient's beliefs, they are treating the whole person—and thus they are providing the best treatment available.

* For Bible-based reasons, Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions.—See Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26, 27; 17:10-14; Deuteronomy 12:23-25; 15:23; Acts 15:20, 28, 29; 21:25.

* Whether a Christian will accept EPO or not is a personal decision.—See *The Watchtower* of October 1, 1994, page 31.



**Two members
of the Hospital
Liaison Committee**



Courtesy: Tourism,
Newfoundland and Labrador

When "Little Brother" Comes Home

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CANADA

EACH spring, after seven or eight months of nomadic life at sea, the puffin returns to its home in Arctic waters. It is breeding season, and the puffin seems to be dressed up for the occasion. Indeed, its feet have turned bright orange, and its bill has grown a colorful plate, which is later shed. The distinct black-and-white plumage remains year round, and this gives the puffin a somewhat clerical appearance. Perhaps this explains the Atlantic puffin's scientific name *Fratercula arctica*, which means "little friar, or brother, of the north."*

Puffins head for their cliffside burrows in small groups called rafts, each of which comprises about 20 or 30 birds. Either during the journey or upon reaching the burrow, the puffin will find its mate. Interestingly, many puffins keep the same burrow—and the same mate—year after year.

Puffins can fly, but they are clearly not the world's greatest "aviators." Indeed, their arrival on shore can resemble a crash landing! Furthermore, the puffin's takeoff is somewhat clumsy, and at times it seems that the bird's wings will not support its stout body. Some puffins even have trouble getting out of the water. But once those wings are beating—and they may beat as rapidly as 400 times a minute—the puffin can achieve a cruising speed of 50 miles per hour.

Puffins are obviously more comfortable at sea than on land. But come to land they must, for a puffin couple will have to prepare a burrow for their young. Upon reaching land, a couple will clean the burrow, which may mea-

sure anywhere from 20 inches in length to about four times that size. They line the burrow with bedding consisting of grass, twigs, and feathers. Some puffins nest in cracks under boulders or in rocky crevices. Using its bill, the puffin picks its way through dirt and then shovels the dirt away with its webbed feet.

The courtship of the puffin couple takes place in the water. During the ceremony the males flick their heads, puff up their chests, and flutter their wings, and the couples repeatedly tap bills. This last ritual, called billing, continues even after mating. It appears to be the couple's way of affirming a mutual bond.

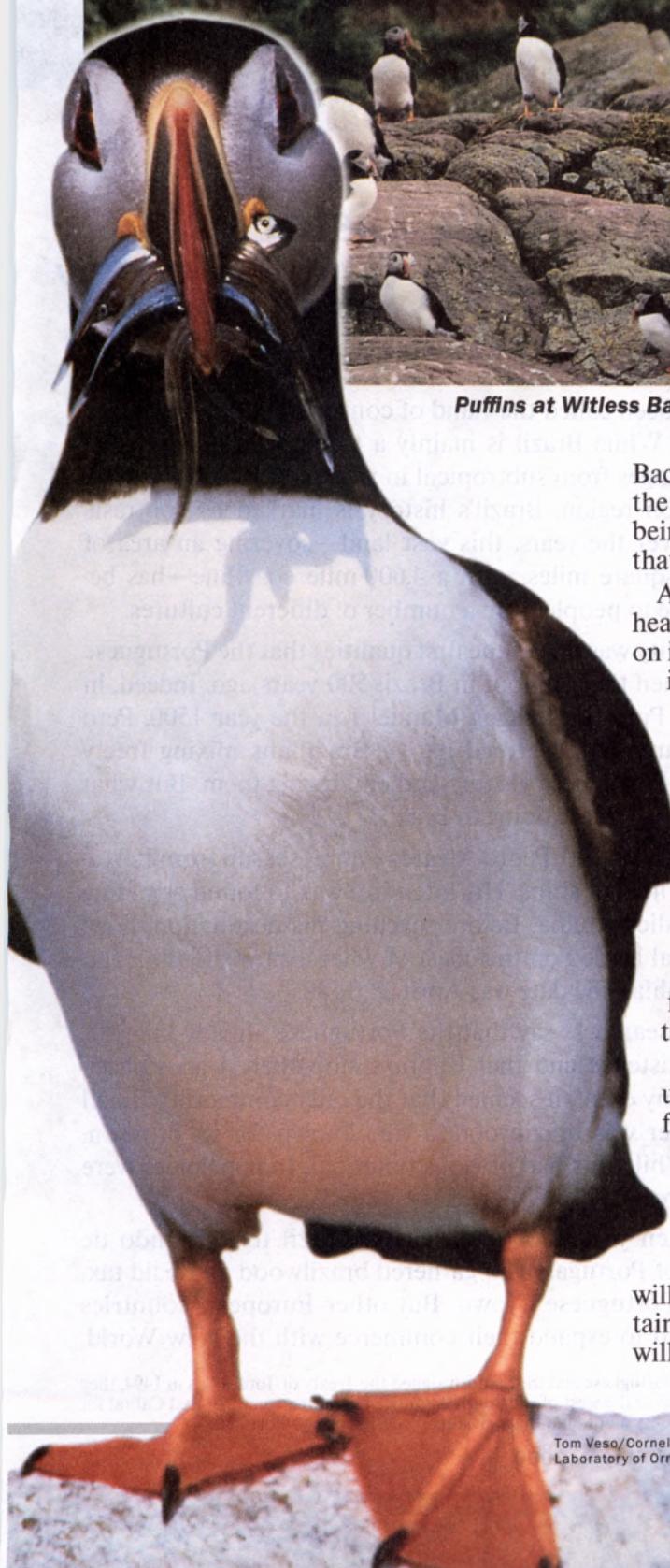
After an egg is laid, it is literally taken under the parents' wings—a responsibility shared by father and mother. Six weeks later, when the chick hatches, the real work begins. The gray-black, soft, down-covered hatchling is brooded for a week to help it maintain its body temperature. The parent puffins make an increasing number of trips to the sea to secure enough food for their chick. The fishing expeditions are not too dangerous, since there are so many puffins going out to sea and back to the burrows. It seems that the flurry of activity makes it difficult for gulls and other predators to attack.

Puffins are expert swimmers and divers. Using their webbed feet as rudders and their wings to propel themselves, they can remain underwater for more than 30 seconds, at depths reaching nearly a hundred feet. A puffin may return home with one or two small fish—perhaps capelins or sand lances—in its bill. Of course, the smaller the fish, the more the puffin can hold in its beak. One was observed with a catch of more than 60!

* The name may also allude to the fact that the puffin clasps its webbed feet together after emerging from the water, as if in a prayerful stance.



Puffins at Witless Bay, Newfoundland



Backward-pointing spines in its mouth enable the puffin to hold fish in place while more are being caught. This is a good thing, considering that a baby puffin can eat 50 fish a day.

After about six weeks, the parent puffins head back to sea. The fledgling puffin, now left on its own, slims down in preparation for leaving the burrow. In the evenings it does wing exercises. Finally, under cover of darkness, the puffin tumbles down to the sea and vigorously paddles away.

Two to three years will elapse before the young puffin returns to its place of birth, and it will be four or five years old before it mates. The mature puffin will perhaps weigh a bit over a pound and stand only about 12 inches high. Even though it is relatively small, a healthy puffin can live for about 25 years. One Atlantic puffin survived to the ripe old age of 39!

Experts estimate the Atlantic puffin population to be 20 million. These birds are fascinating to watch. "Even in the most ordinary things the puffin is entertaining," wrote David Boag and Mike Alexander in their book *The Atlantic Puffin*. And if you live near the northern shores of the Atlantic or the Pacific, perhaps you will see one. In any event, one thing is certain—each spring, "little brother of the north" will come home, and a new generation of dark-feathered seabirds will be born.



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The Dramatic History of a “LAND OF CONTRASTS”

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRAZIL



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IT HAS been called the “land of contrasts”—and with good reason. While Brazil is mainly a tropical country, its climate ranges from subtropical in the south to equatorial in the Amazon region. Brazil’s history is marked by contrasts as well. Over the years, this vast land—covering an area of 3,286,502 square miles, with a 4,600-mile coastline—has become home to people from a number of different cultures.

Hospitality was one of the first qualities that the Portuguese noticed when they set foot in Brazil 500 years ago. Indeed, in writing to Portuguese King Manuel I in the year 1500, Pero Vaz de Caminha described native Brazilians mixing freely with their Portuguese visitors and embracing them. But what were the Portuguese doing in Brazil?

On March 9, 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral set sail from Portugal with a fleet of ships. His intention was to found a trading post in Calicut, India. Before reaching his destination, however, Cabral landed on the coast of what is now the Brazilian state of Bahia. The date was April 23, 1500.

Some researchers say that the Portuguese already knew of Brazil’s existence and that Cabral’s stop there was no accident.* In any event, it seemed that the only commodity Brazil had to offer was brazilwood, a tree known for its crimson-red dye. While this had obvious potential, Indian spices were worth more.

So for ten years Portugal leased Brazil to Fernando de Noronha of Portugal, who gathered brazilwood and paid taxes to the Portuguese Crown. But other European countries also wanted to expand their commerce with the New World,

* When the Portuguese and the Spanish signed the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, they divided the land to the west of the South Atlantic. Therefore, some say that Cabral set out to take possession of land that was already designated to Portugal.



1. Pedro Álvares Cabral

Culver Pictures

2. Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494

Courtesy of Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Spain

3. Coffee carriers

From the book *Brazil and the Brazilians*, 1857

4. Iguaçú Falls, as seen from the Brazilian side

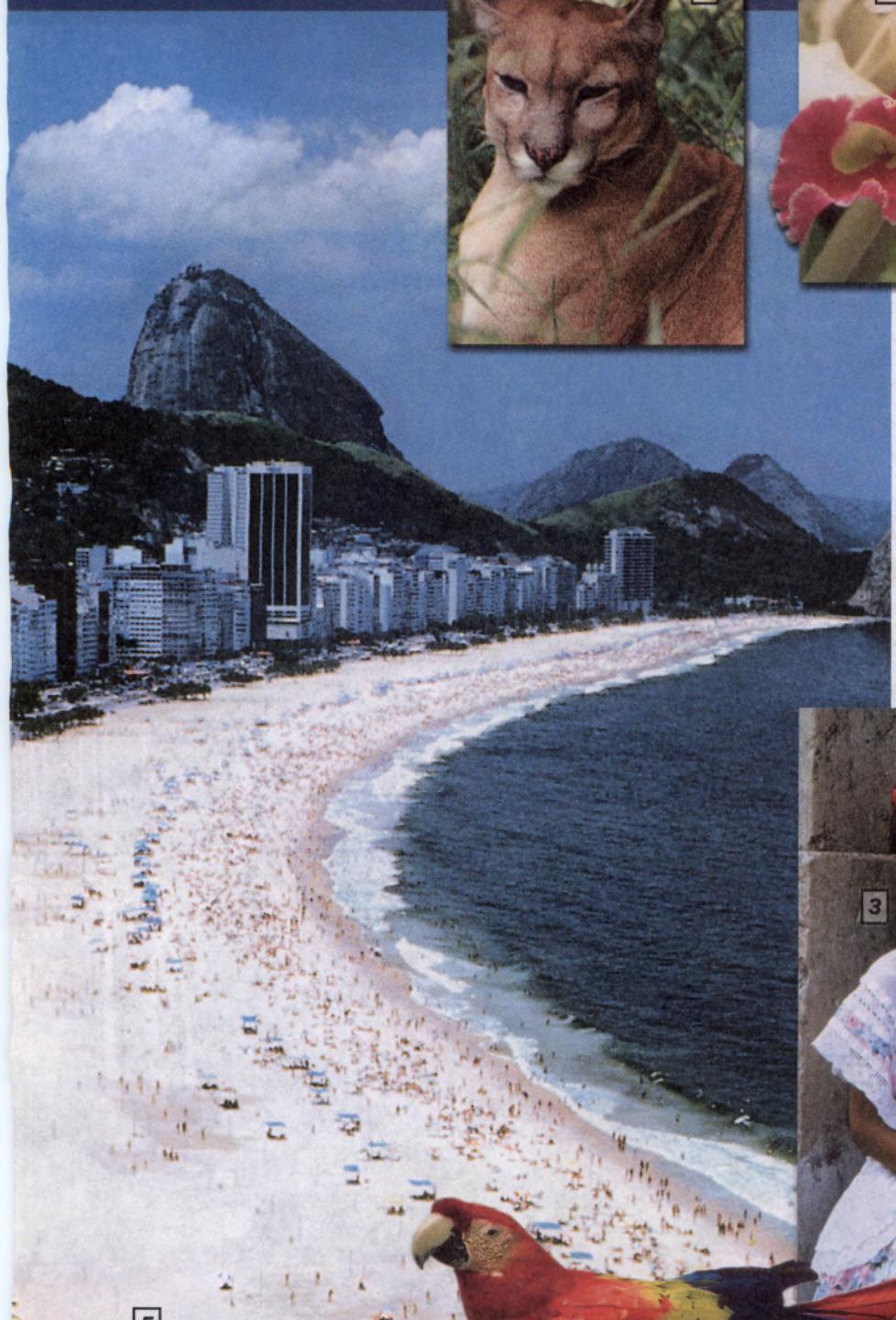
5. Ipixuna Indian

FOTO: MOURA

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1. Pumas are plentiful in Brazil

Courtesy São Paulo Zoo

2. Orchids in the Amazon Jungle

3. Traditional dress of Salvador, Bahia

4. A macaw

5. Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.
Brazil has over
4,000 miles of
beautiful coastline



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and Noronha was powerless to curb the growing illegal trade carried on by French, English, and Spanish navigators. Fearing that they might lose Brazil, the Portuguese began colonization in 1532. Sugar production became Brazil's first lucrative business.

Gold mining and diamond mining became thriving businesses during the 18th century. By the turn of the 19th century, the production of latex from the rubber tree had become an important economic activity in the Amazon region.* Later, coffee farming played a role in the urbanization of Brazil, financing railroad construction and the modernization of the ports of Santos and Rio de Janeiro. By the close of the 19th century, half the world's coffee was being harvested in Brazil, and São Paulo was Brazil's chief economic center.

Sadly, slavery played a part in Brazil's history. At first, the Portuguese settlers used the Indians to cut down and transport brazilwood. Later, the Indians were put to work on sugarcane plantations. Tragically, large numbers of natives contracted European diseases and died from them. To replace these workers, Portugal brought in slaves from Africa.

Over the years millions of Africans were brought to Brazil as slaves, and they brought their cultural and genetic heritage with them. That influence can be seen in popular music such as the samba and in *capoeira* (a system of fighting) as well as in foods such as feijoada, made with black beans cooked with pork, sausage, and jerky. Finally, in 1888, slavery was abolished in Brazil. About 750,000 people—most of whom worked on plantations—were freed.

From the 19th century on, millions of foreigners flocked to Brazil, including Germans, Italians, Japanese, Poles, and Spaniards as well as those of Swiss and Syro-Lebanese descent. Brazil is a fine place to live. Its flora and fauna are plentiful. As a rule, Brazil is free of natural disasters. There are no wars, earthquakes, volcanoes, cyclones, or tidal waves. So why not get to know Brazil by visiting some of its well-known sights? You will enjoy the same hospitality and natural beauty that impressed the Portuguese 500 years ago.



Brasília—capital of Brazil since 1960



São Paulo—the economic center of Brazil

FOTO: MOURA

* See *Awake!*, May 22, 1997, pages 14-17.

How to Cope With Despair

DESPAIR is common to all humans, at least to a degree. For some, however, feelings of despondency become so severe that death seems preferable to life.

The Bible shows that even faithful servants of God are not immune to problems and pressures that lead to despair. Consider, for example, Elijah and Job—both of whom enjoyed a good relationship with God. After fleeing for his life from wicked Queen Jezebel, Elijah “began to ask [Jehovah] that his soul might die.” (1 Kings 19:1-4) The righteous man Job experienced a series of tragedies, including a loathsome disease and the death of ten children. (Job 1:13-19; 2:7,8) His despair caused him to state: “I would prefer death to all my sufferings.” (Job 7:15, *The New English Bible*) Clearly, anxiety had become quite intense for these faithful men of God.

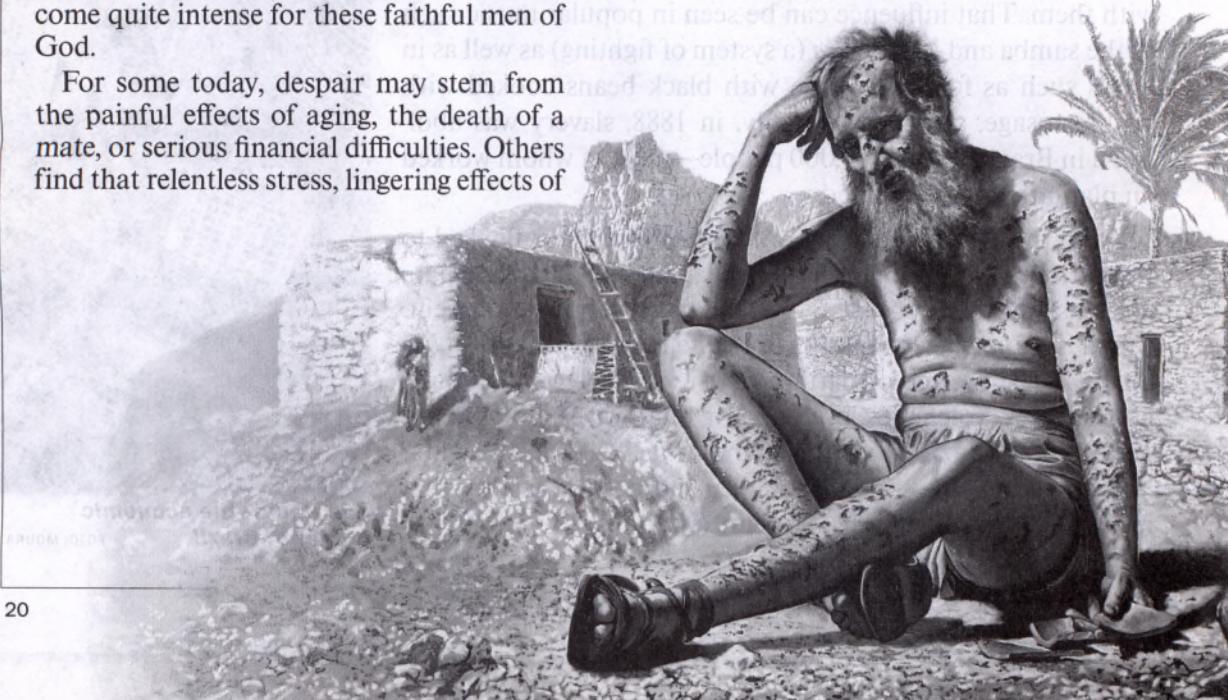
For some today, despair may stem from the painful effects of aging, the death of a mate, or serious financial difficulties. Others find that relentless stress, lingering effects of

a traumatic experience, or family problems make them feel as if they were floundering in the middle of the ocean, with each wave making it harder to reach the shore. One man stated: “You feel a sense of worthlessness—as though no one will miss you once you are gone. The loneliness one feels is at times unbearable.”

In some cases circumstances change for the better, relieving this intense pressure. But what if our circumstances will not change? How can the Bible help us to cope with despair?

The Bible Can Help

Jehovah had the ability and the power to sustain Elijah and Job through their difficulties. (1 Kings 19:10-12; Job 42:1-6) How



comforting that realization is for us today! The Bible states: "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses." (Psalm 46:1; 55:22)

Though it may seem that feelings of despair are pulling us under, Jehovah promises that he will keep fast hold of us with his right hand of righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10) How can we avail ourselves of this assistance?

The Bible explains that through prayer "the peace of God that excels all thought will guard [our] hearts and [our] mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Because of our distress, we may see no way out of our problem. If we "persevere in prayer," however, Jehovah can guard our hearts and minds, providing us with the strength we need to endure.—Romans 12:12; Isaiah 40:28-31; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; Philippians 4:13.

We will benefit by being specific in our prayers. Though our thoughts may be difficult to put into words, we should feel free to talk to Jehovah about what we feel and what we perceive is the root of the problem. We need to petition him for the strength to sustain us through each day. We have the assurance: "The desire of those fearing him [Jehovah] will perform, and their cry for help he will hear, and he will save them." —Psalm 145:19.

In addition to praying, we must resist isolation. (Proverbs 18:1) Some have found strength in giving of themselves to others. (Proverbs 19:17; Luke 6:38) Consider a woman named Maria,* who not only battled with cancer but also experienced the loss of eight family members in just one year. Maria had to force herself to get out of bed and get back into a routine. She went out nearly every day to teach others about the Bible, and she regularly attended

Christian meetings. Upon returning home, Maria's feelings of distress would come back full force. However, by focusing on how she can help others, Maria is able to endure.

But what if we find it difficult to pray or cannot seem to pull ourselves out of isolation? In that case we must reach out for help. The Bible encourages us to turn to "the older men of the congregation." (James 5:13-16) A man dealing with severe ongoing depression stated: "Sometimes talking to someone you trust helps ease the mind and calm the spirit, so that rational thinking prevails." (Proverbs 17:17) Of course, when prolonged and intense despondency is indicative of a medical problem, appropriate professional assistance may also be needed.*—Matthew 9:12.

Though no easy solutions exist, we should not underestimate God's ability to help us cope with our problems. (2 Corinthians 4:8) Persisting in prayer, avoiding isolation, and getting qualified assistance will help us regain stability. The Bible promises that God will bring to a complete end the root causes of our intense despair. Christians are determined to rely on him while awaiting the day when these "former things will not be called to mind."—Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:4.

* *Awake!* does not endorse any particular treatment. Christians should make sure that any treatment they pursue does not conflict with Bible principles. For more information, see *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1988, pages 25-9.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Chronic Illness—Coping as a Family

**Runaway Dads
—Can They Really Run Away?**

How Our Family Was Reunited

* Not her real name.



Loida's Journey OUT of SILENCE

As told by Loida's mother

LIKE any expectant mother, I worried that my baby might be born with some type of defect. Still, I was not prepared for the heart-rending screams of Loida, my third child, as she came into the world. Inadvertently, the doctor had broken Loida's collarbone with his forceps. A couple of weeks after corrective surgery, Loida was sent home. Our joy, however, was short-lived.

During the next few months, it became apparent that something was terribly wrong. Loida's medication caused adverse reactions—including fever, diarrhea, and convulsions—and treatment for these symptoms only seemed to make her condition worse. Soon Loida could not control her bodily movements. Finally the doctors told us that Loida had cerebral palsy. They said that she would never walk or speak—or even understand us.

Early Attempts at Communication

Despite the grim prognosis, I still felt that Loida could understand many things.

So I read simple books to her and endeavored to teach her the alphabet. But Loida could not speak, nor could she indicate any awareness of what I was saying. There was no way of knowing what—if anything—she could grasp.

As the years passed, my efforts to teach Loida seemed to have little success. Still, I spent many hours reading to her. We even included her in our family Bible study with Noemí, our youngest daughter, using the books *Listening to the Great Teacher* and *My Book of Bible Stories*.^{*} I read many of the chapters from these books to Loida repeatedly.

Not being able to communicate with someone you love is truly frustrating. When I took Loida to the park, she would cry inconsolably. Why? It seemed to me that she was tormented by the fact that she could not run and play like the other children. On one occasion, Loida burst into tears when her sister read something to me from a school textbook. Clearly, something bothered her, but I had no idea what it was. Loida's speech was limited to a few inarticulate sounds, which indicated her basic needs for food, water, bed, or toilet.

At age nine, Loida began attending a school for children with special needs. During the next three years, however, her condition worsened. She was afraid to walk even a few steps without help, and she all but

^b* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. *Listening to the Great Teacher* is now out of print.

stopped uttering any speech sounds. My husband and I decided that it would be better to educate Loida at home.

For the next six years, I taught Loida as well as I could. I wrote letters on a blackboard, hoping that Loida would copy them. My efforts were futile. Was the problem a lack of comprehension, or was it that Loida could not write because she had no control over the movements of her hands?

By age 18, Loida had become so difficult to manage that I earnestly prayed to Jehovah, begging him to help me communicate with my daughter. The answer to my prayer came in an unusual way.

Breaking Through the Silence

A turning point came when my daughters were redecorating our bedroom. Before stripping off the old wallpaper, Noemí wrote some names on the wall—names from the Bible and names of friends and family members. Out of curiosity, my daughter Rut asked Loida if she knew where “Jehovah” was written. Surprisingly, Loida went to the wall and put her head next to where God’s name appeared. Rut wondered if Loida could recognize the other names, so she tested her. To Rut’s amazement, Loida could identify every one of them—even the names she had never seen spelled out before! Rut gathered the entire family to see it for themselves. Loida could read!

In time, we came up with a method that would help Loida “speak” to us. We attached letters of the alphabet to the wall of our long hallway. Putting smaller letters on a handheld board would not work, since Loida does not have enough control of her hands to point to each letter. So when Loida wished to communicate, she would spell out her message by walking up to each letter on the wall. As you can imagine, this would be quite tiring. In fact, Loida had to walk

miles just to compose a single page of communication, and it could take hours for her to complete it!

Nevertheless, Loida is thrilled to be able to “talk” to us. In fact, this was her first message to us: “I am so happy that, thanks to Jehovah, I can now communicate.” Astonished, we asked Loida: “What were you doing while you were sitting all day?” Loida told us that she would work out in her mind what she wished she could say to us. Indeed, Loida said that for 18 years she had longed to communicate. “When Rut started going to school,” she said, “I read the school textbook to myself. I moved my mouth and emitted some sounds, but you couldn’t understand me. That is why I often began to cry.”

I tearfully apologized for not having understood her better. Loida replied: “You are a good mother, and you never gave up. I have always been happy alongside you. I love you very much. So don’t cry anymore. OK?”

Spiritual Progress

Loida already had a knowledge of the Bible, and she had memorized some Bible verses. But soon she told us that she wanted to offer comments at the congregation *Watchtower* Study, a weekly question-and-answer Bible discussion. How would she do this? One of us would read the entire article to her. Then Loida would select a question she wanted to answer. We would write down her comment as



she spelled it out to us. Then, at the meeting, one of us would read Loida's comment. "It's thrilling for me to be able to participate," Loida once told us, "because it makes me feel a part of the congregation."

When she was 20 years old, Loida expressed the desire to get baptized. When she was asked if she knew what it meant to dedicate oneself to Jehovah, Loida replied that she had already done this seven years earlier—when she was just 13 years old. "I prayed to Jehovah," she said, "and I told him that I wanted to serve him forever." On August 2, 1997, Loida symbolized her dedication to Jehovah by water baptism. "Thanks to Jehovah," Loida told us, "my greatest wish has come true!"

Loida enjoys talking about God's Kingdom to relatives and neighbors. At times she accompanies us as we preach to people on the street. She has also prepared a letter that we leave at the door when no one is at home. Loida takes a special interest in the elderly and those who are sick. For example, we have a sister in our congregation who had her leg amputated. "I know what it means to be unable to walk," Loida told us, and so she prepared a letter of encouragement for this sister. Then there is Jairo, a young boy in another congregation, who is practically paralyzed from the head down. When Loida heard of his plight, she wrote a letter to him. In part, it stated: "Soon Jehovah will make us well. In Paradise there will be no suffering. Then I will challenge you to a race. I am laughing because it will be great fun. To think

that we shall be as Jehovah created us, without sickness ... Isn't it marvelous?"

Helped to Endure

I now understand many things about Loida's former behavior that used to baffle me. For example, Loida says that when she was younger she didn't like to be hugged because she was so frustrated. "It seemed so unfair that my sisters could speak and learn things and I could not," she said. "I felt so angry. There were times when I would have preferred to have been dead."

Even with the gift of communication, Loida faces many challenges. For example, every month or so she has a series of convulsions during which she seems to be choking and her arms and legs move uncontrollably. In addition, any infection—even a simple cold—weakens her considerably. Occasionally Loida gets depressed over her condition. What helps her to endure? Well, let her tell you in her own words:

"Prayer has been an enormous help. It makes me so happy to talk to Jehovah, to feel close to him. I also appreciate the love and attention from others at the Kingdom Hall. I feel very fortunate that despite my physical problems, I have been brought up by two wonderful parents who love me so much. I will never forget what my sisters have done for me.

Those beautiful letters on the wall saved my life. Without Jehovah's love and the love of my family, my life would have had no meaning."

Loida and her family



What Can a Bird Teach a Prisoner?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

ACCORDING to the *Sunday Tribune* of Durban, South Africa, birds are playing a role in softening the hearts of inmates at Pollsmoor Prison. Currently 14 convicts are participating in a program that involves taking care of cockatiels and lovebirds in their cells.

How does the program work? Each participating inmate has a makeshift incubator in his cell. A hatchling is put in the care of the prisoner, who hand-feeds the helpless little creature every hour or two, day and night, for about five weeks. Then the bird is placed in a cage, which is also kept in the cell. When the bird is grown, it is sold to the public. Some inmates become so attached to their birds that they cry when the inevitable parting takes place.

Even some hardened criminals have become noticeably more tender and gentle after speaking to and caring for the birds daily. One inmate said: "I tame the birds, but they have tamed me too." Another says that the birds taught him patience and self-control. A convicted thief says that caring for a bird made him realize that being a parent "is a big responsibility"—something he neglected with his own children when he was free.

Caring for these birds has another benefit for inmates. "With the skills they learn here," says Wikus Gresse, who conceived the program, "they can get a job outside with bird breeders or a vet."



Are You Lactose Intolerant?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN MEXICO

"My husband and I were visiting some friends in the state of Puebla, in Mexico. Our hosts had their own cows, so they offered us fresh milk along with breakfast and supper."

"The first night we felt bad, but the second day was terrible. My stomach became so bloated that I looked as if I were several months pregnant. Then both of us developed severe diarrhea."

"It was not until years later that we found out that we are lactose intolerant."—Bertha.

BERTHA'S experience is not rare, for some estimate that as much as 75 percent of the world's adult population may experience some or all of the symptoms of lactose intolerance.* Just what is this condition, and what causes it? Most important, what can be done to cope with it?

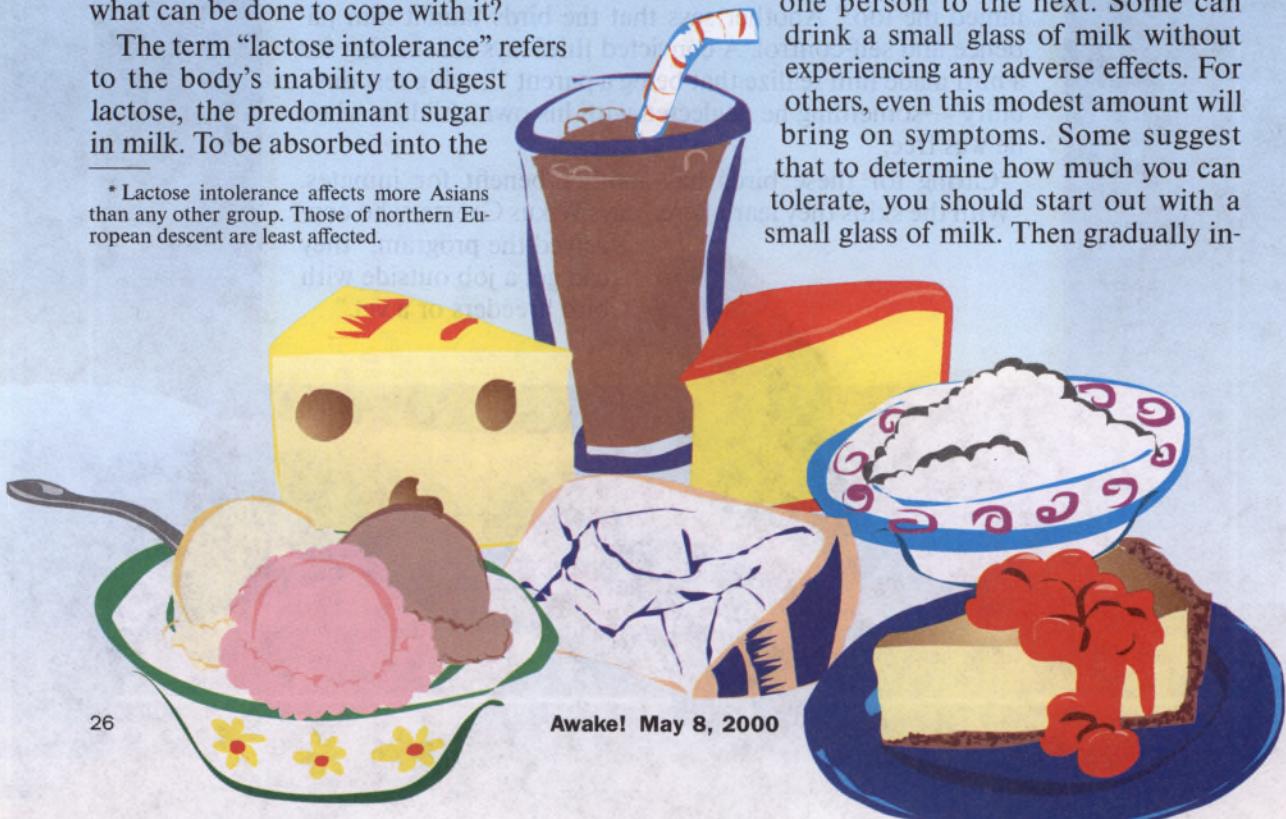
The term "lactose intolerance" refers to the body's inability to digest lactose, the predominant sugar in milk. To be absorbed into the

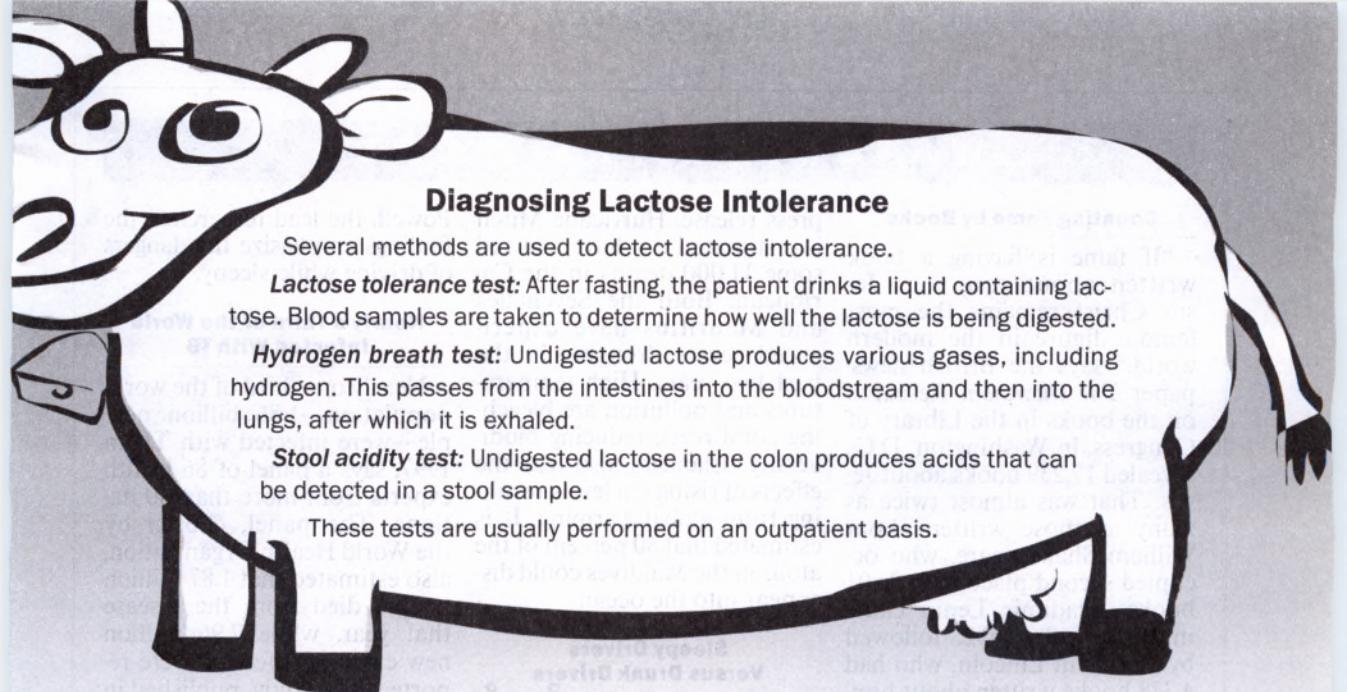
bloodstream, lactose must be broken down into glucose and galactose. For this to take place, an enzyme called lactase is needed. The problem is that after infancy the body produces less lactase. Having a deficiency of lactase, many adults become lactose intolerant.

When a person ingests more lactose—in milk and its derivatives—than he can digest, bacteria in the colon convert it into lactic acid and carbon dioxide. Within as little as 30 minutes, typical symptoms set in, including nausea, cramps, bloating, and diarrhea. Some who are not aware that they are lactose intolerant may try to soothe the stomach with more milk, thereby only aggravating the problem.

The degree of lactose tolerance varies from one person to the next. Some can drink a small glass of milk without experiencing any adverse effects. For others, even this modest amount will bring on symptoms. Some suggest that to determine how much you can tolerate, you should start out with a small glass of milk. Then gradually in-

* Lactose intolerance affects more Asians than any other group. Those of northern European descent are least affected.





Diagnosing Lactose Intolerance

Several methods are used to detect lactose intolerance.

Lactose tolerance test: After fasting, the patient drinks a liquid containing lactose. Blood samples are taken to determine how well the lactose is being digested.

Hydrogen breath test: Undigested lactose produces various gases, including hydrogen. This passes from the intestines into the bloodstream and then into the lungs, after which it is exhaled.

Stool acidity test: Undigested lactose in the colon produces acids that can be detected in a stool sample.

These tests are usually performed on an outpatient basis.

crease the amount you drink on subsequent occasions. In this regard, remember that while the symptoms of lactose intolerance are uncomfortable, they are rarely dangerous.

What to Eat and What to Avoid

If you suffer from lactose intolerance, you need to determine what you can and cannot eat. Much will depend upon your tolerance level. Foods that contain lactose include milk, ice cream, yogurt, butter, and cheeses. Some prepared foods, such as cakes, cereals, and salad dressings, might also contain lactose. Therefore, people with lactose intolerance should check the nutrition label on such products.

Of course, milk is a prime source of calcium, and insufficient calcium intake can lead to the development of osteoporosis. Hence, those who are lactose intolerant should look for other sources of calcium. Some fresh vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, and spinach, contain calcium. So do almonds, sesame seeds, and soft-boned fish, like sardines and salmon.

Even if you are lactose intolerant, you may not have to eliminate milk and dairy prod-

ucts altogether. Instead, try to determine how much you can tolerate, and then consume no more than that amount. When possible, eat other foods along with any products containing lactose. Remember, too, that aged cheeses contain less lactose, and it may be that they will not cause a problem. What about yogurt? It has almost as much lactose as milk, but some people with lactose intolerance can digest it with ease. Why? Because yogurt has microorganisms that synthesize lactase, and this aids the digestion of lactose.

So if you suffer from lactose intolerance, do not worry. As we have seen, knowledge about this ailment will allow you to control it easily. But keep the following points in mind:

- (1) Consume small amounts of milk and dairy products, along with other foods, to determine your degree of tolerance.
- (2) Eat yogurt and aged cheeses, which are usually more easily digested.
- (3) Make use of any available products that are lactose free or that contain lactase.

By following these suggestions, you can cope with lactose intolerance.

WATCHING THE WORLD

Counting Fame by Books

"If fame is having a book written about you, . . . Jesus Christ remains the most famous figure in the modern world," says the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Research on the books in the Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C., revealed 17,239 books about Jesus. That was almost twice as many as those written about William Shakespeare, who occupied second place with 9,801 books. Vladimir Lenin came in third with 4,492, followed by Abraham Lincoln, who had 4,378 books written about him, and Napoléon I, with 4,007. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was in seventh place, with 3,595 books, and was the only woman in the top 30. Joan of Arc, the next closest woman, had 545 books written about her. As for composers, Richard Wagner led the list, followed by Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach. Picasso heads the list of painters, ahead of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. However, Leonardo heads the list of scientists and inventors, beating Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Galileo Galilei. "There is no living person in the top 30," says *The Guardian*.

Paradise Lost?

At a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, 43 small island nations aired their concerns over environmental threats, reports the French daily *Le Monde*. Many of these paradisaic islands are increasingly vulnerable to hurricanes, cyclones, floods, and water shortage. According to a UN

press release, Hurricane Mitch is estimated to have caused some 11,000 deaths in the Caribbean. Both the Seychelles and Mauritius have experienced severe droughts in the past two years. High temperatures and pollution are bleaching coral reefs, reducing biodiversity. Islanders also fear the effects of rising sea levels resulting from global warming. It is estimated that 80 percent of the atolls in the Maldives could disappear into the ocean.

Sleepy Drivers Versus Drunk Drivers



"Not sleeping enough can have the same results as drinking too much," says *The New York Times*. A Stanford University study checked the reaction time of 113 people with sleep apnea—a condition that interrupts sleep at night and causes daytime sleepiness—against a control group of 80 volunteers. After their baseline reaction time was determined, the comparison group began drinking 80-proof alcohol. "On three out of seven tests of reaction time, people known to have apnea did worse than those whose blood alcohol measured [.08] percent, making them too drunk to drive in 16 states," the *Times* reported. According to Dr. Nelson B.

Powell, the lead researcher, the findings emphasize the dangers of driving while sleepy.

Nearly a Third of the World Infected With TB

Nearly one third of the world population—1.86 billion people—were infected with TB in 1997, says a panel of 86 health experts from more than 40 nations. The panel, chosen by the World Health Organization, also estimated that 1.87 million people died from the disease that year, while 7.96 million new cases of infection were reported. The study, published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, said that "eighty percent of all incident TB cases were found in 22 countries, with more than half the cases occurring in 5 Southeast Asian countries." According to the study, "nine of 10 countries with the highest incidence rates per capita were in Africa." In some countries with high HIV infection rates, the case fatality rate exceeded 50 percent. High TB rates continue as a result of "poor control" of the disease in those lands. The authors of the study forecast 8.4 million new cases of TB this year. Most of those infected never become sick with the disease. However, where the bacteria is dormant, it can become active when the patient becomes malnourished or the immune system is weakened, states the same source.

Children Exposed to Cigarette Smoke

"Nearly half of the world's children live with a smoker," says the *University of California*

Berkeley Wellness Letter, commenting on a recent report from the World Health Organization. "That's more than 700 million children." Considering that the number of adult smokers is expected to increase to 1.6 billion during the next 20 years, even more children will be exposed to secondhand smoke. These children will have an increased risk of developing such health problems as ear infections and respiratory ailments.

Best Seller, Few Readers

"It is the biggest bestseller in the history of the planet," states the *Star-Telegram* newspaper of Fort Worth, Texas. "Both cultural icon and spiritual touchstone, the Bible is revered by three major world faiths with billions of believers. But in a paradox to tax the wisdom of Solomon, it is widely unread." Yet, Bible sales are setting new records, and most Americans—over 90 percent—are said to own an average of three versions, according to a research firm. However, one survey showed that two thirds of them do not regularly read the Bible. Most cannot even name the four Gospels or cite five of the Ten Commandments. "And the majority say they find the Good Book irrelevant," the paper adds.

Hymns for the Millennium

British churchgoers "will soon be singing football chants during worship" if they choose to use the new worship book *Songs for the New Millennium*, reports *The Times* of London. Published jointly by the Church of England and the Methodist Church, this new book con-

tains some hymns addressed to "dear mother God." One pleads for her "mother love" and refers to God in the feminine gender throughout. In another song Jesus is depicted as a "player-manager" of a football team, and its chorus is a well-known football chant. Some of the songs are from children, including a group of orphans whose parents died of AIDS. Dave Hardman, one of the project's promoters, said: "It is a song book that marries all traditions. We wanted to get songwriters to tackle the realities of life through the eyes of faith."

Too Many Mummies?



Egypt's problem is unique—too many antiquities. New finds are constantly being announced: the beautifully decorated tomb of Tutankhamen's nurse at Saqqâra, a pyramid capstone at Dahshûr, a very large temple precinct at Akhmîm, a vast underground funerary complex with over 200 rooms at Luxor, sculptures and other artifacts from sunken ports and palaces off Alexandria, to name a few. Cairo's Egyptian Museum already has over 120,000 ancient objects on display and even more than that stashed away in storage. "Each week produces exciting new finds, creating yet more pressure on bulging store-rooms, as well as on the time and budgets of those who ana-

lyse, catalogue and restore artefacts," states *The Economist*. The discovery of a desert cemetery that may hold as many as 10,000 graves led one archaeologist to say: "The last thing we need is more mummies." Only a few outstanding ones will be put on display. The rest will be reburied.

Deadly Booby Traps

Angola has one of the highest concentrations of land mines in the world. But land-mine clearers there are facing a new problem: booby trap mines aimed at them. According to *The Sunday Times* of London, "de-mining experts have discovered two types of switch that have been attached to the mines. One detonates them on exposure to light and is powered by batteries that last for up to 12 months. The other incorporates a magnetic loop or coil designed to cause an explosion when it senses mine-sweeping equipment," which can be over 60 feet away. "In other words, this is a 'deminer mine,'" said Tim Cartstairs of the Mines Advisory Group. "It is specifically designed to kill people like our volunteers who are trying to help communities by getting rid of landmines." Angola now has an estimated 70,000 amputees as a result of mine incidents—the highest in the world—and doctors perform an average of 35 amputations each month. As mines continue to be laid by the warring parties in Angola's civil war, farmers abandon their fields and cities have been unable to get food supplies. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warns that "hundreds of thousands of Angolans face severe malnutrition, disease and death."

FROM OUR READERS

Choosing a Marriage Partner Thank you for the fatherly care you showed us young ones in the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: How to Choose a Marriage Partner." (October 8, 1999) Inexperience makes many young ones rush into marriage, mistaking infatuation for true love. I would rather be alone than be with someone with whom I am *not* compatible.

S.R.M., Brazil

I am 40 years old and have never married. I pray to Jehovah each day concerning finding a mate, and I try hard to cultivate the qualities needed to make a successful marriage. It was so encouraging to read the suggestions on looking for a spiritually strong person, someone who shares the same goals and is endeavoring to cultivate the fruitage of God's spirit. Thank you so much for strengthening my resolve to continue waiting on Jehovah.

E. F., United States

Swifts For many years, from my balcony I have observed European swifts building nests. They arrive in May and disappear suddenly in August. Thanks to the article "Swift in Name—Swift in Flight" (October 8, 1999), I now know much more about these fascinating creatures.

A. D., Germany

Life Story I have been a full-time evangelizer for over a decade now and have often felt a strong urge to thank you for your well-written articles. Most meaningful to me have been the wonderful experiences of missionaries. I've always wanted to be one myself. Experiences like those of Willem and Gré van Seijl ("Reality Has Exceeded My Expectations," October 8, 1999) help me to maintain my desire to serve in a foreign land.

P. K., United States

At the time I read the article, I was feeling very down. Sometimes I feel that I will never reach my spiritual goals. I have also had a difficult time maintaining a positive attitude toward my work as a full-time evangelizer. Willem and Gré had a fine, optimistic outlook in the face of obstacles, and Jehovah blessed their efforts. That reinforced my confidence that I too can reach my goals if I keep my faith strong.

K. C., United States

Outgoing Thank you so much for the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Can't I Be More Outgoing?" (October 22, 1999) I am 17 years old, and the article almost made me think it was written just for me. It expressed exactly the way I feel inside. I have often heard it said that I am conceited. But the fact that someone is quieter than everybody else is no reason to misjudge that person.

R. R., Germany

A serious illness I suffered as a child has made me feel isolated from others. This article helped me to come to terms with my feelings and to find a way of overcoming the situation. I am going to work on cultivating friends in my congregation.

J.F.F., Brazil

Wrong Number! I always enjoy your articles and their usual accuracy. However, in "Watching the World," the item "Car Crazy" (September 8, 1999) stated: "It is estimated that about 40 million vehicles are currently operating in the United States." The actual figure is much larger than that.

R. K., United States

Our apologies for this error. We inadvertently quoted the wrong statistic. Currently, over 130 million cars are registered in the United States.—ED.

AIDS IN AFRICA

What Hope for the New Millennium?

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN ZAMBIA

LAST September delegates from various parts of Africa gathered in Lusaka, Zambia, for the 11th International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa. One purpose of the conference was to encourage greater interregional cooperation in answering the question, How can we tackle the spread of AIDS in Africa?

Professor Nkandu Luo, then the Zambian minister of health, said that the situation in Africa and in other parts of the developing world is "extremely serious," adding that it is "arresting and even reversing some of the significant gains made in health and in other social and economic spheres."

A symposium on blood safety acknowledged that AIDS has been transmitted through transfusions. One doctor, a representative of the World Health Organization's Blood Safety Unit, pointed out that while sexual intercourse with an infected partner does not always transmit HIV, the recipient of AIDS-contaminated blood will be infected—in every case! With good reason, this doctor stated that in such a case, "the safest blood transfusion is the one that is not given."



**Professor
Nkandu Luo**

Photograph by permission of
E. Mwanaleza, Times of Zambia

The conference emphasized that the prohibitive cost of treatment makes it difficult if not impossible for those with AIDS to afford medical care. On the average, for example, a Ugandan in an urban area earns about \$200 a month. But treatment using antiretrovirals can cost up to \$1,000 per month!

The Lusaka conference indicated that the start of the new millennium would see no easy solution to the spread of AIDS. Students of the Bible, however, realize that ultimately the solution for all sicknesses depends upon the Creator, Jehovah God, who promises that in his new world, "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'" —Isaiah 33:24.

Graciela and her family



How to Enjoy A HAPPY FAMILY LIFE

IHAVE been reading the Watchtower and Awake! magazines for 40 years," writes Graciela from Argentina, South America. "Today, after so many years, I can truly say that they have fitted my needs. They helped me through childhood, during my teen years, with courtship and marriage, and in the rearing of my six children.

"The magazines help my husband and me with rearing our four children who still live at home. I make good use of the magazines to talk with my children and with their teachers at school. I have read directly from

Awake! when talking with doctors about health problems. Thanks to the series of articles with the cover title "Help for Children With Learning Disabilities" (February 22, 1997), we came to realize that one of our daughters has a learning problem."

The publications of the Watch Tower Society can help families to cope with the many problems they face and to enjoy a happy life together. For example, the 192-page book *The Secret of Family Happiness* can benefit husbands, wives, parents, children, grandparents—yes, every

member of the family. Among its instructive chapters are the following: "Train Your Child From Infancy," "Help Your Teenager to Thrive," "Protect Your Family From Destructive Influences," and "You Can Overcome Problems That Damage a Family."

