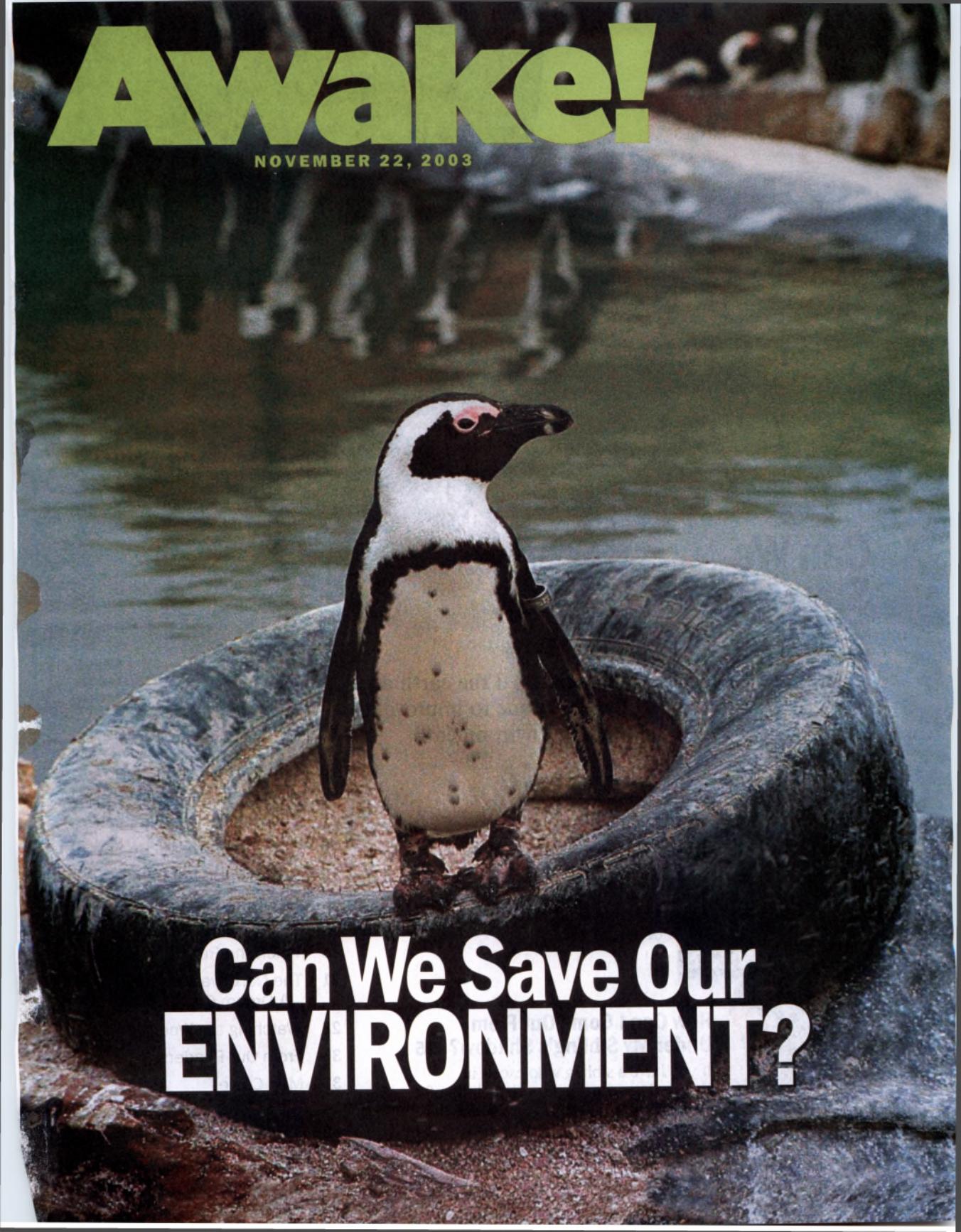


# Awake!

NOVEMBER 22, 2003



**Can We Save Our  
ENVIRONMENT?**

# Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 22,755,000  
PUBLISHED IN 85 LANGUAGES



## Can We Save Our ENVIRONMENT? 3-10

Environmental experts have described the earth as a very sick planet. What is being done to improve its health? Is it too late to save our environment?



### Living With Multiple Sclerosis 11

Many have learned to live happy, productive lives despite suffering the debilitating effects of multiple sclerosis.

### How Can I Come Out From Under My Sibling's Shadow? 25

If you have a sibling who excels in ability, do you struggle with feelings of resentment or inferiority? How can the Bible help you to deal with such feelings?



- 3 How Sick Is Our Planet?
- 4 Saving the Environment—How Successful Have We Been?
- 9 How the Earth Will Be Saved
- 15 Soap—A “Do-It-Yourself Vaccine”
- 16 The Glittering Star of the Bird Show
- 18 When the River Ran Backward
- 21 The Northwest Passage—A Dream Come True?
- 28 Watching the World
- 30 From Our Readers
- 31 Man Copies the Creator’s Design
- 32 A Book That Made a Difference

# HOW SICK IS OUR PLANET?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN THE PHILIPPINES

The patient's condition is serious. Symptoms are multiple. His breath is noxious. He has a fever, higher than ever before. Efforts to bring it down are not working. Poison has been found in body fluids. When symptoms are treated in one area, more pop up in other body parts. If this were a usual patient, doctors would be inclined to declare the multiple sicknesses as chronic and terminal. Not knowing what else to do, they would just take steps to make the patient as comfortable as possible until the end came.

**H**OWEVER, this is not a human patient. It is our home—the earth. The above scenario well illustrates what is happening to our planet. Dirty air, global warming, polluted waters, and toxic wastes are just a few of the maladies of our very ill earth. Like the doctors mentioned above, the experts are in a quandary as to what to do.

The media regularly call attention to earth's poor health with such headlines and captions as: "Blast fishing turns seabeds into killing fields." A "Billion Asians Could Be Parched in 24 Years." "Forty million tons of toxic trash a year trades globally." "Nearly two thirds of the 1,800 wells in Japan are contaminated with poisons." "Ozone Hole Over Antarctic Is Back and Bigger."

Some people become accustomed to frequent news of danger to the environment, perhaps even thinking, 'That is not of great concern as long as it does not affect me.' However, whether we realize it or not, the wholesale destruction of the earth's environment affects the vast majority of people. Since contamination of our planet is now so pervasive, it likely already affects

more than one aspect of our lives. Thus, all should be concerned about the health and preservation of our home. After all, where else would we live?

Just how widespread is the problem? How sick is the earth? How are people's lives affected? Let us take a look at just a few factors that help us to understand why our earth is not just mildly indisposed but, instead, seriously ill.

■ **THE OCEANS:** Large sections of ocean are overfished. A report by the United Nations Environment Programme says that "70 percent of marine fisheries are so exploited that reproduction cannot or can just barely keep up." For example, populations of cod, hake, haddock, and flounder in the North Atlantic fell by as much as 95 percent between 1989 and 1994. If this continues, what will it mean for millions who depend on the sea as a major source of their food?

Additionally, each year an estimated 20 million to 40 million tons of sea life are caught and thrown back into the ocean—usually wounded or dead. Why? They are caught along with target fish but are not wanted.

**■ FORESTS:** Deforestation has many negative sides to it. Loss of trees results in a reduction in the earth's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, and this is said to be a cause of global warming. Certain species of plants, the potential source of lifesaving medicines, will disappear. Nevertheless, forest destruction continues unabated. In fact, the rate of destruction has increased in recent years. Some authorities feel that if this persists, tropical forests could disappear in about 20 years.

**■ TOXIC WASTES:** Dumping of harmful materials both on land and in the sea is a serious problem that has the potential for bringing great harm to millions. Radioactive wastes, heavy metals, and by-products of plastics are

among elements that can cause abnormalities, sickness, or death in humans and animals.

**■ CHEMICALS:** During the past 100 years, close to 100,000 new chemicals have come into use. These chemicals find their way into our air, soil, water, and food. Relatively few of them have been tested for their health effects on humans. However, of the ones that have, a significant number have been found to be carcinogenic or to cause disease in other ways.

There are many more threats to our environment: air pollution, untreated sewage, acid rain, lack of clean water. The few already mentioned suffice to show that the earth is really sick. Can the patient be saved, or is the battle already lost?



# SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

## How Successful Have We Been?

**C**HERNOBYL, Bhopal, Valdez, Three Mile Island. Such names likely conjure up images of environmental disasters that have occurred in various parts of the world. Each of these disasters reminded us that the earth's environment is under attack.

Various authorities and individuals have

voiced warnings. Some have taken action publicly to make their point. An English librarian chained herself to a bulldozer to oppose the building of a road through a fragile ecological area. Two Aboriginal women in Australia led a campaign against mining uranium inside a national park. Operations were suspended. Al-

## Awake!®

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

*Awake!* (ISSN 0005-237X) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. © 2003 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Vol. 84, No. 22 Semimonthly ENGLISH

though well-intentioned, these efforts have not always been well received. For example, a naval captain under the Soviet regime was concerned about radiation leaks from the reactors of sunken nuclear submarines. When he published locations of these, he was arrested.

Various organizations have also been sounding the alarm about threats to the environment. These include the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Environment Programme; and Greenpeace. Some merely report on environmental problems as they happen to relate to their work. Others are dedicated to the cause of keeping environmental issues to the fore. Greenpeace is well-known for sending activists to environmental hot spots and attracting public attention to such matters as global warming, endangered species, and dangers of genetically modified animals and plants.

Some activists say that they use "creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems." Thus, they use such tactics as chaining themselves to the gates of a saw-mill to protest the destruction of ancient forests. Another group of activists protested one country's breaking of a whaling moratorium by appearing at its embassies wearing huge eyeballs to indicate that the country's actions were being watched.

There is no lack of issues to take up. For example, repeated warnings have come from individuals and organizations about the dangers of water pollution. Still, the situation

looks very bleak. One billion people do not have access to safe drinking water. According to *Time* magazine, "3.4 million die each year from water-related diseases." Air pollution is a similar problem. *The State of World Population 2001* reports that "air pollution kills an estimated 2.7 million to 3.0 million people every year." It adds that "outdoor air pollution harms more than 1.1 billion people." As a specific example, it reports that "fine particulate pollution is responsible for up to 10 per cent of respiratory infections in European children." Yes, despite warnings and any action taken so far, problems related to these most basic elements needed for life have just been getting worse.

To many, the situation is a paradox. More information than ever before is available on environmental subjects. More individuals and organizations than ever are interested in seeing the environment cleaned up. Governments have established departments to help solve the problems. We have more technology than ever before to help deal with problems. Yet, things do not seem to be getting better. Why?

### **One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward**

Industrial progress was meant to make our lives easier. In some ways it has. However, it is this very "progress" that aggravates the earth's environmental problems. We appreciate the inventions and advancements that industry has presented to us, but the very production of these and our use of them have often resulted in ruining parts of our world.

An example of this is motor vehicles. These

**Semimonthly Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, Cebuano, Croatian, Czech,<sup>2</sup> Danish,<sup>2</sup> Dutch, English,<sup>2</sup> Estonian, Finnish,<sup>2</sup> French,<sup>2</sup> German,<sup>2</sup> Greek, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>2</sup> Japanese,<sup>2</sup> Korean,<sup>2</sup> Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,<sup>2</sup> Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>2</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>2</sup> Tagalog, Ukrainian

<sup>2</sup>Audiocassettes also available.

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

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

**Would you welcome more information? Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address:** **America:** United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

have made travel quicker and easier. Very few people would like to go back to the age of the horse and buggy. Nevertheless, modern transportation has contributed to a host of problems. One of them is global warming. Humans have been altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere by using inventions that spew out millions of tons of gases. These gases are said to cause what is called the greenhouse effect, resulting in the warming of the atmosphere. Temperatures increased during the last century. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that "the 20th century's 10 warmest years all occurred in the last 15 years of the century." Some scientists believe that in the 21st century, average global temperature could rise 2.2 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit.

Warmer temperatures are expected to cause other problems. Snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has been decreasing. A 1,250-square-mile ice shelf in Antarctica collapsed in early 2002. Sea levels could rise significantly in this century. Since a third of the world's population lives near the sea, this could eventually result in loss of homes and farmland. It could also cause great difficulties for coastal cities.

Scientists believe that higher temperatures will result in increased precipitation, with a greater frequency of extreme weather. Some feel that severe storms like the one that took 90 lives and ruined 270 million trees in France in 1999 are just precursors of things to come. Other researchers feel that climate changes will result in the spread of diseases such as malaria, dengue, and cholera.

The example of the motor vehicle shows how complex the results of technology are—inventions that are helpful for people in general may cause a multitude of related problems that affect multiple areas of life. True is the statement of the *Human Development Report 2001*: "Every technological advance brings potential benefits and risks, some of which are not easy to predict."

Technology itself is often looked to for solutions to environmental problems. For example, environmentalists have long decried the use of pesticides. When genetically modified plants were produced that would reduce or eliminate the need for pesticides, it looked as though technology had provided a good solution. However, in the case of Bt corn, which was designed to control stem borers without pesticide, tests found that it can also kill monarch butterflies. Thus, "solutions" sometimes backfire and can result in additional problems.

### **Can Governments Help?**

Since destruction of the environment is such a huge problem, a successful solution would require the cooperation of the world's governments. In some cases governmental representatives have commendably displayed the courage necessary to recommend positive changes that would help the environment. However, real victories have been few and far between.

An example of this is the international summit that took place in Japan in 1997. Nations haggled and disputed over terms of a treaty to reduce emissions that are said to cause global warming. Eventually, to the surprise of many, an agreement was reached. This agreement came to be called the Kyoto Protocol. Developed regions, such as the European Union, Japan, and the United States, would cut emissions by an average of 5.2 percent by 2012. It sounded good. However, in early 2001, the U.S. government indicated that it was abandoning the Kyoto Protocol. This has raised many eyebrows, since the United States, with less than 5 percent of the world's population, produces about one fourth of the emissions. Additionally, other governments have been slow to ratify the treaty.

The foregoing example shows how difficult it is for governments to come up with meaningful solutions. It is difficult to get various governments together, and it is difficult for them to agree on how to tackle environmental issues. Even when agreements are signed,

some parties later back off from commitments. Others find the agreements difficult to enforce. In other cases governments or corporations feel they cannot accept the expenses involved in cleaning up the environment. In some places it simply boils down to greed, as power-

ful commercial giants exert strong influence on governments not to implement measures that would eat into corporate profits. Businesses and corporations have been known to want to get the most they can from the land without regard for future consequences.

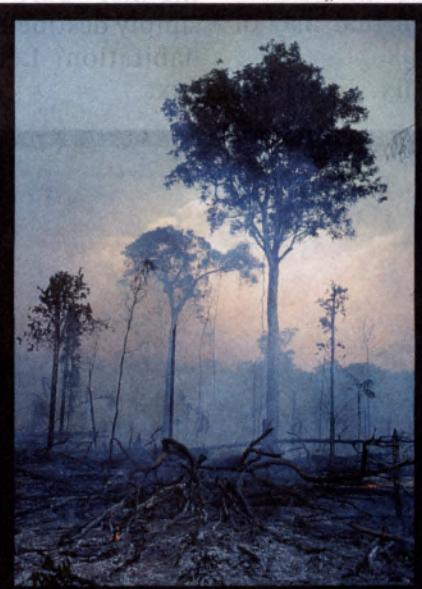


## NOISE POLLUTION

One type of pollution is not seen but heard—noise pollution. Experts say that it is of concern because it can cause hearing loss, stress, high blood pressure, sleep loss, and a loss in productivity. Children who go to school in noisy environments may develop reading deficiencies.

## DEFORESTATION RESULTS IN A RAT INFESTATION

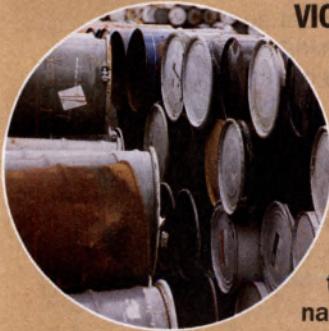
When 15 towns in Samar, Philippines, suffered a massive rat infestation, a government source blamed it on deforestation in the region. Loss of forest resulted in a decline in rat predators as well as in food sources for the rats. The rodents moved into more populated areas in their search for food.



*Replanting a forest to help save the environment*

## VICTIMS OF TOXIC WASTE?

At the age of three and a half months, Michael was found to have neuroblastoma, a form of cancer. If this were a singular case, that might not be so unusual. However, it was later found that about 100 other children from the same small area also had cancer. This alarmed many parents. Some thought that maybe the disproportionate number of cancer cases was linked to chemical companies in the region. An investigation found that an independent waste hauler had previously taken drums of toxic liquid from one of the companies and deposited them at a former chicken farm, sometimes pouring out the contents. Researchers discovered traces of a contaminant in local water wells. Parents cannot help but wonder if this could have been a factor in their children's developing cancer.



To complicate matters further, not all scientists agree on how drastic the effects of pollution of the earth will be. Thus, government policymakers may be unsure about how far to go in restricting economic growth in order to control a problem that may or may not be as big as some think.

Humankind is in a real fix. Everyone

knows that there is a problem and that something needs to be done about it. Some nations are putting forth a conscientious effort, but environmental problems are, for the most part, getting worse. Is the earth simply destined to become unfit for human habitation? Let us examine this question next.

— *Howard Hall*



## TOXIC CHEMICALS

After World War II, 120,000 tons of toxic materials, mostly phosgene and mustard gas, was sealed in ships and sunk at sea, some to the northwest of Northern Ireland. Russian scientists have warned that these materials are now in danger of leaking.

## AIR POLLUTION KILLS

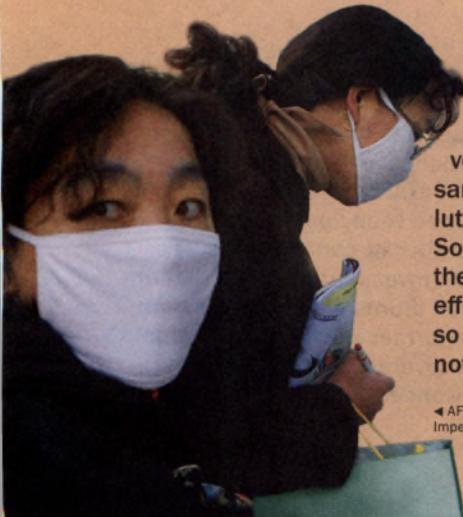
The World Health Organization says that between 5 and 6 percent of deaths worldwide each year are a result of air pollution. In Ontario, Canada, alone, it is reported that citizens spend more than \$1 billion each year for health costs and absenteeism resulting from polluted air.

## DYING CORAL REEFS

Some fishermen in Southeast Asia use cyanide solution to stun fish, making them easy to catch. The poison flushes from a fish's system, and thus the fish remains edible. However, the toxin remains in the seawater, killing coral reefs.

## WEAR A SURGICAL MASK?

Asiaweek magazine reports that much of the polluted air in Asia's cities comes from vehicle exhaust. Diesel and two-cycle engines are often the biggest polluters, producing large amounts of very fine suspended particles. These cause many health problems. The same magazine reports: "Taiwan's leading expert on the effects of pollution, Dr. Chan Chang-chuan, says diesel fumes are a cause of cancer." Some people in Asian cities wear surgical masks in an effort to protect themselves. Do these masks help? Dr. Chan says: "These masks are ineffective. Much of the pollution in the form of gases and particulates is so tiny that a simple mask has a low filtration rate. Besides, . . . they are not airtight. So they give a false sense of security."



◀ AFP/Getty Images; top left: Published with the permission of The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM H 42208); top right: Howard Hall/howardhall.com



# HOW THE EARTH WILL BE SAVED

Still, we cannot control the actions of most people around us. Does this mean that ultimately the situation is hopeless?

## A Greater Solution at Hand

A comment by Thilo Bode of the Greenpeace organization, as quoted in *Time* magazine, touches on the core of the environmental problem: "Our principal aim has been that corporations should consider *how* their products are disposed of. They must think in terms of a trilogy: production, use *and* disposal." Sadly, we are able to make goods, we know how to use them, but we do not dispose of them properly. In some cases humans simply do not know *how* to do so safely.

Humans are limited, but earth's Creator is not. He has already demonstrated his excelling wisdom in the creations we see on the earth. He knows how to make, to use, and to dispose of things properly. Many of the systems he has made are automatic. A seed germinates, and a plant grows and produces fruit. It then dies—with all of its elements breaking down in nonpolluting fashion, ready

**I**N SPITE OF the environmental gloom hanging over the earth, we would like to think that it will survive. After all, it is our home—and hopefully the home of our children and their children. Is there anything we can do to strengthen that prospect?

The truth is that while most people are concerned about the environment, many think nothing of throwing trash on the ground, dumping garbage in a river, or leaving lights turned on when they are not being used. Such acts may seem like small things, but if each of the billions of individuals on earth were careful about how he treated the earth, it could make a difference. Such things as being conservative in the use of energy, cooperating with recycling programs, and disposing of trash properly make a contribution toward preserving the environment. By our habits we can demonstrate our care for the earth now.

to be reused. This is recycling at its best! No toxic pollution!

The Creator does not intend to let the earth deteriorate into an uninhabitable trash dump. In the Bible, at Isaiah 45:18, we read: "This is what Jehovah has said, . . . He the true God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited."

If God formed the earth to be inhabited, why has he let it reach this sad state? The Bible explains that man was originally put in a paradise. In fact, God purposed that this Paradise reach the ends of the earth and be filled with people. (Genesis 1:28) However, rebellion broke out. The first man and woman did not want to continue subject to God's rule.

God allowed humans to try their own way of ruling. The results are what we see today, a disastrous failure. Humans have clearly demonstrated that they cannot solve their problems. The blame for what has happened cannot be put on God. What the Bible says is true of all human society: "They have acted ruinously on their own part; they are not his children, the defect is their own. A generation crooked and twisted!"—Deuteronomy 32:5.

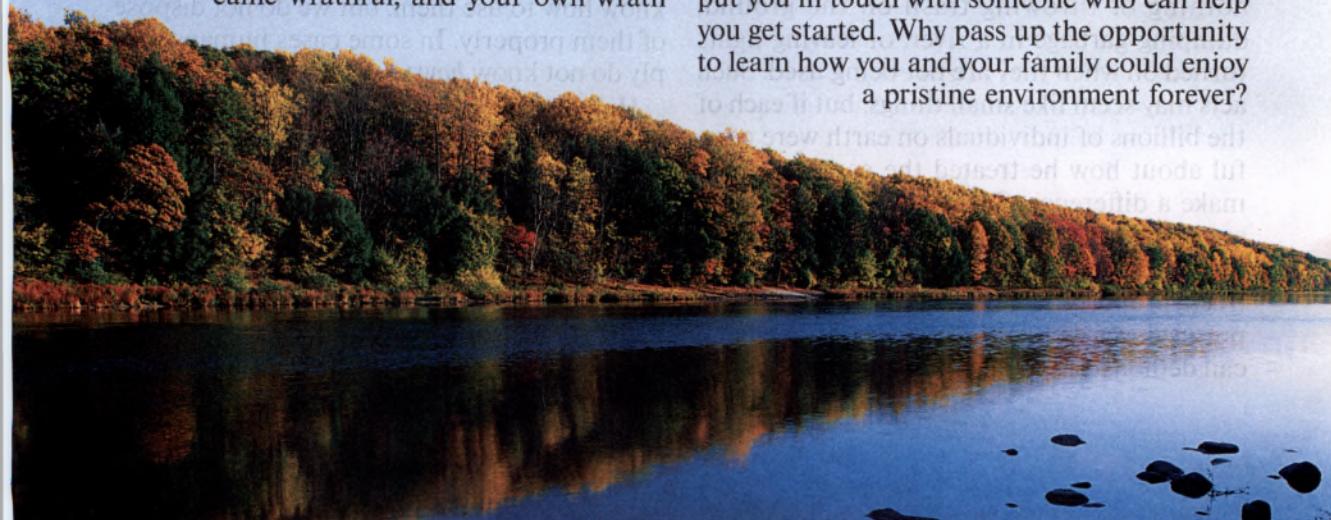
Nevertheless, God has not turned a blind eye to earth's ruination. He will act before it is too late, before the earth becomes an uninhabitable wasteland. How do we know that? Revelation 11:18 explains: "The nations became wrathful, and your own wrath

came, and the appointed time . . . to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." The ruining of the earth will be stopped.

God's original purpose for the earth, that it be a paradise, will still be fulfilled. God issued statements showing this. For example, he said: "My word that goes forth from my mouth . . . will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted." (Isaiah 55:11) You may enjoy reading Isaiah chapter 35, where God describes the transformation of ruined lands into gardenlike parks and fruitful fields.

Even now, when pollution is stopped, the earth has shown a remarkable capacity to renew itself. God created it to do so. If the overloading of the earth with pollutants is discontinued, a wide variety of microorganisms in water and soil can heal much of the damage. Additionally, there is reason to believe that when God steps in and directs things, this rejuvenation process will be even more effective. He can provide the training and perfect direction that humans now lack.

Hence, the earth's future is not hopeless. Plants and animals will be saved. Endangered species lists will be gone. Our air and water will be fresh again. Obedient humans will be there to enjoy it. Would you like to see that? You can. How? The Bible gives details on what to do. Why not make a systematic examination of the Bible to find out for yourself? Ask the publishers of this magazine to put you in touch with someone who can help you get started. Why pass up the opportunity to learn how you and your family could enjoy a pristine environment forever?



# *Living With Multiple Sclerosis*

**A**VIS was driving home alone when suddenly her vision became blurred. She quickly stopped the car. After a few minutes, her sight cleared, and she continued on her way, attributing the incident to tiredness. Then, while on vacation four years later, Avis awoke in the middle of the night with a severe headache. She went to the hospital, where a doctor gave her an analgesic and kept her under observation, fearing a possible aneurysm.

The next day the pain was gone. However, Avis felt very weak. She even had difficulty holding a glass of water, and she felt a tingling, burning sensation on her right side. Concerned, she and her husband cut short their vacation and drove home. The following morning at breakfast, Avis could not control her fork, and the right side of her entire body now felt weak. She went to a hospital, where doctors gave her a battery of tests that ruled out stroke. Unaware of the event that had occurred four years earlier, the doctors felt that the test results were inconclusive. After several months Avis regained the use of her right side. She concluded that she had suffered from a strange virus.

Four more years passed. Then one Friday morning Avis awoke with blurred vision in her left eye. Her doctor attributed it to stress. But by Sunday the eye was blind. Terrified and in tears, she called her doctor, who immediately sent her for an examination. Treatment with steroids partially restored her vision. After further tests, doctors diagnosed Avis's problem. She had multiple sclerosis, or MS.

## **What Is Multiple Sclerosis?**

MS is a chronic, inflammatory disease of the central nervous system (CNS), which is the brain and spinal cord. Many physicians believe that MS is an autoimmune disease. This term refers to a group of diseases in which the immune system goes awry and attacks certain tissues of the body. The cause of MS is unknown, but viral infection has been considered as a possible triggering factor. The end result, it seems, is that components of the immune system target the myelin sheath covering the nerve fibers of the CNS, leaving plaques or lesions on

**MS is twice as common in women as it is in men**



## The Four Main Types of MS

**Relapsing-remitting:** This is the classic form of the disease, and it affects 70 to 80 percent of patients at the onset of symptoms. Relapses, or flare-ups, are clearly distinguished from periods of remission, during which symptoms resolve or partially resolve. Between relapses there is no sign of disease progression.

**Secondary progressive:** Of patients who initially have the relapsing-remitting form, about 70 percent go on to develop secondary progressive MS. They may continue to have relapses, but they also experience a slow, steady loss of neurological function.

**Progressive-relapsing:** Affecting about 10 percent of patients, this form of MS steadily worsens from its onset. Patients have acute relapses with or without recovery. Unlike the relapsing-remitting form, the disease progresses between flare-ups.

**Primary progressive:** This form of MS affects 10 to 15 percent of patients. From its onset it progresses almost continuously, without distinct relapses and remissions. However, the rate of progression may vary over time with temporary minor improvements. It is more common in people who develop MS after the age of 40.

Sources: The U.S. National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the book *Multiple Sclerosis in Clinical Practice*. Depending on the source, percentage figures vary slightly.

the myelin, which is an important fatty substance. Indeed, the name multiple sclerosis refers to the multiple patches of scar tissue appearing on nerve fibers.

Myelin shields certain nerve fibers, providing a form of electrical insulation. So when myelin breaks down, electrical impulses may be completely blocked, or they may short-circuit to adjacent nerves, producing an abnormal impulse. And because damage can occur anywhere in the CNS, no two patients

have exactly the same symptoms. One patient may even have different symptoms with each attack, depending on which part of the CNS is affected. Still, symptoms often include fatigue, weakness, numbness in the extremities, walking difficulties, blurred vision, tingling, burning, and disturbances of bladder and bowel function as well as inattention and impaired judgment. On the positive side, however, many patients "do not become severely disabled," says The National Multiple Sclerosis Society in the United States.—See the box "The Four Main Types of MS."

As in Avis's case, diagnosis may be difficult early on because symptoms may fit a number of disorders. But once a history of recurrent episodes is established, physicians can usually make a more accurate assessment.—See the box "Standard Tests for MS."

Worldwide, about 2.5 million people have MS. That figure includes approximately 50,000 Canadians and 350,000 residents of the United States, where about 200 people are diagnosed with the disease every week. "With the exception of trauma, [MS is] the most frequent cause of neurologic disability in early to middle adulthood," states one medical reference. And it affects nearly twice as many women as men, with the onset of symptoms usually occurring between the ages of 20 and 50.

### Managing MS

Because MS is still incurable, doctors try to manage the disease by arresting or slowing its progress and by managing the symptoms. Medications designed to arrest or slow the progress of MS and to lessen the severity of attacks include at least two forms of interferon (a natural protein made by immune cells) and a drug called glatiramer acetate.

Doctors also prescribe drugs called corticosteroids for some patients, in order to suppress inflammation and to speed up recovery when relapses occur. However, "long-term

corticosteroid treatment is rarely justified and can cause numerous medical complications including osteoporosis, ulcers, and diabetes," says the medical publication *The Merck Manual*. Furthermore, steroid therapy may not alter the long-term course of the disease. Hence, some doctors prefer not to treat a mild attack.\*

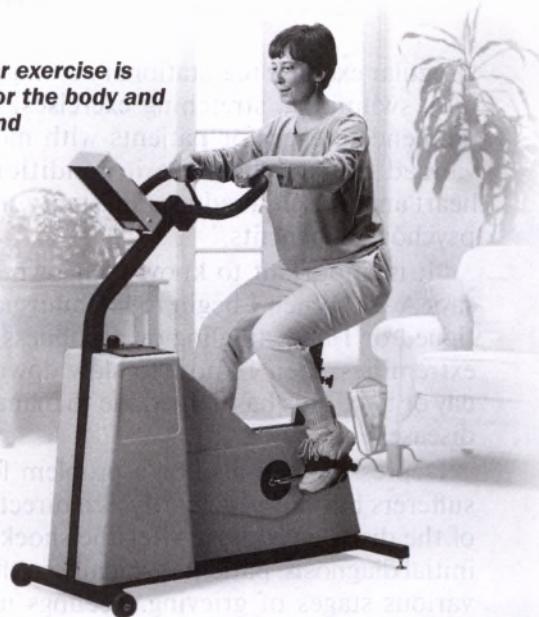
Taking a different approach, some researchers are studying ways to restore damaged myelin. In laboratory studies they have identified certain progenitor, or ancestral, cells that can give rise to mature myelin-producing cells. If they learn how to encourage this process, they may be able to stimulate the body to repair damaged nerves.

### Living With MS

Over 50 percent of MS sufferers report that fatigue is one of the most difficult problems

\* Recent studies show that between 50 and 60 percent of people with MS take vitamins, minerals, herbs, and other dietary supplements. Although some of these may be harmless to MS sufferers, others may be counterproductive or even dangerous. So before patients take any additional therapies or dietary supplements, they should consider the potential risks.

**Regular exercise is good for the body and the mind**



## Standard Tests for MS

**Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI):** One of the most useful imaging methods available, MRI can produce highly detailed images of brain tissue. These images may reveal the telltale signs of MS or at least rule out other diseases if the patient has MS.

**Analysis of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF):** CSF is drawn from the spinal column. Doctors look for abnormal levels of certain immune system substances and substances derived from the breakdown of myelin.

**Evoked response testing:** Computerized equipment is used to measure the average amount of time it takes for nerve signals to travel along nerve pathways. An abnormal response is seen in 80 to 90 percent of MS patients.

they cope with. Fatigue can aggravate the symptoms of the disease, affecting one's employment and employment prospects. And it can erode one's sense of control over the illness. Hence, many who experience afternoon fatigue have found it helpful to do their work earlier in the day and to take a regular afternoon nap. For example, an hour's rest every afternoon has helped Avis continue her work as a full-time volunteer minister.

In regard to general health care for MS sufferers, *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine* stresses the importance of health maintenance, "including stress reduction, a balanced diet, avoidance of rapid weight loss, and adequate rest." Most researchers feel that stress can precipitate relapses. Hence, it is worthwhile for individuals to identify specific stress factors that may be reasonably avoided.

On the other hand, MS sufferers should maintain as normal and active a life as possible but without overworking, becoming fatigued, or exposing themselves to extreme heat or cold. They should also engage in appropriate exercise. Says *The Merck Manual*:

"Regular exercise (eg, stationary biking, treadmill, swimming, stretching exercises) is recommended, even for patients with more advanced disease, because it conditions the heart and muscles, reduces spasticity, and has psychologic benefits."

"It is important to know your own body," says Avis. "When I begin to feel unusually fatigued or I have tingling or numbness in my extremities, then I know to slow down for a day or two. This has helped me to manage the disease."

Depression can also be a problem for MS sufferers but not necessarily as a direct result of the disease process. After the shock of the initial diagnosis, patients typically go through various stages of grieving. Feelings may include denial, anger, frustration, sadness, and helplessness. These feelings are normal, and they usually subside, giving way to a more positive frame of mind.

Naturally, family members and friends can be affected too, often sharing the newly diagnosed person's grief. However, they will more readily cope and be a good support to the sufferer if they make an effort to learn about the disease. It is good to know, for instance, that MS does not significantly affect life span, is not contagious, and is not directly hereditary. However, data does suggest that susceptibility to the disease is inherited.

Many who suffer from MS live productive, happy lives. Avis has found additional strength in her relationship with God and in her Bible-based hope for the future. Yes, she eagerly awaits the time under God's Kingdom rule when nobody will say, "I am sick." (Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:3, 4) If you suffer from MS or from any other serious health problem, may "the comfort from the Scriptures" sustain you too and help you to cope more effectively with your trials.—Romans 15:4.

## Coping With MS



**Support:** A close relationship with understanding and supportive relatives and friends promotes personal well-being. So reach out for help when you need it, and avoid isolating yourself.



**Open communication:** A willingness to talk openly about MS and the challenges it brings promotes understanding and helps sufferers to cope. On the other hand, a reluctance to communicate can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and isolation.



**Spirituality:** A growing body of evidence shows that spirituality is good for our health and fosters other positive traits, including an optimistic view of the future. This accords with Jesus' words: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.



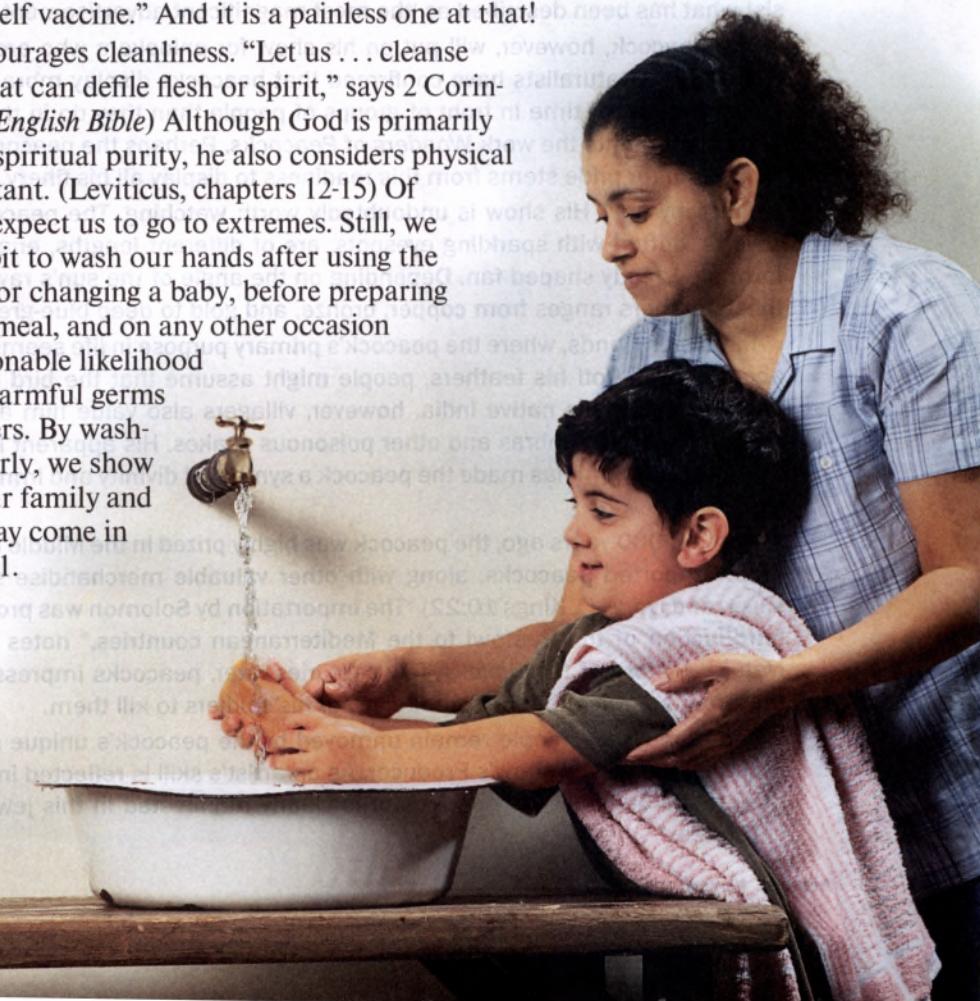
**Sense of humor:** Although there is nothing funny about MS, laughter can be good therapy for body and mind.

# Soap A "Do-It-Yourself Vaccine"

"THE second-biggest killer of children in the world is neither malaria, nor tuberculosis, nor AIDS. It is . . . diarrhoea," reports the magazine *The Economist*. Yet, many of these young victims would be alive today had they and their families regularly washed their hands with soap.

Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found that "appropriate hand-washing can cut diarrhoeal diseases by 43%," says *The Economist*. "It may have an equally big impact on respiratory-tract infections, the biggest child-killer of all. A huge study carried out for the American army found that sniffles and coughs fell by 45% when troops washed their hands five times a day." In developing lands soap is affordable for most families. Hence, it is fittingly described as "a sort of do-it-yourself vaccine." And it is a painless one at that!

The Bible too encourages cleanliness. "Let us . . . cleanse ourselves from all that can defile flesh or spirit," says 2 Corinthians 7:1. (*The New English Bible*) Although God is primarily concerned with our spiritual purity, he also considers physical hygiene to be important. (*Leviticus*, chapters 12-15) Of course, he does not expect us to go to extremes. Still, we should make it a habit to wash our hands after using the toilet, after washing or changing a baby, before preparing or sitting down to a meal, and on any other occasion when there is a reasonable likelihood that we could pass harmful germs or viruses on to others. By washing our hands regularly, we show Christian love for our family and all with whom we may come in contact.—Mark 12:31.





# The Glittering Star of the Bird Show

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SPAIN

**T**HE peacock steps out in front of a glorious curtain of color as if he were the star of a new theater production. Resplendent feathers, five times the length of his body, rise from his back and shimmer in the sunlight.

This majestic sight is the peacock's courtship ritual. As the spectacle reaches its climax, his tail feathers begin to vibrate, making a rustling sound that apparently contributes to the success of the show. How could his prospective mate possibly resist what has been described as 'the most magnificent advertisement in the world'?

The peacock, however, will put on his show for onlookers who are not prospective mates. "Naturalists have confirmed that peacocks display more often and for longer periods of time in front of groups of people than they do in the presence of hens," comments the work *Wonders of Peacocks*. Perhaps the peacock's proverbial reputation for pride stems from this readiness to display all his finery.

And why not? His show is undoubtedly worth watching. The peacock's long tail coverts, dotted with sparkling eyespots, are of different lengths, enabling them to form a perfectly shaped fan. Depending on the angle of the sun's rays, the color of these feathers ranges from copper, bronze, and gold to deep blue-green and violet.

In Western lands, where the peacock's primary purpose in life seems to be to strut about showing off his feathers, people might assume that the bird has few other useful traits. In his native India, however, villagers also value him as an effective predator of young cobras and other poisonous snakes. His apparent insensitivity to the cobra's venom has made the peacock a symbol of divinity and immortality in the Orient.

Some 3,000 years ago, the peacock was highly prized in the Middle East. King Solomon imported peacocks, along with other valuable merchandise such as 'gold, silver, and ivory.' (1 Kings 10:22) "The importation by Solomon was probably the first introduction of the Peafowl to the Mediterranean countries," notes the book *The Natural History of the Bible*. A few centuries later, peacocks impressed Alexander the Great so much that he forbade any of his soldiers to kill them.

Even today few people remain unmoved by the peacock's unique show. And we must not ignore the show's Producer. As an artist's skill is reflected in his works, so the artistic originality of our Creator is clearly manifested in this jewel among his creatures.





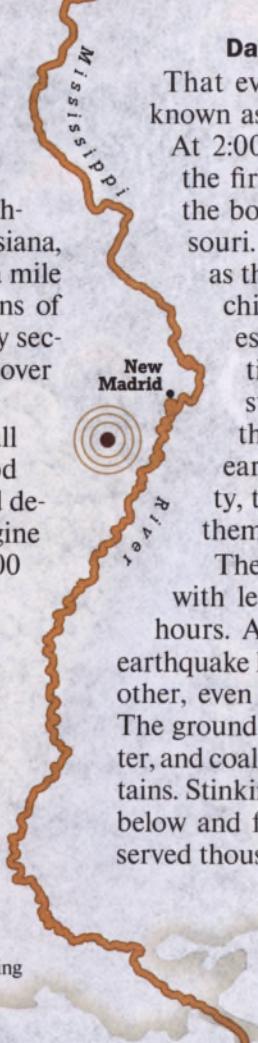
# When the River Ran Backward

LIKE a crease on a map of the United States, the Mississippi River splits the country in two. At its source in Minnesota, it is just ten feet wide. But it quickly broadens out as dozens of tributaries pour into the 2,300-mile-long southbound stream. Near New Orleans, Louisiana, the river reaches 200 feet deep and half a mile wide. Through its delta, 4,000,000 gallons of water pour into the Gulf of Mexico every second. During a flood, that can increase to over 22,000,000 gallons per second.

People living on the river know what all that water can do. They have seen it flood fields, smash levees, carry off houses, and destroy lives. But few today can even imagine what happened on the river less than 200 years ago.

In December 1811, an invisible force closed its grip on the central Mississippi valley and did not let go for weeks. A series of great earthquakes caused the riverbed to heave and sink like an agitated sea. So great was the buckling of the earth that on February 7, 1812, just upstream from New Madrid,\* Missouri, the mighty Mississippi ran north instead of south.

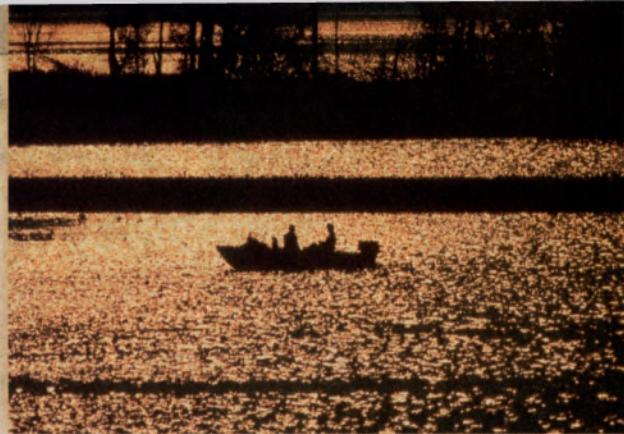
\* The pronunciation of the name is Mad'rid, differing from that of the capital of Spain, Ma-drid'.



## Days of Fear and Trembling

That event climaxed a time of terror known as the New Madrid earthquakes. At 2:00 a.m., on December 16, 1811, the first quake struck in what is now the boohel area of the state of Missouri. Farmers and townsfolk woke up as their furniture began moving and china shattered on the floor. Houses were walking off their foundations. People ran outdoors and stayed out, shivering because of the cold and the trembling of the earth. Once havens of rest and safety, their own homes were menacing them.

The ground continued shaking, but with less force, through the forenoon hours. About 7:00 a.m., another severe earthquake hit. Then, close to 11:00 a.m., another, even stronger, earthquake occurred. The ground split open in fissures. Mud, water, and coal shot up from these in eerie fountains. Stinking sulfurous gases escaped from below and fouled the air. Eyewitnesses observed thousands of crazed birds flying away



▲ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C./Dave Menke

from the area. When the violence ceased, the town of Little Prairie, Missouri, was in ruins.

### A Rough Ride Down the River

While the earthquakes were occurring, the brand-new steamboat *New Orleans* was cruising down the Ohio River toward the Mississippi—destination New Orleans, Louisiana. Exhilaration gave way to grave anxiety as the boat entered waters affected by the earthquakes. Riverbanks were shaking and collapsing into the river. Trees, long buried under the river, were floating to the surface, threatening to gash open the hull. Large waves were rocking the boat like a cork. Navigation maps prepared for the trip were useless, for the earthquakes had shifted the course of the river. A pleasant voyage had become a trip of terror.

On December 19, 1811, the *New Orleans* approached New Madrid, hoping to take on supplies. The once lively river town, however, was in no condition to offer any assistance. The few people still there desperately beckoned the boat to come and take them away from the smoldering ruins of homes and businesses.

The steamboat, however, continued on down the Mississippi, its passengers now trembling like skaters caught on thin ice. It passed the town of Point Pleasant, which was a ghost town. Little Prairie was next on the map. The boat did not stop there either, since most of Little Prairie had already disappeared and the buildings that remained were wrecked.

Farther south, the steamboat encountered a massive logjam. The earthquakes had uprooted dozens of trees and thrown them into the river. After hacking and muscling their way through them, the crew of the *New Orleans* tied up for the night at Island #32, close to what is now Osceola, Arkansas. About 4:30 a.m. on December 21, a passenger felt the boat tugging strange-

ly at its mooring. Daylight revealed what had happened. The line was pulled taut almost straight down into the water. There was no dry ground to be seen. During the night, the riverbed had dropped and Island #32 had disappeared below the surface, another casualty of the New Madrid earthquakes.

The *New Orleans* safely completed its maiden voyage, the first boat to run the length of the Mississippi River under steam power. Perhaps an even greater accomplishment was that it arrived at all.

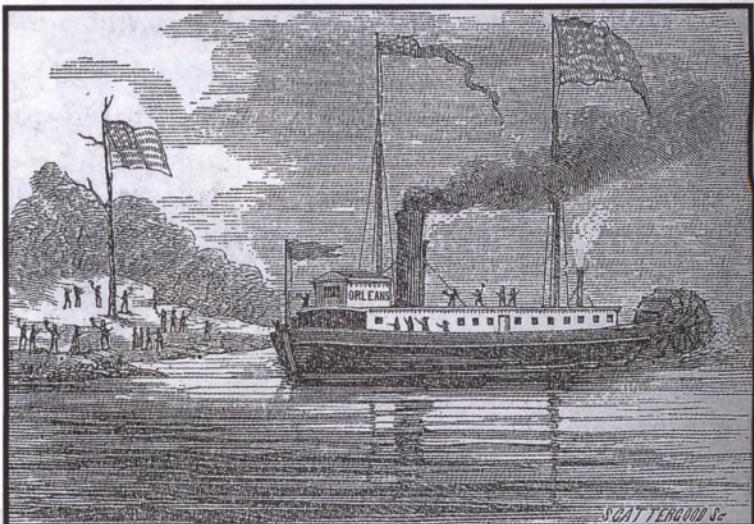
### More Shaking

Subdued tremors continued on into January 1812. On January 23, about 9:00 a.m., people felt the stomach-wrenching blows of another strong earthquake. The already shaken town of Point Pleasant, Missouri, was close to the quake's epicenter, and its inhabitants fled. When some returned in February 1812, they discovered not only that the town had been destroyed but that every trace of it had disappeared. The quake of January 23 resulted in Point Pleasant and the ground on which it stood being thrown into the Mississippi River.

Fearing the end of the world, many folks in the booneel region began turning to religion. Some clergymen rejoiced as the recently repentant now occupied long-empty church pews. Others suspected the motives of the rapidly growing flocks, calling them earthquake

**The steamboat "New Orleans"**

Used by permission, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia



Christians. Minister James B. Finley gave a fiery sermon in which he quoted Revelation 6: 17 of the King James version of the Bible: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" In a physical rather than spiritual sense, standing had become difficult because of the quaking ground.

### The Final Fury

Although the churchmen sent entreaties for relief heavenward, disaster kept haunting the region. Before dawn on February 7, 1812, the bootheel's inhabitants were again shaken from fitful sleep as enormous seismic waves rolled from the epicenter beneath them. This earthquake, the most violent of them all, was so powerful that it knocked down chimneys in Cincinnati, Ohio, 400 miles away. It rang church bells in Boston, Massachusetts, 1,000 miles distant. Way up in Montreal, Canada, plates and saucers rattled on tables. One Kentucky man, living about 80 miles from the epicenter, wrote in his log: "If we do not get away from here the ground is going to eat us alive." A special portion of the earthquake's fury, however, was reserved for the river town of New Madrid.

The earlier shocks had heavily damaged New Madrid, killing several residents and chasing most of the survivors away. The Feb-

ruary 7 tremor finished the place off. As the earthquake struck, the remaining inhabitants took to flight—and none too soon. The high bank on which the town stood crumbled and slid down into the Mississippi, where the riled torrent went licking away at the planks, bricks, and stones of New Madrid. In a short time, every sign of the town had vanished.

### Effects on the River

The New Madrid earthquakes produced temporary waterfalls on the Mississippi near New Madrid. Dozens of boats capsized while going over them. The February 7 quake caused the ground to heave and sink, forcing the current to reverse direction. Huge fissures opened under the river, creating maelstroms where more boats were lost. The quakes moved the channel of the river and inundated towns and homesteads. They also diverted water from the river, creating Reelfoot Lake, a large lake in Tennessee that did not exist before 1812. Trees that once stood on dry land are now in the middle of Reelfoot Lake, stubbornly holding onto flooded ground.

An exact measurement of the magnitude of these earthquakes is not available, since modern seismographs did not exist in 1812. Scientists calculate that at least three of the New Madrid earthquakes would have exceeded 8.0

on the Richter scale. These are the greatest earthquakes ever observed in the contiguous United States and are among the most powerful ever recorded on earth. Even though the affected area was sparsely populated, dozens of people—perhaps hundreds—died in the disaster.

Today the Mississippi River flows by the bootheel of Missouri as if nothing big ever happened. But if the river could speak, it would tell quite a tale about the time it ran backward.

***The earthquakes created Reelfoot Lake***



# The Northwest Passage

## A Dream Come True?

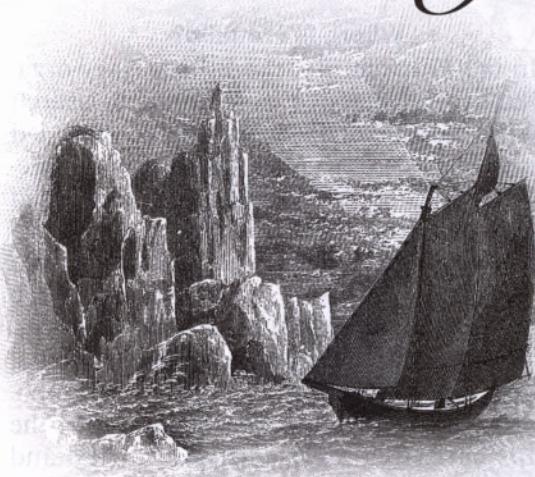
BY AWAKE! WRITER IN FINLAND

**G**LOBAL WARMING is usually associated with negative effects. However, it may help to fulfill one of the fondest dreams of mariners—an easily navigable opening of the Northwest Passage. This link between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans across the top of the North American continent could be open for regular sea traffic this century, according to *Science* magazine. "That would cut [6,800 miles] off the Europe-to-Asia route through the Panama Canal and [12,000 miles] off the trip around Cape Horn for supertankers unable to squeeze through the canal," explains *Science*.

Such a passage was envisioned over 500 years ago. Early attempts to find a northern passage were made soon after Christopher Columbus discovered America. In 1497, King Henry VII of England commissioned John Cabot to find a sea route to the Orient. Like Columbus, Cabot sailed west from Europe, but he headed more to the north. When Cabot landed, possibly on Newfoundland in North America, he was sure that he had reached Asia. Even though it was later understood that there was a whole New World lying between Europe and Asia, the idea of a northern passage to the Orient was not forgotten. Could this newly found continent be circumnavigated to the north?

### Frozen Barrier

In theory, finding and crossing the Northwest Passage may have seemed simple. In



From the book *The Story of Liberty*, 1878

practice, however, the harsh conditions of the Arctic zone made the task harder than probably anyone at that time could have imagined. The biggest obstacle was the ice. "Shifting, drifting, it parted to let ships through, then closed like a trap, imprisoning ships and crews, or crushing them," writes James P. Delgado in his book *Across the Top of the World*.

Sir Martin Frobisher, who led the first expedition that went north of the North American mainland to search for the Northwest Passage through the Arctic, was confronted with ice. A fleet of two ships and a boat left London in 1576. Frobisher also encountered Inuit, natives of the Arctic. At first, he thought that they were seals or fishes, "but coming nearer, he discovered them to be men in small boates made of leather," relates a book about Frobisher's journey. In all, Frobisher made three journeys to the Arctic, but none of them led to establishing the Northwest Passage. Frobisher was, however, fortunate in that he returned home from all his Arctic expeditions unscathed. The same cannot be said of other

explorers who searched for the fabled passage. For many, the Arctic—the ice, the cold, the lack of fresh food—was too much. Still, during the years after Frobisher, dozens of ships and thousands of men headed north, trying to make their way through the ice.

### Where Is Franklin?

In the 19th century, the British Navy organized several massive expeditions to search for the Northwest Passage. One of these led to the biggest disaster in the history of Arctic voyages. Sir John Franklin, an experienced Arctic explorer, was chosen to lead the expedition. Steam engines were installed in two large vessels. Both ships were manned by the most qualified men in the navy and equipped with enough provisions for three years. In addition, much attention was given to the emotional welfare of the crew. For example, the ships carried comprehensive libraries, and even hand organs were part of the equipment. An officer who joined the expedition wrote: "There is scarcely anything that would be of use that has been neglected and I really do not think that, if I could be in London for an hour or two, I would want to get anything!" The expedition set out from England in May 1845, and in July it reached Baffin Bay.

A year went by. And another. Finally, the three years they had prepared for as a worst-case scenario were spent, but nothing was heard about Franklin's expedition. The mysterious disappearance of the two ships and their crews caused a surge of Arctic voyages. Dozens of expeditions shed light not only on the

fate of Franklin's expedition but also on the mystery of the Northwest Passage.

Captain Robert McClure was a commander in one of two ships that were sent to search for Franklin. Leaving London in 1850, the ships approached the northern coast of America from the Pacific through the Bering Strait. Ambitious McClure left one ship behind and moved determinedly toward the Arctic Ocean. Soon he was sailing in waters where no European had been before. Taking many risks, he finally arrived at the coast of Banks Island, where he made an exciting observation. The island was the very one that Edward Parry had sighted years earlier when searching for the Northwest Passage from the east. If McClure could sail to the other side of the island, he would complete the Northwest Passage!

But the ice imprisoned his ship. Two years later, McClure and his men were still stuck in the ice. When it seemed that all hope was gone, however, on the horizon they saw men coming toward the ship. It was like a miracle. Henry Kellett, a captain on a separate expedition, had found a message left by McClure on Melville Island and was able to send men to the rescue. McClure's men, who were half dead by now, were taken to Kellett's ship, in which they sailed home—by the eastern route. Why, Kellett had come to the northern coast of America from the Atlantic! McClure "was thus the first to make the Northwest Passage, though in more than one ship and partly on foot," says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*.

But what had happened to Franklin's expedition? Various clues give some information regarding the events after 1845. Both ships of the expedition became stuck in the ice in Victoria Strait. By the time the ships had been imprisoned in the ice for 18 months, several men, including Franklin himself, were dead. Those remaining decided to abandon the ships and head south on foot, but the men, already weakened, died on the way. No one in the crew survived. The fate of the expedition remains a

## In Our Next Issue

■ Are Your Taxes Too High?

■ I Accepted God's View of Blood

■ When Your Child Has a Fever



**John Cabot**

Culver Pictures

**Sir Martin Frobisher**

Painting by Cornelis Ketel/  
Dictionary of American Portraits/  
Dover Publications, Inc., in 1967



**Sir John Franklin**

National Archives of Canada/C-001352



**Robert McClure and his  
ship "Investigator" (below)**

▲ National Archives of Canada/C-087256

▼ National Archives of Canada/C-016105





**The rise of global temperature is making frozen passages more accessible**

Kvaerner Masa-Yards

subject for speculation. Even lead poisoning from tin cans has been mentioned as a cause for the rapid death of the men.

### First Breakthrough

While the existence of the Northwest Passage had already been proved, it was not navigated until the 20th century. Young Roald Amundsen led the group of seven Norwegians who made the journey. They used a puny fishing boat named *Gjøa*, completely different from imposing British warships. The tiny vessel of shallow draft proved, however, to be an ideal means of transportation in the Arctic Ocean, with its numerous narrow passages as well as rocks and shoals. On June 16, 1903, Amundsen and his crew started the long journey from Oslo to the North American Arctic by the eastern route. Over two years later, on August 27, 1905, the crew on board the *Gjøa* observed a whaler that had come to the Arctic Ocean by the western route, through the Bering Strait. Regarding the encounter, Amundsen wrote: "The Northwest Passage had been accomplished. My childhood dream—this very moment it became a reality ... I had tears in my eyes."

However, so far it has not been possible to initiate regular traffic through the passage. Since Amundsen's time, a number of vessels have navigated across the top of North Amer-

ica, but it is still not an easy trip. Yet, that might not be the case for long.

### A Surprise Solution?

Arctic ice is now melting with surprising speed. Because of this, in the year 2000, a Canadian police ship was able to cross the Northwest Passage in about a month. When *The New York Times* interviewed the skipper, Sergeant Ken Burton, after the trip, he was concerned that they did not have problems with ice. "There were some bergs, but nothing we saw to cause any anxiety. We saw some ribbons of multiyear ice floes, all small and fragmented, and were able to steer around them," Burton said. According to *Science* magazine, "the extent of Arctic ice has shrunk 5% in the past 20 years, its thickness is down, and climate models forecast continued shrinkage as global temperatures climb." The article refers to a report released by the U.S. Arctic Research Commission that predicts that within a decade the Northwest Passage "could be open to vessels lacking reinforcement against the ice for at least a month in the summer."

Ironically, "by simply staying home and burning billions of tons of fossil fuels," the dream of humans that once inspired them to put forth enormous effort will now be realized, says *Science* magazine. Still, researchers are concerned about the effects of melting ice and regular sea traffic on polar bears, walrus, and native people in the Arctic. In addition, the passable Northwest Passage could lead to political conflicts. What else will the possible opening of the Northwest Passage mean? Time will tell.

## Young People Ask . . .

# How Can I Come Out From Under My Sibling's Shadow?

**"I wanted to be an individual, but I always felt I had to live up to my sisters' reputations. I felt I could never do the things my sisters had accomplished."—Clare.**

**D**O YOU have a brother or a sister who seems to succeed at just about everything? Do your parents constantly exhort you to be more like that sibling? If so, you may fear that you will always be in his or her shadow—that your worth will always be measured by how well you live up to your sibling's accomplishments.

Barry's\* older brothers are both graduates of the much-respected Ministerial Training School<sup>#</sup> and have excellent reputations as Christians. Barry admits: "My self-confidence suffered, since I felt I could never live up to their standards in the preaching work or be as good as they are at public speaking.

I found it hard to make friends of my own be-

cause I just tagged along with my brothers when they were invited out. I felt that people were only friendly to me because of who my brothers were."

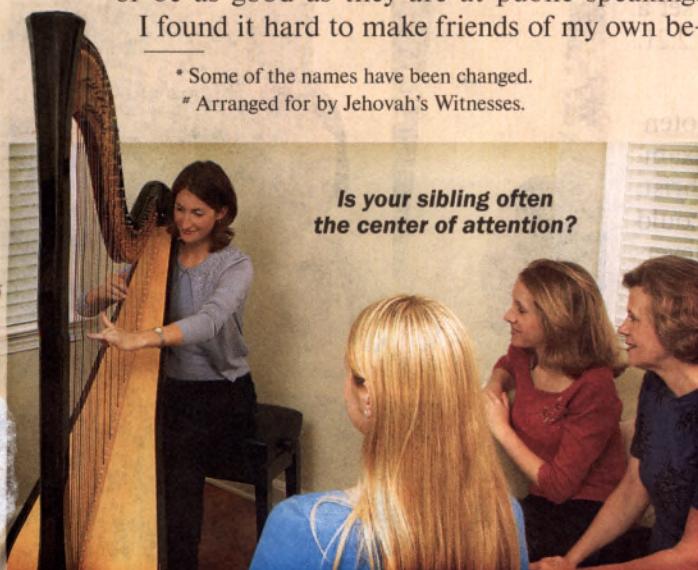
It is hard not to feel jealous when you have a sibling who is often the object of praise. In Bible times young Joseph stood out among his brothers. The effect on his siblings? "They began to hate him, and they were not able to speak peacefully to him." (Genesis 37:1-4) Joseph, of course, was modest. But your sibling might stir up rivalry and resentment by constantly reminding you of his or her achievements.

Some youths react to all of this by rebelling—perhaps letting their school grades slip, cutting back on Christian activities, or engaging in shocking conduct. They may figure that if they cannot do as well as their sibling, there's no point in trying at all. But in the long run, rebelling will only hurt you. How can you come out from under your sibling's shadow in a way that makes you feel good about yourself?

\* Some of the names have been changed.

<sup>#</sup> Arranged for by Jehovah's Witnesses.

*Is your sibling often the center of attention?*





#### **Don't Put Them on a Pedestal**

Seeing all the attention your sibling receives, you can find yourself buying into the belief that he or she is perfect and that you could never, ever, measure up. But is that really true? The Bible puts matters bluntly when it says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23.

Yes, whatever siblings' skills or talents are, they are still "humans having the same infirmities" as we do. (Acts 14:15) There is no reason to put them on a pedestal or to make idols out of them. The only human who has ever set a perfect example is Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 2:21.

#### **Learn From Them!**

Next, try to see your situation as a potential learning experience. Consider, for example, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 13:55, 56) Think of what they could have learned from their *perfect* sibling! Nevertheless, "his brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him." (John 7:5) Perhaps pride and jealousy got in the way of their faith. It was Jesus' *spiritual* brothers—his disciples—who responded to his generous invitation: "Learn

from me." (Matthew 11:29) And it was not until after Jesus' resurrection that his fleshly brothers finally appreciated Jesus. (Acts 1:14) Until then, they missed out on many golden opportunities to learn from their outstanding brother.

Cain made a similar error. His sibling, Abel, was an outstanding servant of God. The Bible says that "Jehovah was looking with favor upon Abel and his offering." (Genesis 4:4) For some reason, though, God "did not look with any favor upon Cain and upon his offering." Cain could have shown some humility and learned from his brother. Instead, "Cain grew hot with great anger" and ended up slaughtering Abel.—Genesis 4:5-8.

Not that you would ever get *that* angry with your sibling. But you too could miss out on precious opportunities if you let pride and jealousy stand in the way. If you have a sibling who excels at math, is a whiz at history, has mastered your favorite sport, possesses an outstanding knowledge of the Scriptures, or does well at public speaking, you must resist jealousy! After all, "jealousy is rottenness to the bones" and can only harm you. (Proverbs 14:30; 27:4) Instead of being resentful,



**"Let your light shine" by developing your spiritual skills**

try to *learn* from your sibling. Accept the fact that he or she has some abilities or skills that you do not have. Observe the way your sibling does things—or, better yet, ask for help.

Barry, mentioned earlier, came to benefit from the good examples his brothers set. He says: “I saw how happy my brothers were because they were willing to help people in the congregation and in the preaching work. So I decided to follow my brothers’ example, and I became involved in Kingdom Hall and Bethel construction work. The experience I gained has given me confidence and helped me to grow in my relationship with Jehovah.”

### Finding Your Own Strengths

Perhaps you fear that imitating your sibling’s good qualities will mean losing your own individuality. But that need not happen. The apostle Paul encouraged first-century Christians: “Become imitators of me.” (1 Corinthians 4:16) Did this mean that Paul wanted them to be devoid of their own individuality? Not at all. There is plenty of room for variety. If you are not as good a math student as your sibling is, it does not mean that you are defective. It simply means that you are different.

Paul gives this practical advice: “Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person.” (Galatians 6:4) Why not work on developing your own unique skills and abilities? Learning to speak a foreign language, to play a musical instrument, or to use a computer may help you feel better about yourself, and it may also give you valuable skills. Don’t worry about doing things perfectly! Learn to be thorough, conscientious, and competent. (Proverbs 22:29) You may not have much natural aptitude toward something, but “the hand of the *diligent* ones is the one that will rule,” says Proverbs 12:24.

However, it is especially your spiritual development that you want to cultivate. Spiritu-

al skills are of far more lasting value than any talents that may get more attention. Consider the twin brothers Esau and Jacob. Esau won much praise from his father because he was “a man knowing how to hunt, a man of the field.” Initially, his brother, Jacob, might have been easy to overlook because he was “a blameless man, dwelling in tents.” (Genesis 25:27) Esau failed to develop his spirituality and missed out on blessings. Jacob cultivated a love for spiritual things and was richly blessed by Jehovah. (Genesis 27:28, 29; Hebrews 12:16, 17) The lesson? Develop your spirituality, “let your light shine,” and your “advancement [will] be manifest to all persons.”—Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 4:15.

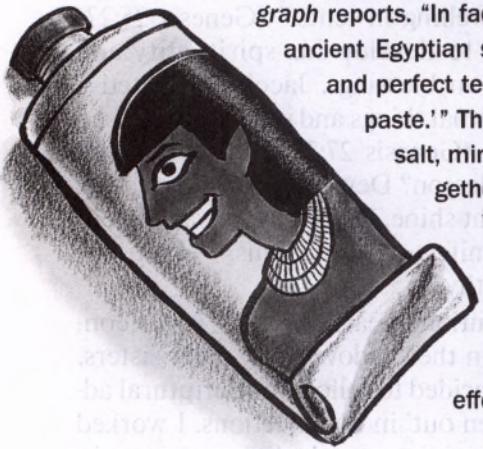
Clare, mentioned earlier, says: “I was content to live in the shadow of my older sisters. But then I decided to follow the Scriptural advice to ‘widen out’ in my affections. I worked in the field ministry with different ones in the congregation, and I looked for practical ways to help those in need in the congregation. I also invited brothers and sisters of different age groups to our family home and cooked for them. I now enjoy a wider circle of friends, and I am more confident.”—2 Corinthians 6:13.

From time to time, your parents may lapse into admonishing you to be more like your brother or sister. But realizing that your parents have your best interests at heart can take away some of the hurt. (Proverbs 19:11) However, it may be good to tell your parents respectfully how such comparisons make you feel. Perhaps they will try to find other ways of expressing their concerns.

Never forget that Jehovah God himself will take notice of you if you serve him. (1 Corinthians 8:3) Barry sums it up by saying: “I find that the longer I serve Jehovah, the happier I am. People now see me for who I am and appreciate me, just as they appreciate my brothers.”

# Watching the World

## Ancient Egyptian Formula for Toothpaste



"The world's oldest-known formula for toothpaste, used more than 1,500 years before Colgate began marketing the first commercial brand in 1873, has been discovered on a piece of dusty papyrus in the basement of a Viennese museum," the *Electronic Telegraph* reports. "In faded black ink made of soot and gum arabic mixed with water, an ancient Egyptian scribe has carefully described what he calls a 'powder for white and perfect teeth.' When mixed with saliva in the mouth, it forms a 'clean tooth paste.'" This document of the fourth century C.E. lists the ingredients as rock salt, mint, dried iris flower, and grains of pepper—all crushed and mixed together. The discovery created a sensation at a dental congress held in Vienna. "Nobody in the dental profession had any idea that such an advanced toothpaste formula of this antiquity existed," said Dr. Heinz Neuman, who tried it and found that his "mouth felt fresh and clean." The article states: "Dentists have recently discovered the beneficial properties of the iris, which has been found effective against gum disease and is now in commercial use."

## Health Hazards of Video Games

Parents may not realize how dangerous video games can be to their children's health, reports *El Universal* newspaper of Mexico City. According to Antonio González Hermosillo, president of the Mexican Society of Cardiology, up to 40 percent of children who constantly play video games will develop high blood pressure. Why? Because in addition to lack of exercise, the children come under stress from being so highly involved in situations that are perceived as dangerous, such as attacks, virtual fights, and other conflicts. "The specialist warned that this will make cases of cardiovascular disease, the primary cause of death in Mexico, shoot up in the country," said the paper.

## Fundamentally Flawed

"There is something fundamentally flawed about the way in which our world is being managed," says Dr. Jacques Diouf, director general of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Speaking to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, U.S.A., Diouf said: "One of the great successes of the twentieth century was a rate of growth in food output that considerably surpassed the unprecedented rate of population growth. . . . We have the capacity to produce enough food for everyone on the planet to be adequately fed." Nonetheless, 800 million people in the developing world alone do not get enough to eat, and some 6 million children under the age of five die each year from under-nutrition and hunger. "Many of them die from diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria or measles,

but could survive if they were better nourished," said Diouf. "The world hunger problem is clearly political, not technical." He added: "Unless action on the political level is taken, there is no guarantee that things will be different in the future."

## Born out of Wedlock

In the European Union, "25 percent of all children are born out of wedlock," reports the Spanish newspaper *La Vanguardia*. As traditional values change, "births out of wedlock are increasing all over Europe." According to the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Sweden, Denmark, and France head the list with 54 percent, 46 percent, and 39 percent respectively. Finland and Great Britain follow next, both with 37 percent of children being born out of wedlock. The same tendency is observed among

Mediterranean countries, where strong family traditions used to prevail. Recent figures for Spain, for example, show that 19 percent of the children are born to unmarried mothers, and in some regions, such as Catalonia, the figure is 22 percent—a 100-percent increase in just ten years.

### **Earth Is Half Wilderness**

"Despite a century of mounting environmental threats, 46 percent of the Earth's land area remains largely intact wilderness," reports the publication *World Watch*. A study involving 200 scientists worldwide "found that [26 million square miles] of land met 'wilderness' criteria, meaning that they have at least 70 percent of their original vegetation, contain fewer than [13] people per [square mile] outside urban areas, and have not been reduced to fragments of less than [3,900 square miles]." The 37 wilderness areas contain just 2.4 percent of earth's total population—144 million people, not counting urban centers—yet are equivalent to the land mass sum of the six largest coun-

tries combined: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Russia, and the United States. However, *World Watch* states that "more than one-third of the wilderness is Antarctic ice or Arctic tundra, and only 5 of the 37 areas are conservation-priority areas—meaning that they each contain more than 1,500 endemic species and harbor a high concentration of biodiversity."

### **Western Europe's Jail Capital**

"Britain is now the prison capital of western Europe, with an average incarceration rate of 139 for every 100,000 of population in England and Wales," states the *Guardian Weekly*. "The prison population has risen from 42,000 in 1991 to 72,000." British courts are not only sentencing more people to prison but giving them longer sentences as well. In 1992, 45 percent of convicted adults were sent to prison, compared with 64 percent in 2001. Incarceration levels, however, are much higher in some other countries. In fact, about half the estimated 8.75 million people in prison worldwide are found in just three countries: the Unit-

ed States (1.96 million), China (1.4 million), and Russia (900,000).

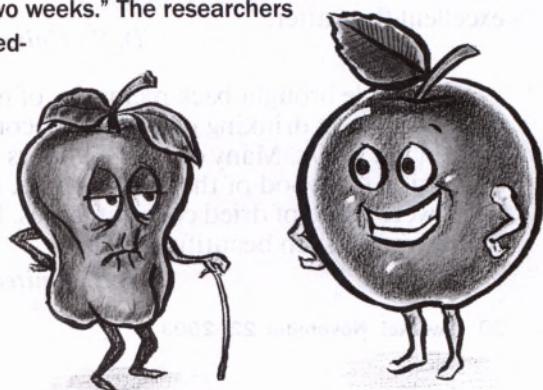
### **The Perils of Being Overweight**

"People who are overweight at 40 are likely to die at least three years sooner than those who are slim, meaning that being fat during middle age is just as damaging to life expectancy as smoking," reports *The New York Times*. "This study is saying that if you are overweight by your mid-30's to mid-40's, even if you lose some weight later on, you still carry a higher risk of dying," said Dr. Serge Jabbour, director of a hospital weight-loss clinic. "The message is that you have to work early on your weight. If you wait a long time, the damage may have been done." Losing weight can also prevent cancer deaths. After a 16-year study of 900,000 people, the American Cancer Society came to the conclusion that "excess weight might account for 14 percent of cancer deaths in men and 20 percent of those in women," said the *Times*. Studies have linked excess weight to many cancers.

---

### **Extending the Shelf Life of Fruit**

"The contents of your fruit bowl could soon stay fresh a lot longer—thanks to a substance hailed as one of the health-giving components of red wine," reports *New Scientist*. "Dipping apples in a solution of *trans*-resveratrol, an antioxidant found in grapes, extended their shelf life from two weeks to three months. Similarly dipped grapes fared less well, but their shelf life still doubled to two weeks." The researchers found that only small amounts of the antioxidant were needed to prevent tissue damage and ward off the yeasts and molds that wilt many fruits. "In subsequent work, the team has protected other produce, including tomatoes, avocados and green peppers," the magazine said. "They are now looking into cheaper methods of producing *trans*-resveratrol."

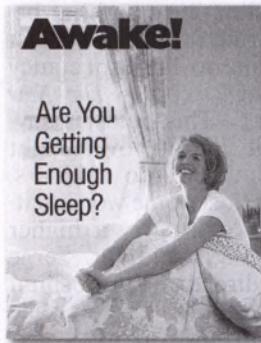


# From Our Readers

**Sleep** The series "Are You Getting Enough Sleep?" (March 22, 2003) was particularly timely for me. Because of my daughter's sudden illness, I began to suffer from insomnia. After five or six days, I went

to a nearby hospital, and with the help of medication, I can now sleep. However, your articles suggested that I also get sufficient exercise during the day but not just before bedtime. I will try to apply that advice as soon as possible.

*T. M., Japan*



Recently, I have been overcome with extreme fatigue. My family doctor examined me and came to the conclusion that I simply wasn't getting enough sleep at night and that I was also being affected by a medicine I take for epilepsy. I questioned his diagnosis. But a week later I received your articles on sleep. I couldn't put the magazine down, and after taking the test on page 9, I came to the same conclusion as my doctor. I am now trying the suggestions given in the article. Thanks for the timely information.

*M. B., United States*

**Coconuts** I want to express my appreciation for the article "One of the Most Useful Nuts on Earth." (March 22, 2003) I recently visited Mexico, and I was able to see firsthand how truly versatile the coconut is! I saw almost every usage listed in the article. One additional use involves cutting off branches, stripping off the leafy parts, and bundling 10 to 15 of these dried, flexible stems together. It makes an excellent flyswatter!

*D. S., United States*

This article brought back memories of my grandmother making drinking cups from coconut shells back in the 1930's. Many of her neighbors built their huts using the wood of the coconut tree, and their roofs were made of dried coconut leaves. I want to thank you for such beautiful articles.

*M. B., United States*

**Breast-Feeding** The "Watching the World" item "Breast-Feeding Benefits" (March 22, 2003) left me perplexed. I do not doubt that those who were not breast-fed may have deficiencies in their immune system. I was not breast-fed and have had frequent attacks of the flu. But to quote a study that indicates that those who were not breast-fed have a lower IQ than those who were shows a lack of sensitivity.

*C. B., Italy*

*"Awake!" responds: It was not our intent to offend anyone. We merely reported the findings of a Danish study with regard to breast-feeding. Publishing such information allows parents today to make informed decisions regarding their methods of child-rearing.*

**African Proverbs** I continue to marvel at the great variety of articles *Awake!* contains. I have been reading it for about 40 years, and I thoroughly enjoyed the article "Akan Proverbs—A Mirror on Social Norms." (March 22, 2003) It helped me appreciate just how important good manners are to getting along with our fellowman. I wrote out some of the proverbs so that I might refer to them from time to time.

*D. Z., United States*

Never have I read such a pleasant, amusing, and instructive article on proverbs. What a joyful experience to savor for a moment the norms of another culture. After each proverb, I paused to try to work out what I thought it meant. Needless to say, I didn't always get it right!

*J. K., Germany*

# Man Copies the Creator's Design

How is it that paper-thin electric lightbulbs can withstand strong pressure when pushed or screwed into a light socket? According to the book *How in the World?*, the answer lies mainly in the bulb's shape, which is based on the "eggshell principle." Even though eggshells are very thin, the eggs are not crushed by the weight of the female bird when she sits on the nest to incubate them. This is because the shape of the egg provides structural

strength that withstands the pressure. (Thicker shells might not allow the chick to peck its way out.) Copying the Creator's design, lightbulbs have a rounded profile so that when gripped, the force is "transmitted in all directions away from the point of contact by the curve of the glass." Thus, as with the egg, excessive stress is not placed on any one point, and the bulb does not break. Man has learned much from studying creation!

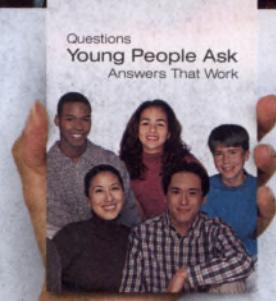


# A Book That Made a Difference

**B**ECAUSE so many young people imitate sloppy, faddish styles, it is refreshing when some try to dress modestly. In Balykchi, a city in Kyrgyzstan, formerly a republic of the Soviet Union, a group of youngsters decided to have their picture taken in the type of attire they had seen on the cover of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*. The youths went to a professional photographer and asked her for a group picture that would look like the one on the book's cover. The accompanying picture is the one she took.

After the photo session, the youths left the book with the photographer. At the time, she expressed little interest, as she did not believe in the Bible. However, when

the youths returned to the studio a few days later to pick up the picture, she commented that she had never read such a book in her life. She said that she never realized that the Bible gave such practical counsel, and she wanted to know more. As a result, she began to study the Bible.



[www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org)

g03-E 11/22