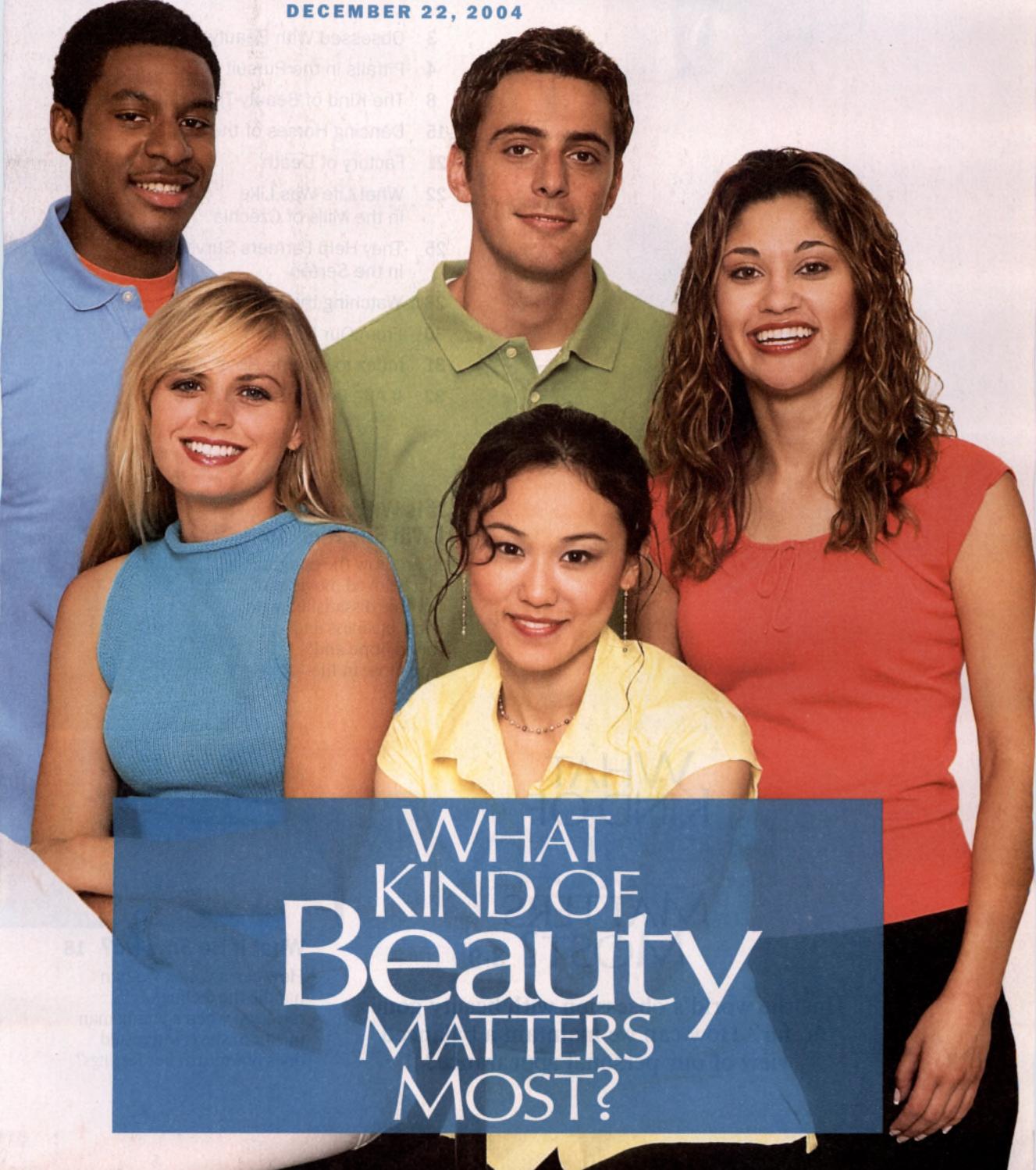
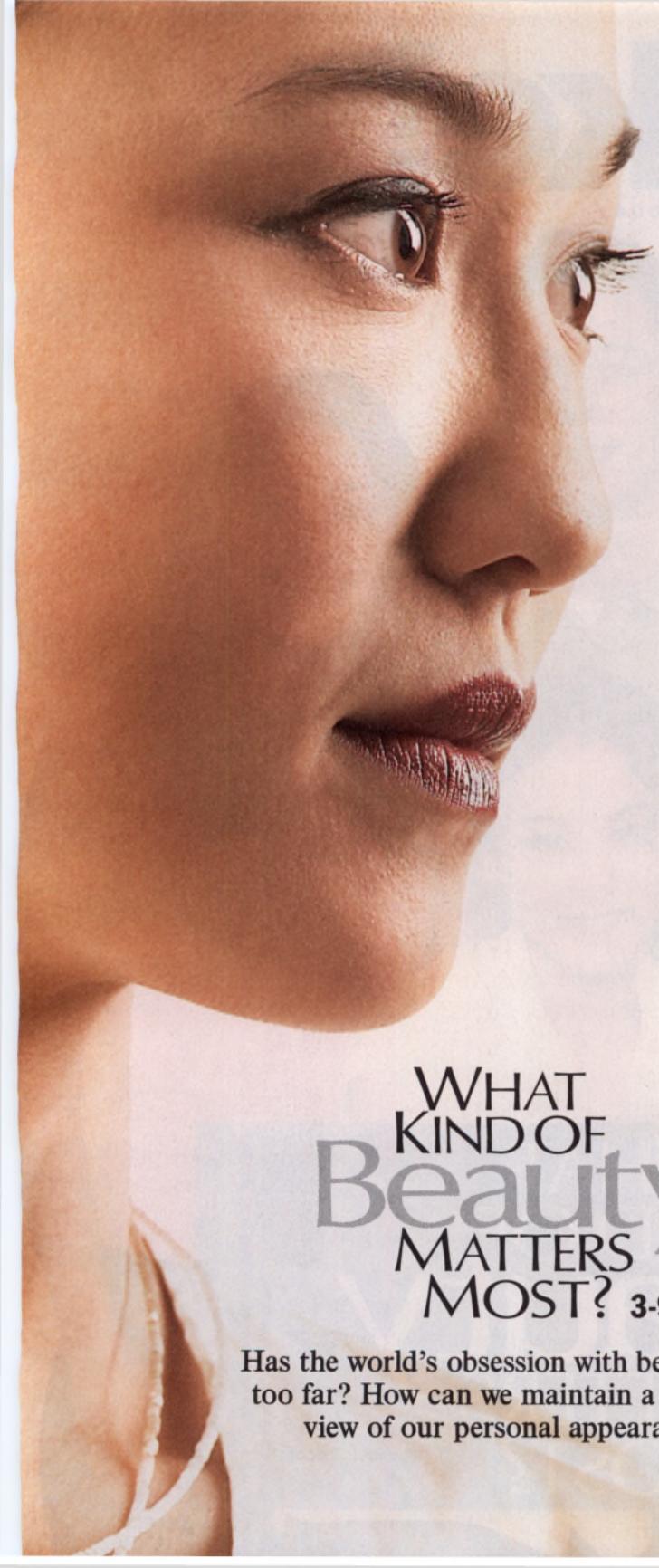


Awake!

DECEMBER 22, 2004



WHAT
KIND OF
Beauty
MATTERS
MOST?



Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 22,530,000

PUBLISHED IN 87 LANGUAGES

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Learn how the daughter of a beloved movie star became dissatisfied with show business and found hope and a purpose in life.



Activia, 1979

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Has the world's obsession with beauty gone too far? How can we maintain a balanced view of our personal appearance?



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How can a young woman handle the feeling of rejection when a young man in whom she is interested does not return her feelings?

OBSESSED WITH Beauty

MARIA* is a successful young woman and is part of a lovely family. Still, she is not happy. Why? She is dissatisfied with her appearance. Although her family tries to encourage her, Maria feels that she is far from beautiful, and that makes her depressed.

José comes from a respectable family and seems to have every reason to be happy. But he feels that he will never find a mate. Why? José feels that he is homely, even ugly. He is convinced that no worthwhile woman would be attracted to him.

Eight-year-old Luis likes to go to school and is quite sociable. He enjoys playing with his schoolmates, but he often cries because they make fun of his appearance. They say that he is fat.

These are not isolated cases. To say that Maria, José, and Luis merely have a problem with self-respect may be oversimplifying the matter. The truth is that no one likes to feel rejected because of his or her appearance.

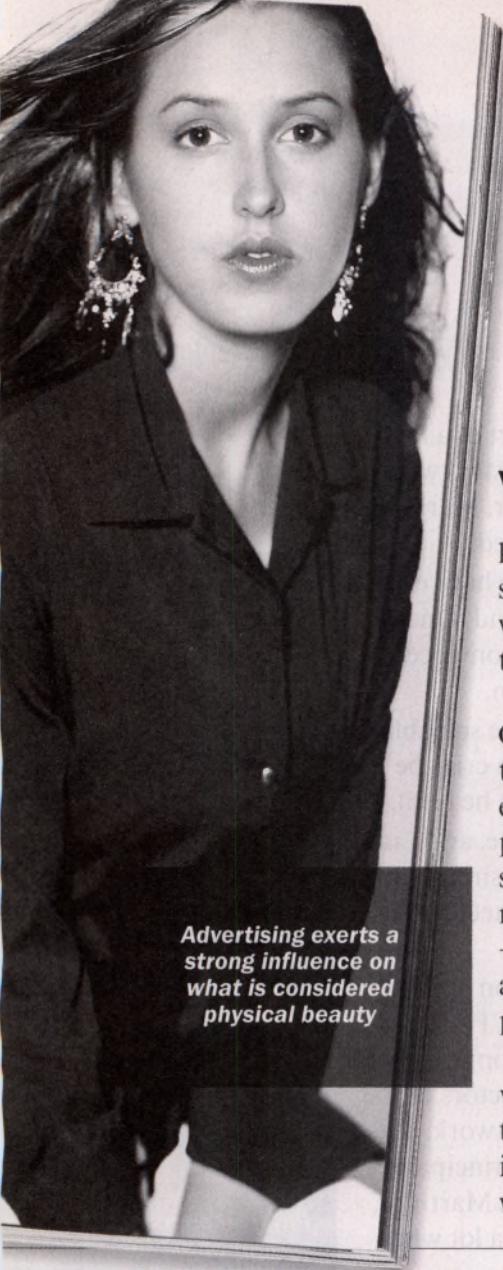
However, society places excessive importance upon appearance. In fact, success often seems to depend on looks. For example, the most attractive people seem to have more opportunities in the job market. Pilar Muriedas, one of the directors of the Latin-American and Caribbean Women's Health Network, says that for women, "having a good image is one of the principal requirements for success." And according to Dr. Laura Martínez, women well know that ultimately "image counts for a lot when it comes to being hired."

Of course, many men have also become obsessed with developing the "perfect" body. Indeed, many individuals of both sexes go to great lengths in their pursuit of beauty, even starving themselves or submitting to painful treatments to achieve the best face or figure possible. Is this pursuit worthwhile? Are there any dangers involved?

* Names have been changed.



**Physical appearance
may affect the
opportunities
one is given**



PITFALLS IN THE PURSUIT OF Beauty

WHAT are the criteria for judging true beauty? "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," according to a well-known adage. Indeed, the perception of beauty is widely considered subjective. Furthermore, the popular notion of just what constitutes beauty has varied a great deal from culture to culture and from era to era.

Jeffery Sobal, associate professor in nutritional sciences at Cornell University, U.S.A., points out: "Through the nineteenth century, almost all societies equated heaviness with elevated social status. A wide girth was seen as a sign of prosperity and health, while a skinny frame meant that a person was too poor to afford enough to eat." The works of many artists of the time reflect that concept, as their models—mostly female—had a physique with stout arms, legs, back, and hips. And many of these works were portraits of real people who were considered paragons of beauty.

That concept is still evident today, though beauty involves more than being fat or thin. Still, in some cultures of the South Pacific, fatness is highly valued. In certain places in Africa, prospective brides are shut up in "fattening farms," where they are fed large amounts of rich food with the idea

Advertising exerts a strong influence on what is considered physical beauty

Awake![®]

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

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that they will become more attractive. The owner of a nightclub in Nigeria says: "The average African woman is robust . . . That's what she offers in terms of beauty. It's in our culture." In many traditional Hispanic cultures, robustness is also valued, as a sign of affluence and success.

However, in many other places, the opposite is true. Why? Some say that as trade expanded and industrialization led to a greater supply and wider distribution of food, the "lower" classes could eat what before had been the privilege of the wealthy. Thus, admiration for corpulence gradually decreased. On the other hand, some religious beliefs link overweight with gluttony, and this has conferred a negative image on robustness. Also, scientific discoveries about health risks related to obesity have had their influence. These and other factors have contributed to changing opinions about what constitutes beauty, and for decades now a large part of the world has promoted thinness as the ideal.

The media have done much to further this thinking. People who appear in advertising on billboards and on television usually have thin, athletic bodies. Their image is intended to project a sense of security and achievement. The same is true of movie and TV stars.

How does this influence ordinary people, including youths? A recent article on body image indicates that "by the time the average American female graduates from high school, she will have watched television over 22,000 hours." During much of that time,

she is bombarded with images of glamorous women with "perfect" bodies. The article adds: "Through repeated exposure to these images, women internalize an association between this body ideal and prestige, happiness, love and success." It is hardly surprising, then, that after seeing photographs of models in a magazine, 47 percent of the girls analyzed felt compelled to lose weight, when only 29 percent of these were deemed overweight.

In 69 percent of girls, the concept of what constitutes a beautiful body is influenced by models appearing in magazines

The fashion industry also has a strong influence on people's concept of beauty. Jennifer, a Venezuelan model who works in Mexico City, states: "Your work is to look good, and today that means being thin." A French model named Vanessa says: "It is not so much that they demand that you be thin, but that you demand it of yourself. It's a worldwide trend." In a survey of young girls, 69 percent confessed that models appearing in magazines influenced their concept of what constitutes a beautiful body.

But women are not the only ones who are susceptible to the influence of the "ideal physique." The Mexican newspaper *El Universal* states: "Never before have so many products

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Some have harmed themselves through excessive plastic surgeries

for masculine aesthetic care been seen on the market."

"Ideal Image"—Ideal Results?

In an effort to achieve the "ideal image" or just to look their best, many people resort to cosmetic surgery. The applications of this branch of medicine are becoming less expensive and ever more varied. How did cosmetic surgery get its start?

According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, modern techniques of plastic surgery originated in the years following World War I,

when efforts were made to repair disfigurements resulting from war wounds. Since then these techniques have been valuable tools for correcting severe physical damage caused by burns, traumatic injuries, and congenital abnormalities. However, as *Britannica* acknowledges, plastic surgery is often "performed solely to improve appearance in otherwise healthy persons." For example, the nose can be reconstructed, excess skin can be removed from the face and neck, the size of the ears can be reduced, fat can be eliminated from the abdomen and hips, the volume of certain parts of the body can be increased, and even the navel can be given a more "attractive" appearance.

However, what of healthy people who put themselves at risk in the interest of enhancing their appearance? What dangers might they face? Angel Papadopoulos, secretary of the Mexican Association of Plastic, Aesthetic, and Reconstructive Surgery, explains that sometimes people who are poorly trained perform this type of surgery, resulting in much harm. There are clinics that administer dangerous substances to patients in order to trim their figure. Early in 2003, a newspaper reported that unhealthy conditions in beauty shops caused a scandal in the Canary Islands, where hundreds of women had become victims of unsafe operations.*

Men too can become caught up in the pursuit of the "ideal image." Some spend many hours in the gym, using virtually all their free time shaping and toning their body. "In the long run," says the magazine *Milenio*, "the

In Our Next Issue

- **Can Planet Earth Be Saved?**
- **Is It Weak to Be Gentle?**
- **Snow Babies of the Magdalen Islands**

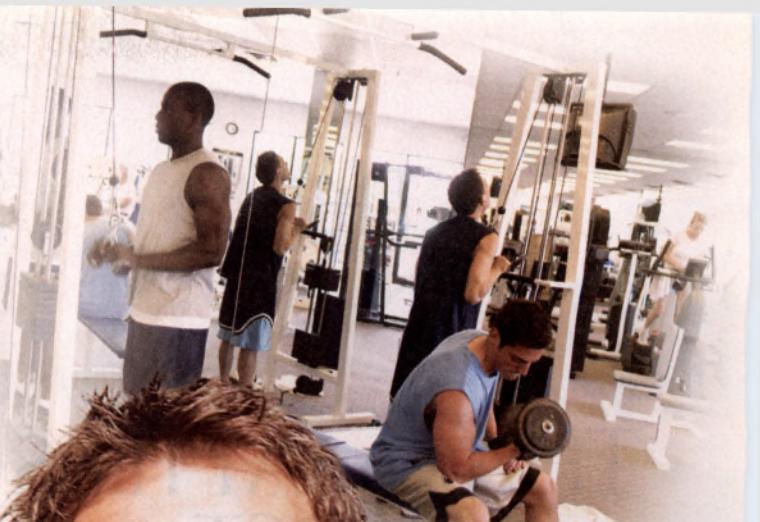
* For Christians, having cosmetic surgery is a personal decision. Still, vital factors should be considered. For a more in-depth discussion, see *Awake!* of August 22, 2002, pages 18-20.

need to exercise causes their social activities and relationships with other people to fall off." The compulsion to achieve a muscular look even causes many to consume substances that can harm the body, including steroids.

An obsession with personal appearance has caused some young women to fall victim to eating disorders, such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa. Some use slenderizing products that promise extraordinary results in a short time but do not have the backing of reputable health institutions. Using such products can result in serious harm.

The risks stemming from being obsessed with one's appearance go beyond the physical. Dr. Katherine Phillips of Brown University, U.S.A., says that people who are unduly concerned about their physical appearance can develop a psychological illness called body dysmorphic disorder, in which sufferers are obsessed with imagined flaws in their appearance. This condition may afflict as many as 1 in 50 people. Those affected "can be so convinced of their own ugliness that they isolate themselves from their friends and loved ones," she says. "They can become depressed and develop suicidal tendencies." Phillips cites an example of a pretty girl who had a slight case of acne yet was convinced that her face was full of scars. Refusing to be seen in public, the girl quit school in the eighth grade.

Is how a person looks really so important that he or she must sacrifice mental and physical well-being to obtain the "ideal image"? Is there a more important kind of beauty that one should strive for?



Some make a strenuous effort to acquire the desired look



THE KIND OF Beauty THAT MATTERS MOST

PEOPLE feel drawn to those they consider to be attractive. But what really makes you attractive? After all, there are limits to what you can safely do to alter inherited characteristics. Furthermore, physical beauty is transitory, as no one today can escape the deteriorating effects of aging and sickness. Is there another kind of beauty that is more important, lasting, and attainable?

The Importance of Inner Beauty

The Bible assures us that the Creator, Jehovah God, places great value upon inner beauty. Consider some examples.

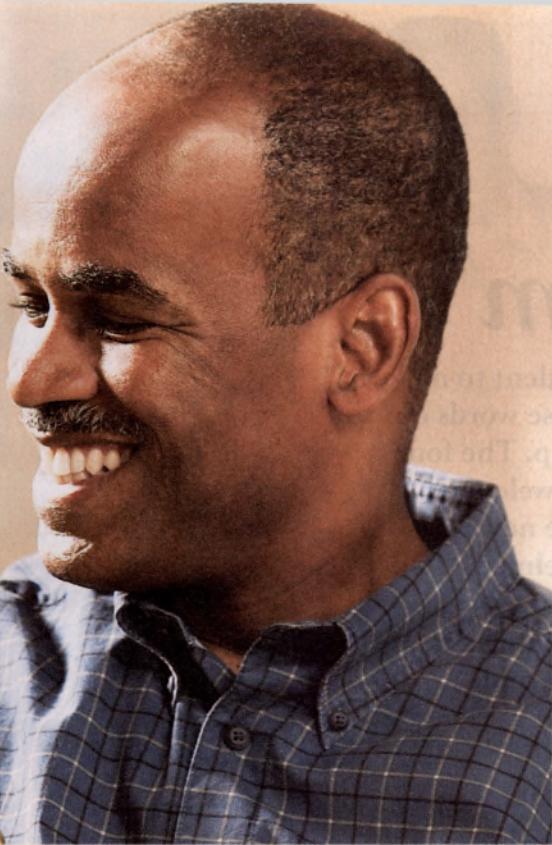
When Jehovah told the prophet Samuel to choose a king for Israel from among the sons of Jesse, the prophet was drawn to the handsome Eliab. "He has to be the one the Lord has chosen," Samuel said. But Jehovah said to Samuel: "Don't think Eliab is the one just because he's tall and handsome. He isn't the one I've chosen. People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts." —1 Samuel 16:6, 7, *Contemporary English Version*.

The one chosen to be king turned out to be the youngest son, David. While he was said to have "beautiful eyes" and to be "handsome in appearance," David may not have been as impressive-looking as his more mature brothers. But "the spirit of Jehovah began to be operative upon David from that day forward." Although he was imperfect and committed



some grave errors, he distinguished himself as a person of good heart and as a faithful servant of God to the end of his life. (1 Samuel 16:12, 13) Without a doubt, he was attractive to God primarily for his inner beauty.

By way of contrast, consider Absalom, one of David's sons. He turned out to be an undesirable man in spite of his enviable appearance. The Bible says of him: "Now compared with Absalom there proved to be no man so beautiful in all Israel as to be praised so much. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there proved to be no defect in him." (2 Samuel 14:25) However, Absalom's ambition impelled him to rebel against his own father and usurp the throne. He even violated his father's concubines. As a result,



Good qualities can do more to beautify you than any physical treatment can

and makes me feel appreciated. I know that he really loves me."

Daniel, who was married in 1987, says: "My wife is beautiful to me. Not only am I physically attracted to her but her personality makes me love her even more. She always thinks about other people and takes an interest in making them feel good. She has valuable Christian qualities. This has made it pleasant for me to be with her."

In this superficial world, we need to see past the surface. We need to see that achieving the "ideal" look is difficult—if not impossible—and of very limited value. Yet, developing desirable qualities that contribute to true inner beauty is possible. The Bible says: "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself." In contrast, the Scriptures warn: "As a gold nose ring in the snout of a pig, so is a woman that is pretty but that is turning away from sensibleness."—Proverbs 11:22; 31:30.

God's Word helps us to value "the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." (1 Peter 3:4) Truly, such inner beauty is far more important than physical beauty. And it is within the reach of all.

Inner Beauty Attracts

Can inner beauty attract others? Georgina, who has been married for nearly ten years, says: "Throughout the years, I have been drawn to my husband because of his honesty and sincerity toward me. The most important thing in his life is to please God. This has contributed to his being considerate and loving. He takes me into account in his decisions

As told by Rosalía Phillips

It Is Written That I Will See Him

"You'll be a big success! You've got the talent to make it!"
Sitting at his piano, our director called those words out to me seconds before the stage curtain went up. The four other members of the ensemble signaled a welcome. Attired in my red, sequined dress, I was the newest vocalist in the group. Nervousness overwhelmed me. Here at one of the most important theaters in Mexico City, I was making my debut, launching a career in show business! It was March 1976, and I was a month shy of turning 18.

MY FATHER had died three years earlier, and memories of him still filled my heart and mind. The public remembered him well too. He had been loved and admired as one of the top comic actors in the country, having appeared in more than 120 films during what is often called the golden era of Mexican cinema. His name, Germán Valdés, "Tin-Tán," was displayed on theater marquees all over Central and South America and in Spanish-speaking areas of the United States and Europe. Even today, more than 30 years after his death, his films are still shown repeatedly on television.



▲ Activa, 1979

Ever since I was a little girl, my house had been a gathering place for celebrities. My mother and her sisters formed a singing trio called Las Hermanitas Julián (The Julián Sisters). Her brother Julio Julián was a renowned opera tenor in Europe, while his Spanish wife, Conchita Domínguez, sang soprano. Moreover, my father's brothers, Manuel "Loco" (the crazy one) Valdés and Ramón Valdés, better known as Don Ramón, were famous television comedians.

Movie lots, revue theaters, and recording studios were familiar places to my brother, Carlos, and me because my father would frequently take us with him to work and on working tours; that is how he kept the family united. What a contrast there was between that superficial environment and our home, where real harmony and love prevailed! I remember my father as a very affectionate man, full of vitality and love of life. He was extremely generous, even to a fault at times. He taught me that happiness depends not on possessing but on giving.



With my parents and my brother when I was one year old

A Devastating Change

Toward the end of 1971, my mother broke the awful news to my brother and me that our father had been diagnosed with an incurable disease. For a year and a half, I watched him suffer as he struggled under the influence of powerful medication.

I still remember the day I saw the ambulance come to our house to take him to the hospital. I knew that he would never return. I can hardly describe my pain. I decided that since he was suffering, I should suffer too. I extinguished a cigarette against the palm of my hand and cried inconsolably. On June 29, 1973, my father passed away. I began to ask myself: 'Why did someone so good, who gave so much joy, have to leave us? Where is he now? Can he hear me if I speak to him? What meaning does my life have now without him?'

A Career Without Purpose

After taking some time to recover emotionally, I started to study interior decorating. I had a rebellious streak, though, and left school. My mother and I decided to socialize more. We attended elegant parties in the entertainment world. Often, the host would conclude by saying, "Rosalía, now please sing one of your songs for us." They liked my voice and the feeling I put into my music, saying that I had inherited my parents' talent.

At one of those parties, the composer and director of Arturo Castro and His Castros '76 heard me sing and invited me to join his group. At first, I didn't like the idea. Even though I loved music and had played guitar and composed since I was 14, I did not want to become a professional performer. But my mother urged me, and our family had a financial position to maintain, so I finally accepted. That led to my debut described earlier.

I enjoyed steady work from the beginning of my career. Our group toured Mexico, performing two shows a night. We worked in Guatemala, Venezuela, New York, and Las Vegas. I stayed with the troupe for two years.

Then I was offered a chance to make movies. I was given two supporting roles in films and one starring role, for which I earned two important awards.

One day I received a call from the foremost television company in the country. They offered me an exclusive contract under their "star system" and the leading role in a soap opera to be named after me. I would be propelled to the top of the entertainment world. I would receive an excellent salary, even if I did not work regularly. Feeling that I did not deserve all that and fearing the loss of freedom, I turned down the contract. I did accept work on the soap opera, but only so that I could continue studying theater at the university. Still, I was not happy. It troubled me to watch actors strive for years to land a leading role, while I was heading the cast—mainly because I was Tin-Tán's daughter.

Then came the recordings. The first included the sound track for the soap opera, the lyrics and music of which I composed. Later I recorded at a famous studio in London. I did more recordings, movies, and soap operas. The front pages of entertainment sections in newspapers began to feature articles about me, so you might say that I had reached the peak of success. Still, something was missing. I observed how vain and competitive performers were, and there was rampant immorality and insincerity among them. I lost confidence in people.

Then in the autumn of 1980, I saw my Uncle Julio at a family gathering. He had decided to leave the opera, and I listened to him speak about a paradise promised by God. Uncle Julio said that injustice and sorrow would disappear from the earth and love would rule. He also said that the name of the true God is Jehovah. What appealed to me most was hearing that in the Paradise our dead loved ones would be resurrected. The prospect of seeing my father again delighted me. I had never stopped missing him and longing

for his support and affection. How wonderful it would be to have him back again! But deep down inside it seemed impossible to me. Uncle Julio gave me a Bible and invited my mother and me to attend a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses that was to take place in a few weeks. We told him that we might go.

I Decide to Change My Life

One night, I was smoking in bed while reading the Bible that my uncle had given me. What I read in the book of Proverbs led me to conclude that light, understanding, and life originated with God, while darkness, confusion, and death came from an opposite source. That same night, I put out the last cigarette that I would ever smoke and waited for my mother to arrive. Crying, I asked her to support me in some big decisions. Next, I went to the theater where I had been rehearsing the role of Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. I quit the play and broke up with my boyfriend, one of the lead actors.

However, I had not yet learned to serve God, so I had nothing to lean on. I fell into a deep depression. I prayed that God would help me to feel that I could truly belong to something just for being myself, without regard to inherited talent or a well-known name. I cut myself off from all my regular associates and activities.

The Road to Real Success

In the midst of my confusion, I remembered my uncle's invitation to attend the convention. I called him, and he took me to the stadium. What I saw there touched me. I saw orderly people who did not use foul language or smoke and did not try to impress anyone. What I heard from the Bible reminded me of what I had read in the little book entitled *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?** which I found in my house shortly after my father's death.

About this time I was offered another star-

ring role in a soap opera. I liked the role, as it seemed to uphold the godly values I had learned about at the convention. In view of that, I accepted the part. On the other hand, this thought from the Bible kept coming to mind: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For . . . what sharing does light have with darkness?"—2 Corinthians 6:14.

A desire to please God was growing within me. I wanted to attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall with my uncle and aunt. Their congregation was an hour from my house, but I went the next three Sundays. My uncle decided to take me to a congregation in my area. We arrived as the meeting was ending, and there I met Isabel, a young woman my age. She was unpretentious and kind. When my uncle introduced me to her as Rosalia Valdés, she did not pay the least bit of attention to my name. That pleased me very much. She offered to study the Bible with me in my own home.

We started to study using the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*.* Isabel gladly adapted to my schedule. Sometimes she had to wait until very late at night, when I would finish filming the soap opera. How grateful I was that here was someone interested in me simply because I wanted to learn Bible truths! She was a genuine, honest, and refined person, qualities that I had thought could be acquired only by studying philosophy and art. We arranged to study for long periods, sometimes several times a week.

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.



* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.

In the beginning it was difficult for me to rid myself of my own wrong ideas, but gradually the truths of the Bible replaced them. I recall how I was heartened by God's promise: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:10, 11) Then, too, the hope of seeing my father again in Paradise was starting to become real to me. I often thought of Jesus' words: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life." —John 5:28, 29.

I finished my work on the soap opera, and other offers came in immediately. Though the projects were likely to make me more famous, participating in them would have implied that I endorsed immorality, idolatry, and other false ideas. I had learned that Satan was real and that he does not want us to serve Jehovah. So I refused the offers and began to attend all the meetings. Naturally, my mother and brother did not understand why I was giving up so many opportunities and so much money. At the same time, they could see a transformation in me. I was changing from an unhappy, dispirited person to one with some spark and joy. Finally, I had a purpose in life!

I felt the desire to share what I was learning with others and soon became a publisher of the beautiful message of God's Kingdom. When I was preaching, it was sometimes hard to hold the householder's attention; many would recognize me as an entertainer. On more than one occasion, my companion and I arrived at people's doors while the soap opera in which I was appearing was being shown on

their TV. The householders could not believe that I was standing at their doorstep!

On September 11, 1982, I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah. My life now had real purpose, and a different kind of career lay ahead of me. Isabel's zeal for the ministry motivated me. She served as a regular pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. Soon I was accompanying her as she studied the Bible with others. Isabel became my best friend.

I had practically abandoned my work as a performer, so my mother and I had to be content with a lower standard of living. Meanwhile, I composed the music for my fourth record album, which included some songs about my new values and beliefs. I wrote a song about the firm hope I had of seeing my father again. I called the song "It Is Written—I Will See Him." When I first sang it for my mother, she was deeply moved. She sensed my genuine conviction. I was thrilled when she expressed her desire to study the Bible. Two years later, she became a baptized servant of Jehovah. She remains active in the ministry to this day.

As time passed, it was becoming easier for me to turn down offers of work. And when faced with a trial or temptation, imagining the wonderful picture of my father together with us in a beautiful paradise would build my confidence and determination to keep serving Jehovah.

One day I was asked to form part of the cast for the Hispanic version of *Sesame Street*, a children's program. I thought that I could not do it and told the producer that my Bible principles would not allow me to promote such things as holidays and birthdays. The producer replied that if I would accept the job, he would respect my beliefs and we could sign a contract detailing my position. I therefore accepted and filmed 200 episodes. That was the last job I took as an actress.

There was just one contract still pending with the record company; so I recorded ten of my compositions for it, including the song

that I had composed about my father and the resurrection. I had the opportunity to sing that song on television and at personal appearances, during which I always mentioned my beliefs. However, the record company began to exert pressure on me to present a more sensuous image. I handed in my resignation.

Blessings in God's Service

In December 1983, Isabel and I toured the facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. There I met the man who would later become my husband, Russell Phillips. We wrote to each other for almost two years. How well I remember the day I commenced my regular pioneer service—all the way from New York, Russell sent me roses!

For a year I pioneered with Isabel. Then she was invited to serve at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico. Her conversations about her new assignment kindled in me the desire to expand my ministry and, Jehovah willing, to serve at Bethel too.

Russell has been another blessing in my life. Thanks to his love for Jehovah and His organization, I have learned to cherish full-time service. He loved Bethel, having served at Brooklyn Bethel for three years. After we married, we served together as regular pioneers in Colorado, U.S.A. Later, we were invited to be international construction workers on new branch facilities in other lands. How great our surprise when we learned that we were assigned to Mexico! In April 1990, we embraced the blessed privilege of becoming members of the Bethel family in Mexico. Russell's example encouraged me greatly. I admired the self-sacrificing spirit that motivated him to

leave his home country and family to advance the Kingdom interests here in Mexico.

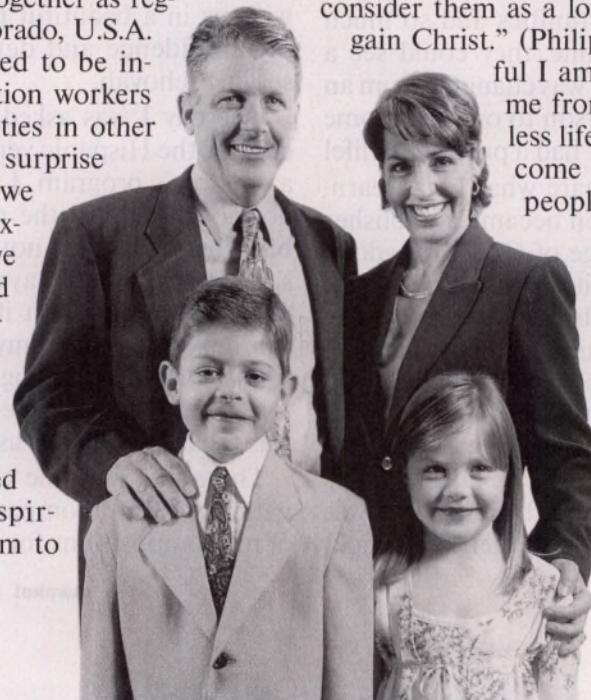
Russell and I greatly enjoyed our privilege of service at the Mexico branch. But things suddenly changed when I became pregnant. The news took us by surprise. Nevertheless, we had always admired parents who raise their children in the way of the truth, and we gratefully accepted this as a new assignment. In October 1993, Evan was born, and Gianna two and a half years later. Even though raising children requires continuous effort, we feel rewarded each time that our 11-year-old and our 8-year-old express their own faith as they engage in the ministry.

Russell now serves on a Kingdom Hall Regional Building Committee, and I recently resumed the full-time ministry as a pioneer. During the past 20 years, I have been able to help 12 family members, as well as 8 others, to learn Bible truth and come to serve Jehovah.

When my children ask me, "Mommy, was it hard for you to leave your life in show business?" I quote the words of the apostle Paul: "I do indeed . . . consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ." (Philippians 3:8) How grate-

ful I am that Jehovah rescued me from a vain and purposeless life and allowed me to become part of his wonderful people! I never tire of thanking him for countless blessings provided through his Son, Jesus Christ. Often I joyfully sing the song that I wrote about my father. I am confident that I will see him again.

***With my
family today***



Dancing Horses of the Sea

THE couple share a blush of recognition. He seems to puff with pride, while she looks on with approval. They reach out to share a delicate touch, then a warm embrace. As the glow of dawn filters down on them, they ease into the rhythm of one of nature's most elegant ballets—the dance of the sea horse.

"Sea horses are simply fascinating, unique, and charismatic," says marine expert Dr. Keith Martin-Smith. In the past, though, people were unsure of just what to make of them. Early naturalists used the name *Hippocampus*, which was also given to the mythological fish-tailed horses that pulled the chariot of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea.

It has been suggested that in medieval times, hucksters may have passed sea horses off as baby fire-breathing dragons. In truth, sea horses are simply bony fish—although they don't look like most fish or swim like them. Drifting through water or hovering in aquatic space, they have been compared to dainty crystal horses and animated chess pieces.

Sea horses are found in most of the world's warm coastal waters. They come in an incredible variety of shapes and sizes. Experts estimate that there could be from 33 to more than 70 different species. These include the pygmy sea horse, which could easily fit on your fingernail, and the potbellied sea horse, which can grow to over 13 inches in length.

No Teeth, No Stomach, No Problem!

With their curious arrangement of horse-like head, bony body armor, and monkeylike



tail, sea horses are better built for staying put than for speeding about. Most of the day, they seem content simply to wrap their tail around a suitable hitching post, or holdfast, and feed. If sea horses need to move, a tiny rear dorsal fin propels them along at a gentle pace, while side fins provide steering. By regulating the amount of air in their internal swim bladder, they are able to ascend or descend just like a submarine.

Feeding is serious business for hungry sea horses, and any small shrimps or crustaceans swimming past are quickly vacuumed into their bony snout. Since sea horses have no teeth or stomach to aid digestion, they must catch as many as 50 shrimps each



Pygmy sea horse
(actual size)



Shorthead sea horse



Potbellied sea horses



Lined sea horse

Sea horses have the ability to transform their skin color dramatically to match their surroundings

day to obtain the nutrients they need to survive. This is no problem for these efficient hunters, since sea horses have excellent eyesight. One eye can peer ahead for prey while the other independently scans behind. Their eyes can also detect more color than the human eye can and see in more detail than most fish.

Sea horses must avoid becoming somebody else's lunch. To evade such predators as crabs and turtles, many species can merge almost invisibly into their sea grass, coral, or mangrove habitat. Their blotchy skin patterns, their weedlike body growths, and their ability to transform their skin color dramatically in order to match their surroundings allow them to blend perfectly into the background. "Their body camouflage is so good that to see them you really have to be tuned in," says researcher Rudie Kuiter.

Dance and Romance

Unlike most other fish, male and female sea horses pair for life and rarely stray far from each other. Every dawn, they affirm their union through a unique dance. "The sea

horse dance is so beautiful and graceful that it's a joy to watch," says sea-horse breeder Tracy Warland. When the dance ends, the sea horses return to their respective holdfasts to feed for the rest of the day. The mating dance is more involved. As the female approaches the male, he puffs his pouch, brightens in color, and parades back and forth before her. They circle each other slowly and link tails. Whirling in unison, the couple then gambol across the seabed like prancing horses. Rising and falling, twirling and changing colors, they frolic together for up to half an hour.

Of course, the mating dance is a prelude to parenthood. "As the time to mate approaches, the sea-horse dance increases in length and frequency and can be repeated throughout the day," says Kuiter. "As the dance reaches its climax, the couple slowly rise to the surface with tails interlocked and bodies close. The female then gently transfers her eggs to the male's kangaroo-like brood pouch." The prospective father then finds a quiet spot to settle the eggs securely into the pouch lining. He fertilizes them and then begins the most unusual pregnancy in the animal kingdom.



High-crown sea horse

Lined seahorse: © Ken Lucas/Visuals Unlimited;
all other photos: Rudie H Kuiter

"Every Woman's Dream"

"I think it's wonderful that sea-horse males get pregnant and have the babies," said one woman. "They're every woman's dream," quipped another. One male sea horse endured seven consecutive 21-day pregnancies in a single year!

As the baby sea horses lie nestled deep within the brood pouch, a rich network of blood vessels supplies them with oxygen and nutrients. Over time, the salinity within the pouch increases, thus preparing them for their future seawater home. When the time for birth arrives, the father's labor may last from several hours to two days. Finally, his pouch opens, and the sea-horse babies are progressively ejected into the world. The number of babies born varies with the species but can range as high as 1,500.

Pets, Curios, and Remedies

Global pressures on sea-horse populations are increasing despite the fish's high birthrate. Some authorities estimate that each year, 30 million sea horses are caught and traded worldwide. Many are destined for the traditional Asian medicine market, where they are used to treat a host of illnesses ranging from asthma and broken bones to impotence.

Every year about a million sea horses are used by the curio trade to make key chains, paperweights, and brooches. Trawl fishing, dynamite blasting of coral reefs, and pollution threaten the sensitive coastal areas where sea horses live. Sea horses are also caught in the wild for the aquarium trade—although few survive in captivity, since they require special food and are subject to disease.

To stem the tide, legal measures have been proposed that would require many nations to prove that their sea-horse exports are ecologically sustainable. Better methods and technologies are also helping a small number of commercial breeders to supply the aquarium market with sea horses bred in captivity.

Shorthead sea horses



The outlook for sea horses is tied in with the future of the oceans. "The world's oceans are clearly under threat from human activity. We are taking too much of everything from them," laments Kuiter. Will these dancing dainties of the sea be lost in the jarring symphony of human "progress"? "We have to be optimistic," says Martin-Smith. "There is definitely goodwill out there among people. Our job is to make more people care about the earth's living creatures. When that happens, change will occur. Perhaps if we can save the sea horses, we can also save the seas." Perhaps. Happily, though, there is a more reliable source of hope.—Revelation 14:7.



Male shorthead sea horse giving birth

Baby shorthead sea horses





What if He Says No?

YOU thought of him as a friend. But then he caught your attention in a different way. Perhaps it was his good manners or the way he smiled at you when he spoke that drew you to him. In any event, time passed, and he failed to express any romantic interest. So you decided to ask him if he wanted to go beyond being just friends. To your deep disappointment, he kindly but firmly said no.*

Naturally, you are hurt. But do not overreact; try to see things in proper perspective. Yes, a young man has said that he is not interested in a romantic relationship with you. Remember, his decision does not change your worth as a person, nor does it negate the fact that others continue to love and respect you. In fact, his decision may have less to do with

you than it does with the young man's own personal goals and priorities.

If you are a Christian, you may remember, too, that "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Hebrews 6:10) Sonja* puts it this way: "You are still valuable. You are an asset to Jehovah as a single person." Since the Most High and others highly esteem you, why should you lose your self-respect?

You may still feel like a failure or fear that you may not be marriage material. But just because you do not appear to be "right" for this young man at this time does not rule out your being "just right" for someone else. (Judges 14:3) So rather than view your search for a suitable marriage mate as a failure, recognize that your efforts have yielded one beneficial result: You've learned that this young man is not for you. Why do we say this?

Was He Right for You?

The Bible commands husbands to "be lov-

* The article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Tell Him How I Feel?" (October 22, 2004) explained that in some lands there may be cultural objections to a woman's approaching a man about a romantic relationship. While the Bible does not condemn this practice, it does encourage Christians to avoid stumbling others. Thus, those desirous of God's blessing do well to take the Bible's counsel into account when deciding what to do.—Matthew 18:6; Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:13.

* Some of the names have been changed.

ing their wives as their own bodies." (Ephesians 5:28) It also commands husbands to 'assign honor' to their wives. (1 Peter 3:7) Now in this case, the young man may very well appreciate you as a friend. But by saying no, he has shown, in effect, that he is not prepared at this time to love and honor you as his wife. He had the right to make that choice. Think about it: If that is how he feels, would he really be a suitable husband for you? Imagine your unhappiness if you married someone who did not love you and cherish you as the Scriptures direct!

It may also help to take another look at this young man, now that your hopes for a romantic relationship will not be realized. Sometimes infatuation blinds one to personal or spiritual flaws that may be obvious to others. For example, was he unaware of your growing feelings for him, or did he knowingly encourage your feelings to grow by continued association with you? If the latter was the case, might it not indicate that he is not ready to be a considerate, empathetic Christian husband? If so, it is good that you found that out, painful though it may be.

Marcia's emotions were aroused when a young man began showing her special attention. When she asked him about his intentions, he told her that he was not interested in a relationship with her. What helped her to deal with the disappointment? She says, "Thinking with my brain, not my heart, has helped me handle my feelings." Recalling the Bible's requirements for husbands helped her to realize that he simply did not measure up. This helped her to overcome her sadness.

Andrea had a similar experience with a young man. She later realized that his actions toward her revealed a lack of maturity. She came to see that he was not ready for marriage, and she is grateful that Jehovah opened her eyes to that fact. She says, "I believe that Jehovah can protect you from circumstances that can hurt you, but you have to trust Him."

Of course, in many cases a young man conducts himself well and says no for honorable reasons. In any case, how can you cope with the feelings that result?

What You Can Do About Your Feelings

Your heart may need time to absorb the fact that he has said no. Your affection for him developed over time, and reversing that process likewise requires time. Rarely can romantic feelings be turned off like an electric light. On some days they may seem overwhelming! Be patient with yourself. As time passes, so will those feelings. But if you want those feelings to disappear more quickly, avoid things that feed them.

For example, resist second-guessing yourself by reviewing your every word and gesture when you revealed your feelings to the young man. If you do not restrain such thoughts, you may end up believing that he did not really mean no or that trying a different approach might work. Face the fact that you cannot change how he feels. In all likelihood, no matter how you approached him, his answer would have been the same.

Daydreaming can be another snare. You conjure up a mental picture in which the two of you live happily ever after. Those reveries may seem soothing, but they are not real. When they end, your sense of loss reappears and with it your agony. This cycle of pleasure followed by unbearable pain may go on for a long time unless you try hard to stop it.

Work to push daydreams out of your mind. When they begin, get up and take a walk. Do a physical task—something to get your thoughts moving in another direction. Concentrate on things that build you up, not things that depress you. (Philippians 4:8) This can be difficult at first, but in time, you will win the battle and find peace.

The support of close friends can help. (Proverbs 17:17) However, Sonja gives this caution: "It is not good if your friends are all

single, of the same age, and desirous of getting married. You also need older friends, who can help you to keep things in perspective." And remember, there is someone who can be of even greater help in overcoming your pain.

Jehovah—A Friend and Support

When one faithful man in ancient times faced disappointment, he prayed to Jehovah for help. The result? He wrote: "Whenever I am anxious and worried, you comfort me and make me glad." (*Psalm 94:19, Today's English Version*) Jehovah will comfort and sustain you too if you pray to him in faith. Andrea did so. She says, "Prayer is so important to help you get over the pain and move on." Sonja likewise says regarding prayer, "It helps you to have self-worth that does not depend on whether others like you or reject you."

No human can fully understand your feelings, but Jehovah does. He created humans with the desire to share love in marriage. He knows the power of romantic attraction, and he knows how to control it. He can help you overcome great pain of heart, for 1 John 3: 20 says: "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things."

Keep Your Balance

Marriage can be a source of great happiness, but it is not the only source. Joy comes to all who serve Jehovah, and married people have no monopoly on it. In some ways, single ones have certain advantages over those who are married. They do not suffer the "tribulation in their flesh" mentioned at 1 Corinthians 7:28. This tribulation refers to the stresses and strains experienced by all married couples. Single people also have more personal freedom and can more easily use their lives in Jehovah's service. Hence, the Bible teaches: "He . . . that gives his virginity in marriage does well, but he that does not give it in marriage will do better." (1 Corinthians 7: 38) Even if you have a strong desire to marry, meditating on these Bible teachings can help you to keep your balance and to make the most of your present circumstances.

Some well-meaning friends may tell you, "Don't worry, one day you will find someone wonderful." And it is true that your having suffered one rejection hardly means that you will always be alone. Still, a young Christian woman named Candace reasons this way: "I do trust Jehovah. I don't necessarily expect

him to give me a husband to make me happy. But I know that he will give me what I need to fill that void." Thinking in this positive vein has helped her to overcome romantic disappointment.

Attempts at romance often fail in this world, but so do many marriages. If you put your trust in Jehovah and obey his counsel, he can help you to replace disappointment with joy. You can have an experience like that of King David, who wrote: "O Jehovah, in front of you is all my desire, and from you my sighing itself has not been concealed. For on you, O Jehovah, I waited; you yourself proceeded to answer, O Jehovah my God." —Psalm 38:9, 15.



**Take advantage
of the help God
provides**

*1945 photo
showing V-1 rockets
on trolleys*

FACTORY OF DEATH

BY AWAKE! WRITER
IN GERMANY

MITTELWERK was, some claim, the largest underground factory in the world. Located in the Harz Mountains of Germany, some 160 miles southwest of Berlin, the factory complex wove its way through 10 miles of huge galleries dug into the base of a hill. From 1943 to 1945, thousands of concentration camp inmates worked as slaves in these galleries. Under horrific conditions, they were forced to make weapons for the Nazi State.

What the slave laborers made were not just any weapons. The factory produced missiles known as V-1 and V-2 rockets. These were transported from Mittelwerk to launching sites, chiefly in France and the Netherlands. Once launched, they flew unmanned toward targets in Belgium, Britain, and France, where they dropped out of the sky and exploded on impact. The Nazis even hoped to develop a rocket so powerful that it could fly a bomb across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. By the time the second world war ended, many hundreds of V-1 and V-2 missiles had hit European cities. However, those represented but a fraction of the missiles the Nazis had made and hoped to deploy against their enemies. None of the missiles ever reached New York.

Poignant Distinction

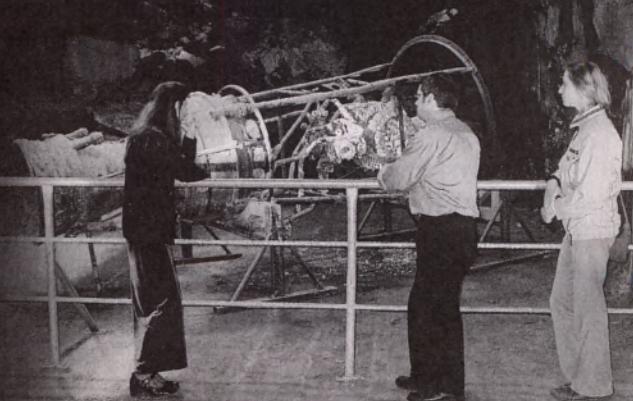
Once the war was over, dozens of German scientists and technicians who had designed

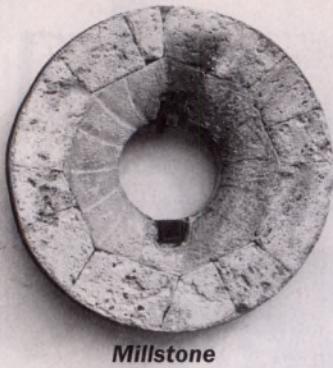
the V-1 and V-2 missiles left Germany. They took with them their expertise in rocket technology, which they put to use in their new home countries. One such rocket scientist was Wernher von Braun. He moved to the United States, where he helped to develop the Saturn rocket that took man to the moon.

Today, directly next to the former Mittelwerk factory, a concentration camp monument stands in remembrance of the 60,000 people who were incarcerated there. Many of the inmates not only worked in the cold, damp galleries but lived in them as well. Small wonder that according to some estimates, up to 20,000 inmates perished. Visitors to the memorial museum can take a guided tour of the galleries, the floors of which are still littered with rocket parts abandoned there about 60 years ago. The magazine *After the Battle* awards the Mittelwerk missiles a poignant distinction: "The V1 and V2 are the only weapons which cost more lives in production than in deployment."

Quelle: Dokumentationsstelle Mittelbau-Dora

*Visitors tour the galleries,
the floors of which are
still littered with rocket parts*





WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE IN THE MILLS OF CZECHIA

BY AWAKE! WRITER
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

THE rhythmic tapping of cogged mill-work wheels could be heard all over Czechia a hundred years ago. Rather than disturbing the peace, the sound seemed to enhance the idyllic Czech countryside. The mill was a central feature of the community.

In those days, it was customary for the miller's wife to bake fresh, sweet-smelling bread as soon as the flour had been milled. We can picture the miller's wife placing her freshly baked bread on a massive table. What a lovely aroma! And now, here comes the miller. White all over with flour, he is an impressive figure! He calls his household together to share in some refreshment.

Mills Down Through History

The miller's trade is nearly as old as agriculture itself. In ancient Israel, milling flour was a normal domestic task. For the most part, women ground the grain, using hand mills and often working in pairs. The Bible also mentions large millstones that were turned by animals.—Mark 9:42.

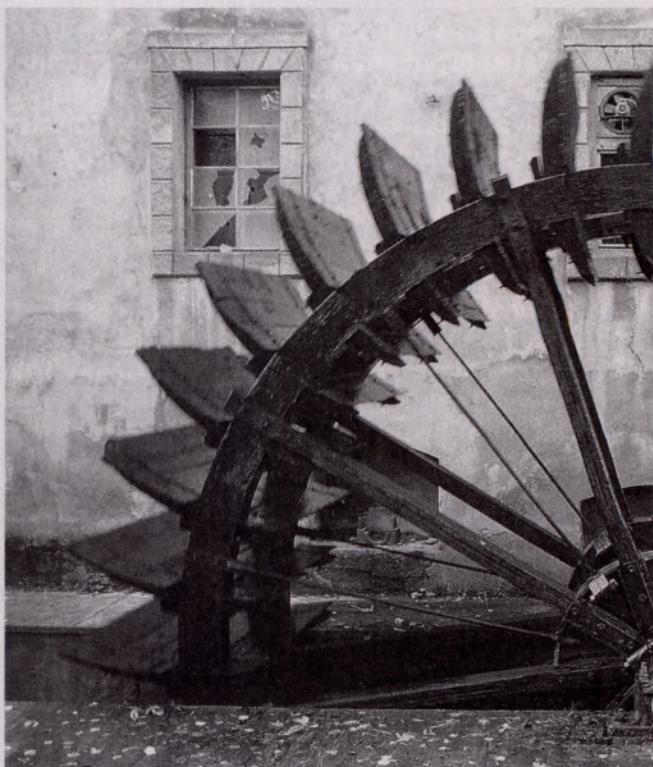
When you hear the word "mill," you may imagine a windmill. In the Czech countryside, however, water mills were more popular. Why? Evidently the Czechs felt that running water was the most economical and reliable source of power for operating a mill.

In Czechia, as elsewhere in Central Europe, large systems of ponds, channels, and floodgates were constructed to regulate the flow of water to the mills. Millponds collected the water, channels carried it to the mills, and

floodgates controlled its flow. Some channels were less than 60 feet long, but others extended nearly a mile and powered several mills stationed along the channel.

The Miller and His Helpers

In Czechia a hundred years ago, the miller and his entire household lived at the mill. The miller's living quarters and the room where the grain was milled shared the same roof and sturdy stone walls. The townspeople customarily called him "Master Father." He was easy to identify in his typical white trousers rolled up at the cuff, his low cap trimmed with sheepskin, and his slippers.



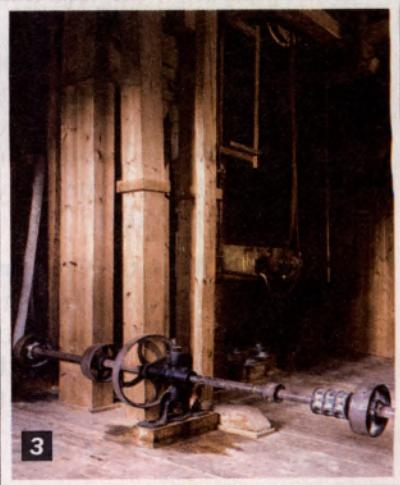
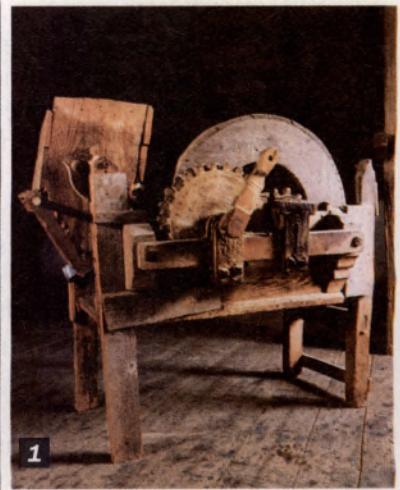
To do his work, the miller had to be physically strong—think of all the sacks of flour that he would lift and carry in a lifetime! The miller's trade was a respected profession, usually passed from father to son. The son learned his trade at home with his father, but he might also work for a time with other master millers to broaden his experience.

Work in the mill kept the whole family busy. Often, the family's help was not enough, so the miller expanded the household, either with permanent employees or with seasonal workers called journeymen. These journeymen were experienced millers who, at the busiest times of the year, helped out at various mills in return for room and board.

A chief miller—a highly esteemed and expert worker—often ran the mill. Assisting him was a young man called the hand, who was schooled in the miller's trade and was entrusted with operating the milling machinery. The quality of the flour that was produced was considered to be a measure of the knowledge and ability of this hand. Additionally, there would be an apprentice—a bright boy who never let the experienced older millers out of his sight. Nothing was allowed to distract the apprentice from learning his trade.

The Millstones

The Bible book of Job mentions “a lower millstone.” (Job 41:24) This ancient reference suggests how millstones



functioned. There had to be two—an upper stone, now called the runner, and a lower stone, called the bedder. The lower stone was fixed in place, while the upper stone was rotated to grind the grain as it passed between the two.

Originally, the millstones were made of hard rock. Later, artificial millstones were produced, consisting of crushed rock cemented together with magnesium chloride. The cogwheels were made from very hard wood by an experienced specialist. Making the cogwheels was a demanding task, not only because complicated shapes were involved but also because the gears had to mesh properly. The cogwheel arrangement increased the rotational speed of the rest of the milling machinery. The clatter of these cogwheels gave the mills their characteristic sound.

Millers in Czech Folklore

While some millers were honest and upright, others were greedy and domineering or swindled their customers. Thus, in some folk songs, millers and their families were teased, while in others they were praised and their helpers were pronounced to be desirable as husbands! Still other songs recall inundating floods—the most frequent threat to a miller and his mill, besides fire.

The stories varied somewhat according to the region and the time they were composed. Otherwise, their subject matter was similar all over Czechia. It was the wandering journeyman millers who propagated and, of course, embellished these tales. So, to this day there is a Czech saying: “Tales are told and water runs,” implying suspicion that some story or report has been exaggerated.

Mills in the Present

With the passage of time, the miller’s trade gradually became obsolete. Mills were modernized and water-driven milling mechanisms gave way to electric

motors. A few millers tried to keep their traditional way of life at all costs, and some water mills continued in operation in Czechia until after World War II. But the year 1948 spelled the end for even the most persevering miller. In that year the mills became national property, and most mills stopped running and began to deteriorate.

The industrial mills of today do not share the romance of the past. Milling is done by modern machines, often controlled by computers. Steel rollers have replaced most millstones. Still, the rustic character of the remaining old-time mills continues to attract those who love quiet, poetic settings, as well as tourists seeking out culture and history.

Today quite a few mills have been turned into recreation centers because of their charm. Many visitors to Prague visit the mill wheel at Čertovka, or “Devil’s Race,” a branch of the Vltava River. The mill there ceased operation in 1938 after it burned down. But its nearly 22-foot waterwheel, dating back more than 600 years, was restored in 1995 as a cultural monument. Down to the present, the wheel continues to turn.

Standing in a restored mill today, we can imagine the miller doing his work a century ago. We can hear the water splash as the mill wheel turns. As we walk away, the mill recedes into the distance. But the clapping of the cogs lingers in our ears—a pleasant sound that will stay with us for a long time.

The mill wheel at Čertovka



The
“Sertão”

BY AWAKE!
WRITER IN
BRAZIL

They Help Farmers Survive in the Sertão

SOME ten million goats roam the *sertão**, the semiarid region that covers 440,000 square miles of northeast Brazil. Here summer means nine months of cloudless skies, suffocating heat, and scorched, brick-hard earth. Rivers disappear, trees shed their leaves, the wind blows hot and dry, and farm animals roam free in search of whatever meager vegetation they can find.

Brazil's native goats, however, seem oblivious to the dry conditions. In the worst droughts, cattle and sheep herds decline, but the number of goats increases. How do they manage to survive?

A Mouth Designed for Survival

Many people who live in the *sertão* claim that goats eat anything—including boots, saddles, and clothes. Professor João Ambrósio, researcher at the National Center for Research on Goats, in Sobral, northeast Brazil, confirms that goats can survive on an apparently indigestible diet that includes the roots,

* Portuguese settlers apparently called it the *desertão*, or big desert, because it reminded them of the deserts and savannas of North Africa.



dry leaves, and bark of over 60 species of plants. Other farm animals such as cattle depend almost exclusively on grass.

Being less choosy helps, but the goat's mouth gives it a decisive advantage. Ambrósio points out that cattle grasp food with their tongues and are incapable of selecting an individual leaf or the bark of a plant. Goats, however, use their small mouth, flexible lips, and sharp teeth to choose and then pluck a plant's most nutritious parts. This ability to hunt for and select scarce food has gained the goat a reputation for destroying vegetation. "Blame man who forces the goat to live in such conditions. The goat is just trying to survive," says Ambrósio.

Raising Goats Makes Sense

It is no surprise that hardy native goats have assumed a pivotal role in *sertão* subsistence farming. For many families they are an important source of protein. Since beef can be expensive, roasted or boiled goat and *buchada* (goat's stomach stuffed with diced tripe and rice) are standard fare. Goat hides are sold to leather-processing factories to



**The goat uses its well-designed mouth
to select the best parts of a plant**

provide extra income. Thus, in an emergency, goats are easily converted into ready cash to buy medicine or other essentials.

An added advantage is that goats practically rear themselves. During the day small herds graze together in the unfenced caatinga, or thorn forests. At nightfall, goats recognize their owner's voice, and each returns obediently to its respective corral. The farmer usually intervenes only during the breeding season when he chooses the goats he will slaughter, treats the sick ones, and brands the young. Goats are so easy to rear that even town dwellers often keep a few in their back garden or, despite local laws, allow them to roam around in town. It is not unusual to see a goat grazing in the town square.

Centuries of experience have proved that goat-rearing makes sense, especially for small farmers. It takes the same amount of labor and land to rear eight goats as it does to raise one cow. And consider: Suppose a farmer has five cows. If one dies, that represents a loss of 20 percent of his herd. But suppose that instead of 5 cows, he reared 40 goats. Such a herd would require about the same amount of land and labor. The death of one goat would represent a loss of just 2.5 percent. It is easy to understand why about a million Brazilian families view goats as a kind of insurance policy against drought and crop failure.

Incentives for Hard Work

Bahia State is home to some of the largest herds of goats, which number into the thousands. It has been said that in Uauá, a small town some 500 miles inland from the state capital, goats outnumber local inhabitants 5 to 1. Practically the entire community's livelihood depends on raising goats or on related activities. Locals often joke, "In Uauá it is goats that rear men, not men that rear goats."

The first baby goats start to appear in May, about five months after the beginning of the breeding season. Dedicated goatherds work from four o'clock in the morning till seven at night rounding up, watering, and rescuing lost and endangered baby goats. Dexterous herders lasso and milk hundreds of female goats each day to prevent the newborns from gorging themselves to death. Care also has to be taken to treat injuries and botfly infestation, which can cause small holes in the goat's hide and reduce its commercial value.

The Truth About Goat's Milk

Many say that it is hard to digest; others that it smells. But do not believe the bad press goat's milk gets. If you have difficulty digesting cow's milk, your doctor or dietitian may well prescribe goat's milk products as an alternative. Although richer in proteins and fat, its fat globules are smaller and easier to digest. And what about the smell?

Goat's milk is, in fact, odorless. If you detect a strong, offensive odor, that may be because the goat was milked in unhygienic conditions or was in close contact with a male goat. Scent glands located behind the male's horns produce a hormone that attracts the female. However, the hormone contaminates everything the male goat touches.



Tending the goats this way is a labor of love—but not completely selfless. The traditional *quarteação* (quartering) system of payment used in Uauá and other rural localities rewards diligent herdsmen. They are given 1 of every 4 baby goats born each breeding season—1 of every 3 when the herd's owner is more generous. Each young goat is assigned a number, and numbered tokens are drawn at random from a cup. Since the lot may fall on lame or healthy, thin or fat alike, herdsmen look after the herd as if it were their own.

Getting More From Native Goats

Brazilian goats are descendants of species introduced by European settlers in the early 1500's. However, native goats in general are smaller and yield much less milk than their European ancestors.

The Brazilian *canindé*, for example, produces considerably less than a quart of milk per day, while its genetic counterpart in Europe, the British alpine goat, can give about a gallon. For decades, the dream of many farmers and agronomists has been to combine the native's hardiness with its foreign ancestor's productivity. That way "the poor man's cow," as many refer to the goat, could become the *sertão* farmer's gold.

Crossbreeding native goats with foreign ones has proved to be a shortcut to increasing

animal size and milk yield. An agricultural research unit in Paraíba State, northeast Brazil, successfully crossbred native goats with Italian, German, and English varieties. This resulted in larger animals that cope with dry conditions and have a higher milk yield. Varieties that formerly produced less than one quart of milk a day now produce between two and four quarts.

The research center in Sobral has made an equally profitable discovery that is cheaper to implement. Researchers noted that goats were partial to the foliage of certain trees. However, this foliage only became available when the trees were dormant and shed their leaves. To increase this food source, on certain trees all branches above a certain height were pruned. This forced the tree to sprout branches lower, within the goats' reach. The result? A fourfold increase in weight gain for goats grazing on the specially prepared areas.

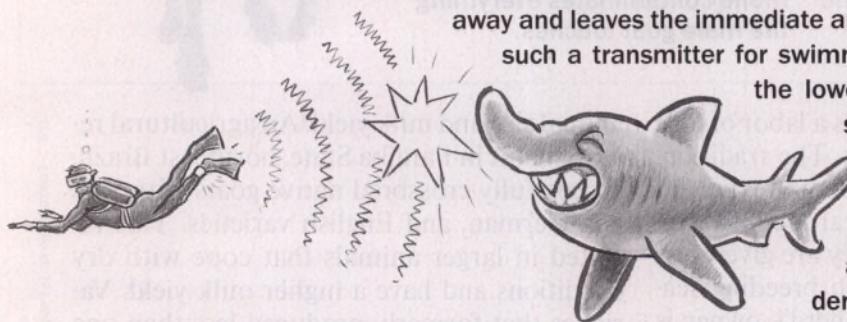
Despite these innovations, small-herd owners may still face a problem that scientific research is unlikely to solve. What is that? Well, as one farmer explained, "goats get used to the people who care for them, and they become pets. So getting rid of one can be a problem." Owners simply do not want to part with their pets! Could that be another reason why the goat is a survivor?

Watching the World

Antishark Device

The thought of coming face-to-face with a shark keeps many would-be bathers out of the ocean. However, South Africa's Natal Sharks Board has come up with an antishark device. The board "found that a specific electric waveform impacts on sensitive receptors situated in the snouts of sharks," reports the *KwaZulu-Natal Weekend Witness*. The board designed a transmitter, called a Protective Oceanic Device, that causes a shark to feel increasing discomfort as it approaches the device. When the discomfort becomes unbearable, "the shark then veers

away and leaves the immediate area." An Australian firm makes such a transmitter for swimmers and surfers. Attached to the lower leg, it creates a "personal shark exclusion zone" around the wearer. Still, the manufacturer warns: "It is simply impossible to guarantee that all sharks will be deterred under all circumstances."



Television Harmful for Toddlers?

"Very young children who watch television face an increased risk of attention deficit problems by school age," reported *The Herald* of Mexico City. The report cites a study published in the medical journal *Pediatrics* involving two groups totaling 1,345 children—one group of one-year-olds and the other of three-year-olds. According to the study, every hour of television the children watched per day increased by 10 percent their risk of suffering attention problems at age seven. The researchers believe that the "unrealistically fast-paced visual images typical of most TV pro-

gramming may alter normal brain development" in toddlers. "The truth is there are lots of reasons for children not to watch television," said Dr. Dimitri Christakis, author of the study. "Other studies have shown [TV viewing] to be associated with obesity and aggressiveness."

Laughter Is Good Medicine

"Neurologists at Stanford University have discovered another reason why laughter makes us feel good," reports the *UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*. "They monitored the brain activity of people reading funny cartoons and found that humor and laughter triggered the brain's 'reward centers,'" the same

areas affected by stimulant drugs. "Laughter reduces tension, clears the mind, and lifts the spirits," says the *Wellness Letter*. Laughter also increases our hormone production and heart rate, and it contributes to better circulation and muscle tone. "Indeed, a good laugh is a kind of workout," notes the *Wellness Letter*. "It's not exactly a major calorie burner, however—you can laugh yourself silly, but not thin."

Plant Detects Land Mines

"A Danish bioengineering company has produced a plant whose leaves turn red when it grows over buried explosives," reports the Spanish newspaper *El País*. The

herbal mine detector, *Arabisopsis thaliana*, changes color when exposed to nitrogen dioxide, as the gas leaks from buried land mines. "When its roots soak up this substance," explains the newspaper, "a biochemical chain reaction starts that triggers the production of a natural pigment—anthocyanin." Simon Oostergaard, president of a biotech company, says that the idea is to "take the seeds to the affected areas, scatter them in the fields, wait five weeks, and then defuse the mines." The widespread application of the herbal mine detector could save thousands of lives every year, says Oostergaard. Wars fought during the 20th century left some 100 million land mines hidden in the soil of 75 countries.

Swifts' Navigational Skills

Swifts "migrate more than 4,000 miles from Africa to England in late April," states

The Sunday Telegraph of London. Though they have "no global positioning satellite, no air traffic controls and no pilots," they routinely fly at an altitude of 10,000 feet at night, using navigational skills more sophisticated than modern aircraft. The birds adjust their flight to avoid being blown off course, judging their position in relation to the wind rather than to landmarks on the ground, as was previously thought. Dr. Johan Bäckman of Lund University, in Sweden, who used radar to track 225 birds, says that "even the most advanced planes, with very good navigational instruments would probably be unable to judge the wind drift like this." Remarkably, some studies have shown that the birds shut down half their brain during nighttime flight. But questions remain, says Graham Madge of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. For instance, "What

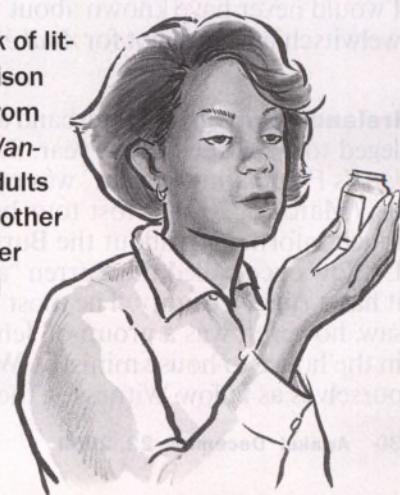
on earth are they eating up there?"

Uninviting Lavatories

"Wet floors, icy tap water, no soap," and a lack of privacy resulting from "faulty locks" and "small partition walls" cause many French pupils to avoid using school lavatories, says the French weekly *L'Express*. A study directed by the *Fédération des conseils de parents d'élèves* (Federation of Pupils' Parents Councils) revealed that "more than 48 percent of the pupils do not regularly use the toilets of their school." This is not without health consequences for the children. According to the study, "a quarter of them suffer from intestinal or urinary problems." Pediatric urologist Michel Avérous states: "Children should go to the toilet five or six times a day. A bladder that is not emptied as often as needed may develop disabling infections."

Adults More Likely to Be Poisoned

"When people think of poison prevention, they tend to think of little kids," says Debra Kent of the British Columbia Drug and Poison Information Centre. Yet, Kent continues, "most of the deaths from poisoning are in adolescents and adults." According to *The Vancouver Sun*, the majority of accidental poisonings among adults "resulted from someone placing a poisonous substance in another unmarked container—a plastic water bottle, for example." Other incidents could have been avoided if people had simply turned on the light and read the label before using a product. According to the *Sun*, "poisoning ranks fourth among the top 10 causes of death from injury in adults."



From Our Readers

Balloons I enjoyed reading the article "The Greatest Balloon Event in the World!" (March 8, 2004) My mom says she would like to ride in a balloon someday, and I would like to ride in one too. When I read the article, I couldn't believe how many balloons there were! I loved the pictures. I am eight years old.



J. L., United States

Amazing Plant I've never read anything as interesting and remarkable as the article "An Amazing Survivor." (March 8, 2004) The welwitschia is truly an amazing plant. How does it ever manage to live so long under harsh conditions? Such articles reveal to us more fully the wisdom of our ingenious Creator, Jehovah.

A. C., Russia

I grew up in Angola and had the privilege of seeing the welwitschia a number of times. Each time, I was fascinated by this strange plant. But I wondered about many common beliefs regarding it. Now, 27 years later, I have received the information I desired.

A. O., Switzerland

I have been reading *Awake!* for more than 15 years. Since I am not in a position to travel, such articles permit me to study Jehovah's creation in detail. I would never have known about the longevity of the welwitschia were it not for *Awake!*

L. Z., France

Ireland's Burren My husband and I were privileged to visit Ireland last year. So the article "Ireland's Fascinating Burren" was of special interest to us. (March 8, 2004) Most tour books do not give much information about the Burren. The surveyor Ludlow once called the Burren "a savage land," but it has a rugged beauty. The most beautiful thing we saw, however, was a group of Jehovah's Witnesses in the house-to-house ministry. When we identified ourselves as fellow Witnesses, they were delighted.

We left Ireland with some new friends as well as memories of the Burren.

B. E., United States

Blood Type Thank you for the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Is Your Personality Determined by Blood Type?" (February 8, 2004) I have been a little troubled about this issue. At school I was told that personality cannot be determined by blood type. I also noticed that in some books, using blood type to determine personality is tied to spiritism. But I know people who often talked about blood type and judged others based on it. Just when I found myself wondering what was right or wrong, this article came out, and I was able to understand the Bible's viewpoint clearly.

R. K., Japan

The article was interesting to me. People at my school say that a person with type A blood is precise and sensitive and a person with type B blood is gentle. I have often wondered, 'Am I like that?' But I was relieved to learn that each person has his own personality. I was also able to recognize that we can change our personality by submitting to the influence of God's holy spirit.

N. I., Japan

Waterfalls I would like to express my appreciation for the wonderful article "Exploring Magnificent Waterfalls." (February 22, 2004) Zambia is blessed with lakes, rivers, forests, and mountains. And the waterfalls are a delight. The article made me thank Jehovah, our heavenly Father, for the things he created.

G. M., Zambia

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IT AFFECTED THIS CHILD'S LIFE

■ Years ago, Savinien, a nine-year-old boy from a small town in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., wrote a letter expressing appreciation for *My Book of Bible Stories*. The youth explained that he had just finished reading the book, which is filled with pictures that feature people and events in the Bible.

"I feel," he wrote to the book's publishers, "that you should keep printing this book so that you can keep on encouraging little kids like myself to know more about the Bible.

"What I've learned from this book is that everything in the Bible is true and that it was written to teach us, in order that we may have hope for the future.

"I would not have known this if it wasn't for your taking an interest in us young people and breaking down this information so that we can better understand it."

