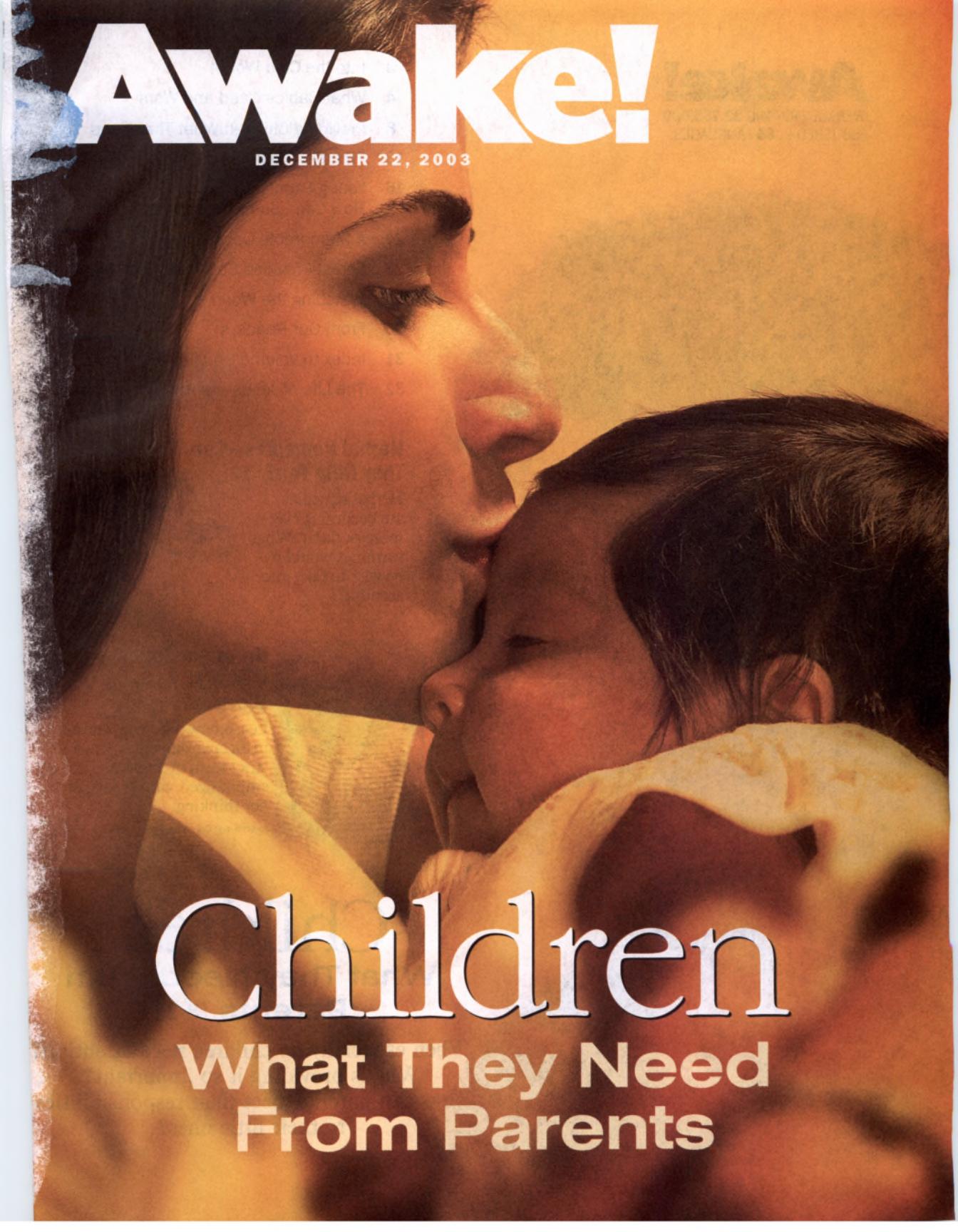


Awake!

DECEMBER 22, 2003



**Children
What They Need
From Parents**

Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 22,755,000
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Journal and Courier, Lafayette, Indiana

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How can parents meet their responsibilities
to their little ones?



Into the Cold World!

A BABY is born into a harsh, cold world, a world full of stress. Although a baby cannot really verbalize his feelings, some scientists believe that even before birth the fetus is aware of what is taking place.

The book *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* says: "We now know that the unborn child is an aware, reacting human being who from the sixth month on (and perhaps even earlier) leads an active emotional life." Although the baby may not remember, some scientists wonder if the stressful experience of birth does affect his later life.

After birth, stress continues. Outside mother's womb, the baby is no longer automatically fed. The pipeline that carried oxygen and nutrients is gone. To survive, he has to start breathing and take in nutrients himself. He needs somebody to feed him and to take care of his other physical needs.

The newborn also has to develop mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. So someone must nurture the little one. Who is in the best position to do it? What does the baby need from his parents? How can these needs best be met? The following articles will help answer these questions.



What Babies Need and Want

FROM the time of his birth, the newborn needs tender care, including gentle strokes and skin-to-skin contact. Some physicians believe that the first 12 hours after birth are crucial. They say that what mother and child require and want most right after the delivery is "not sleep or food, but to stroke and snuggle and to look at and listen to each other."*

Instinctively, parents reach out, cuddle, stroke, and snuggle their baby. The baby, in turn, becomes securely attached to his parents and responds to their attention. The power of this bond is so strong that parents will make sacrifices to care for the infant without letup.

On the other hand, without a loving parental bond, an infant may literally wilt and die. Therefore, some doctors believe it is important that a baby be given to his mother immediately after the delivery. They suggest that at least 30 to 60 minutes of early contact between parent and infant should be provided.

Despite the emphasis some put on bonding, early contact may be difficult, if not impossible, in some hospitals. Often, newborns are separated from the mother because of the danger of transmission of infection to the child. Some evidence

* In this series of articles, *Awake!* presents the views of a number of respected child-care authorities, as findings of this kind may be useful and informative to parents. Still, it must be acknowledged that such views are often subject to change and revision over time, unlike the Biblical standards that *Awake!* upholds without reservation.

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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indicates, though, that the rate of fatal infections may actually drop when newborns stay with the mothers. So more and more hospitals are open to early extended contact between the mother and the newborn.

Concern About Bonding

Some mothers do not become emotionally attached to their baby the first time they see him. So they wonder, 'Will I have trouble bonding?' Admittedly, not all mothers fall in love with their baby at first sight. Yet, there is no need to be anxious.

Even when maternal affection for the baby is delayed, it can develop fully later. "There's no one birth circumstance that makes or breaks your relationship with your child," observes an experienced mother. Still, if you are expecting a baby and have concerns, it may be wise to have a discussion with your obstetrician in advance. Be clear about your wishes on when and how long you want to interact with your newborn.

"Talk to Me!"

There seem to be certain windows of time during which infants are especially sensitive to specific stimuli. Those windows close after a while. For instance, the young brain masters a language with ease, even more than one. But the most receptive period for learning language seems to begin to close at about the age of five.

After a child reaches 12 to 14 years of age, learning a language can be a formidable challenge. According to pediatric neurologist Pe-

ter Huttenlocher, that is when "the density and number of synapses in the language areas of the brain decrease." Clearly, the first few years of life are a critical time for acquiring language ability!

How do infants accomplish the feat of learning to speak, which is so important for the rest of their cognitive development? Primarily through verbal interactions with the parents. Infants especially respond to human stimuli. "A baby . . . imitates its mother's voice," observes Barry Arons of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Interestingly, however, babies do not imitate all sounds. As Arons observes, the baby "does not insert the cradle squeaks that have occurred simultaneously with the mother's speech."

Parents of varied cultural backgrounds speak to their babies using the same rhythmic speaking style that some call "Parentese." As the parent speaks in a loving way, the heart rate of the infant increases. This is believed to assist in hastening the connection between words and the objects they denote. Without saying a word, the infant is calling out: "Talk to me!"

"Look at Me!"

It has been established that during the first year or so, the infant forms an emotional attachment to an adult caregiver, generally his mother. When securely bonded, the baby relates better to others than do babies who do not enjoy the security of the parental bond. Such bonding with his mother, it is believed,

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Silent Babies

Some physicians in Japan say there is an increase in the number of babies who neither cry nor smile. Pediatrician Satoshi Yanagisawa calls them silent babies. Why do the babies stop expressing their emotions? Some doctors believe that the condition arises because babies are deprived of parental contact. The condition is called enforced helplessness. One theory suggests that when needs for communication are constantly ignored or

misinterpreted, the infants eventually give up trying.

If a baby is not given proper stimulus at the right time, the part of his brain that makes him empathic may not develop, suggests Dr. Bruce Perry, chief of psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital. In cases of profound emotional neglect, capacity to feel empathy may be irretrievably lost. Dr. Perry believes that in some cases substance abuse and adolescent violence can be linked to such early life experiences.

needs to be in place by the time the child is three.

What may happen if an infant is neglected during this critical period when his mind is highly susceptible to outside influence? Martha Farrell Erickson, who tracked 267 mothers and their children for over 20 years, expresses this opinion: "Neglect just slowly and persistently eats away at the child's spirit until [the child] has little will to connect with others or explore the world."

In an effort to illustrate his view regarding the serious consequences of emotional neglect, Dr. Bruce Perry of Texas Children's Hospital says: "If you asked me to take a 6-month-old and choose between breaking every bone in its body or emotionally ignoring it for two months, I'd say the baby would be better off if you broke every bone in its body." Why? In Perry's view, "bones can heal, but if an infant misses out on two months of crucial brain stimulation, you will have a forever disorganized brain." Not all agree that such damage is irreparable. Still, scientific studies do indicate that an emotionally enriching environment is vital for the young mind.

"In short," says the book *Infants*, "[babies] are prepared to love and be loved." When an infant cries, often he is begging his parents: "Look at me!" It is important for the parents to respond in a caring way. Through such

interactions, the baby becomes aware that he is able to make his needs known to others. He is learning to form social relationships with others.

'Won't I Spoil the Baby?'

'If I respond to every cry of the baby, won't I spoil him?' you might ask. Perhaps. Opinions vary widely on this question. As each child is unique, parents generally have to determine which approach works best. However, some recent research indicates that when the newborn infant is hungry, uncomfortable, or upset, his stress-response systems release stress hormones. He expresses his distress by crying. It is said that when the parent responds and fills the baby's needs, the adult starts to create in the baby's brain the networks of cells that help him to learn to soothe himself. Also, according to Dr. Megan Gunnar, a baby who has received responsive care produces less of the stress hormone cortisol. And even when he does become upset, he turns off the stress reaction sooner.

"In fact," says Erickson, "babies who have been responded to quickly and consistently, especially during the first 6-8 months of life, actually cry less than babies who have been left to cry." It is also important to diversify how you respond. If you respond the same way on each occasion, such as by feeding

him or holding him, he can indeed become spoiled. At times, just acknowledging his cry with your voice may suffice. Or moving close to the baby and talking gently in his ear may be effective. On the other hand, touching his back or stomach with your hand may do the trick.

"It's a baby's job to cry." So goes the saying in the Orient. For the baby, crying is the major way to communicate what he wants. How would you feel if you were ignored every time you asked for something? So, then, how would your baby, who is helpless without a caregiver, feel if he was slighted every time he yearned for attention? Who, though, should respond to his cry?

Who Cares for the Baby?

A recent census in the United States revealed that 54 percent of children from birth through third grade regularly receive some form of child care from persons other than their parents. Many families may need two incomes to make ends meet. And many mothers take maternity leave, if possible, to care for their newborn for a few weeks or months. But who is going to care for the baby after that?

Of course, there are no hard-and-fast rules to govern such decisions. However, it is good to remember that the child is still vulnerable during this crucial period of his life. Both parents together need to give the matter serious consideration. When deciding what to do, they must consider the options carefully.

"It's becoming increasingly clear that allowing even the best of child care programs to raise our offspring doesn't substitute for the time that children

need from their mothers and fathers," says Dr. Joseph Zanga, of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Some experts have raised concerns that infants at day-care facilities do not get to interact with the caregiver as much as they need to.

Some working mothers, being aware of their child's vital needs, have decided that they would stay home rather than let other people take over the emotional nurturing of their children. One woman stated: "I have been blessed with a contentment I honestly believe no other job could give me." Of course, economic pressures do not allow all mothers to make such choices. Many parents have no option but to make use of day-care facilities, so they put extra effort into giving their child attention and affection when they are together. Similarly, many working single parents have few options in this regard and make outstanding efforts in raising their children—with fine results.

Parenting can be a joyful work, full of excitement. Still, it is a challenging, demanding job. How can you succeed?



The bond between parent and baby grows stronger as they communicate



Providing Children What They Need

**A mother's feelings
about her unborn
are very important**

CLEARLY, young children need a lot of attention, and evidently, many are not getting what they need. The condition of today's youths suggests as much. "Never have our young people been so isolated from their families, so bereft of practical experience and practical wisdom," lamented a researcher quoted in *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada.

What has gone wrong? Could the problem be traced, at least in part, to a failure to realize the importance of giving attention to the very young? "We all need to learn how to become parents," explains a psychologist who helps low-income women learn how to care for their newborns. "And we need to realize that the time we spend with our kids now will come back to us with many, many returns."

Even babies need regular instruction. Not just a few minutes now and then but regularly—yes, throughout the day. Time spent with young ones from their babyhood on is vital for their wholesome development.

Need for Preparation

To fulfill their weighty responsibility, parents need to prepare for their baby's arrival. They might learn from a principle that Jesus Christ pointed out regarding the importance of planning ahead. He said: "Who of you that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense?" (Luke 14:28) Child rearing—often called a 20-year project—is far more complicated than building a tower. So to rear a child successfully requires having a blueprint, as it were, for the job.

First, mental and spiritual preparation for taking on the responsibilities of parenthood is important. A study of 2,000 pregnant women in Germany found that the children of mothers who looked forward to



having a family were much healthier—emotionally and physically—than the offspring of mothers who did not want their babies. On the other hand, one researcher estimated that a woman locked in a stormy marriage runs a 237 percent greater risk of bearing an emotionally or physically damaged baby than a woman in a secure relationship.

Clearly, then, fathers are important to the successful development of a child. Dr. Thomas Verny observed: "Few things are more dangerous to a child, emotionally and physically, than a father who abuses or neglects his pregnant wife." Indeed, it has often been noted that the best gift a child can receive is a father who loves its mother.

Hormones related to anxiety and stress, secreted into the mother's bloodstream, can affect the fetus. However, it is thought that only intense or prolonged maternal anxiety, rather than occasional negative emotions or stressful events, is hazardous. What matters the most seems to be how the expectant mother feels about the unborn.*

What if you are pregnant and your husband is not supportive, or what if you personally resent the idea of becoming a mother? It is not unusual that circumstances may cause a woman to feel depressed about her pregnancy. Yet, always remember that your child is not at fault. How, then, can you maintain a calm attitude despite adverse circumstances?

The wise direction provided in

* Not only stress hormones but also nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs may have adverse effects on the fetus. Expectant mothers do well to stay away from any dangerous substance. In addition, it is vital to check with a doctor regarding the effects of medication on the fetus.

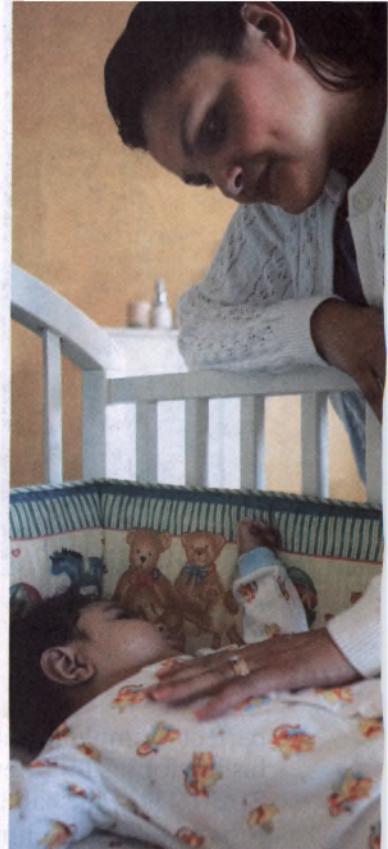
God's Word, the Bible, has been of help to millions. It says: "In everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." You will be surprised how living by those words can help you to follow this counsel: "Do not be anxious over anything." (Philippians 4:6, 7) You will feel the caring hand of the Creator, who can look after you.—1 Peter 5:7.

Not an Uncommon Experience

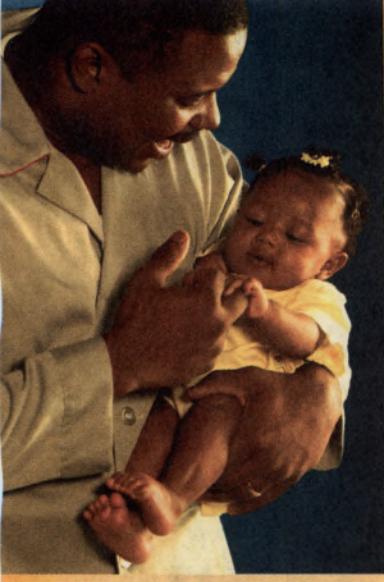
In the first few weeks after giving birth, some young mothers experience unexplained sadness and lethargy. Even women who were happy to have the baby can become moody. Such mood swings are not unusual. This is because after giving birth, women can experience dramatic changes in hormone levels. It is also common for a new mother to be overwhelmed by the demands of motherhood—feeding, changing diapers, and caring for the baby, who has no concept of time.

One mother felt that her baby was crying just to torment her. Little wonder that a child-rearing specialist in Japan said: "No one is free from experiencing the stress that comes with child rearing." According to this specialist, "the most important thing is for a mother never to isolate herself."

Even if a mother feels depressed at times, she can protect her child from being affected by her mood swings. *Time* magazine reported: "Depressed mothers who managed to rise above their melancholy, lavishing their babies with attention and indulging



Although a new mother may experience mood swings after childbirth, there is much that she can do to make her baby feel loved and secure



Fathers have a responsibility to share in child care

Jesus Christ provided the perfect example for husbands to follow. He even gave his life for his followers. (Ephesians 5:28-30; 1 Peter 2:21-24) Thus, husbands who sacrifice their own comforts to take some initiatives in child rearing are imitating Christ. Indeed, rearing children is a joint venture, a cooperative effort in which both parents need to participate.

A Joint, Cooperative Effort

"As husband and wife, we've discussed in detail how we should rear our daughter," says Yoichiro, the father of a two-year-old girl. "Each time an issue

* If a mother feels profound sadness and hopelessness as well as a sense of detachment from the baby and from the world, she may be suffering from postpartum depression. If that is the case, she should consult her obstetrician. Please see *Awake!*, July 22, 2002, pages 19-23 and June 8, 2003, pages 21-3.

Reading to a child should begin in infancy

in playful games, had children with brain activity of a considerably more cheerful cast."*

How a Father Can Help

The baby's father is often in the best position to provide needed help and support. When the baby cries in the middle of the night, in many instances the father can look after the baby's needs so that his mate can sleep. The Bible says: "Husbands must always treat their wives with consideration in their life together."

—1 Peter 3:7, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

arises, we talk over how we should proceed." Yoichiro realizes that his wife needs her rest, and he often takes his daughter with him when he runs errands.

In earlier times, when families were commonly large and close-knit, parents had the help of older children and relatives to share in child care. So it is not surprising that a worker at the Child-Rearing Support Center in Kawasaki, Japan, observes: "In most cases, mothers will be relieved when they talk to others about the matter. With just a little bit of help, many mothers have been able to cope in the face of obstacles."

Parents magazine says that parents "need a network of people they can call on to share their concerns." Where can such a network be found? By being open-minded and listening to their own parents or in-laws, new mothers and fathers can benefit considerably. Of course, the grand-



parents should appreciate that final decisions rest in the hands of the young couple.*

Another resource on which young parents can often rely is fellow religious believers. In the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, you may find people who have had years of experience in child rearing and who are willing to listen to your problems. They can share some helpful tips. Often, you can summon the help of "the aged women"—as the Bible calls those with greater experience in Christian living—who are willing to assist younger women.—Titus 2:3-5.

True, parents need to be selective when listening to the opinions of others. "All of a sudden, people around us became child-education experts," says Yoichiro. His wife, Takako, admits: "At first, I was disturbed by the suggestions others gave, as I felt they were criticizing my lack of experience as a parent." Yet, by learning from others, many husbands and wives have been helped to have a balanced view of providing what their children need.

The Best Help Available

Even if no one seems to be available to help you, there is one reliable source of strength. That is Jehovah God, the one who created us, the one whose eye can see "even the embryo" of those born on earth. (Psalm 139:16) Jehovah once said to his people of ancient times, as recorded in his Word, the Bible: "Can a wife forget her sucking so that she should not pity the son of her belly? Even these women can forget, yet I myself shall not forget you."—Isaiah 49:15; Psalm 27:10.

No, Jehovah does not forget parents. In the Bible, he has provided them with fine guidelines for rearing children. For example, some 3,500 years ago, God's prophet Moses wrote: "You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force." Then Moses said: "These words [including the exhortation to love and serve Jehovah]

vah] that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up."—Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

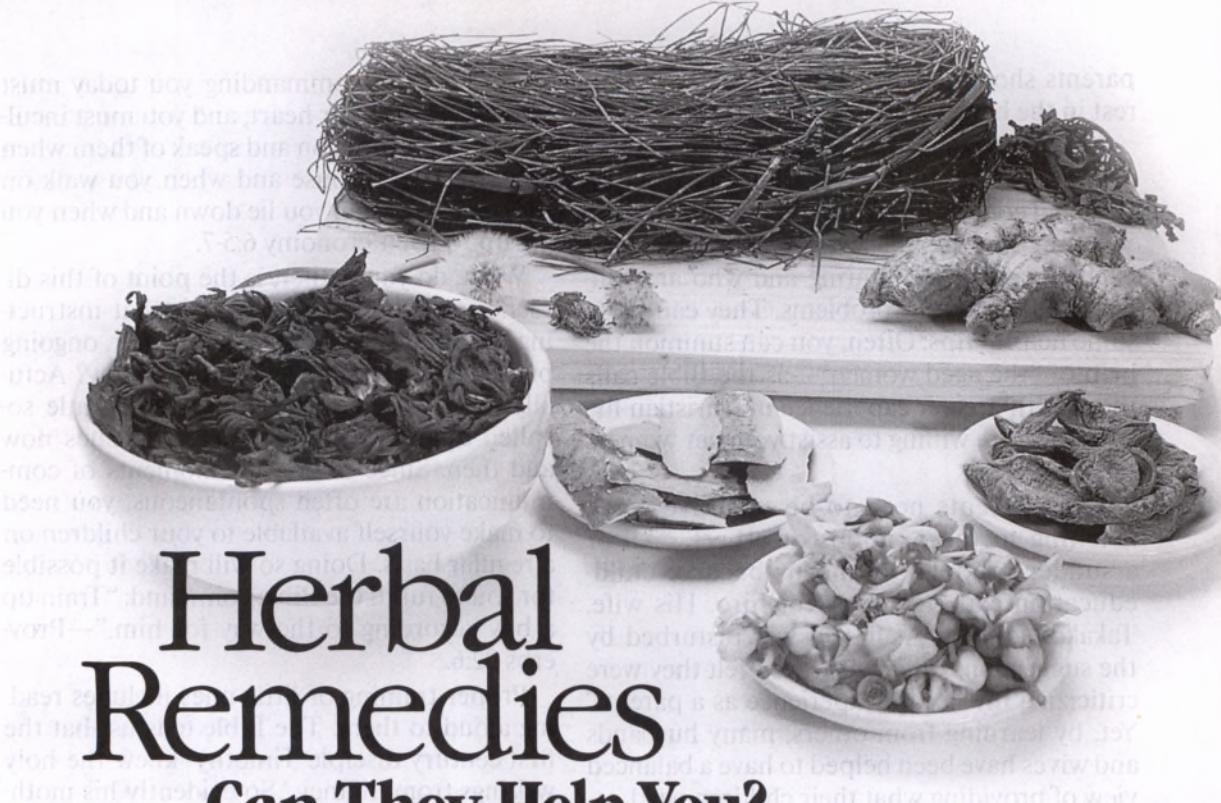
What, do you gather, is the point of this direction in God's Word? Isn't it that instructing your children should be a regular, ongoing procedure that is carried out each day? Actually, it is not enough simply to schedule so-called quality time for your little ones now and then. Since important moments of communication are often spontaneous, you need to make yourself available to your children on a regular basis. Doing so will make it possible for you to fulfill the Bible command: "Train up a boy according to the way for him."—Proverbs 22:6.

Proper training of little ones includes reading aloud to them. The Bible tells us that the first-century disciple Timothy 'knew the holy writings from infancy.' So evidently his mother, Eunice, and grandmother Lois read aloud to him when he was still a baby. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15) It is good to begin doing this as soon as you start to talk to your infant. But what can you read, and how can you best teach even an infant?

Let your child hear you read the Bible. Evidently that is what was read to Timothy. Books are also available that acquaint children with the Bible by means of colorful pictures. These help a child actually visualize things the Bible is teaching. For example, there are *My Book of Bible Stories* and *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*. By means of such books, millions of little ones have had Bible teachings impressed on their minds and hearts.

As the Bible says, "sons [and daughters] are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward." (Psalm 127:3) Your Creator has entrusted you with "an inheritance," a lovable baby, who can be a source of pride and joy. Raising children, especially to be praisers of their Creator, is indeed a rewarding career!

* Please read the article "Grandparents—Their Joys and Challenges," in the March 22, 1999, issue of *Awake!*



Herbal Remedies

Can They Help You?

FROM earliest times herbal remedies have been used to treat disease. The Ebers Papyrus, prepared in Egypt about the 16th century B.C.E., contains hundreds of folk remedies for various afflictions. Usually, however, herbal remedies were explained orally from one generation to the next.

Western medical herbalism appears to have begun with the work of first-century Greek physician Dioscorides, who wrote *De Materia Medica*. It became the leading pharmacological text for the next 1,600 years. In many parts of the world, traditional herbal remedies continue to be popular. In Germany, government health programs may even reimburse the costs of herbal prescriptions.

Although it is sometimes claimed that traditional and folk-remedy herbs are safer than modern pharmaceutical drugs, they are not without their risks. So the questions are raised: What cautions and recommendations

should one take into account when considering herbal remedies? And are there any circumstances under which one form of therapy may be more advantageous?*

How Herbs May Help

Herbs have been credited with many therapeutic properties. Some are thought to help the body fight infection. Others are said to aid digestion, settle nerves, serve as a laxative, or help regulate the glands.

Herbs may have both nutritional and medicinal value. For example, some plants that serve as diuretics, such as parsley, also contain significant amounts of potassium.* The potassium in these plants compensates for the loss of this vital element through urination. Like-

* *Awake!* is not a medical journal and so does not recommend any specific treatment or diet, herbal or otherwise. The information contained in this article is purely for general information. Readers must decide for themselves on health and medical matters.

* Diuretics are substances that increase the flow of urine.

wise, the valerian plant (*Valeriana officinalis*), long used as a sedative, is high in calcium. The calcium may enhance the herb's sedative effect on the nervous system.

How Herbs Can Be Taken

Herbs can be taken in many ways, such as in teas, decoctions, tinctures, and poultices. Teas are made by pouring boiling water over an herb. But authorities caution that herbs used as teas should generally not be boiled in water. Decoctions, made from such things as herbal roots and bark, are boiled in water to release their active ingredients.

What about tinctures? One book says that these "are herb extractions made with help of pure or diluted spirits of alcohol, or brandy, or vodka." Then there are poultices, which can be prepared in various ways. Usually they are applied to diseased or painful body parts.

Unlike many vitamins and drugs, most herbs are considered foods and are often taken alone on an empty stomach. They can also be taken in a capsulated form, which can be more convenient and more palatable. If you decide to take herbal remedies, it is wise to do so under professional guidance.

Traditionally, herbs have been suggested for such conditions as the common cold, indigestion, constipation, insomnia, and nausea. However, herbs are also sometimes used for more serious ailments—not only as a cure but also as a preventive. For instance, in Germany and Austria, the herb saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is used as a first-line treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia (swelling of the prostate gland). In some countries this disorder eventually affects 50 to 60 percent of men. It is important, however, that the cause of the swelling be diagnosed by a physician to make sure that the condition does not require more aggressive intervention, as in the case of cancer.

Some Cautions

Even though an herb may be widely regarded as *safe*, *caution* is advised. Never let your

guard down simply because a product is labeled "natural." An encyclopedia on the subject of herbs states: "The unpleasant fact of the matter is that some herbs are downright dangerous. [Regrettably] some people don't give any herb—dangerous or benign—the appropriate respect." Chemical compounds in herbs can change heart rate, blood pressure, and glucose levels. Hence, people with cardiac problems, high blood pressure, or blood-sugar disorders such as diabetes must be especially cautious.

Usually, however, the side effects of herbs are limited to allergic-type reactions. These include headaches, dizziness, nausea, or rash. Herbs are also said to prompt a "healing crisis" by producing flulike or other symptoms. The one taking herbs may appear to get worse before getting better. It is generally claimed that this reaction is caused by toxic wastes being removed from the body during the early stages of herbal therapy.

The mortality occasionally related to certain herbal products underscores the need for caution and sound guidance. For instance, the herb ephedra, commonly taken for weight loss, can also elevate blood pressure. Over 100 reported deaths in the United States have been linked to ephedra products, although San Francisco pathologist Steven Karch states: "The only cases I know where people [who took ephedra] died, they had severe coronary artery disease or they took overdoses."

Dr. Logan Chamberlain, author of a book on herbal supplements, holds: "Virtually every report in recent years about harmful effects of herbs has stemmed from cases in which people didn't follow directions. . . . Dosage recommendations on reliable products are safe and even conservative. Don't second-guess them unless you have good advice from a trained herbalist."

Herbalist Linda Page provides this cautionary advice: "Even for serious health conditions, moderate amounts are the way to go, mega-doses are not. Much better results can

be obtained by giving yourself more time and gentler treatment. It takes time to rebuild health."

A book on herbology explains that some herbs have a built-in overdose protection mechanism. For example, one herb used to relax the body induces vomiting if taken in excess. However, this characteristic, which does not apply to all herbs, does not negate the need to adhere to a safe dosage.

Still, many believe that for an herb to be effective, sufficient amounts must be consumed and in the proper form. At times, the only way to do so is to take an extract. This is the case with ginkgo biloba, long used to enhance memory and circulation, since many pounds of leaves are needed for a single effective dose.

A Possible Dangerous Mix

Herbs can interact with medicinal drugs in various ways. For instance, they can magnify or reduce a drug's effect, cause it to be eliminated from the body faster than usual, or increase the risk of side effects. St. John's wort, often prescribed in Germany for mild to moderate depression, causes many drugs to be eliminated twice as fast as normal, thus lessening their potency. So if you take a prescription drug, including birth-control pills, consult with your doctor before taking herbs.

A book on the healing properties of herbs states: "Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, other mood-altering drugs and tobacco can cause

Risks of Self-Medicating

The following are risks of using herbs without qualified professional help.

❖ You may not really know what is wrong with you.

❖ Your regimen of self-medication may be inappropriate for your ailment, even if you have properly diagnosed it.

❖ Your self-medication program may delay more radical, but nevertheless necessary and appropriate, treatment.

❖ Your self-medication may conflict with drugs prescribed by a doctor—allergy medication, for example, or blood pressure medication.

❖ Your self-medication may cure your minor ailment but aggravate another health problem, such as high blood pressure.

Source: *Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*

life-threatening interactions when mixed with some medicinal herbs. . . . Common sense dictates you avoid [such drugs], particularly during an illness." Also, pregnant women and nursing mothers should take that advice to heart. Of course, when it comes to tobacco and addictive drugs, Christians are protected by heeding the Biblical command to "cleanse [yourselves] of every defilement of flesh and spirit."—2 Corinthians 7:1.

In regard to herbs themselves, one reference provides this caution: "If you become pregnant while taking a medicinal herb, tell your physician and discontinue taking it until you have discussed it with him or her. Try to remember the exact dose and the length of time you have taken the substance."

"The dangers of self-medication [with herbs] are several," says an encyclopedia on herbs. In the accompanying box, "Risks of Self-Medicating," you will find a list of possible dangers involving herbs.

As with all health products, herbs should be treated with respect, knowledge and, of course, balance—and remember that for some things there is no cure at present. True Christians look forward to the time when the very cause of sickness and death—the imperfection we inherited from our original parents—will be completely eliminated under the benevolent rulership of God's Kingdom.—Romans 5:12; Revelation 21:3, 4.



Plants

A Valuable Source of Medicines

▼ USDA-NRCS PLANTS
Database/Herman, D.E. et al. 1996.
North Dakota tree handbook



Aspirin is obtained from this white willow tree



Experts estimate that a quarter of all the modern-day pharmaceuticals that people rely on started out—wholly or in part—as chemicals that occur in plants. This fact is often cited by those who promote various herbal remedies.

Most research being done on medicinal plants is directed toward isolating active compounds. A foremost example of such a compound is aspirin, which is derived from salicin, found in the bark of the white willow tree.

Once isolated, active compounds found in a plant can be administered in a sufficient and more precise dosage. One reference work states: "To take enough willow bark to achieve the benefits aspirin provides or to take enough foxglove to achieve the full lifesaving effects of digitalis is much more easily accomplished via a pill than by eating natural substances."

On the other hand, isolating the active compound from a medicinal plant can have its drawbacks. For one thing, it may mean losing any nutritional and possible medicinal benefits provided by other substances in the plant. What is more, some of the organisms that cause disease have become resistant to the drugs that target them.

Quinine, a substance derived from the bark of cinchona trees, provides an example of the drawbacks of isolating the active compound from a medicinal plant. While the quinine kills a huge percentage of malaria-causing parasites, those parasites it does not kill become increasingly plentiful as other parasites die. One reference work explains: "Such resistance has become a major issue in medicine."



Courtesy of Satoru Yoshimoto



The cinchona tree, from which quinine is obtained



Young People Ask . . .

How Can I Succeed as a Public Speaker?

"I imagined that people were noticing every one of my faults and insecurities. I couldn't focus on my speech. I felt they were laughing quietly to themselves."—Sandy.*

THE school auditorium is packed. You hear your name over the sound system, and suddenly everyone's eyes are on you. The few paces you must take to reach the speaker's stand seem like a mile. Your palms start to sweat, your legs feel weak, and for some reason your mouth seems impossibly dry. Then, before you can stop it, a huge bead of sweat trickles down your cheek. How embarrassing! You know you are not going to face a firing squad, but it certainly feels that way.

Let's admit it: Most of us dread the thought of speaking before others. (Jeremiah 1:5, 6) Some people have even ranked their fear of public speaking above their fear of death! However you might feel about it yourself, there are good reasons why you should be interested in public speaking. Let's look at some of them and consider how you can become a successful speaker.

Called On to Speak

"Public speaking is a skill that everyone needs." So says an advertisement for a course



on public speaking. Yes, sooner or later, you may have to face an audience. For one thing, public speaking is promoted in many schools. A young woman named Tatiana recalls: "There were many times when I had to speak in front of my classmates at school." From oral reports and book reviews to multimedia presentations and debates, students often have to be ready to speak.

When you eventually enter the workplace, you may be called on to teach a class of coworkers, pitch a proposal to a client, or explain a financial report to an executive committee. Actually, speaking skills are useful in a wide range of jobs, including those in journalism, management, public relations, and sales.

What, though, if you choose to work as a laborer or an office clerk? Well, being able to speak well on a job interview may mean the difference between getting hired or not. On the job itself, your ability to express yourself can work in your favor. Corrine worked for three years as a waitress after she completed her schooling. She says: "If you can speak well,

* Some of the names have been changed.



you are looked on as being more mature and able to handle more responsibility. It may even mean a better job, higher pay, or at least more respect."

Finally, young Christians often speak before others in the course of their worship. (Hebrews 10:23) "It's important to be able to express yourself clearly," Taneisha observes. "We have the privilege of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom." (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) In the congregation and in their public ministry, young Christians cannot "stop speaking about the things [they] have seen and heard."—Acts 4:20; Hebrews 13:15.



Being an accomplished speaker can help you in all aspects of life

Learning good speaking skills can thus benefit you in a variety of ways. Even so, you may still feel anxious at the thought of getting up before an audience. Is there something you can do to overcome your nervousness? Yes, there is.

Overcoming Your Fears

"You don't have to be brilliant or perfect to succeed," says Dr. Morton C. Orman, an

expert on stress and a professional public speaker. "The essence of public speaking is this: give your audience something of value." In other words, concentrate on the message, not on yourself or your own anxieties. Some in the first century thought that the apostle Paul was not the most eloquent speaker, but because he always had something valuable to say, he was still effective. (2 Corinthians 11:6) Likewise, if you present something of substance that you really believe in, your nervousness will more readily dissipate.

Ron Sathoff, another noted speaker and trainer, makes this suggestion: Don't think of your speech as a performance. Treat it as a conversation. Yes, try to connect with your audience, not as a mass, but as individuals, just as

you would in regular conversation.

Show a real "personal interest" in your audience, and speak to them the way you normally talk. (Philippians 2:3, 4) The more conversational your approach, the more relaxed you will be.

Another common reason for anxiety is fear of embarrassment or of being judged by your audience. Lenny Laskowski, a professional speaker and trainer, reminds us that audiences tend to approach each presentation with a positive

outlook. "They want you to succeed—not fail," Laskowski says. So

have a positive mind-set. If possible, try to greet some of your audience as they arrive.

Try to see them, not as enemies, but as friends.

Remember, too, that nervousness is not entirely a bad thing. "Contrary to popular belief," one expert says, "nervousness is *good* for you and your presentation." Why is that?

Because a measure of nervousness reflects modesty, which will help keep you from becoming overconfident. (Proverbs 11:2) Many athletes, musicians, and actors feel that a little nervous energy actually makes them perform better, and the same can be true of public speakers.

Tips for Success

By applying these and other ideas, some young Christians have already obtained a measure of experience and success as speakers at school, on the job, and in their congregations. See if a few of their suggestions might help you.

Jade: "Put the material in your own words. Convince yourself of the benefits of what you have to say. If you feel that your talk is important, so will the audience."

Trained as Speakers

In congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth, there is a weekly Bible-based program of instruction called the Theocratic Ministry School. Students participate in class discussions, give presentations before the congregation, and receive personal assistance to help them progress. Does the program work? Let 19-year-old Chris tell you his experience.

"Before joining the school, I felt very uncomfortable around people," he says. "I never thought I could be on stage before an audience. But some in the congregation encouraged me, saying that even if I just stuttered the whole time, they would enjoy it, knowing what it took for me to be up there. Then, after every talk I gave, they commended me. That was a big help."

Today, after five years in the school, Chris is preparing to deliver his first 45-minute lecture. Are you taking advantage of this provision?

Rochelle: "I found it helpful to videotape myself. It's humbling but beneficial. Also, try to choose a topic that you enjoy. It will come across in your speech."

Margrett: "I find that I speak more naturally and sound more conversational when I use an outline instead of writing things out word for word. In addition, taking a deep breath before I speak helps calm me."

Corrine: "Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. Everyone makes mistakes. You just have to try your best."

Of course, as in any endeavor, such as sports, art, or music, there is no substitute for experience and lots of practice. Tatiana recommends preparing your speech far enough in advance so that you have enough time to practice. And do not give up. "The more often I speak in front of others," she says, "the more comfortable I get." There is one more source of help, though, that you should not forget, especially when you are called on to speak in behalf of true worship.

Help From the Great Communicator

As a young man, David, the future Israelite king, already had a reputation as "an intelligent speaker." (1 Samuel 16:18) Why was that? Evidently, in his youth, during many long hours spent under the open skies tending sheep, David developed an intimate relationship with the Great Communicator, Jehovah God, through prayer. (Psalm 65:2) In turn, this relationship prepared him to speak with clarity, force, and persuasion even under trying circumstances.—1 Samuel 17:34-37, 45-47.

You can be sure that in the course of your worship, God will also help you to speak persuasively, as he helped David, giving you "the tongue of the taught ones." (Isaiah 50:4; Matthew 10:18-20) Yes, by taking advantage of opportunities to sharpen your speaking skills now, you can become an effective public speaker!

Dress and Grooming Was My Stumbling Block

AS TOLD BY EILEEN BRUMBAUGH

I WAS raised in the Old Order German Baptist Brethren religion, which is similar to the Amish and Mennonite religions. The Brethren movement began in Germany in 1708 as part of the spiritual awakening called Pietism. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* says that Pietism was marked by a "vision of a humanity in need of the gospel of Christ." That outlook led the movement to launch successful missionary campaigns in various lands.

In 1719 a small group led by Alexander Mack came to what is now Pennsylvania, in the United States. Since then, additional groups have formed and separated from one another. Each group adhered to its own interpretation of the teachings of Alexander Mack. Our little church had about 50 members. Reading the Bible and sticking closely to the official decisions of church members were stressed.

For at least three generations, my family had held to this faith and way of life. I joined the church and was baptized when I was 13. I was raised to believe that it was wrong to own or use an automobile, a tractor, a telephone, or even a radio or any other electric-powered invention. Our women dressed simply, and we would not cut our hair or leave our head uncovered. Our men wore beards. To our way of thinking, being no part of the world included not wearing modern clothing, makeup, or jewelry, which we felt were expressions of sinful pride.

We were taught to have deep respect for the Bible, which we considered our spiritual food. Every morning before breakfast, we gathered in the living room and listened to

Papa read a chapter from the Bible and make comments on what he had read. Then we would all kneel as Papa prayed. Afterward, Momma would repeat the Lord's Prayer. I always looked forward to our morning worship, as the whole family was together, concentrating on spiritual things.

We lived on a farm near Delphi, Indiana, where we raised various types of produce. We hauled it to town by horse and buggy, and then we sold it on the street or from door to door. We felt that hard work was part of our service to God. So we focused on it, except on Sunday, when we were to do no "servile work." At times, though, our family got so involved in our farm work that it was a challenge to hold to our spiritual point of view.

Marriage and Family

In 1963, when I was 17, I married James, another member of the Old Brethren. His roots in the Old

When I was about seven years old, and later as an adult



Brethren religion went back as far as his great-grandparents. We both had a strong desire to serve God and believed that ours was the only true church.

By 1975 we had six children, and in 1983 our seventh and last child was born. Rebecca, next to the oldest, was our only girl. We worked hard, spent little, and lived simply. We tried to instill in our children the same Bible principles we had learned from our parents and others of the Old Brethren.

Outward appearance meant a lot to the Old Brethren. We felt that since no one could read the heart, the way a person dressed revealed what he or she was on the inside. Thus, if a member fluffed up her hair too much, this was considered an indication of pride. If the print on our plainly made dress was too big, that was another indication of pride. At times, these issues overshadowed the Scriptures themselves.

A Prison Experience

During the late 1960's, my husband's brother Jesse, raised in the Old Brethren faith as well, was sent to prison because of his refusal to accept military service. While he was there, he met Jehovah's Witnesses, who also feel that engaging in warfare is inconsistent with Bible principles. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 26:52) Jesse enjoyed many Bible discussions with the Witnesses and observed their qualities firsthand. After much Bible study, he was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses—much to our dismay.

Jesse spoke to my husband about the things he had learned. He also saw to it that James regularly received the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Reading these heightened James' interest in

James, George, Harley, and Simon, dressed in plain clothes



the Bible. Since James always had a desire to serve God but had often felt distant from Him, he was very interested in anything that could help him draw closer to God.

Our elders encouraged us to read religious magazines of the Amish, the Mennonites, and other Old Brethren faiths, even though we considered those religions to be part of the world. My father, though, had a strong prejudice against the Witnesses. He felt we should never read *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* So I cringed when I saw James reading them. I was afraid he would pick up false teachings.

Yet, James had long questioned some of the beliefs of the Old Brethren that he felt contradicted the Bible—in particular the teaching that it is a sin to do any “servile work” on Sunday. The Old Brethren, for example, taught that it is permissible to water your animals on Sunday but not to pull a weed. The elders could not give him a Scriptural reason for this rule. Gradually, I too began to have doubts about such teachings.

Because we had long believed that ours was God's church and we realized what we would experience if we left it, we found it difficult to break away from the Old Brethren. Yet, our consciences would no longer allow us to remain in a religion that we felt was not fully adhering to the Bible. So in 1983 we wrote a letter explaining our reasons for leaving and asked that the letter be read to the congregation. We were disfellowshipped from the group.

A Quest for True Religion

Thereafter, we began a quest to find the true religion. We were looking for consistency, a religion whose adherents bore the kind of fruit they taught others to produce. First of all, we ruled out any religion that participated in war. We were still drawn to the “plain” religions, for we felt that a simple

way of life and plain clothing were indications that a religion was no part of the world. From 1983 to 1985, we took time to travel the country, examining one religion after another—the Mennonites, the Quakers, and other “plain” groups.

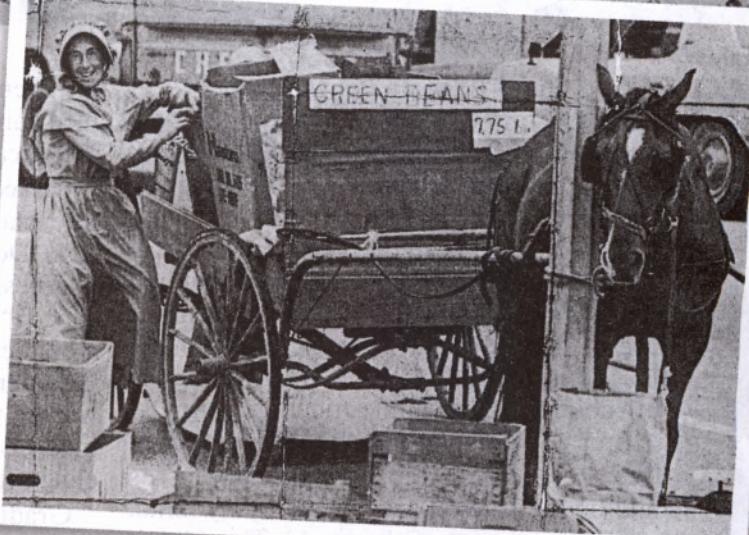
During that period Jehovah's Witnesses called on us at our farm, near Camden, Indiana. We would listen, asking them to use only the King James version of the Bible. I respected the Witnesses' stand on warfare. But it was difficult for me to listen to them because if they couldn't see the need to be separate from the world by dressing plainly, I felt they couldn't be the true religion. Pride, I felt, caused people to dress other than the way we did. I believed that things, or possessions, made one proud.

James began to go to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, taking some of our boys with him. I was very upset. My husband urged me to go with him, but I held back. Then one day he said, “Even if you don't go along with all their teachings, just go and see for yourself how they treat one another.” He had been impressed by this.

Finally, I decided to go along but to be very cautious. I walked into the Kingdom Hall in my plain dress and cap. Some of our boys were barefoot, and their clothes were also plain. Yet, the Witnesses came up to us and treated us lovingly. I thought, ‘We're different, but they are accepting us anyway.’

I was impressed by their loving attitude, but I still was determined just to observe. I wouldn't stand or even sing their songs. After the meeting I flooded them with questions, asking about things I didn't think they were doing right or about what a certain scripture meant. Even though I wasn't very tactful, each person I asked took a real interest in me. I was also impressed that I could put

Journal and Courier, Lafayette, Indiana



This picture of me bringing produce to market appeared in a local newspaper

the same question to different ones and get answers that were harmonious. Sometimes they would write down the answer, which was very helpful, as I could then study the material on my own later.

In the summer of 1985, our family went to a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Memphis, Tennessee—just to observe. James still had his beard, and we still wore our plain garb. Between sessions there was scarcely a moment when someone wasn't visiting with us. We were drawn by the love, attention, and acceptance shown. We were also impressed by the unity, for no matter where we attended a meeting, the teachings were the same.

James, moved by the Witnesses' personal interest, accepted a Bible study. He scrutinized everything, wanting to be sure of what he was learning. (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21) In time, James felt he had found the truth. However, I was feeling torn apart inside. I wanted to do what was right, but I didn't want to “go modern” and be counted “worldly.” When I first agreed to sit in on the Bible study, I had the *King James Version* on one knee and the more modern *New World Translation* on the other. I checked every verse in both translations to make sure that I wasn't being misled.

How I Became Convinced

As we studied with the Witnesses, we learned that our heavenly Father is one God, not three in one, and that we ourselves *are* souls and do not possess an immortal soul. (Genesis 2:7; Deuteronomy 6:4; Ezekiel 18:4; 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6) We also learned that hell is the common grave of all mankind, not a place of fiery torment. (Job 14:13; Psalm 16:10; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Acts 2:31) Learning the truth about hell was a milestone, since the Old Brethren could not agree on the meaning of it.

Yet, I still wondered how the Witnesses could be the true religion when, in my mind, they were still part of the world. They didn't lead the "plain" life, which I thought was so necessary. At the same time, however, I realized that they were fulfilling Jesus' command to preach the good news of the Kingdom to all people. I felt so confused!—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

During this critical time, the love of the Witnesses helped me to continue my investigation. The whole congregation took an interest in our family. As various members of the congregation came by—sometimes making an excuse to visit by buying our milk and eggs—we began to see them as truly good people. Our house was not avoided because a particular Witness was studying with us. Rather, anytime people in the congregation were near our house, they stopped in. We desperately needed this opportunity to get to know the Witnesses, and we came to appreciate their genuine interest and love.

This personal interest was not limited to the Witnesses in the congregation nearest us. As I battled with the issue of proper dress and grooming, Kay Briggs, a Witness from a nearby congregation, who by preference dressed simply and chose not to wear makeup, came to visit me. I felt comfortable with her and was able to converse more freely. Then one day Lewis Flora, who had also been raised in a "plain" religion, came to visit me. He could see the dilemma written on my face and sent

me a ten-page letter, trying to soothe my troubled mind. His kindness moved me to tears, and I read his letter over many times.

I asked a traveling overseer, Brother O'Dell, to explain to me Isaiah 3:18-23 and 1 Peter 3:3, 4. "Don't these verses show that plain dress is necessary to please God?" I asked. He reasoned: "Is there anything wrong with wearing a bonnet? Is braiding hair wrong?" In the Old Brethren, we braided little girls' hair, and the women wore caps or bonnets. I could see the inconsistency, and I was impressed by the traveling overseer's patience and kind manner.

Gradually, I became more and more convinced, but there was one issue that still bothered me greatly—*women would cut their hair*. Christian elders reasoned with me that some women's hair only grows to a certain length, while others' hair can become quite long. Was one woman's hair better than the other's as a result? They also helped me to see the role of conscience in dress and grooming and gave me written information to take home to read.

Acting on What We Learned

We were looking for good fruitage, and we found it. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) We were convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses are a people who show *true love*. Even so, this was a confusing time for our two oldest children, Nathan and Rebecca, since they had accepted the Old Brethren religion and been baptized in it. Eventually, they were moved by the Bible truths we shared with them, as well as by the love shown by the Witnesses.

Rebecca, for example, had always longed for a warm relationship with God. She found it easier to pray to him when she learned that he did not predestine how one would act or what one's future would be. She also drew closer to God when she came to appreciate that rather than being some part of a *mysterious Trinity*, he is a real person, one she could imitate. (Ephesians 5:1) And she was happy that she

did not need to use "thee" and "thou" when speaking to him. As she learned God's requirements concerning prayer, as well as his grand purpose for humans to live forever in an earthly paradise, she came to feel a new closeness to her Creator.—Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Privileges We All Enjoy

James and I and our five oldest children—Nathan, Rebecca, George, Daniel, and John—were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses in the summer of 1987. Harley was baptized in 1989, and Simon in 1994. Our whole family remains devoted to the work that Jesus Christ commissioned his followers to do, namely, proclaiming the good news of God's Kingdom.

Our five older sons—Nathan, George, Daniel, John, and Harley—as well as our daughter Rebecca—have each served at the U.S. branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. George is still there after 14 years, and Simon, who finished school in 2001, has recently also become a member of the branch staff. All our boys are

With our family today

either elders or ministerial servants in congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. My husband serves as an elder in the Thayer Congregation, in Missouri, and I stay busy in the ministry.

We now have three grandchildren—Jessica, Latisha, and Caleb—and are happy to see their parents instilling a love for Jehovah in their tender hearts. As a family, we rejoice that Jehovah drew us to him and helped us to identify his name people by the godly love they display.

Our hearts go out to others who have a strong desire to please God but whose consciences may have been trained by their environment instead of by the Bible itself. We hope that they might find the joy we now have in going from door to door, not with produce, but with a message about God's Kingdom and the wonderful things it will accomplish. My eyes are filled with tears of appreciation when I think of all the patience and love we were shown by the people who bear Jehovah's name!



A Memorable Open House

BY AWAKE! WRITER
IN MEXICO

ON March 15, 2003, delegates from over 40 countries assembled just outside Mexico City for the dedication of the newly constructed buildings seen below. These residence buildings and printing facilities are part of the latest expansion of the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico.

In 1974, when there were about 65,000 Witnesses in Mexico, the first buildings of the branch at this site were dedicated. As the number of Witnesses in Mexico was growing dramatically, dedications of additional buildings were held in 1985 and again in 1989. The latest addition, which consists of more than a dozen new buildings, includes a huge printery as well as residences that will allow for a branch staff of some 1,300.

Two weeks after the dedication, an open house was held for neighbors near the branch. Among those to whom written invitations were sent were local authorities as well as students and teachers at a newly founded university located across the street. Many at the branch wondered how many would accept the invitation.

A Rewarding Response

A total of 272 responded, including students and state and municipal authorities. Visitors commented on the beauty and cleanliness of the facilities and expressed appreciation for the hospitality shown. One wrote in the guest book: "I am visiting your facilities for the first time. They are lovely. I admired and respected you before, but I do so even more now."

Another visitor observed: "We had a wrong impression of what was being done here. Stories had circulated about you. . . . But what I see now gives me confidence. I will gladly receive you into my home because I think that what you are doing is worthwhile."

One of the university's lecturers, whose mother is a Witness, brought two entire classes of students to visit. She said: "I wanted the youths to know what Jehovah's Witnesses do around the world. There are things that they can learn by visiting here." How were students affected by the visit?

One wrote: "Thank you for your hospitality. It was an unforgettable day for me and my classmates." Another noted that people who don't listen to Witnesses who visit them have no idea what they are really like. "We must be



tolerant and open to other things," she concluded. A young man said: "I had a very different idea, but now I see that you support one another. You look like tiny ants—so busy."

Four members of the local police were among the visitors. One of them, a woman, noted: "This is impressive. There is no discrimination here. The one who cleans, the gardener, everybody is equal. . . . This is marvelous."

Two little neighbors, boys nine and ten years old, said: "This is pretty—very big." "What I liked most were the machines. They are so fast. I especially liked the machines that cut paper."

A traumatologist, his wife, and their daughter, a university student, were among the visitors. During the tour the doctor's wife asked many Bible questions. She commented that her interest was aroused when the Witnesses visited her father, a member of an evangelical religion. He would get furious, while the Witnesses remained calm. "Now I understand why," she declared.

The doctor and his family said that their visit had changed their opinion of the Witnesses. Noting their interest, their guide, José, invited them to the Memorial of Christ's death and offered them a Bible study. They responded favorably, saying that they would be glad to come to the branch for the study.

The following week they came, and José and his wife, Beatriz, were thrilled to receive them in their room. They had so many questions

1. Vehicle repair building
2. services building
3. maintenance shops building
4. residences
5. printery
6. auditorium
7. visitors' building



that the first study lasted three and a half hours! The family attended the Memorial on April 16—along with the father of the traumatologist's wife—yes, the one who used to get furious at the Witnesses' visits!

A special reason for joy was news of the quantity of Bible literature that the visitors took home with them—500 pieces, especially Bibles. Some of them said that they had never had a Bible before.

A woman who lives nearby told Armando, who was handling the Bible literature stand: "From now on, I will join you Witnesses at your meetings, for I know that this is the truth." A few weeks later, Armando was happy to see this woman in the Kingdom Hall. He says: "She was carrying the book that she had obtained during the open house. When I greeted her, she told me: 'As you see, I am doing what I told you I was going to do.'"

The three days of the open house passed quickly. But they were most upbuilding. Seeing the branch facilities through the eyes of first-time visitors helped members of the branch to have greater appreciation for their privilege of serving in one of the branches of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Hundreds responded to the invitation to the open house, including students and local police





Forest-Provided Services—How Valuable?

FORESTS cover nearly one third of the earth's land area, but that figure keeps dropping. *Choices—The Human Development Magazine*, published by the United Nations Development Programme, said in 1998 that in the developing world alone, "as many as 4 million hectares [10 million acres] of land—an area the size of Switzerland—are deforested each year."

Why Deforestation Is a Paradox

Ongoing deforestation, say some experts, is a paradox. This is because the burning and logging of forests continues for economic reasons. Yet, as one authority says, forests "are worth far more standing than they are cut or burned down." How so?

Dr. Philip M. Fearnside and Dr. Flávio J. Luizão, researchers with the National Institute for Research in the

Amazon, in Manaus, Brazil, told *Awake!* that the standing rain forests provide, as they put it, "services to the world." These services include absorbing and storing carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas), preventing soil loss and flooding, recycling nutrients, regulating rainfall, and providing a home for endangered animals and a shelter for wild crop plants. Forests also provide fascinating scenery and a place for recreation. All such environmental services, say the researchers, have economic value.

As an example, consider a forest's ability to store carbon. When the forest is cut down, carbon released by trees after they are felled ends up as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and contributes to global warming. Thus, the economic value of this forest-provided "service to the world," that is, storing carbon, can be estimated by determining what it costs to reduce carbon emission by man-made means.

According to Marc J. Dourojeanni, an environment adviser at the Brazilian office of the

Ricardo Beliel / SocialPhotos

© Michael Harvey/Panos Pictures



Inter-American Development Bank, such calculations show that "the value of forests as carbon sinks [storage places] is much greater than the value they generate from timber and as agricultural land." Still, ever more forests are leveled. Why?

An Incentive to Preserve

Think of this comparison: A group of people own an electric power plant. The plant transmits electricity to the surrounding towns, but the consumers do not pay one cent in compensation. After some time the owners reason, 'Shutting down the plant, stripping it of all equipment, and selling the inventory for a profit makes more economic sense than preserving a plant that makes no money.' Some officials in forest-rich countries seem to think similarly. Since the forest-provided services are not paid for by the world's consumers, it makes more economic sense to cut down the forests (strip the power plant, so to speak) and sell the trees (sell the inventory) in order to make a quick and fat profit—or so the argument goes.

The only way to reverse this trend, says Dourojeanni, is to make it economically appealing to preserve a forest. One idea, proposed by Professor Dr. José Goldemberg, a Brazilian nuclear physicist and former chancellor of the University of São Paulo, is to levy a "worldwide carbon tax" on users of what are often called fossil fuels.

As proponents see it, the amount of tax levied would depend on the amount of fuel a country or state used, as well as on the volume of greenhouse gases they produced. For example, the United States, which represents about 5 percent of the world's population, emits nearly 24 percent of the world's greenhouse gases. Some policymakers reason that the tax money paid by such a country would then be used to compensate the nations that forgo quick logging profits to preserve their forests instead. In this way, it is suggested, the consumers would, in effect, pay their 'electricity bill' and the so-called owners would

have an economic incentive to preserve their 'power plant.'

Who, though, would set the prices for environmental services? And who would collect and distribute the fees?

Changes in Behavior Needed

"These issues," says Dourojeanni, "could best be addressed at a worldwide forest convention." Such a convention could determine the price tags for the environmental services provided by forests. Then, "a world forest organization could be set up to manage this international endeavour."

Although using an international institution to regulate an international problem may seem to make sense, Dourojeanni admits: "A proliferation of institutions and commissions set up to deal with forestry issues has not helped matters." What is really needed, he adds, are "drastic changes in social and economic behaviour." Indeed, forest preservation requires more than a change of law—it requires a change of heart.

Will such problems ever be solved? They will, promises earth's Creator, Jehovah God. The Bible shows that he has established a government that will soon rule worldwide and solve earth's problems. That government "will never be brought to ruin." (Daniel 2:44) Moreover, it will supervise the proper use of earth's ecosystems as earth's inhabitants continue to learn about their Creator, the one whom the Bible identifies by the name Jehovah. (Isaiah 54:13) All humans then living will have full appreciation for the earth, including its forests.

In Our Next Issue

■ Understanding Mood Disorders

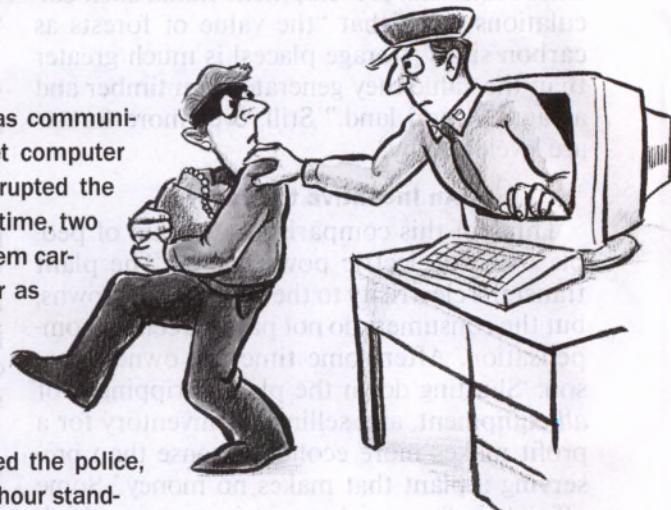
■ Repair Your Car Safely

■ Will Diplomacy Bring World Peace?

Watching the World

Robbery Foiled by Internet

A man in Uruguay named Mauricio was communicating with a friend in Brazil by Internet computer camera (webcam) when his friend interrupted the video conversation to answer the door. In time, two unfamiliar men came into view, one of them carrying a gun. Mauricio looked on in horror as the robbers, unaware that they were being watched from afar, began to scoop up his friend's valuables. Upon realizing what was happening, Mauricio phoned a relative in São Paulo. The relative alerted the police, who surrounded the house. After a three-hour stand-off, the robbers surrendered to the police without harming anyone.



Missing Relatives

Many thousands of families worldwide do not know the whereabouts of relatives who have disappeared in war or civil unrest. A recent conference in Geneva, Switzerland, bearing the theme "The Missing" addressed the plight of families of missing persons, as reported in Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. According to Sophie Martin, head of the Missing Persons Project of the International Committee of the Red Cross, "anxiety can remain with [family members] for years after the fighting has subsided." In many cases, victims' families feel "unable to move on with their lives or begin the process of recovery." Formerly warring parties are often disinclined to cooperate in finding missing persons. The reason may lie not so much in inability as in unwillingness. As one expert pointed out, revealing the truth about the circumstances of the deaths of missing persons

can bring wartime atrocities to light.

Breast-Fed Babies —Smarter, Healthier

"Queensland researchers who studied almost 4000 Brisbane children found that, on the whole, those who were breastfed had higher IQs," states *The Daily Telegraph* of Sydney, Australia. Professor Jake Najman of the University of Queensland said: "The longer the mother breastfed, the higher the intelligence of the child. It's not just a small advantage that the breastfed children have, it's about eight IQ points, which is quite a substantial advantage. It's the difference between being an average child and being a reasonably bright child." Another possible advantage of breastfeeding is that it may be a factor in reducing by up to 30 percent a child's risk of becoming obese, says a report in Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph*. According to lactation consultant Joy Heads,

"there are very few waste products in breastmilk, which is almost perfectly utilised. You can have a big, chubby breast-fed baby and there is no problem with that at all. But a fat, bottle-fed baby has a higher chance of being obese later in life."

Very Long-Distance Service Calls

A caller in Philadelphia, in the United States, dials a local customer service number. Though the young woman who answers the caller identifies herself as Michelle, her real name is Meghna, and she is located in India, where it is the middle of the night. Indian call centers employ more than 100,000 people to handle many "back-office" operations for overseas companies, such as American Express, AT&T, British Airways, Citibank, and General Electric. Moving this work to India has been prompted by affordable international telephone rates along with India's abun-

dance of educated, English-speaking workers, "whose wages are 80 per cent less than their western counterparts," reports the magazine *India Today*. In order to sound as American as possible, operators like Meghna take months of training, including "watching Hollywood block-busters to pick up a wide variety of American accents." Meghna's computer even tells her the weather in Philadelphia, so she can comment on it. And she signs off by saying: "Have a good day."

Undersea Plumbing

Two underwater volcanoes discovered off the coast of Canada's Vancouver Island have been found to act as a huge plumbing system running under the ocean floor, reports *Canadian Geographic* magazine. Scientists have long known that seawater circulates beneath the ocean floor. "The problem is that most of the seafloor doesn't have much exposed rock that would be permeable to water," explains Andrew Fisher, a hydrogeologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Fisher and his colleagues found that seawater is drawn into a volcanic seamount that pene-

trates the impermeable clay covering the ocean floor. The water comes out of another seamount more than 30 miles away. Fisher anticipates that this discovery will lead to a better understanding of the chemistry of seawater as well as of the microbes living in the oceanic crust.

Never Too Old to Learn

In Nepal, where illiteracy is widespread, an elderly man with over 12 grandchildren has gained fame for his efforts to get an education. Bal Bahadur Karki, known as Writer Baje, was born in 1917 and fought in the second world war. At the age of 84, after four attempts, he obtained his School Leaving Certificate. Now, at the age of 86, he is taking a college course. He is majoring in English and even tutors others in the language. Sitting at a desk surrounded by young people helps him to forget his age and feel young again, he says. On his last trip to the capital, Kathmandu, he received prizes and a thunderous ovation for his accomplishments. He encouraged others not to give up just because they are old. However, Writer Baje voiced a complaint. He

had been forced to walk three days in order to catch a bus because he was denied a discount and could not afford the regular airfare. He told *The Kathmandu Post*: "The airlines should give me a student discount as I am also a student."

Mental Disorders Among Children

"Twenty-two percent of children and adolescents in Spain suffer from mental disorders of some kind," reports Spain's newspaper *ABC*. "The most common are behavior disorders, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders," states child psychiatrist María Jesús Mardomingo. During the past 30 years, specialists have observed a marked increase in the number of these cases, leading them to the conclusion that emotional problems often accompany economic progress. They note, for example, dramatic changes in social and cultural values, including a significant decline in parental authority. "Although we know that inflexibility and authoritarianism are destructive," states Mardomingo, "there is a need to combine love with authority."

The Gap Between Man and Monkeys

A recent analysis of the DNA of chimpanzees and orangutans, as well as of certain monkeys and macaques, has revealed that their genetic makeup is not as similar to man's as scientists once thought. "Large differences in DNA, not small ones, separate apes and monkeys from both humans and each other," says Britain's *New Scientist* magazine. "There are large deletions and insertions sprinkled throughout the chromosome," explains Kelly Frazer of Perlegen Sciences, the California, U.S.A., company that did the analysis. *New Scientist* characterized the differences as a "yawning gap [that] divides monkeys and us."

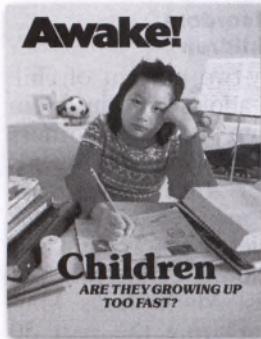


From Our Readers

Children—Growing Up Too Fast? The series “Children—Are They Growing Up Too Fast?” (April 22, 2003) was very well written. It helped me understand why I have experienced certain problems.

I had a gloomy childhood, and I can’t help but agree that the path of wisdom is to let children grow at their own pace.

S. M., Japan



The series truly touched my heart. I was raised in a single-parent home. I used to stay up nights listening to my mother cry because of her worries. If it were not for the Christian congregation, I don’t know how I would have ended up. Thank you for your loving efforts to feed us spiritually.

D. B., United States

I am 11 years old, and I have always had the tendency to want to grow up quickly. This series showed me the importance of cherishing my childhood while I still have it.

G. M., United States

I can identify with the story of Carmen and her sister in the article. Although I did not run away from home, as they did, I did have abusive stepfathers and a neglectful mother. Because my parents had problems with drug abuse, I was forced to raise my younger brothers, starting when I was only ten years old! Of course, this led to problems of my own. I am forever grateful to Jehovah for the help I have received over the years.

D. S., United States

Hedgehog I am the chief executive of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, and I was delighted to read the wonderful article “Prickly Urchin of the Countryside.” (April 22, 2003) It was beautifully written and factually accurate—unlike many articles in other publications.

F. V., Britain

Thank you very much for *Awake!* magazine. My mother always tells me to read the magazines. Once I start, I sometimes keep reading for an hour or so. They have many articles I enjoy, such as “Prickly Urchin of the Countryside.” I am 15 years old. Keep up the excellent job!

K. G., United States

Adoption Thank you for the timely article “Young People Ask . . . Why Did I Have to Be an Adopted Child?” (April 22, 2003) My daughter had to put her baby up for adoption because of her circumstances, and this bothered my conscience very much. This information came just at the right time. I sent the article to my daughter.

E. D., Guyana

I am writing to thank you very much for the timely articles on adoption in the April 22 and May 22 issues. My husband and I recently adopted an infant son. In time, we will use these two articles to help our son know and understand just how much he is loved by Jehovah God, his Dad, and me.

S. R., United States

Thank you so very much for the article on adoption. I am 47 years old and still struggle with this. My adoptive parents—whom I respect and love very much—were unable to respond to my needs for love and affection. I was never really hugged or kissed, even when I asked. Such rejection was difficult for me. Anyway, the article was so very comforting and heartwarming.

D. H., United States

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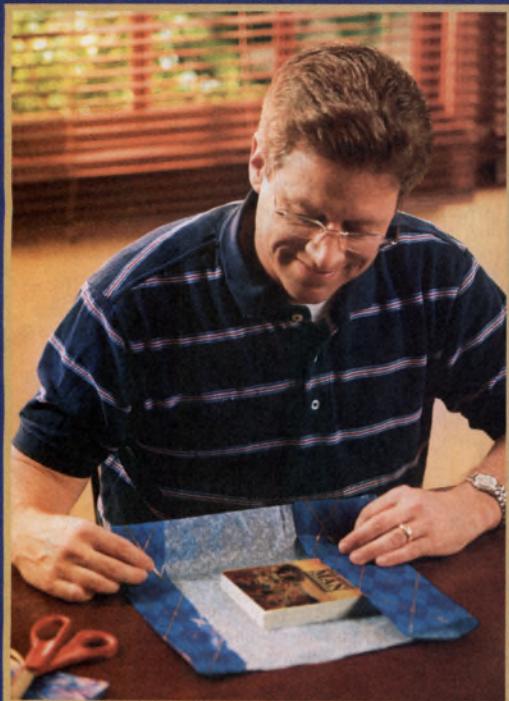
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THE LIFE OF JESUS AN APPRECIATED GIFT



Nearly 2,000 years ago, God provided the greatest gift ever given to mankind—the life of his Son, Jesus Christ, which makes it possible for us to receive everlasting life. (John 3:16) Appreciating this, many have given friends and relatives a gift copy of *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, a book that describes the life of Jesus as it is presented in the four Gospels.

Some time ago a man explained that he gives this book to those from whom he receives Christmas cards. He writes to them, briefly explaining why he no longer celebrates Christmas, and he uses references from the encyclopedia, the dictionary, and the Bible. Then he includes a copy of *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*.

The man said that he received two very encouraging responses from university professors. One letter said: “Your beautiful gift, *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, arrived the other day. We are so pleased to have it. It is so beautiful from so many standpoints. It already has had heavy usage.”

This book includes the speeches Jesus delivered, as well as his illustrations and miracles. To the extent possible, everything is related in the order in which it occurred. And the book features beautiful, carefully researched illustrations designed to convey the feelings of Jesus and his contemporaries.

