

Awake!

AUGUST 22, 2004



What Makes a Good Father?

Awake!

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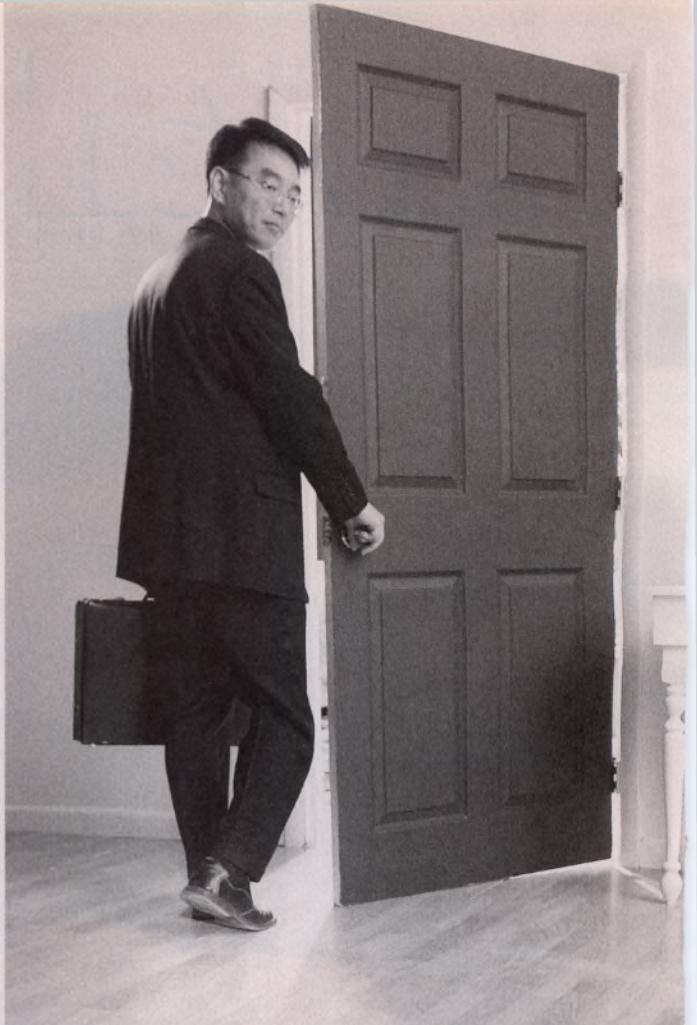


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Read about fathers who learned the answer. See how their families have been benefited by the application of what they learned.

Absent Fathers A Growing Problem

FATHERS are abandoning their families in increasing numbers. In the late 1990's, the newspaper *USA Today* called the United States "the world leader in families without fathers." However, the absence of fathers is a worldwide problem.

In Brazil a 2000 census report revealed that the number of families headed by women was 11.2 million out of a total of 44.7 million. In Nicaragua, 25 percent of children lived with their mothers only. In Costa Rica the number of children not recognized by their own fathers rose during the 1990's from 21.1 percent to 30.4 percent.

The statistics from these three countries are just a sampling of the worldwide trend. Consider another aspect of the problem of absent fathers.



Present but Not Available

Please see the box "Daddy, When Will You Come Again?" Nao, now 23 years of age, confesses: "Before I started elementary school, I rarely saw Father. Once as he was leaving, I begged him, 'Come back, won't you?'"

Family relationships such as that of Nao with her father are what moved the Polish writer Piotr Szczukiewicz to say: "The father seems to be an important missing factor in the family." True, many fathers live with their families and provide them economic support. Yet, as the French magazine *Capital* put it, "too many fathers content themselves with being food suppliers, without being educators."

Often, the situation is that the father is *in* the family but is not *involved* in the lives of his children. His attention is focused elsewhere. "Even if [the father] is physically present," notes the French magazine *Famille chrétienne*, "he can be absent psychologically." Why are so many fathers today mentally and emotionally absent from their families?

As the above journal explains, a basic reason is that "he fails to understand the role of a father or husband." According to the view of many fathers, the role of a good father

"Daddy, When Will You Come Again?"

That was the question five-year-old Nao, a Japanese girl, asked her father as he was leaving for work one day. Although he lived at home, she rarely saw him. He routinely arrived from work after Nao was in bed and left for work before she awoke.

is simply to bring home a decent wage. As Polish writer Józef Augustyn stated, "many fathers think they are good parents because they provide money for the family." But doing that is only part of a father's responsibility.

The fact is, children don't judge their father's worth by the amount of money he makes or the monetary value of gifts he may give them. Rather, what children really want—far more than material gifts—is their father's love, time, and attention. These are what truly matter to them.

Need for Reexamination

According to a report by the Japanese Central Council for Education, "fathers should re-examine their lifestyle, which is excessively devoted to work." The question is, Will a father make an adjustment for the sake of his children? The German newspaper *Gießener Allgemeine* reported a study in which most fathers interviewed refused to put their children ahead of their career.

Young ones can be deeply hurt by what may appear to be their father's lack of concern for them. Lidia, now aged 21, has vivid memories of what her father was like when she was a young girl in Poland. She explains: "He never talked to us. We lived in different worlds. He didn't know I spent my leisure time in discos." Similarly, Macarena, a 21-year-old from Spain, says that when she was a child, her father "went off on weekends with his friends to enjoy himself, and several times he disappeared for some days."

Establishing Proper Priorities

Most fathers may realize that they give too little time and attention to their children. A Japanese father of a teenage son said: "I am hoping that my child will understand my situation. I am always thinking of him, even when I am busy." Yet, will merely wishing that a child will understand his father's absence solve the problem?

There is no doubt about it, real effort—yes, sacrifice—is necessary to satisfy a child's needs. Clearly, providing children with what they need most—namely, love, time, and attention—is not easy. Jesus Christ said: "Man must live, not on bread [or, material food] alone." (Matthew 4:4) It is also true that children cannot grow up successfully with only material things. As a father, are you willing to sacrifice what may be very precious to you—your time or possibly even advancement in your career—to be available for your children?

The *Mainichi Daily News* of February 10, 1986, told about a father who came to appreciate how important his children really were. It reported: "A top executive of the Japanese National Railways (JNR) chose resignation rather than separation from his family." The newspaper then quoted the executive as saying: "The job of the director general can be taken by anybody. But I am the only father of my children."

Indeed, a first step in becoming a good father is to recognize the kind of father children need. Let us examine what is involved in being that kind of father.

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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The Kind of Father Children Need

CHILDREN need a father who loves them, who is there for them, and who does whatever he can to help them grow into responsible, trustworthy adults. That children need this kind of father has not been given due recognition.

True, mothers deliver babies into the world, and the importance of being a good mother can hardly be overstated. But noting that the father plays an equally vital role, *The Wilson Quarterly* said: "The decline of fatherhood is a major force behind many of the most disturbing problems that plague American society"—and, we might add, those of the rest of the world.

The Brazilian newspaper *Jornal da Tarde* reports on a study that concluded that many behavioral problems of youths—such as aggressiveness, unruliness, poor performance in school, and apathy—are often "the result of an absent father." And the Italian book *Gli imperfetti genitori* (The Imperfect Parents), by Marcello Bernardi, emphasizes that to develop successfully, children ideally need two parents.

Family Life Can Be Improved

Even if a negligent father has contributed to problems in the family or has been largely

responsible for them, it doesn't mean matters cannot be corrected and family life improved. How? What does the father need to do?

Clearly, children need family structure, a sense that someone with their welfare in mind is in control. When that need isn't met, as often occurs today, the lives of children are adversely affected. Yet, the situation is never hopeless, whether there is a father in the picture or not. "A father of fatherless boys," the Bible says at Psalm 68:5, "is God in his holy dwelling."*

How to Obtain Help

That God's help is vital for success and that it can be obtained is evidenced by the situation described by Lidia, the girl from Poland mentioned in the preceding article. What was family life like in her home? How did the family receive God's help?

Franciszek, Lidia's father, admits that when his children were young, he neglected his family, just as his daughter reported. He says: "I didn't care what our children were doing. I didn't display affection, and there wasn't any bond between us." So he was unaware

* Please see the chapter "Single-Parent Families Can Succeed" in the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

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that when Lidia was 14, she and his younger son and daughter were already carousing, smoking, drinking, and getting into fights.

Finally, Franciszek came to realize the trouble his children were getting into, and he was shocked into doing something about it. "I prayed to God for help," he says. Remarkably, soon afterward Jehovah's Witnesses called at his home, and he and his wife agreed to study the Bible. In time, the parents started applying its teachings in their lives. What was the effect upon the children?

Franciszek explains: "They began to notice that I had quit drinking and was becoming a better father. They wanted to get to know Jehovah's Witnesses better. They also began to study the Bible and quit their bad associations." The son, Rafał, says of his father: "I came to love him as a friend." He adds: "The street gang suddenly became unimportant. We were busy with spiritual activities."

Franciszek is now a Christian elder in a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and he is still involved with his family and the spiritual growth of each one. His wife and Lidia are pioneers, full-time evangelizers. Rafał and his younger sister, Sylwia, share whole-souled in Bible study, in commenting at Christian meetings, and in sharing their faith with others.

He Practiced What He Taught

Consider, too, what happened with Luis, the father of Macarena. Recall that she is the 21-year-old girl in Spain who was quoted in the opening article. Luis' way of life had been patterned after that of his own alcoholic father. As Macarena said, he would disappear with his friends for days at a time. Moreover, he treated his wife like a servant rather than an appreciated partner. Their marriage was at a breaking point, and Macarena and her younger siblings were traumatized.

In time, however, Luis agreed to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. He explains:

"I began to spend time with my wife and my children. We talked together, had meals together, and studied the Bible together. We also shared in doing household chores and in recreation." Macarena says: "I started to feel the presence of a kind father who showed genuine interest in his family."

Significantly, not only did Luis encourage his family to serve God but he practiced what he taught. He left "a thriving business enterprise," Macarena explains, "because it took up too much time and he wanted to give more attention to family matters." The effect was remarkable. "His example has taught me how to keep a simple eye and to put spiritual things in first place," Macarena says. She now serves as a pioneer, and her mother and younger siblings are active members of the Christian congregation.

The Railway Executive's Decision

Clearly, the kind of father children need is one who makes decisions with the welfare of his children in mind. The teenage son of Takeshi Tamura, the Japanese executive mentioned in the preceding article, had become involved with unsavory associates and appeared to be heading for real trouble. That was in 1986, the year that Takeshi decided to give up his responsible position with the Japanese National Railways. How does Takeshi feel about his decision now, more than 18 years later?

"It is perhaps the best decision I ever made," he said recently. "Spending more time with my son and doing things together, including studying the Bible with him, had a remarkable effect. We became friends, and he cut off his bad associations and improper behavior."

Takeshi's wife had become one of Jehovah's Witnesses a few years earlier, and it was her exemplary conduct that moved her husband to look into the Bible and become more involved with the family. Eventually he, his son, and his daughter all became Witnesses.

Takeshi and his son now serve as elders in their respective congregations, and his wife and daughter are pioneers.

Fathers Need Help

Many fathers, despite realizing that they are neglecting their children, do not know what to do for them. The Spanish newspaper *La Vanguardia* carried the headline "42 Percent of [Spanish] Parents Admit That They

Don't Know How to Bring Up Their Teenage Children." But the same can be said regarding the fathers of preteens as well as toddlers. Contrary to the thinking of many, these younger ones also need the presence and attention of a devoted father.

What more can be learned about how to become a good father? Who are the best examples for fathers, and what can be learned from them? Our concluding article will examine these questions.

Fathers who provided what their children needed

**Franciszek
and his family**



Luis and his family



Takeshi and his family





*Although in prison,
Viktor Gutschmidt
managed to be a
good father*

How to Be a Good Father



AN ARTICLE in the *Economist* magazine about the deterioration of family life began with the arresting statement: “*Making children is easy, making a good father is not.*”

While many things in life are hard to do, one of the hardest—as well as most important—is to be a good father. Every father should want to be a good one, since the welfare and happiness of his family is at stake.

Why It Is Not Easy

Simply stated, a major reason why being a good father is not easy is inherited imperfection—both of parents and of their children. “The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up,” says the Bible. (Genesis 8:21) Thus, a Bible writer acknowledged: “In sin my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) The inclination to do bad because of inherited sin is only one obstacle that makes being a good father difficult.

This world, or system of things, is also a huge obstacle. Why so? Because, as the Bible explains, “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one,” who is identified

as “the one called Devil and Satan.” The Bible also calls Satan “the god of this system of things.” No wonder Jesus said that like him, his followers should be “no part of the world”—1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 17:16.

Vital to being a good father is constant awareness of our inherited imperfection, Satan the Devil, and this world under his control. These obstacles are not imaginary. They are real! But where can a man go to learn how to combat them and how to become a good father?

Divine Examples

For help in overcoming the obstacles mentioned above, a father can go to the Bible. Wonderful examples are provided there. Jesus identified the best one when he taught his followers to pray: “*Our Father in the heavens.*” Describing our heavenly Father, the Bible says simply: “God is love.” How should a human father respond to this loving example? “Become imitators of God,” the apostle Paul

urged, "and go on walking in love."—Matthew 6:9, 10; 1 John 4:8; Ephesians 5:1, 2.

If you are a father, consider what you can learn from just one instance when God dealt with Jesus, his Son. Matthew 3:17 tells us that at Jesus' water baptism, God's voice was heard from heaven, saying: "*This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.*" What can we learn from this?

First, think of the effect it has upon a child when a father proudly says to someone, '*This is my son*' or '*This is my daughter*.' Young ones thrive when receiving a parent's attention, especially positive acknowledgment. A child will likely be moved to try harder to prove worthy of favorable recognition.

Second, God expressed how he felt about Jesus, referring to him as "*the beloved*."

That expression of endearment from his Father must have warmed Jesus' heart. Your children too will be encouraged if you show by your words—as well as by your time, attention, and concern—that you dearly love them.

Third, God told his Son: "*I have approved you.*" (Mark 1:11) That too is a vital thing for a father to

do, that is, tell his children that he is pleased with them. True, a child will often fall short. We all do. But as a father, are you looking for opportunities to express approval of the good things your children do or say?

Jesus learned well from his heavenly Father. While on earth, he demonstrated by word and example just how his Father feels about His earthly children. (John 14:9) Even when Jesus was busy and under stress, he took time to sit and talk with children. "Let the young children come to me," he told his disciples, "do not try to stop them." (Mark 10:14) Can you fathers follow the example of Jehovah God and his Son more fully?

Good Example Vital

The importance of setting a good example for your children cannot be overemphasized. Your efforts to "go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" will likely have little effect if you yourself are not submitting to God's discipline and allowing your life to be regulated by it. (Ephesians 6:4) Yet, with God's help, you can overcome any obstacle to fulfilling his command to care for your children.

Consider the example of Viktor Gut-schmidt, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in the former Soviet Union. In October 1957, he was sentenced to ten years in prison for talking about his faith. He left behind two young daughters along with his wife, Polina. While



While he was imprisoned for his faith,
Viktor drew these pictures
to teach his children



Viktor's daughters
in 1965



in prison, he was allowed to write letters to his family but was forbidden to say anything about God or any religious subject. Even in the face of this hardship, Viktor was determined to be a good father, and he knew that teaching his children about God was vitally important. So what did he do?

"I found material in the Soviet magazines *Young Naturalist* and *Nature*," Viktor relates. "On postcards I drew pictures of animals and people and included a story or an experience regarding nature."

"As soon as we received these postcards," Polina says, "we immediately connected them with Bible subjects. For instance, when they included the beauty of nature, forests, or rivers, I read Isaiah chapter 65," which tells about God's promises to make the earth a paradise.

Viktor's daughter Yulia relates: "Mama would then pray with us, and we would cry.

Fathers should be actively involved in teaching their children

These cards played a big role in our upbringing." Polina says that as a result, "the girls loved God very much from childhood." What is the situation with the family now?

Viktor explains, "Now my daughters are both married to Christian elders, and both of them have spiritually strong families with children who are faithfully serving Jehovah."

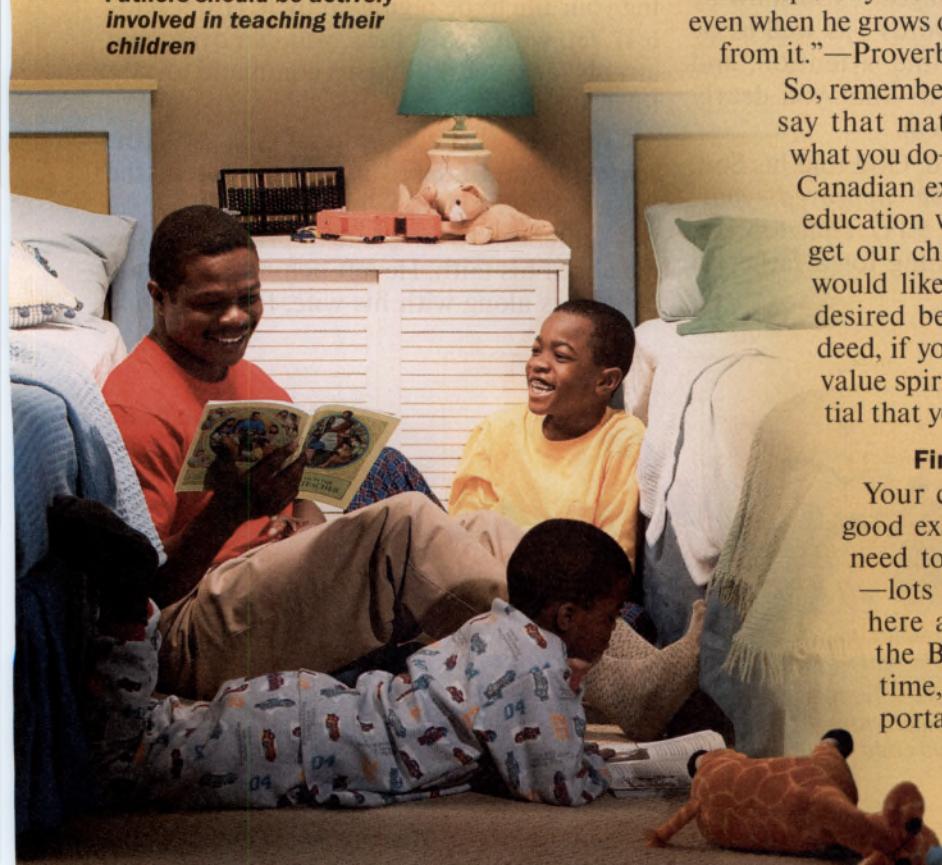
Setting a good example often requires not only ingenuity but also great effort. The hearts of children will likely be touched when they see their father really trying. A son who spent many years in the full-time ministry said appreciatively of his father, "Sometimes Dad would be so tired from work he could hardly keep awake, but we would have our Bible study regardless, and this helped us to appreciate the seriousness of it."

Clearly, setting a fine example—in both word *and deed*—is vital to being a good father. You need to do so if you want to realize the truth of the Bible proverb that says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Proverbs 22:6.

So, remember, it is not only what you say that matters; it is particularly what you do—the example you set. A Canadian expert in early-childhood education wrote: "The best way to get our children to behave [as we would like] is to demonstrate the desired behaviour ourselves." Indeed, if you want your children to value spiritual matters, it is essential that you do so yourself.

Find Time for Them!

Your children must see your good example. That means you need to spend time with them—lots of it, not just snatches here and there. Wisely heed the Bible advice to 'buy out time,' that is, forgo less important things in order to be



with them. (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Really, what is more important than your children? A large-screen TV, a professional set of golf clubs, a beautiful house, your job?

There is a familiar saying, ‘*Pay now, or pay later.*’ Fathers whose children have been lost to immoral activity or even to a life-style devoid of spirituality often feel deep remorse. They lament that they failed to be with their little ones more often when they really needed a father.

Remember, when your children are young is the time to think about the consequences of your choices. The Bible calls your children “an inheritance from Jehovah,” something that God himself has entrusted to you. (Psalm 127:3) So never forget that you are answerable to God for them!

Help Is Available

A good father is eager to receive help that will benefit his children. After an angel told Manoah’s wife that she was going to bear a child, Manoah prayed to God: “Let him, please, come again to us and instruct us as to what we ought to do to the child that will be born.” (Judges 13:8, 9) Like parents today, what kind of help did Manoah need? Let us see.

Brent Burgoyne, a teacher at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, observed: “One of the greatest gifts one can give a child is to teach him or her a value system.” That children need to be taught such a system can be seen from a report in Japan’s *Daily Yomiuri*, which noted: “[A] survey shows that 71 percent of Japanese children have never been told by their fathers not to tell lies.” Is that not a sad commentary?

Who can provide a reliable value system? The same one who gave Manoah guidance—God himself! To provide help, God sent his own dear Son, Jesus, as Teacher—the term by which he was commonly addressed. Now the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*, which draws lessons from Jesus’ teachings,

is available in many languages for your use when teaching young ones.

Learn From the Great Teacher not only explains values based on God’s Word but also illustrates the written text with more than 160 pictures that have pointed questions. For example, chapter 22, entitled “Why We Should Not Lie,” contains the picture shown on page 32 of this magazine. The written text on the page where this picture appears says: “Perhaps a boy tells his father: ‘No, I didn’t kick the ball in the house.’ But what if he really did? Would it be wrong to say that he didn’t?”

Powerful lessons are also taught in chapters entitled “Obedience Protects You,” “We Need to Resist Temptations,” “A Lesson on Being Kind,” “Never Become a Thief!,” “Do All Parties Please God?,” “How to Make God Happy,” and “Why We Need to Work,” to name just a few of the 48 in the book.

The foreword of the book concludes: “Children especially need to be directed to the Source of all wisdom, our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. This is what Jesus, the Great Teacher, always did. We sincerely hope that this book will help you and your family to mold your lives so as to be pleasing to Jehovah, to your eternal blessing.”*

Clearly, being a good father includes setting a good example for your children, spending plenty of time with them, and helping them to live according to God’s standards as he has revealed them in the Bible.

* *My Book of Bible Stories*, *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, and *The Secret of Family Happiness* are other books Jehovah’s Witnesses provide to assist families.

In Our Next Issue

- Will Prejudice Ever End?
- When Someone You Love Has a Mental Disorder
- Is Divorce the Answer?

By Awake! writer in New Zealand

The GENEVA BIBLE

A Forgotten Translation

DO YOU possess a compact Bible that you can hold comfortably and that has a typeface that is gentle on the eyes? Does its format make it easy to find the information you seek? If you answer yes to these questions, then you owe much to the *Geneva Bible* of 1560.

Few people today have heard of the *Geneva Bible*. Yet, this remarkable translation was a best-seller in its day. Its reputed textual accuracy, along with innovations in presentation and layout, made it the favorite of the reading public. The English dramatists Shakespeare and Marlowe used it as the source for their Bible quotations.

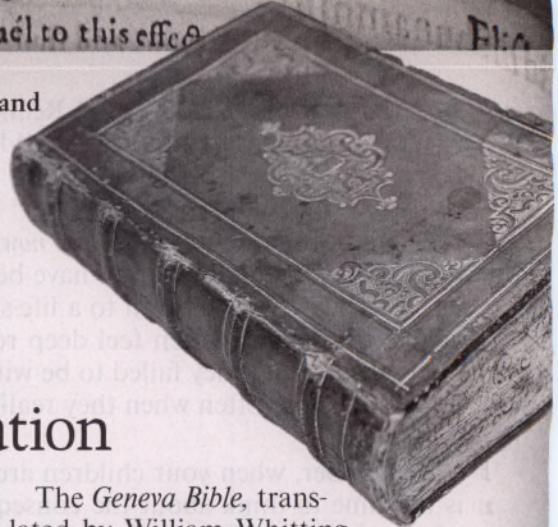
Just how did this popular 16th-century English Bible come to originate in the French-speaking Swiss city of Geneva? What were its unique features? What led to its demise? How do we continue to benefit from it today?

A Bible With New Features

The *Geneva Bible* was produced by a group of religious refugees who fled repression and possible execution in England when Mary Tudor came to power in 1553. These scholars were welcomed into Geneva's Protestant community. With a well-established printing industry and an interest in Bible reading, Geneva was a place where Bible translation and production flourished.

Exodus 6:3, where God's name appears

God:but by my Name "Jehovah was I
not knownen vnto them.
Furthermore as I made my couen-
them to give them the land
the lnd of their di-
and also that
the infideles des, & had taken a little maid of the land



The *Geneva Bible*, translated by William Whittingham and his assistants, appeared in 1560. Soon people were eagerly reading it in England. Easier to read than Bibles produced prior to it, this was the first Bible in English to contain numbered verse divisions, a system that is universally used today. Also included were running heads—a few key words at the top of each page to help readers find specific passages in the text below. In addition, rather than using the heavy Gothic typeface that was modeled on written script, a clear typeface similar to what is still preferred in English Bibles today was generally used.

Earlier Bibles, designed for reading from church lecterns, had been produced in the large and cumbersome folio size. The *Geneva Bible* was a handy edition about half the size of the folio volumes. This smaller Bible was not only well suited to personal reading and study but also far more affordable.

Striving After Textual Integrity

The *Geneva Bible* translators gave particular attention to retaining the flavor and sense of the original Hebrew. God's name, Jehovah, appeared in a few places, including Exodus 6:3;

17:5; and Psalm 83:18. Words that the translators considered to be necessary additions were shown in italics, and text that had been added for grammatical clarity appeared in square brackets.

The *Geneva Bible* quickly became established as the official translation in Scotland. It was also widely used in England and is thought to be the translation taken by the Pilgrims on their famous 1620 voyage to what is now the United States. The *Geneva Bible* was taken to other British colonies—including the most distant, New Zealand. There, in 1845 a copy became part of the collection of Governor Sir George Grey.

The Contentious Marginal Notes

The extensive annotations in the *Geneva Bible* contributed to its enduring popularity among its readers. These were provided because the translators realized that the Bible had ‘hard places,’ or parts that were difficult to understand. Such marginal notes were not new. Tyndale had used them in his 1534 “New Testament.” Besides the marginal notes, the *Geneva Bible* contained illustrations, prefaces, and maps—all designed to enhance understanding. Bound with the text were genealogical tables, summaries, and even a section encouraging daily Bible reading.

Although they acknowledged the excellence of the translation in private, the hierarchy of the Church of England publicly objected to it because they considered the tone of the marginal notes to be radical. Matthew Parker, then Archbishop of Canterbury, called them “diseased prejudicial notes.” King James I considered the notes to be “very partial,

untrue, seditious.” No wonder, since some of the notes challenged the “divine right” of kings!

The Demise of the Geneva Bible

In 1604, King James authorized a new translation, hoping to rid England forever of the *Geneva Bible*. Theological historian Alister McGrath states that “the greatest obstacle faced by the King James Version as it sought to establish itself in the seventeenth century was the continuing popularity of the *Geneva Bible*.” For many years the *Geneva Bible* was preferred by the public, and it remained the official Bible in Scotland. New editions continued to appear until 1644.

The British and Foreign Bible Society observed that an “examination of [the] King James’ Bible of 1611 shows that its translators . . . were influenced more by the *Geneva* than by any other English version.” Many innovations in presentation and renderings of the *Geneva Bible* were incorporated in the *King James Version*, including such distinct phrases as “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” and “Solomon in all his glory.” —Ecclesiastes 12:1; Matthew 6:29.

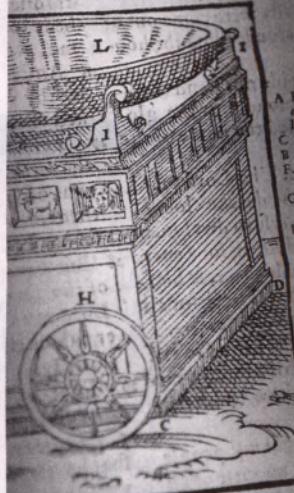
An Enduring Influence

Although eventually superseded by the *Authorized Version*, or *King James Version*, the *Geneva Bible* occupies an important place in literary history. Not only did it set new standards in translation and presentation but it remains a vital link in the chain of revision of English Bibles. It promoted Bible reading and study among a wide range of people who otherwise might not have had access to it.

By paving the way for the *King James Bible*, the *Geneva Bible* also ensured that certain Bible phrases made their way into literature and the English language. So although the *Geneva Bible* may for the most part be forgotten, it has certainly left its mark.

A Running heads

over the 43 And
which were the bases,
THE CALDRONS.



▲ An illustration

Marginal notes ▼

THE **Smallest Dog** IN THE **World**

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN MEXICO

ARE you looking for a companion that is an extrovert yet is content to lie quietly in your lap or by your side while you read? A companion that eats little, requires little space, and doesn't need to be taken out every day for exercise? Then you may enjoy having a Chihuahua, the smallest recognized breed of dog in the world.*

Chihuahuas are good watchdogs, as they will sound the alarm. In fact, Chihuahuas are courageous. They aren't intimidated in the least by larger dogs.

The Chihuahua is characterized by a well-rounded head, wide-set luminous eyes, a saucy expression, and erect ears, which flare to the sides when in repose. They have short soft hair or long silky hair, and some may be red, blond, blue, or chocolate-colored as well as solid, marked, or splashed. A unique feature of most Chihuahua puppies is the soft spot on the crown, similar to that of a newborn baby.

Origin of the Chihuahua

While there are different theories regarding the origin of the Chihuahua as a breed, it appears to have descended from a small dog called the Techichi. These were kept by the Toltec people of Mexico in the ninth century C.E. Evidence for this origin is provided by a monastery in Huejotzingo that was built by Franciscan monks with stones taken from

* The Chihuahua is the only "natural" toy breed, that is, the only small dog not bred down from larger versions of the same breed.

the pyramids of Cholula. The stones have ancient carvings on them that closely resemble today's Chihuahua.

Later, the Aztecs defeated the Toltec, and the aristocracy adopted these small dogs, particularly the blue ones, as objects of veneration. The dogs could reputedly guide the spirits of the dead in their journey through the underworld. Montezuma II, the last emperor of the Aztecs, was a fancier of the Chihuahua. It is said that he had hundreds of them, each with its keeper. Skeletons of Chihuahuas have been found in human graves on the Mexico/U.S. border.

Research done by the late Thelma Gray, a historian and an authority on Chihuahuas, led her to believe that the native dog of the Aztecs was crossed with a small terrier-type dog brought over by the Spanish conquistadores. Thus, the basis was laid for the even smaller modern-day Chihuahua. It is called the Chihuahua because in the mid-1800's, American travelers to Mexico discovered the breed in the state of Chihuahua and took some of these dogs back to the United States. About the same time, Carlotta, wife of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, contributed to the Chihuahua's international fame by taking the breed to Europe.

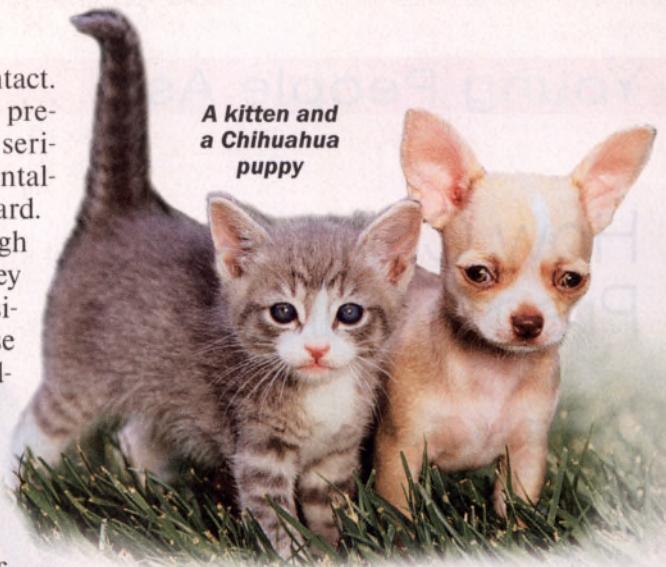
Having a Pet Chihuahua

Chihuahuas are indoor dogs, ideal for apartment living and for the elderly or handicapped or those confined to the home. They

thrive on much attention and human contact. Nevertheless, since they are so small, precautions must be taken. They can be seriously injured or killed by being accidentally stepped on, sat on, or squeezed too hard. They should not be left unattended on high surfaces, such as beds and sofas, as they have no sense of height and could easily jump off and break a bone. For these reasons Chihuahuas are not recommended as pets for very young children.

Yet, the Chihuahua is harder than you might think. In fact, it is one of the longest-lived breeds, living well into its teens. This dog is energetic and playful, yet it can get all the exercise it needs from daily romps with its toys. However, since it burns calories faster than the larger breeds and has a tiny digestive system, the Chihuahua is prone to hypoglycemia. Therefore, it needs small, frequent meals and plenty of rest. Shivering is a normal characteristic of this breed. In fact, a Chihuahua shivers when excited, apprehensive, discontented, or frightened—not just when it is cold.

A kitten and a Chihuahua puppy



▲ Tim Davis/CORBIS

The Chihuahua is loyal, eager to please, and highly trainable. According to the book *A New Owner's Guide to Chihuahuas*, "if you are willing to make the necessary commitment that a Chihuahua requires, there are few breeds that are any more versatile, amiable, and adaptable." Many people have found the diminutive Chihuahua to be an excellent companion.

An adult Chihuahua



How Can I Avoid Premarital Sex?

"At age 19, I had sex with a boy from school. I can't tell you how bad it made me feel. I was left feeling worthless."—Laci.*

FLEE from fornication," commands the Bible. (1 Corinthians 6:18) Few young ones today, however, seem willing to obey the Bible's words and refrain from sex until they are married. Some, like Laci, have given in to their desires and have suffered pain and a troubled conscience.

Admittedly, it is not easy to control one's sexual urges. As the textbook *Adolescent Development* observes, the hormonal changes of puberty inevitably result in "accompanying increases in sexual impulses." Admits Paul, "At times, thoughts about sex enter my mind without any apparent cause or reason."

Yet, professor of pediatrics Howard Kulin notes: "It is a great oversimplification to blame [adolescent] behavior solely on hormones." He explains that social factors also play a role. Indeed, social factors—particularly the influence of peers—can be very persuasive.

In her book *A Tribe Apart*, writer Patricia Hersch says that "young people have built their own community. . . . More than a group of peers, it becomes in isolation [from adults] a society with its own values, ethics, rules."

* Names have been changed.



However, the "ethics" and "rules" of many young ones today often promote indulging sexual impulses, not controlling them. Many may thus feel pressured to try premarital sex.

Even so, Christian youths are wisely determined to avoid all forms of fornication, knowing that God condemns it as one of "the works of the flesh."* (Galatians 5:19) How, though, can you remain chaste in the face of great pressures?

Seek Wise Companions

Interestingly, while social pressures can influence you negatively, the right kind of friends can influence you in a positive way. It is as the Bible says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise." (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) A report from the

* See the article "Young People Ask . . . What's Wrong With Premarital Sex?" in our issue of July 22, 2004.

World Health Organization (WHO) observed that "adolescents who have meaningful relationships with parents, other caring adults, and peers" and "who are provided with structure and boundaries . . . are less likely to initiate sexual activity."

Having meaningful relationships with your parents can be particularly rewarding. Recalls Joseph, "My parents definitely helped me to resist the pressures to experiment with sex." Indeed, godly parents can provide structure and boundaries for you that are based on God's Word. (Ephesians 6:2, 3) They can support you in your efforts to remain chaste.

Granted, speaking to them about sexual matters may be awkward at first. But you may be surprised at how well they understand what you are feeling. After all, they were young once themselves. Sonja, therefore, advises other young ones, "Go to your parents, and don't feel embarrassed or ashamed to talk about sex."

What if your parents don't follow Bible standards? While still honoring them, you may need to seek some guidance from outside your family. Paul, quoted earlier, says, "I get great help in this area from mature Christian married couples." Kenji, a young girl whose mother is an unbeliever, likewise says, "For advice, I stick to mature ones who are spiritually upbuilding." But she cautions, "I avoid those who lack strong moral standards, *even if they claim to share my religious beliefs.*"

At times, it may be necessary to watch your association within the Christian congregation. The Bible reminds us that in any large group, there will often be some who do not conduct themselves honorably. (2 Timothy 2:20) What should you do if you discover that some of the youths in your congregation, in effect, "hide what they are"? (Psalm 26:4) Avoid close association with such ones, and seek out friends who will support your determination to stay morally clean.

Discussing your feelings with your parents can help you to stay chaste

Reject Harmful Propaganda

You should also take steps to protect yourself from the flood of sexual images and innuendos that are dispensed through books, magazines, music videos, video games, movies, and the Internet. The media portray premarital sex as glamorous, enjoyable, and risk free. The effect? Kenji, quoted above, admits: "I watched a show where sex was treated casually and even had homosexual overtones. As a result, I began to forget how seriously Jehovah views these matters."

The truth is, popular entertainment often cleverly masks the unpleasant realities of premarital sex—unwanted pregnancies, premature marriages, and sexually transmitted diseases. So do not be taken in by those "who are saying that good is bad and bad is good." —Isaiah 5:20.

Remember the words of Proverbs 14:15: "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps." If you come upon sexually suggestive or arousing images while reading, surfing the Net, or watching TV, take immediate action! Close that book, shut down your computer, or switch channels! Then focus your thoughts



on something else—something wholesome. (Philippians 4:8) By doing so, you can halt wrong desires before they have time to grow.—James 1:14, 15.

Beware of Compromising Situations

Are you dating someone? Then there is a need for you to be on guard. The Bible warns us: “The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate.” (Jeremiah 17:9) It is easy to allow displays of affection to turn into sexual misconduct. Take reasonable precautions, such as having a suitable chaperon or dating in wholesome groups. Avoid being alone in tempting situations.

Perhaps, though, you are engaged to marry and feel that some physical displays of affection would be appropriate. Even so, a WHO report warns: “When marriage is imminent, premarital sex seems to occur among the majority of women, even in conservative settings.”* Therefore, set limits on displays of affection and thus protect yourself from needless heartbreak.

Shocking though it may seem, many youths—especially young girls—are forced or coerced into having sex. According to one

* See chapter 29 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

study, “60 percent of U.S. adolescent girls who had sex before age 15 did so involuntarily.” Perpetrators often use power to overwhelm their victims. (Ecclesiastes 4:1) For example, the Bible tells us that King David’s son Amnon “fell in love” with his half sister Tamar and through trickery forced her to have sex.—2 Samuel 13:1, 10-16.

This does not mean that it is impossible to prevent rape or coerced sex. By being alert to danger, avoiding compromising circumstances, and taking quick action when there is a threat, you can do much to protect yourself.*

“Unify” Your Heart

We hope that the suggestions we have discussed here will help you in your fight to remain chaste. But in the long run, what is in your heart will determine your behavior. Jesus said that “out of the heart come . . . fornications.” (Matthew 15:19) You must therefore resist the tendency to become either “halfhearted” (lukewarm) or ‘double-hearted’ (hypocritical) on this very important issue.—Psalm 12:2; 119:113.

If you ever feel your resolve weakening or feel a conflict within your heart, pray as did David when he pleaded: “*Unify my heart to fear your name.*” (Psalm 86:11) After that, work in harmony with your prayer by studying the Bible and Bible-based publications and applying what you learn. (James 1:22) Lydia says, “I am motivated to resist sexual temptations by always remembering that ‘no fornicator or unclean person has any inheritance in the kingdom of God.’”—Ephesians 5:5.

Avoiding premarital sex may not be easy. But with Jehovah’s help, you can keep yourself chaste and spare yourself and others a lot of pain and suffering.—Proverbs 5:8-12.

* Suggestions along these lines were given in the “Young People Ask . . .” articles “Sexual Harassment—How Can I Protect Myself?” and “How Can I Stop My Boyfriend From Mistreating Me?” in our issues of August 22, 1995, and June 22, 2004.

Dating in a wholesome group setting can be a protection



SOMETHING BETTER THAN FAME

AS TOLD BY CHARLES SINUTKO

In 1957, I was offered a 13-week contract to sing in Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A., for a thousand dollars a week, with an option of 50 more weeks if performances went well. That would be an additional \$50,000—big money at the time. Let me explain what led up to this lucrative offer and what made the decision about accepting it or not such a difficult one.



FATHER, a Ukrainian, was born in eastern Europe in 1910. In 1913 his mother brought him to the United States, where she rejoined her husband. Father married in 1935, and I was born a year later in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. About that time two of Father's older brothers became Jehovah's Witnesses.

When my three brothers and I were young and our family was living near New Castle, Pennsylvania, our mother studied the Bible briefly with the Witnesses. Neither of my parents became Witnesses at that time, but Father believed that his brothers had the right to believe as they wished. Although Dad had raised us to be patriotic, he always stood up for the right of others to worship as they pleased.

A Singing Career

My parents believed I had a natural singing voice, so they did all they could to promote me. When I was six or seven, Dad would stand me up on the bar at a nightclub to sing and play my guitar. I sang the song "Mother." The lyrics featured words that began with the letters of the

word "mother." Each word was emphasized as it was used in the description of a quality of a loving mother. The song ended with the crescendo "Put them all together they spell M-O-T-H-E-R, a word that means the world to me." The men at the bar, who had often had more than enough to drink, would cry and put money into Dad's hat.

I had my first radio program in New Castle on WKST in 1945, singing country music. Later I branched out into singing popular songs from the *Hit Parade*, which was a weekly network radio program featuring the week's top ten songs. My first appearance on television was in 1950 on Paul Whiteman's show. His arrangement of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" is still famous. Soon afterward Dad sold our home in Pennsylvania, and we moved to the Los Angeles area of California in the hope of expanding my career.

Thanks to Father's persistence, I soon got my own weekly radio program in Pasadena and a weekly half-hour TV show in Hollywood. I did recordings at Capitol Records with the hundred-piece orchestra of Ted Dale and also became a singer on the CBS radio network. In 1955, I took a musical revue to Lake Tahoe in northern California.



While there, my priorities in life changed dramatically.

Developing New Priorities

About that time, Uncle John—Dad's older brother who had also moved from Pennsylvania to California—gave me the book "*Let God Be True*."^{**} I took it with me to Lake Tahoe. After our last show, which ended well after midnight, I began reading the book to unwind before going to bed. I was thrilled with finding Bible answers to questions I had long wondered about.

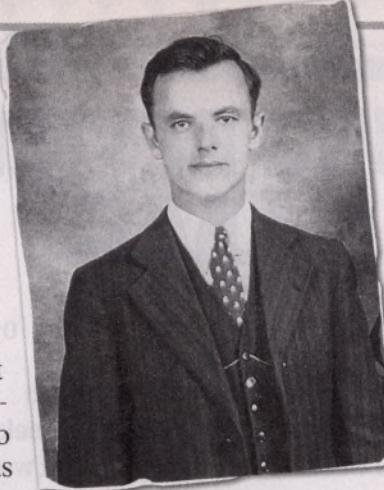
Soon I was sitting around the nightclub after work talking to fellow entertainers, often into the wee hours of the morning. We discussed such topics as life after death, why God allows wickedness, and whether man will eventually destroy himself and the earth. A couple of months later, on July 9, 1955, at a district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses held at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles, I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to serve Jehovah God.

Less than six months later, Christmas morning 1955, I was invited by a fellow Witness, Henry Russell, to go with him to visit Jack McCoy, who was in the entertainment business. Henry himself was the musical director for NBC. Well, when we arrived, Jack had his three children and his wife sit down and listen to us, even though they had just been opening their Christmas presents. He and his family soon became Witnesses.

About this time I studied with Mother, and she really took hold of Bible truth. She eventually became one of Jehovah's Witnesses and a pioneer, a full-time evangelizer. In time, my three brothers were also baptized and shared in the pioneer ministry for a while. In September 1956, at the age of 20, I became a pioneer.

* John Sinutko remained a faithful Witness of Jehovah until his death in 1996 at the age of 92.

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



**Uncle John in 1935,
the year he was baptized**

Decisions Regarding Employment

About this time my agent's personal friend George Murphy took an interest in promoting me. George had appeared in numerous films during the 1930's

and 1940's. In December 1956, as a result of Murphy's connections, I appeared on the Jackie Gleason show in New York City on CBS-TV. This was a great impetus for my career, since the show had a viewing audience of an estimated 20,000,000. While in New York, I visited the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn for the first time.

After appearing on the Gleason show, I signed a seven-year movie contract with MGM studios. I was offered a part as a regular on a TV Western. After a while, though, my conscience began to bother me, since I would have to assume the role of a gambler and gunslinger—parts that romanticized immorality and other unchristian behavior. So I quit. Those in the entertainment business thought that I had lost my mind.

This brings us up to the lucrative offer to perform in Las Vegas, referred to at the outset. I was to begin work during the week of our traveling overseer's visit. If I did not take the job then, I would miss out altogether. I had such mixed feelings, since Dad had looked forward to my making some big money! I felt he deserved compensation for all that he had done to promote my career.

So I approached our presiding overseer, Carl Park, who was himself a musician and had been a violinist on New York's radio station WBBR in the 1920's. I explained that if I

took this contract, I could pioneer all my life without financial worry. "I can't tell you what to do," he said, "but I can help you reach a conclusion." He asked, "Would you leave if the apostle Paul were visiting our congregation this week?" He added, "What do you think Jesus would have you do?"

That was so clear, I thought. When I told Dad that I had decided not to take the job in Las Vegas, he said I was ruining his life. That night he waited up for me with his .38-caliber handgun. He intended to kill me, but he fell asleep—apparently from drinking too much. Then he tried to kill himself in the garage with automobile exhaust. I called the rescue squad, and they were able to revive him.

Knowing of Dad's temper tantrums, many in our congregation feared him, but our circuit overseer, Roy Dowell, did not. When Roy went to see him, Dad happened to mention to him that when I was born, there had been a strong possibility I would not survive. Dad had promised God that if I lived, he would dedicate me to His service. Roy asked if he had ever thought that God might be taking him up on his promise. That astounded Dad. Then Roy asked, "If the full-time service was good enough for God's Son, why isn't it good enough for yours?" With that, Dad seemed to resign himself to my choice.

In the meantime, in January 1957, Shirley Large came from Canada with her pioneer partner to visit some friends. Shirley and I became acquainted when I went in the house-to-house ministry with her and her partner. Shortly afterward, Shirley accompanied me to the Hollywood Bowl, where I sang with Pearl Bailey.

Following Through on a Decision

In September 1957, I received an appointment to serve as a special pioneer in the state of Iowa. When I told Dad that I had decided to take the assignment, he just sobbed. He could not understand my new sense of what was really valuable. I drove into Hollywood

and backed out of all my contracts. The famous orchestra and choral leader Fred Waring was among those with whom I was under contract. He told me that I would not work again as a singer if I did not fulfill my agreement. So I explained that I was leaving my singing career to expand my ministry in the service of Jehovah God.

Mr. Waring listened respectfully as I spoke at length, and then he surprised me by his gentle reply: "Son, I'm sorry about your giving up such a fine career, but I have been in music all my life and have learned that there is more to living than just music. May God bless what you do." I still remember driving home with tears of joy in my eyes, realizing that I was now free to spend my life in Jehovah's service.

"Where Is Your Faith?"

I began serving in Strawberry Point, Iowa, a town of about 1,200, with my partner, Joe Triff. Shirley came out for a visit, and we discussed marriage. I had no savings, nor did she. The money I had made was all controlled by my father. So I explained: "I want to marry you, but how would we live? All I have is my special pioneer allowance of \$40 a month." In her usual calm, direct, matter-of-fact manner, she said: "But, Charles, where is your faith? Jesus said that if we seek first the Kingdom and his righteousness, he'll add to us all we need." (Matthew 6:33) That settled it. We were married on November 16, 1957.

I had a Bible study with a farmer outside Strawberry Point who had a 12-foot-by-12-foot log cabin in the woods on his property. It had no electricity or running water and no bathroom. But if we wanted to, we could stay there free of charge. It was primitive, but we figured we were in the ministry all day and only needed a place to sleep.

I drew water from a nearby spring. We heated the cabin with a wood stove and read by kerosene light; Shirley cooked on a kerosene stove. For bathing we used an old washtub.

We listened to the wolves at night and felt so fortunate to have each other and to be serving Jehovah together where the need for Christian ministers was greater. Bill Malenfant and his wife, Sandra, who now serve at the world headquarters in Brooklyn, were special pioneers about 60 miles away, in Decorah, Iowa. Now and then, they came and spent a day in



field service with us. In time, there was a little congregation of about 25 in Strawberry Point.

Into the Traveling Work

In May 1960 we were invited into the circuit work, the traveling ministry. Our first circuit was in North Carolina, and it included the cities of Raleigh, Greensboro, and Durham, as well as many little rural towns. Our living conditions improved, as we stayed with many families who had electricity and even indoor toilets. Not comforting, however, were warnings from those who had outdoor toilets. They cautioned us to watch out for the copperheads and rattlesnakes on the path!

Early in 1963 we were transferred to a circuit in Florida, where I contracted a severe case of pericarditis and almost died. I probably would have been it not for Bob and Ginny Mackey of Tampa.* They took me to their doctor and even paid all our bills.

* The *Awake!* issue of February 22, 1975, pages 12-16, has the first-person story of Bob Mackey's battle with paralysis.

My Early Training Utilized

In the summer of 1963, I was invited to work in New York in connection with a large convention of Jehovah's Witnesses that was to be held there. I accompanied Milton Henschel, a spokesperson for Jehovah's Witnesses, to a radio talk show hosted by Larry King. Mr. King is still a prominent television talk-show host. He was very respectful and for about an hour after the show asked a lot of questions about our work.

That same summer Harold King, a missionary who had just been released from a prison in Communist China, was a guest at the Witnesses' world headquarters. One evening he spoke to an audience of about 700, relating some of his experiences and explaining how his more than four years in solitary confinement had strengthened his faith. While in prison he had written songs on themes related to the Bible and the Christian ministry.

That memorable evening I accompanied Audrey Knorr, Karl Klein, and Fred Franz—a long-time Witness with a trained tenor voice—in singing "From House to House," a song later incorporated in the songbook used by Jehovah's Witnesses. Nathan Knorr, who then took the lead in the work of the Witnesses, asked me to sing it at the following week's "Everlasting Good News" Assembly at Yankee Stadium, which I did.

Experiences in the Traveling Work

While we were serving in Chicago, Illinois, two memorable things occurred. First, at a circuit assembly, Shirley spotted Vera Stewart, who had witnessed to her and her mother in Canada in the mid-1940's. Shirley, who was 11 years of age at the time, was thrilled to hear about God's promises in the Bible. She asked Vera, "Do you think I could live in that new world?" Vera replied, "I don't see why not, Shirley." Neither of them forgot those exact words. From that first encounter with Vera, Shirley knew that serving Jehovah was what she wanted to do.



A 1975 photo of my parents, who remained faithful till death

Second, a Witness asked if I remembered finding a 50-pound sack of potatoes on our porch during the winter of 1958. Indeed, I did. We found it after fighting our way home through a snowstorm one evening! Although we did not know where it came from, of course we credited Jehovah for the provision. We were snowed in for five days but had the joy of eating potato pancakes, baked potatoes, fried potatoes, mashed potatoes, and potato soup! We had no other food. The Witness had not known us or where we lived, but he had heard that some pioneers nearby were having a hard time. Something, he said, moved him to start inquiring about where this young couple lived. Farmers know everything about their neighbors, so he was soon directed to our cabin and carried the potatoes through the snow.

Grateful for Choices Made

By 1993, after 33 years in the traveling work, my health had deteriorated to such an extent that I had to leave that privilege of service. Shirley and I became infirm special pioneers, which we remain until today. While I regret that I no longer have the energy to do traveling work, I am glad that I spent my energy the way I did.

My three brothers made different choices. Each eventually determined to pursue material riches, and not one of them is presently serving Jehovah. In 1958, Dad got

baptized. He and Mother helped scores of people come to know Jehovah, dedicate their lives to Him, and get baptized. Both of them died in 1999. Thus, my decision to turn down worldly fame and riches likely meant life for my father as well as for many with whom he and my mother shared Bible truth. I often wonder, 'Would I have continued to serve Jehovah had I not made the choices I did?'

Some five years after leaving the circuit work, my health improved, and I was able to expand my ministry. I now serve as presiding overseer of a congregation in Desert Hot Springs, California. I also have the privilege of substituting in the circuit work, serving on special committees and, on occasion, teaching the Pioneer Service School.

To this day Shirley remains my best friend. There is no one whose company I prefer. We regularly have stimulating spiritual conversations, both of us being excited over Bible truths we discuss together. I still remember with appreciation her calm inquiry over 47 years ago, "But, Charles, where is your faith?" If young Christian couples would just ask such a question of each other, I wonder how many of them might also have the joy and blessings we have had in the full-time ministry.

With Shirley today



Reaching Pygmies With Bible Truth

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN CAMEROON

In more than 230 lands throughout the world, Jehovah's Witnesses try to reach "all sorts of men" with the message of God's Kingdom. (1 Timothy 2:4; Matthew 24:14) Included among these are African Pygmies, a small people who average between four and four and a half feet in height. These live principally in the deep forests of the Central African Republic, the Congo region, and southeastern Cameroon.

The first recorded encounter between Pygmies and visitors occurred when Egyptian Pharaoh Neferirkare sent an expedition to find the source of the Nile River. In the forests of interior Africa, the expedition reported encountering people of short stature. The later Greek writer Homer and the philosopher Aristotle both mention Pygmies. Europeans came in contact with these people in the 16th and 17th centuries.

In modern times Jehovah's Witnesses have been preaching in the forests of Africa. Although Pygmies have responded to the Kingdom message, efforts to follow up interest among them has for the most part been unsuccessful. This is because of the Pygmies' migratory way of life—moving from place to place every couple of months or so.

Pygmies are known to be a peaceable, timid people, with an estimated population in Africa of between 150,000 and 300,000. Governments, international organizations, and churches have built schools especially for their use, along with small houses to fit their life-style. Yet, the many attempts to entice them to settle in one place have largely been unsuccessful.

A notable exception in Cameroon is Janvier Mbaki, the first Pygmy known to have become a Witness here. He accepted the Bible's message after reading the illustrated book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, as well as other publications.* In the year 2002, Janvier was baptized, and he is now serving as a pioneer, as Jehovah's Witnesses call their full-time evangelizers. He is also a ministerial servant in the Christian congregation he is part of in Mbang, a small town in the southeastern part of the country. The future will tell if more Pygmies in Cameroon choose to worship Jehovah, the only true God, who loves "all sorts of men."

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

◀ **Janvier Mbaki—the first Pygmy in Cameroon known to have become a Witness—sharing in the ministry**



Suffering the Scourge of **SALT**

By *Awake!* writer in Australia

SALT is essential to human and animal life. It makes up nearly 1 percent of our body. We use it in food, medicines, and livestock feed. In fact, the world consumes some 190 million tons of salt each year.* But this useful and abundant substance is becoming a scourge to some of the world's most productive farmland.

Some 40 percent of the global food harvest comes from the 15 percent of the world's cultivated land that is irrigated. Indeed, channeling water onto seemingly barren land can make it blossom like the proverbial rose. But irrigation can lead to a buildup of salt residue in the soil, resulting in a slow poisoning of the ground. Already crop production is stunted by salinization on half of all irrigated land in the world. Indeed, an area more than twice the size of Switzerland is said to be lost every

* The most common form of salt is sodium chloride. Other important salts are potassium chloride and ammonium nitrate.

Salt residue clings to the remains of a tree in the middle of a waterlogged field



▲ CSIRO Land and Water ▼

Once fertile fields are killed as salt accumulates in the surface soil

year as a result of salinization and waterlogging!

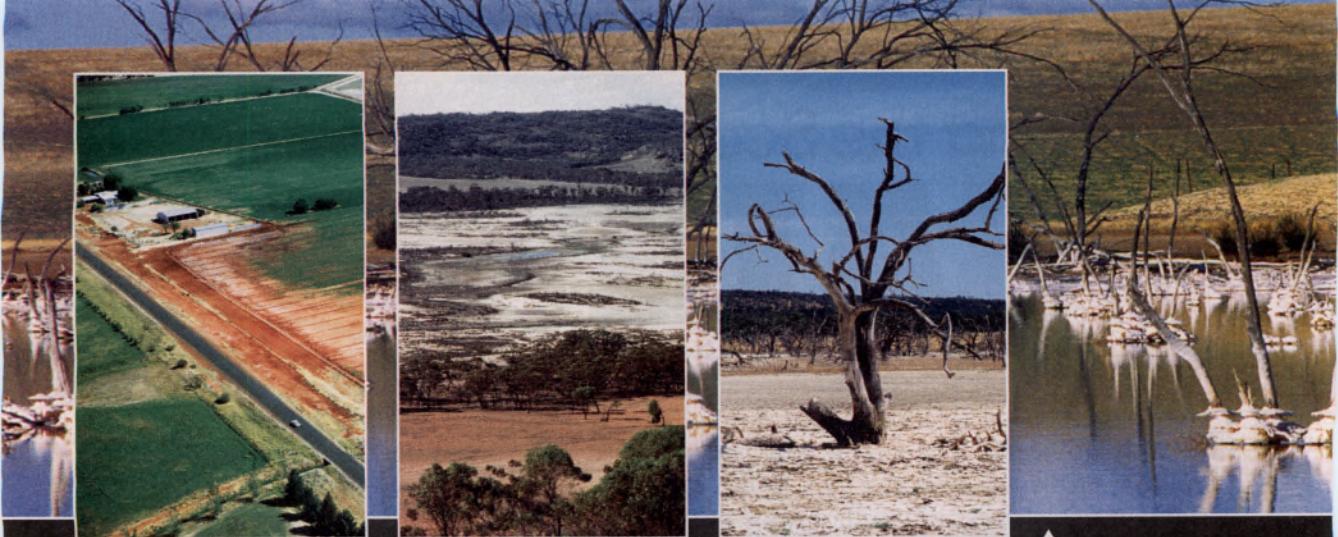
In his book *Out of the Earth*, Daniel Hillel, a prominent soil scientist, sounds this warning: "Each and every one of the insidious man-induced scourges that played so crucial a role in the deaths of past civilizations has its mirror image in our contemporary world . . . but on an ever larger scale." Salinity is already said to be costing the U.S. economy five billion dollars a year in crop losses. Yet, there are few places on earth where this man-induced scourge is more menacing than Australia.

The White Death

Each hour, the vast wheat fields of Western Australia are losing an area the size of one football field to salinization. Dr. Tom Hatton of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) says: "Without question this is the largest environmental crisis we face."

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

▲ Map: Mountain High Maps®
Copyright © 1997 Digital Wisdom, Inc.



First signs of the scourge—infertile patches amid fertile fields

Salt drawn to the surface kills vegetation

The effects of salinity on once productive farmland

The final effects of rising groundwater tables

The agricultural heartland of eastern Australia, known as the Murray-Darling Basin, is especially vulnerable to salinization. The basin covers an area as large as France and Spain combined, and it contains three quarters of Australia's irrigated land. Close to half of Australia's total agricultural earnings come from here. The Murray and Darling rivers, the arteries that feed this agricultural heartland, nurture thousands of wetland areas and supply drinking water for three million people.

Sadly, 750 square miles of this vital land is already badly affected by salinization, and scientists estimate that a further 4,000 square miles are at risk during this decade. The salt content is rising in the Murray and Darling rivers and their tributaries, and in some areas the water is becoming unsafe to drink. In the fertile fields that flank these rivers, salt-encrusted, lifeless bogs are forming. Farmers call this phenomenon the white death.

However, more than farmland is at risk. Scientists at the CSIRO warn that because of salinity, up to a thousand Australian plants and animals are threatened with extinction.

Also, if things continue as they are, perhaps half the bird species in the Murray-Darling Basin will be lost in the next 50 years. Consider the lack of foresight that has provoked this environmental crisis.

The Source of the Salt

Scientists surmise that much of Australia's salt came from ocean mist, carried inland over millennia of time. The salt from the mist was deposited on the land by rain. Another source, they believe, is the salt residue of seas that once covered parts of the continent. Rain leached the salt through the layers of soil, and groundwater tables slowly formed below the salty subsoil.

Over time, eucalyptus trees and other vegetation carpeted the continent, growing roots that penetrated as much as a hundred feet or more into the earth. The vegetation intercepted most of the rain falling on the soil and pumped it back to the surface, where it transpired from leaves. This kept the groundwater tables deep underground. But European farming methods, which brought prosperity and progress to Australia, also involved clearing vast tracts of

land. On account of mass removal of these pumplike trees, as well as the widespread use of irrigation, water tables rose. Thus, long-dormant salt has been dissolved and carried ever closer to the fertile surface soil.

Causes of the Salinity Problem

Controlled flood irrigation of crops boosts production in the Murray-Darling Basin. At the same time, however, this practice rapidly raises the groundwater tables under the fields. The salty groundwater then seeps into the river systems, polluting the fresh water. This creates another problem known as river salinity. The salty river water is pumped back onto the irrigated fields, and the problem increases in a vicious circle.

More insidious, though, is the form of salinity known as dryland salinity. Throughout the basin, deep-rooted trees have been replaced by pastures and annual crops, whose roots only penetrate a few feet into the soil. The rainfall previously absorbed by the trees now filters past the reach of the crops.

As a result, scientists estimate that from 10 to 100 times more water now seeps into the groundwater table than when trees were growing on the plains. So much extra water has soaked into the earth over the past hundred years that water tables under the Murray-Darling Basin have risen in places by up to 200 feet or more. As these salinized water tables reach within a few feet of the surface, the farmer's woes begin.

Fields once fertile begin showing areas of stunted growth. Long before salt-encrusted patches start forming, salinized groundwater lurking close to the surface is drawn upward by evaporation. At first, the plants growing on these patches can cope, but as more salt is drawn up and concentrated in the surface soil, the ground becomes infertile.

Dryland salinity affects more than just the farming community. It is already undermining some state highways, reducing their life expectancy by 75 percent. Also, it is

damaging buildings, plumbing, and sewerage systems in country towns throughout the Murray-Darling Basin.

Is Recovery Possible?

It seems that the majority of these salinized water tables will continue to rise for the next 50 to 100 years. One report states that by the time a baby born today reaches the age of 30, an area the size of the state of Victoria—about the size of Great Britain—will be ruined. What is needed to turn back this destructive tide?

"We need to radically change the management and use of [Murray-Darling] Basin resources in order to maintain healthy ecosystems and productive land use," states a government report. "Significant costs will be incurred . . . However, these costs are dwarfed when compared with the inevitable costs—economic, environmental and social—if current management practices are not changed."

Large-scale tree planting would start to reverse the damage, but at present this is not seen as a profitable option. One scientific report noted: "We cannot return to conditions identical to the natural system. In many cases, improvements [from planting trees] would occur very slowly, if at all."

In the meantime, farmers are being encouraged to plant crops that have deeper roots or to change to salt-tolerant crops. Some entrepreneurs are even mining the salt that has ruined their farms and are making a living from this enterprise. Others are planning to use salinized water ponds to raise ocean-going fish, prawns, and even seaweed commercially.

Australia's experience is not unique. Unless major changes take place soon, the description of ancient Greece by the Greek philosopher Plato will sound ominously prophetic: "What now remains of the formerly rich land is like the skeleton of a sick man, with all the fat and soft earth having wasted away and only the bare framework remaining."

Watching the World

Staggering Diversity in the Oceans

"International marine biologists are now discovering over 30 new species each week," says the German newspaper *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. This announcement came as part of the first progress report on the Census of Marine Life, a ten-year project begun in 2000, which involves some 300 scientists from 53 different countries.

The researchers believe that "there are likely more than two million animal and plant species in the oceans," says the paper. "More than 95 percent of the animal species in the oceans may still be unknown."

Taming Tardiness

A national punctuality campaign has been launched in Ecuador. According to the *Economist* magazine, it is estimated that besides the inconveniences caused, tardiness costs Ecuador \$742 million a year—4.3 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. "More than half of all public events start late," states the report. The punctuality campaign is meeting with some success. "Stragglers are barred from entering meetings," says *The Economist*, and "a local newspaper is publishing a daily list of public officials who turn up late to events."

Young People and Computer Use

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, in that country "about 90% of people ages 5 to 17 use computers and 59% of them use the Internet

—rates that are, in both cases, higher than those of adults," explains *The Wall Street Journal*. Computer use begins early. "About three quarters of children already use computers by the age of five, and a majority use the Internet by the age of nine," the report shows. While more than half of young people go on-line to communicate with friends or play games, "almost three in four use the Internet for help with school assignments," comments the *Journal*. "Girls, who not long ago used computers and the Internet at lower rates than boys, have essentially eliminated that difference."

Healthful Greek Diet

"Scientists at Harvard and the University of Athens Medical School tracked the eating habits of 22,043 Greeks for nearly four years and found that a Mediterranean diet cut the risk of

death from cancer and heart disease by 25% or more," reports *Readers Digest*. "Greeks eat lots of nuts, fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereal and olive oil, ample servings of fish, moderate levels of dairy and alcohol, and some meat." The health benefits of a traditional Mediterranean diet have often been noted.

Desperate Street Children

Poverty has driven more than a million Polish children to street life, states the magazine *Wprost*. Usually they are between 8 and 15 years of age, and "they have already become family breadwinners," paying the rent and providing for hungry siblings—even giving money to their alcohol-addicted parents. Although initially they may earn money legally, most turn to "theft, drug and alcohol trafficking, extorting from their peers, and prostitution." According to Marek Liciński of the Pońska Social Foundation,

"the biggest problem these children face is neither violence nor crime; it is that they have no place on earth to call their own nor anyone they can count on."

Foods for the Skin

Foods are becoming increasingly popular ingredients in cosmetics and wellness treatments. Besides chocolate, basic foodstuffs like olive oil are being used. Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* reports that "a relaxing cocoa bubble bath by candlelight, followed by a massage with an emulsion of hot cocoa and then a chocolate-fondue compress around your body," is believed by some to help prevent skin from aging. Is it true? "Although it is theoretically conceivable that cocoa extract in creams may help slow down aging, this has not been proved scientifically," says Professor Volker Stein-kraus of the Institute of Dermatology in Hamburg.

Women Seek Out Pornography

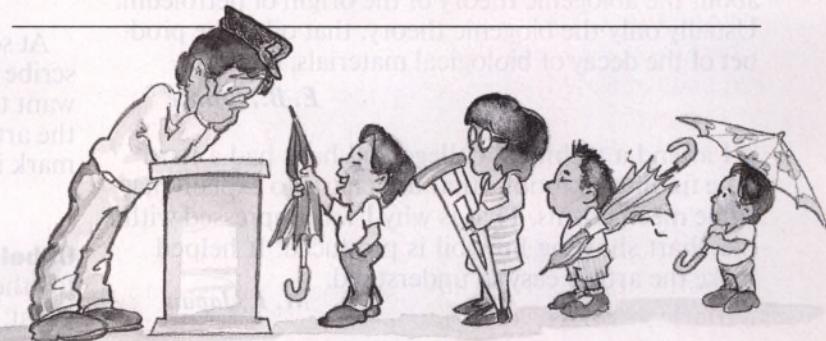
"In recent years, the accessibility, affordability and anonymity of the Internet have made pornography undeniably attractive to millions of women," says the *Plain Dealer* newspaper of Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. "Nearly one in three visitors to adult Web sites is a woman." One 42-year-old mother started

viewing pornography "to try to understand what it was that captivated her ex-husband. Soon, she was spending up to 30 hours a week surfing the Web for arousal."

The Deceptive Nature of Sleep Debt

"People who get by on a modest sleep deficit are often not aware of their shrinking thinking capabilities and don't feel particularly drowsy," reports the magazine *Science News*. A two-week study of 48 volunteers, aged 21 to 38, showed that in just a few days, the constant sleep

shortage reduced their mental abilities, including alertness and reaction time. All had previously averaged between seven and eight hours of sleep per night, but for the study they were now divided into four groups. Members of three groups were allowed to sleep for eight hours, six hours, or four hours a night. The other group was allowed no sleep at all for a three-day period. Tests showed increasing losses in abilities for both the six-hour and four-hour groups, but there were no losses for those who slept for eight hours.



Lost but Usually Found

During 2002, people brought more than \$23 million in lost cash to the Tokyo, Japan, Metropolitan Police Lost and Found Center, reports *The New York Times*. Of this, 72 percent was returned to the owners. The large lost-and-found center also houses hundreds of thousands of other items, including cell phones, keys, eyeglasses, toys, sports equipment, and—most common—umbrellas, 330,000 of which were turned in during 2002. "Children are taught from early on to hand in anything they find to the police," states *The Times*. From two hundred to three hundred people come to the center every day to pick up their possessions. Some lost items, such as crutches and wheelchairs, are puzzling. "I wonder what happened to the owners," says Hitoshi Shitara, a longtime official of the lost-and-found system.

From Our Readers

OIL I just wanted to express my gratitude for the November 8, 2003, series, "Oil—Will It Ever Run Out?" I had never seen the frightening statistics you cited regarding oil spills. With man doing things like this, it's no wonder the earth is in such poor shape! It makes me look forward to the future when Jehovah will clean things up once and for all and make the earth a paradise!

T. T., United States

The articles were presented in a very attractive and unbiased way. Although I have a physics doctorate in process engineering, I had never heard about the abiogenic theory of the origin of petroleum. Usually only the biogenic theory, that oil is the product of the decay of biological materials, is taught.

E. B., France

I attend a technical college and have had a hard time finding textbooks that use charts to explain machine mechanisms. That is why I was impressed with the chart showing how oil is produced. It helped make the article easy to understand.

M. I., Japan

Your series should have been researched more thoroughly. You neglected to mention that the first commercial oil well in North America was dug by James Miller Williams in Ontario, Canada—a year prior to Edwin Drake's well in Titusville, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

G. Y., Canada

"Awake!" responds: There is considerable debate on this matter. One petroleum geologist who has written on the history of oil told "Awake!" that the location of the first well is "shrouded in mystery." "The Canadian Encyclopedia" thus sums it up this way: "Claims that Williams drilled the first oil well in N[orth] America are shared with E. L. Drake of Pennsylvania."

Geography As a family, we are fond of articles that deal with geography. Thus, we were fascinated by

the article "The Mighty Amazon—A Lifeline for Millions." (November 8, 2003) Although we studied about the Amazon in school, we didn't realize that "in just 30 seconds, it could quench humanity's thirst for a day"! We are happy that such articles allow us to "visit" remote lands.

V. G., Slovakia

Thank you for the lovely article "Prague—Come Visit Our Historic Jewel." (November 8, 2003) It was such a pleasure to read about this historic city—it was as if I were literally there! Thank you also for the wonderful pictures.

L. Z., Russia

At school we were assigned to describe a city in a way that made you want to go there. I based my paper on the article on Prague and got the best mark in the class. Thank you!

O. C., France

Unbelieving Relatives Thank you for the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: When Loved Ones Do Not Share Your Faith." (November 8, 2003) As the only Christian in a family of six children, I have struggled for years to find a balance in dealing with this situation. The scriptures in this article were like rays of sunshine!

R. G., United States

It has not been long since I began studying the Bible. But the little I know, I try to pass on to my loved ones, who are not believers. Since I am only 16 years old, my family has not permitted me to get baptized, but I hope to do so someday. This article will help me to deal with my family.

J. G., United States



"When Are You Going to Read All of These?"

In July 2001 a man in Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East found a stack of 34 issues of *Awake!* in a city library. He checked them out, and when the due date came in August, he didn't want to part with them. So he renewed them till September. He liked the magazines so much that he checked them out again in November, together with six new issues.

Before this, the man had always avoided religious publications. Why did he start reading *Awake*? "Because most of the material in this magazine discusses social problems that are interesting and that touch everyone," he wrote.

"Often, there are well-designed 'trips' to modern cities and countries, together with information about people's traditions," the man continued. He was also drawn to articles about people who have been successful in life, kept their spiritual values, and helped

others to endure misfortune and catastrophe. His assessment of the magazine? "It can surely be said that *Awake!* is *Time*, *Popular Science*, and *National Geographic* combined!"

The man requested back issues of *Awake!* in Russian all the way through 1995. In addition to *Awake!* he requested various books and brochures published by Jehovah's Witnesses. "You may ask," he wrote, "'When are you going to read all of these?'" He answered his own question by saying that he has time for reading worthwhile material, since he does not spend a lot of time watching television and surfing the Internet.

Awake! provides rich information about current events and gives insight into the solution to today's problems. Why not ask Jehovah's Witnesses to bring you the current issues of *Awake!* each month?

▼ Nuclear explosion: U.S. Department of Energy photograph

**Children—What They
Need From Parents**



**Understanding
Mood Disorders**



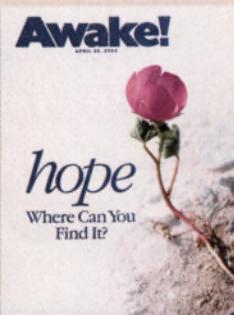
**Do You Know
God by Name?**



**The Nuclear Threat
—How Real Is It?**



**Hope—Where
Can You Find It?**

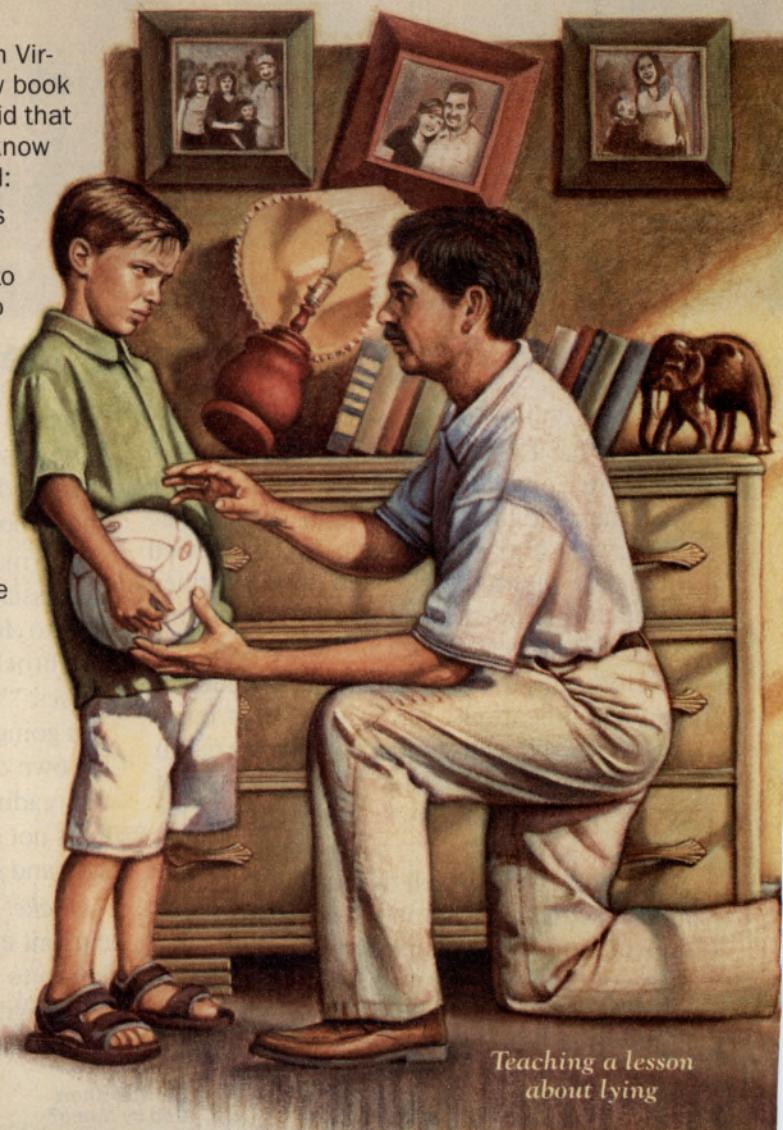


"IT HAS CHANGED ME A LOT"

That is what a 12-year-old boy from Virginia, U.S.A., wrote regarding the new book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. He said that it taught him some things he didn't know and had never heard of. He explained:

"Learn From the Great Teacher has taught me always to love God, to talk about him to everybody, and to talk to him in prayer. It has also taught me to ask God for help and protection. I learned that anyone who loves God and does what God commands will be in Paradise."

"It has changed me a lot. I used to lie all the time, but when I started reading this book, I stopped lying. The things I have learned from this book gave me the desire to read more books like it. So I would be glad to read and find out more about God."



Teaching a lesson
about lying

