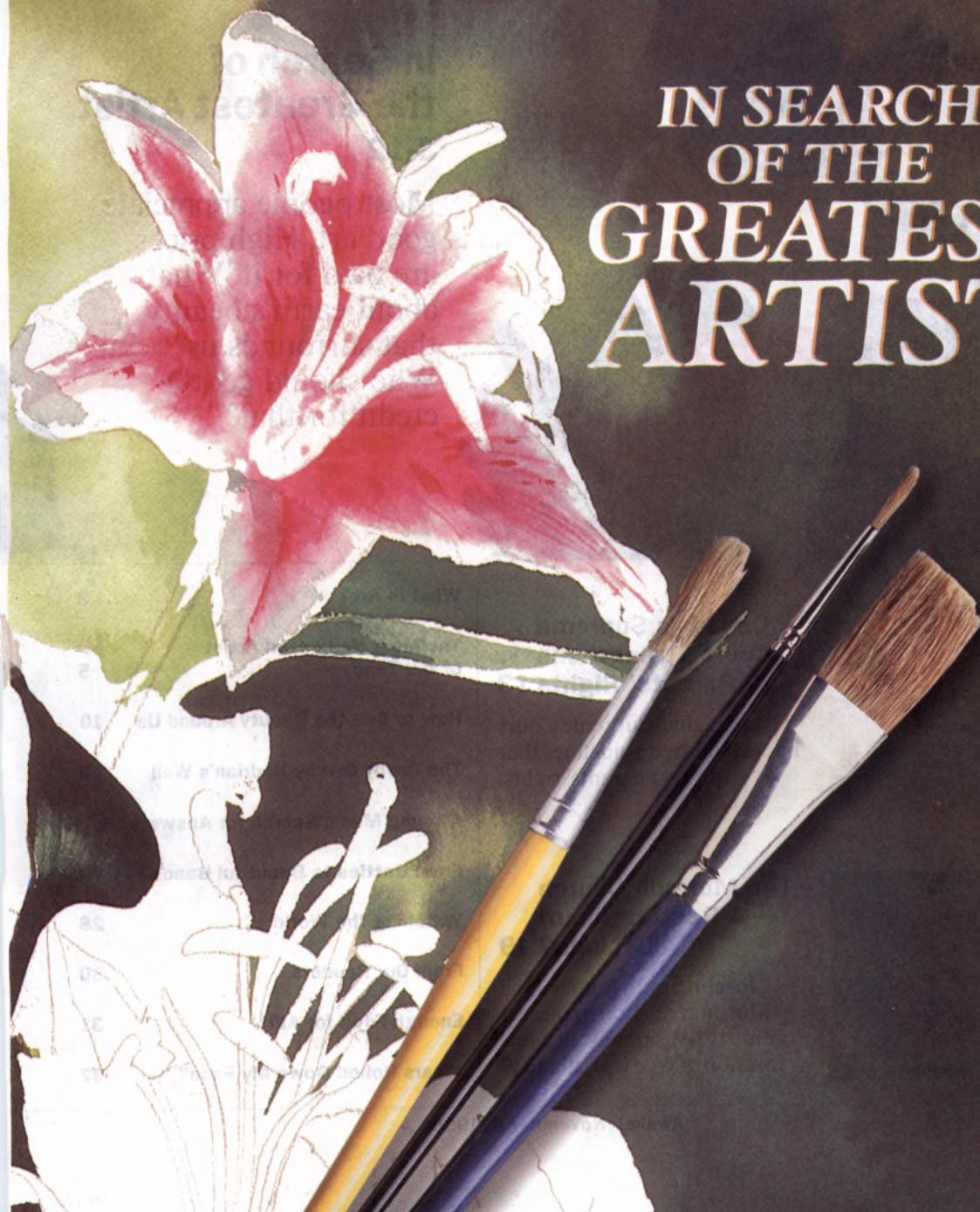


Awake!

November 8, 1995

IN SEARCH
OF THE
GREATEST
ARTIST



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Most people appreciate good art. High prices are paid for it. What about earth's beauty that surrounds us? Who should get the credit for that?



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BY A WAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

WHAT IS ART?



Musei Capitolini, Roma

WHAT is the most beautiful sight you have ever seen? Was it a tropical sunset, a snowcapped mountain range, a profusion of blossoms in the desert, the glorious colors of a forest in the fall of the year?

Most of us cherish some special moment when we were captivated by the earth's beauty. If we can, we like to spend our vacations in paradisaic surroundings, and we try to capture the most memorable sights on film.

The next time you gaze at this unspoiled grandeur, there are questions you might consider. Wouldn't you feel something was missing if every painting in an art gallery were marked "Anonymous"? If you were

deeply moved by the quality and beauty of the paintings in an exhibition, wouldn't you want to know who the artist was? Should we be satisfied with the contemplation of earth's beauteous wonders and yet ignore the Artist who created them?

True, there are those who claim that there is no such thing as art in nature—that art requires human creative skill and interpretation. Such a definition of art, however, is perhaps too narrow. What exactly is art?

Defining Art

A definition of art that will satisfy everybody is probably impossible. But as good an explanation as any is found in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, which says that art is "the conscious use of skill

and creative imagination esp[ecially] in the production of aesthetic objects." On this basis we can say that an artist needs to have both skill and creative imagination. When he puts these two aptitudes to work, he can produce something that others will find pleasing or attractive.

Are expressions of skill and imagination limited to human works of art? Or are they also manifest in the natural world around us?

The lofty California redwoods, the extensive coral reefs of the Pacific, the mighty waterfalls of the rain forest, and the magnificent herds of the African savanna are, in different ways, more valuable to mankind than the "Mona Lisa." For that reason, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has designated Redwood National Park, U.S.A.; Iguaçú Falls, Argentina/Brazil; the Great Barrier Reef, Australia; and Serengeti National Park, Tanzania, as part of mankind's "World Heritage."

These natural treasures are included alongside man-made monuments. Why? The aim is to preserve whatever has "exceptional universal value." UNESCO argues that whether the beauty be that of the Taj Mahal, India, or the Grand Canyon, U.S.A., it deserves protection for the sake of future generations.

But you need not travel to a national park in order to observe creative skill. A

supreme example is your own body. The sculptors of ancient Greece viewed the human form as the epitome of artistic excellence, and they strove to represent it as perfectly as possible. With our present knowledge of the workings of the body, we can appreciate even more the consummate ability required for its creation and design.

What about creative imagination? Look at the exquisite patterns on the quivering train of the peacock, the delicate bloom of a rose, or the high-speed ballet of a glittering hummingbird. Surely, such artistry was art, even before it was captured on canvas or on film. A *National Geographic* writer, intrigued by the lavender filaments of the tacca lily, asked a young scientist what their purpose was. His simple answer: "They reveal the imagination of God."

Not only do skill and creative imagination abound in the natural world but they have been a constant source of inspiration to human artists. Auguste Rodin, the famous French sculptor, said: "The artist is the *confidant* of nature. Flowers carry on dialogues with him through the graceful bending of their stems and the harmoniously tinted nuances of their blossoms."

Some artists openly recognized their limitations when trying to emulate natural beauty. "The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection," confessed Michelangelo, considered one of the greatest artists of all time.

Awake!

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Scientists, as well as artists, may be overwhelmed by the beauty of the natural world. A professor of mathematical physics, Paul Davies, in his book *The Mind of God*, explains that "even hard-nosed atheists frequently have what has been called a sense of reverence for nature, a fascination and respect for its depth and beauty and subtlety, that is akin to religious awe." What should this teach us?

The Artist Behind the Artistry

An art student learns about the artist in order to understand and appreciate his art. He or she realizes that the artist's work is a reflection of the individual. Nature's art also reflects the personality of na-

ture's originator, Almighty God. "His invisible qualities are clearly seen . . . by the things made," explained the apostle Paul. (Romans 1:20) What is more, the earth's Maker is by no means anonymous. As Paul told the Athenian philosophers of his day, "[God] is not far off from each one of us." —Acts 17:27.

The artwork in God's creation is not purposeless or accidental. Apart from enriching our lives, it reveals the skills, imagination, and grandeur of the greatest Artist, the Universal Designer, Jehovah God. The following article will consider how this art can help us to get to know the Supreme Artist better.

THE MOST NEGLECTED ARTIST OF OUR TIME

"Nature is the art of God."—Sir Thomas Browne,
17th-century physician.



LEONARDO DA VINCI, Rembrandt, van Gogh—these are names known to millions. Even though you may never have seen one of their original paintings, you know these men as great artists. Their art has, in a sense, immortalized them.

They captured on canvas an enigmatic smile, a penetrating portrait, a glimpse of the beauty in creation, which still touches the imagination of the onlooker. We are captivated by what captivated them—even though centuries may separate us.

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We may be neither artists nor art critics, but we can still discern artistic excellence. Like the artist whose work we admire, we also possess a sense of beauty. Our sensitivity to color, form, patterns, and light may be something we take for granted, but it is part of our lives. No doubt we like to decorate our homes with objects or paintings that please the eye. Although tastes vary, this sensitivity to beauty is a gift shared by most of humankind. And it is a gift that can draw us closer to our Creator.

The Gift of Beauty

A sense of beauty is one of the many attributes that distinguish mankind from the animals. The work *Summa Artis—Historia General del Arte* (Comprehensive Treatise of Art—A General History of Art) points out that "man could be defined as the animal that has an aesthetic capacity." Because we are different from the animals, we see creation in a different light. Does a dog appreciate a beautiful sunset?

Who made us that way? The Bible explains that "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him." (Genesis 1:27) Not that our first parents looked like God. Rather, God endowed them with attributes he himself possesses. One of these is an ability to appreciate beauty.

By some unfathomable process, the human brain perceives beauty. First of all, our senses convey to the brain information regarding the sounds, smells, colors, and shapes of objects that attract our attention. But beauty is much more than the sum of those electrochemical impulses, which merely tell us what is going on around us. We do not see a tree, a flower, or a bird in the same way an animal does. Although these objects may offer us no immediate practical benefit, they give us pleasure just the same.

Our brain enables us to discern their aesthetic value.

This capacity touches our emotions and enriches our lives. Mary, who lives in Spain, vividly recalls one November evening several years ago when she stood beside a remote lake and watched the sunset. "Flying toward me came wave after wave of cranes calling to each other," she says. "Thousands of birds were strung out across the crimson sky in spidery patterns. Their annual migratory journey from Russia and Scandinavia had brought them to this Spanish resting-place. The experience was so beautiful that it made me cry."

Why the Gift of Beauty?

For many people the sense of beauty clearly points to the existence of a loving Creator, who wants his intelligent creation to enjoy his artistry. How logical and satisfying it is to attribute our sense of beauty to a loving Creator. The Bible explains that "God is love," and the essence of love is sharing. (1 John 4:8; Acts 20:35) Jehovah has taken delight in sharing his creative art with us. If a musical masterpiece were never heard or a magnificent painting never seen, their beauty would be lost. Art is created to be shared and enjoyed—it is sterile without an audience.

Yes, Jehovah created beautiful things for a purpose—to be shared and enjoyed. In fact, our first parents' home was an extensive paradise park called Eden—which means "Pleasure." God has not only filled the earth with his artistry but he has also given mankind the ability to notice and appreciate it. And what a wealth of beauty there is to behold! As Paul Davies observed, "sometimes it seems as if nature were 'going out of its way' to produce an interesting and fruitful universe." We find the universe interesting and fruitful precisely because Jehovah has 'gone out of his way' to create us with the capacity to study and enjoy it.

We Need to Know Who Put Us Here

Bible translator Ronald Knox was once engaged in a theological discussion with scientist John Scott Haldane. "In a universe containing millions of planets," reasoned Haldane, "is it not inevitable that life should appear on at least one of them?"

"Sir," replied Knox, "if Scotland Yard found a body in your cabin trunk, would you tell them: 'There are millions of trunks in the world—surely one of them must contain a body?' I think they would still want to know who put it there."—*The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes*.

Apart from satisfying our curiosity, there is another reason why we ought to know who put us here—so we can give Him the due credit. How would a talented artist react if an arrogant critic described his work as nothing better than an accident in a paint shop? Likewise, what greater snub could we give the Creator of the universe than to ascribe his artistry to blind chance?

Not surprisingly, the recognition of natural beauty—and the desire to emulate it—is common to all cultures, from cave artists to Impressionists. Thousands of years ago, inhabitants of northern Spain painted graphic animal portraits in the caves of Altamira, Cantabria. Over a century ago, Impressionist painters got out of their studios and tried to capture the flashes of color in a field of flowers or the changing patterns of light on the water. Even young children are keenly aware of pretty things. In fact, most of them when given crayons and paper love to draw whatever they see that captures their imagination.

Nowadays, many adults prefer to take a photo in order to recall a beautiful sight that impressed them. But even without a camera, our minds are capable of recalling images of beauty we may have seen decades



Courtesy of ROE/Anglo-Australian Observatory, photograph by David Malin

ago. Clearly, God has made us with the capacity to enjoy our earthly home, which he has decorated exquisitely. (Psalm 115:16) There is another reason, however, why God gave us our sense of beauty.

'His Qualities Are Clearly Seen'

Deepening our appreciation for the artistry in nature can help us get to know our Creator, whose handiwork surrounds us. On one occasion Jesus told his disciples to take a close look at the wildflowers growing around Galilee. "Take a lesson from the lilies of the field," he said, "how they are growing; they do not toil, nor do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." (Matthew 6:28, 29) The beauty of an insignificant wildflower can serve to remind us that God is not indifferent to the needs of the human family.

Jesus also said that you can judge a person



Cranes in flight

Cave paintings in Altamira, Spain

by his "fruits," or works. (Matthew 7:16-20) Thus, it is only to be expected that God's artwork would offer us an insight into his personality. What are some of 'his qualities that can be clearly seen from the world's creation onward'?—Romans 1:20.

"How many your works are, O Jehovah!" exclaimed the psalmist. "All of them in wisdom you have made." (Psalm 104:24) *God's wisdom* can even be discerned in the colors he has used to "paint" earth's flora and fauna. "Color gives much pleasure to the spirit and the eyes," point out Fabris and Germani in their book *Colore, Disegno ed estetica nell'arte grafica* (Color—Design and Aesthetics in Graphic Art). Harmonious and contrasting colors, which delight the eye and uplift the spirit, are everywhere. But perhaps the most eye-catching are those color effects produced by iridescence—lustrous rainbowlike colors—a striking testimony to wise design.

Iridescent colors are especially common in hummingbirds.* What makes their plumage so dazzling? The top third of their

* Many butterflies, such as the brilliant blue morphos of tropical America, have iridescent scales on their wings.

unique feathers breaks up the sunlight into distinct rainbowlike colors—somewhat like a prism does. Common names of hummingbirds, such as ruby, sapphire, and emerald, aptly testify to the glittering reds, blues, and greens that adorn these jewellike birds. "What is the purpose of the magnificent loveliness of these exquisite creatures?" asks Sara Godwin in her book *Hummingbirds*. "As far as science can determine, it has no purpose on earth except to dazzle the beholder," she replies. Certainly, no human artist ever wielded such a palette!

We can perceive *God's power* in a thundering waterfall, the turning tides, the pounding surf, or the towering trees of a forest swaying in a gale-force wind. This dynamic artistry can be just as impressive as a tranquil scene. Famous American naturalist John Muir once described the effect of a storm on a group of Douglas firs in the Sierra Nevada of California:

"Though comparatively young, they were about 100 feet high, and their lithe, brushy tops were rocking and swirling in wild ecstasy. . . . The slender tops fairly flapped and swished in the passionate torrent, bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round, tracing indescribable combinations of vertical and horizontal curves." As the psalmist wrote thousands of years ago, 'the tempestuous wind praises Jehovah'—it gives us a sample of his extraordinary power.—Psalm 148:7, 8.

A bird has long been the symbol of love for the Japanese. It is the beautiful Japanese crane, whose elaborate courtship dances are as graceful as any ballet. These avian performers are so prized that they have been classified in Japan as a "special natural monument." Since cranes pair up for life and may live for 50 years or more, the Japanese consider them the epitome of marital fidelity.

What of *God's love*? Interestingly, the Bi-

ble compares Jehovah's loving protection of his loyal ones to that of a parent bird using its wings to shelter its young from the elements. Deuteronomy 32:11 speaks of the eagle that "stirs up its nest, hovers over its fledglings, spreads out its wings, takes them, carries them on its pinions." The parent eagle does these things to encourage the young to leave the nest and fly. Though seldom seen, there are reported cases of eagles helping their young by carrying them on their wings.—Psalm 17:8.

As we take a closer look at the natural world around us, we notice certain principles at work that also reveal aspects of God's personality.

Variety Is the Spice of Life

Diversity in God's handiwork is something immediately apparent. The variety

Dolphins, hummingbirds, and waterfalls all reveal aspects of the Great Artist's personality



of plants, birds, animals, and insects is astounding. Just two and a half acres of tropical forest may contain 300 different species of trees and 41,000 species of insects; one square mile may harbor 1,500 kinds of butterflies; and a single tree can be home to 150 species of beetles! And just as there are no two people exactly alike, the same could be said of oak trees or tigers. Originality, a quality esteemed among human artists, is an intrinsic part of nature.

Of course, we have just touched briefly on a few aspects of nature's art. By observing it more closely, we can discern many other facets of God's personality. But to do so, we need to put to work our God-given artistic sensitivity. How can we learn to appreciate better the art of the greatest Artist?

G. C. Kelley,
Tucson, AZ

HOW TO SEE THE BEAUTY AROUND US

"In all languages, one of our earliest expressions is 'let me see!'"—William White, Jr.

THE little child who stares at the fluttering butterfly, the elderly couple who gaze at a glorious sunset, the housewife who admires her display of roses—all are momentarily focusing their attention on beauty.

Since the beauty of God's creation is ev-

erywhere, it isn't necessary to travel hundreds of miles to behold it. Awe-inspiring scenery may be distant, but impressive art can be found in your neighborhood if you look for it and—more important—if you know how to look for it.

It has often been noted that "beauty is

Godo-Foto



Examples of pattern and form, light, color, and composition

in the eye of the beholder." However, although the beauty is there, not everyone will spot it. It may take a painting or a photograph to make us sit up and take notice. In fact, many artists believe that their success depends more on their ability to see than to draw. The book *The Painter's Eye*, by Maurice Grosser, explains that "the painter draws with his eyes, not with his hands. Whatever he sees, if he sees it *clear*, he can put down. . . . Seeing *clear* is the important thing."

Whether we are artists or not, we can learn to see more clearly, to notice the beauty around us. In other words, we need to go out and look at things in a new light.

In this regard John Barrett, a writer on natural history, emphasizes the value of personal involvement. "Nothing replaces seeing for oneself, touching, smelling and listening to living animals and plants with all the forces of nature acting upon them," he says. "Let the beauty sink in . . . Wherever one may be, first look, enjoy and look again."

But what should we look for? We could start by learning to notice the four basic elements of beauty. These elements can be discerned in almost every facet of Jehovah's creation. The more often we pause to observe them, the more we will enjoy his art.

Isolating the Elements of Beauty

Forms and Patterns. We live in a world of multiple forms. Some are linear like the columns of a clump of bamboo or geometric like a spider's web, whereas others are shapeless like a cloud that changes constantly. Many forms are attractive, whether they be an exotic orchid, the spirals of a seashell, or even the branches of a tree that has shed its leaves.

When the same form is repeated, it creates a pattern that may also be visually

appealing. For example, imagine a stand of tree trunks in a forest. Their forms—each one different, yet similar—create a pleasing pattern. But to discern the forms and the pattern they create, there must be light.

Light. The distribution of light gives a special quality to the forms we find attractive. Details are highlighted, the texture is colored, and a mood is created. Light varies according to the time of day, the season of the year, the weather, and even the place where we live. A cloudy day with its diffused light is ideal for appreciating the subtle tones of wildflowers or autumn leaves, whereas the crags and peaks of a mountain range show off their dramatic forms when sculptured by the rising or setting sun. The soft, wintry sunlight of the Northern Hemisphere lends romance to a pastoral landscape. On the other hand, the bright sun of the Tropics converts the shallow sea into a transparent wonderland for snorkelers.

But there is still an important element missing.

Color. It gives life to the different objects we see around us. While their form may distinguish them, their color highlights their uniqueness. Furthermore, the distribution of color in harmonious patterns creates its own beauty. It may be a vibrant color like red or orange that cries out for our attention, or a relaxing color like blue or green.

Imagine a patch of yellow flowers in a glade. The light catches the yellow blossoms, which seem to glow in the morning air, while dark tree trunks fringed by the morning sun form a perfect backdrop. Now we have a picture. All we need to do is "frame" it, which is where composition comes in.

Composition. The way in which the three basic elements—form, light, and color—combine determines the composition. And

here we, as observers, have a crucial role to play. Just by moving slightly forward, backward, to one side, higher, or lower, we can adjust the elements or the lighting in our picture. We can thus crop the picture to include only the elements that we desire.

Often, we automatically compose a picture when we come across a magnificent view that is framed by nearby trees or vegetation. But many exquisite pictures, on a smaller scale, may be underneath our feet.

Noticing the Small and the Great

In God's handiwork both big and small are beautiful, and our pleasure will be multiplied if we learn to see the details, which also combine pleasingly. They form miniature paintings that are scattered across nature's large canvas. To appreciate them, all we need to do is stoop down and take a closer look.

These pictures within a picture are described by photographer John Shaw in his book *Closeups in Nature*: "It never ceases to amaze me that a close view of a natural detail always invites an even closer view. . . . First we see the great vista, then a patch of color in one corner of the frame. A closer look reveals flowers and, on one flower, a butterfly. Its wings reveal a distinct pattern, the pattern is produced by a precise arrangement of wing scales, and each scale is perfect in and of itself. If we could truly understand the perfection that makes up that one butterfly wing scale, we could conceivably start to understand the perfection of the scheme that is nature."

Apart from the aesthetic pleasure it gives us, nature's art—both large and small—can draw us closer to our Creator. "Raise your eyes high up and see," exhorted Jehovah. By stopping to see, to gaze, and to wonder, whether we fix our sights on the starry heavens or any other of God's creations, we

are reminded of the One "who has created these things."—Isaiah 40:26.

Men Who Learned to See

In Bible times servants of God took a special interest in creation. According to 1 Kings 4:30, 33, "Solomon's wisdom was vaster than the wisdom of all the Orientals . . . He would speak about the trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that is coming forth on the wall; and he would speak about the beasts and about the flying creatures and about the moving things and about the fishes."

Perhaps Solomon's interest in the glories of creation was partly due to his father's example. David, who spent many of his formative years as a shepherd, often meditated on God's handiwork. The beauty of the heavens particularly impressed him. At Psalm 19:1, he wrote: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling." (Compare Psalm 139:14.) Evidently, his contact with creation drew him closer to his God. It can do the same for us.*

As these godly men knew, recognizing and appreciating God's handiwork uplifts the spirit and enriches our lives. In our modern world plagued with prepackaged entertainment that is often debasing, taking note of Jehovah's creation can provide a wholesome activity for ourselves and our families. For those who yearn for God's promised new world, it is a pastime with a future.—Isaiah 35:1, 2.

When we not only see the art around us but also discern the qualities of the Master Artist who made it all, we will doubtless be moved to echo David's words: "There is none like you . . . , O Jehovah, neither are there any works like yours."—Psalm 86:8.

* Other Bible writers, such as Agur and Jeremiah, were also keen observers of natural history.—Proverbs 30:24-28; Jeremiah 8:7.



BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN CANADA

Canada's Supreme Court Strengthens Parents' Rights

WHEN your child faces serious medical problems, as loving parents you naturally feel concern and anxiety. How reassuring and comforting it is for you when responsible, compassionate doctors respect your choice of treatment! However, situations arise where arbitrary action is taken and parents' wishes are ignored. Very often this leads to a traumatic experience.

In Canada child-welfare statutes authorize state officials to apprehend children. Four provinces permit the state to override parental choices without a judicial hearing. This presents issues important to all parents and children. What area of decision-making belongs to the parents? If the state elects to intervene in parental decision-making, what procedure should be adopted to provide parents and children with fundamental justice? Does the Constitution protect parental decision-making?

An article appeared in *The Toronto Star* of

March 3, 1995, which summarized these issues as they related to a case involving a premature baby girl born in 1983. Her parents were Jehovah's Witnesses. "[They] would accept most medical treatment but objected to blood transfusions. The doctors asked for a court order. The judge gave the Children's Aid Society control. No blood was given to the baby until three weeks later, and then only in preparation for an elective eye examination and possible eye surgery. The parents objected all the way to the Supreme Court."

A judgment was delivered on January 27, 1995, and while the Supreme Court did not overturn what had been done in 1983, five of the nine justices set out guidelines to prevent the abuse of state authority. The Court decision strengthens the rights of parents to make medical decisions for their children.

In particular, the Court considered parental decision-making in the light of

freedom of religion guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Gerard La Forest, for the majority, stated: "The right of parents to rear their children according to their religious beliefs, including that of choosing medical and other treatments, is an equally fundamental aspect of freedom of religion."

This is the first time Canada's highest court has ruled that freedom of religion under the *Charter* includes the right of parents to choose medical treatment for their children. Justice La Forest crystallized this principle when he stated: "This is not to say that the state cannot intervene when it considers it necessary to safeguard the child's autonomy or health. But such intervention must be justified. In other words, parental decision-making must receive the protection of the *Charter* in order for state interference to be properly monitored by the courts, and be permitted only when it conforms to the values underlying the *Charter*."

Justice La Forest underscored the need to justify interference with parental decision-making when he responded to remarks made by two of his fellow justices: "Some of their remarks may be understood as supporting a parent's rights being overturned simply because a professional thinks it is necessary to do so. I would be very much concerned if a medical professional were able to override the parent's views without demonstrating that necessity."

Parental decision-making as to medical treatment was identified as a constitutional right under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Thus, a strong message was sent out to child health-care officials and judges. They must act with caution and proper respect for parents' rights. Responsible doctors will also welcome these guidelines in that they support parental choice of

reasonable alternatives, including nonblood medical treatment for children.

In view of the current debate about blood transfusions and their known risks, including AIDS, one can appreciate the comment of Justice La Forest when he added: "The concern voiced by the appellants in the present appeal raises the more general question of the appropriateness of proceeding with treatments for which the medical benefits are highly questionable . . . However, the medical evidence presented in 1983 . . . does not permit us to question the necessity of the blood transfusion, *although some might in retrospect be tempted to do so*. This appeal does remind us, however, of the necessity of proceeding with care when overriding parental refusal."—Italics ours.

The article in *The Toronto Star* mentioned earlier concluded: "What has been achieved by the Supreme Court decision? First, doctors, parents, social workers and judges now have guidelines for when there is a difference of opinion between parents and doctors. Second, the emphasis on medical alternatives should open the doors to more flexibility on the question of transfusion medicine at a time when more and more non-blood alternatives are being developed and made available. Third, when a decision is made to seek reversal of the parents' decision, there must be a fair hearing in court with the onus on the state and doctors to prove the necessity of the proposed intervention."

Medical practitioners, judges, and parents in other lands will no doubt find helpful and constructive the guidelines set out by the majority in the decision of the Canadian Supreme Court. It is hoped that medical practitioners everywhere will continue to provide medical care in a sensitive and compassionate manner with concern for the rights of both children and parents.

THE TAWNY OWL BY HADRIAN'S WALL

BY A WAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN BRITAIN

A THIN trail of mist hung at treetop level as a crescendo of delightful melody broke the stillness of the dawn. Summer migrants had just arrived in the north of England to add their songs to those of the resident blackbirds and thrushes.



Courtesy of English Heritage

I followed a peat-stained stream wending its way between banks studded with primroses and wood violets toward the ancestral home of the tawny owl by Hadrian's Wall.* I knew that about a mile farther upstream, she would be close to the trunk of an old elm tree, keeping watch over her four young chicks. They would be snug and safe in the hollow stump of a dead ash tree.

The owl—what a marvel of creation! Its eyesight at night is a hundred times more acute than that of humans. Even in the diffused light from the moon, an owl is able to capture its prey. Human eyes have cells called cones that separate colors and cells called rods that gather light, but the owl's eyes are packed tight with rods that contain a chemical known as visual purple. This converts the faintest glimmer of light into a chemical signal that gives the bird a sight impression, whereas humans see just the presence of light.

Owls cannot rotate their eyes in their sockets as most creatures can. Each eye is fixed like a car headlight. To compensate, the owl—thanks to an amazingly flex-

ible neck—is able to rotate its head at least 270 degrees to see in all directions!

It has been said that from its perch 50 feet up in a tree, an owl is capable of not only seeing a mouse but also hearing it rustling in the grass. Its amazing ability to hear comes from the design of its ears. If you look at the face of an owl, you will see that it is ringed by stiff curved feathers that collect and reflect sound waves to the ears, bouncing the sound onto the largest ear-drums in the avian world. The ears are set one slightly higher than the other, allowing the owl to pinpoint sound accurately.

Once the owl has located its prey—whether by sight or sound—it will swoop silently. The owl's body is covered with feathers so soft that all sound is muffled. Even the wing feathers have downy edges to eliminate whir when in flight. On a dark night, countryfolk have at times been frightened by the glowing form of an owl swooping low along the road. Unknown to them the owl can glow with a phosphorescence rubbed onto its feathers from luminescent fungi that grow on the rotting wood of its nest.

I continued to move upstream and soon came upon the gnarled old tree stump. The warmth of the morning had brought one of the young birds to the hollow's entrance to bask in the slanting rays of the sun as they filtered through the leafy canopy above. There he sat, blinking his eyes in the breaking sunlight—a delightful sight!

Hidden somewhere in the branches above, the old tawny owl was perched with her mate, surveying all before her through half-closed eyes. I knew she would carefully watch over her young until they could fend for themselves with the instinctive wisdom given them by their Grand Creator.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Will Being God's Friend Help Me?

Where Eagles Fly in for Fish Dinners

**Glass—Its First Makers
Lived Long, Long Ago**



A Young Man's Search for Answers

THE morning sun shone brightly, filtering down through the trees to a boy kneeling in fervent prayer. Fourteen-year-old Joseph was confused by the religious tumult of his time. Traditional churches were racked with division. New sects were everywhere. Which group should he join? On bended knee he asked: "Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?"

Thus Joseph Smith described his early spiritual crisis. Little wonder he was confused. This was rural northeastern America in the early 19th century, a region ablaze with religious fervor.* Hope was sorely needed. Many farmers struggled with a life as hard as the rocky soil they plowed. Yearning for something better, they were tantalized by tales of buried Indian treasure. So they combed the hills, armed with magic seer stones, incantations, and divining rods. Local legends told of a great Indian civilization that perished in a terrible battle somewhere in New York State.

Popular preachers of the day fanned the fires of speculation, saying that the American Indians were descended from the lost

ten tribes of Israel. In 1823, for example, Ethan Smith wrote the book *View of the Hebrews; or the Tribes of Israel in America*.

Golden Plates and a Prophet

Raised in this fertile climate of folklore and religious ardor was young Joseph Smith. His family too was caught up in the excitement. Joseph's mother wrote of their experiencing healings, miracles, and visions. But when she and some of the children joined a church, Joseph refused to follow. Later, in his life story, he wrote of his prayer for help and the answer he received.

Joseph told of a vision in which God forbade him to join any of the sects because they were all in error. Then, one autumn day in 1823, the 17-year-old Smith told his family that an angel named Moroni had shown him a set of ancient golden plates. Four years later he claimed he was given the plates and the exclusive divine power to translate them, which required using a special stone called "a seer stone" and a pair of magic silver spectacles—two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass. It meant instant death for others to see the plates at that time, Smith warned.

Smith, who could read but not write well, dictated the "translation" of the plates to several scribes. Sitting behind a curtain, he related a story said to be compiled by a Hebrew

* Historians later dubbed this area in western New York State the burned-over district because of the waves of short-lived religious revivals that swept the region during the early 1800's.

Photo: Courtesy Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints/*Dictionary of American Portraits*/Dover

man named Mormon. The plates were inscribed in "reformed Egyptian" writing, Smith explained, which was more compact than Hebrew. Mormon and his son Moroni were described as being among the last survivors of a people called the Nephite nation, fair-skinned descendants of Hebrews said to have migrated to America about 600 B.C.E. to escape Jerusalem's destruction.

The account relates that Jesus had appeared to this nation in America after his death and resurrection and had chosen 12 Nephite apostles. The Lamanites, a people also of Hebrew descent, were rebellious and warlike and so were cursed by God with dark skin. Mormon's account principally chronicled the ongoing battles between these two nations. The Nephites grew wicked and eventually were annihilated by the Lamanites, who were ancestors of the American Indians.

According to Smith, Mormon's son, now the spirit Moroni, had given him the record on golden plates and the commission leading to the restoration of Christ's church. Smith soon had a following. A prosperous believer financed the publishing of Smith's manuscript called *The Book of Mormon*. It appeared in print in the spring of 1830. Two weeks later, Joseph Smith announced his official title: "Seer, a Translator, a Prophet, an Apostle of Jesus Christ." On April 6, 1830, the Mormon Church, or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was born.*

Smith had a commanding presence that won the devotion of many converts. But his unconventional religion also made enemies. The fledgling church was hounded; its members fled from New York to Ohio and then to Missouri in search of its New Jerusalem.

* Originally named The Church of Christ, on April 26, 1838, it became The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or LDS. Though LDS is the designation preferred by members, the name Mormon (derived from *The Book of Mormon*) is also used in this series of articles, since it is the more familiar term to many readers.

As prophet, Smith uttered revelation after revelation, pronouncing God's will on matters ranging from financial donations to a divine mandate to take multiple wives. This latter revelation particularly spawned much persecution. Faced with suspicion and antagonism at every turn, the Mormons took up arms to defend themselves.

The intrigue and turmoil that marked the early years of Joseph Smith's life never abated. Frontier towns, inundated with influxes of Smith's followers, put up stiff resistance. They had use neither for another sacred book nor for a self-proclaimed prophet. Then, in 1839, to the dismay of the local populace, the Mormons established a thriving colony, with its own mills, factory, university, and militia, in Nauvoo, Illinois. When hostilities erupted, Smith was arrested and jailed in Carthage, Illinois. There, on June 27, 1844, a mob raided the jail and shot and killed him.

The Church Survives Its Prophet

The story by no means ends with Joseph Smith's death. Brigham Young, president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, quickly assumed command and led many believers on a perilous journey to the Great Salt Lake valley in Utah, where the Mormon headquarters are to this day.*

The church founded by Joseph Smith continues to attract converts, with, according to LDS sources, some nine million members worldwide. It has spread far beyond its cradle in New York State to places as diverse as Italy, the Philippines, Uruguay, and Zaire. Despite continued antagonism, the remarkable Mormon Church has prospered. Is it, indeed, the restoration of true Christianity for which men of faith have waited?

* There are various groups that have broken away from the LDS, who also call themselves Mormons. Principal among them is the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with headquarters in Independence, Missouri.

The Mormon Church

A Restoration of All Things?

THE Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, is, for the LDS (Latter-day Saints), a proud symbol of their faith. Diligence, family values, and financial self-sufficiency are Mormon watchwords. Mormon missionaries, with their lapel name badges, are a familiar sight around the world. But some inner affairs sacred to the Mormons are hidden from outsiders. So the church remains a target of sensational rumors. A fair evaluation, however, should be based, not on scurrilous tales, but on facts. What can we learn about this much-maligned faith?

Joseph Smith's Church Today

The Mormons believe that their religion is the restoration of the true church with its priesthood and ordinances. Hence, its official name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the Mormon Church, no division exists between clergy and laity. Rather, beginning at the age of 12, every worthy male member may become involved with various duties of the church, achieving priesthood by the age of 16.

The majority of church positions are unsalaried, and LDS families join in the many programs sponsored by their local congregation, or ward. On a congregational level, elders, bishops, and stake (district) presidents oversee the well-organized affairs of the church. A council of 12 apostles in Salt Lake City has worldwide jurisdiction. Ultimately, the president of the church—revered as prophet, seer, and revelator—and two counselors form the church's presiding

authority, called the Quorum of the Presidency, or the First Presidency.

Several ordinances affect the lives of devout Mormons. Baptism, signifying repentance and obedience, may take place upon reaching eight years of age. Washing and anointing purify and consecrate the believer. The temple endowment ceremony involves a series of covenants, or promises, and a special temple undergarment to be worn ever after, as a protection from evil and as a reminder of the vows of secrecy taken. Also, a Mormon couple may seal their marriage in a temple "for time and eternity" so that their family can remain intact in heaven, where the couple may continue to bear children.

The Mormon Church has won acclaim for its welfare program, established so that "the curse of idleness would be done away with." It is financed by local members who give up two meals a month and donate the value of them to the church. In addition, strict tithing of their income is required. Family and friends supply the funds to support Mormon missionaries. These are generally young men and women, who spend about two years in the service.

Self-sacrifice, close families, and civic responsibility are features of Mormon life. But what of Mormon beliefs?

The Mormons and the Bible

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly," states the eighth article of the Mormon

Articles of Faith. But it adds: "We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." Many wonder, though, why the need for other scriptures?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie asserted: "There are no people on earth who hold the Bible in such high esteem as [Mormons] do. . . . But we do not believe . . . the Bible contains all things necessary for salvation." President Gordon B. Hinckley wrote in the pamphlet *What of the Mormons?* that the numerous different sects and churches "bear witness to the inadequacy of the Bible."

LDS writers express profound misgivings about the Bible's reliability because of alleged deletions and translation errors. Mormon apostle James E. Talmage, in his book

A Study of the Articles of Faith, urges: "Let the Bible then be read reverently and with prayerful care, the reader ever seeking the light of the Spirit that he may discern between truth and the errors of men." Orson Pratt, an early Mormon apostle, went further: "Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution?"

On this issue, though, the Mormons do not appear to be aware of all the facts. True, the Bible text has been copied and translated repeatedly over the years. Yet, the evidence of its essential purity is overwhelming. Thousands of early Hebrew and Greek manuscripts have been scrutinized alongside more recent copies of the Bible. For example, the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, dated

Mormon Holy Writings

IN ADDITION to the Bible and *The Book of Mormon*, the Latter-day Saints recognize a number of other writings.

Doctrine and Covenants: This is primarily a collection of what Joseph Smith called revelations from God. These have been revised at times as doctrinal and historical developments dictated.

The Pearl of Great Price: This book contains Joseph Smith's revisions of the Bible book of Genesis, the 24th chapter of Matthew, and Smith's personal history. It also has Smith's translation of a papyrus he purchased in 1835. He declared it to be Abraham's own writing that told how an angel saved him when a priest tried to sacrifice him on an altar. The papyrus was relocated in 1967 and examined by a number of Egyptologists. They found, said one report, that "not a single word of Joseph Smith's alleged translation bore any resemblance to the contents of this document." It turned out to be the *Book of Breathings*, an Egyptian funeral document buried with the dead. Smith's original

manuscript shows that he used 136 English words to translate the Egyptian hieroglyph for "lake."

Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible: In 1830, Smith began a revision of the King James Version of the Bible, which he never completed. He revised some 3,400 verses and added much material, including a prophecy at the end of Genesis about his own coming as "a choice seer." Since the manuscript remained with Smith's widow, who did not follow Brigham Young, the Salt Lake church seldom quotes from it, though it is accepted as correct.

Further "inspired" doctrines: These may be handed down by the church's living prophet at any time and are equal in authority to the Holy Bible. The King Follett discourse presented in 1844 is one example. Smith gave this funeral sermon for Elder King Follett in which he explained the doctrine of deified man and humanized God. It appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, a collection of lectures by Smith, Young, and other 19th-century Mormon authorities.

The Mormon Family of Gods

God: Father of all Gods, he has a flesh-and-bone body.—*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22.

Elohim: Sometimes referred to as an individual. Also described as a council of Gods who organized the earth.—*Doctrine and Covenants* 121:32; *The Pearl of Great Price*, Abraham 4:1; *Journal of Discourses*, Volume I, page 51.

Jesus: God and Creator of the whole earth, the Savior.—3 Nephi 9:15; 11:14.

Jehovah: The Old Testament name for Jesus.—Compare *Mormon* 3:22; *Moroni* 10:34; and *Book of Mormon* index.

Trinity: The Godhead of three separate, distinct spirit personages, Father and Son, of

flesh and bone, and Holy Ghost.—*Alma* 11:44; 3 Nephi 11:27.

Adam: Jesus' helper in the creation. Brigham Young stated: "Our father Adam came into the garden of Eden . . . and brought Eve, one of his wives. . . . He is our Father and our God." (*Journal of Discourses*, Volume I, page 50, 1854 Edition) After his sin, Adam became earth's first Christian. (*The Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 6:64-66; *Ensign*, January 1994, page 11) He is "the Ancient of days" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 116) and is the literal physical Father of Jesus.—*Journal of Discourses*, Volume I, page 51.

Michael: Another name for Adam, the archangel.—*Doctrine and Covenants* 107:54.

from the second century B.C.E., was compared with a manuscript dated over a thousand years later. Had serious corruptions crept in? On the contrary, one scholar's analysis stated that the few discrepancies found "consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling."^{*}

After a lifetime of intense study, former British Museum director Sir Frederic Kenyon testified: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries." Thus, the psalmist's words are still true today: "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (*Psalm 12:6, King James Version*) Do we really need more?

"Thou fool," reproaches *The Book of Mormon* at 2 Nephi 29:6, "that shall say: A Bible,

we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible." Many Mormons, however, have pondered the apostle Paul's stern words in the Bible at Galatians 1:8 (KJ): "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

LDS scholars explain that the new scripture is *not* beyond what is declared in the Bible but is only a clarification and complement thereof. "There is no tension between the two," writes Rex E. Lee, president of Brigham Young University. "Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon teach the same plan of salvation." Is there agreement between these books? Consider the Mormon plan of salvation.

"As God Now Is, Man May Become"

"Though we do not remember it," explains Lee, "we existed as spirits before this life." According to this LDS belief of eternal progression, by strict obedience a man may become a god—a creator like God. "God himself was once as we are now, and is an

* For further information see *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

exalted Man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens," stated Joseph Smith. "You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, . . . the same as all Gods have done before you." Mormon prophet Lorenzo Snow said: "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become."

Is such a future presented in the pages of the Bible? The only offer of godhood ever recorded there was the empty promise by Satan the Devil in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:5) The Bible shows that God created Adam and Eve to live on earth and instructed them to produce a perfect human family that would live here in happiness eternally. (Genesis 1:28; 3:22; Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 65:21-25) Adam's willful disobedience brought sin and death into the world.—Romans 5:12.

The Book of Mormon says that had the former spirits Adam and Eve remained sinless, they would have been childless and joyless, alone in Paradise. So its version of the sin of the first married couple involved sexual intercourse and childbearing. "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:22, 23, 25) Spirits in heaven are thus said to await a chance to live on a sinful earth—a necessary step toward perfection and godhood. Says the LDS magazine *Ensign*: "We look upon what Adam and Eve did with great appreciation rather than with disdain."

"This doctrine [that man existed in the spirit creation]," says Joseph Fielding Smith, great-nephew of Joseph Smith, "in the Bible is only discerned through a mist or fog . . . because many plain and precious things have been taken out of the Bible." Further he states: "This belief is based upon a revelation given to the Church, May 6, 1833." Therefore, while accepting the Bible's authority, in case of disagreement LDS doctrine necessarily assigns greater weight to the words of their prophets.

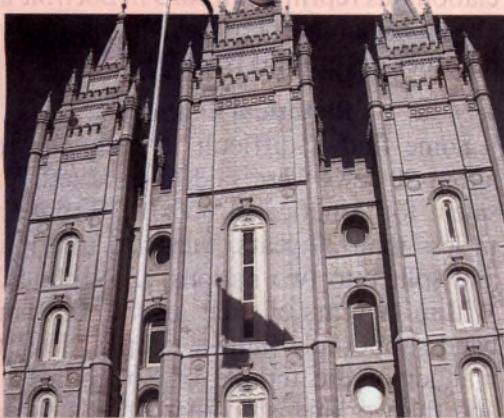
***The Book of Mormon* —Keystone of the Faith**

Joseph Smith lauded *The Book of Mormon* as "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion." One set of golden plates was said to have been the source for his writings. Eleven Mormons testified that they saw the plates. Upon completion of the document, though, Smith said the plates were taken to heaven. Thus, they are not available for textual analysis.

The Pearl of Great Price (see box, page 20) tells of a Professor Charles Anthon who was shown a copy of some of the inscriptions and declared them to be authentic and the translation accurate. But upon being told of the plates' origin, the account says he retracted his verdict. This story appears to be inconsistent, however, with Smith's claim that he alone had the gift to translate the language of the plates, "the knowledge of which was lost to the world." Could Professor Anthon verify as correct a text he could not read and therefore could not translate?

The Book of Mormon quotes extensively from the King James Version of the Bible, with its Shakespearean English, which was already considered archaic in Joseph Smith's day. It has troubled some readers that *The Book of Mormon*, this "most correct" of books, lifts at least 27,000 words directly from the Bible version that is purportedly full of errors and that Smith later undertook to revise.—See box, page 20.

A comparison of the first edition of *The Book of Mormon* with current editions reveals to many Mormons a surprising fact—that the book said to be "translated . . . by the gift and power of God" has itself undergone numerous changes in grammar, spelling, and substance. For instance, there is apparent confusion over the identity of "the Eternal Father." According to the first edition at 1 Nephi 13:40, "the Lamb of God is



The Mormons, Nationalism, and Politics

JOSEPH SMITH—prophet, seer, revelator, according to Mormon belief—was also mayor, treasurer, lieutenant-general, and U.S. presidential candidate. Following his lead, many Mormons are energetic political activists. The church is proud of its American heritage and asserts that God directed the writing of the U.S. Constitution. Brigham Young said: "When . . . the Kingdom of God will bear rule, the flag of the United States will proudly flutter unsullied on the flagstaff of Liberty and equal rights, without a spot."

Article 12 of the Articles of Faith states: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." How far does their subjection go? When the United States entered World War I, Elder Stephen L. Richards affirmed: "There is no more loyal people to the government of the United States than the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints." "When we fight we will conquer by the power of God," said another elder.

Article 12 applied on the other side of the battlefield as well. Professor Christine E. King of Staffordshire University wrote: "German Mormons were encouraged to bear arms for their country and to pray for her victory." The church said they were fighting, not British and

American Mormon brethren, but government representatives. "Such a distinction, although transparent, served to salve the moral and religious doubts of German Mormons."

When Hitler seized power, the Mormon policy of wholehearted support continued. "The Nazis met no resistance or evidence of criticism from the Mormon church," wrote Dr. King. Mormon stress on racial purity and patriotism served the church well, and to many Mormons, "the links between their faith and the politics of the Third Reich were clear." When several Mormons dared to defy Hitler, they received no backing from Mormon officials. "The church was patriotic and loyal and decried any attack on the Nazi government." The church even excommunicated one dissident posthumously after the Nazis had executed him.*

How different from those lauded in *The Book of Mormon* at Alma 26:32: "They had rather sacrifice their lives than even to take the life of their enemy; and they have buried their weapons of war deep in the earth, because of their love towards their brethren."

Jesus reasoned with Pilate: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." (John 18:36, King James Version) His disciples were not to take up arms in defense of God's own Son, let alone in a war between governments. They were even to love their enemies.—Matthew 5:44; 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4.

There are true Christians today who have kept strict neutrality individually and as a group. Said the book *Mothers in the Fatherland*: "Jehovah's Witnesses had since their foundation stood resolutely apart from any state." Therefore, during Hitler's reign of terror, they, "practically to a person, unequivocally refused to render any form of obedience to the Nazi state."

Though thousands of them were martyred, Jehovah's Witnesses took to heart the words of Jesus: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." —John 13:35, KJ.

* Helmut Hübener was reinstated in 1948.

the Eternal Father." But later editions say that "the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father." (Italics ours.) The two original 1830 manuscripts of *The Book of Mormon* still exist. One of the two originals, held by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, has the words "the Son" added between the lines.

As for the Mormon scripture *Doctrine and Covenants*, the book *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, by LDS scholar Lyndon W. Cook, explains in the preface: "Inasmuch as some revelations have been revised by those committees appointed to arrange them for publication, significant textual additions and deletions have been noted." One such alteration is found at *Book of Commandments* 4:2, which said of Smith: "He has a gift to translate the book . . . I will grant him no other gift." But when the rev-

elation was reprinted in 1835 in *Doctrine and Covenants*, it read: "For I will grant unto you no other gift until it is finished."—5:4.

Historical Enigmas

Some find it difficult to reconcile that about 20 Jews were said to have left Jerusalem for America in 600 B.C.E. but that in less than 30 years, they had multiplied and split into two nations! (2 Nephi 5:28) Within 19 years of their arrival, this small band supposedly built a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon . . . , and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine"—a formidable task, indeed! The seven-year construction of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem occupied nearly 200,000 laborers, craftsmen, and overseers.—2 Nephi 5:16; compare 1 Kings 5, 6.

Careful readers of the *Book of Mormon*

The Bible and Mormon Writings—A Study in Contrasts

Bible: Although the exact site is unknown, the garden of Eden was probably in the Mesopotamian region by the Euphrates River.
—Genesis 2:11-14.

Doctrine and Covenants: Garden of Eden was in Jackson County, Missouri, U.S.A.
—*Doctrine and Covenants* 57, as explained by President J. F. Smith.

Bible: The soul dies.—Ezekiel 18:4; Acts 3:23.

The Book of Mormon: "The soul could never die."—Alma 42:9.

Bible: Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
—Matthew 2:1-6.

The Book of Mormon: Jesus was to be born in Jerusalem.—Alma 7:10.

Bible: Jesus was begotten by holy spirit.
—Matthew 1:20.

Journal of Discourses: Jesus was not begotten by holy spirit. He was begotten in the flesh by Adam's having intercourse with

Mary.—*Journal of Discourses*, Volume I, pages 50-1.

Bible: New Jerusalem to be in heaven.
—Revelation 21:2.

The Book of Mormon: New Jerusalem, earthly, to be built by men in Missouri, U.S.A.
—3 Nephi 21:23, 24; *Doctrine and Covenants* 84:3, 4.

Bible: Writers of the Bible were inspired to write God's thoughts.—2 Peter 1:20, 21.

The Book of Mormon: Its prophets are said to have written according to their own knowledge.—1 Nephi 1:2, 3; Jacob 7:26.

Bible: Mosaic Law, including tithing, terminated by the death of Jesus. Contributions are to be voluntary, not under compulsion.—2 Corinthians 9:7; Galatians 3:10-13, 24, 25; Ephesians 2:15.

Doctrine and Covenants: "Verily it is . . . a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned (at his [the Lord's] coming)."—*Doctrine and Covenants* 64:23.

have puzzled over certain events that seem out of proper chronological sequence. For example, Acts 11:26 says: "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (KJ) But Alma 46:15, purportedly describing events in 73 B.C.E., has Christians in America before Christ ever came to earth.

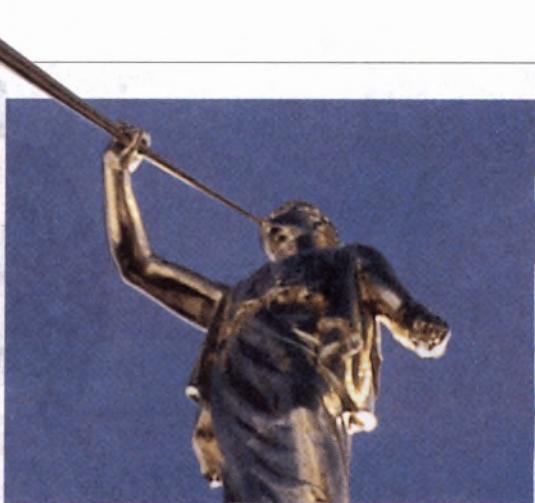
The Book of Mormon presents itself more as a historical narrative than as a doctrinal treatise. The phrase "and it came to pass" occurs about 1,200 times in the current edition—about 2,000 times in the 1830 edition. Many places mentioned in the Bible still exist, yet the locations of virtually all sites named in *The Book of Mormon*, such as Gim-gimno and Zeezrom, are unknown.

The Mormon story tells of vast settlements across the North American continent. Helaman 3:8 reads: "And it came to pass that they did multiply and spread . . . to cover the face of the whole earth." According to Mormon 1:7, the land "had become covered with buildings." Many people wonder where the remains of these sprawling civilizations are. Where are the Nephite artifacts, such as gold coins, swords, shields, or breastplates?—Alma 11:4; 43:18-20.

Considering such questions, members of the Mormon faith do well to reflect seriously on the words of Mormon Rex E. Lee: "The authenticity of Mormonism stands or falls with the book from which the Church derives its nickname." A faith based upon solid Scriptural knowledge, rather than just on an emotional prayer experience, presents a challenge to sincere Mormons—as well as to all claiming to be Christians.

The Basis for Restoration

It was the spiritual chaos around him that caused Joseph Smith to spurn the warring sects of his day. Other reverent men before, during, and since his time have sought to return to the true faith.



**Statue of Moroni atop the
Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City**

What is the pattern for true Christianity? Is it not Christ who set "an example, that ye should follow his steps"? (1 Peter 2:21, KJ) The life of Jesus Christ stands in stark contrast with LDS theology. While Jesus was no ascetic, his simple life was devoid of any ambition to amass wealth, glory, or political power. He was persecuted because he was "not of the world." (John 17:16, KJ) The foremost aim of Christ's ministry was to glorify his Father, Jehovah, and to sanctify His name. The same is true of Jesus' true disciples. They view their own salvation as of secondary importance.

Jesus taught the Word of God, freely quoted from it, and lived it. Brigham Young said of the Bible: "We take this book for our guide, for our rule of action; we take it as the foundation of our faith. It points the way to salvation." (*Journal of Discourses*, Volume XIII, page 236) So he urged: "Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*) Not only the Mormon faith but all religions claiming to be Christian must submit to this test, for Jesus said: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."—John 4:23, KJ.



From Bottles to Beautiful Beads

BY AWAKE! CORRESPONDENT IN NIGERIA

YOU are in a hurry. You reach for a bottle on the table, but it slips from your grasp, falls to the floor, and breaks. You sigh, sweep up the broken pieces, and dump them into the wastebasket. As far as you are concerned, that is the end of the matter.

If you lived in Bida, Nigeria, that might

be just the beginning. Why? Because among the Nupe people who live there, craftsmen can take a broken bottle and make from it a beautiful string of beads. It is an art that has been passed on from generation to generation—one that has changed little over centuries of time.



Firing glass in a kiln

Beadmaking in Bida

The workshop is a small, round hut made of dried mud. In the center of the floor stands an earthenware kiln. Into the kiln, craftsmen drop pieces of wood, which they set ablaze. The fire is fanned to a roar by hand-operated bellows. As more sticks are added, a red flame rises above the top of the kiln. A bottle is suspended on a rod over the kiln, and soon the glass softens and hangs molten.

The beadmaker makes beads one at a time. He lays a pointed rod over the fire next to the rod that suspends the glass. When the pointed end becomes a glowing red, he moves it to the hanging glob of molten glass. Then, by turning the rod with his fingers, he wraps a bead-size portion of glass onto it.

Next, using a long, flat bush knife, he smooths and shapes the glass into a bead. If he is especially skilled, he may work with several colors of glass, overlaying a pattern on each bead he makes. Finally, he uses the knife to gently ease the bead off the rod into a pan of ash where it will cool. The bead is now complete. The hole made by the rod becomes the hole used to string the bead. All that remains is to wash the bead and then thread it with other beads to make a necklace.

Learning the Art

How does one learn the art of beadmaking? Nupe children begin by watching. By the time they reach ten years of age, they help collect and cut the firewood.

The next step is to master the bellows. The bellows are twin bags made of cloth, each of which is connected to a stick. To operate the bellows, the "blower" must hold a stick in each hand and rapidly move them up and down. He needs both strength and coordination. He must be strong enough to constantly pump the bellows throughout the beadmaking session, and a session can last for hours!

He must also be coordinated enough to maintain a rapid, constant rhythm, pumping the bellows at precisely the correct speed. If he pumps too slowly, the heat of the fire will not make the glass soft enough to work with. If he pumps too quickly, the heat produced may cause the glass to fall from the rod into the fire.

Typically, an apprentice beadmaker will handle the bellows for five years. Finally, he learns how to fashion beads. Part of the challenge of this job is to learn to endure the heat from the fire, which, added to the tropical heat of the sun, can be a test.

He learns progressively. After helping an experienced beadmaker with the handling of the rods, the apprentice learns to form small, plain beads. In time, he progresses to making larger beads and beads adorned with an overlaid pattern of glass of another color. Experienced beadmakers make the job look easy, but it takes time to master the skill necessary to produce a series of beads, one bead at a time, all of uniform size, shape, and pattern.

Beadmaking is an enjoyable art. The beadmakers delight in seeing people throughout the country adorned with their colorful beads—tiny beads worn by children, delicately crafted beads worn by women, and heavy ceremonial beads worn by men. There is enjoyment too at festival times when people gather around the workshop to sing and dance to the rhythm of the bellows.

Says the book *History of West Africa*: "Nupe artistic production in . . . glass . . . is still some of the best on the continent." Others agree. Said one Christian missionary: "We bought beads from Bida as well as other places to give to our friends and family when we went on vacation. When we got to the United States, our friends chose the beads from Bida every time!"

WATCHING THE WORLD

Deadly Peace Missions

So far, more than a thousand persons have been killed while engaged in United Nations peacekeeping missions, reports the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. This figure does not include those who lost their lives during UN combat missions, such as in the Gulf War. Of these 1,000 deaths, more than 200 occurred in 1993 alone. Why so many? The paper explained that the United Nations is now getting involved in a different type of war. Whereas in the past the United Nations mediated in and monitored the settlement of conflicts between countries, the organization is now involved in "civil wars, in which the authority of the state disintegrates and even the parties engaged in the war fail to protect the personnel of the UN."

Mental Illness Among Children

According to *The Sunday Times*, in Great Britain's schools, more than 1,000 children below 10 years of age and about 1,200 between 10 and 14 years of age are being treated for psychoses, severe depression, or eating disorders; and the suicide rate is likewise climbing, with children as young as six years of age threatening to take their own lives. Some mental-health experts think that one of the reasons is the lack of meaningful conversation between children and their parents. They note that many children live in a home environment where television dominates. As a result, the children are unable to discuss and share their anxieties

with their parents. One expert observed that lack of communication between parents and children can cause "worries [to] build up and culminate in an unhappy child."

Running the Lights

In Argentina, according to the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín*, there were 7,700 serious automobile accidents during 1994. These accidents left 13,505 people seriously injured and 9,120 dead. A study conducted by a government agency has revealed that 90 percent



of all automobile accidents are caused by driver and pedestrian violations of traffic laws. The most frequent accidents in cities are the lateral collisions that result from running through a red traffic light. Eduardo Bertotti, a government official, noted that while in other countries it is unthinkable to disregard a red traffic light, in Argentina "it is not only a frequent occurrence but there are those who even take pride in doing it."

Teen Violence

For three consecutive years, the United States has experienced a downward trend in the number of reported serious crimes. However, the number of teenagers responsible for crimes

is increasing, especially among youths between 14 and 17 years of age. Some experts predict that violent crime will escalate as the number of teenagers rises. One expert, James Alan Fox, of the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University in Boston, noted that "the number of young people in the United States will climb sharply in the next few years, with 23 percent more teenagers by 2005," reports *The New York Times*. Fox warns that "unless we act now, while our children are still young and impressionable, we may indeed have a blood bath of teen violence by the year 2005."

Unbaptizing the Dead

Recently Jewish Holocaust survivors were shocked to learn that some of their relatives had been baptized as Mormons long after their deaths. *The New York Times* reported on the practice "in which dead people are baptized as Mormons by living church members who stand in as their proxies." Mormons had obtained the names of some 380,000 Jews who had died in concentration camps or who were otherwise victims of the Holocaust. Then, over a period of time, they baptized them in ceremonies in which church members were immersed in water as stand-ins while the names of the deceased were read. Some Jewish organizations have protested this procedure. As a result, Mormon leaders agreed to delete from their list of baptized Mormons the names of Jewish Holocaust victims for whom such ceremonies had been performed.

Stress in Hong Kong

A recent survey in which 5,000 people from 16 different countries were interviewed revealed that Hong Kong rates as the most stressful city in the world, reports *The Medical Post*. For many, the stress is job-related. Researcher Dr. David Warburton, of England's University of Reading, notes that "some 70% of Hong Kong men and 64% [of] women complained of stress at work, compared to 54% of people worldwide." About 41 percent of the interviewees from Hong Kong felt that their jobs were boring in contrast with 14 percent in other countries. The *Post* adds that "one in five people in Hong Kong (compared to less than one in 10 worldwide) said that not liking their boss was the main reason for stress at work."

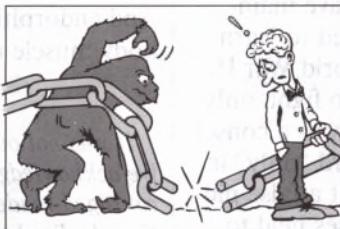
Electrical Devices Under Suspicion

According to *FDA Consumer*, a magazine of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, medical equipment can malfunction when exposed to electromagnetic interference, such as from a nearby cellular phone. "Some European hospitals have already banned cellular phones from their buildings, and FDA has encouraged hospitals in the United States to take such action if warranted," says the magazine. Electromagnetic interference is suspected in numerous accidents in which life-saving medical devices such as pacemakers and apnea monitors have malfunctioned. *FDA Consumer* warns: "Patients and doctors who routinely use sensitive medical devices should be aware of the problem and consider keeping cellular phones away from their equipment." Electro-

magnetic interference can also be caused by wireless computer links, microwave signals, radio and television transmitters, pagers, and other electrical devices. Researchers are exploring ways to minimize the threat.

The Myth of the Missing Link

Evolutionists have long sought fossil evidence to prove the theory that man descended from the ape. However, the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* says that "theories on the origin of man have been shaken" by the discovery in Ethiopia of a series of 90 bones representing what paleontologists believe to



be the remains of an adult humanoid skeleton. The problem, according to paleontologists, is that the new fossils do not fit in with any of the theories that attempt to show a link between humans and apes. Rather, the fossils have raised more questions than they have answered. Some researchers have concluded that the so-called missing link between man and ape may be "nothing but a myth," says *Le Monde*.

Computer Porn Available to Children

As Australian schools connect up to the Internet global information network, they are also linking up to what amounts to a moral minefield. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, they can access

"X-rated photos of nude children, orgies, video clips from on-line brothels, a 'bill of rights' for people wishing to have sex with animals—and information on how to join a masturbation 'chat-line.'" The article adds: "Passwords or proof of age were not required—just an ordinary dial-up connection." Experts say it is impossible to censor the network "because its structure was designed . . . by the US Defense Department to survive a nuclear war." The data is not tidily located in one spot but is mirrored on thousands of data bases around the world. Recently a Swedish researcher counted 5,651 messages or postings about child pornography in just four news groups in one week.

Troubled Priests

"Fifty percent of the priests who come to me to be treated for psychological disturbances have problems of a sexual nature," states Valerio Albisetti, one of the best-known Italian Catholic psychologists, according to the newspaper *La Repubblica*. More than anything, sexual desire and the need for fatherhood are the things that torment these men, whose obligation of celibacy was recently reiterated by John Paul II. Albisetti suggests encouraging men to enter the priesthood when of a more mature age and raising the age for entrance into seminaries. He suggests that "it is very harmful for the mental health and psychological equilibrium of the future priest" to live his adolescence "within structures characterized by female absence." Besides problems relating to sexuality, Albisetti comments that "often churchmen suffer from depression, obsessive-maniacal disturbances and bulimia."

FROM OUR READERS

Saved by Awake! Some years ago (May 8, 1984) *Awake!* recommended that each family discuss what to do in case of a fire and have regular fire drills. My husband and I took this advice. In January of this year, we had the chance to put our plans into practice when I awoke to find the lower floor of our house burning fiercely. We each did as we had rehearsed and got out safely. I have never been so grateful for an *Awake!* article!

G. E., Germany

Only Witnesses Neutral? Your May 8, 1995, issue ("It's No Secret Anymore") stated: "Only Jehovah's Witnesses have maintained their neutrality and refused to learn or practice war anymore." In World War II, of the 11,996 men who refused to fight, only 940 were Jehovah's Witnesses. I was a conscientious objector myself. The word "only" in your statement was used to paint a false picture that only Jehovah's Witnesses held to this belief.

P. B., United States

We realize that some individuals have refused to participate in war, and we have acknowledged this in our publications. (See "Awake!" of September 8, 1987, page 7.) However, the statement in question specifically referred to the failure of "Catholic and Orthodox believers" to maintain neutrality in Rwanda, Liberia, the Balkans, and other places of recent conflict. Among religious organizations, only Jehovah's Witnesses have taken a consistently neutral stand.—ED.

Hospital Seminars Thank you very much for the article "Seminars to Improve Relations Between Doctors and Jehovah's Witnesses." (March 22, 1995) I am so grateful for the Hospital Liaison Committee. I am 81 years old, and I broke my hip and shoulder while I was away from home. The local committee was at the hospital 30 minutes before

I was. Since I had no family in the area, one of the brothers stayed with me through the operation. What a relief! The HLC arrangement is truly a blessing from Jehovah.

A. W., United States

Jogging Risks I am a regular runner. Because of your article "Enjoy Jogging—But Watch the Risks" (March 22, 1995), I am sure many of my fellow Christians will view me as unbalanced. I am also afraid many will steer clear of running because of the negative connotation you presented. Runners are not prone to heart attacks as you allege. And endorphins occur in the brain not in body muscle nerves as you state.

C. D., United States

It was not our intention to stigmatize running. We acknowledged the benefits of exercise but encouraged readers to be balanced and not push their bodies beyond reasonable limits. More research will have to be done before it is known just how much of a health risk long-distance running may pose for certain individuals. As to endorphins, "The New Encyclopaedia Britannica" confirms that they are "distributed in characteristic patterns throughout the nervous system." On the danger of heart attacks, "The Medical Post" acknowledges that strenuous exercise lowers the overall risk of sudden cardiac arrest; however, it states that there is "an increased risk for the exerciser during the period they are actually exercising."—ED.

Stamp Collecting I loved the article "Philately—Absorbing Hobby and Big Business." (January 8, 1995) I am convinced that *Awake!* doesn't overlook anything—not even postage stamps. I collect stamps as a hobby and felt the article was very complete. Thank you for your valuable suggestions.

R. C., Venezuela

Enough Food for All!

BY AWAKE!
CORRESPONDENT
IN BRAZIL



IT IS possible to enjoy plentiful, excellent food and yet still be unhappy. To have true and lasting happiness, something else is needed—spiritual food. Jesus stated: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

On the other hand, rejecting God's Word leads to spiritual hunger, as foretold at Amos 8:11: "I will send a famine into the land, a famine, not for bread, and a thirst, not for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah." However, spiritual malnutrition can be avoided. Declared Jesus: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need

... Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled." (Matthew 5:3, 6) As nutritious food in proper quantities satisfies our body, wholesome spiritual food strengthens our faith and our hope for the future. What kind of world can we hope for?

Plenty of Food for All

Imagine a world with an abundance of delicious and wholesome food. A world without wars, disasters, or misfortunes that cause starvation or malnutrition, which weakens or depresses people. There will no longer be homeless or unemployed people depending on soup distribution or handouts, neither will soaring food prices force people to eat just anything to fill the stomach. "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Psalm 72:16) But how will this

come about? Who will solve the problem of malnutrition?

Our Creator will give loving attention to man's need for adequate food. Even earth's climate will be under control, thus guaranteeing that there will no longer be any crop failures. "Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield." (Psalm 85:12) Furthermore, although the earth is capable of producing enough food, only God's Kingdom will end greed and oppression, which lead to inadequate distribution, malnutrition, and misery.

Yes, Jehovah's heavenly government will see to it that any agricultural and transportation systems available will provide wholesome food where it is needed. The Kingdom administration will not enrich a few and leave the majority to eke out a living. Instead of despair and hopelessness, Kingdom blessings will bring the joy manifested in the great banquet of good things foretold at Isaiah 25:6: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow."

Now, visualize today's competitive, stressful, unfeeling life-style gone forever. No one will be undernourished or sick. Therefore, if you really want to enjoy life in that new world, heed Jesus' words: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting." —John 6:27.

"Tears Rolled Down My Face"

"I just opened my March 8, 1995, *Awake!* and read the article on the back cover offering the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*. The article was entitled 'It Has Been So Difficult to Grow Up Without Him.' Tears rolled down my face as I read the comments from the young person in Austria who lost his father ten years ago. I am 50 years old, and I lost my father when I was 7. He died of cancer at the age of 39. I just started to grieve his death when I was hospitalized for major depression six years ago. I have been in therapy for the last five years and have had to learn how to cope with some very difficult issues.

"Until I read this letter from Austria, I believed that there was something drastically wrong with me or with my faith. I thought I was the only person who had this huge hole inside and an enormous ache of loneliness for my father. It is so encouraging to know that I am not alone and that there are others who feel the same way I do.

"I read the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies* from cover to cover. It was, in my opinion, the best publication ever written for my needs."—Mrs. A. G., Connecticut, U.S.A.

