

Awake!

October 22, 2001

A close-up photograph of two women smiling. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a blue textured jacket over a white top. The woman on the right has curly brown hair and is wearing a dark blue shirt. They appear to be standing near a railing, with a bright sky in the background.

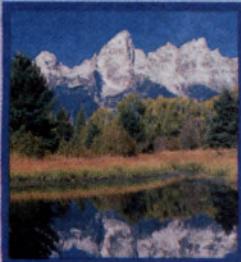
**LIFE
IS WORTH LIVING**

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Life Is Worth Living 3-12

Although most people naturally love life and cling to it, suicide is on the increase worldwide.

Why? What underlying factors are involved?
How can this deadly urge be resisted?



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Visit Grand Teton National Park with us and learn about this magnificent mountain range and the animal life flourishing there.



A United Brotherhood Unshaken 23

When earthquakes rocked El Salvador earlier this year, the Christian brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses rose to the challenge of providing relief work.

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A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

"Suicide is a serious public health problem."

David Satcher, U.S. surgeon general, in 1999.

THAT statement marked the first time in history that a surgeon general of the United States had made suicide a public issue. More people in that country are now killing themselves than are being killed by others. Little wonder that the U.S. Senate declared suicide prevention to be a national priority.

Yet, the suicide rate in the United States, which was 11.4 per 100,000 in 1997, is below the global rate published by the World Health Organization in 2000—16 per 100,000. The suicide rates worldwide have increased 60 percent in the last 45 years. Now, in a single year, about a million people worldwide take their own lives. That amounts to approximately one death every 40 seconds!

Statistics, however, cannot tell the whole story. In many cases family members deny that a death was a suicide. Moreover, it is estimated that for every completed suicide, between 10 and 25 are attempted. One survey found that 27 percent of high school students in the United States admitted that during the previous year, they had seriously considered suicide; 8 percent of the group surveyed said that they had made suicide attempts. Other studies have found that from 5 to 15 percent of the adult population have had suicidal thoughts at one time or another.

Cultural Differences

The way people view suicide varies greatly. Some view it as a crime, others as a cow-

ard's escape, and still others as an honorable way of apologizing for a blunder. Some even consider it a noble way to further a cause. Why such different viewpoints? Culture plays a major role. In fact, *The Harvard Mental Health Letter* suggests that culture may even "influence the likelihood of suicide."

Consider a country in central Europe—Hungary. Dr. Zoltán Rihmer refers to the high suicide rate there as Hungary's "sad 'tradition.'" Béla Buda, the director of Hungary's National Institute for Health, noted that Hungarians commit suicide all too readily, for virtually any reason. "He has cancer—he knows how to end that state" is, according to Buda, a common reaction.

In India there was once a religious custom known as suttee. Although this practice, in which a widow throws herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, has long been prohibited, it still is not quite extinct. When one woman reportedly committed suicide in this way, many of the local people glorified the tragedy. According to *India Today*, that region of India "has seen nearly 25 women burn themselves on their husbands' pyres in as many years."

Remarkably, in Japan suicide claims three times as many lives as do traffic accidents! "Japan's traditional culture, which has never condemned suicide, is known for a highly ritualized and institutionalized form of self-disembowelment (*seppuku* or *hara-kiri*)," says *Japan—An Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

In his book *Bushido—The Soul of Japan*, Inazo Nitobe, who later became the under-secretary-general of the League of Nations, explained this cultural fascination with death. He wrote: "An invention of the middle ages, [seppuku] was a process by which warriors could expiate their crimes, apologise for errors, escape from disgrace, redeem their friends, or prove their sincerity." Although this ritualistic form of suicide is generally a thing of the past, a few still resort to it for the sake of social impact.

In Christendom, on the other hand, suicide was long viewed as a crime. By the sixth and seventh centuries, the Roman Catholic Church excommunicated those who had committed suicide and denied them funeral rites. In some places, religious fervor has bred strange customs regarding suicides—including hanging the dead body and even driving a stake through the heart.

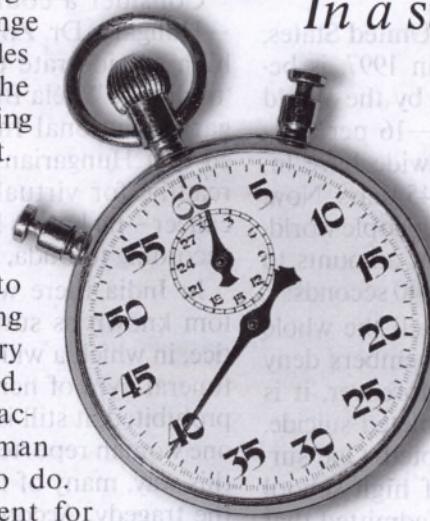
Paradoxically, those who attempted suicide could incur the death penalty. For trying to kill himself by cutting his throat, a 19th-century Englishman was hanged. Thus the authorities accomplished what the man himself had failed to do. Though the punishment for

attempted suicide changed over the years, it was not until 1961 that the British Parliament declared that suicide and attempted suicide were no longer crimes. In Ireland it remained a crime until 1993.

Today some authors encourage suicide as an option. A 1991 book about assisted suicide for the terminally ill suggested ways to end one's life. Later, an increased number of people who were *not* terminally ill used one of the recommended methods.

Is suicide really the answer to one's problems? Or are there good reasons to keep living? Before considering these questions, let us first examine what leads to suicide.

In a single year, about a million people worldwide take their own lives. That amounts to one death almost every 40 seconds!



Awake!

Why Awake! Is Published *Awake!* is 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* is used.

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WHY PEOPLE GIVE UP ON LIFE

"Each way to suicide is its own: intensely private, unknowable, and terrible."

*Kay Redfield Jamison,
psychiatrist.*

IT IS suffering to live." That is what Ryunosuke Akutagawa, a popular writer in early 20th-century Japan, wrote shortly before committing suicide. However, he prefaced that statement with the words: "Of course, I do not want to die, but . . ."

Like Akutagawa, many of those who take their life do not want to die as much as they want "to end whatever is going on," stated one psychology professor. The wording so commonly found in suicide notes suggests as much. Such phrases as 'I could not take it any longer' or 'Why go on living?' show a deep desire to escape life's harsh realities. But as one expert described it, committing suicide is "like treating a cold with a nuclear bomb."

Although the reasons why people commit suicide vary, certain events in life commonly trigger suicide.



For adults, financial or work-related problems are common triggering events

Triggering Events

It is not uncommon for young ones who give in to despair and commit suicide to do so even over matters that may seem trivial to others. When they feel hurt and cannot do anything about it, youths may view their own death as a means of getting back at those who have hurt them. Hiroshi Inamura, a specialist in handling suicidal people in

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Gender and Suicide

According to a study in the United States, while women are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than men, men are four times more likely to succeed. Women are at least twice as likely as men to suffer from depression, which may account for the greater number of suicide attempts. However, their depressive illnesses may be less violent, and thus they may turn to less violent means. Men, on the other hand, may tend to use more aggressive and decisive means to make sure they succeed.

In China, however, more women than men succeed. In fact, a study reveals that some 56 percent of the world's female suicides occur in China, especially in rural areas. It is said that one of the reasons for impulsive female suicide attempts leading to completed suicides there is the easy access to lethal pesticides.

Japan, wrote: "Through their own death, children cherish an inner urge to punish the person who has tormented them."

A recent survey in Britain indicated that when children are subjected to severe bullying, they are nearly seven times as likely to attempt suicide. The emotional pain that these children suffer is real. A 13-year-old boy who hanged himself left behind a note naming five people who had tormented him and had even extorted money from him. "Please save other children," he wrote.

Others may try to take their life when they get into trouble at school or with the law, suffer the end of a romance, get a bad report card, experience stress over exams, or become weighed down by worries about the future. Among high-achieving adolescents who may tend to be perfectionists, a setback or a failure—be it actual or imaginary—may bring on a suicide attempt.

For adults, financial or work-related problems are common triggering events. In Japan after years of economic downturn, suicides

recently topped 30,000 a year. According to the *Mainichi Daily News*, almost three quarters of the middle-aged men who killed themselves did so "because of problems stemming from debts, business failures, poverty and unemployment." Family problems too may lead to suicide. A Finnish newspaper reported: "Recently divorced middle-aged men" make up one of the high-risk groups. A study in Hungary found that the majority of girls who contemplate suicide were reared in broken homes.

Retirement and physical illness are also major triggering factors, especially among the elderly. Often suicide is chosen as a way out, not necessarily when an illness is terminal, but when the patient views the suffering as intolerable.

However, not everybody reacts to these triggering events by committing suicide. On the contrary, when faced with such stressful situations, the majority do not take their life. Why, then, do some view suicide as the answer, while most do not?

Underlying Factors

"Much of the decision to die is in the construing of events," says Kay Redfield Jamison, professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She adds: "Most minds, when healthy, do not construe any event as devastating enough to warrant suicide." Eve K. Mościcki, of the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, notes that many factors—some of them underlying—work together to lead to suicidal behavior. Such underlying factors include mental and addictive disorders, genetic makeup, and brain chemistry. Let us consider some of them.

Foremost among these factors are mental and addictive disorders, such as depression, bipolar mood disorders, schizophrenia, and alcohol or drug abuse. Research in both

Europe and the United States indicates that more than 90 percent of completed suicides are associated with such disorders. In fact, Swedish researchers found that among men who were not diagnosed with any disorders of that kind, the suicide rate was 8.3 per 100,000, but among the depressed it jumped to 650 per 100,000! And experts say that the factors leading to suicide are similar in Eastern lands. Still, even the combination of depression with triggering events does not make suicide inevitable.

Professor Jamison, who once attempted suicide herself, says: "People seem to be able to bear or tolerate depression as long as there is the belief that things will improve." However, she has found that as the cumulative despair becomes unbearable, the ability of the mental system to restrain suicidal impulses gradually weakens. She likens the situation to the way that the brakes on a car are worn thin by constant stress.

It is vital to recognize such a trend because depression can be treated. Feelings of helplessness can be reversed. When the underlying factors are dealt with, people may react differently to the heartaches and stresses that often trigger suicide.

Some think that one's genetic makeup may constitute an underlying factor in many

suicides. True, genes play a role in determining one's temperament, and studies reveal that some family lines have more incidents of suicide than others. Yet, "a genetic predisposition to suicide by no means implies that suicide is inevitable," says Jamison.

Brain chemistry too can be an underlying factor. In the brain billions of neurons communicate electrochemically. At the branched-out ends of the nerve fibers, there are small gaps called synapses across which neurotransmitters carry information chemically. The level of one neurotransmitter, serotonin, may be involved in a person's biological vulnerability to suicide. The book *Inside the Brain* explains: "A low serotonin level . . . can dry up the wellsprings of life's happiness, withering a person's interest in his existence and increasing the risk of depression and suicide."

The fact is, however, that nobody is *destined* to commit suicide. Millions of people cope with heartaches and stresses. It is the way the mind and the heart *react* to pressures that leads some to kill themselves. Not just the immediate triggering causes but the underlying factors must also be dealt with.

So, then, what can be done to create a more positive outlook that will regenerate a measure of zest for life?

Suicide and Loneliness

Loneliness is one of the factors that lead people to depression and suicide. Jouko Lönnqvist, who headed a study of suicides in Finland, said: "For a great number [of those who had committed suicide], everyday life was lonely. They had lots of spare time but few social contacts." Kenshiro Ohara, a psychiatrist at Hamamatsu University School of Medicine in Japan, commented that "isolation" was behind the recent surge in suicides by middle-aged men in that country.



YOU CAN FIND HELP

FORTY-NINE sleeping pills in a cup. Shall I swallow them or not?" a 28-year-old man in Switzerland asked himself. His wife and children had left him, and deep depression had set in. After swallowing the potion, though, he said to himself: "No. I don't want to die!" Fortunately, he lived to tell the story. Suicidal impulses do not always lead to death.

Alex Crosby of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said regarding teenage suicide attempts: "If you can restrict it for even just a few hours, you can stop it. With intervention, there are a good number

you can prevent from going to a completed suicide. You can save their lives."

While working at the Lifesaving and Emergency Center at Japan Medical College, Professor Hisashi Kurosawa helped hundreds of suicidal people to regain their will to live. Yes, with some kind of intervention, lives can be saved. What help is needed?

Facing Underlying Problems

As noted in the preceding article, researchers say that 90 percent of those who committed suicide had psychiatric disorders or substance-abuse problems. Hence, Eve



Talk to somebody



K. Mościcki, of the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, says: "The greatest hope for preventing suicide in all age groups is the prevention of mental and addictive disorders."

Sadly, many who suffer such disorders are not inclined to seek help. Why not? "Because there is strong prejudice in society," comments Yoshitomo Takahashi of the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Psychiatry. He adds that as a result, even people who are vaguely aware that they are unwell hesitate to seek immediate treatment.

Some, though, do not let shame stop them. Hiroshi Ogawa, a well-known television announcer who has hosted his own show in Japan for 17 years, acknowledged publicly that he suffers from depression and

has even been on the verge of suicide. "Depression is likened to a common cold of the mind," Ogawa said. Anyone can come down with it, he explained, but recovery is possible.

Talk to Somebody

"When someone is alone with his problem, then he usually sees it as disproportionately large and as unsolvable," says Béla Buda, the Hungarian health official quoted earlier. This observation underscores the wisdom of the ancient proverb in the Bible: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth."—Proverbs 18:1.

Listen to those wise words. Do not allow yourself to flounder alone in a sea of overwhelming personal problems. Seek out someone you can trust and in whom you can



How Can You Help Someone Who Seems Suicidal?

What should you do if someone confides in you that he wants to commit suicide? "Be a good listener," advises the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Let him express how he feels. In many cases, though, a suicidal person is withdrawn and not communicative. Acknowledge the reality of the pain or hopelessness that he is undergoing. If you gently mention some particular changes that you have noticed in his behavior, you may move him to open up and confide in you.

While listening, show empathy. "It is important to stress that the person's life is important to you and to others," says the CDC. Let him know how his death would devastate you as well as others. Help the person to see that his Creator cares about him.

—1 Peter 5:7.

Experts also recommend removing anything that the person might use to commit suicide—firearms in particular. If the situation seems serious, you may want to encourage the person to seek medical attention. In extreme cases you may have little choice but to summon some kind of emergency medical service yourself.

confide. ‘But,’ you may say, ‘I don’t have anybody to confide in.’ According to mental-health professional Dr. Naoki Sato, many feel that way. Sato noted that patients may avoid confiding in others because they do not want to reveal their weaknesses.

Where can a person turn for a hearing ear? In many places he or she can enlist the help of a suicide prevention center or a crisis hot line or find a reputable medical doctor who deals with emotional problems. But some experts also recognize another source of help—religion. How can that help?

Finding Needed Help

Marin, an invalid in Bulgaria, had developed a strong desire to kill himself. One day he came upon the religious journal *The Watchtower*, a publication of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He responded to the invitation in the magazine to have a personal visit by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Marin explains what resulted: “I learned from them that life is a gift from our heavenly Father and that we do not have the right to harm ourselves or end our life willfully. Thus, I reversed my former desire to commit suicide and came to love life again!” Marin also received loving support from the Christian congregation. Although still an invalid, he says: “My days are now joyful and tranquil, and they are filled with pleasant things to do—even more than I have time for! All of this I owe to Jehovah and to his Witnesses.”

The young Swiss man mentioned at the outset also received help from Jehovah’s Witnesses. Today he remarks on “the kindness of a Christian family” who took him into their home. He adds: “Later, the members of

the congregation [of Jehovah’s Witnesses] took turns inviting me to meals day after day. What helped was not only being treated hospitably but also being able to talk to someone.”

This man was greatly encouraged by what he studied in the Bible, especially when he learned about the love that the true God, Jehovah, feels for humankind. (John 3:16) Indeed, Jehovah God has hearing ears to listen to you when you “pour out your heart” before him. (Psalm 62:8) “His eyes are roving about through all the earth,” not to find fault with people, but “to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9) Jehovah assures us: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will

Your life matters to others



'Will God Forgive Me for Feeling This Way?'

Associating with Jehovah's Witnesses has helped many to overcome suicidal thoughts. Yet, no one today is immune to life's stressful events or to depression. Christians who have thought of taking their life often contend with profound feelings of guilt over having such thoughts. The guilt may only add to their burden. So how can such feelings be dealt with?

It is worth noting that some faithful men and women in Bible times expressed profoundly negative feelings about life. Rebekah, the wife of the patriarch Isaac, was once so distressed over a family problem that she said: "I have come to abhor this life of mine." (Genesis 27:46) Job, who suffered the loss of his children, his health, his wealth, and his social standing, said: "My soul certainly feels a loathing toward my life." (Job 10:1) Moses once cried out to God: "Please kill me off altogether." (Numbers 11:15) Elijah, a prophet of God, once said: "It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my soul away." (1 Kings 19:4) And the prophet Jonah repeated-

ly said: "My dying off is better than my being alive."—Jonah 4:8.

Did Jehovah condemn these individuals for feeling as they did? No. He even preserved their expressions in the Bible. It is vital to note, though, that none of those faithful ones let their feelings drive them to commit suicide. Jehovah valued them; he wanted them to live. The fact is, God is concerned even about the lives of wicked ones. He urges them to change their ways and 'actually keep living.' (Ezekiel 33:11) How much more does he want those who are concerned about winning his favor to keep living!

God has provided the ransom sacrifice of his Son, the Christian congregation, the Bible, and the privilege of prayer. This line of communication with God—prayer—never has a busy signal. God can and will hear all who approach him with a humble, sincere heart. "Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Hebrews 4:16.

really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness."—Isaiah 41:10.

Regarding God's promise of a new world, the Swiss man said: "This has helped considerably to lighten the weight of my frustration." This hope, which is described as "an anchor for the soul," involves the promise of everlasting life in Paradise on earth.—Hebrews 6:19; Psalm 37:10, 11, 29.

Your Life Is Important to Others

True, you may face situations that make you feel that you are completely alone and that your death would matter to no one. Remember, though: There is a big difference between *feeling* alone and *being* alone. In Bible times the prophet Elijah reached a low point in his life. He said to Jehovah: "Your prophets they have killed with the sword, so that I only am left." Yes, Elijah felt total-

ly alone—and not without reason. A great many of his fellow prophets had been killed. A death threat was hanging over his own head, and he was on the run for his life. But was he truly alone? No. Jehovah let him know that there were some 7,000 loyal people who, like him, were faithfully trying to serve the true God in those dark times. (1 Kings 19:1-18) What, though, about you? Is it possible that you are not as alone as you feel?

There are people who care about you. You might think of your parents, your mate, your children, and your friends. But there are more. In the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, you can find mature Christians who are interested in you, who will hear you out, and who will pray with you and for you. (James 5:14, 15) And even if every imperfect human were to fail you, there is One who will

never leave you. King David of old said: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up." (Psalm 27:10) Yes, Jehovah "cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7) Never forget that you are precious in Jehovah's eyes.

Have You Lost a Loved One to Suicide?

When someone commits suicide, family members and close friends suffer severe mental turmoil. Many blame themselves for the tragedy. They say such things as: 'If only I had spent a little more time with him that day,' 'If only I had held my tongue that time,' 'If only I had done a little more to help him.' The implication is, 'If only I had done this or that, my loved one would still be here.' Is it fair, though, to assume the blame for the suicide of another?

Remember, it is only too easy to recognize signs of suicidal feelings after the fact. In the present, it is a different matter. The Bible says: "The heart alone knows its bitterness, and no outsider can share in its joy." (Proverbs 14:10, Tanakh) Sometimes it is simply impossible to discern what another person is thinking or feeling. Many suicidal people just cannot adequately communicate their innermost feelings to others, even to close family members.

The book *Giving Sorrow Words* says this about the signs that a person may be suicidal: "The reality is that it's usually not easy to discern such signs." The same book adds that even if you had recognized some telltale signs, that in itself would not guarantee that you could have prevented the suicide. Rather than torment yourself, you may find comfort in the words of wise King Solomon: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Your loved one is not being tormented in a fiery hell. And the mental and emotional anguish that led him to suicide have ended. He is not suffering; he is simply at rest.

It might be best now to focus on the welfare of the living, including yourself. Solomon continued: "All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power" while you are alive. (Ecclesiastes 9:10) Rest assured that the future life prospects of those who have committed suicide are in the hands of Jehovah, "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort."—2 Corinthians 1:3.*

* You will find a balanced view of the future prospects for those who have committed suicide in the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Suicides—A Resurrection?" in the September 8, 1990, issue of Awake!

Life is a gift from God. Granted, at times life may feel more like a burden than a gift. Can you imagine, though, how you would feel if you were to bestow a valuable gift on someone who then threw it away before really putting it to use? We imperfect humans have barely begun to use the gift of life. In fact, the Bible indicates that the life we live right now is not even "the real life" in God's eyes. (1 Timothy 6:19) Yes, in the near future our life will be far fuller, richer, and happier. How so?

The Bible says: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3, 4) Try to picture what your life will be like when those words are fulfilled. Take your time. Try to create a full, colorful mental picture. That picture is no empty fantasy. As you meditate on how Jehovah has dealt with his people in the past, your confidence in him will grow and that picture can become all the more real to you.—Psalm 136:1-26.

It may take some time before you fully recover your desire to live. Continue praying to "the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) Jehovah will give you the strength you need. He will teach you that life is worth living.—Isaiah 40:29.

YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

"He insulted me."—Conneel, aged 15, in prison for murder.

Andrew, aged 14, who killed a teacher at a school dance, claimed to hate teachers and his parents and to be angry with girls for rejecting him.

TIME magazine calls it "a deadly pattern." An angry youth smuggles a lethal weapon into his school and opens fire on his schoolmates and teachers. Such tragic incidents have begun to seem so common in the United States that one TV news network described the trend as "an explosion of violence."

Fortunately, school shootings are still relatively rare. Even so, the recent crimes of rage reveal just how angry some youths really are. What seems to trigger such outbursts? Some of these youths were evidently enraged at an injustice or abuse of power that they experienced at the hands of people in authority. Others were evidently angered by ongoing teasing from their peers. One 12-year-old boy who shot a classmate—and then himself—had been teased about being overweight.

Admittedly, most youths would probably never think seriously of engaging in such extreme violence. Still, fighting the feelings of hurt and pain that arise when you are a victim of racism, bullying, or cruel teasing is not easy. Reflecting back on his school days, Ben says: "I was always shorter than most of the



What's Wrong With Getting Even?

"I was always shorter than most of the kids my age. And because my head was clean-shaven, other kids were constantly teasing me and slapping me on my head. This made me very angry. What made matters worse is that when I went to get help from people in authority, they ignored me. That made me even angrier!" Ben adds: "The only thing that kept me from getting a gun and shooting these people was the fact that I had no access to one."

How should you view youths who seek to hurt those who have hurt them? And what should you do if you become the victim of mistreatment yourself? In answer, consider what God's Word has to say.

Self-Control—A Sign of Strength!

Mistreatment and injustice are hardly new. One Bible writer gave this advice: "Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil." (Psalm 37:8) Far too often, rage involves a loss of self-control

and is expressed without regard for the consequences. Allowing oneself to become “heated up” can result in an explosion of rage! What may result?

Consider the Bible example of Cain and Abel. “Cain grew hot with great anger” at his brother Abel. As a result, “while they were in the field Cain proceeded to assault Abel his brother and kill him.” (Genesis 4:5, 8) Another example of uncontrolled rage involved King Saul. Jealous of the military exploits of young David, he actually threw spears not only at David but also at his own son Jonathan!—1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10; 20:30-34.

True, there are times when it is right to be angry. But even then, righteous indignation can result in evil if it is not controlled. Simeon and Levi, for example, certainly had a right to be angry with Shechem when they learned that he had raped their sister Dinah. But instead of staying calm, they stirred up violent anger, as reflected in their later words: “Ought anyone to treat our sister like a prostitute?” (Genesis 34:31) And when their anger rose to a fever pitch, they “proceeded to take each one his sword and to go unsuspectedly to the city and to kill every male” living in Shechem’s village. Their rage was contagious because “the other sons of Jacob” joined in the murderous attack. (Genesis 34:25-27) Even years later, Simeon and Levi’s father, Jacob, denounced their uncontrolled anger.—Genesis 49:5-7.

From this we learn an important point: Uncontrolled anger is a sign not of strength but of weakness. Proverbs 16:32 states: “He that is slow to anger is better than a mighty man, and he that is *controlling his spirit* than the one capturing a city.”

The Folly of Retaliation

The Scriptures thus give this advice: “Return evil for evil to no one. . . . Do not avenge yourselves.” (Romans 12:17, 19) Retaliation—whether it involves physical violence or

just cruel words—is ungodly. At the same time, such vengeance is simply impractical and unwise. For one thing, violence usually results in more violence. (Matthew 26:52) And cruel words often beget more cruel words. Remember, too, that anger is often unjustified. For example, can you really know that the person who offended you bore you ill will? Could it be that the person was simply being thoughtless or crude? And even if malice was involved, does the situation really make retaliating the right thing to do?

Consider the Bible’s words at Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22: “Do not give your heart to all the words that people may speak, that you may not hear your servant calling down evil upon you. For your own heart well knows even many times that you, even you, have called down evil upon others.” Yes, it is unpleasant to have people say bad things about you. But the Bible acknowledges that it is a fact of life. Is it not true that you have probably said things about others that would better have been left unsaid? So why should you overreact when someone says something unkind about you? Oftentimes, the best way to handle teasing is simply to ignore it.

Along the same lines, it is unwise to overreact when you feel that you have been mistreated. A teenager named David recalls what took place when he played basketball with some fellow Christians. “Someone from the other team hit me with the ball,” says David. Quickly concluding that this was a malicious act, David retaliated, throwing the ball back at the other player. “I was real mad,” admits David. But before matters deteriorated further, David prayed to Jehovah. He said to himself, ‘What am I doing, wanting to fight a Christian brother?’ Later, they apologized to each other.

In such situations it is good to remember the example of Jesus Christ. “When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threaten-

ing." (1 Peter 2:23) Yes, when under stress, instead of reacting, pray to God and ask him to help you to maintain self-control. He will generously "give holy spirit to those asking him." (Luke 11:13) Instead of retaliating when someone has offended you, perhaps the thing to do is approach that person and talk about it. (Matthew 5:23, 24) Or if you are the victim of some ongoing form of serious harassment, perhaps from a school bully, do not seek an ugly confrontation. Instead, you need to take practical steps to protect yourself.*

A Youth Who Put Away Rage

Many youths have applied these Bible principles with good results. Catrina, for example, was given up for adoption at an early age. She says: "I had a problem with rage because I didn't understand why my birth mother gave me up. So I would take it out on my adoptive mother. For some silly reason, I felt that if I hurt her, I was actually get-

ting back at my birth mother in some way. So I did everything—verbal abuse, stomping, tantrums. Slamming doors was my favorite. I also used to say, 'I hate you!'—all because I was so angry. Looking back, I can't believe that I did these things."

What helped Catrina control her anger? She replies: "Reading the Bible! This is so important because Jehovah knows how we feel." Catrina also found comfort when she and her family read *Awake!* articles that dealt with her particular family situation.* "All of us were able to sit down together and understand one another's feelings," she recalls.

You too can learn to control feelings of rage. When confronted with teasing, bullying, or mistreatment, remember the words of the Bible at Psalm 4:4: "Be agitated, but *do not sin*." Those words can help you to avoid giving in to destructive rage.

* See the series entitled "Adoption—The Joys, the Challenges," appearing in the May 8, 1996, issue of *Awake!*



**Oftentimes,
the best way to
handle teasing is
simply to ignore it**

The Youngest Range of **THE ROCKIES**

BONE WEARY, we pulled out the camp stove and set about making breakfast. We had driven nearly 3,000 miles in five days, traveling from New York to Wyoming. As we ate breakfast, we took in our surroundings.

The bright sunlight was dazzling, the air crisp and fresh. But this was like none of our previous roadside picnics—the view was stunning! We were dining near the shore of Jackson Lake in Grand Teton National Park. Before us lay majestic mountain scenery. Nothing in our 10,000-mile tour of the West had proved to be quite so spectacular. We

knew that if we were ever given the opportunity to return, we would.

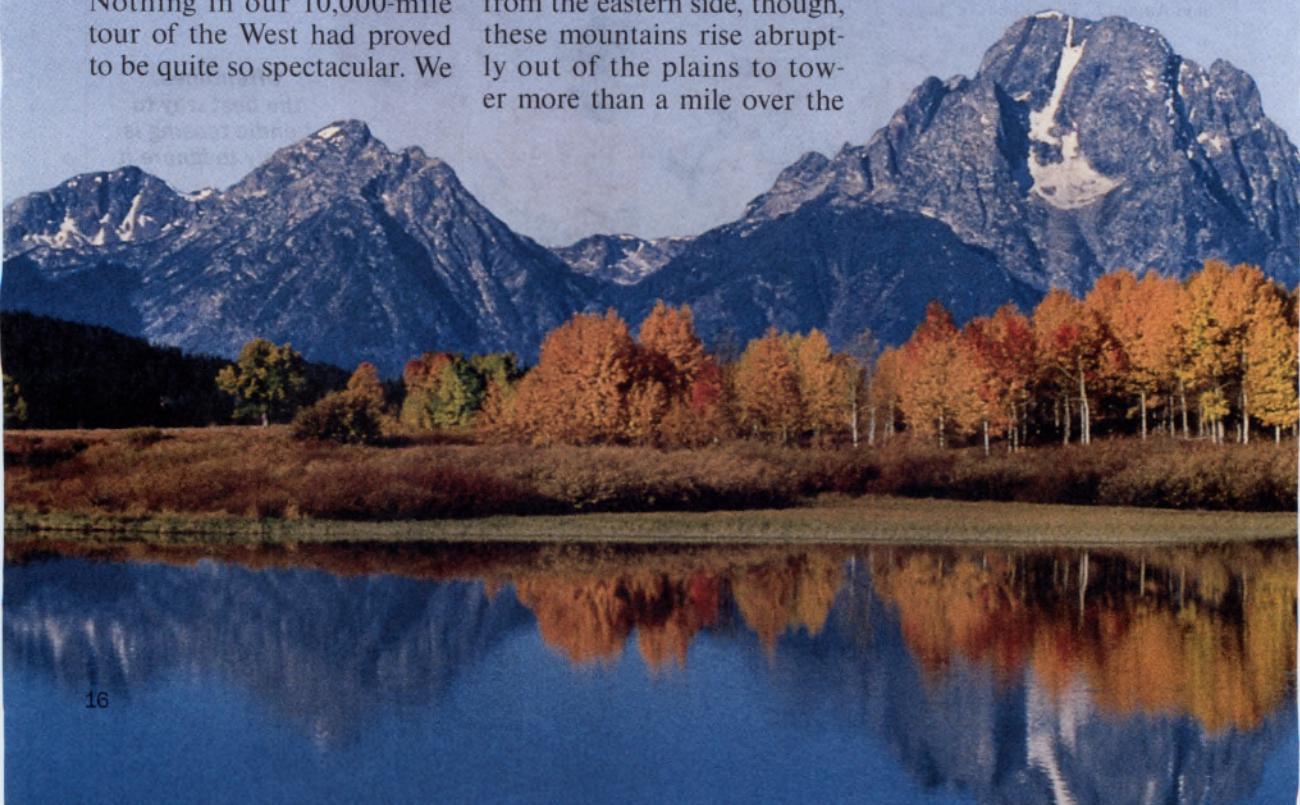
Grand Teton is some 13,770 feet tall, and a dozen other peaks in this range reach over 12,000 feet. Though certainly nothing to scoff at, they are not the highest of mountains. Depending on your approach by automobile, you might even miss the Teton Range. From the western side, you might merely observe that the land slopes gently upward—hardly something to write home about! Approached from the eastern side, though, these mountains rise abruptly out of the plains to tower more than a mile over the

valley below. They really command attention.

Our Return Visit

After years of wishing, we finally did manage to return. This time we flew into Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and drove north to the Tetons. Come along as we start our day at glacial, jewelike Jenny Lake, which lies just under the tallest peaks in this range.

Our skin tingles in the coolness of the early morning air. The sun has not yet risen, but we are not alone. Other hardy



souls are up and about. Some photographers want to capture the glories of the mountains bathed in shades of pink and gold by the first shafts of morning light. Suddenly we freeze—staring straight at us is a large doe! She stiffens, alert and wary, for her fawn is feeding no more than ten yards away from us. We reach for our camera ever so slowly. Holding our breath, we aim, focus, and shoot. We breathe; our day at Jenny Lake is just beginning.

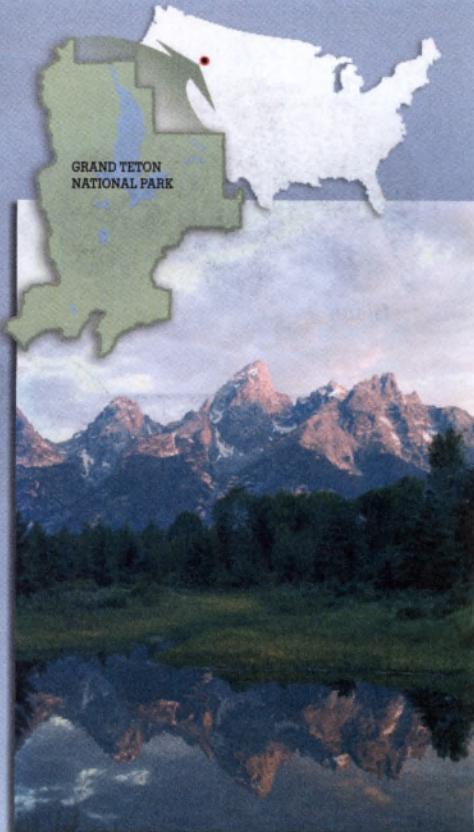
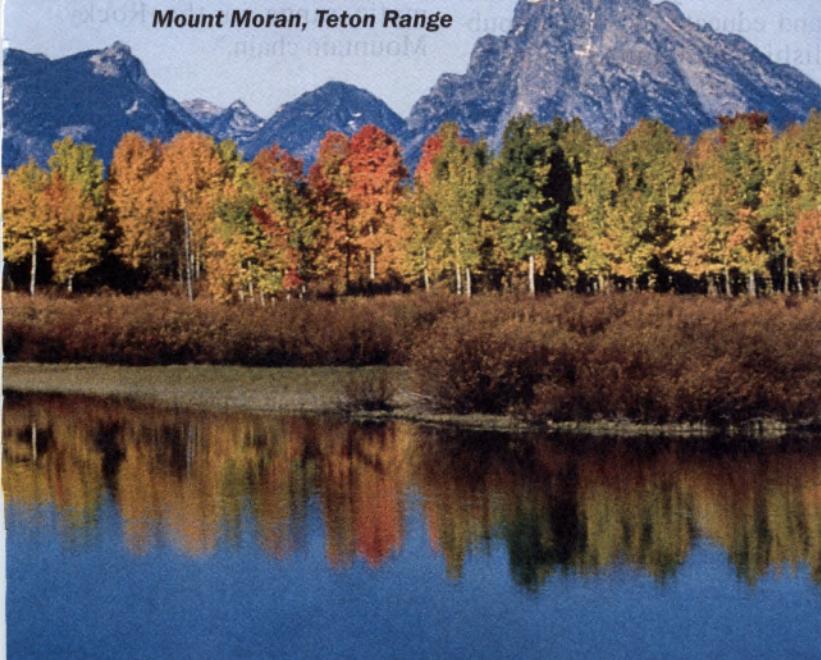
Joining a knot of hikers boarding a shuttle boat, we are soon at the base of the mile-long trail that climbs to Inspiration Point. We exit the boat, and the coolness of the forest quickly envelopes us. As the steep trail leads us upward, the lake falls away behind. We begin to hear the thunder of distant waterfalls. Pant-

ing, we emerge from the forest and pause on a rocky outcrop. We bask in the bright morning light and gulp in deep breaths of cool alpine air. Stretched out below us lies Jenny Lake, a shimmering patch of sapphire blue. Set within a ribbon of trees that stand on a distinctive mound, the lake appears to be the work of a master jeweler.

Towering above us are the mountain spires known as the Cathedral Group. In the 1930's, Dr. Fryxell, a naturalist who studied this range, wrote: "Towering above all else, with pointed summits [these peaks] direct one's vision and thoughts yet higher." Filled with wonder, we drink in the grandeur of Inspiration Point. Already we feel well rewarded for our efforts. But there is more.

The trail is surprisingly level now as it weaves along the

Mount Moran, Teton Range



Upper Cascade Canyon





Bison



Sunset in the Tetons



Bald eagle

bottom of Cascade Canyon. Rocky cliffs soon tower above us, and torrents careen down their sides. We wonder, 'What forces shaped this place?' Suddenly, we're confronted by an excited child. She is hardly able to contain herself. Breathless, she whispers: "We spotted a moose! Hurry, you can see it too!"

Thoughts about how these mountains were shaped are pushed aside. Grabbing our camera, we get ready to take a shot of one of the magnificent animals that roam this park.

The girl leads us to a vantage point. Their voices hushed, the rest of her family point. There, in a marshy bog along the river, we spot the bull moose. Gazing in amazement, camera raised, we whisper about our blessing in being here at the right moment.

Geology and Plates

With so much to see, it is easy to forget to ask about the history of this remarkable landscape. However, the park makes every effort to inform and educate the public, publishing a number of pamphlets and providing for group hikes led by ranger-naturalists.

It was explained that although the earth under our feet may feel quite firm, in a way it's like a frozen lake in springtime—not as solid as it appears! Geologists have come to believe the theory that the earth's crust is made up of a number of tectonic plates and that these plates, resting on seas of molten rock, are in motion. For us, the point of inter-

est in the theory is that when these plates bump against each other, mountain ranges may form as a result.

In the case of the Teton Range, it seems that one plate acted somewhat like a crowbar, prying up the other. The result is what geologists call a fault-block mountain front. The Teton Range, they say, was formed relatively recently, in geologic terms. Thus our park pamphlet calls it "the youngest and most dramatic range in the Rocky Mountain chain."



Bull moose

Water and Ice as Sculptors

We found these answers fascinating, but they raised even more questions. We thought about our hike at Jenny Lake. What could account for the jaggedness of those peaks? Then, too, what about that distinctive mound around the lake, so overgrown with trees? The geologists' answer? Water is behind it all. The theory is that sometime in the distant past, glaciers carved out the canyons of the Teton Range. That mound around the lake, known as a moraine, was formed by moving ice. This moraine held back some of the now-melted glacier and also retained the better soil.

That theory would account for the richness of the plant life around the lake, especially compared to the barren-looking gravel beds and sagebrush of the nearby plains. Intrigued, we encouraged the ranger-naturalist to tell us more. A different phenomenon, she said, was behind the jagged shape of those mountain pinnacles. She called it frost-wedging. Water works its way into crevices in the rock, expanding when it freezes. This force eventually pries sections of rock free, leaving a chiseled look. We warmly thanked her for her lecture and her enthusiasm for these mountains.

The Animals

Besides remarkable geology, the area is rich in animal

life. This made our trip down the famous Snake River more memorable. As we took in the scenery, we watched bald eagles and ospreys soar and then dive toward the river to catch fish. Our boat guide, a trained biologist, pointed out something that surprised us. Despite the bald eagle being greater in size and having a more dramatic appearance, the osprey is really the superior fisherman. He told us that he had seen eagles steal fish from ospreys. Sure enough, we watched as a bald eagle moved in on a young osprey. The osprey abandoned its catch and took to flight.

Viewing wildlife in its natural setting was a real thrill for us. The National Elk Refuge is nearby, and many of the elk spend the summer in Grand Teton National Park. We often pulled over to gaze at herds of elk lazily feeding. At other times, we perched on the veranda of our

lodge to see moose peacefully feeding among the willows. At night these creatures appeared to play to the crowds that gathered to watch them graze. Though tired, we would linger just to gaze at what we city dwellers so seldom see—a near-black canopy of sky sparkling with stars.

Our last day brought us a farewell treat. Fear mingled with awe as we drove right through the midst of a herd of bison. The herd of these massive, shaggy beasts stretched out on both sides of the road. How we hated to leave! But it was time to go.

As we sat in the plane awaiting takeoff, we reflected on our visit. We savored what was briefly ours—the mountains, the alpine air, and the animals. How thrilling to be able to fulfill the yearning we had long felt to revisit the Teton Range! Truly, the youngest offspring of the Rocky Mountains is a beautiful child.

Some Suggestions for Visitors

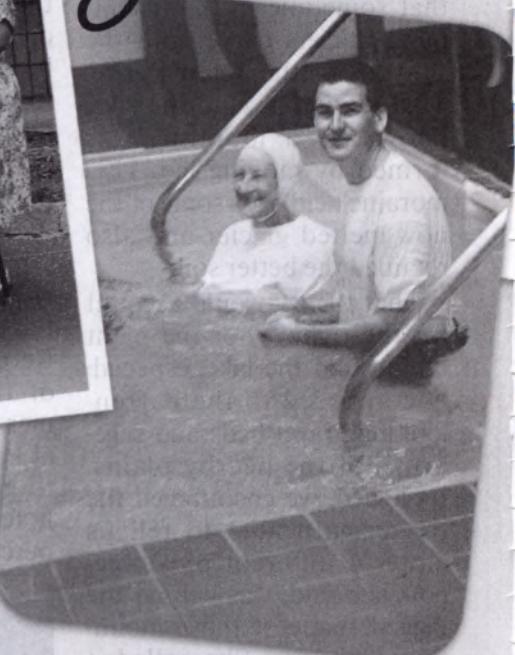
Give yourself time to get adjusted to the thinner air. The valley floor itself is well over 6,000 feet above sea level. Some tourists from lower altitudes may feel the effects of altitude sickness, such as headaches or irritability. Older folks, especially those with heart trouble or respiratory ailments, may find it advisable to talk to their doctor before making such a trip.

Prepare properly before you hike. Keep in mind that the high altitude and semiarid conditions tend to dehydrate the body rapidly. Bring plenty of water.

This is a wilderness park, with many large and beautiful, but wild, animals. Some visitors are eager to get up close, but the animals may react unpredictably. Listen to and follow the rangers' advice on how to interact with wild creatures in their environment. Besides being interesting, the rangers' words may prove lifesaving.



Mama and Her Ten Girls



AS TOLD BY ESTHER LOZANO

BOTH Mom and Dad were born in Bitlis, Turkey, to Armenian parents. Early in the last century, when there was a widespread massacre of the Armenians, our dad left Turkey and came to the United States. He was about 25 years old. Our mama, Sophia, left some time later, when she was 12 years old.

It seems that the parents of both families agreed to send our mother to the United States to marry our father, Aram Vartanian. Sophia was too young to marry when she arrived in Fresno, California, so she lived with her future mother-in-law until she became of age.

Our parents' first child was a boy whom they named Antranig, a name he later changed to

Barney. He was born on August 6, 1914. The next ten children were all girls. Our father became a Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known, when Shield Toutjian visited Fresno and gave a discourse to the Armenian community in 1924. Afterward, our whole family attended Christian meetings together.

We moved to Oakland, California, in 1931 and associated with the congregation there. Barney served Jehovah faithfully in Napa, California, until his death in 1941. I was the third

Agnes at her baptism, 1997



Elizabeth on the day she graduated from Gilead, 1949

Esther (on right) at Mexico branch, 1950

Ruth and Alvin Stauffer serving as international servants at Mexico branch, 1987

girl born after Barney, and I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah in 1935. After attending meetings for some 75 years, our sister Agnes got baptized fairly recently! All us girls were present, and we were very happy that the last of the ten girls was now baptized.

Sadly, Mother was not present. She died just the year before at 100 years and 2 days of age. Her death was reported by the California newspaper *Hayward News* of May 14, 1996. It stated that "she performed voluntary community service as a Jehovah's Witness by teaching . . . the Bible to interested people for 54 years." The article also quoted our sister Elizabeth, who said: "Her home was always open and she always had room for one more at the dinner table . . . She would always say, 'Come in for some cowboy coffee,' and if you happen[ed] to come when she had made her famous baklava pastry, you were fortunate indeed."

Our oldest sister, Gladys, is 85, and the youngest is 66. We are all active Witnesses. Three of us served as missionaries after graduating from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Elizabeth, who now lives in Newport Beach, California, was in the school's 13th class and served in Callao, Peru, for five years. Ruth attended the 35th class. She and her husband, Alvin Stauffer, served as missionaries in Australia for five years. I was in the fourth class of Gilead and in 1947 was assigned to Mexico, where in 1955, I married Rodolfo Lozano.* Both of us have served in Mexico ever since.

We ten sisters are very grateful for the measure of health we have. It allows us to continue serving Jehovah with all our mind, heart, and strength for as long as he wills—both now and forever in his new world.

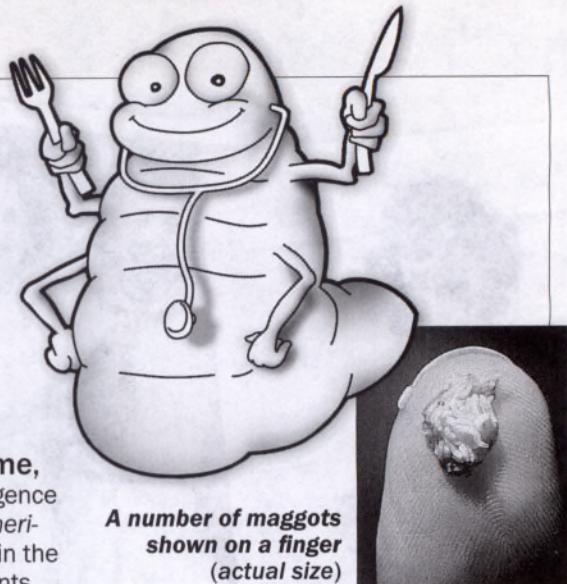
* His experience can be found in the January 1, 2001, issue of *The Watchtower*.

"Surgeons" With a Wiggle and an Appetite

As repulsive as the thought may be to some, a capable and hygienic "surgeon" is making a resurgence—the lowly maggot. A report in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) states that doctors in the United Kingdom conducted a pilot study on 12 patients with leg ulcers. Six were treated with conventional hydrogel therapy, and six, with the application of maggots.*

"All six patients undergoing larval [maggot] therapy were left with clean wounds after only 3 days," says JAMA. Of those treated conventionally, "only two had clean wounds after 1 month of treatment; the other four required further medical attention." The British medical journal *The Lancet* says that maggot therapy "can dramatically reduce treatment times compared with conventional therapies" and that it "costs little more than half as much as hydrogel."

When employing maggot therapy—say on a wound that has turned necrotic—doctors introduce young, sterile larvae into the wound, says JAMA. (Of course, doctors use only those species of larvae that do not attack healthy



A number of maggots shown on a finger (actual size)

▲ Picture copyright SMTI.. <http://www.smti.co.uk>

tissue.) The wound is then covered with a fine nylon mesh and an absorbent pad to hold liquefied dead tissue. When the maggots are satiated, they are removed and discarded, and new ones are added until the wound is completely clean. Thereafter, blood flow to the remaining healthy tissue promotes the growth of new flesh.

"We have never had a patient decline the maggots," said vascular surgeon Michael Walker. "It is staff, not patients, who are the squeamish ones." Besides the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada also use larval therapy at some medical centers. In fact, a surgeon quoted in *The Lancet* said that "there are a lot more patients in the USA requesting maggot therapy than can find practitioners willing to apply it."

Maggot therapy was discovered by accident. "Battlefield physicians," says *Science World*, "saw that soldiers' wounds infested with maggots tended to heal better than non-infested wounds. Soon maggot therapy was born." And now it is used in hundreds of hospitals in the United States and Europe.



Photos by R. Sherman, University of California, Irvine

A United Brotherhood UNSHAKEN

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN EL SALVADOR

AT 11:34 ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 13, 2001, AN EARTHQUAKE MEASURING 7.6 ON THE RICHTER SCALE SHOOK THE LENGTH OF EL SALVADOR AND WAS FELT FROM PANAMA TO MEXICO. FEW WILL EVER FORGET WHAT THEY WERE DOING AT THE MOMENT IT HIT.

WHEN the worst of the shaking subsided, we looked up and saw the tip of the mountain split, and then it seemed to freeze for a few seconds," remembers Miriam Quezada. "My daughter screamed, 'Mama! Run! Run!'" Then the face of the mountain slid off and tumbled toward them.

The landslide caused by the earthquake buried more than 300 houses in Las Colinas

About 500 lives were snuffed out in the Las Colinas community of Nueva San Salvador, or Santa Tecla, and some 300 houses were obliterated.

"I had just left home and was waiting at the bus stop when the earthquake struck," recounts Roxana Sánchez. "When the shaking stopped, I helped a lady pick up her bags and



thought, 'I'd better go back home because my family will be worried about me.' " When Roxana turned the corner, she saw that her street ended abruptly at the foot of a mountain of dirt. Her house was gone!

Providing Immediate Help

The total number of Witnesses in El Salvador is over 28,000, and thousands live in the disaster zone—the area along the Salvadoran coast. Although still reeling from their own trauma, many quickly began focusing on the needs of others. Mario Suarez, a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses serving in Santa Tecla, relates: "About an hour after the earthquake, I received a call for help. Some Christian brothers and sisters were said to be trapped in their houses.

A group of volunteers were immediately mobilized.

"We thought that maybe some walls had fallen and that it was just a matter of removing rubble and making a passageway so that those who were trapped could get out. But none of us could have imagined the magnitude of the disaster. In fact, when we arrived at the site, we asked where the houses were. To our horror, we were told that we were standing on them! The houses were buried up to the second story in nine feet of earth. It was devastating!"

As the afternoon hours passed, approximately 250 Witnesses from neighboring congregations poured into the area to help. With only picks, shovels, plastic pans, and bare hands, the volunteers desperately tried to reach the survivors. Very few, however, were rescued alive in Santa Tecla. Among the hundreds who perished— asphyxiated or crushed under tons of earth—were five of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Organized Relief Efforts

All over the country, congregations of Witnesses became involved in relief activity. In Comasagua, Ozatlán, Santa Elena, Santiago de María, and Usulután, many Witnesses had lost their homes. Kingdom Halls and private homes were converted into collection centers. "The support was tremendous," says traveling overseer Edwin Hernández. "The brothers arrived with food, clothing, mattresses, medicines, and even cash for funeral expenses."

A relief committee, appointed by the local branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, arranged for groups of less affected congregations to care for the immediate needs of those that were harder hit. Work groups comprised of between



The villagers used picks, shovels, and buckets in their rescue work

10 and 20 Witnesses were formed, and these attended to needed repairs.

In addition, Regional Building Committees of Jehovah's Witnesses, which usually arrange for the construction of Kingdom Halls, organized groups to build provisional housing for those whose homes had been completely destroyed. Within El Salvador the price of corrugated tin skyrocketed, so the Guatemala branch of Jehovah's Witnesses generously donated a large supply of it. Lumber for framing the shelters was provided by the branches in the United States and Honduras.

Amid this flurry of activity, the tremors continued. Whole communities slept in the streets under plastic tarps and old sheets. Nerves were frayed. By February 12, a total of 3,486 aftershocks had been logged.

A Second Major Quake

On February 13, 2001, at 8:22 in the morning, one month after the first quake, a second earthquake struck the center of El Salvador, registering a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter scale. Once again, rescue and relief efforts by Jehovah's Witnesses went into high gear. An elder named Noé Iraheta explained: "Each Congregation Book Study conductor went to look for the Witnesses assigned to his group to make sure that they were all safe."

The cities of San Vicente and Cojutepeque and their outskirts were hit hard. The towns of San Pedro Nonualco, San Miguel Tepezontes, and San Juan Tepezontes were in ruins. In Candelaria, Cuscatlán, where



Ruins of the Kingdom Hall at Tepecoyo

the destruction was almost total, a parochial school collapsed, killing more than 20 children. Salvador Trejo, a local Witness, recounts: "About an hour later, I heard a voice from the street calling, 'Brother Trejo!' At first, I couldn't see anything for the dust. Then, suddenly, the Witnesses from Cojutepeque appeared. They had come to see how we were!"

Neighboring congregations again became organized to provide necessities for victims of this second disaster. They followed the first-century example of Christians in Macedonia who begged for the privilege of giving, although they were in need themselves. For example, those in the congregations in the city of Santiago Texacuangos, who had suffered great losses during the first earthquake, prepared hot food to take to their brothers in nearby San Miguel Tepezontes.

Altogether, it is estimated, over 1,200 people perished in the earthquakes in El Salvador, and an additional eight were reportedly killed in neighboring Guatemala.

Efforts Appreciated

The organized efforts of the Witnesses to assist victims were appreciated by other relief groups. A National Emergency Committee vehicle arrived to dispatch emergency provisions at a Kingdom Hall that was being used as a shelter. A representative exclaimed: "Of all the shelters we have visited, this is the first that is orderly. I congratulate you!" No one there swarmed the truck, pushed, or shoved, as had occurred at other centers. In fact, the elderly were given first consideration in receiving the donations.

The Witnesses did not limit their relief efforts to fellow believers. In San Vicente, for

example, dozens of non-Witness neighbors sought refuge on the grounds of the Kingdom Hall. "Here at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses," said Regina Durán de Cañas, "the people have hearts of gold. They opened their gates and said, 'Come on in!' and here we are. Even at night they take shifts watching over us while we sleep."

Arranging for Housing

After the damages were evaluated, recommendations for providing needed housing were made to the branch office. Provisional

A shelter was immediately set up by brothers at Tepecoyo to hold their meetings

Witnesses quickly rebuilt Kingdom Halls and built more than 500 provisional houses



A grateful single mother and her daughter watch the reconstruction of their damaged home



houses began to be built for those who had lost their homes. Also, repairs were made to houses that had only partial damage. The hardworking, efficient construction teams attracted quite a bit of attention, as neighbors came out to watch them work.

One woman, thinking that the workers were the long-promised aid from the township, came to complain that no one had come to help her to clear her rubble. The neighbor children explained: "No, lady, they aren't from the township. They're from the Kingdom!" Another non-Witness, Moisés Antonio Díaz, commented: "It is a fine experience to see how Jehovah's Witnesses help those in need. This is a very united organization, and thanks to God, they have the goodwill to help us poor people. I have worked along with them and intend to keep on doing so."

A Christian sister for whom a provisional house was constructed was crying when she said: "My husband and I don't have words to describe our gratitude—first to Jehovah and then to these brothers who, although they didn't even know us, quickly came to our aid."

By mid-April, 567 provisional homes had been built by the Witnesses for victims of the earthquakes, and almost 100 additional households had received materials to repair their damaged homes. Once the needy families had a door to lock and a roof to protect them, the Witnesses focused their attention on the 92 Kingdom Halls needing to be repaired or rebuilt.

Rebuilding Lives

Apart from the reconstruction of buildings and homes, many were especially grateful for the shoring up of their spirituality and emotional well-being.

"Under the circumstances, because the tremors continued, there were moments when my nerves betrayed me, but the broth-

ers were a constant source of warmth and encouragement," said Miriam, mentioned earlier. "Where would we be without the brothers?"

Jehovah's loving care through the congregation arrangement has motivated earthquake victims in surprising ways. In Comasagua nearly all the Witnesses' homes were damaged or destroyed by the first quake. Yet, 12 of the 17 Witnesses there enrolled to share in the full-time ministry during April and May, and 2 have since become regular full-time ministers.

Congregations in the department of Cuscatlán, one of the areas most affected by the second earthquake, held their special assembly day in March. There was a record attendance of 1,535, and 22 people were baptized. Despite the fact that so many in attendance had just lost their homes, they donated a considerable amount of money to the Assembly Hall, to the surprise of the assembly organizers.

Echoing the grateful sentiments of many, a Witness from San Vicente commented: "I had read in the publications how the organization responds during times of disaster, but now I have experienced it personally, and I have felt the support of the brotherhood. We have seen Christian love in action. What a privilege it is to belong to this united people!"

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Help for Battered Women

Vienna's Beloved Giant Wheel

The Matatu—Kenya's Colorful Carrier

WATCHING THE WORLD

Economic Crime on the Rise in Europe

"Economic crime has worsened significantly since 1998," according to a report adopted by Council of Europe parliamentarians. What is economic crime? The report from the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development lists "trafficking in human beings, illicit drug and other contraband smuggling, counterfeiting, environmental crime, cybercrime, tax fraud, money laundering, corruption and influence trading." Noting that crime of this sort is becoming more closely connected to politics, the report warns: "Europe's will to fight it may well wane and the battle be lost." The author of the report, Vera Squarcialupi of Italy, said: "The rule of law, which is the lifeblood of civilised society, will be the first to suffer."

Surviving Plane Accidents

"More than 95% of passengers survive commercial airplane accidents," states Canada's *National Post* newspaper. According to the *Post*, a U.S. National Transportation Safety Board study found that the majority of passengers survive even "serious accidents" that result in substantial airplane damage. Art LaFlamme, director general of civil aviation at Transport Canada, explains: "Most of the accidents that do occur are in the landing and takeoff phase. These are the type that don't make the headlines, and most of these accidents are highly sur-

vivable. That's why we put a lot of emphasis on safety briefing." Frequent travelers tend not to pay attention to safety instructions. But as one airline spokeswoman put it, "it is very important people tune in. In the event of an emergency, their lives will depend on it."

"Techno-Stress"



"Techno-stress"—frustration arising from pressure to use new technology—is said to be mounting, reports *Maclean's* magazine of Canada. Studies point to causes that range from "the never-ending process of learning how to use new technologies to the blurring of work and home life as a result of innovations like e-mail, call-forwarding and wireless phones." How can you cope? Experts recommend setting boundaries. Determine whether using a particular device will really simplify life or add new complexity. Count on having to invest time to learn a new technology well enough to realize its full benefits. "Put aside time each day to turn the technology off," and devote time to other priorities. "People start the day by making the fundamental mistake of opening their e-mail, instead of working to a plan," notes Vancouver

productivity expert Dan Stamp. "The best hour and a half of the day is spent on complete rubbish."

Children Write Their Own Books

In an effort to promote reading, school children in Zambia are being encouraged to write and illustrate their own short books, reports the *Zambia Daily Mail*. "Most of the libraries in schools have reading materials on things and situations that are completely alien to the Zambian children," states a government report. "The advantage of children writing their own books is that the books are of their own level and area of interest." Some of the stories may become part of school or class libraries, be read on the radio, or even be published. The *Daily Mail* notes: "This is a very cheap way of building reading resources in that it only requires paper and pen. It is also a way to utilise a resource that is plentiful (pupils) to create a resource that is scarce and expensive (books)."

Malaria Drug No Longer Effective

'Chloroquine, the most widely prescribed antimalarial drug in Zambia, is to be phased out of government dispensaries as the first line of treatment for the disease' and replaced with more effective medication, reports the *Times of Zambia*. The phaseout comes after a study indicated that "resistance to Chloroquine is claiming 12,000 of the 25,000

under-five deaths attributable to malaria each year in Zambia." The changeover has also been instituted in most other eastern and southern African lands. "Although Chloroquine has served the country well for more than 30 years, it is no longer effective in the treatment of malaria, which remains far and away the number one killer in the nation," says the *Times*.

Alcohol and Bicycles Don't Mix

Riding a bicycle after drinking alcohol may be as dangerous as driving a car after drinking, reports *New Scientist* magazine. "Riding a bike requires a higher level of psychomotor skills and physical coordination than driving a car, so alcohol has an even stronger effect," says Guohua Li of Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, U.S.A. Li and his colleagues studied 466 bike riders and found that those who had consumed four or five drinks were 20 times as likely to be seriously injured or killed. Even consuming only one drink made bike riding six times more dangerous. "To make matters worse," says *New Scientist*, "the more the cyclists had to drink, the less likely they were to wear a helmet."

Paper From Banana Plants

After bananas are harvested, the stalks are often simply left on the ground as fertilizer. However, Professor Hiroshi Morishima of Nagoya City University has succeeded in making paper from banana stalks, reports Japan's *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper. The plant's fibers "are long and strong

and are about the same good quality as the raw material for producing paper from Manila hemp." Machine-produced banana-stalk paper is comparable in quality to regular copy paper, and it has proved to be stronger than recycled copy paper. "Bananas are produced in 123 countries throughout the world and 58,000,000 tons are produced annually, making it a promising resource," says the newspaper.

Honey's Healing Powers



Besides its delightful taste, honey has long been known for its healing powers. According to the newspaper *The Australian*, a research team from Queensland and Sydney universities has shown why honey is a potent bacteria killer. When honey is mixed with water and applied to wounds and burns, an enzyme in the honey reacts with the sugar to produce hydrogen peroxide, well-known for its use in domestic bleach. This chemical not only kills bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus* but also helps tissue to repair itself.

The Demise of the Nail

"The heyday of the common nail is undeniably over," states *The Toronto Star*. The paper reports that the market for common nails "has been nearly halved in the last few years."

The development of pneumatic nailers, or nail guns, has reduced the demand for common nails in North America. Hardware stores in the United States report that professional builders rarely buy common nails, opting instead to use nail guns, which are becoming increasingly lighter. Why have manufacturers of common nails not switched over to the production of pneumatic nails? "For the same reason railroad companies didn't go into the airline business," answers the *Star*. "It's a fundamentally different product."

Etiquette Education

For the past eight years, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has offered a free course in etiquette to all its students. Why? Travis Merritt, former dean of undergraduate affairs, describes students as typically "style-free, fashion-challenged, and manner-deprived," reports *New Scientist* magazine. The one-day course includes instruction in table manners, dress, business and cell-phone etiquette, and ways to get acquainted with others. Students are taught such things as how to walk and how to sneeze discreetly, and they are also reminded that "small talk is a dialogue, not an interrogation." One instructor, Roseanne Thomas, emphasizes the importance of saying "thank you" when accepting a compliment. "These are basic skills needed anywhere in life," says Thomas. "I think it comes as a little bit of a shock when people realize that interpersonal skills are so critical for success."

FROM OUR READERS

Hectic Pace The series "Coping With Today's Hectic Pace" (February 8, 2001) touched on the core of the problems of our modern society. The question, "Do you give priority to things or to people?" captured my attention. Please continue to publish such good articles for us!

Y. K., Japan

The articles helped me set priorities and evaluate my activities. Without realizing it, I had fallen into a trap that led me to chronic tiredness, anxiety, and mental exhaustion. Now I am changing my habits and giving priority to what really matters. Thank you for helping me to simplify my life!

L.D.C., Guatemala

The Immune System I gave the February 8, 2001, issue, which contained the article "Sentinels That Protect Your Health," to a doctor who is involved with preventive medicine. He was happy with the picture on page 15 that shows the white blood cells attacking the bacteria. He enlarged it and put it in a frame, and he is now using it to explain the immune system.

H. K., Japan

I have been reading *Awake!* for 30 years, and I very much appreciate its timely information. The article "Sentinels That Protect Your Health" especially touched me because it helped me to understand how wonderfully the immune system that Jehovah implanted in us works.

L. G., Mexico

I am a doctor, and I learned about immunology when I was a medical student. The textbook explanation of the immune system was difficult to understand, but this article was wonderful. It summarizes the subject in

a manner that is easy to understand. A lecturer once said that when we study the immune system, we can't logically avoid the thought that God made it. I am looking forward to more wonderful articles on the human body.

N. K., Japan

Tsunamis I am 12 years old, and I read all your magazines. I really liked the article "Killer Waves—Myths and Realities." (February 8, 2001) I am fascinated by these waves, and I loved how you showed, by means of example, how powerful they are.

K. S., United States

Radioactive Fallout I was fascinated by the simplicity of explanation in the article "Radioactive Fallout—A Matter of Concern." (February 22, 2001) I knew that elements like strontium 90 are extremely harmful, but I did not know that they affect man from his infancy. Understanding such complex subjects is very useful because it helps people realize that man really needs the Grand Creator's help to find solutions. Thank you so much for showing continual concern for your readers by simplifying such difficult subjects so that anyone can benefit from them.

M. Z., Italy

Young People Ask I have been reading *Awake!* magazine since it was called *Consolation*. Even though I am along in years, I enjoy reading the "Young People Ask . . ." articles. By changing some of the situations presented to a more adult application, I am able to take in much information and obtain good advice. The series is educating even older ones like me.

R. S., United States

VIETNAM'S HIDDEN ANIMALS

"THE most exciting period of animal discovery of the century," enthused Douglas Richardson, curator of mammals at the London Zoo. He was referring to the discovery of certain large animals in remote jungles in Vietnam during the last ten years.

For decades, savage warfare made these forests inaccessible to scientists. Now, however, animal researchers working there have used automatic cameras to photograph animals. Among these is the Vietnamese rhinoceros, a subspecies of the Javan rhino and one of the world's most endangered species.

Another of what might be called Vietnam's hidden animals is an antelope-like ox also known as the Vu Quang ox. This creature, which was discovered in 1992 in the Vu Quang nature reserve, weighs about 225 pounds and stands three feet high at its shoulder. It is possibly related to the ox, antelope, or goat. In the same reserve, three deer were also discovered—the giant muntjac in 1993, the Truong Son muntjac in 1997, and the leaf muntjac in 1998.

In 1996, scientists on the Tainguen Plateau in Vietnam discovered a small nocturnal carnivore, the Tainguen civet. It weighs between 6.6 and 16.5 pounds and lives in damp tropical forest.

Richardson explained that small animals are constantly being found—maybe as many as 20 different frogs in the course of a year—but the existence of these larger animals has been quite unexpected, reports *The Independent* newspaper of London.



Forest: © Wildside Photography
Vietnamese rhino: AP Photo/World Wildlife Fund,
Mike Baltzer; other three animals: Courtesy EC-SFNC/Acknowledging the European Commission's support of the photo-trapping program

Tainguen civet



Vu Quang ox



Truong Son muntjac



Vietnamese rhinoceros



It Caught His Attention

On a main street in Bangui, Central African Republic, a youth received a copy of the tract *Who Really Rules the World?* The question intrigued him, and he was eager to know more about it. He started reading it, and his friend showed the same interest. Yet, there was only one copy, and the owner did not intend to give it away. How would they solve the problem?

The solution was to pay 100 CFA, which is the equivalent of 15 cents (U.S.), to obtain a photocopy of the tract. That is a substantial sum of money for a schoolboy in Bangui. But now both were happy to have a copy of the message that millions all over the world have enjoyed.

