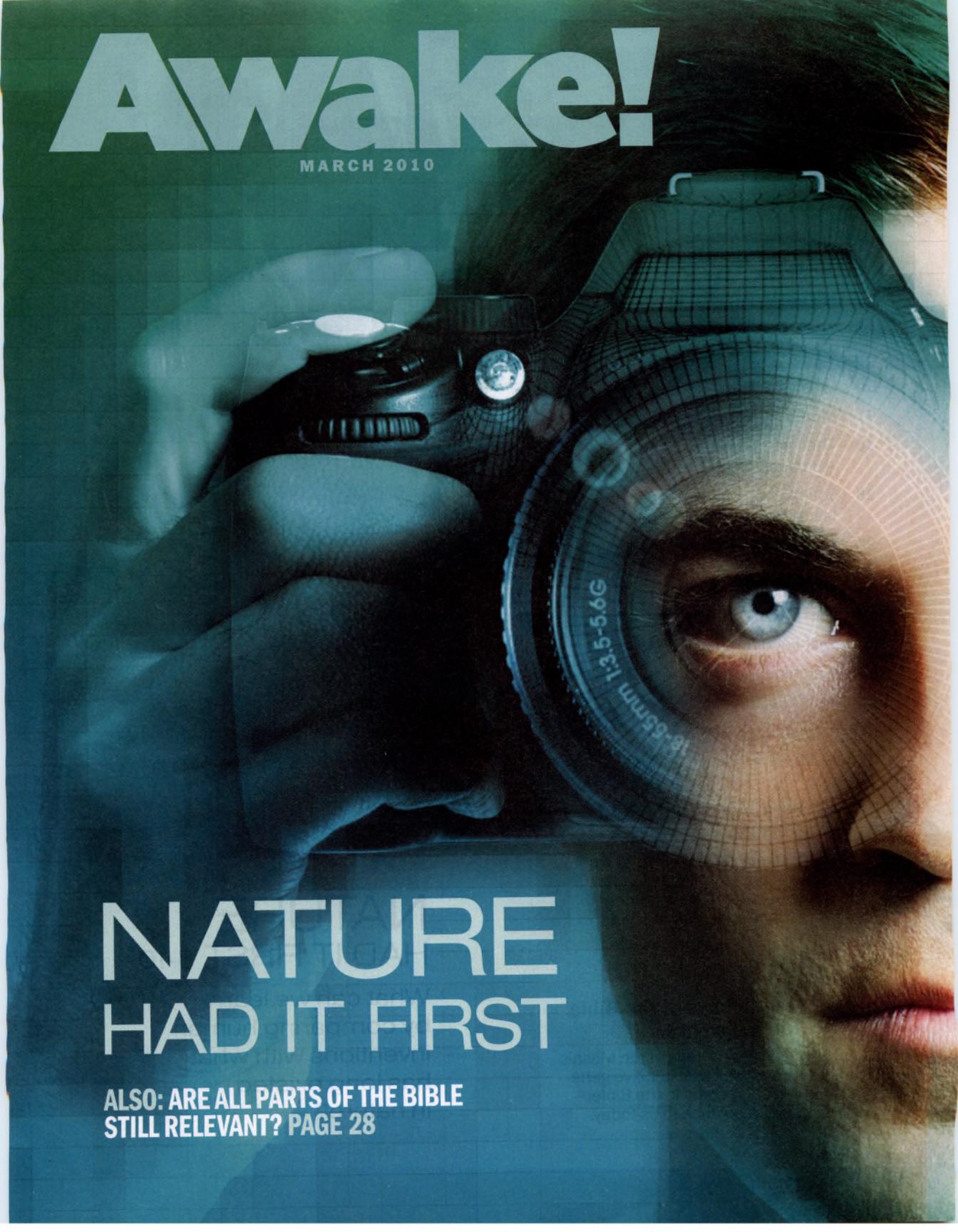


Awake!

MARCH 2010



NATURE HAD IT FIRST

ALSO: ARE ALL PARTS OF THE BIBLE
STILL RELEVANT? PAGE 28

Awake!

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PUBLISHED IN 82 LANGUAGES

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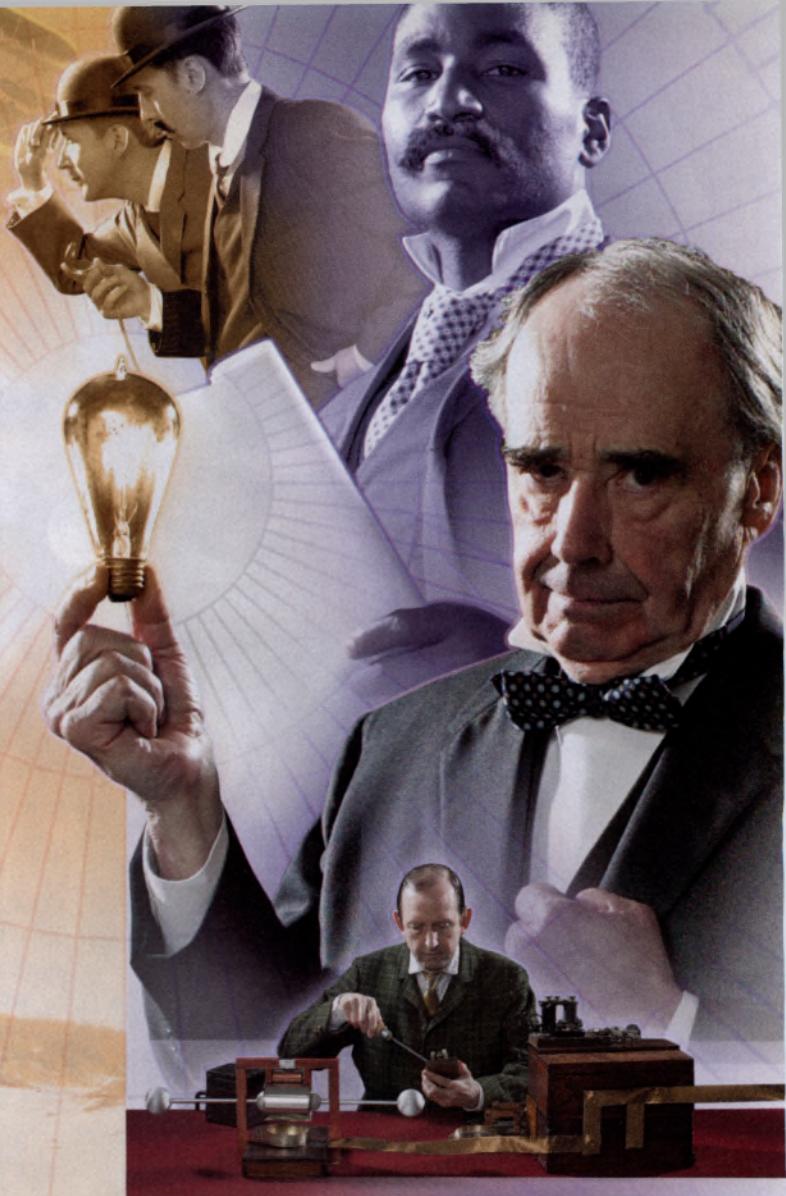
What Attracted Me to Jehovah's Witnesses

You may be surprised by what prompted a military leader to pursue an examination of Jehovah's Witnesses.

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Are All Parts of the Bible Still Relevant?

Learn how details in the Mosaic Law, as well as extensive genealogical records in the Bible, are of relevance to us today.



NATURE HAD IT FIRST 3-10

What can we learn by comparing human inventions with what has long existed in nature?

Who Did It First?

In 1973, Dr. Martin Cooper was the first to demonstrate a handheld cellular telephone. It had a battery, a radio, and a microprocessor (a minicomputer). New Yorkers gaped in amazement when they saw Cooper making a phone call on the street. But the invention was possible only because back in 1800, Alessandro Volta had invented a reliable battery. In addition, the telephone had been developed by 1876, the radio by 1895, and the computer by 1946. Finally, the invention of the microprocessor in 1971 made cell phones possible. Nevertheless, we might ask, Was communication with sophisticated devices really new?

A communication device often taken for granted is the human voice. Over half the billions of neurons in the motor cortex of your brain are involved in controlling your speech organs, and about 100 muscles operate the complex mechanisms of your tongue, lips, jaw, throat, and chest.

Your ear too is part of the same communication system. It converts sound into electrical impulses that your brain can process. Your brain analyzes sounds, so you can recognize people by the timbre of their voice. Your brain also measures how many millionths of a second one ear hears before the other and thus calculates precisely where a sound comes from. These are just two of the features that enable you to listen to one person at a time, even though several others may be speaking.

So, sophisticated wireless communication (with caller recognition) is not new. We find it first in the world of living things—nature.

Right side of page 2, front to back, reenacted photos: Guglielmo Marconi with his radio equipment; Thomas Edison and the lightbulb; Granville T. Woods, a communications inventor; the Wright Brothers and the 1903 Wright Flyer

1800

Reliable battery



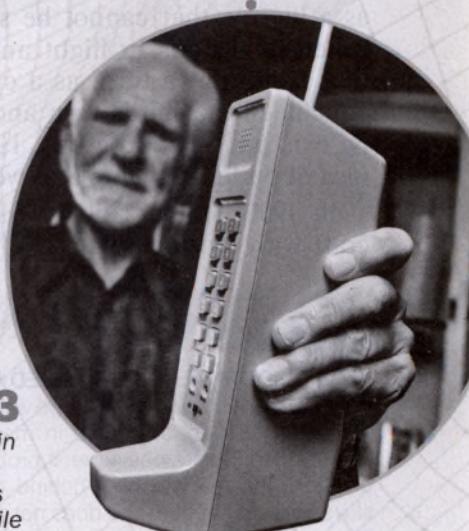
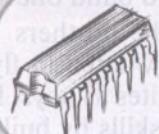
1876

Telephone



1971

Microprocessor



1973

Dr. Martin Cooper develops the mobile telephone

Powered Flight

The Wright "Flyer," North Carolina, U.S.A., 1903 (reenacted photo)

FOR centuries, men dreamed of flying. But a man does not have muscles powerful enough to lift his own weight into the air. In 1781, James Watt invented a steam engine that produced rotary power, and in 1876, Nikolaus Otto furthered the idea and built an internal-combustion engine. Now man had an engine that could power a flying machine. But who could build one?

The brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright had wanted to fly ever since they learned to fly kites as boys. Later, they learned engineering skills by building bicycles. They realized that the key challenge of flight was to design a craft that could be controlled. A plane that cannot be balanced in the air is as useless as a bicycle that cannot be steered. Wilbur watched pigeons in flight and noticed that they bank into a turn, as a cyclist does. He concluded that birds turn and keep balance by twisting their wing tips. He hit upon the idea of building a wing that would twist.

In 1900, Wilbur and Orville built an aircraft with twistable wings. They flew it first

as a kite and then as a piloted glider. They discovered that it needed three basic controls to adjust pitch, roll, and side-to-side movement. However, they were disappointed that the wings did not produce enough lift, so they built a wind tunnel and experimented with hundreds of wing shapes until they found the ideal shape, size, and angle. In 1902, with a new aircraft, they mastered the art of balancing the craft on the wind. Could they mount an engine on it now?

First, they had to build their own engine. With knowledge gained from the wind tunnel, they solved the complex problem of designing a propeller. Finally, on December 17, 1903, they started the engine, the propellers whirred, and the craft lifted off into an icy wind. "We had accomplished the ambition that stirred us as boys," said Orville. "We had learned to fly." The brothers became international celebrities. But how did they manage to power themselves into the air? Yes, nature played a part.

Awake!®

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

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Nature Had It First

"Ask, please, . . . the winged creatures of the heavens, and they will tell you. . . .

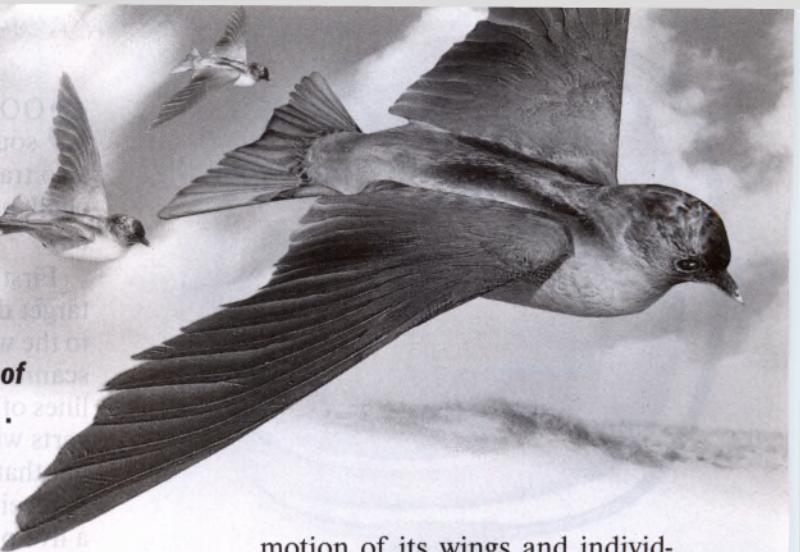
The hand of Jehovah itself has done this."—Job 12:7-9.

EVERYTHING about birds appears to be designed for flight.

For example, the shafts of wing feathers must support a bird's entire weight during flight. How can the wings be so light yet so strong? If you cut through the shaft of a feather, you may see why. It resembles what engineers call a foam-sandwich beam. It has a pithy interior and a rough exterior. Engineers have studied feather shafts, and foam-sandwich beams are used in aircraft.

The bones of birds are also amazingly designed. Most are hollow, and some may be strengthened by internal struts in a form engineers call the Warren girder. Interestingly, a similar design was used in the wings of the space shuttle.

Pilots balance modern aircraft by adjusting a few flaps on the wings and tail. But a bird uses some 48 muscles in its wing and shoulder to change the configuration and



motion of its wings and individual feathers, doing so several times a second. No wonder that avian aerobatic ability is the envy of aircraft designers!

Flight, especially takeoff, consumes a lot of energy. So birds need a powerful, fast-burning "engine." A bird's heart beats faster than that of a similar-size mammal and is usually larger and more powerful. Also, a bird's lungs have a different, one-way-flow design that is more efficient than a mammal's.

Many birds are designed to carry enough fuel for amazingly long flights. A migrating thrush uses up half of its body weight for a ten-hour flight. When a bar-tailed godwit takes off from Alaska heading for New Zealand, over half of its body weight is fat. Astonishingly, this allows it to fly for about 190 hours (eight days) nonstop. No commercial aircraft can do that.

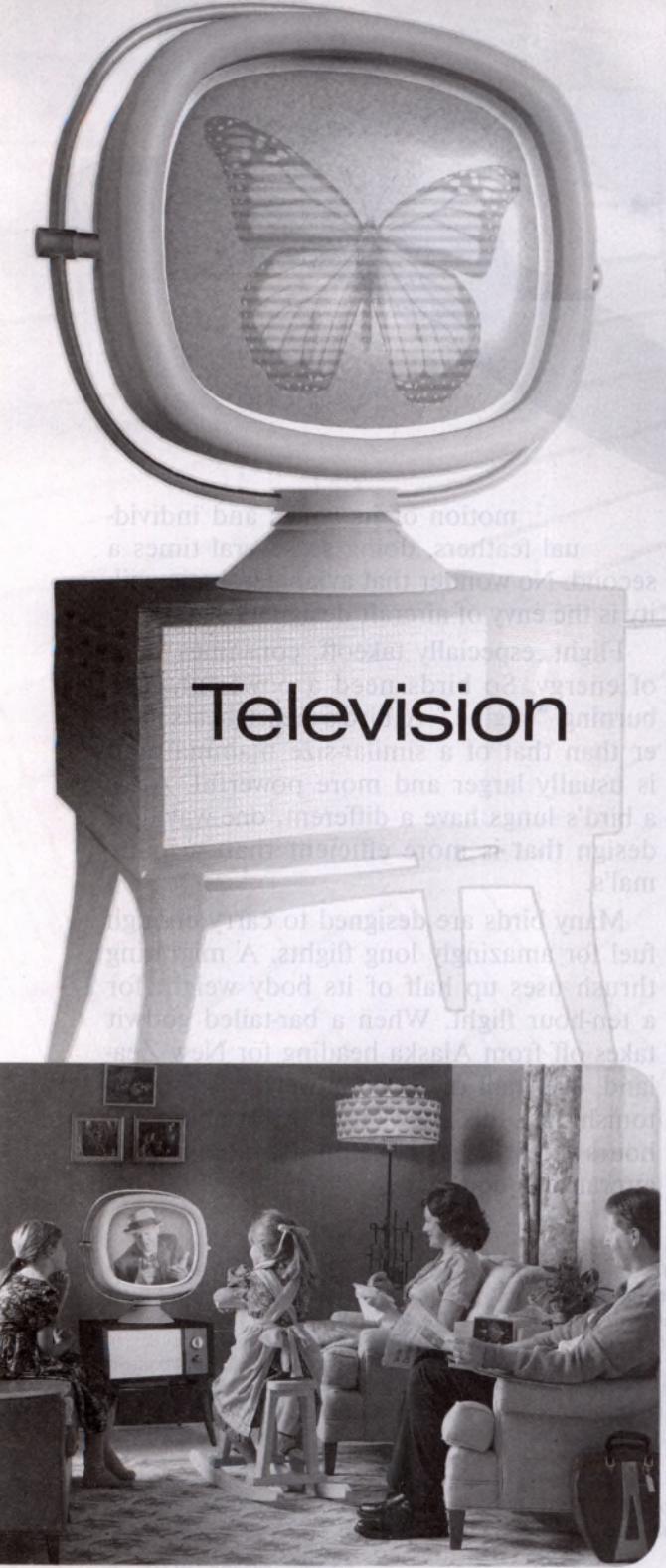
Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese⁺ (audio Mandarin only), Chinese (Simplified), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech⁺, Danish, Dutch,^{+,o} English,^{+,o} Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,^o French,^{+,o} Georgian, German,^{+,o} Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,^{+,o} Japanese,^{+,o} Kannada, Kirghiz, Korean,^{+,o} Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,⁺ Polish,^{+,o} Portuguese,^{+,o} Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,^{+,o} Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,^{+,o} Swahili, Swedish,^{+,o} Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

⁺ CD also available.

^o MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address. **America, United States of:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. **Australia:** PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** PO Box N-1247, Nassau, NP. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Am Steinfeins, 65618 Selters. **Guam:** 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St, Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii:** 2055 Kamehameha IV Road, Honolulu, HI 96819-2619. **Jamaica:** PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 47-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. **Puerto Rico:** PO Box 3980, Guayanabo, PR 00970. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.



Television

SOON after men learned to broadcast sound, inventors wondered if they could also transmit live pictures. To appreciate the challenge, consider how television works today.

First, a TV camera focuses a scene onto a target device that "reads" the picture, similar to the way you read print. However, instead of scanning lines of letters on the page, it scans lines of spots (or pixels) in the picture. It converts what it sees into an electronic video signal that can be transmitted to another place. A receiver then converts the signal back into a live picture.

A Scotsman named John Logie Baird has been credited with being the first to demonstrate a television. When poor health caused him to give up his job as an electrical engineer, he turned to a subject that had interested him since he was a teenager—how to build a machine that could transmit live images.

Baird's television camera used a disk (a hatbox, at first) perforated by about 30 holes arranged in a spiral. As the disk spun, the holes scanned successive lines of the picture and allowed light to fall on a photoelectric cell. The cell produced a video signal that was transmitted to a receiver. In the receiver the signal was amplified to illuminate a variable light behind a similar spinning disk to reproduce the picture. The challenge was to synchronize the disks. As Baird toiled on the project, he supported himself by shining shoes.

Baird transmitted the first television pictures from one end of his attic to the other on October 2, 1925. The first person ever to appear on TV was a frightened office boy from downstairs, who was pressed into service for half a crown. In 1928, Baird broadcast the first television pictures across the Atlantic. When John Baird arrived in person in New York, the timid Scotsman was acutely embarrassed when he was greeted by a pipe band. He was famous. But was he the first to transmit live pictures?



Nature Had It First

**"The hearing ear and the seeing eye
—Jehovah himself has made even both of
them."—Proverbs 20:12.**

YOUR eyes are like tiny television cameras. They convert images into electrical signals and transmit these signals along the optic nerve to the back of your brain, where the actual seeing takes place.

The eye is a marvel in miniature. Just an inch in diameter and one fourth of an ounce in weight, it is ingeniously engineered. For example, it has separate systems for dim and bright lighting, so that 30 minutes after entering a dark room, your eyes may become 10,000 times more sensitive to light.

In normal lighting, what gives you a clear picture? Your eye has over 100 times more light-sensitive cells (pixels) than most video cameras. Also, a large portion of those cells are packed into a small spot at the center of the retina called the fovea, which provides the sharpest vision. Since you shift your gaze several times a second, you get the impression that your whole field of vision is sharp. Remarkably, your eye's fovea is about the size of the dot at the end of this sentence.

Electrical signals from the light-sensitive cells pass from one nerve cell to another toward the optic nerve. But the nerve cells do

**The way the
eye processes
information attests
to its ingenious engineering**

more than just pass the signals on. They preprocess them, enhancing vital information and suppressing unneeded detail.

The visual cortex of your brain is like a sophisticated video receiver. It sharpens images by enhancing edges and compares the signals from cells sensitive to primary colors, so you can distinguish millions of colors. Your brain also compares the tiny dissimilarities between what your two eyes see, so you can perceive distance.

Consider how your eyes scan faces in a distant crowd and send electronic impulses to your brain, which then transforms the signals into clear images. Consider, too, how subtle details of those faces are compared with ones in your memory, so that you instantly recognize your friend. Is that process not awe-inspiring?

Automatic Navigation

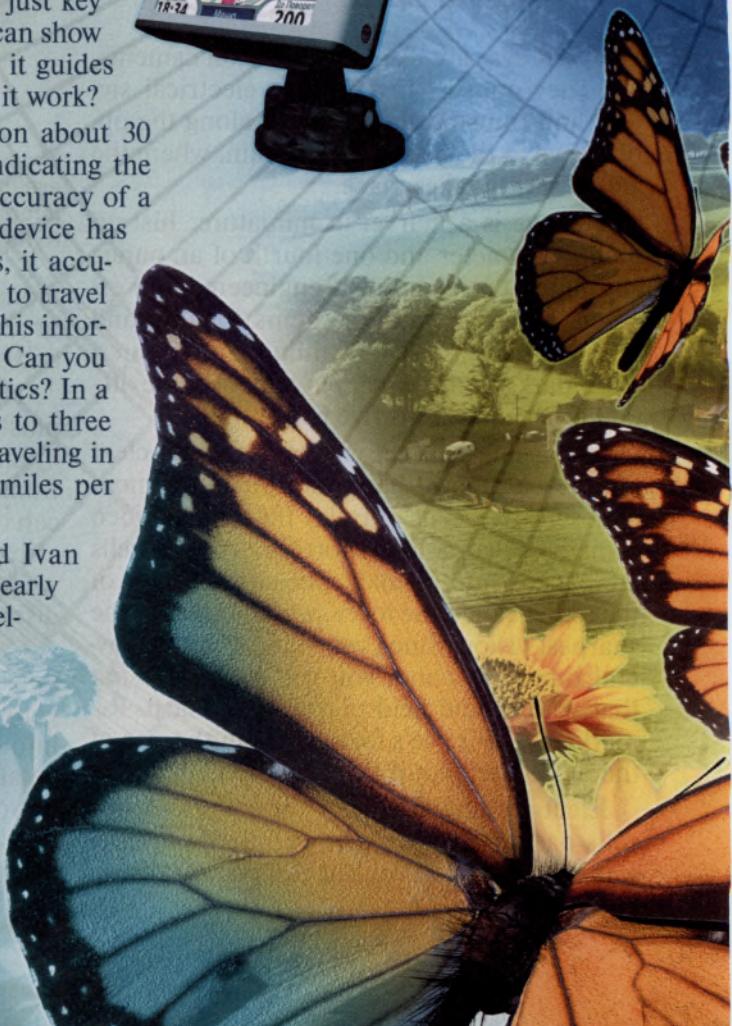
YOU probably know how difficult it can be to find your way across an unfamiliar town. So how can a navigator find his way across featureless oceans? Merely having a compass does not help unless a navigator knows what his position is in relation to his destination. Not until the invention of the sextant and the marine chronometer in the 1730's could navigators determine their exact location and plot their course on a map—with each fix requiring hours of calculation.

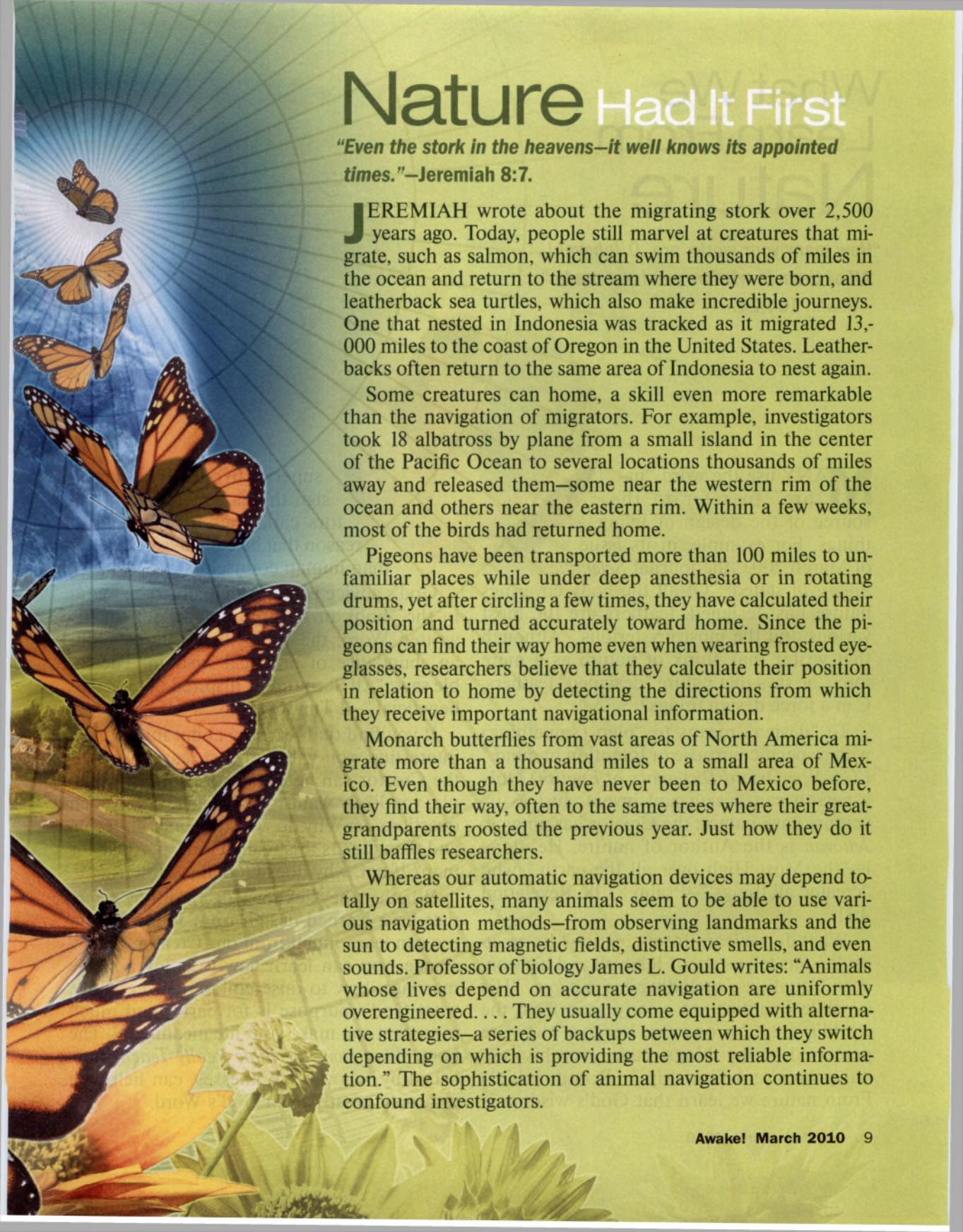
Today motorists in many countries navigate using relatively inexpensive devices linked to the Global Positioning System (GPS). You just key in your destination address. The device can show your exact position on its screen. Then it guides you to where you want to go. How does it work?

Satellite navigation devices depend on about 30 satellites that each broadcast signals indicating the satellite's position and the time to an accuracy of a few billionths of a second. Once your device has established contact with a few satellites, it accurately measures how long a signal takes to travel from the satellite to your receiver. With this information, it can determine your position. Can you imagine the complexity of the mathematics? In a few seconds, it computes the distances to three satellites, all thousands of miles away traveling in different directions at speeds of many miles per second.

Professors Bradford Parkinson and Ivan Getting invented the GPS back in the early 1960's. Although it was originally developed for military use, it was later made available to the public, becoming fully operational in 1996. A GPS receiver is a marvel of computer technology, but was it the first automatic navigation device?

Globe: Based on NASA photo





Nature Had It First

"Even the stork in the heavens—it well knows its appointed times."—Jeremiah 8:7.

JEREMIAH wrote about the migrating stork over 2,500 years ago. Today, people still marvel at creatures that migrate, such as salmon, which can swim thousands of miles in the ocean and return to the stream where they were born, and leatherback sea turtles, which also make incredible journeys. One that nested in Indonesia was tracked as it migrated 13,000 miles to the coast of Oregon in the United States. Leatherbacks often return to the same area of Indonesia to nest again.

Some creatures can home, a skill even more remarkable than the navigation of migrants. For example, investigators took 18 albatross by plane from a small island in the center of the Pacific Ocean to several locations thousands of miles away and released them—some near the western rim of the ocean and others near the eastern rim. Within a few weeks, most of the birds had returned home.

Pigeons have been transported more than 100 miles to unfamiliar places while under deep anesthesia or in rotating drums, yet after circling a few times, they have calculated their position and turned accurately toward home. Since the pigeons can find their way home even when wearing frosted eyeglasses, researchers believe that they calculate their position in relation to home by detecting the directions from which they receive important navigational information.

Monarch butterflies from vast areas of North America migrate more than a thousand miles to a small area of Mexico. Even though they have never been to Mexico before, they find their way, often to the same trees where their great-grandparents roosted the previous year. Just how they do it still baffles researchers.

Whereas our automatic navigation devices may depend totally on satellites, many animals seem to be able to use various navigation methods—from observing landmarks and the sun to detecting magnetic fields, distinctive smells, and even sounds. Professor of biology James L. Gould writes: “Animals whose lives depend on accurate navigation are uniformly overengineered. . . . They usually come equipped with alternative strategies—a series of backups between which they switch depending on which is providing the most reliable information.” The sophistication of animal navigation continues to confound investigators.

What We Learn From Nature

**"How many your works are, O Jehovah!
All of them in wisdom you have made."**
—Psalm 104:24.

MANY use the word “nature” to refer to the source of the design of living things. For example, in its issue of March 2003, the journal *Scientific American* stated: “Of all the body coverings nature has designed, feathers are the most various and the most mysterious.” Although that writer may think of nature as a mere force, he says that nature “designed” feathers. Can a force design things?

To “design” means to “plan (something) with a specific purpose or intention in mind.” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*) Only a person can design and invent. Just as inventors have names, the Creator has a name. Jehovah is the Author of nature. He alone is “the Most High over all the earth,” who “created all things.”—Psalm 83:18; Revelation 4:11.

What do we learn from creation? Its greatest lessons tell us about Jehovah and his wonderful qualities, including his *wisdom*. “His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship.” (Romans 1:20) From nature we learn that God’s wisdom is



superior to ours. If he can design things better than inventors can, does it not stand to reason that he can advise us better than human counselors can?

God’s advice is not principally to be found in the “book of nature” but, rather, in his written Word, the Bible. In it you can find an abundance of practical wisdom. The Bible says: “All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial.”—2 Timothy 3:16.

If you find that learning about inventors is interesting, you will find that learning about the Creator can be even more so. For example, you likely want to know answers to such questions as: Why do we experience suffering and then die? Is this really God’s purpose for man? If not, why does God allow suffering?

Whether they acknowledge it or not, scientists have learned design from Jehovah. You too can learn much from our Creator. For instance, you can learn how to enjoy a stable marriage, how to raise children successfully, what God’s purpose is for earth, and much more that can make your life meaningful. The book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses, can help you to benefit greatly from God’s Word.

Medical Care on Wheels

● A pregnant woman sat in a large auditorium listening attentively to a program of Bible instruction. Suddenly, she felt sharp labor pains. But the emergency was under control. An ambulance was at hand, and within a few minutes, the woman and her husband arrived at the hospital. She gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

Today, intensive-care-unit ambulances play an important role in the health systems of many countries. These vehicles are staffed by qualified personnel—doctors, nurses, and trained drivers.* They are fully equipped to handle such emergencies as road accidents, heart attacks, strokes, or imminent births. Every year this rapid medical care on wheels saves thousands of lives.

In the 2004 attacks on four passenger trains in Madrid, Spain, some 400 lives were saved because the ambulance teams reacted quickly and efficiently.[#] Dr. Ervilio Corral Torres, director of Madrid's emergency services unit, recalls that ordeal.

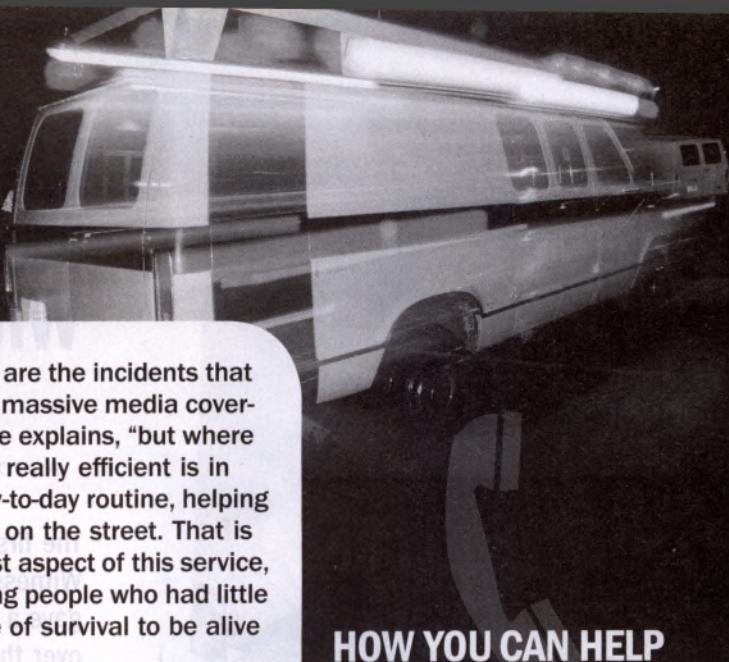
* Drivers must know how to use the ambulance medical equipment and how to drive according to the type of patient they carry.

[#] See *Awake!* of November 8, 2004, page 14.

"These are the incidents that attract massive media coverage," he explains, "but where we are really efficient is in the day-to-day routine, helping people on the street. That is the best aspect of this service, enabling people who had little chance of survival to be alive now."

When asked what he would recommend to facilitate their work, Dr. Corral Torres replied: "We should increase people's awareness of the need to call us when there is reason to do so." He added: "Our goal is to take specialized medical care to the people wherever and whenever they need it and to do so as quickly as possible once we receive the call." In large cities, help usually arrives within ten minutes.

In some congested cities, such as São Paulo, Brazil, traffic creates serious problems for ambulance drivers, so medics on two wheels do the job. They can arrive by motorbike ahead of the ambulance to evaluate and stabilize emergency situations. Other cities that have implemented this speedy service are London, England; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Miami, United States.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Some basic steps that you can take in an emergency to help mobile medical teams fulfill their life-saving work include:

1. Call the emergency number immediately. It is 112 in the European Union and 911 in the United States.
2. State clearly the place of the emergency.
3. Describe the obvious symptoms. For example, Is the person breathing? Is he conscious? Is he bleeding?
4. If there are multiple injuries, do not move the person since doing so can make injuries worse.
5. If the person is vomiting, place him on his side to prevent choking.



What Attracted Me to Jehovah's Witnesses

AS TOLD BY TOMÁS OROSCO

The first time I attended a meeting of the Witnesses at their Kingdom Hall, a little boy gave a talk. Although he was barely able to see over the speaker's stand, his poise and skill were remarkable. I was truly impressed.

THE audience, I could see, was paying rapt attention. Since I had served as a Bolivian military diplomat to the United States, a commander of the armed forces, and a personal assistant to the president, I was used to receiving respect. But the respect this child received caused me to reexamine my goals in life.

My father died in the mid-1930's, in the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia. Soon afterward, I was sent to a Catholic boarding school. For many years, I attended daily Mass, where we sang hymns, listened to catechism, and repeated memorized prayers. I even served as an altar boy and sang in the choir. Yet, I never read the Bible; in fact, I had never seen one.

I enjoyed the religious holy days because they were more like a party, and I liked the change of routine. But the priests and others who taught religion were harsh. They repelled

rather than attracted me. I felt I had gone as far as I could with religion.

Military Order Attracted Me

One fine sunny day, two smartly dressed young military officers came to my hometown, Tarija. They were on leave from La Paz, Bolivia's principal city. They walked through the main plaza with ease and grace. I was impressed with their regal, clean, dignified appearance. They were sporting green dress uniforms, complete with a hat that had a shiny brim. Right then and there, I decided to become a military officer. I thought their lives must be rich with experiences and filled with honorable deeds.

In 1949, when I was 16, I was admitted to Bolivia's military college. My older brother accompanied me in the long line of young men that stretched up to the gate to the barracks. He introduced me to the lieutenant, with a request that he take good care of

With my brother Renato, in 1950



Attending a social event together with military personnel from China and other countries

me. Then he put in a word of recommendation in my behalf. When he left, I received the customary greeting for new recruits. I was knocked to the ground and told, "We will see who recommends whom here!" Such was my introduction to military discipline and intimidation. However, I was resilient, and nothing more than my pride was hurt.

In time, I learned how to wage war and became a respected military officer. But through experience, I learned that the clean and dignified exterior of military personnel can be misleading.

Achieving a Distinguished Position

Early in my career, I trained aboard the Argentine Navy battle cruiser *General Belgrano*, which could accommodate over a thousand personnel. Before World War II, it had been launched in the United States as the *USS Phoenix* and later survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941.

Eventually, I ascended through the ranks and became second in command of Bolivia's Navy, which patrols the waterways that form Bolivia's frontiers. These waterways included the rivers of the Amazon Basin, as well as the highest navigable lake in the world, Lake Titicaca.

In the meantime, in May 1980, I was chosen to be part of a commission of military diplomats sent to Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. A top-ranking officer was chosen from each branch of service—army, air force, and navy—and I was named coordinator of the group because of my seniority. I lived in the United States for almost two years and later became the personal assistant to the president of Bolivia.

As a military commander, I was obligated to attend church every Sunday. The involvement of the army chaplain and the priests in revolutions and wars left me

disillusioned with religion. I knew that the position of the churches in supporting such bloodshed was wrong. Yet, instead of such hypocrisy causing me to abandon religion, it nudged me to search for spiritual truth. I had never read the Bible, so I began to pick it up from time to time and read random texts.

Orderliness at the Kingdom Hall

To my surprise, my wife, Manuela, started studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a missionary named Janet. Later, Manuela began attending meetings at their place of worship, the Kingdom Hall. I had no problem with driving her there, but I didn't want to attend. I assumed that the meetings would be noisy and emotional.

One day Manuela asked if I would accept a visit from Janet's husband. At first, I resisted the proposal. Then I thought that with all my religious training, I would be able to refute anything he could say. When I first met Ian, it was his demeanor that impressed me—not particularly what he said. He didn't try to embarrass me with his training and Bible knowledge. Rather, he was kind and respectful.

The following week, I decided to go to the Kingdom Hall where, as I mentioned at the outset, I heard the little boy speak. As I listened to him read and explain texts from the Bible book of Isaiah, I knew I had found a unique organization. It is ironic that as a youth, I wanted to be a respected military officer, yet now I wanted to be like that boy and provide Bible instruction. It was as if my heart suddenly softened and became receptive.

- sons in addition to Solomon.
4. Bath-sheba. 5. David and Bath-sheba had four raised. 3. The meat was lamb, not pork.
bread should be unleavened and therefore flat, not
2. There should be only 11 apostles, not 12. 2. The

As time went by, I was also struck by the punctuality of the Witnesses and the cordial way they always greeted me and made me feel at home. Their clean, neat dress also impressed me. What I especially liked was the good order of the meetings—if a certain talk was scheduled, that is exactly what I would hear that day. I could appreciate that this was discipline based on love, not intimidation.

After my first meeting, I agreed to study the Bible with Ian. We used the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* as a study guide.* I can still remember the third chapter, with its picture of a bishop blessing the troops before a battle. I didn't doubt its accuracy for a moment because with my own eyes, I had seen that very thing happen. At the Kingdom Hall, I obtained the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures*. When I read what the Bible says about neutrality, I knew I had some changes to make. I decided never to return to the Catholic Church, and I began regularly attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall. I also made plans to retire from the military.

Progressing Toward Baptism

A few weeks later, I heard that the congregation would be cleaning the coliseum that was to be used for an upcoming convention. I was excited about attending and went along to help with cleaning the facilities. I worked right along with the others, truly enjoying the work and association. As I was sweeping the floor, a young man approached and asked if I was the admiral.

"Yes," I replied.

"I can't believe it!" he cried in amazement. "An admiral is sweeping the floor!" A high-ranking officer would never be seen picking up a piece of paper, let alone cleaning the floor. The man had been my personal military chauffeur and was now one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

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

Cooperation Based on Love

Military order is based on respect for rank, which had become in me a deeply embedded concept. For instance, I remember asking if some of Jehovah's Witnesses were higher than others by virtue of their positions of responsibility or the tasks they performed. My view regarding rank and position was still deeply ingrained, but it was soon to change dramatically.

About that time—in 1989—I learned that a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses from New York was scheduled to visit Bolivia and give a talk in the coliseum. I looked forward to seeing how an "elite" member of the organization would be treated. I thought that one with such responsibility would arrive with a certain amount of pomp and fanfare.

Well, when the meeting started, there was no indication that anyone special had arrived, and I began to wonder. It happened that sitting next to me and Manuela was an elderly couple. Manuela noticed that the wife had an English songbook, so during a break in the program, Manuela began conversing with the woman. But after that the couple left.

How surprised both of us were when later

the woman's husband walked to the platform to deliver the main talk! In that moment, in my mind, everything I had learned in the military about rank, respect, power, and position was rewritten. "Imagine that," I said afterward, "the brother sitting with us in those uncomfortable stadium seats was a member of the Governing Body!"

I smile now when I think of how many times Ian had tried to help me understand Jesus' words found at Matthew 23:8: *"All you are brothers."*

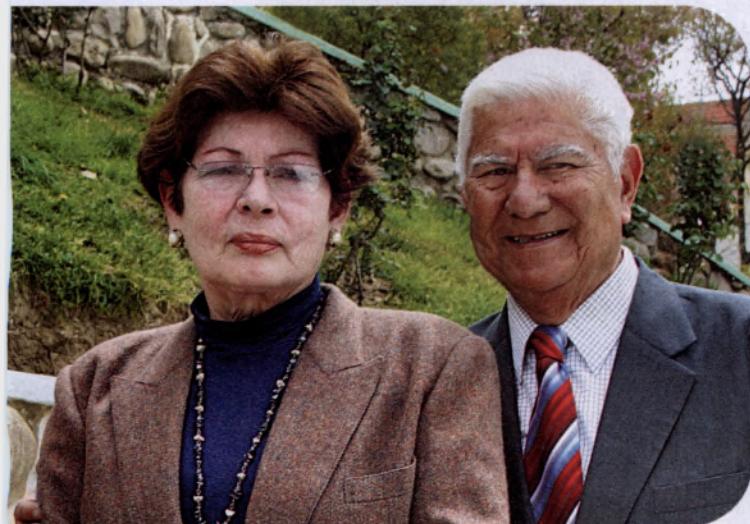
Preaching for the First Time

When I completed my military obligations, Ian invited me to share in house-to-house preaching with him. (Acts 20:20) The neighborhood we went to was one I was hoping to avoid—it was filled with military housing. A general whom I especially wanted to avoid answered the door. I felt nervous and scared, especially when he noted my briefcase and Bible and asked with disdain, "What happened to you?"

After a quick prayer, a feeling of confidence and calm swept over me. The general listened to my presentation and even accepted some Bible literature. That experience encouraged me to dedicate my life to Jehovah.

I symbolized my dedication by water baptism on January 3, 1990.

In time, my wife, my son, and my daughter also became Jehovah's Witnesses. I now enjoy serving in the congregation as an elder and full-time preacher of the good news of God's Kingdom. The most precious privilege I have is to know Jehovah and be known by him. This eclipses any rank or position anyone could aspire to or reach. Indeed, orderliness should not be harsh and unyielding but warm and caring. Jehovah is a God of order, but more important, he is a God of love.—1 Corinthians 14:33, 40; 1 John 4:8.



The Faeroe Islands

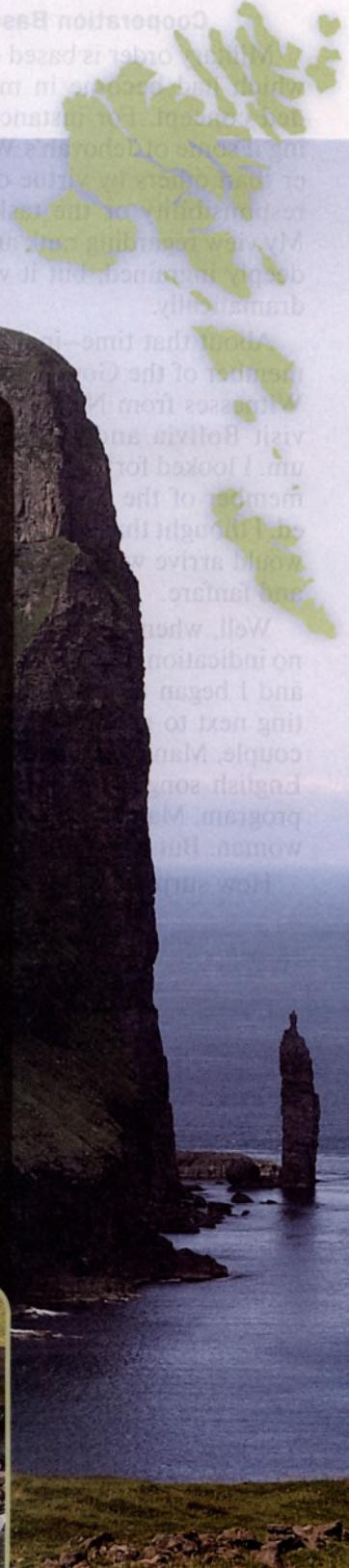
UNIQUELY CONNECTED

THE Faeroe Islands, a tiny cluster of 18 islands in the restless waters of the North Atlantic, are populated by a people with their own language—Faeroese. On these breathtakingly beautiful islands, steep, rugged mountains drop dramatically toward the sea. Near the sea, houses in the villages are painted in many colors. In summer the grass-covered hilltops shine with a greenness beyond compare.

Although the islands' 48,000 inhabitants function as a community, doing so has not always been easy. Rowboats were formerly used to carry people and commodities from island to island. Travel between villages was by foot over steep mountains and through deep ravines. Building a house when all the materials had to arrive by rowboat was a formidable task. Before construction could begin, the materials had to be carried to the site from a small natural harbor on the coast.

The Early Population

The earliest available accounts about the Faeroe Islands were written by an Irish monk about 825 C.E. He relates that there had been solitary Irish monks on the islands over a hundred years before him. However, a settlement on the islands reportedly began in the early ninth century with the arrival of Grimur Kamban from Norway.



Although the early population earned their living by fishing, these settlers also took up sheep farming. In Faeroese the name Føroyar (Faeroe Islands) means "Sheep Islands," and sheep farming has remained important. Wool has served as protection against the wind, rain, and cold. In fact, it used to be said that 'wool is the gold of the Faeroes.'

Even today, more sheep than people live on the islands. Sheep are slaughtered in the traditional way, with the meat being hung up to dry in sheds where the wind can freely pass through the walls. This brings a particularly desirable flavor to the meat, making it a great delicacy.

As might be expected with a small, isolated population, the Faeroese feel strongly united by the kind of bonds that form among people who depend on one another for survival. And today that feeling has remained, as modern methods of travel and communication have made contact with fellow islanders easier.

Connected by Tunnels

The first tunnel in the Faeroes opened in 1963. It was cut through a mountain on the southernmost island, Suðuroy, where it connects two villages. The tunneling, which involved extensive digging, drilling, and dynamiting, was done simultaneously from both sides of the mountain.



This tunnel takes traffic some 500 feet below the sea and connects two of the larger islands

A tunnel constructed more recently takes traffic some 500 feet below the sea and connects two of the larger islands. To excavate it, a 17-foot-long drill was used to bore into the rock mass. Then dynamite was placed at the end of the hole and ignited. After the explosion, rocks and boulders were removed, thus clearing a 17-foot-long section of the tunnel. This procedure was repeated until the tunnel reached a length of about 3.8 miles. It was opened for traffic on April 29, 2006.

The Faeroe Islands now have 18 tunnels, two of which are below the sea and connect islands. No other nation in the world has more miles of tunnels in proportion to its number of inhabitants. Yet, new tunnels are on the drawing board. Parliament has decided to build two more between major islands. One of them, expected to be finished in 2012, will be 7.4 miles long, making it one of the longest underwater tunnels in the world.

Another Unique Bond

The Faeroe Islands have one group of people united by a bond of a different kind—the strong spiritual bond that exists among Jehovah's Witnesses. The first Witnesses to visit the islands—two devoted women who arrived from Denmark in 1935—spent the summer walking from house to house carrying the Bible's message about God's Kingdom. In time, some islanders embraced the encouraging message and joined in preaching it.—Matthew 24:14.

Today, there are about a hundred Witnesses who gather for their meetings in four Kingdom Halls on the islands. They zealously carry out their ministry, assisted in their work by the fine roads and tunnels that form physical connections between these fascinating islands in the restless North Atlantic.



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

Is it wrong to want some privacy?



Put a ✓ next to your most likely response in each of the following scenarios.

1. You're in your bedroom with the door closed, and your sibling barges in without knocking.

- 'No problem . . . I do the same thing to my sibling.'
- 'How rude! What if I'd been getting dressed?'

2. You're talking to a friend on the phone, and your mom is within earshot, obviously listening to every word.

- 'No problem . . . I have nothing to hide.'
- 'How awkward! I feel like I'm being spied on!'

3. You just got home, and now both parents start plying you with questions. "Where did you go? What did you do? Who went along?"

- 'No problem . . . I usually tell them everything anyway.'
- 'How frustrating! My parents just don't trust me!'

WHEN you were younger, privacy probably wasn't such a big deal. If your younger sibling barged into your room, you welcomed the company. If your parents asked you a question, you answered without hesitation. Back then, your life was an open book. Now there may be times when you wish you could close the cover. "I like it when I can just

keep some things to myself," says 14-year-old Corey.*

Why the sudden desire for privacy? In part, it's because you're growing up. For example, the bodily changes that take place during adolescence can leave you highly self-conscious

* Some names in this article have been changed.

—even in the presence of your family. Also as you grow, you start feeling as never before the need to ponder over matters privately. This is a sign that you are developing “thinking ability”—a quality that the Bible praises in a young person. (Proverbs 1:1, 4; Deuteronomy 32:29) Even Jesus went to “a lonely place” for deep thought.—Matthew 14:13.

Of course, you’re still under your parents’ authority, and they have a right to be aware of what’s happening in your life. (Ephesians 6:1) But when you combine their need to know with your need to grow, there may be some conflict. How can you deal with the challenge? Let’s look at two areas where problems might arise.

When You Seek Solitude

There are a number of valid reasons for you to seek out solitude. Perhaps you just want to “rest up a bit.” (Mark 6:31) Or when you want to pray, you may, as Jesus advised his disciples, “go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father.” (Matthew 6:6; Mark 1:35) The problem is, when you shut the door to *your* private room (if you have one), your parents may not think you’re praying! And your siblings may not understand when you simply want to be alone.

What you can do. Rather than turn your bedroom into a battle zone, do the following.

- When it comes to your siblings, try setting a few reasonable ground rules so that you can have some time to yourself. If needed, see if your parents can help in this regard.
- When it comes to your parents, strive to understand their viewpoint. “At times, my parents check up on me,” says 16-year-old Rebekah. “But to be honest, I would check up on my teenager if I were a parent—especially knowing all the temptations young people face today!” Like Rebekah, can you perceive your parents’ underlying concerns?—Proverbs 19:11.

- Ask yourself honestly: ‘Have I given my parents reason to suspect that I’m up to no

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY



Eden

“If young people are open with their parents about things, then the parents will have less reason to read their teenagers’ e-mails and text messages to find out what’s going on in their life. **”**



Kevin

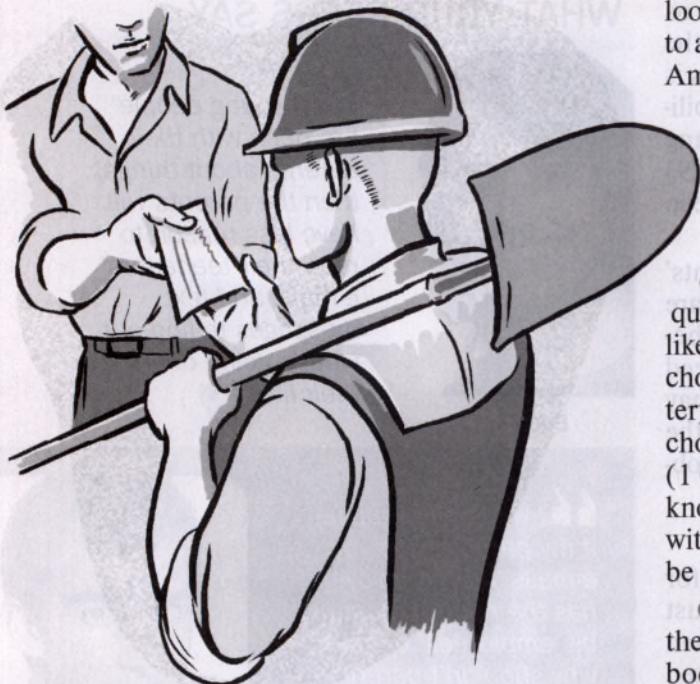
“I wouldn’t be upset if my parents read my e-mails. If an employer has the right to monitor his employees’ e-mails, why shouldn’t parents be able to monitor the e-mails of their children? **”**



Alana

“Parents don’t want anything to happen to you, and at times they may seem to intrude on your privacy. It doesn’t seem fair. But honestly, if I were a parent, I would probably do the same thing. **”**

good when my door is closed? Have I been so secretive about my personal life that they feel they must resort to covert tactics to learn



Trust is like a paycheck—it must be earned

about me?" Generally, the more open you are with your parents, the less suspicious they will be.*

Action plan. Below, write what you might say to bring up this topic with your parents.

.....
.....
.....

When You Make Friends

During adolescence, it's normal for you to form friendships outside your family. It's also normal for your parents to wonder who your friends are and what you're doing with them. To your parents, this is just part of their job—standard operating procedure. To you, however, your parents' concern might seem to border on paranoia. "I just want to have my cell phone and my e-mail without my parents'

* If your parents still seem untrusting, calmly and respectfully tell them how you feel. *Really listen* to their concerns, and make sure there is nothing you are doing that is contributing to the problem.—James 1:19.

looking over my shoulder every ten minutes to ask me who I'm talking to," says 16-year-old Amy.

What you can do. Instead of letting your friendships create a barrier between you and your parents, try the following.

● Bring your friends out into the open, and make sure your parents are acquainted with them. After all, you might not like your parents' playing detective, but what choice do they have if your friends are a mystery? Remember, your parents know that your choice of friends will have a big effect on you. (1 Corinthians 15:33) The more your parents know about the people you're spending time with, the more comfortable they're likely to be about your choice of friends.

● Respectfully talk to your parents about the matter. Don't accuse them of being busybodies. Instead, you might say something like, "I feel as if everything I say to my friends is being scrutinized and judged. It's very difficult for me even to hold a conversation." Perhaps your parents will allow you a little more privacy with regard to your friends.
—Proverbs 16:23.

● Be honest with yourself: Is the issue privacy, or is it secrecy? Brittany, 22, says: "If you're living at home and your parents have a concern, your thought should be, 'What I'm doing isn't bad, so why should I have to hide it?' On the other hand, if you *need* to hide it, then something else is going on."

TO THINK ABOUT

- Why do your parents have a right to be inquisitive about your life?
- How might your efforts to build skill in communicating with your parents help you to communicate with other adults later in life?

Action plan. Below, write what you might say to bring up this topic with your parents.

Privacy and You

Now you'll have opportunity to brainstorm some solutions to a specific area of privacy that concerns you.

Step 1: Identify the issue.

In what area do you feel that you would like more privacy?

Step 2: Consider your parents' viewpoint.

What do you think could be their underlying concern?

A NOTE TO PARENTS

● Your son is in his bedroom with the door closed. Should you barge in without knocking?

● Your daughter left her cell phone behind as she rushed off to school. Should you peek at her stored text messages?

These are not easy questions to answer. On the one hand, you have a right to know what is going on in your adolescent's life and an obligation to keep him or her safe. On the other hand, you cannot forever be a "helicopter parent," suspiciously hovering over your child and monitoring his or her every move. How, then, can you strike a balance?

First, recognize that an adolescent's desire for privacy

does not always spell trouble. Often, it is a normal part of growth. Privacy helps adolescents 'test their wings' as they forge their own friendships and think through their problems using their "power of reason." (Romans 12:1, 2) Privacy also helps adolescents develop thinking ability—a vital quality if they are to function as responsible adults. (1 Corinthians 13:11) It also gives them opportunity to meditate before answering difficult questions.—Proverbs 15:28.

Second, realize that attempts to micromanage your adolescent's life may breed resentment and rebellion. (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21) Does this mean that you

should back off? No, for you are still the parent. However, the goal is for your child to acquire a trained conscience. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Proverbs 22:6) In the end, guidance is more effective than surveillance.

Third, discuss the matter with your adolescent. Listen to his or her concerns. Might there be times when you could be yielding? (Philippians 4:5) Let your adolescent know that you will allow him or her a measure of privacy as long as your trust is not betrayed. Outline the consequences of disobedience, and follow through if it becomes necessary. Be assured that you can give your adolescent some privacy without relinquishing your role as a caring parent.

Step 3: Work at solutions.

(a) Think of at least one way you might inadvertently be contributing to the problem, and write it below.

(b) What changes could you make regarding your answer above?

(c) In what way would you like your parents to address your concerns?

Step 4: Talk it out.

At an appropriate time, discuss with your parents what you have written above.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

Snakes in Worship

PAST AND PRESENT

THE ancient Egyptians worshipped snakes, as did the Minoans, early inhabitants of Crete. Some ancient Israelites offered sacrifices to a copper serpent. Others from the same nation took up burning incense before images of “creeping things.”—Ezekiel 8:10-12; 2 Kings 18:4.

Worship of snake-gods also engrossed peoples of ancient Mexico. The supreme deity of the Maya—Itzamná—was at times represented by a serpent. Quetzalcoatl, the “feathered serpent,” was the Toltec god of learning, culture, and philosophy. The Aztecs also viewed it as the god of learning and even revered it as the creator of humans. Regarding that god’s many roles and talents, the magazine *Arqueología Mexicana* (Mexican Archaeology) states: “The feathered serpent accumulated multiple meanings, more perhaps than any other deity.”

For many centuries the inhabitants of Mesoamerica worshipped the feathered serpent. Today, belief in that god survives among the Cora and Huichol people of Mexico. On certain fiesta days, dances are performed in which the participants adorn themselves with feathers and simulate the movements of a snake. The Quiche perform a fertility rite in which they dance using live snakes. The Chorti, a Maya group in Guatemala, venerate a feathered serpent that they associate with certain Catholic saints.

The question is, How does the Creator of man and animals—including snakes—view the worship of serpent-gods?

God's View of Snake Worship

Jehovah God gave this command to the ancient nation of Israel: “You must not make for

A feathered-serpent head on an Aztec temple wall



▲ Bas-relief of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered-serpent god of the Toltec

yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them.”—Exodus 20:4, 5.

Jehovah prohibited his people from worshipping images of animals, such as snakes. Thus, should it not be clear that those desirous of his favor must avoid the worship of snakes? Why does God reject idolatry, including snake worship? The reason is simple: He gives life to humans, to snakes, and to all other living things. They are all the works of his

hands, so worship is due him, not the things he has created.

To illustrate: Suppose that an architect constructed houses and gave them to families to live in and enjoy. What if those families thanked and praised the houses rather than the architect? Would that not be foolish, as well as offensive to the generous architect? Similarly, worshipping animals rather than their Creator is offensive to God.

Clearly, those who wish to have God's approval should heed the warning of the apostle John: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”—1 John 5:21.

WORSHIPPING WITH SNAKE IN HAND

● In the southeastern United States, a few charismatic churches practice handling live poisonous snakes. Some individuals drape one of the venomous creatures over their shoulders, while others pick up several snakes at once. Lifting and moving the snakes can startle them and cause them to bite. Over the years, some snake-handling worshippers have died of snakebites.

Snake handlers base their actions on Mark 16:17, 18. Those verses include the words: “With their hands they will pick up serpents.” The King James Version and other older translations present those verses as if they were part of the original text. The New Revised Standard Version, The New American Standard Bible, and The New King James Version note that those verses do not appear in most of the oldest manuscripts of Mark’s Gospel.

The teachings of the Bible do not support the idea that snake handling is an acceptable



REUTERS/Tami Chappell

feature of true worship. The Bible says: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8) You will probably agree that our loving Creator would not require that his true worshippers carry out dangerous rituals in order to please him. His Son, Jesus, offered the invitation: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you.” (Matthew 11:28, 29) Surely, handling snakes and possibly suffering pain, sickness, and even death as a result is not what Jehovah and Jesus desire for their followers!

The Odessa Catacombs

An Underground Maze

A LONG crack appeared in the freshly plastered wall of a newly remodeled apartment. "Oh, it's those catacombs causing our building to tilt," the owner groaned.

Whatever the problem might be—whether a water pipe bursts or a road caves in—the tunnels below Ukraine's beautiful city of Odessa on the Black Sea are blamed. Thought to consist of 1,500 miles of underground passages, they may be the world's largest catacombs.

"How did these tunnels come to be?" we wondered. "What role do they play in the lives of those who live above them?" A tour of them answered our questions.

An Underground Journey

Our tour bus departed from the Odessa train station with an excited group of vacationers and students. During our ride to the catacombs, the guide filled us in on some of their history.

We learned that the digging of the catacombs appears to have begun in the 1830's, when the city needed inexpensive and readily available building material. Conveniently, beneath the city lay long veins of lightweight, durable yellow limestone. So stonecutting became a profitable business for the growing city. As miners excavated stone, the catacombs began to take shape.

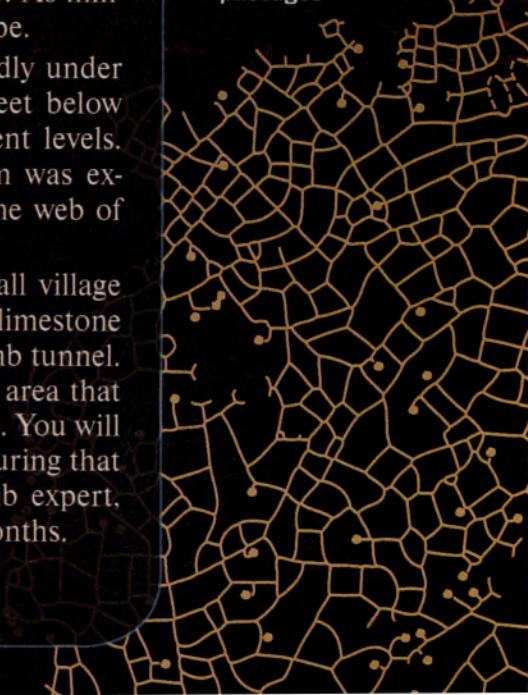
An unmapped maze quickly spread out haphazardly under the city. Tunnels were dug more than a hundred feet below ground level. Sometimes they crisscrossed at different levels. Shafts were abandoned when the limestone in them was exhausted, and then new ones were started. In time, the web of tunnels extended into the outlying countryside.

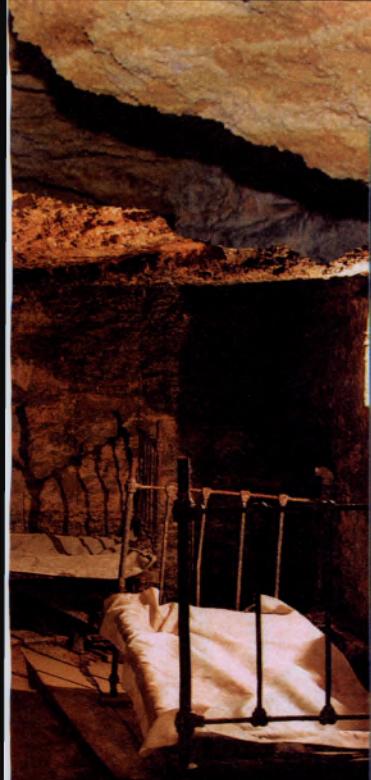
Before long, our bus arrived at Nerubaiske, a small village just north of Odessa. Soon we were standing next to a limestone wall with a heavy metal gate that sealed off a catacomb tunnel. Our guide informed us: "We will now be entering an area that was occupied by Soviet partisans during World War II. You will be able to get an idea of what their life was like here during that time." According to Andriy Krasnozhon, a catacomb expert, one partisan group lived below ground here for 13 months.



▲ Hospital beds used by the Soviets during World War II

▼ The Odessa catacombs are thought to consist of 1,500 miles of underground passages





"Remember," our guide added, "at one time or another, many others occupied the different sections of the catacombs. These included bandits, pirates, and political refugees. They all experienced basically the same conditions."

We entered a gloomy corridor that faded into darkness. "These tunnels for the partisans were not just a hideout but were equipped as comfortably as possible," our guide said. "In the recreation room, men played checkers, chess, or dominoes by candlelight. Rooms to accommodate men and women were cut into the rock off the main tunnel. Inside each room a shelf was cut into the wall and strewn with hay. This served as a sleeping shelf. The hospital wing was equipped with real beds and an operating theater. Women cooked on a woodstove made from the yellow limestone, and smoke was vented to a tunnel above."

The ceiling of the tunnel resembled a large, natural sponge, only it was not soft to the touch. Saw marks zigzagged down the walls where blocks of stone had been cut out. The walls felt like coarse sandpaper. "When the partisans went topside, they changed their clothes so the Germans could not sniff them out," our guide explained. "The dampness of the catacombs permeated clothes with a distinctive odor."

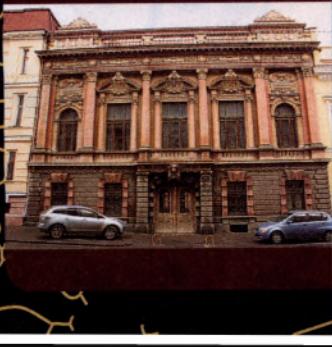
"There were other peculiarities of life underground," our guide said, "such as living in total darkness." She flipped a light switch, plunging us into darkness. "They couldn't always burn their kerosene lamps," she noted. As we groped along the wall, she added, "The rocks absorb sound, so if you get lost, no one is going to hear your screams." Mercifully, our guide turned the lights on again!

"Guards on sentry duty worked only two-hour shifts," she continued, "because after a long time in the darkness and in total silence, a person could experience auditory hallucinations." A hole in the roof of the tunnel allowed us to see an upper tunnel that cut across the one we were in. I wondered: 'Where does it come from? Where does it go?' I felt a sense of adventure. "Only about a thousand miles of the catacombs have been mapped," our guide noted, "so there is still much work to do."

Recent explorers have discovered new tunnels. Inside they have found century-old newspapers, prerevolutionary kerosene lamps, and money from czarist days. Such discoveries—untouched for decades—belonged to the bygone occupants of the deep, dark, and long catacombs of Odessa.—Contributed.

ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES

Beautiful buildings made of excavated yellow limestone still stand in downtown Odessa. The doors in the basements of some open directly into the catacombs. New buildings continue to be built with this limestone.



Fast Food FOR INSECTS

- Insects readily feast on quick, high-calorie food. A convenient source is a flower head. Like fast-food chains, flowers advertise their presence with bright colors. Finding the flowers attractive, insects alight on the flowers, where they can munch on pollen or sip nectar.

Being particularly sluggish after a cool night, these cold-blooded creatures need the sun's energy to get going. Many flowers offer the insects a complete package—nutritious food and a place to bask in the sun. Let's take a look at a familiar example.

The oxeye daisy is a common flower that grows throughout much of Europe and North America. It may not seem special, but if you take the time to inspect it, you will see a lot of activity. This daisy offers an ideal place for insects to start the day. The white petals reflect the sun's warmth, and the yellow center offers a good resting place where insects can soak up solar energy.*

To make the visit even more appetizing, the center of the daisy is replete with pollen and nectar, nutritious foods that many insects thrive on. What better place could an insect find for having a good breakfast and enjoying the sun?

Thus, a whole parade of insects alight on oxeye daisies during the course of the day. You may spot beetles, colorful butterflies, shield bugs, crickets, and flies of every sort. Of course, if you are not observant, you may never notice these fascinating insect "fast-food chains."

Therefore, the next time you are in the countryside, why not make an effort to examine some of these inconspicuous daisy ecosystems? If you do, the experience is likely to enhance your appreciation for the Creator who designed them all.

* Scientists have discovered that the temperature on the surface of some flowers is several degrees warmer than the surroundings.



Abandoned "Toys"

"The bad economy is creating a flotilla of forsaken boats," says *The New York Times* of the situation in the United States. Owners are sandpapering the names off their boats, removing registry numbers, and then abandoning their vessels or sinking them, sometimes with a view to making claims on their insurance. What is behind this? "Some . . . are in the same bind as overstretched homeowners: they face steep payments on an asset that is diminishing in value and decide not to continue," notes the *Times*, which calls the boats "expensive-to-maintain toys that have lost their appeal." The newspaper explains: "The owners cannot sell them, because the second-hand market is overwhelmed. They cannot afford to spend hundreds of dollars a month mooring and maintaining them. And they do not have the thousands of dollars required to properly dispose of them."

Preschoolers' Body Image

Children as young as four are "attempting to alter their appearance to conform to the body ideal endorsed by society," reports Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph*.

"People who don't smoke, are physically active, drink alcohol in moderation, and eat at least five servings of fruits or vegetables a day live 14 years longer, on average, than those with none of these attributes." The conclusion is based on an 11-year study of 20,000 people.—UC BERKELEY WELLNESS LETTER, U.S.A.

"Reading is the best way to relax. . . . Even six minutes is enough to cut stress by more than two-thirds."—INDIA TODAY INTERNATIONAL, INDIA

Children Shopping Online

"A fifth of children [in the United Kingdom] are shopping online without parental permission and half of those who make a purchase are using their parents' credit cards," reports *The Daily Telegraph* of London. Many children know the sites and passwords their parents use for online shopping—which may also give them easy access to their parents' credit card number. Few parents think their children could shop online without their consent. There is "an alarming difference" between what parents think their children know and what their children actually do know, notes the report. Among other things, this behavior exposes parents to the risk of fraud. Advice to parents who shop on the Internet is: "Avoid storing credit or debit card details online," use only reputable Web sites, and "log out of sites when finished."

A study of preschoolers' eating and exercise habits found that both boys and girls were concerned about their body size—girls about losing weight and boys about building muscles. "Children seemed to be reflecting the body focus of their mothers [who] were generally dissatisfied with their own bodies," stated the authors of the study.



Are All Parts of the Bible Still Relevant?

"The Bible has extraordinarily little practical value for the modern human being, beyond knowing some trivia to successfully do crosswords or answer questions on game shows."

"Biblical references to family lines, virginity, and fear of God were relevant cultural concepts in biblical times, but they have little relevance in the Twenty-first Century."

"The Bible was outdated even before it was printed for the first time."

THESE comments were recently taken from an Internet site that discussed the topic "Is the Bible outdated and irrelevant?" How do you feel about those opinions? Do you agree?

You might disagree with such sweeping dismissals of the Bible but still wonder if everything in the Bible is relevant. After all, the Bibles used in most churches are divided into what are commonly called the Old Testament and the New Testament, giving the impression that over 75 percent of the Bible is old, outdated.

No one still offers the animal sacrifices prescribed in the Mosaic Law. So, what is the point of preserving all those details regarding sacrifices in the book of Leviticus? (Leviticus 1:1–7:38) And what about the opening chapters of 1 Chronicles, which consist almost entirely of genealogical lists? (1 Chronicles 1:1–9:44) If no one alive today can trace his or her lineage directly to anyone mentioned in those chapters, what good are such lists?

Suppose that you pick an apple from an apple tree. Once you have the apple, is the tree that produced it irrelevant? Not if you want

more fruit! In some ways the Bible is like that apple tree. Certain parts of the Bible, such as the Psalms or the Sermon on the Mount, might seem to be readily accessible and especially "tasty." While we may treasure those parts—as we might our favorite fruit—should we disregard the rest? What does the Bible itself say on the matter?

About the year 65 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, reminding him: "From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." Paul next stated: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:15, 16) When Paul wrote that "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial," was he talking about just the New Testament?

Notice Paul's reference to Timothy's having known "the holy writings" from "infancy." If, as some believe, Timothy was in his 30's at the time this letter was written, then he was an infant about the time of Jesus' death. That was before any portion of the New Testament, or the Greek Scriptures, was writ-



The details in the Bible deepen our appreciation for the sacrifice that Jesus made



ten. Timothy's mother was Jewish, so the holy writings that she would have taught him as a young child must have been the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Scriptures. (Acts 16:1) Paul's reference to "all Scripture" doubtless included the entire Old Testament, containing sacrificial regulations and genealogies.

Over 1,900 years later, we still benefit from those portions of the Bible in several ways. First, we would not even have the Bible if God had not seen to it that it was written and preserved by a people whom he had chosen. (Romans 3:1, 2) In ancient Israel the Mosaic Law was not just a sacred relic to be preserved for future generations but was, in effect, the constitution of that nation. Details in the Law that may seem unnecessary to us today were vital to the survival and proper functioning

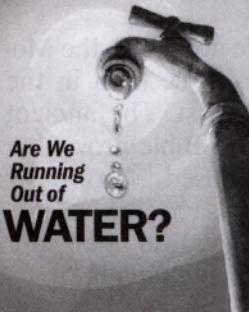
of ancient Israel. Moreover, the genealogical records in the Bible were necessary to identify the Messiah, who was foretold to be a direct descendant of King David.—2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Luke 1:32; 3:23-31.

Although Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, they need to exercise faith in the foretold Messiah, Jesus Christ. The ancient genealogies preserved in the Bible prove that Jesus was indeed the promised "son of David." And details regarding sacrifices deepen our appreciation for the far more important sacrifice that Jesus made, building faith in its value.—Hebrews 9:11, 12.

To the first-century Christian congregation in Rome, Paul wrote: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) This text reminds us that the Bible was written for our benefit but not our benefit only. For over 3,500 years, its inspired words have directed, instructed, and corrected God's people—in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Promised Land, in Babylonian exile, in the Roman Empire, and now earth wide. No other book can rightly make such a claim. Like the roots of an apple tree, the value of certain parts of the Bible might be hard to see at first. A little digging may be required to reveal that value, but the effort will be handsomely repaid!

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- How long had Timothy known "the holy writings"?—**2 Timothy 3:15**.
- What parts of the Bible are inspired and beneficial?—**2 Timothy 3:16**.
- How can we benefit from "all the things that were written aforetime"?—**Romans 15:4**.

Awake!**The Water Crisis—What Is Being Done?** (January 2009)

I am troubled by the conclusion of this article. Rather than encouraging your readers to assist others by building wells, supporting water conservation programs, or even exploring the problem further, the article says: "The ultimate solution to the water crisis rests in God's hands, not man's" and further He will "'make all things new.' (Revelation 21:5)" While this is encouraging news, wouldn't it be better to help out in the meantime? There are so many problems in this world. Although God certainly has planned the solutions, we cannot in good conscience wait passively while the Devil does his work.

S. S., United States

"Awake!" responds: The focus of the above-mentioned article was not intended to imply that individuals have no responsibility to make efforts to improve matters now. As the article stated, "God gave humans the responsibility of taking care of this planet." Thus, we have published many articles in our journals that encourage our readers to be proactive in conserving earth's resources and in protecting the environment. Sadly, however, man's efforts to protect the earth's resources are often hampered by regulations that favor economic growth over environmental concerns and by the inherent greed and selfishness of imperfect humankind. Hence, that is why we say that "the ultimate solution to the water crisis rests in God's hands."

Earth—Designed for Life (February 2009)

At a time when the media only writes things that make us feel insecure because of global warming, reading this series really gives me peace of mind. I was greatly encouraged, too, that the future of the earth is not dark but that both physically and spiritually, it will become a paradise where humans can live in peace. Thank you very much.

M. H., Japan

Dyslexia Has Not Held Me Back (February 2009)

I also have a problem with dyslexia, and unfortunately I did not fully understand the extent of my problem until after my wife and I were assigned as missionaries and I tried to learn another language. I found this article to be very encouraging, particularly the box on page 22,

which helped me to understand the nature of this problem. I was heartened to read how Michael Henborg has tackled a number of languages. Thank you so much.

M. M., Tanzania

Young People Ask . . . How Can I Make**Bible Reading Enjoyable?** (April 2009)

I have a visual handicap, and I work in Braille at school. I really appreciate your publications, which have helped me to overcome many of my problems. I usually listen to your cassettes and audio CDs before going to sleep. That allows me to fall asleep with positive thoughts in mind. I listened to this article at least five times and found some ideas for developing my personal study.

S. H., France



What Is Wrong With This Picture?

Read Exodus 12:1-8, 17-20, 24-27; Mark 14:12, 22-26; John 13:1, 21-30. Now look at the picture of the Lord's Evening Meal. What features are incorrect? Write your answers on the lines below.

1.
2.
3.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Why did Jesus use unleavened bread as a symbol of his body? CLUE: Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Hebrews 4:14, 15.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT KING SOLOMON?

- 4. Who was Solomon's mother?**

CLUE: Read 2 Samuel 12:24.

- 5. How many other sons did David and Solomon's mother have?**

CLUE: Read 2 Samuel 11:26, 27; 1 Chronicles 3:5.

FOR DISCUSSION:
Why was Solomon so wise?
 CLUE: Read 1 Kings 3:5-14.
How can you become wise?

• Answers on page 14



CHILDREN'S PICTURE SEARCH

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

FROM THIS ISSUE

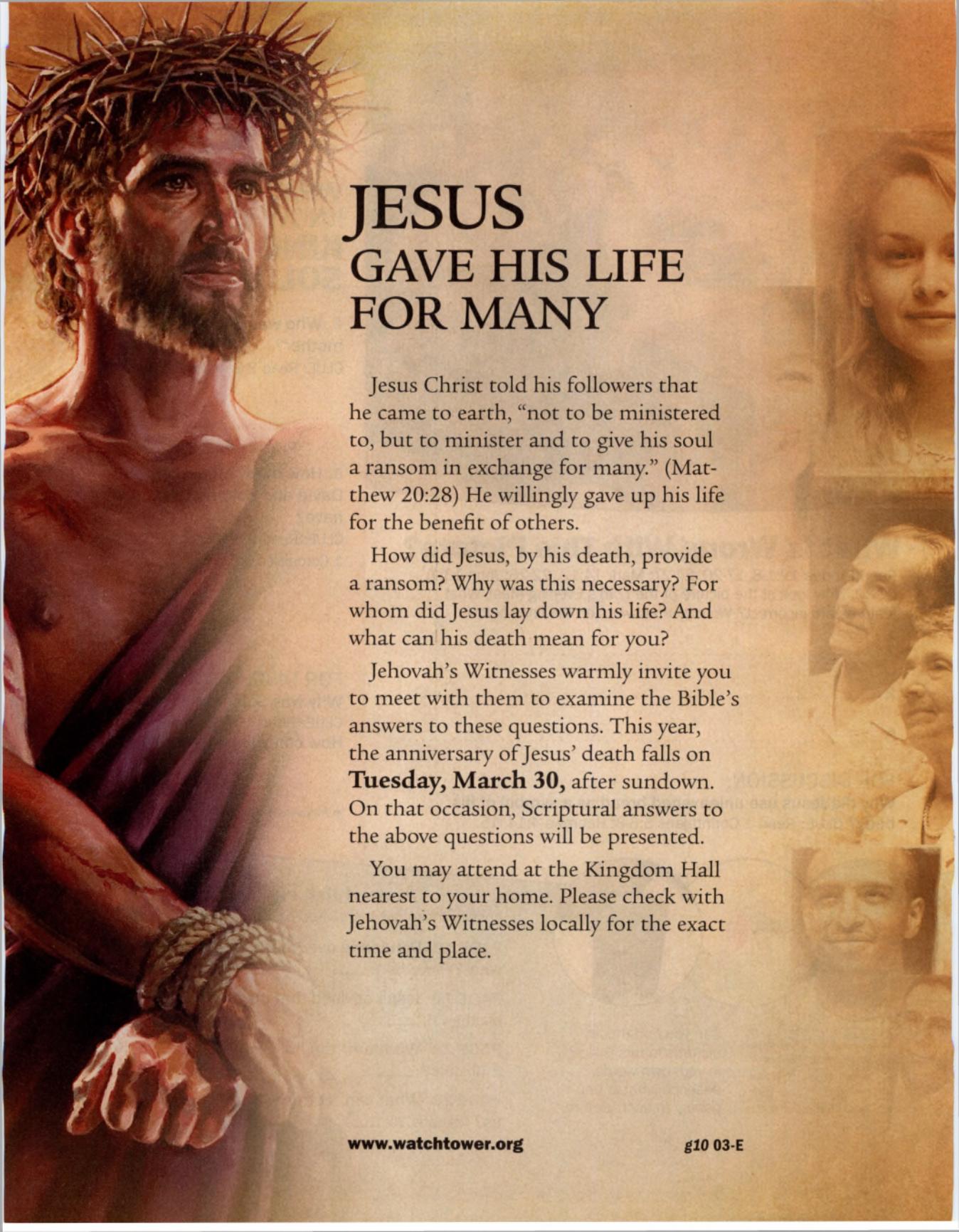
Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

PAGE 19 Pondering over matters privately is a sign of what? Proverbs 1:_____

PAGE 19 Jesus advised that his disciples pray where? Matthew 6:_____

PAGE 28 What are "the holy writings" able to do? 2 Timothy 3:_____

PAGE 29 What can "comfort from the Scriptures" give us? Romans 15:_____



JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR MANY

Jesus Christ told his followers that he came to earth, "not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) He willingly gave up his life for the benefit of others.

How did Jesus, by his death, provide a ransom? Why was this necessary? For whom did Jesus lay down his life? And what can his death mean for you?

Jehovah's Witnesses warmly invite you to meet with them to examine the Bible's answers to these questions. This year, the anniversary of Jesus' death falls on **Tuesday, March 30**, after sundown. On that occasion, Scriptural answers to the above questions will be presented.

You may attend at the Kingdom Hall nearest to your home. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place.