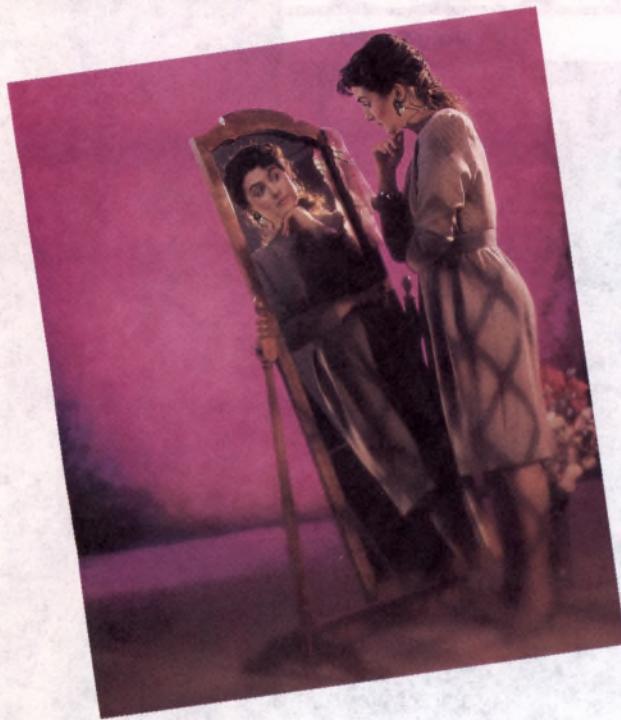


# Awake!

July 8, 1991



**Should  
You  
Change  
What  
You  
Are?**



## Should You Change What You Are? 3-10

Are you disappointed with the behavior of mankind in general? Are you ever disappointed with your own behavior and personality?

Have you become disconcerted as you tried to understand why you are what you are? Can you change your behavior? Can you change what you are?



Albrecht Dürer, 1508

### **Self-Defense —How Far Can a Christian Go? 12**

Should a Christian learn and practice judo, kendo, and karate? When is self-defense appropriate for a Christian?



### **Memories —At the Touch of a Button! 23**

Many people today have a camera. But what is the difference between taking and making a picture? How can you get the best results?

<b>Discovering the Real You</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Why Change?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Not the Best Ways to Make a Change</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>How You Can Change What You Are</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Response to <i>Mankind's Search for God</i></b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Their Faith Moves Mountains</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Spanish Flamenco Was Our Life</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Young People Ask . . . How Can Christian Meetings Help Me?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Watching the World</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>From Our Readers</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Afghan Orphans Who Wanted to See a Farm</b>	<b>31</b>

# DISCOVERING THE REAL YOU

**W**HEN you look in a mirror, what do you see? Your own physical reflection. But does that tell you who you really are? Does it tell you how others may perceive you as a person? Do you really know who you are? Do you know how your personal behavior was established in the first place? Yes, how did you, as a personality, develop?

When you pause to analyze all the elements that shaped your personality, you may notice that many influences have been imposed on you—either by other persons or by other factors. During our early formative years, most of us had relatively little to do with establishing our own habits and ways. So let us look at some of these personality-shaping influences that were imposed on you—some of them long before you had a chance of doing anything about your own behavior.

## **Genetics Plays a Big Part**

How much has genetics affected you? The DNA blueprint, found in the chromosomes that transmit hereditary characteristics, carries descriptions and coded instructions for each person's development. So how much of your individual behavior is influenced genetically? It seems that there is still difficulty in proving any definite link between genes and personality. However, there are some approaches that appear to have merit. For example, a number of your inherited traits do have an immediate bearing on your behavior. Thus, some people inherit subdued disposi-

tions, while others are naturally more outgoing.

A pregnant woman can benefit or impair her unborn child by her own actions, thoughts, and feelings. Just how much peace or irritation was thrust upon you while you were in your mother's womb? How much did you learn from your parents' tone of voice, the music they listened to? How much were you affected by the food your mother ate? In the event she drank alcohol or took drugs, how much was she affected by them? By the time you were born, many of your propensities were set and perhaps are difficult to change.

## **What About Diet, Allergies, Environment?**

As you grew into childhood, certain substances in your food may have had an effect on your behavior. Sweeteners, artificial colorings, and preservatives—all can exert an unseen influence on behavior. Hyperactivity, increased tension, irritability, nerve pain, and immoderate and uncontrolled actions are just some of the results. Pollution from automobile exhaust fumes, industrial emissions, and other poisons in the environment also shape behavior. Or, on a personal level, you may have an allergy that affects you quite seriously but may have no adverse effect on those around you.

In addition to these influences, your parents' behavior, their likes and dislikes as well as their prejudices that you have lived with from infancy, have had an effect on you and

have shaped your personality to some degree. The result is that many of your ways and your general outlook on life are simply a reflection of theirs. You tend to get upset at things that upset them. You are inclined to tolerate things that they tolerated. And you rarely notice that you copy their behavior until someone tells you that you are acting just like your father or your mother. Their financial and social standing also affected you, as did your neighbor-

## The actions and feelings of a pregnant woman may affect her unborn child

hood and school environment. Your friends and associates have had a big influence on you too. Perhaps a bad accident (to you or to a close friend), some local disaster, or even troubling world events have affected you. Or it could be that some tragedy, such as a divorce or a serious illness, has left a scar on your personality.

Can you, on reflection, identify any such influences?

### What Part Does Religion Play?

Theoretically, religion should help you to be a better person, improving your moral be-

havior, ethics, and daily routine. Just how many of your values and actions have been affected by religion? While religion should act as a restraint on irresponsible, criminal behavior, many people are affected by their contact with religion in a different way. They discern a lot of hypocrisy and emphasis on material rather than spiritual values in churches and become embittered as a result. They may even become irreligious, robbed of spirituality and hope.

You may be able to think of other external influences that shape behavior. Just spend a few moments reflecting on any of the things that may have affected you until now. Can you list some of them? It is not easy to be objective and think in this way, but it is worth the effort and may be of help to you. How so?

Well, if you can identify a certain influence or cause for some negative tendency in your behavior, if you can specifically isolate it, you will be in a better position to control it, maybe even to alter it. If you can control, or even get rid of, an undesirable influence, you could become a different person, behaving more positively toward others.

Of course, that is a challenge. But since so many of the influences on your behavior have been imposed on you by other people or by circumstances you had no control over, why not take the initiative and do something about the situation for yourself? If it means an improvement, why not change what you are?

**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 before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. This is part of a worldwide Bible educational work that is supported by voluntary donations.**

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# WHY CHANGE?

**F**EW of us like to admit that we have outstanding weaknesses. How true the lines from the Scottish poet Robert Burns: "O would some power the gift give us to see ourselves as others see us!"\* Yes, we find it easy to spot faults in others and may be quick to offer advice to show them how to improve. But any suggestion that we ourselves need to change our behavior may offend us. Would it offend you?

Let us stop for a moment and imagine a perfect world where everyone is clean, healthy, happy, and honest; where even those in authority are kind and considerate, interested in doing good for others; where there is no greed, and no one exploits his fellow man; where children are obedient to warm, caring parents; where there are no outbursts of temper—no violence, no crime, no immorality; where people are trusting and pleasant by nature; where life can be enjoyed with a sense of security and well-being.

Can you see yourself fitting into a world like that, if such a Utopian world could ever exist? Well, the good news from the Bible is that such a world *is* coming to this earth soon. So now the

\* In the original: "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us to see oursels as others see us!"—*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

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\* Outside the United States and Canada, write U.S. office concerning certification for the blind and visually impaired.

important question is: Do you have any behavioral traits that would disqualify you from fitting into such an idyllic community? How hard, do you think, would it be worth trying to qualify for life in such a paradise?—Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Peter 3:13.

Even now, before such a new world comes, could your life be improved if you did something about your behavior and attitude? If so, why not change? It is possible to do so. Remember, specific influences shaped and molded your behavior in the first place, so by taking more control and interest, it is possible for you to reshape your behavior even now.

However, you may still protest: 'But can I really change? I've tried before, many times, and failed. I am just the way I am, and there is nothing I can do about it!'

Consider Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. (Romans 7:18-21) Paul changed from being a violent, self-righteous opposer of Christians and became a Christian himself. He changed because he really wanted to. He did not give up because of setbacks or genetic influences. He did not believe that his old personality was set in concrete. It took much effort on his part. But he received a lot of help.—Galatians 1:13-16.

Where did this help come from?

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# NOT THE BEST WAYS TO MAKE A CHANGE

**O**NCE patterns of behavior are established, how can change be effected? Whom could you turn to, and what methods can be used to produce lasting improvement?

Let us consider some *extreme* measures being used today.

## *Political Pressure*

Millions of people today are living under regimes that seek to control ideals and codes of conduct. Such governments use their power to induce change—some subtly, others forcefully. Some use brainwashing techniques, often including intimidation, imprisonment, and torture. Exercising control over the news media and other educational systems, they seek to replace all formerly established concepts with those desired by the current ruling elite. All dissent is forcibly quashed. Anyone who proves unwilling to be reeducated may be subjected to terrifying treatment that often breaks the individual's spirit.

## *Psychosurgery and Electrical Stimulation*

Certain parts of the brain have been identified as affecting specific moods and forms of behavior. Psychosurgery involves the physical removal or destruction of the brain tissue in that part of the brain. Once removed, that section of your brain can never function again, and any behavior it influenced will disappear.

It is said that thousands of such operations have been performed, especially on people with deviant and dangerous sexual behavior. Some have had small electrodes inserted deep in-

side their brain, and when a current was applied, it stimulated or blocked the brain activity in that area. It is claimed that this modifies impulses affecting the behavior controlled by that part of the brain.

## *Drugs*

Drug use in psychiatry is quite widespread and often needed. There are drugs to pacify, drugs to induce sleep, drugs to enliven, and drugs to correct chemical imbalances in the brain. There are also drugs that have been used punitively in prisons and other correctional institutions. Two such drugs are apomorphine and Anectine.

Apomorphine has been administered to prisoners whose behavior was regarded as unacceptable. It causes violent nausea and vomiting. The prisoner is told that if he behaves badly again, he will be given more apomorphine. This is also called aversive therapy. Anectine causes an asthmatic, choking feeling in the misbehaving prisoner. He thinks he will die. If he misbehaves again, he gets more Anectine.

Are these the ways you would use to change your behavior pattern?

Most of the above methods violate free will. They also involve the influence of people with power over another but not always with that one's advantage in mind. Is the political power seeking its own advantage or the individual's? In psychosurgery, who holds the scalpel? Who controls the switch when electrical stimulation is used? How long-lasting is aversive therapy? Can the therapist be trusted?

Let us consider a more acceptable procedure.

# HOW YOU CAN CHANGE WHAT YOU ARE

**W**HAT has been missing from the methods of behavior establishment and change already discussed? The person's own wishes and use of willpower! The exercise of his own free will by informed personal choice. In short, his self-control is missing!

Behavior therapists have found that they have a better chance of achieving lasting results if the individual being treated has a say in setting his own behavior goals. Vance Packard writes in his book *The People Shapers*: "Apparently with a little counsel, any reasonably bright person can now become a modifier of his own behavior." This is called self-management. In other words, where a measure of self-control is applied, outstanding improvements have been noted.

Christians have an advantage when self-control is called into play, for they have learned to exercise this as one of the nine fruits of God's holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) This means that the active force of Almighty God can be brought to bear on your behavior change and help you to succeed.

So, what do you want to do about your behavior? Do you really want to change? If so, from what? To what? And why? Can you trust your own control? Where can you find help that provides only benefits?

Let's look at some of the methods and ingredients for changing behavior patterns.

## *Step 1: Find Out What You Really Are*

You are the raw material for what you want to be. The new you must be built by changing the old you. So you must accurately know yourself. Can you define which aspects of your behavior you would like to change?

Since it is difficult to evaluate your own behavior, you need to consult a respected and credible standard. The Holy Bible is recommended for this. Use the Bible, and you will get a view of yourself that you may not have seen before. You may not even like what you see reflected, but you can be sure it will be an accurate image.

The Bible has been likened to a mirror, and people are urged to peer into it. "If anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this one is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, and off he goes and immediately forgets what sort of man he is. But



***Step 1:  
Find out  
what you  
really are***

he who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it, this man, because he has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, will be happy in his doing it." (James 1:23-25) The Bible, properly understood and used, has deep, incisive analytical power that will not only show up what you are as a person but even reveal your motives and attitudes. Thus, Paul wrote: "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." God's Word goes even further by providing guidance as to what is truly right and what is truly wrong.—Hebrews 4:12; 5:14.

The Bible can do all these things for you because it is the Word of Jehovah, the perceptive true God. According to Psalm 139, God searches through you and makes an accurate analysis of what you are. As verse 1 says: "O Jehovah, you have searched through me, and you know me." God has been monitoring you since conception. He knows you through and through. He has had commentaries on human life written down in the Bible in all possible combinations. You will find yourself reflected somewhere in its pages, either positively or negatively.

Thus, you can find out what you really are—if you want to.

#### *Step 2: Decide What You Want to Be*

If you are going to change, make sure that the change will be worth it. Make sure that it

is what you want and that it is better than what you have now. What improved behavior goals should you set? Where can you get the right advice on desirable behavior traits? Again, the Bible is recommended for this.

The Bible urges you to change for the better, to adopt a "new personality." Paul counseled: "You should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is being corrupted according to his deceptive desires; but . . . you should be made new in the force actuating your mind, and should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4: 22-24) The Bible shows you what these better traits are. Do you recall the perfect world described earlier? If you want to be part of that world, you will have to see the necessity of developing the qualities described at Colossians 3:12-17, qualities such as compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, and gratitude.

So after consulting your Bible, set your goals. Make note of them. Give each goal a priority. Work at it!

#### *Step 3: Seek Worthy Examples*

Much of your behavior was established by your modeling yourself after others—friends, associates, parents, schoolteachers.

Why not, then, after deciding on your desired behavior goals, look for someone who behaves in a way you wish to copy? Then seek that



#### **Step 2: Decide what you want to be**



#### **Step 3: Seek worthy examples**

person's help. A Bible proverb wisely points out: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise."—Proverbs 13:20.

The Bible contains the account of the life of the best example for all of us, Jesus Christ himself. Read of how he behaved under all circumstances, his moral conduct, his perception and wisdom, his dignity, his thoughtfulness and extraordinary kindness and concern for his fellowman. How refreshing he sounds when he says: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light!"—Matthew 11:28-30.

Millions in all countries have already turned to Christ Jesus as their example and do their best to follow in his footsteps, just as he, in turn, walked in the way instructed by his heavenly Father, Jehovah God. These millions, having had their fill of the bad behavior of the world in general today, have turned to the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses for help and direction and have not been disappointed. At their Kingdom Halls, excellent Christlike examples are plentiful, and much help has been provided for those wanting to change their personal behavior to something better. Of course, the Witnesses have the frailties common to imperfect humankind; but they also have a positive spiritual force actuating the mind.—Ephesians 4:23.



## **Step 4: Get the strength you need to succeed**

### **Step 4: Get the Strength You Need to Succeed**

It will be comforting to those who wish to change their ways to know that help is available. "The new personality" is described as being "created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4:24) This guarantees that superhuman assistance is available from God himself for those desiring it. How can you get Jehovah God's help?

One of the foremost helps is personal prayer. Prayer provides a vital consultation service with the Source of the power necessary to change your ways. Prayer allows you to speak freely and openly at any time, even in mid crisis. Such access to a real and caring God far surpasses access to any human help and is immediately effective. Thus, the apostle John could write: "This is the confidence that we have toward him, that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:14) And the prophet Isaiah's words encourage us: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near. Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way." —Isaiah 55:6, 7.

Bible study also furnishes strength, providing you with refreshment, enabling you daily to refocus on your goals. The Bible supplies positive reinforcement as you strive toward your



## **Step 5: Cope with relapses**

...the secret  
of life is  
beginning a  
fresh  
start

chosen behavior target. Further, it stimulates a sense of revulsion for your former ways. Daily taking in knowledge of the Bible and its contents will serve also to crowd out any misinformation that may filter in from the world's media and from its educational systems.

Christian meetings at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses not only provide education on Bible standards but also make available group support and mutual incitement to improved behavior. This support provided through the congregation has assisted many to make a successful behavior change. Why not discuss such help with the person from whom you received this magazine?

#### *Step 5: Cope With Relapses*

Many have tried to improve their ways but have become discouraged by relapses that may be inevitable. The result has been that some give up entirely. Such ones often think that if what they had considered as their only hope has now failed, there is no hope at all. They may then give themselves over to the influences of the world. Often they become worse off than before they tried to change.

Keep reassuring yourself that any former undesirable course is worth escaping from. The apostle Paul referred to his former behavior and lifestyle as a heap of refuse, or rubbish. (Philippians 3:8) So if you, in making the change, are

***Those who change can also inherit a changed earth***

stumbled by an obstacle or a relapse, get up again, and keep going forward. Continue! Fight on! It will be worth it!

Remember, many of your ways and traits were imposed on you by external forces beyond your choice or control at that time. These forces still operate. Will you let them squeeze you into their mold? No? Then don't ever give up!

Millions of people from diverse cultures—even criminals and people deeply involved in immoral conduct—have successfully changed their behavior. They have maintained their improved standards to this day, many for decades, sticking to their better ways with admirable voluntary integrity. But they thank God for the strength and motivation to do it. As the apostle Paul said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Philippians 4:13.

They are winning in the fight to do what is right. You too can make the change if you really want to, and you can enjoy life in God's new world.—Psalm 37:29; 2 Peter 3:13.



# Response to *Mankind's Search for God*

ONE of the highlights of the "Pure Language" District Conventions, which Jehovah's Witnesses held from the middle of 1990 to early 1991, was the release of the book *Mankind's Search for God*. It gives a succinct explanation of the origin, history, and beliefs of the major religions of the world, and it tells how the true God can be found. How have readers around the world reacted?

"My sincere commendation for *Mankind's Search for God*," commented E. G., a non-Witness from Germany. "Such a detailed and thorough investigation of individual religions is truly remarkable and makes fascinating reading. Furthermore, the book is not short on logic—quite the opposite. I can only recommend that people examine their religion on the basis of this book."

A reader from Flushing, New York, U.S.A., wrote: "I'm a Muslim, and Al-Islaam is my religion. I appreciate your new book *Mankind's Search for God*. I particularly appreciate the information you have on my religion."

In the Netherlands, A. v. D., a 17-year-old, placed a copy of the book with a fellow student, who used it in the preparation of a school assignment. The teacher wanted to know the source of her material. On seeing the book, he ordered three copies. A. v. D. continues: "The next day I handed three new books to the teacher, which he showed to some other teachers right away. A short time later, he told me, 'It is OK. I have the approval of the school administration to order 35 of these books.'"

From British Columbia, Canada, a couple wrote: "*Mankind's Search for God* could quite possibly affect more people from more cultural backgrounds than any other Watch Tower publication has previously."

From Le Havre, France, M. H. wrote: "I have to say that this book totally surpassed my expectations; it is so clear, precise, and pleasing to the eye. *Magnifique!*"

H. W. W. from Texas, U.S.A., wrote: "This book was so interesting and absorbing, I just couldn't put it down. I found myself reading late into the night. The quality of writing is superb. The book discusses the beliefs of other people in a reasonable and respectful way, while encouraging them to continue their search for the true God, Jehovah. And the words come across in a very personable way, almost as if someone were sitting next to you carrying on a conversation."

A couple from Panama, G. and S., said: "The Spanish-speaking people are readily accepting the book. They are thrilled with the colorphotos of the temples and the idols."

D. M., a sailor in the U.S. Navy wrote: "I met a lady one day who said, 'Do you want a spiritual book?' and I said, 'Yes,' not really knowing what kind of book it was. To my surprise it ended up being the book that for some time I had been looking for."

A professor who has taught on world religion at an American university wrote: "The succinct clarity of expression and the general accuracy of explanation of the central teachings of the various religions is impressive. The citing of numerous recognized writers in the field makes clear that the author is aware of contemporary scholarship and usage. There is complete honesty and no hidden agenda."

A young girl, N. Y., wrote from Nagoya City, Japan: "I am 12 years old and study history at school. This book deals with Japan's religions in detail. Also, I thoroughly enjoyed reading about magic and spiritism in chapter 4 and 'A Return to the True God' in chapter 15."

Many other letters of appreciation have been received from Argentina, Colombia, England, Puerto Rico, and Spain as well as other countries.

# Self-Defense How Far Can a Christian Go?

"Why live in fear? Learn practical ways to defend yourself and to escape an attacker. Easy and effective defense techniques are demonstrated in detail. This instructional video could be the difference between being a statistic or a survivor."

—Advertisement for self-defense video.

**N**O ONE has to explain the selling power of such a video today. In the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., packs of youths chant "Beat, beat, beat" as they prowl the streets seeking victims to mug. "Fear of crime colors the character of the entire city" of Rio de Janeiro, reports *Time* magazine. In Hong Kong armed robberies and shootings are occurring in areas where violent crime has been almost unknown—until now.

Similar reports are heard worldwide. With what result? "Citizens weigh the risks of shooting back," says *Newsweek*. Christians are not shielded from these "critical times hard to deal with," but will shooting back really make "the difference between being a statistic or a survivor"? —2 Timothy 3:1.

## Meet Violence With Violence?

'If I carry a gun,' some believe, 'I'll be

safe. I'll get *him* before he gets *me*. At least I'll scare him off!' However, it's not that simple.

George Napper, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., public-safety commissioner, says: "Owning a handgun means being prepared to live with the aftermath of killing another human being." Is a Christian prepared to live with such a consequence, which may well include bloodguilt?—Compare Numbers 35:11, 12.

Also, God's Word commands, 'Beat your swords into plowshares' and, "Seek peace and pursue it." (Micah 4:3; 1 Peter 3:11) How can Christians seek protection in firearms and at the same time live in harmony with the Bible's requirements? In any case, the attacker is likely to be quicker on the draw than the victim.

Jesus rejected armed resistance. True, he instructed his apostles to carry two swords to the garden of Gethsemane, *the place where he would be arrested*. But



Betrayal of Christ, by Albrecht Dürer, 1508

why did he do this? Having weapons, yet not using them, powerfully demonstrated that Jesus' followers should not resort to carnal weapons. It is noteworthy that having a weapon available, Peter impetuously used it. Jesus strongly rebuked him for this rash act with the words: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword."—Matthew 26:36, 47-56; Luke 22:36-38, 49-51.

'That is all well and good for owning firearms,' someone may say. 'But what about learning the martial arts for self-defense, such as judo, karate, and kendo?' Ask yourself, is not the object of this instruction to fight or hurt others? And is not such training really equivalent to arming oneself lethally? (1 Timothy 3:3) Even practice sessions have resulted in serious injuries and fatalities.

Romans 12:17-19 offers wise advice in this regard: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'" The Greek word Paul uses for "evil" (*ka-kos*) could also mean "destructive, damaging." Hence, Christians are to keep from all thought of vindictively damaging or harming another person.

Rather than impetuously expressing his own wrath, a Christian fully trusts in God, who says of his people: "He that is touching you is touching my eyeball." In harmony with this, God promises to 'annihilate the wicked' in due time.—Zechariah 2:8; Psalm 145:20.

### A Time to Fight?

'I won't give up my money without a fight!' some daringly exclaim. Dick Mellard, manager of education at the National Crime Prevention Institute, cautions: "It's human nature to resist, but human nature can get [you]

killed in the wrong situation." Many muggers are dangerously armed and are tense and nervous. Lost money can be regained, but what about a lost life? Is it worth the risk?

George Napper gives this advice: "Perhaps the best way to protect yourself is by risking your property rather than your life. Most robbers and burglars are there to steal, not to kill." In situations where a person is simply accosted or when his money is demanded, a sound principle is: "A slave of the Lord does not need to fight."—2 Timothy 2:24.\*

This is not pacifism, a policy of nonresistance under any circumstance. At Exodus 22:2, 3, a situation is described in which a thief is fatally struck while entering someone's home during the day. Such a defensive measure was considered tantamount to murder, since the thief could have been identified and brought to justice. But during the night, it would be difficult for the householder to see an intruder and ascertain his intentions. Therefore, the person killing an intruder in the dark was considered guiltless.

Thus, the Bible does not uphold impetuous attempts at self-defense. In not supporting pacifism, however, the Bible indicates that there is a time to defend oneself. Christians may ward off physically aggressive attacks against themselves, their families, or others in genuine need of defense.<sup>#</sup> But they would not initiate an attack, nor would they physically retaliate to save their possessions. They would not carry weapons in anticipation of such an attack; rather, they endeavor to "live peaceably."—2 Corinthians 13:11.

\* While the context shows that Paul was here referring to verbal fights, the original language word rendered "fight" (*ma'khesthai*) is generally associated with armed or hand-to-hand combat.

<sup>#</sup> A woman threatened with rape should scream and use any means at her disposal to resist intercourse.—Deuteronomy 22:23-27.

# Their Faith Moves Mountains

WITH that headline the Buenos Aires daily newspaper *Crónica*, of December 7, 1990, reported the convention of Jehovah's Witnesses that was being held in the River Plate and the Vélez Sarsfield soccer stadiums. Certainly, it was strong faith that moved nearly 6,000 foreign delegates from over 20 lands to travel all the way to Argentina to join tens of thousands of their Argentine brothers for their "Pure Language" Convention. This total included several local congregations of Korean Witnesses. The foreign delegates came from Britain, Canada, Chile, Japan, Spain, the United States (including Alaska), and many other countries. What motivated them? Their desire to support the second international convention held in Argentina.

## New Bethel Dedication

But great acts of faith had taken place well before convention time. In October the new Argentine branch office of the *Asociación de los Testigos de Jehová* was dedicated by visiting speaker Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. The new residence complex had been built by 259 international and 690 Argentine volunteer workers. Bethel, or "House of God," located in a tree-lined section of Buenos Aires, has 129 residential rooms and a dining room for 300. With over 84,000 Witnesses in Argentina and

potential for much more increase, there is no doubt that this new branch building will soon be fully occupied.

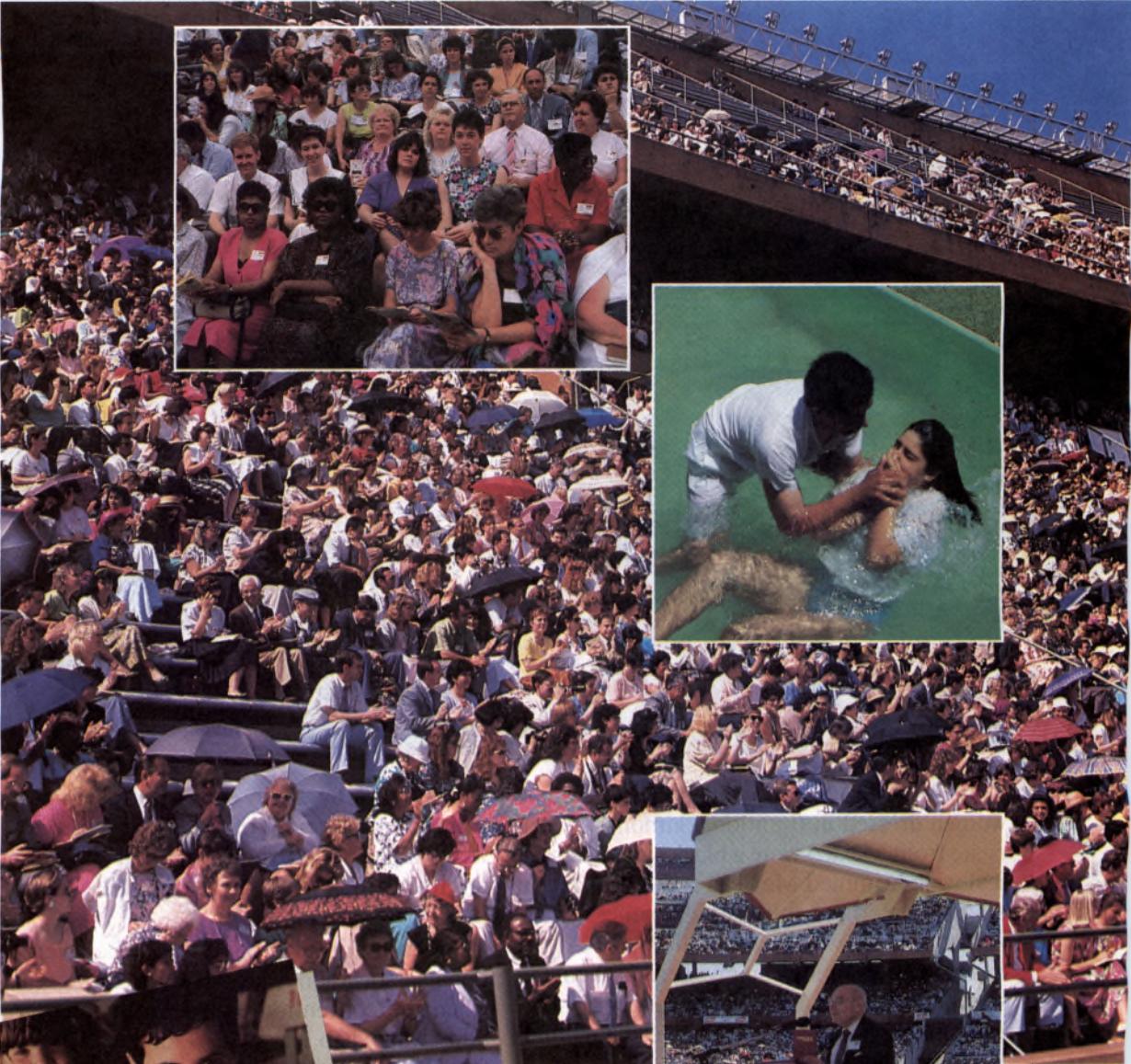
## "Jehovah's Witnesses With Pure Language"

The "Pure Language" theme of the international convention intrigued many, including representatives of the media. *Crónica* featured the above headline and quoted the definition of "pure language" as given by a speaker: "The correct understanding of the truth about God and his purpose for the earth and man, as contained in the Bible . . . When someone learns to speak the pure language, then his way of thinking, his speech, and his conduct are centered in the recognition of God as the only true God."

Metropolitan Buenos Aires, a sprawling city of over ten million people, was made well aware of the convention in its midst. During a six-day period, regular 40-second radio and TV spots, mandated by law, gave free publicity to the event. Saturday's program attracted the press with the baptism of new Witnesses. Visible to the audience, 3 pools were set up at each end of both stadiums, but even 12 pools were not enough to finish the baptism in time for the afternoon program. So the pools at the River Plate Stadium were relocated to be out of sight. At River Plate, 1,363 were baptized and at the Vélez Sarsfield, 748, for a total of 2,111! The *Crónica* headline read: "Another Marvelous Expression of Faith in River and Vélez—Witnesses Get Baptized." Attendance at the two conventions totaled more than 67,000.

## International Flavor

As one moved through the colorful audience, the physical differences of race and culture were evident. Here was an Argentine sister enjoying her yerba maté, a tea sipped through a metal *bombilla*, or tube, from a special wooden cup. Among the 800 from Spain were sisters dressed in the beautiful costumes of that land.



**More than 67,000 attended the two "Pure Language" Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses in Buenos Aires, December 6-9, 1990**



**The new Argentine branch complex is ready to serve over 84,000 Witnesses**



The group of 900 from Japan included some women dressed in traditional kimonos. A delegate from Mexico wore a black suit and a typical wide-brimmed Mexican sombrero. Yet, in spite of all these outward differences, their spiritual unity was clear for all to see. At the end of the assembly, many were exchanging souvenirs—convention badges, pens, postcards—anything that would serve as a reminder of this beautiful event.

The assembly spirit spilled over into airports. This was especially evident in Miami, Florida, U.S.A., where many groups happened to meet when catching connecting flights. On the way back from Buenos Aires, a large group from the United States encountered a group from Japan, who were on their way to Mexico. Soon, all the American travelers were being

buttonholed by their enthusiastic Japanese companions. The rest of the public in the area were baffled and intrigued by what was going on. It was the Witnesses sharing the spirit of their "pure language"!

The convention program and the international association were so outstanding that when the convention ended on Sunday, nobody wanted to leave the stadiums. The different national groups spontaneously started singing Kingdom songs a cappella in their different languages and waved their handkerchiefs to one another. This went on for almost an hour before the happy conventioners finally went home. As one hardened Argentine press photographer stated: "This has never happened before in Argentina . . . such emotion and such warmth!"

# SPANISH FLAMENCO WAS OUR LIFE



**T**HREE is a big difference between playing a guitar and blowing a trumpet. Although I have loved the flamenco guitar since I was 17, it was the trumpet that, in a way, changed the course of my life. That was when I was in the Spanish Air Force back in 1975. But first, let me explain how I came to love the guitar.

I was raised in Verdun, a working class suburb of Barcelona, Spain's busy Mediterranean port. My father is a flamenco poet and enthusiast. Mother is a flamenco singer. (Flamenco is a unique style of music, song, and dance of Andalusia that originated with the Gypsies, Arabs, and Jews hundreds of years ago.) My father, originally from Baena, Córdoba, in Andalusia, naturally loved flamenco and encouraged me to take up the guitar. So I studied with a private teacher for two years and then looked for a job. That was not difficult to find. Because so many tourists visit Spain, flamenco is always in high demand.

## A Flamenco Duo Is Form'd

After completing my military service, I worked at a *tablao* called *El Cordobés* in Barcelona. Our Spanish word *tablao*, or *tablado*, which refers to a flamenco show, comes from the wooden staging made of *tablas*, or planks, on which the flamenco dancing is performed. On the guitar, I accompanied the male and female dancers (*bailaores* and *bailaoras*) as well as the singers (*cantaores*) who are the usual complement of a flamenco show. For those not conversant with flamenco singing and dancing, I can only say that it is an art going back perhaps to the times of the Arab occupation of Spain (8th to 15th century). In the past it was mainly performed by artists with Gypsy background.

While working at *El Cordobés*, I was impressed by a young dancer who came into the company. She was Yolanda, from Catalonia, a petite, vibrant dancer with dark hair and dark

eyes. She changed my life by becoming my wife. We were married in 1978 in a Catholic church in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, near Barcelona. But how did she get into the world of flamenco dancing? I'll let her tell her story.

### **Music and Dance in My Blood**

Yolanda: From childhood I was immersed in Spanish music. My father enjoyed listening to Sardana music, typical of Catalonia, while my mother and grandmother were always singing the happy jotas of Aragon. Since I had problems with my feet, a doctor recommended that I exercise. As a result, I started to study ballet. When I was seven years old, I saw a girl dancing flamenco, and I liked it so much that my mother placed me in a school for such dancers.

I began to do well and appeared in *peñas flamencas*, or small flamenco theaters. One day, when I was 14, I was walking with my mother along the famous *Rambla de las Flores* in downtown Barcelona when we saw a sign advertising *El Tablao Flamenco, El Cor-*

*dobés*. Mother suggested we go up to see if they needed a dancer. They accepted me that first night. And who was the guitarist? Francisco (Paco) Arroyo, whom I eventually married! Now he can continue the story.

### **A Trumpet and a Change**

How does the trumpet come into my story? In 1975, I was serving in the air force (*Academia General del Aire*) at the military prison in La Manga del Mar Menor in the province of Murcia. I was the prison trumpeter who sounded the calls during the day for the officer cadets.

While on duty there, I noticed one young prisoner, a quiet, humble man. I wondered why he was in the prison. So one day I asked him. At first he was reluctant to talk to me because of prison regulations, but I insisted. I wanted to know. He explained that he was there as a Christian conscientious objector, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and by reason of personal conviction, he had refused to serve in the army. I was curious about his beliefs, so he



**Performing flamenco  
for a group of friends**

**Our family ready to  
preach from house to house**

told me that he believed in the Bible and that the present world conditions were prophesied in that book. I had never read the Bible, so he asked me if I would like a copy. I said I would.

But how was he, a prisoner forbidden to preach, going to get me a Bible? One day some of his fellow Witnesses brought him a basket of oranges and hidden in the middle was a Bible and the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. He secretly passed the literature on to me, but after that I was not able to see him again. Shortly afterward, I left the air force and went back to Barcelona. If only I knew his name! I would love to meet him again, since he was used to show me the truth of the Bible for the first time.

### **Loosening the Grip of Flamenco**

As I previously said, Yolanda and I got married. About a year had passed when one day there was a knock on the door. Yolanda answered, and there were two of Jehovah's Witnesses. I told her to tell them to go away. Then I remembered the young man in the prison and the books he had given me. I invited them in and started to ask them many questions. They saw the need to arrange a further visit, and so a Bible study was started the following week.

I soon got opposition from my family. My father said: "I would rather that you were a thief than one of Jehovah's Witnesses!" This opposition convinced me that we would be better off working in another country, away from the family. So in 1981 we went to Venezuela with a work contract. Soon Witness missionaries started to study with us. We associated with the Witnesses for some time without making any real progress. Eventually, in 1982, we moved to the United States, where we got work in a Spanish restaurant in Los Angeles, California.

In spite of negative attitudes from both our families, in 1983 we finally got baptized in Los

Angeles. My father was so disgusted that he told me to remove his last name, Arroyo, from my name. However, since then his attitude has changed, and now he even accepts visits from the Witnesses. Also, one of my sisters is now studying the Bible.

Another reason it took us a long time to get baptized was that we were deeply immersed in the flamenco world. That life tied us up in the evenings, as we had to perform in night-clubs and restaurants. The association was not always the best for us as Christians. The restaurant owner wanted us to entertain at Christmas and at birthday parties, and we were not willing to compromise. So we finally quit that world.

In the meantime we had had two children, Paquito and Jonathan. To support our family, we now earn a living teaching dancing and guitar to students who come to the house. This leaves us more time for our family and our spiritual interests, including at times increasing our activity in public preaching.

### **Something More Important Than Flamenco**

Flamenco is expressed in a tremendous variety of styles and is an authentic manifestation of the ancient folklore of Spain. We both still love it as music and as an expression of human feelings. But we know that there is something more important in life—serving God and our fellowman.

We enjoy relaxation with our Hispanic brothers and sisters when occasionally we have a fiesta with Mexican and Spanish music and dancing. What a joy to see the unity of Jehovah's people from many nations! And what a pleasure it will be for all of us soon to share our musical experience in God's promised new world on a clean, peaceful, purified earth!—*By Francisco (Paco) and Yolanda Arroyo*.

**Young  
People  
Ask . . .**



# How Can Christian Meetings Help Me?

**"I don't think the churches help you to advance spiritually. I mean, it's up to the person whether he wants to be spiritual or not."**  
— 19-year-old Kevin.

**K**EVIN is right in more ways than one. It really is up to each person to decide "whether he wants to be spiritual or not." But since you are reading this article, it is more than likely that you at least want to be spiritual. You may not be exactly sure, though,

just what a spiritual person is or how you can become one.

Simply put, a spiritual person is one who submits his thoughts, opinions, and actions to direction by the Most High God, Jehovah. He takes his Creator into consideration when making daily decisions, establishing goals, or setting priorities in life. In other words, a spiritual person is God-oriented.

As a teenager, you may find that "the anxiety of this system of things" hinders your spiritual growth. (Matthew 13:22) Having to associate all day long with schoolmates who may be 'inclined to do bad all the time' can also be discouraging. (Genesis 6:5) Some may even "scoff and speak about what is bad," making it hard for you to focus your mind on what is good. (Psalm 73:8) And if your parents or other family members do not share your faith, they may provide little, if any, spiritual encouragement. What can you do to counteract these negative influences and grow spiritually?

One thing you can do is to attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses regularly. Unlike church services, the meetings there both encourage you to pursue "godly devotion as your aim" and assist you in your development from spiritual babyhood to spiritual adulthood.—1 Timothy 4:7; Ephesians 4:13, 14.

## Meetings That Help You Learn

In over 63,000 congregations throughout the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses follow the Bible's admonition to "congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones . . . in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn." (Deuteronomy 31:12) So you will find many young ones like yourself among the Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses all over the world share in the same educational program. This consists

of five weekly meetings, each about an hour in length. The five meetings are:

Public Meeting—a Bible discourse highlighting a Bible theme.

*Watchtower* Study—an in-depth study of Bible teachings using the *Watchtower* magazine, the principal publication of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Theocratic Ministry School—teaches speaking skills for the Christian ministry.

Service Meeting—features discussions and demonstrations of effective teaching methods for the door-to-door and Bible study ministry.

Congregation Book Study—a question-and-answer discussion by smaller groups using a Bible study aid—usually in private homes.

The educational programs at these meetings can help you learn "even the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10; Proverbs 2:5) However, there are other benefits from attending.

#### **"As Iron Sharpens Iron"**

"It's easy to be a Christian around others who also serve God," says 15-year-old Michelle. "But when you go to school, it's more difficult because your schoolmates have a different set of standards and goals." One benefit of attending meetings, therefore, is the opportunity to associate with fellow believers.

Wise King Solomon said: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens the wits of another." (Proverbs 27:17, *The New English Bible*) At times, our spiritual "wits," that is, our spiritual knowledge and insight, need to be honed. But just as sharpening a literal knife requires skill and the correct tools, so you need to associate with the right people, those who have the ability to "impart some spiritual gift to you."—Romans 1:11.

At the Kingdom Hall, you will find such people, of different ages, races, and nationalities. Understandably, you may gravitate toward your peers. Pay particular attention, though, to those who have spent many years faithfully

serving Jehovah. (Leviticus 19:32) Their experience in life along with their deep knowledge of the Bible can be of great assistance to you. How can you get to know such ones? Try asking them questions, such as, 'How did you come into the truth?' or, 'What was field service like when you were young?' They may very well produce some spiritual gifts for you!

True, when approaching others in the congregation, you may at first feel as did 12-year-old Craig, who says: "I used to be afraid of talking to older ones. I thought that if I said something wrong, I would get counseled." Craig now knows that his feelings were unfounded. "I'm comfortable talking to them



**The Theocratic Ministry School has trained thousands of youths to be competent teachers of God's Word**

now," he explains. Why not make a similar effort to associate with spiritually mature ones in the congregation? Doing so will give you a priceless opportunity to observe and imitate mature Christians.—2 Thessalonians 3:9.

### A "Tongue of the Taught Ones"

Another area in which to make progress involves your teaching abilities. For example, are you able to communicate Bible truths clearly? Are you able to capture the attention of an audience? Do you know how to put real meaning into your reading? The prophet Isaiah said: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones." (Isaiah 50:4) And with training, you too can have the tongue of the taught ones. One meeting in particular can benefit you in this regard: the Theocratic Ministry School. Have you joined that school yet?

The Theocratic Ministry School is designed to instruct Christians in speaking to others. It does not have an age limit, nor is baptism a requirement. You should be able to read and write, though, be actively associated with the congregation, and be living a life that is in harmony with Christian principles. How does this ministry school work?

After enrolling, you will be assigned to give a brief talk on a specific Scriptural theme. Work hard in preparing your talk. For example, additional information on your subject theme can usually be found by researching Bible publications with the use of the *Watch Tower Publications Indexes* and by considering the Bible encyclopedia *Insight on the Scriptures*.\* If you need assistance in this regard, ask your parents or an experienced Christian to help you. The research you do will add much to your talk and can stimulate your spiritual growth.—Proverbs 2:1-5.

\* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

When you deliver a talk before the congregation, the qualified minister who conducts the school will be listening carefully. After your talk, he will offer appropriate encouragement and counsel based on information found in the *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*, a publication designed to aid public speakers. Listen closely to this counsel. It is not meant to criticize or embarrass you. The suggestions offered are to assist you. If you "continue applying yourself to public reading," your spiritual progress will "be manifest to all persons."—1 Timothy 4:13-15.

### 'Praise Jehovah With Your Lips'

Another way to grow spiritually at Christian meetings is to volunteer answers or comments when audience participation is called for. Advance preparation is the key.\* But perhaps you find it difficult to comment even when you have prepared for the meeting. In such cases, ask Jehovah for help. King David prayed: "O Jehovah, may you open these lips of mine, that my own mouth may tell forth your praise."—Psalm 51:15.

Remember: An answer does not have to be long or involved to be upbuilding. As 12-year-old Rachel says: "Instead of giving a whole big talk, commenting may be just one sentence." At first, speaking out at the meetings may seem hard, and you may ask for assistance, but in time, you will feel as Rachel did. She explains: "When you give a comment by yourself, it's really yours, and you feel proud of it." Furthermore, you will grow spiritually as a result of your efforts.

It is not easy to be spiritually minded in today's self-centered world. But if you regularly attend meetings, prepare thoroughly, participate, and make an effort to associate with mature ones, Christian meetings will indeed help you to grow spiritually.

\* For more information on how to prepare for and participate at meetings, see *Awake!*, June 22, 1988, pages 11-13.

# Memories at the Touch of a Button!



You rush to the local

photo shop to pick up those great pictures you took on your last vacation. But what a disappointment they are! Some of the pictures are dark; others are washed out or out of focus. 'It's the camera!' you say in frustration. **But is it really the camera? Or is it the photographer?**

**Y**OUR wedding, breathtaking places you have visited, friends who have moved away, grandparents and other relatives, your child's first steps—all these memories can be captured on film at the touch of a button. How disappointing it is, though, when your pictures come out poorly—or don't come out at all! No, a new camera is probably not the answer. The key to success is mastering the basic principles of photography.

## How Does a Camera Work?

Simply speaking, a camera is a light-tight box with an "eye," a lens, through which light enters and is focused to form an image on film. The surface of the film consists of light-sensitive chemicals that must receive an adequate amount of light to be properly exposed. Too much light and your pictures seem washed out. Too little and your pictures are too dark.

When you take your picture, the shutter of the camera opens for a fraction of a second, allowing an image to form on your film. So one way of controlling film exposure is to regulate how long that shutter stays open. In normal daylight the average photo can be taken at a shutter speed of 1/125 second. Many cameras have a range of shutter speeds, but generally speaking you should use as fast a shutter speed as the light level permits. The longer the shutter is open, the more likely your picture is to be blurred by camera movement. In critical

situations this can be prevented by mounting the camera on a tripod and releasing the shutter by a cable or the camera's timer.

Another way to control film exposure is to adjust the size of the lens aperture (also called f-stop). This can be compared to having your eye wide open, half closed, or squinting. It controls the amount of light that enters. Many lenses have a dial with various settings, or f-stops, you can select from. The larger the aperture, the more light that enters and the greater the exposure of the film. To confuse matters for the beginner, f-stop numbers are the reverse of the aperture size. For example, f-2.8 is a large opening; f-32 is a tiny opening. Many cameras now come with such features as automatic exposure control and built-in light meters that tell you exactly where to set the adjustments. Indeed, on some fully automatic cameras, all the adjustments are made for you. Such cameras may even focus for you!

**A wider aperture (lower f-stop) isolates the flower from its background; the smaller aperture keeps subject and background in focus**



## Which Film to Choose?

As with cameras, there is an ever-changing variety of films available. A color negative film is used to make color prints. These are easy to pass around and relatively cheap to copy or enlarge. Another advantage is that because of its great latitude, or exposure range, even a poorly exposed negative will produce an acceptable print. Color-reversal films are used to produce color transparencies, or slides. To enjoy these, though, you will also have to purchase a projector and a screen. Slides are less forgiving and demand more precision in exposure. However, you can get good prints from them.

Films differ as to their speed (sensitivity to light) and are rated by ISO or ASA numbers.\* Some are as low as ISO 25 and others as high as ISO 3200. A good general-purpose film would be ISO 100 Daylight, as this medium-speed film works well for normal shots taken in daylight. A faster ISO 400 film works well in low light situations, such as early evening, overcast days, and indoors. However, as a general rule, the slower the film, the sharper the detail it yields. Fast film tends to show grain on enlargements.

If your camera has a film-speed selector, it is very important to set it to the correct ISO or ASA number. Now comes the crucial point:

## How to Make a Good Photograph

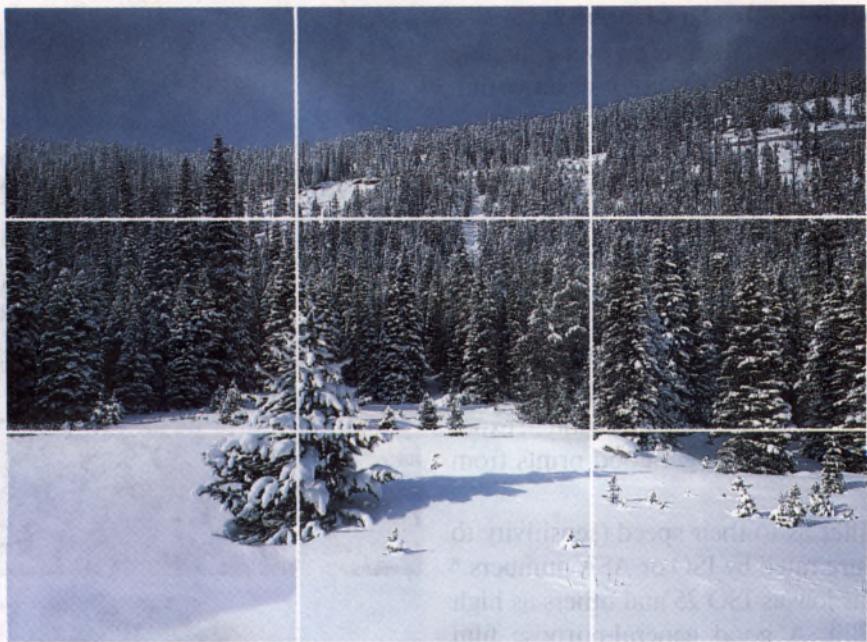
Most beginners *take* snapshots. They point and shoot. A seasoned photographer takes a little time and forethought and *makes* a picture. He composes it. Placing your subject or point of interest properly is called composition. No, lining up your subject dead center is not necessarily the best way. Notice how, in the

\* ISO is the abbreviation for International Standards Organization; ASA, for American Standards Association. In parts of Europe, DIN (*Deutsche Industrie Norm*) is also used. A film listed as ISO 100/21 is ASA 100, or 21 DIN.



**Fill-in flash compensates for the dark shadows in the top photo**

example given here (page 26), a subject may become much more interesting when it is moved slightly away from center—say about one third of the distance from the top or side of the photograph. This is called applying the rule of thirds.



**By applying one method, "the rule of thirds," the point of interest is kept away from the middle of the photo**

It is also important to isolate the subject from the background. A cluttered, or busy, background can distract the viewer's attention from the subject. Is there a light-colored wall or some other neutral background that could be used in posing people? If an ideal background cannot be found, adjust the aperture to a wider opening (a smaller f-stop number). This will put your subject in focus, but it will blur the background. —See example, page 24.

To ensure good exposure, you can also bracket your shots. This means that if you take your photo at f-8 and 1/125 second, you can also shoot at f-5.6 and f-11 at the same speed. In this way, you allow for latitude in the lighting conditions. On the other hand, if maximum depth of field is desired, then bracket by increasing or decreasing the shutter speed (1/60, 1/125, and 1/250 second) while leaving the f-stop constant.

Lighting is also important. If there happens to be a bright background or strong light behind your subject (snow, sunny sea, or beach), this can confuse your camera and cause underexposure. The solution? Step nearer to the subject, and take an accurate light reading. Then step back to your original position, and shoot

### **Some Ways to Avoid Disappointing Pictures**

1. Read and follow camera instructions carefully.
2. Make sure film-speed setting is correct.
3. Make sure the lens and the flash are not covered by your fingers or the lens cap.
4. Compose and crop your picture by changing your position or using a zoom lens.
5. Hold the camera steady, and press the release button.

your picture at the chosen settings. Experienced photographers often use an electronic flash in daylight as fill-in lighting that removes the shadows created by bright backlight or heavy shade.

A bright, high sun projecting down on the subject (or directly behind) may produce harsh shadows under a person's eyes, nose, and chin. If so, place your subject in the shade or use fill-in flash. You can even angle the sun directly behind or to the side of your subject to produce a halo effect as the sun highlights the person's hair, as long as the sun does not shine directly into your lens.

Electronic flash has its limitations, since many flash units are effective only for about 30 feet maximum. Therefore, trying to take a flash picture of a theater stage (as at a Christian convention) or of a city skyline does no more than run down your battery. Direct flash tends to create shadows or highlight facial blemishes. Solution? Try covering your flash (not lens) with a tissue or handkerchief to eliminate hot spots, or bounce the flash from a white ceiling. This will also require exposure compensation. You can place your subject against a darker background to cut down shadows.

The red-eye effect is another quirk of flash photography, especially with cameras that have a built-in flash. If you cannot separate your camera from your flash unit (such as by a mounting bracket), then have the subject look first at a bright light so that the eyes will not be dilated when you take the picture. Or have the subject avoid looking directly into the lens.

### Revealing Portraits

A good portrait does more than reproduce a person's facial features. It can give insight into the individual's personality and character. To produce such fine pictures, you must master the mechanics of photography. This way

you can concentrate on your subject, not on your equipment.

First, get your subject to relax. Use a telephoto lens so you can get a close-up shot without moving that intimidating camera in close. Appropriate music is relaxing. Talking is also another way to help your subject forget the camera and achieve a natural expression. Use questions to draw him out and evoke the emotions you want to capture. In photographing children, make it a game or tell a story. Let them be spontaneous and playful. Props may also help your subject relax. So pose a musician with his instrument or a worker with his tools.

A group photograph doesn't necessarily mean arranging everyone into a neat row. Give them a prop—a chair or two—and arrange them around it, perhaps forming a triangular composition. It isn't necessary for everyone to smile at the camera. Now look carefully at the scene before you press the button. Are clothes and hair well arranged? Are there distracting background elements? Is the camera angle the most flattering? (A camera placed a little lower than the face can shorten a long nose or de-emphasize a receding hairline.) Now go ahead and take a number of shots, and when they are developed, choose the best.

With a little effort—and practice—your camera can bring you much pleasure and help you preserve cherished memories, memories captured at the deft touch of your camera button!

### In Our Next Issue

#### **The Power of the Truth to Rehabilitate**

#### **How Can I Protect Myself From Gang Attack?**

#### **AIDS—Its Tragic Toll on Children**

## Watching the World

### World AIDS Toll Rises

During the first quarter of this year, the worldwide tally of cases of the deadly disease AIDS stood at 345,533 in 162 countries, reports WHO (World Health Organization). This represents an increase of 9.8 percent compared with the previous quarter. Since it is not uncommon for nations to under-report their AIDS statistics, WHO believes that the real total of cases for the first three months of this year would be about 1.3 million.

### Religion in America

An opinion poll on religious affiliation in the United States found that 86.5 percent of the population, or 214 million people, claim to be Christians. Surprisingly for a high-tech, affluent nation, an extraordinary 90 percent said they are religious. "If such a poll were done in Western Europe, the ancestral home of many Americans, you would run at least a third or lower on every indicator," said Dr. Martin Marty, a religion scholar at the University of Chicago. Adherents of the Roman Catholic faith lead with 26 percent of Americans, followed by Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans, respectively. The largest non-Christian faith is the Jewish, comprising 1.8 percent of the population; Muslims make up one half of 1 percent.

### "A More Violent Italy"

The data on crime in Italy has been collected for 1990, and according to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, it "speaks very clearly. And it gives reason for alarm." Crime escalated 21.8 percent over the previous year. During 1990, based on figures supplied by the Italian statistics institution ISTAT, 2,501,640 crimes were re-

ported to the judicial authorities. Thus, on the average, 6,854 crimes were committed every day, with robbery increasing at a terrifying pace. Any improvement seems uncertain, since 24,817 minors were reported to have committed crimes in 1990, an increase of 17.9 percent in comparison with 1989. It is "a more violent Italy" that is entering the 1990's, says the daily *La Repubblica*.

### Protecting Africa's Giants

A team of German experts recently announced that Africa's elephant population has risen for the first time in a decade, reports *The Star*, a South African newspaper. The team estimates that there are currently 609,000 elephants in Africa. That is less than half the number alive in 1979, but the team believes that the downward trend has at last been halted. They credit the



widespread ban on ivory, which has led to plummeting ivory prices and a collapse in the trade. Meanwhile, urgent efforts are also underway to protect the African rhinoceros. In Namibia, conservationists are removing the rhino's horns so that poachers will have no reason to kill the animals. However, according to *The Star*, Swaziland conservationist Ted Reilly predicts that this desperate measure won't work. He has seen poachers slaughter even young rhino for their tiny horns.

### Satanic Cults in Hungary

Satan worship has become so widespread among young people in Hungary that it has stunned the nation. "Investigations into the ritualistic killings by teenagers have uncovered hundreds of cases of youngsters being tempted to dabble in satanism after reading recently-available magazines on the black arts," reports *The European*, a weekly published in London. One such ritual killing involved a 17-year-old boy who stabbed his 13-year-old sister, then dismembered her and distributed her organs around the room. It is no wonder that Bela Csepe, deputy of the Christian Democratic People's Party, has appealed for a ban on the advertising of horror literature, films, and videos.

### Great Barrier Reef —Not So Old

The world's largest coral formation—the Great Barrier Reef—may not be as old as once thought. The vast system of coral reefs stretching some 1,250 miles along the northeast coast of Australia has been estimated to be about 20 million years old. However, geologists studying the reef have recently bored through the coral formations. Their findings have prompted scientists to reexamine the question of the reef's age, which they now believe may be only between 500 thousand and one million years. *Terre Sauvage*, a French magazine, says that the discovery is likely to cause a stir in the scientific community because it seems to run contrary to the traditional evolutionary theory that different life-forms appeared gradually over millions of years. The evidence from the reef seems to indicate that life appeared in what *Terre Sauvage* describes as "a gigantic genetic explosion."

## Plastic Forests

"If we planted artificial forests, in ten years the deserts could be cultivated," claims inventor Antonio Ibáñez Alba. Despite sounding farfetched, the idea has been well received by several North African countries, reports Madrid's daily *Diario 16*. The plan is for millions of plastic trees to duplicate the forest's natural role of trapping the moisture in the night air and then releasing the humidity during the day. Over a ten-year period, these artificial trees could theoretically stimulate enough rainfall to enable natural trees to take over the job. What do the polyurethane trees look like? "Since Nature's designs are the best, they resemble palm trees, the ideal form to trap dew and facilitate evaporation," explains their designer. Their main advantages? They need no irrigation and are unlikely to be chopped down for firewood.

## Adieu Brown Bears?

The Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* reports that France may soon lose its last population of brown bears. Europe's brown bear, whose habitat once ranged from the British Isles to Spain, has almost completely disappeared from western Europe. Officially, these bears have been a protected species in France since 1962. But environmentalists fear that poaching, poisoning, and the loss of the bear's natural habitat in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain have reduced the number of surviving bears to about ten—too few to perpetuate the species. Lamenting the apparent failure of efforts to save the bears, environmentalist Georges Érome observes: "It demonstrates our total incompetence in managing the environment. Today, however, we realize that the environment is life itself."

## Peaceful Coexistence

In a battle between crows and men, the crows have won—at least in Ota City, Japan. For years crows have used discarded bits of steel and copper wire to build nests on electric transmission towers. It mattered little to the crows that their metallic nests might cause power failures. Fed up with constantly removing such nests, the Tokyo Electric Power Company finally decided



instead to help the crows with their nest-building. Tokyo's *Asahi Evening News* reports that during the first year of the electric company's new policy, hundreds of basketlike nests have been attached to transmission towers in such a way as to prevent electrical problems. The crows seem pleased with the new baskets. Now, at last, the crows and the electric company in Ota are living in peaceful coexistence.

## Church Halts Collective Masses

With the decree issued by the Congregation for the Clergy on February 22, 1991, and published in the Vatican newspaper *L'Ossevatore Romano*, the Vatican has tried to bring a halt to the so-called "market of accumulative Masses." What are "collective" or "accumulative Masses"? The Catholic Church allows a priest to accept donations of either money, produce, or commodities for celebrating a Mass for a specific "intention," or purpose, such as a requiem. However, according to a rather recent practice, some priests, unbeknownst to the donors, are also accepting donations

from other faithfuls but are celebrating only one "collective" or "accumulative" Mass for all the requested "intentions." According to the decree, from now on this practice will no longer be permitted, unless the donators give their explicit consent. This decision has been made because, explains the decree, "even the slightest appearance of profit or simony would cause scandal."

## Office 'Drive Through'

Visitors to Osaka City, Japan, are surprised to see an expressway run straight into a cylindrical-shaped building and out the other side. "The road structure will not touch the building so no vibration should be felt. We will also set up a wall to cover the highway to prevent noise and exhaust gas from disturbing office workers," explained an official of the Hanshin Expressway Public Corporation, according to the *Mainichi Daily News*. The main reason for this construction is that land costs 7,600 dollars per square foot in the area, and by taking the elevated expressway through the fifth to the seventh floors of the 16-story building, the Hanshin Corporation makes a hefty saving of almost 12,000,000 dollars. This is the first of three highways-via-buildings slated for construction in Osaka, and it is due to open next year.

## Who Decides?

Advertisers have long known how to appeal to children in order to get parents to buy. *Le Figaro Magazine* reports that a survey carried out by the Children's Institute of France reveals that "a child's opinion is decisive in the following categories: food (70%), planning a vacation (51%), hygiene and cosmetics (43%), household appliances (40%), TV-hi-fi (33%), and cars (30%)." But an executive of a large advertising agency gave this simple reminder: "Adults should not allow their children to rule them."

## From Our Readers

**Receiving Criticism** Earlier today I received some criticism for a project I had been working on for weeks. Although the criticism was beneficial, my supervisor was harsh. I was very upset. When I got home, I read the article "Do You Hate to Receive Criticism?" (February 8, 1991) Needless to say, it changed my whole outlook.

D. B., United States

The article was truly helpful. Having recently been criticized myself, I was feeling depressed and overcome by despair. However, by reading the article over and over again, I was helped to overcome my problem.

N. O., Japan

**Drinking and Driving** I was deeply touched by the articles on "Drinking and Driving—A Deadly Mixture." (February 8, 1991) My little nine-month-old sister was killed in a car accident some 31 years ago. I still grieve for her. A drunken driver smashed into our car. I can still see my mother covered with blood and my little sister slumped over dead in her seat. I am happy to have faith in the resurrection, but I sincerely hope that the article will cause some to reconsider whether they should drink and drive.

K. N., United States

I am 16 years of age. The article "Victims Face Offenders" contained deeply moving experiences and made tears come to my eyes. I feel sure that this article will help many young ones like me to keep others in mind and not be careless in the use of alcohol.

R. H., Germany

**Care for the Elderly** The article on "Caring for the Aged—A Growing Problem" (March 22, 1991) gave me tremendous encouragement. My 86-year-old father now suffers

from Alzheimer's disease, and I wanted to take care of him at home rather than put him in a hospital. As his condition has worsened, the difficulties and mental strain involved in caring for him have increased. I reached a point of feeling complete hopelessness! But then I read your articles. Deeply comforted, tears came to my eyes. There are many, many more problems and hard times ahead, but my resolve to take care of my father right to the end has received a strong boost.

T. H., Japan

**Mexico City** I found the article "Mexico City—A Growing Monster?" (January 8, 1991) to be in error. You say that having a large family is a cultural heritage. However, this phenomenon takes place only in some parts of the country—not Mexico City.

S. C., Mexico

*We are sorry if the article caused some misunderstanding. However, the statement was made in reference to Mexico as a whole, not simply to Mexico City.—ED.*

**Nightclubs** As a music and dance instructor, I was troubled by your article "Young People Ask . . . What About Nightclubs?" (February 8, 1991) There is nothing wrong with music and dancing. But your article stated that music and dancing have been used to lure people into misconduct. I disagree. Your article will only close people's minds to the arts.

B. M., United States

*We did not condemn all forms of music or dancing. Nevertheless, debasing music and sensual dancing played a role in misleading God's people in Bible times. (Compare Exodus 32:6, 17-19.) It is therefore appropriate to warn youths about some of the extremes being indulged in today.—ED.*

# Afghan Orphans Who Wanted to See a Farm

AS MODERN society becomes more and more urbanized, millions of children never get to see a farm and its animals. Certainly, children from Afghanistan would normally never get to see an American farm. So imagine the thrill for a small group of such children, orphans, ravaged and maimed by war, to be able to visit Watchtower Farms, located at Wallkill, some two hours north of New York City by car.

Afghan translators came with the group to help them understand all the activity at this unique farming-printing complex operated by Jehovah's Witnesses and manned by a force of over a thousand volunteer workers, who make up the Watchtower Farms family.

The visit started off with a welcome treat of tea and

cookies, after which the group moved on to see the huge full-color printing presses used to produce the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. One guide said: "To my surprise they enjoyed the efficiency and size of the operation, even though their hearts were set on seeing the farm animals."

He continued: "Then, on to the calves, where the children had a chance to pet and feed the animals. It was a scene to behold—the children running to get more green leaves to feed the young animals. At the chicken house, all of them got to hold the little chicks. Funny enough, when asked what their favorite American food was, they answered, 'Kentucky fried chicken!'"

When lunchtime came around, they shared a meal of

rice and chicken with the huge farm family in the dining room. Afterward, members of the family flocked to greet these youngsters from so far away. It was obvious that they loved children.

In the afternoon the children enjoyed climbing on the tractors and holding the steering wheel. Of course, they all wanted to ride a horse, and that wish was soon granted. The next big thrill? The Watchtower Farms firehouse, with its big, bright-red fire engine! What excitement! You could see it in their faces as they took turns having a ride and blowing the siren. Children worldwide basically love the same things—color and noise!

When asked for their reactions to the visit, Ahmad, an older boy, said: "I enjoyed the printing presses, praying before and after the meal—and everything at the cafeteria!" All of them loved the animals and the horse ride.

This brief experience illustrates that kindness, to orphans or to anyone else, can serve as a fine recommendation of the Christian faith and the loving God, Jehovah. As the Bible states: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world." (James 1:27)—Contributed.



