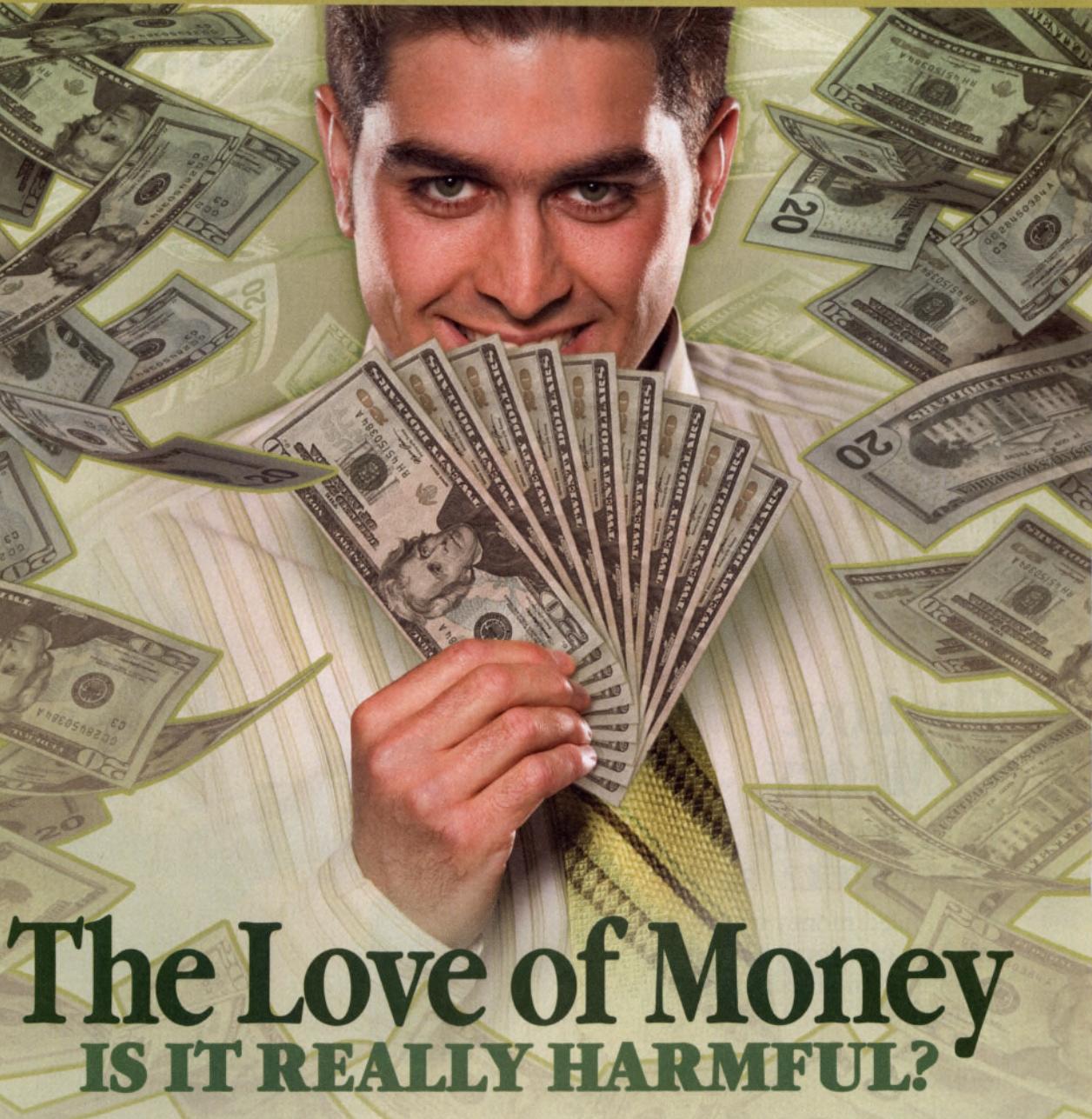


Awake!

JUNE 2007



The Love of Money IS IT REALLY HARMFUL?

ALSO: WHAT'S WRONG WITH DATING SECRETLY? PAGE 26

Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 34,267,000
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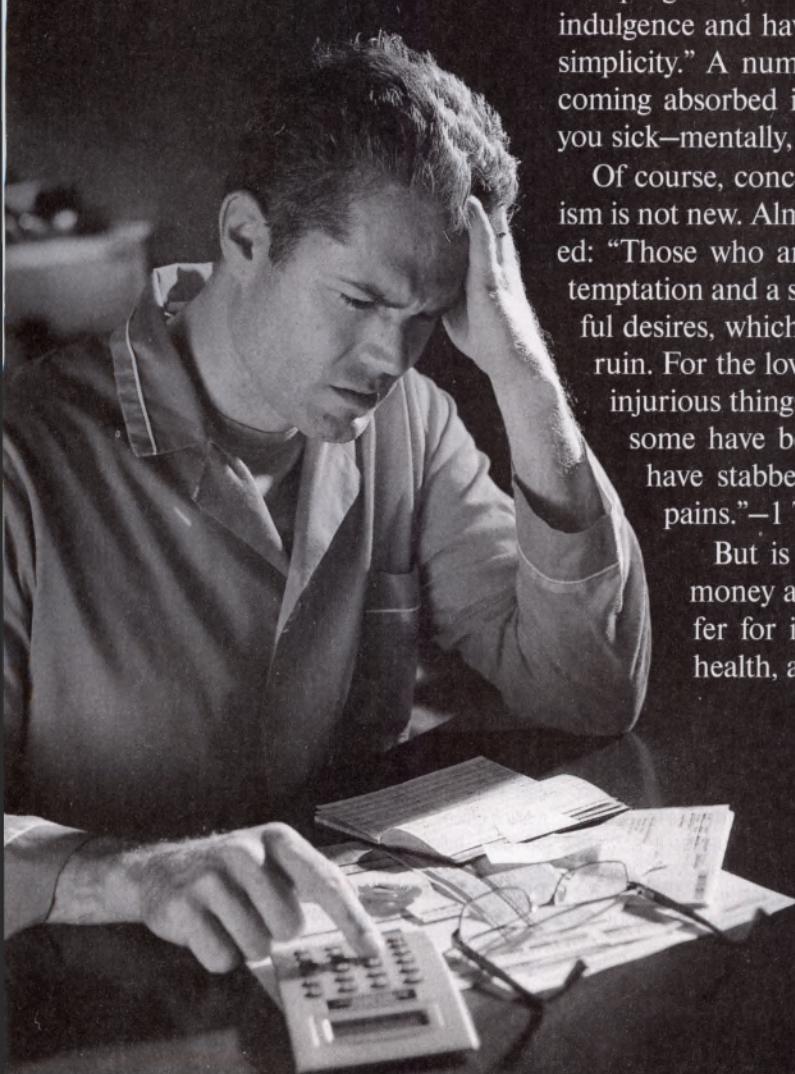
The Love of Money

IS IT REALLY HARMFUL? 3-9

We all need money to survive. But how can you keep it from becoming an all-consuming obsession?



Is the Pursuit of Money Making You Sick?



IF YOU became very rich tomorrow, what would you do? Slow down and enjoy life? Quit your job and spend more time with your family and friends? Take up a career that you really enjoy? Interestingly, many people who become rich do no such things. Instead, they devote the rest of their lives to making more money—either to pay off their new debts or just to get richer.

Some who have followed this course, however, are noting the damaging effect that materialism has had on their health, their family life, and the moral character of their children. Recently, books, articles, television programs, and videos have warned against over-indulgence and have, instead, encouraged “voluntary simplicity.” A number of sources point out that becoming absorbed in materialistic pursuits can make you sick—mentally, emotionally, and even physically.

Of course, concern about the dangers of materialism is not new. Almost 2,000 years ago, the Bible stated: “Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains.”—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

But is that true? Do those who live for money and material acquisitions really suffer for it? Or do they have it all—wealth, health, and happy families? Let us see.

Determined to Be Rich

How It Can Affect You

IN A world where over 850 million people are hungry, it may be hard to imagine that having too much could be a problem. But did you note that the scripture quoted in the previous article warned not against money or riches but, rather, against the *love* of money and the *determination* to be rich? What happens when people live for riches and the things that money can buy? Consider first the effect on their children.

The Effect on Children

It is estimated that in just one year, an average child in America sees 40,000 television commercials. Add to these the video games, sophisticated music players, computer programs, and name-brand clothing that children see in stores and in the homes of their friends, and then try to imagine the barrage of requests parents face as a result. Some parents have pandered to their children's every wish. Why?

Having been denied material luxuries when they were young, some parents are eager to make sure that their children do not grow up feeling deprived. Still other parents are afraid that if they say no, their children will stop loving them. "They want to be their kids' best friend and make sure they're having fun," said a cofounder of a support group for parents



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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in Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A. Other parents hope that an abundance of gifts will compensate for their spending a great deal of time at their job, away from their children. Then, too, after a long week of stressful work, a parent may simply not feel up to the conflict that inevitably follows the answer "No, you can't have it."

But are parents who give their children everything they want helping them or hurting them? Ironically, experience is showing that instead of loving Mom and Dad more, spoiled children tend to be ungrateful. They

don't even appreciate the gifts that they begged for so desperately. Said a middle-school director: "It's been my experience that when children have their 'gimmies' met immediately, the sought-after items are often discarded after two weeks."

What happens to spoiled children when they grow up? According to *Newsweek* magazine, studies show that they become adults who "have difficulty coping with life's disappointments." Never having learned to work hard for what they get, a number of them fail at school, at work, and in marriage, thereafter remaining financially

Often, spoiled children are ungrateful and sought-after gadgets are quickly discarded

Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech,[#] Danish,⁺ Dutch,⁺ English,^{+○} Estonian, Finnish,⁺ French,^{#+} Georgian, German,^{#+} Greek, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,^{#+} Japanese,^{#+} Korean,^{#+} Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Myanmar, Norwegian,⁺ Polish,^{#+} Portuguese,^{#+} Romanian, Russian,⁺ Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,^{#+} Swahili, Swedish,⁺ Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Zulu

[#]Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

[○] MP3 CD-ROM also available.

dependent on their parents. They may also be prone to anxiety and depression.

So, spoiled children are deprived after all. They are denied appreciation for the value of work, a sense of self-worth, and the ability to feel rich on the inside. Therapist Jessie O'Neill warns: "By teaching children that they can have what they want when they want it, you are setting them up for a lifetime of misery."

What Happens to Adults?

If you are married, "no matter how long you've been together or how much money you have, your next fight is likely to be about money," reports the journal *Psychology Today*. It also observes that "the way a couple deals with money disagreements and disappointments can predict the long-term success, or failure, of the relationship." A couple who place too much importance on money and material things clearly put their marriage at greater risk. Indeed, it has been estimated that arguments about money are dominant in 90 percent of divorce cases.

Yet, even when a couple stay together, the quality of their marriage may suffer if their



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Would you welcome more information? Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address: **America:** United States of Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** PO Box 75142, Manurewa, Manukau 2243. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.



***The determination
to be rich can cause
tension in a marriage***

focus is on money and the luxuries it affords them. For example, a couple in debt may easily become irritable and quick-tempered, with each blaming the other for their financial worries. In some cases each mate is so preoccupied with his or her material possessions that there is little time for their relationship. What happens when one mate makes an expensive purchase and hides it from the other? Doing so breeds secretiveness, guilt, and mistrust—all of which eat away at the marriage.

A few adults, whether married or not, have literally sacrificed their lives to materialism. Some in South Africa, under the stress of adopting Western-style materialistic values, have attempted suicide. In the United States, a man killed his wife, his 12-year-old son, and himself, apparently because of his financial problems.

Of course, most people do not die as a result of pursuing riches. Yet, life could easily pass them by while they are lost in their quest. Then, too, the quality of their lives may suffer if job stress or financial strain causes panic attacks, sleeplessness, chronic headaches, or ulcers—health problems that can shorten one's life. And even if a person wakes up to the need to change his priorities, it may be

too late. His mate may no longer trust him, his children may already be hampered emotionally, and his health may be ruined. Perhaps some of the damage can be repaired, but it will require a great deal of work. Such ones have indeed “stabbed themselves all over with many pains.”—1 Timothy 6:10.

What Do You Want?

Most people want a happy family, good health, meaningful work, and enough money to live comfortably. To have all four requires balance, and when one's main concern is money, that balance is disturbed. For many people, getting back on track may mean accepting a lower-paying job, a smaller home, a less-expensive car, or a lower social status. How many of them are willing to sacrifice such luxuries for the sake of higher values? ‘I know I don't need these things,’ admitted one woman, ‘but it's so hard to let go of them!’ Others want to let go, but they don't want to be the first to do so.

What about you? If you have already found a way to keep money and material things in their place, you are to be commended. On the other hand, are you rushing through this article right now because your standard of living demands too much of your time? Are you

among those who feel a need to cut back materially in favor of greater physical and emotional well-being? Then act decisively before materialism has opportunity to do its destructive work in your household. The box on this page provides some suggestions for getting started.

When material things are kept in their

place, each member of the family will benefit physically and emotionally. Christians, however, have an additional concern—they do not want material things to interfere with their relationship with God. How can materialism threaten one's spiritual health, and how can one prevent that from happening? The next article will explain.

Living With a Sense of Balance

Cutting back materially will require determination and careful planning. Here are suggestions that have proved helpful to some.

■ **INVENTORY.** What can you stop buying? What can you get rid of? Magazine subscriptions? Music CDs? Unnecessary accessories for the car?

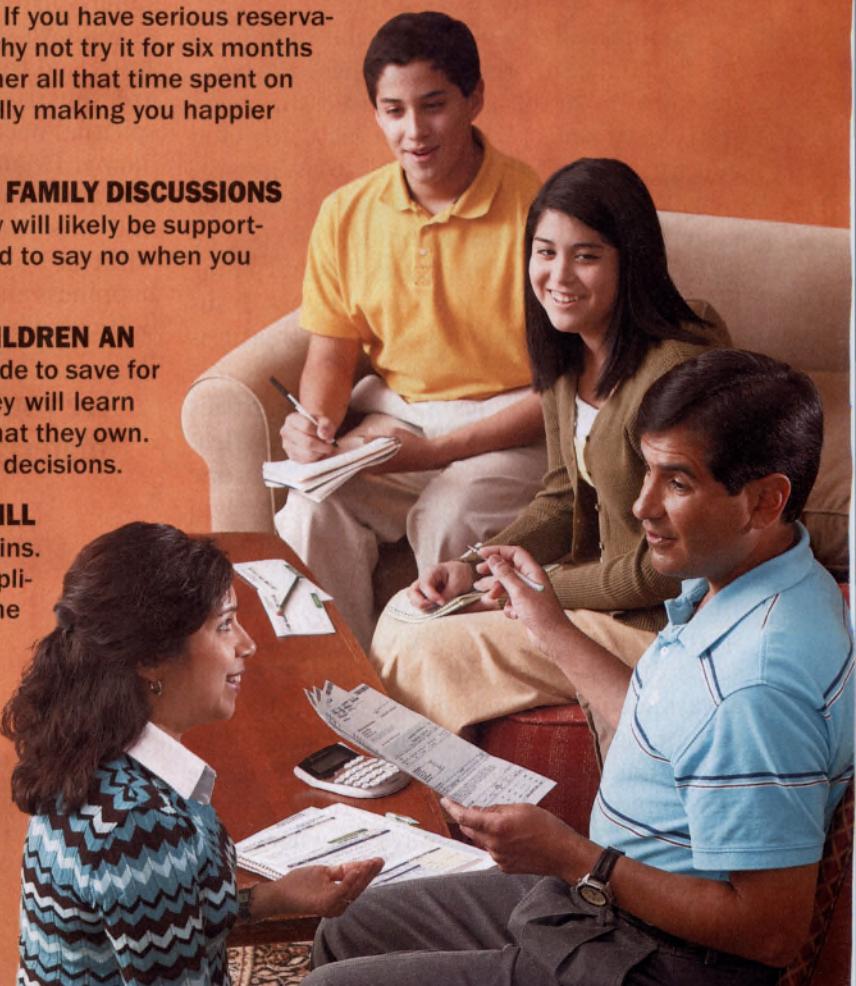
■ **SIMPLIFY ON A TRIAL BASIS.** If you have serious reservations about living more simply, why not try it for six months or a year. Prove to yourself whether all that time spent on money and possessions was really making you happier—or less so.

■ **INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN IN FAMILY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SIMPLIFYING.** Thus, they will likely be supportive and you will not find it so hard to say no when you must.

■ **CONSIDER GIVING YOUR CHILDREN AN ALLOWANCE.** Whether they decide to save for a desired item or to forgo it, they will learn patience and appreciation for what they own. They will also learn how to make decisions.

■ **LEARN TECHNIQUES THAT WILL HELP YOU SAVE.** Shop for bargains. Make a budget. Carpool. Run appliances less. Borrow books from the library instead of buying them.

■ **FILL THE GAP.** Remember, your objective in cutting back is not simply to own less but to give attention to more important concerns, such as the people in your life. Are you doing that?



Determined to Be Rich Spiritually

GETTING rich materially requires focused effort and sacrifice. So does getting rich spiritually. This was implied by Jesus when he said: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matthew 6:20) Spiritual riches do not gather themselves. Merely having a religion will not make a person spiritually rich any more than just having a bank account will make him financially wealthy. Cultivating an intimate relationship with God, developing as a spiritual person, and becoming rich in spiritual qualities require determination, time, focused effort, and sacrifice.—Proverbs 2:1-6.

Can You Have Both?

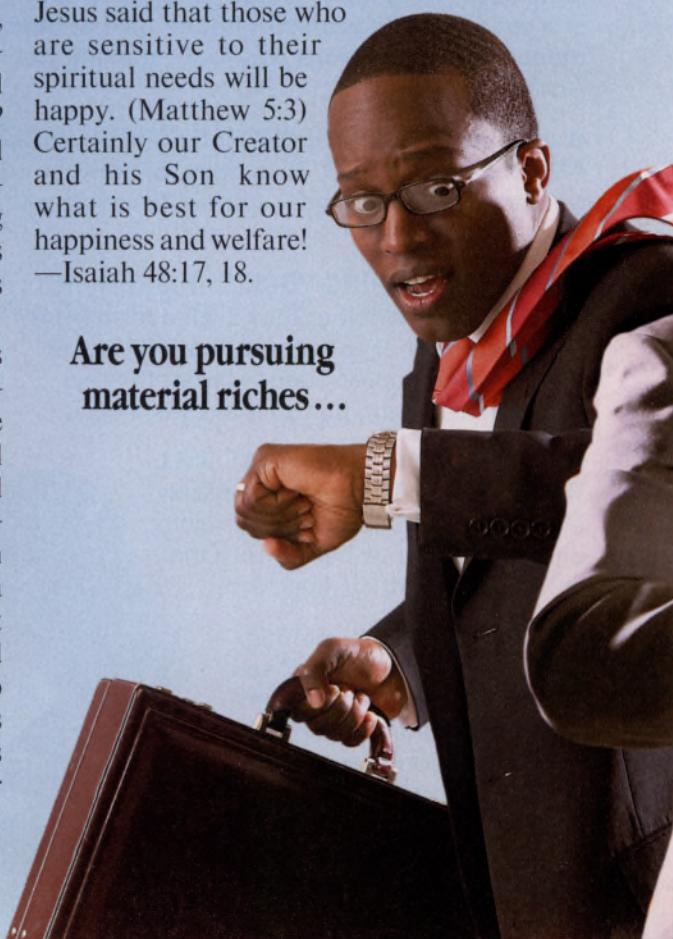
Cannot one have both spiritual riches and an abundance of material things? Perhaps, but only one of these can be successfully pursued. Jesus said: “You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” (Matthew 6:24b) Why not? Because the pursuit of spiritual riches and material riches implies a conflict. The one interferes with the other. Thus, before telling his disciples to store up spiritual riches, Jesus said: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth.”—Matthew 6:19.

If one disregards Jesus’ counsel and tries to pursue both spiritual and material riches, what will happen? Jesus said: “No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other.” (Matthew 6:24a) When one pursues both, then spiritual matters, even if cared for out of a sense of duty, may become a nuisance that always seems to be getting in the way. Instead of looking to God, one might even look to money and what it buys as the primary means of coping with life’s anxieties. It is as Jesus said: “Your heart will always be where your

riches are.”—Matthew 6:21, *Today’s English Version*.

Each Christian does well to consider such Bible counsel seriously before deciding where he will focus his time, his attention, and his heart. Just because God does not provide specific limits on how much a Christian can acquire does not mean that His warnings against greed carry no penalty. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Those who disregard Bible counsel and cultivate a determination to be rich suffer spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, as we have seen. (Galatians 6:7) By contrast, Jesus said that those who are sensitive to their spiritual needs will be happy. (Matthew 5:3) Certainly our Creator and his Son know what is best for our happiness and welfare!—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

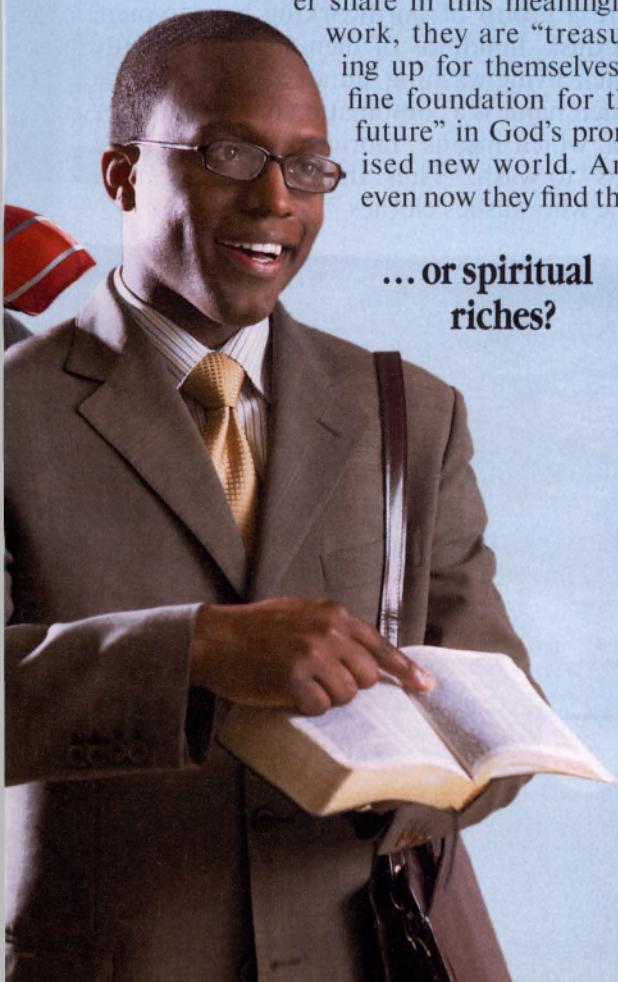
**Are you pursuing
material riches ...**



A Choice You Will Not Regret

What will it be for you, God or riches? It is obvious that we must give some attention to our material needs. In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul said: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." Paul also encouraged Christians to place their hope, not in money, but on God and "to be rich in fine works." (1 Timothy 5:8; 6:17, 18) On what will you focus? What will you pursue? Chief among the fine works Paul referred to is the preaching and disciple-making activity that Jesus gave his disciples to do. (Matthew 28:19, 20) When Christians voluntarily simplify their lives, not merely to slow down and enjoy life but to have a greater share in this meaningful work, they are "treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future" in God's promised new world. And even now they find that

... or spiritual
riches?



spiritual riches are "O how much better than gold!"—1 Timothy 6:19; Proverbs 16:16; Philippians 1:10.

Consider the experience of Eddie, whose family became Jehovah's Witnesses when he was young. At one point his family lost all their assets, and they were forced to move out of their home. Eddie explains: "I had always worried about what would happen if we got to the point where we actually had nothing. Well, now we had nothing. And do you know what happened? Nothing! We still ate, drank, and clothed ourselves. Jehovah provided, and in time we recovered from our losses. This experience taught me to take seriously what Jesus promised at Matthew 6:33—that if we make God's Kingdom our life's priority, we need never be anxious about our material needs." Today Eddie, accompanied by his wife, serves as a full-time traveling minister. They have what they need materially. More important, they are spiritually rich.

Immeasurable Benefits

Unlike treasures on earth, which thieves can steal, spiritual riches can be permanent. (Proverbs 23:4, 5; Matthew 6:20) It is true that spiritual progress is harder to measure. It is not as easy to determine the extent to which one has grown in love, joy, or faith as it is to ascertain one's financial progress. But the rewards of spiritual riches are immeasurable. Speaking of disciples who would leave even their houses and fields—yes, their means of living—to make room for spiritual things, Jesus said: "Truly I say to you men, No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life." —Mark 10:29, 30.

What will you put first in your life? God or riches?



The Hardworking Laundrymen of Abidjan

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

WE WERE traveling west from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, enjoying the sights and sounds of this bustling West African city, when our attention was suddenly captured by a dazzling scene. Over a vast area of grassland stretched thousands of pieces of brilliantly colored clothing. What was the reason for this vivid display? Our Ivorian friends were happy to enlighten us. It was the work of the *fanico*.

The *fanico* are a group of hardworking laundrymen. From dawn till dusk, hundreds of men and a few hardy women make their living washing laundry by hand in the Banco River. Their name is a combination of the Dyula, or Jula, words *fani*, which means "fabric" or "clothes," and *ko*, which means "to wash." Thus, the Dyula word *fanico* means "someone who washes clothes."

Photo: MicroStock®/C. Céleste



The Work of the Laundryman

Early one morning we visited the *fanico* at their workplace to find out more about their interesting livelihood. What a flurry of activity! Already the work was well under way. The somewhat murky Banco River was blanketed with huge tires in which rocks had been placed. At each tire a laundryman standing in water thigh-deep to waist-deep was busy at his task of lathering, pummeling, and scrubbing.

Well before sunrise the *fanico* washerman goes from door to door to collect his day's work. Some of his clients live a good two miles from the "laundry." He hauls all the clothes in a wooden handcart or carries them in a huge bundle on his head. The *fanico* then makes his way to the Banco River. Upon arrival he is welcomed with a chorus of greetings in many languages, as the *fanico* who work here come from many parts of Africa. Some have been in this area for decades, such as Mr. Brama, a muscular washerman now in his 60's. Except for three days of the year, the work continues relentlessly.

The actual washing of the clothes is an enormous task. We watched as one man put down his load of laundry, an amount that would boggle the mind of the average housewife. He untied the bundle and began by soaking each piece of clothing in the water. Next, he lathered up a huge block of palm-oil soap and one by one pummeled the pieces of clothing against a rock. Sometimes he used a scrub brush to remove a stubborn stain. How much does it cost to have clothes laundered? Seven cents (U.S.) for a shirt and perhaps 14 cents for a bedsheet. That explains why the *fanico* have to wash such large quantities to make a living.

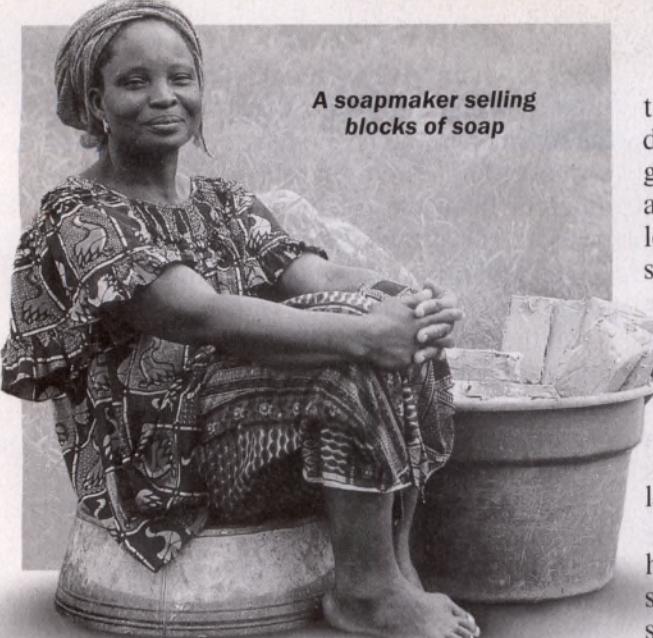
If you were to see the great bulk of clothing they wash, you might ask yourself, 'How can they possibly remember which piece of clothing be-

longs to whom?' We wondered if perhaps they used a system similar to that of a group of laundrymen in India who have a secret marking code. The system that the *fanico* use is far different from that of their Indian counterparts but, nevertheless, just as effective.

Our well-informed guide attempted to explain the *fanico* technique to us. First of all, when the washerman collects the laundry, he notes the physical size of each member of the family so he can remember which piece of clothing belongs to whom. No marking or tagging takes place. Then he ties each article of clothing from the same family in the same place on the garment—using, for instance, the left sleeve, the right sleeve, the collar, or the waistband. When he washes them, he is always careful to keep the clothes from the same family together. It still seemed a rather daunting memory challenge to us. So we asked one *fanico* if he had ever lost or mixed up anyone's clothing. His shocked expression clearly conveyed his thoughts, 'No. A *fanico* never loses a garment!'

Can anyone come to the Banco River and start washing clothes? Certainly not! There is a strict protocol to follow. A would-be *fanico* is given a three-month probationary period, during which he is trained by a veteran. It is during this time that he learns the specialized memory-training technique. If he fails in this, he will have to find work elsewhere. However, if the new *fanico* is proficient, he then pays a





A soapmaker selling blocks of soap

small fee and is assigned his very own tire-rock station, which is not to be used by anyone else.

Palm-Oil Soap

Soap plays an integral part in the work of the laundryman. So the novice is also trained in the proper use of the palm-oil soap. Three different types of soap are used, which are identified by their color. The white and the yellow soaps are used for lightly soiled garments, and the black soap is used for those that are heavily soiled. The color is dark because of the palm oil, which is the main ingredient. Since each *fanico* uses at least ten blocks of soap every day, nearby soapmakers keep them in constant supply.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Instinct Guides Birds—What Guides Man?
- Why Am I Always Left Out?
- Is “Being Good” All That Matters?

We visited the modest soapmaking facilities on the hillside adjacent to the “laundry.” The serious business of soapmaking begins at six in the morning. The workers have already bought the required materials in the local market—coagulated palm oil, potassium, salt, soursop juice, coconut oil, and cacao butter, all biodegradable. They boil these ingredients together in a huge steel drum placed over a wood fire. After cooking the soap concoction for approximately six hours, they pour it into tin trays and bowls and wait for it to harden. Several hours later they cut the soap into large blocks.

Then, carrying a tubful of soap blocks on her head, the soapmaker goes down the hillside to the *fanico*. How does she deliver the soap to the laundrymen if they are busily splashing away in the river? She simply descends into the waist-deep water with the soap in a plastic tub, floats the tub on the water, and delivers the soap to whoever needs it.

The Workday Ends

When the *fanico* has finished all the washing, he goes to the nearby hillside and places the pieces of freshly laundered clothing in rows on the grass or drapes them on improvised lines. The result is the colorful scene that initially caught our attention. Now is also the time when the industrious laundryman can take a little respite from his day's duties. In the late afternoon when all the clothing has dried, he carefully folds each piece, perhaps pressing some items with a charcoal iron. As the day draws to a close, he bundles up all the clean, pressed garments and delivers them to their owners.

When we first sighted the rows upon rows of clothing laid out to dry, we didn't realize how much work went on behind the scenes. So we are very glad we visited the *fanico* of Abidjan, as we now have a greater understanding of and appreciation for the work of all laundrymen and laundrywomen worldwide.

**Young People Ask . . . Do I Have an Eating Disorder?**

(October 2006) After reading this article, I felt depressed. I have battled with an eating disorder all my life. The article made me feel that I should have "solved" this disorder when I was young. However, to this day I struggle with this monster, and now I feel that I am a lost cause. The article makes it sound as if one could overcome this disorder simply by having strong faith.

J. J., United States

"Awake!" responds: While the subjects that are discussed in the "Young People Ask . . ." series are intended primarily for youths, the Bible principles contained in these articles apply to people of all ages. We recognize that eating disorders are among the most difficult maladies to overcome. The article did not say that those who struggle with eating disorders are lacking faith.

It simply suggested that sufferers can pray to Jehovah for help in overcoming eating disorders. In addition to appealing to God, victims were encouraged to seek help from "a parent or other adult." Moreover, the article candidly admits that "the road to recovery is not easy" and that relapses may occur. The fact that you are still battling an eating disorder after many years means that you have not given up hope.

Young People Ask . . . What Should I Do With My Life?

(July 2006) I am about to graduate from school, and it is time for me to plot my course in life. This article has made me more determined to attain the goal of entering the full-time ministry. There is no other work that is more worthwhile and that can bring me more joy.

H. W., Hong Kong

I am so grateful for this article because it has helped me to see that in this materialistic world, the best thing young people like me can do is give priority to spiritual goals.

A. S., Brazil

In my busy everyday life, I often lose sight of my goals. Reading this article enabled me to renew my determination to do all that I can to serve Jehovah. Thank you very much for caring for us young ones.

E. M., Japan

How to Build a Happy Marriage

(July 2006) These articles are a masterpiece. Using Jesus and his treatment of his apostles as an example to show how mates should treat each other couldn't have been better. Keep up the good work. We eagerly await our magazines each month.

S. C., United States

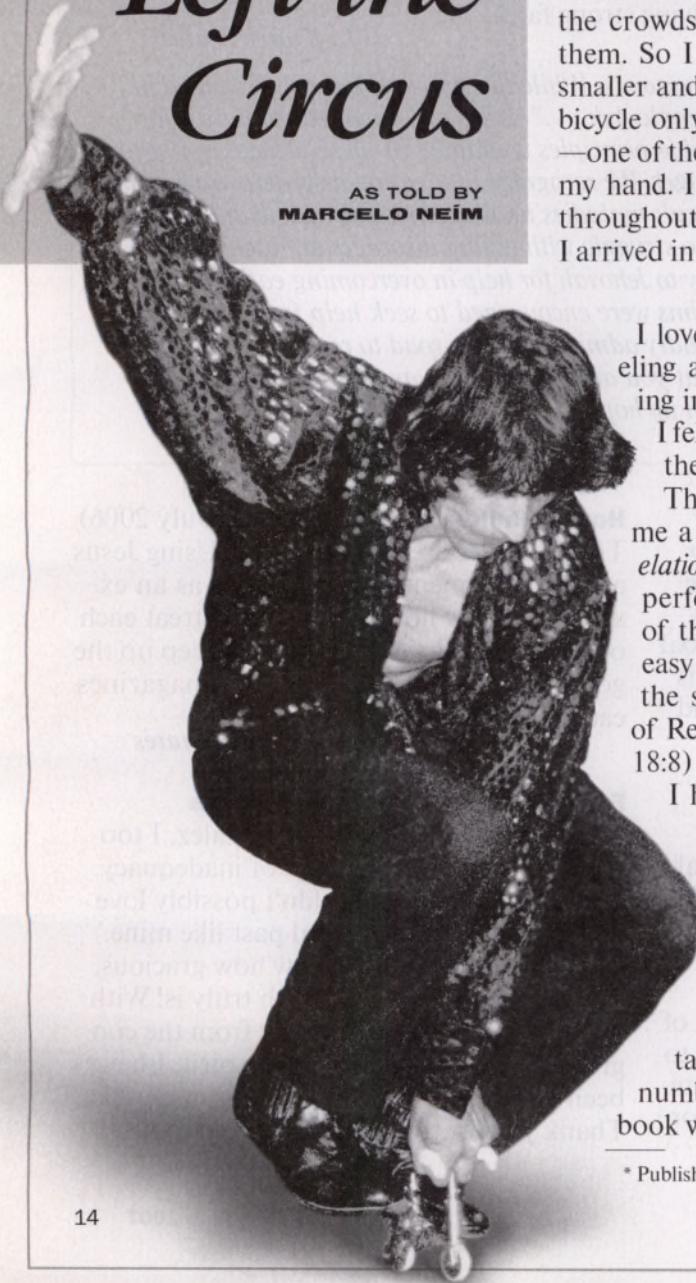
From Hopelessness to Happiness

(July 2006) Like Brother González, I too have struggled with feelings of inadequacy. I reasoned, 'Jehovah couldn't possibly love me, especially with a sinful past like mine.' What a blessing it is to know how gracious, forgiving, and loving Jehovah truly is! With much counsel, loving support from the congregation, and Jehovah's holy spirit, I have been helped to apply Bible truths in my life. Thank you for this timely spiritual food.

T. A., United States

Why I Left the Circus

AS TOLD BY
MARCELO NEIM



I WAS born in Montevideo, Uruguay. Although my parents were God-fearing, they did not belong to any religion. My mother died in an accident when I was about four years old, and I was raised by relatives who tried to instill good principles in me. At the age of 20, I decided to travel to get to know different countries and cultures.

In Colombia I began to work in circuses as a helper. I observed how happy the performers looked when the crowds applauded, and I wanted to be one of them. So I practiced a bicycle act, gradually using smaller and smaller ones until I could perform on a bicycle only four and three quarters of an inch long—one of the smallest in the world. It fit in the palm of my hand. I began to enjoy a measure of popularity throughout much of South America. At the age of 25, I arrived in Mexico and worked in several circuses.

My Life Changes Radically

I loved the life of the circus. It involved traveling a lot, staying in the best hotels, and eating in exclusive restaurants. At the same time, I felt my life was empty, and I had no hope for the future. One afternoon my life changed.

The master of ceremonies at the circus gave me a book that he had received, entitled *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!** After the performance I read it until the early hours of the morning. Although the book was not easy for me to understand, the explanation of the scarlet-colored wild beast and the harlot of Revelation fascinated me. (Revelation 17:3–18:8) Then, while cleaning out a trailer that

I had purchased, I found another book by the same publishers, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.* It was easier to understand, and right away I realized that I must preach. So I immediately began to share what I had learned with everyone I met.

As time went by, I felt a need to contact Jehovah's Witnesses. The telephone number of the Witness girl who had left the book with my friend was in the *Revelation Climax*

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

book. So I called, and her father invited me to a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Tijuana, Mexico. I was impressed by the love shown there and was convinced that this was the true religion. Wherever the circus went, I attended the local Kingdom Hall and obtained literature to distribute informally.

Something happened that convinced me even more that I was on the right course. The Witnesses invited me to the Memorial of Christ's death and explained how important it was for Christians to attend. But it was opening night at the circus, and I thought it would be impossible for me to attend. I prayed intensely to Jehovah about it, and something surprising happened. Two hours before the performance, the electricity went off! Thus, I was able to go to the Memorial and later return to perform. It seemed to me that Jehovah had answered my prayer.

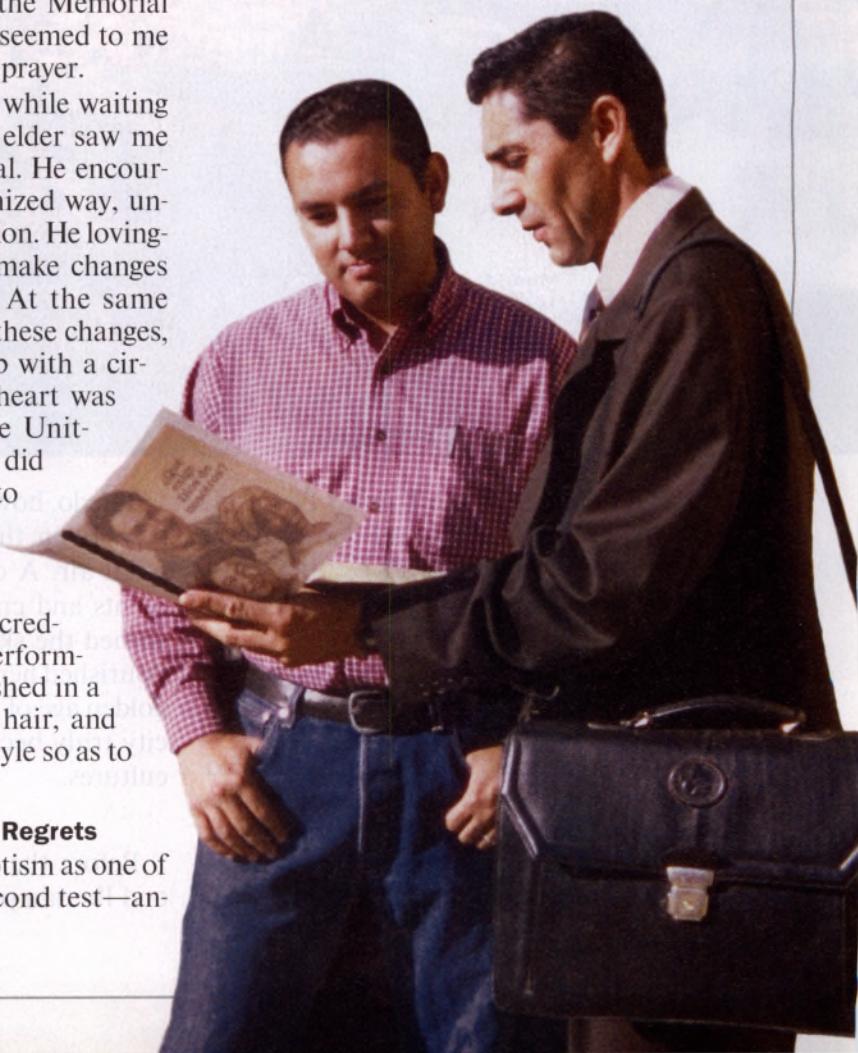
Once I was giving out tracts while waiting in line at a bank. A Christian elder saw me and commended me for my zeal. He encouraged me to preach in an organized way, under the direction of a congregation. He lovingly explained that I needed to make changes in my life in order to do so. At the same time that I was contemplating these changes, I was offered a high-paying job with a circus in the United States. My heart was divided. I wanted to go to the United States, but if I accepted, I did not know what would happen to the path that I was just setting out upon. This was my first test, and I did not want to disappoint Jehovah. In spite of the incredulous reaction of my fellow performers, I left the circus, got established in a congregation, cut off my long hair, and made other changes in my lifestyle so as to be able to serve Jehovah.

A Satisfying Life With No Regrets

In 1997 shortly before my baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I had a second test—an-

other opportunity to go to the United States, this time to perform on a famous television program in Miami with all expenses paid. But I wanted to get baptized and fulfill my dedication to Jehovah. So I refused the offer, much to the astonishment of the program's representatives.

Some people have asked me if I regret having left the life of the circus. My answer is that I would never exchange Jehovah's friendship and love for the life I had before. Although my new career as a full-time Christian minister does not give me applause, fame, or fortune in this world, I no longer feel empty. I am filled with the precious hope of living on a paradise earth and of welcoming my mother back in the resurrection.—John 5:28, 29.



Toledo

A FASCINATING MIXTURE OF MEDIEVAL CULTURES



JN THE center of the Iberian Peninsula lies a granite hill surrounded on three sides by the Tagus River. Over the centuries the river has carved out cliffs that protect the hill's flanks. On this strategic outcrop arose Toledo, a city that has become synonymous with Spain and its culture.

Today, the narrow, winding streets of old Toledo transport the visitor back to the Middle Ages. The city's gates, castles, and bridges all maintain their medieval flavor and bear silent witness to the days when Toledo was one of the most important cities of Europe.

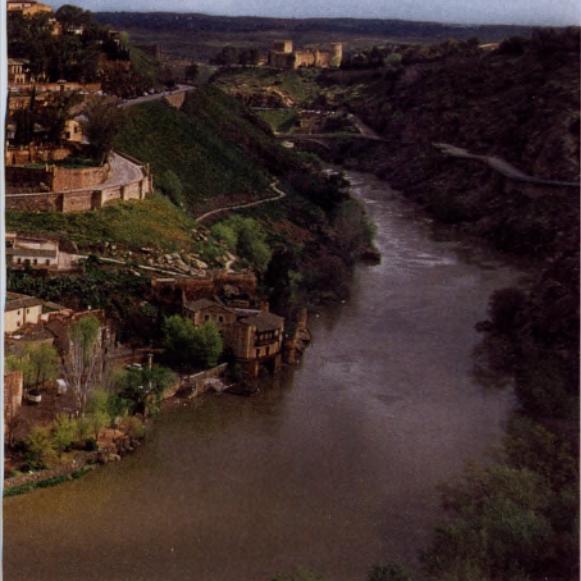
Toledo, however, is not a typical European city. Even the railway station has an Oriental air. A closer look at Toledo's monuments and crafts reveals a city that has absorbed the skills of several civilizations that flourished here over the centuries. During the golden age of Toledo, some 700 years ago, the city truly became a melting pot of medieval cultures.

Varied Cultures

Before the Romans came to Spain, Celtic and Iberian peoples had already built a town

THE THREE CULTURES OF TOLEDO

During the Middle Ages, Toledo was divided into three different quarters, where Catholics, Jews, and Muslims lived according to their own laws and customs. Some of their ancient places of worship have now become principal tourist attractions.



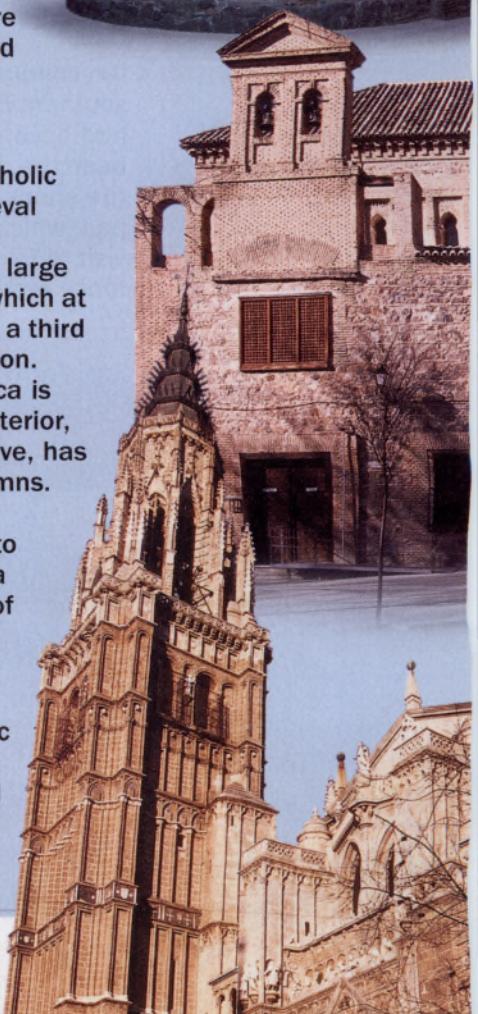
at this strategic location. The Romans renamed it Toletum (from *tol-litum*, meaning "raised aloft") and made it one of their provincial capitals. Roman historian Livy described Toledo as "a small city, but fortified by location." When the Visigoths conquered Spain after the fall of the Roman Empire, they chose Toledo to be their capital. It was here in the sixth century that King Recared rejected Arianism, a step that paved the way for Spain to become a center

(Continued on page 19)

► A tenth-century mosque, now known as Cristo de la Luz, illustrates the brickwork artistry so typical of Muslim craftsmen. It stands in the Medina area of the city, where wealthy Muslims used to live.

► Though later transformed into Catholic churches, two medieval synagogues remain, testifying to Toledo's large Jewish community, which at one time constituted a third of the city's population. Santa María la Blanca is the oldest, and its interior, like the mosque above, has ornate multiple columns. A more spacious synagogue, El Tránsito (right), now houses a Sephardic museum of Jewish culture.

► Construction of Spain's largest Gothic cathedral began in the 13th century and took over 200 years to complete.



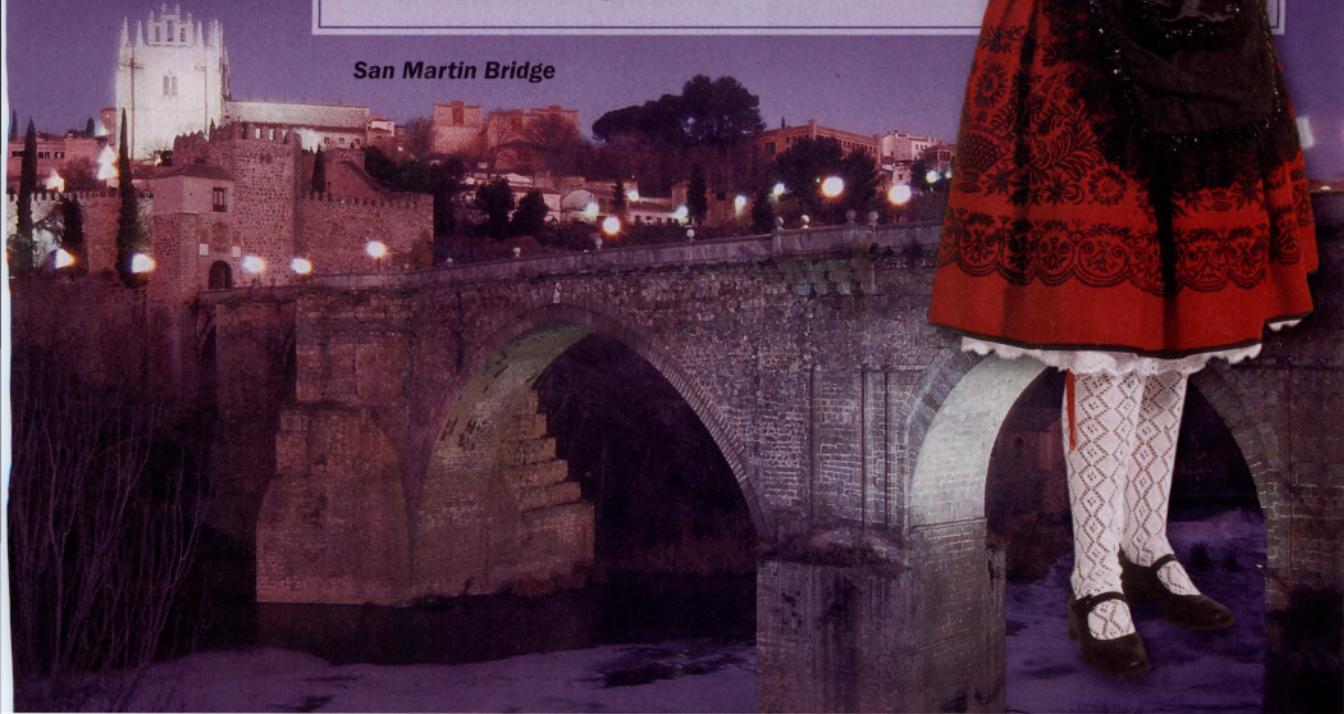
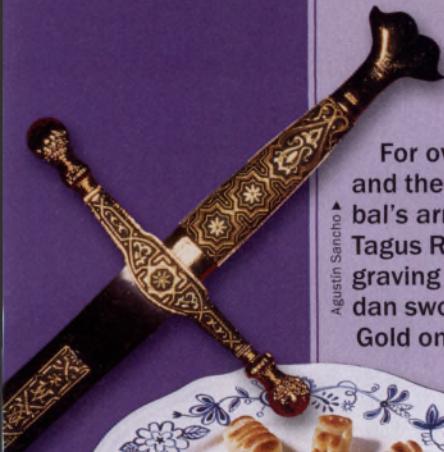
SPECIAL SWORDS, AND SWEET MARZIPAN

For over two thousand years, the city's blacksmiths have made swords, and the name Toledo has become synonymous with fine steel. Both Hannibal's armies and Roman legions used these swords, forged alongside the Tagus River. Centuries later, Muslim craftsmen introduced damascene engraving to embellish their Toledan swords and armor. The replica of a Toledan sword shown at left is an example of this. (See the article "Patterns of Gold on Steel," in the January 22, 2005, issue of *Awake!*) Nowadays, most of the city's souvenir shops have an ample selection of swords, along with the inevitable suit of armor. Apart from serving as collector's items, these swords are likely to be seen in a movie, not on a battlefield.

Another tradition in Toledo is the production of marzipan, whose origin dates back to the Arabic conquest of the city. Spain already had extensive fields of almonds when the Muslims arrived, but sugar—the other essential ingredient—was missing. Within 50 years of the Muslim conquest, fields of sugarcane sprang up in southern Spain. By the 11th century, marzipan had become a specialty of Toledo, and it has been the delight of connoisseurs ever since. Entire shops in Toledo are now devoted to marzipan, which is often made into small figurines. No visit to Toledo would be complete without tasting those mouthwatering morsels.

San Martin Bridge

Agustin Sanchez



(Continued from page 17)

of orthodox Catholicism and Toledo the seat of its foremost archbishop.

The religious panorama changed when Toledo became a part of the Muslim caliphate. The narrow streets of the old city date from this period, which lasted from the 8th century to the 11th century. Muslim tolerance permitted the coexistence of Christian, Jewish, and Moorish cultures in Toledo. Finally, in 1085, King Alfonso VI (a Catholic king) conquered the city. Despite the change of rulership, these cultures continued to exist together for several centuries.

Many of Toledo's most impressive monuments date from the medieval period. Catholic rulers converted the city into their capital, Jewish citizens employed their skills in crafts and commerce, and Muslim artisans contributed their talents in architecture. Scholars of the three different creeds worked together in the School of Translators. During the 12th and 13th centuries, they translated a great number of works of antiquity into Latin and Spanish. The vast scientific store of Arabic civilization likewise became available to the West thanks to these translators.

Religious tolerance came to an end during the 14th century when thousands of Jewish citizens perished in religious pogroms. By the time Columbus discovered America, the Spanish Inquisition had set up a tribunal in Toledo and both Jews and Muslims had to choose between forcible conversion and exile.

Monuments to Past Glory

Today the city center of Toledo is home to over a hundred monuments. That historic

wealth led the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization to declare it a World Heritage City. Two of the most impressive medieval structures are the bridges that span the Tagus River, one providing access to the city from the east and the other from the west. And few visitors will fail to see the massive gate Puerta Nueva de Bisagra, which guards access to the old walled city.

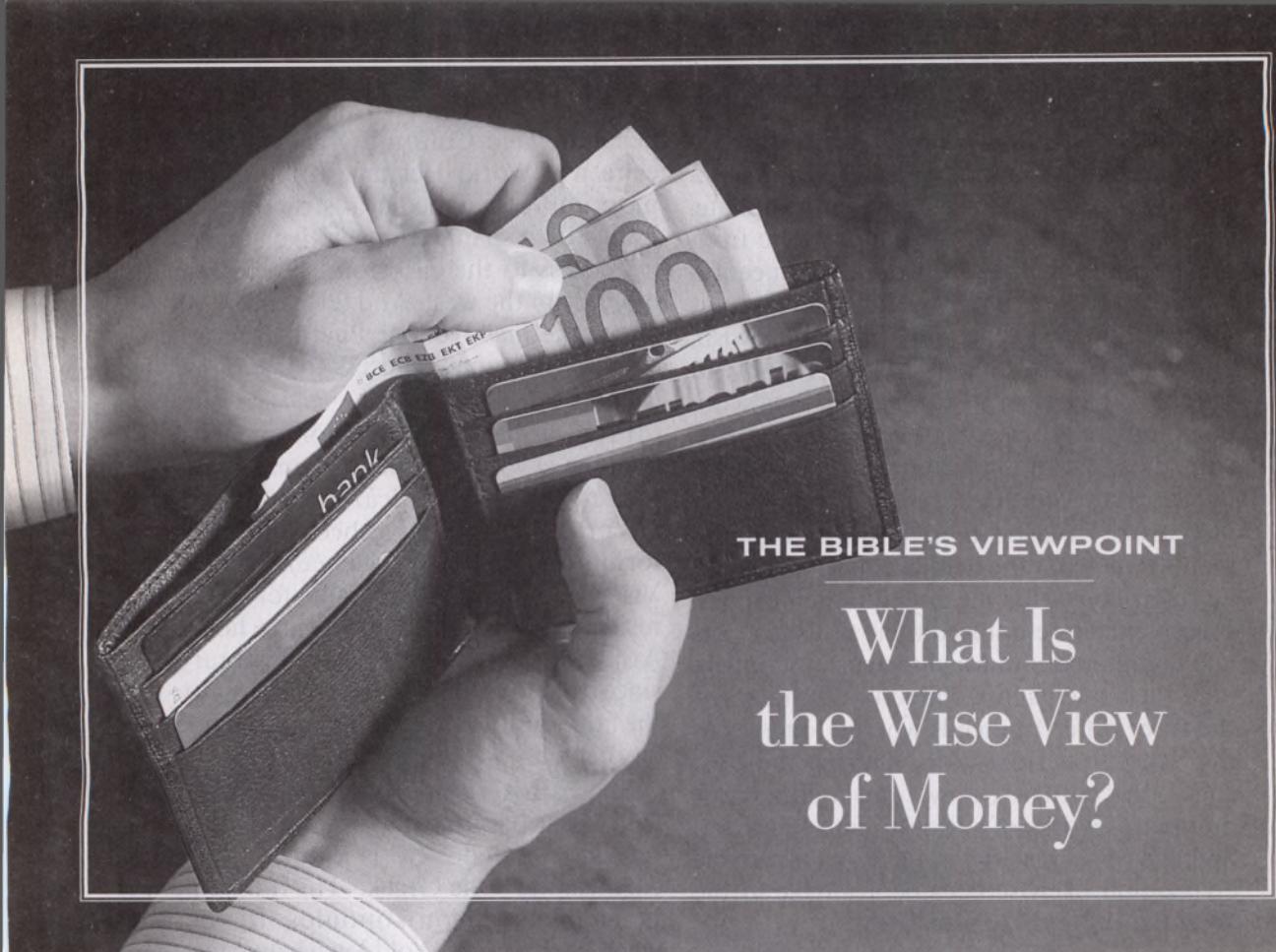
From a distance, two monuments dominate the skyline of Toledo. A massive square fortress called the Alcázar lies to the east. Over the centuries it has been a Roman praetorium (governor's residence), a palace for Visigoth monarchs, an Arabic fortress, and a residence of Spanish kings. It now houses the Army Museum and an extensive library. But since Toledo is above all a religious city, it is the huge Gothic cathedral that dominates the city center.—See the box on page 17.

The cathedral and other churches in Toledo boast paintings by a famous artist who settled in Toledo. He is known as El Greco, meaning "The Greek." His full name was Doménikos Theotokópoulos. In the area where he lived in the old Jewish quarter, there is now a museum containing a number of his paintings.

Perhaps Toledo appears most majestic when viewed from the hills that overlook the city from the south. However, the charm of Toledo can best be savored by wandering through its narrow streets. The visitor may temporarily get lost, but he will soon find himself fascinated by the quaint passageways, ancient buildings, ornate balconies, and tempting souvenir shops.

Although this ancient city seems timeless, the tourist must eventually bid farewell to Toledo. The best place to do so is on the southern bank of the Tagus River. As the day draws to a close, the setting sun casts a warm glow over the city, whose proud monuments seem to reflect once more its golden age.

1. Nile to blood—Exodus 7:19-21. 2. Frogs—Exodus 8: 5-14. 3. Gnats—Exodus 8:16-19. 4. Gaddites—Exodus 8: 1-6. 6. Boils—Exodus 9:8-11. 7. Hail—Exodus 9: 22-26. 8. Locusts—Exodus 10:12-15. 9. Darkness—Exodus 10:21-23. 10. Death of firstborn—Exodus 12: 12, 29. 11. The Schulamite maidens—Song of Exodus 10:21-23. 12. Euodia—Philippians 4:2. Solomon 1:1-6. 12. Euodia—Philippians 4:2.



THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

What Is the Wise View of Money?

“**M**ONEY is for a protection,” says the Bible. (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Because it pays for food, clothing, and shelter, money serves as a protection against the hardships associated with poverty. Indeed, in a material way, money can buy practically anything. It “meets a response in all things,” says Ecclesiastes 10:19.

God’s Word encourages us to work hard so that we have the means to provide for ourselves and our families. (1 Timothy 5:8) Honest, hard work rightly engenders feelings of satisfaction, dignity, and security.—Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13.

Additionally, our hard work enables us to be generous in a financial way. “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”

said Jesus. (Acts 20:35) Such happiness results when we cheerfully use our finances to help the needy, especially fellow Christians, or to purchase a gift for someone we love.—2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Jesus encouraged his followers to be generous, not merely on rare occasions but as a habit, as a way of life. “*Practice giving*,” he said. (Luke 6:38) The same principle applies to giving in order to advance the interests of God’s Kingdom. (Proverbs 3:9) Indeed, our generosity in this way helps us to “make friends” of Jehovah and his Son.—Luke 16:9.

Beware of “the Love of Money”

Selfish people rarely give, and when they do, it may be with an ulterior motive. Their problem often is the love of money, which,

contrary to their expectations, usually brings unhappiness. “The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains,” says 1 Timothy 6:10. Why is the love of money so unsatisfying and even hurtful?

For one thing, a greedy person’s appetite for wealth is insatiable. “A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver,” says Ecclesiastes 5:10. Hence, money lovers ‘stab themselves’ with endless frustration. Moreover, their greed contributes to poor relationships, unhappy family life, and even lack of proper rest. “Sweet is the sleep of the one serving, regardless of whether it is little or much that he eats; but the plenty belonging to the rich one is not permitting him to sleep.” (Ecclesiastes 5:12) Above all, the love of money earns God’s disfavor.—Job 31:24, 28.

Biblical and secular history contain many examples of people who stole, perverted justice, prostituted themselves, committed murder, betrayed others, and lied—all for money. (Joshua 7:1, 20-26; Micah 3:11; Mark 14:10, 11; John 12:6) During his earthly ministry, Jesus invited a “very rich” young ruler to follow him. Sadly, the man declined this wonderful invitation because it would hurt him financially. In response, Jesus exclaimed: “How difficult a thing it will be for those having money to make their way into the kingdom of God!”—Luke 18:23, 24.

During the present “last days,” Christians must especially be on guard because people in general are, as foretold, “lovers of money.” (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) True Christians who remain conscious of their spiritual need are not swept along with this wave of greed,

for they possess something far superior to money.

Something Better Than Money

While stating that money serves as a protection, King Solomon added that “wisdom is for a protection” because it “preserves alive its owners.” (Ecclesiastes 7:12) What did he mean? Solomon was here pointing to the wisdom that is based on an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and on a wholesome fear of God. Superior to money, such godly wisdom can save a person from countless pitfalls in life and even from a premature death. Also, like a crown, true wisdom exalts those possessing it and wins them respect. (Proverbs 2:10-22; 4:5-9) And because it contributes to the gaining of God’s favor, it has been called “a tree of life.”—Proverbs 3:18.

Those who sincerely want such wisdom, and who are willing to search for it, find that it is readily available. “My son, if you . . . call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God. For Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment.”—Proverbs 2:1-6.

Because they attribute more value to wisdom than to money, true Christians enjoy a measure of peace, happiness, and security that eludes money lovers. Says Hebrews 13:5: “Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For [God] has said: ‘I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.’” Money affords no such security.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- How does money serve as a protection?—Ecclesiastes 7:12.
- Why is godly wisdom superior to money?—Proverbs 2:10-22; 3:13-18.
- Why should we avoid the love of money?—Mark 10:23, 25; Luke 18:23, 24; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.



Sebastian D'Souza/AFP/Getty Images

They Survived the TERROR IN MUMBAI

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN INDIA

THE city of Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, has a burgeoning population of more than 18 million. Daily, between six million and seven million of these residents travel on fast and frequent suburban trains to their places of employment, to schools and colleges, to shopping areas, or to local sights. During peak hours each overcrowded nine-car train, with a normal capacity of 1,710, carries about 5,000 passengers. It was at such a peak time on July 11, 2006, that terrorists targeted the Mumbai trains. In less than 15 minutes, seven bombs exploded on different trains along the Western Railway, leaving more than 200 dead and 800 injured.

Quite a number of individuals from the 22 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mumbai and its suburbs are regular passengers on the trains and were on the ones that were attacked. Thankfully, none of them lost

their life, but several were injured. Anita was returning home from work. The train was crowded, so she was standing near the door of the first-class compartment in order to exit more easily. As the train sped along, suddenly there was a tremendous explosion, and her compartment filled with black smoke. As she leaned out the door and looked to her right, she saw that the metal side of the next compartment had been ripped away and was hanging from the body of the train at a 45-degree angle. She was appalled to see bodies and body parts flying out of the gap onto the tracks. After what seemed an eternity to her—but was actually only a few seconds—the train stopped. She, along with other passengers, jumped down onto the tracks and ran to get far away from the train. Anita phoned her husband, John, on her cell phone and fortunately got through to him; within minutes the entire

city's phone system was jammed with anxious callers. She had been relatively calm until she spoke to her husband. Then she broke down and cried. She told him what had happened and asked him to come and get her. While she waited for him, rain started to pour down, washing away much of the evidence that would have helped investigators.

Claudius, another one of Jehovah's Witnesses, left his office earlier than usual. He boarded the 5:18 p.m. train at Churchgate Station, the city terminus of the Western Railway, and entered a first-class compartment. While looking for a seat for the hour-long journey to Bhayandar station, he saw Joseph, who was from a nearby congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Time passed quickly as the two exchanged news. Then, tired from his day's work, Joseph dozed off. Since the train was packed, Claudiois got up at the station before his own to make his way to the door. While Claudiois was standing there, Joseph woke up and leaned over the back of the seat to wish him good-bye. Holding a bar on the seat, Claudiois leaned over to speak to him. That possibly saved Claudiois' life. Suddenly, there was a great noise. The compartment shook violently, filled with smoke, and became totally dark. Claudiois was hurled to the floor between rows of seats and, except for a ringing sound in his ears, seemed to have lost his hearing. Where he had previously been standing, there was just a gaping

hole. The commuters standing beside him had either been thrown out onto the tracks or were lying dead on the floor. He had survived the fifth of the seven blasts that rocked the railway system on that fateful Tuesday.

**Where he had previously been standing,
there was just a gaping hole**

Claudius was transported to the hospital, with blood all over his clothes. However, the blood was mainly from other less-fortunate passengers. He suffered only minor injuries—a ruptured eardrum, burns on one hand, and singed hair. At the hospital he met up with Joseph and Joseph's wife, Angela, who had

been in the next compartment reserved for ladies and was unhurt. Joseph suffered a bruised right eye and hearing loss. These three Witnesses thanked Jehovah that they were alive. Claudiois commented that his first thought when he regained his senses was, 'How pointless it is in this system to chase after money and material gain when life can be snuffed out in an instant!' He was glad that he had made his relationship with his God, Jehovah, the most important thing in his life!

Within a brief period, the city of Mumbai had suffered from severe flooding, riots, and then the bomb blasts. However, the more than 1,700 Witnesses there have a fine, zealous spirit. They regularly share with their neighbors the wonderful hope of a new world, where all violence will be a thing of the past.—Revelation 21:1-4.

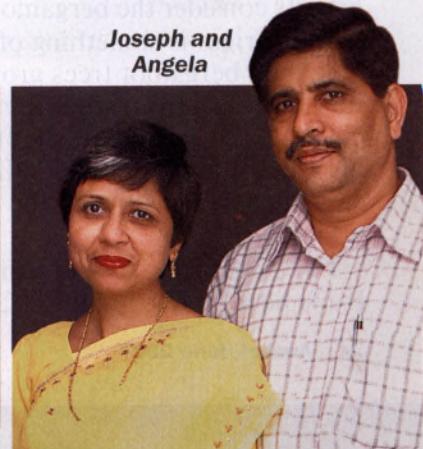
Anita



Claudius



Joseph and
Angela





THE PERFUMER'S Favorite Fruit

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ITALY

PERFUMES have a long history. In Bible times perfumes scented homes, clothes, beds, and the bodies of any who could afford them. The ingredients for perfumes included aloes, balsamic oil, cinnamon, and other spices.—Proverbs 7:17; Song of Solomon 4:10, 14.

Essences extracted from vegetation are still fundamental to perfumery. We have come to Calabria, the southernmost region of the Italian peninsula, to see where one such ingredient is produced. You may not know the bergamot by name, yet the aroma of this fruit is said to be found in approximately one third of women's perfumes on the market and half of men's colognes. Allow us to introduce the bergamot to you.

The bergamot is an evergreen citrus. Its flowers appear in spring, and smooth-skinned yellow fruits—about the size of an orange—ripen in late autumn or early winter. Many experts consider the bergamot to be a hybrid, and its origin is something of a mystery. Nowhere do bergamot trees grow wild, nor can they be grown from seed. To reproduce them, cultivators have to graft shoots of existing trees into plants of similar species, such as the lime or the sour orange.

For perfumers, bergamot fruits have unique qualities. One

book on the subject explains that the essence extracted from them has the rare ability to "amalgamate and fix different aromas, blending them into a single *bouquet*, and to confer a note of special freshness on each composition that includes it."^{*}

Cultivation in Calabria

Historic sources indicate that bergamots grew in Calabria at least as early as the beginning of the 18th century and that locals occasionally sold the essence to passing travelers. Commercial cultivation, however, was tied to the success of cologne. In 1704, Gian Paolo Feminis, an Italian emigrant to Germany, produced a toilet water that he called *Aqua admirabilis*, or "admirable water." Its main ingredient was bergamot essence. The perfume came to be known as eau de Cologne, "Cologne water," or simply cologne, after the city in which it was produced.

The first bergamot grove was planted in Reggio in about 1750, and handsome profits from the sale of bergamot essence stimulated further cultivation. The trees need mild weather and a southern exposure sheltered from cold north winds, but they dislike high winds, abrupt chang-

* Just as some people are allergic to such things as grass pollen or flowers, others have reactions to perfumes. *Awake!* does not promote any particular product.



**Bergamot essence is extracted by
grating the rind of whole fruits**

© Danilo Donadoni/Marca/age fotostock



es in temperature, and prolonged humidity. The ideal microclimate is offered by a narrow strip of land, only 3 miles wide and 100 miles long, that hugs the southernmost coast of mainland Italy. Though efforts are being made to grow bergamots elsewhere, a high percentage of production worldwide comes from the province of Reggio. The only other important producer is the country of Côte d'Ivoire, in Africa.

Bergamot essential oil—a greenish-yellow liquid—comes from the peel of the fruit. The traditional method of extracting this oil was to cut the fruit in half, scoop out the pulp, and squeeze the skins so that the essence sprayed out of the colored outer layer of the peels into sponges. Some 200 pounds of bergamots had to be processed to extract just one pound of essence. Today almost all the essence is extracted by machines, which use abrasive disks or rollers to grate the rind of whole fruits.

Little Known but Widely Used

This fruit may be little known outside Calabria, but, says one source, "among connoisseurs, bergamot is a magic word." Its fruity scent can be found not only in perfumes

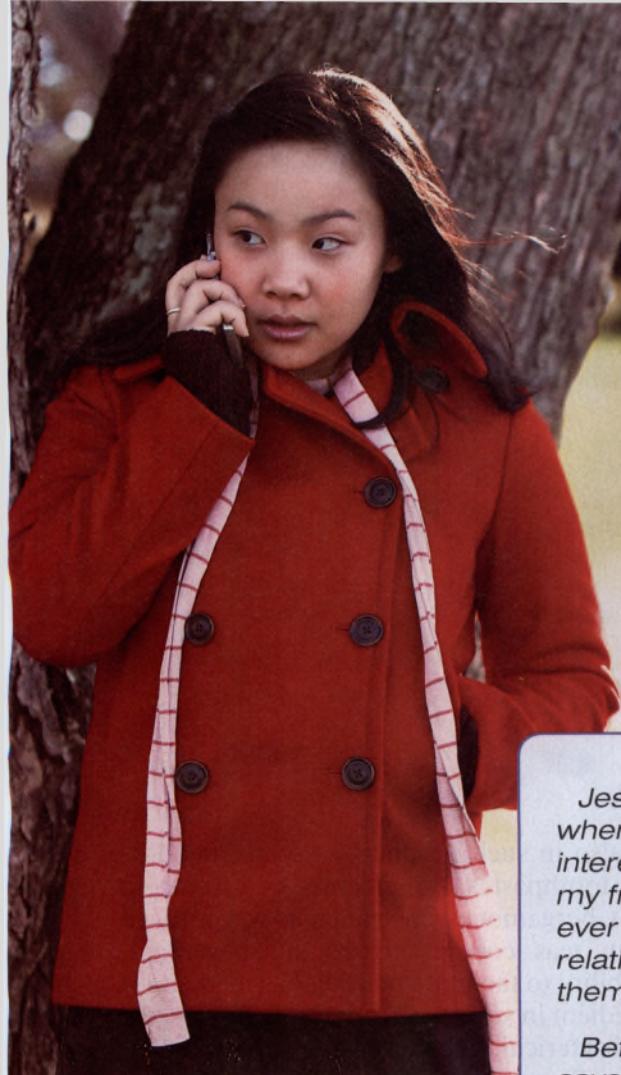


but also in such products as soaps, deodorants, toothpastes, and creams. As a flavoring agent, bergamot essence finds its way into ice cream, teas, confectionaries, and beverages. Its ability to facilitate tanning has made it an ingredient in sun-care products. Its antiseptic and bactericidal properties make it valuable to the pharmaceutical industry as a disinfectant in surgery, ophthalmology, and dermatology. Bergamot pectin, a powerful gelatinizing agent, also finds a place in hemostatic and antidiarrheal preparations.

Analysts have isolated some 350 components of bergamot essence, which contribute to its unique bouquet and numerous other qualities. All this in just one fruit!

It is unlikely that Bible writers were acquainted with the bergamot. However, any who care to consider the properties of this citrus and the wisdom of its Creator can certainly find reason to echo the psalmist's words: "Praise Jehovah . . . , you fruit trees."

—Psalm 148:1, 9.



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK...

What's wrong with dating secretly?

Jessica was caught in a dilemma. It all started when a classmate named Jeremy began showing interest in her. "He was very cute," she says, "and my friends said he was the most decent boy I'd ever meet. Several girls had tried to start a relationship with him, but he wasn't interested in them. He liked only me."*

Before long, Jeremy asked Jessica out. Jessica says: "I explained to him that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I wouldn't be allowed to date someone who wasn't of my faith. But then Jeremy had an idea. He asked, 'Why can't we just date behind your parents' backs?'"

F SOMEONE you were attracted to made such a suggestion, how would you respond? You might be surprised to learn that, at first, Jessica went along with Jeremy's plan. "I was convinced that if I dated him, I could make him learn to love Jehovah," she says. How did things turn out? We'll find out later. First, let's see how even an otherwise exemplary Christian youth like Jessica could unwittingly get caught in the snare of secret dating.

* Some names in this article have been changed.

Why They Do It

Some youths pair off at an early age. "I have seen children with boyfriends and girlfriends at 10 or 11!" says Susan, in Britain. Why are they so eager? The natural attraction of the opposite sex and a dose of peer pressure—often that's all it takes. "Your hormones are rushing and everyone else at

school is going out with someone," says Lois, in Australia.

But why do some date *secretly*? "Probably they're scared of what their parents will say," says Jeffrey, in Britain. David, in South Africa, feels similarly. "They know their parents would not approve," he says, "so they don't tell them." A girl in Australia named Jane points out another possibility. "Secret dating is a rebellion thing," she says. "If you feel that you're not being treated like the young adult you think you are, you decide that you're going to do what you want and just not tell your parents. Keeping it a secret is easy."

Of course, the Bible commands you to obey your parents. (Ephesians 6:1) And if your parents object to your dating, they must surely have good reasons. For example, if they are Jehovah's Witnesses, your parents would want you to date only a fellow believer—and then only when both of you are in a position to consider marriage.* Don't be surprised, though, if you find yourself thinking:

■ I feel left out because everyone is dating except me.

■ I'm attracted to someone who doesn't share my faith.

■ I would like to go out with a fellow Christian, even though I'm too young to marry.

You probably know what your parents would say about these statements. And deep down, you know that your parents are right. Still, you may feel like Manami, in Japan, who says: "The pressure to date is so strong that I sometimes doubt my stand. For kids today it's unthinkable *not* to be dating." Some in that situation have begun to date and have hidden the matter from their parents. How?

"We Were Told to Keep It a Secret"

The very term "secret dating" suggests a measure of deception. Some keep their dat-

* See the article "Young People Ask . . . When Can I Start Dating?" appearing in our issue of January 2007.

ing secret by communicating primarily over the phone or the Internet. In public they are just friends, while their e-mails, text messages, and phone calls tell a completely different story.

Caleb, in Nigeria, reveals another sly tactic. "Some youths who secretly date use code words and nicknames when they are talking among their peers so that others will not grasp what they're talking about," he says. Another method is to arrange for a group activity, only to pair off later. James, in Britain, says: "Once, a group of us were invited to meet at a location, only to discover that the whole thing had been set up so that two in the group could be together. We were told to keep it a secret."

Frequently, as James points out, secret dating is carried out with the cooperation of friends. "At least one friend knows about the situation but chooses not to say anything because of a 'don't-tell' mentality," says Carol, in Scotland.

Often, blatant dishonesty is involved. "Many keep their dating secret by lying to their parents about where they go," says Beth, in Canada. Misaki, in Japan, admits that she did just that. "I had to make up stories carefully," she says. "I was cautious not to tell any lies other than those related to my dating so that I would not lose my parents' trust."

The Pitfalls of Secret Dating

If you are tempted to date secretly—or if you are already doing so—you need to consider the following.

■ **Where will my deceitful course lead?** Do you intend to marry the person reasonably soon? "Dating without the intention of marriage is like advertising something you're not selling," says Evan, in the United States. Proverbs 13:12 says: "Expectation postponed is making the heart sick." Do you really want to make someone you care about sick at heart?

Secrecy or Privacy?

Not all secrecy surrounding dating involves deception. Suppose that a young man and woman who are of an age to get married would like to become better acquainted but that for a time they wish to maintain a measure of privacy. Perhaps, as a young man named Thomas said, "they don't want to be teased with questions like, 'So when are you getting married?'"

Undue pressure from others can indeed be harmful. (*Song of Solomon 2:7*) Therefore, at the initial stage of a relationship, some couples may well choose to be discreet—while being careful not to isolate themselves. (*Proverbs 10:19*) "This gives two people time to decide if they're serious about each other," says 20-year-old Anna. "If they are, then they can go public."

At the same time, it would be wrong to hide your relationship from those who have a right to know about it, such as your parents or the parents of the person you are dating. If you cannot be open about your dating, you should ask yourself why. Is your case similar to Jessica's that was mentioned at the outset of this article? Do you know in your heart that your parents would have valid reasons to object?

■ How does Jehovah God feel about what I am doing?

The Bible says that "all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (*Hebrews 4:13*) So if you're covering up your own dating—or that of a friend—Jehovah already knows about it. And if deception is involved, you have good reason to be concerned. Jehovah God feels strongly about lying. Indeed, "a

false tongue" is listed prominently in the Bible among the things that he detests.—*Proverbs 6:16-19*.

Really, if you date secretly, you rob yourself of the protection that you can have when your relationship is aboveboard, out in the open. Not surprisingly, some who secretly date fall into sexual misconduct. Jane, in Australia, tells of a friend who secretly dated a boy from school and led a double life. "By the time her dad found out she had a boyfriend, she was pregnant," Jane says.

Certainly, you would do well to talk to your parents or a mature Christian adult about any secret relationship that you may be involved in. And if you have a friend who is dating secretly, do not share in his or her course by helping to cover it up. (*1 Timothy 5:22*) After all, how would you feel if the relationship had harmful consequences? Would you not be at least partly responsible? Suppose a friend who is diabetic is secretly eating sweets. What if you found out about it, but your friend begged you not to tell anyone? What would be your most important concern—covering up for your friend or taking action that could possibly save his or her life?

The same is true if you know someone who is dating secretly. Don't worry about permanently ruining your friendship! In time, a true friend will realize that you were acting in his or her best interests.—*Proverbs 27:6*.

"I Knew What I Had to Do"

Jessica, mentioned at the outset, changed her mind about dating secretly when she heard the experience of another Christian who was in the same situation. "After hearing how she broke off the relationship," Jessica says, "I knew what I had to do." Was breaking up easy? No! "This was the only boy I had

TO THINK ABOUT

- Look back at the three situations highlighted in bold on page 27. Which, if any, of these describes how you feel at times?
- How can you address the matter without dating secretly?

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

ever really liked,” Jessica says. “I cried every day for several weeks.”

Yet, Jessica knew something else—that she loved Jehovah and that although she had got sidetracked, she truly wanted to do what was

right. In time, the pain of breaking up subsided. “Now,” Jessica says, “my relationship with Jehovah is better than ever. I’m so grateful that he gives us the direction we need at just the right time!”

A NOTE TO PARENTS

After reading the preceding article, you may wonder, ‘Would my son or daughter date behind my back?’ Note what a number of youths told *Awake!* about why some may be tempted to date secretly, and then think about the accompanying questions.

■ **“Some kids aren’t finding comfort at home, so they decide to lean on a boyfriend or girlfriend.”—Wendy.**

As a parent, how can you make sure that the emotional needs of your children are adequately cared for? Are there improvements you can make in this regard? If so, what are they?

■ **“When I was 14, an exchange student asked me to be his girlfriend. I agreed. I thought it would be nice to have a guy put his arms around me.”—Diane.**

If Diane were your daughter, how would you address this issue?

■ **“Mobile phones make secret dating easy. Parents have no idea what is going on!”—Annette.**

What precautions can you take when it comes to your children’s use of cell phones?

■ **“Secret dating is much easier when parents don’t keep a close enough eye on what their children are doing and with whom.”—Thomas.**

Are there ways you can be more a part of your teenager’s life and still allow him or her appropriate freedoms?

■ **“Often parents aren’t home when their children are. Or they are too trusting about letting their children go places with other people.”—Nicholas.**

Think of your child’s closest associate. Do you really know what their activities involve when they are together?

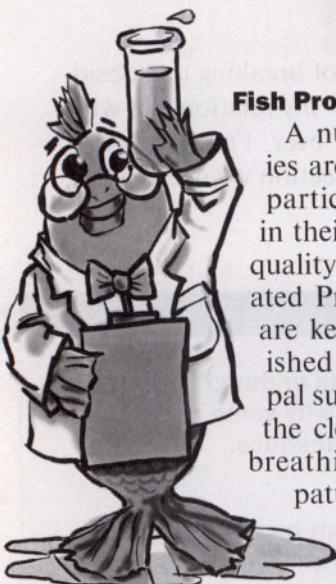
■ **“Secret dating can happen when parents are overly strict.”—Paul.**

Without compromising Bible laws and principles, how can you “let your reasonableness become known”?—Philippians 4:5.

■ **“In my early teens, I had low self-esteem and I craved attention. I began e-mailing a boy in a neighboring congregation and fell in love. He made me feel special.”—Linda.**

Can you think of some healthier ways that Linda’s needs could have been fulfilled at home?

Why not use this article and this page as a basis for discussion with your son or daughter? The best countermeasure to secrecy is heartfelt and forthright communication. It takes time and patience to discern the needs of a young person, but the rewards make the effort worthwhile.—Proverbs 20:5.



Fish Protect Water Supply

A number of North American cities are using common bluegills, fish particularly sensitive to chemicals in their environment, to monitor the quality of drinking water. An Associated Press report explains: "The fish are kept in tanks constantly replenished with water from the municipal supply, and sensors work around the clock to register changes in the breathing, heartbeat and swimming patterns of the bluegills that occur in the presence of toxins."

In one instance in New York City, says the report, "the fish noticed a diesel spill two hours earlier than any . . . other detection devices," and they thus prevented toxins from reaching the public water supply.

Nicotine Levels Raised

While public health campaigns have been urging smokers to quit, tobacco companies have been "sneakily making cigarettes more addictive" by raising nicotine levels "10 percent in the past six years," reports *The New York Times*. A new test, considered more realistic in mimicking smokers' real-life habits, has revealed that tobacco companies are trying "to hook new young smokers and prevent older ones from quitting." In tests "virtually all brands [of cigarettes] were found to deliver a high enough nicotine dose to cause heavy dependence."

Thought-Controlled Artificial Arm

A man in the United States who had both arms amputated at the shoulder after an accident is now using a thought-controlled artificial arm. He can climb a ladder, use a paint roller, and even hug his grandchildren. "His left arm is a bionic device controlled by his brain," explains the Cable News Network. "He thinks, 'Close hand,' and electrical signals sent through surgically re-routed nerves make it happen." Electrodes pick up muscle activity caused by thought-generated impulses and relay them to a computer in the arm. The computer activates motors in

■ According to one study, Cesarean sections more than triple the risk of maternal death, as compared with normal deliveries.

—OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY, U.S.A.

■ Scientist Stephen Hawking posed this open question on the Internet: "In a world that is in chaos politically, socially and environmentally, how can the human race sustain another 100 years?" A month later he confessed: "I don't know the answer. That is why I asked the question, to get people to think about it, and to be aware of the dangers we now face." —THE GUARDIAN, BRITAIN.

■ Every year between 14 million and 19 million people out of Tanzania's population of 37 million suffer from malaria. "The disease claims about 100,000 lives annually in the country." —THE GUARDIAN, TANZANIA.

the artificial limb, making its parts imitate certain movements of a normal elbow and hand.

Thousands of New Species!

Nearly 17,000 new species are found every year, according to the newspaper *Fenua Info* of Tahiti. Some three quarters of the new species are insects, but among the discoveries are also some 450 vertebrates, including 250 species of fish and 20 to 30 mammals. Two thirds of the new mammals are rodents and bats, and "on average," says the newspaper, "a new primate is discovered every year," which scientists say is surprising. The list of finds also includes trees and plants.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?



NAME THE TEN PLAGUES

List the plagues in the order in which they occurred, and draw a line connecting your answer to the correct picture. (Note: The pictures are not in the correct order.)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

(Answers on page 19)



WHO AM I?

- 11.** I describe myself as a black girl. I was courted by a king.
- 12.** Paul exhorted Syntyche and me to be of the same mind in the Lord.



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

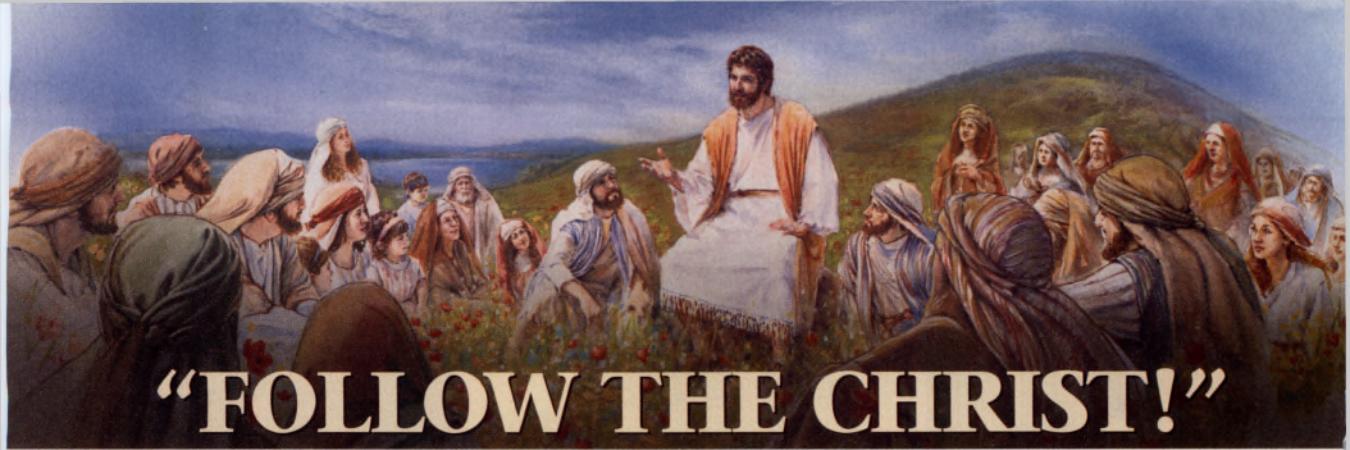
Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

Page 3 If you love money, what can happen to you?
(1 Timothy 6:____)

Page 8 Where will your heart always be?
(Matthew 6:____)

Page 21 What should our manner of life be free of?
(Hebrews 13:____)

Page 28 What should a person who is secretly dating remember? (Hebrews 4:____)



"FOLLOW THE CHRIST!"

District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses

This series of three-day conventions began in the United States in May and will continue into 2008 in hundreds of cities worldwide. In most places the program will be opened with music on Friday at 9:20 a.m. Each day of the convention will focus on Jesus.

Friday's program theme is "**Look Intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of Our Faith, Jesus.**" (Hebrews 12:2) The welcoming address is "Why Follow 'the Christ'?" A three-part feature is the symposium "Appreciating Jesus as the Greater Moses, David, Solomon." The morning session concludes with the keynote address, "Jesus' Unique Role in Jehovah's Purpose."

On Friday afternoon the first talk is "'We Have Found the Messiah!'" It is followed by "'Finding Treasures 'Carefully Concealed in Him.'" The hour-long, five-part symposium "'Keep Christ's Mental Attitude in You'" includes the talks "'He Received Them Kindly,'" "'He Became Obedient as Far as Death,'" and "'He Loved Them to the End.'" The session concludes with the discourse "'They Keep Following the Lamb No Matter Where He Goes.'"

Saturday's program theme is "**My Sheep Listen to My Voice, . . . and They Follow Me.**"

(John 10:27) An hour-long symposium "Follow Jesus' Pattern in the Ministry" will include practical suggestions for improving our ministry. After the talks "'He Loved Righteousness and Hated Lawlessness—Do You?'" and "'Oppose the Devil' as Jesus Did," the morning program will conclude with a discussion of

baptism, after which those who qualify will be baptized.

Saturday afternoon's program begins with the symposium "Do Not Follow . . ." Its six parts are "After the Crowd," "Your Hearts and Your Eyes," "Unrealities," "False Teachers," "False Stories," and "Satan." The next talks include "The Superiority of Being 'Taught by Jehovah'" and "Help Them Return to the Flock." The day ends with a convention highlight, the talk "Come Be My Follower."

Sunday's theme is "**Continue Following Me.**" (John 21:19) After the talk "Do Not 'Beg Off' From Following the Christ," the six-part symposium "Precious Gems From the Sermon on the Mount" will focus on such sayings of Jesus as: "Happy Are Those Conscious of Their Spiritual Need," "First Make Your Peace With Your Brother," and "Practice Giving, and People Will Give to You." The morning program concludes with the public talk, "Who Are the Real Followers of Christ?" The afternoon highlight is a full-costume drama based on the Bible account of Gehazi, the greedy attendant of God's prophet Elisha. The convention ends with the talk "Keep Following Christ, Our Invincible Leader!"

Make plans now to attend. To find the location nearest you, contact the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses or write the publishers of this magazine. The March 1 issue of *The Watchtower*, our companion magazine, has a list of all the convention locations in the United States and Canada.